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REPORT

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*“30 Years since Helsinki:
Challenges ahead”*

RAPPORTEUR
Mr. Leonid Ivanchenko
Russian Federation

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Centuries-old experience leaves no doubts as to a unique role that Europe has always played in the global history of human civilization. Therefore, we can positively assert today that Europe will continue to determine the world order for a long time to come. However, under the present circumstances, in order to head the list of actors of the global process Europeans need to take coordinated and consolidated action both within the continent and on the global scene. There have been and still are three fundamental issues to be addressed which will, no doubt, determine the geopolitical position of Europe in this century.

The first one concerns the very possibility of a successful completion of the integration project. The second one is much more complicated; it concerns the formation of a supranational community in Europe, a completely new process that history has never known. In this connection, a whole range of problems emerge: what form - federative, confederative or some other - this community will take? Will the institute of single citizenship develop? To what extent and how modern democratic norms will be respected, etc? Finally, the third issue relates to the nature of interaction of a united Europe with the rest of the world: whether the European experience can or should be replicated in other regions of our planet? Will the European Union be able to take a leading role in the economic, political and military areas without provoking negative attitude, while preserving its social and cultural appeal?

The integration idea emerged on the ruins of the Old World after the Second World War. At that time, arguments of Robert Schuman, former foreign minister of France, and professor Jacques Monet - the founding fathers of the European unity - concerning joint building of a new Europe seemed to be naive dreams. However, it was the European Coal and Steel Community established upon their initiative in spring 1951 and composed of six states of Western Europe, that became a cornerstone of the pan-European home. The dream came true. Interstate conflicts (primarily between France and Germany) have passed into oblivion.

On 22 November 1972, consultations of 35 European and North American states began in suburban Helsinki to prepare a Pan European Conference. They marked the beginning of the Helsinki process. Today, in the beginning of a new century, one should look back at the distance covered by us with all its achievements and frustrations.

The first stage of the Conference began in July 1973 in Helsinki, while an intensive meaningful work was carried out during the second stage in Geneva. There, we had to consider a number of positions of principle, first of all the issue of "three baskets" (first - political issues, second - economic and trade issues and third - humanitarian problems). The agenda of the Conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE) agreed upon there was established for many years to come.

After August 1, 1975, when the Helsinki Act was signed, the CSCE authority began to rise. Many bilateral treaties and agreements between European states were signed which contained a necessary reference to the Final Act, bilateral commissions for cooperation were established and pan-European expert meetings on various themes were held. The Soviet Union took certain measures and adopted regulatory acts to improve the condition of stay for foreigners, work of foreign journalists, etc.

The mid 80s witnessed fundamental transformations in the leadership of the Soviet Union. A concept was put forward concerning "new political thinking", which, inter alia, provided for normalization of relations with the West, abandonment of confrontation, strengthening of peace and cooperation in Europe. The CSCE process was deemed critical for the achievement of those goals. This approach was first demonstrated in 1986 at the conclusion of the Stockholm Conference on confidence-building measures and disarmament and in Bern during the European Meeting on Human Contacts. However, a real breakthrough in the Helsinki process - not only in terms of the Soviet approach, but also that of Europe as a whole, was achieved during the Vienna Meeting (November 1986 - January 1989).

At the beginning, a low-key confrontation during the Vienna talks remained concerning the "third basket" but soon positions of the Sides softened and approximated. As a result, a uniquely important section was adopted and added to the Final Vienna document on humanitarian cooperation, and for the first time a new section appeared - "CSCE Human Dimension". The Vienna meeting and the follow-up steps actually put an end to the cold war in the humanitarian area. At the same time, new Soviet leadership headed by M. Gorbachev used participation in the CSCE and respective commitments as an additional tool for a deep democratization of the Soviet society.

In 1992, the signing of the Maastricht Treaty on the European Union started the modern phase of the European integration. The Treaty embodied the main organizational principles of the united Europe - single citizenship, commitment to a single educational, cultural and health-care policy and agreed regional and environmental policy - and formulated fundamental EU citizens' rights.

In the same 1992, the countries that previously had been members of both the European Economic Community and the European Free Trade area integrated into a common European Economic Area.

In the 90s, irreversibility of the European integration became obvious. A number of East European countries - Poland, Hungary, Czechia and later the Baltic states, as well as Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria - concluded treaties on cooperation with the EU.

Successful development of the Pan-European process led to the first since 1975 CSCE Summit in November 1990 which adopted the Paris Charter and contributed to the signing of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

Following long years of cold war the CSCE created an effective mechanism of Pan-European negotiations and cooperation (never before in existence).

The CSCE expanded the notion of "security" by turning it from a purely military and political into a multidimensional concept covering humanitarian, economic, environmental and other aspects. Today, it is taken for granted but 20 - 30 years ago it was a breakthrough.

From the very beginning, the CSCE was a unique structure consisting of 35 states of Europe and North America, and all the more so now that the CSCE comprises 55 states from Vancouver to Vladivostok, actually being the largest Euroasian organization.

During its first 20 years in existence the CSCE brought into life such an unusual for Europe phenomenon as greater role of medium and small states - neutral, non-aligned and socialist - in solving common European problems. At the CSCE meetings neutral and non-aligned countries, the so-called "N + N" Group consisting of 9 states, often took the initiative of rescuing the situation. Now that there is no bipolar confrontation, this role of neutral countries is, understandably, a thing of the past.

The CSCE can be credited for a well-established consensus principle during pan-European talks.

As of 1 January 1999, 11 member-countries of the European Union (becoming 12 within a year) introduced a single European currency - euro. From then on they entrusted their monetary policy to the European Central Bank and abandoned the fundamental right of sovereign states - to emit national currencies.

A single currency became a reality in spite of the fact that it was admittedly considered a utopia for many years. A decisive stage of euro infancy is behind us, and now it strongly competes with one of the dominant currencies of the world - the US dollar.

It can be stated with certainty that today the European Union represents a unique supranational entity which provides optimal functioning of national economic systems under unified legislation and common monetary policy and plans to create in the nearest future the largest single regional economy in the world.

Meanwhile, both in the political and economic aspects the formation and development of the European Union creates many new issues to be solved and poses before its initiators a lot of problems, whose solution can and must become an important contribution of the new and united Europe to the social and political experience of the 21st century.

In the course of the European integration a number of problems of political nature emerge, that go, however, beyond the framework of day-to-day policy. The idea of European unity even today comes into conflict with the concept of national state that reigned supreme in Europe during recent centuries.

Not less substantial are economic dilemmas. The integration stage observed today is characterized by a dangerous division of economic functions that used to be traditionally united in a national state. Indeed, on the one hand, in today's Europe there exist supranational law-making entities that govern the issues of trade, investments and labor and capital market. On the other hand, such institutions cannot be sufficiently effective, if deprived of the possibility to establish tax regulations and redistribute resources through budgetary system.

The last decade has been marked by an active discussion of the issues of expansion of the European Union. It has made both political and economic problems a reality.

The present expansion of the European Union is very closely connected with the NATO's movement to the East. The decision of the EU leadership on initial practical steps in order to prepare for the admission of new candidate countries followed only after a similar step was made by NATO at the 1997 Madrid Summit. This shows the unwillingness of the European Union to provide absolute guarantees of security to post-Soviet candidates, to take responsibility for stabilization of a vast geopolitical space. At the same time, it brings to the forefront and aggravates the problem of mismatched membership in Western unions.

The eastward movement of NATO may create additional lines of tension not only between the alliance and Russia, but also between NATO and the EU. Small countries from the group of newly independent states can willingly or unwillingly get themselves in between the grindstones of friction, divergence and contradiction. The change in membership and position in NATO may cause, as presumed by some observers, certain differences among the allies or reduce the interest of the US leadership in preserving its role and former obligations in Europe. On the other hand, there is an apprehension in the EU that new members of the alliance will weaken the united European positions.

During the 90s, when the disposition of forces both in Europe as a whole and in the OSCE changed, the Organization began undergoing negative processes. It started re-focusing from the problems of interstate relations, where it had earlier proved to be successful, to the problems emerging inside states that concerned not all states, but predominantly the ex-Yugoslavian and former Soviet republics. This is where almost all of the missions, information centers and groups representing the OSCE operate. Out of 20 OSCE missions functioning today 6 operate in the Balkans, 5 in Central Asia, 3 in the Caucasus, and 6 in Eastern Europe. There is not a single mission west of Vienna – as if there exist no Northern Ireland, Cyprus, the Basque Country or Corsica with their problems.

And that is just an example. In a number of countries, politicians and mass media started to talk about the metamorphoses in the work of the Organization and its degradation. But the majority of sober-minded politicians believe that certain negative trends are not the reason to "bury" the OSCE. Its major advantages are the unique geographical coverage and the multi-dimensional character of the concept of security. It is within the framework of the OSCE that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces was negotiated and approaches to confidence building in military field are being developed.

Within the OSCE architecture and throughout the world there emerge new and ever more complex challenges and problems. Therefore, it is extremely important:

- to correct the existing geographical and functional disbalances in the work of the Organization;
- to get the OSCE back to performing its main function - taking care of interstate relations rather than internal conflicts, so that it abandons its questionable concepts of "humanitarian interventions" and the doctrine of "limited sovereignty". This is required by the European Security Charter adopted by the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November 1999;
- to strengthen the role of the OSCE as an organization by enhancing its legal capacity, developing rules of procedure for its bodies and missions, etc.;
- to seek a reform of the OSCE started at the ninth meeting of the Ministerial Council in Bucharest (December 2001).

After the meeting in Bucharest, certain new topics have emerged which are of major importance to all Member States, including the topics of counteracting international terrorism, combating organized crime and illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and arms, protecting the rights of ethnic minorities, etc.

The Maastricht meeting of the Ministerial Council (December 2003) adopted the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. It reflects changes in the economic and ecological situation in the OSCE region which resulted not only in progress and achievements but also in the emergence of new economic and environmental threats and challenges.

Despite certain progress in developing market relations in the OSCE region, some Member States still need assistance in carrying out reforms and integrating into the world economy. Problems to be addressed include weak and inadequate government, corruption, high unemployment, social and economic inequality and widespread poverty. These are just some of the factors aggravating such global threats as terrorism, aggressive extremism and transnational organized crime.

We see a rise in illegal economic activities, including money laundering and its illicit traffic. Inefficiency of legal institutions and weakness of civil society, lack of transparency and accountability in the public and private sectors, flaws in legislation governing economic activities, inadequate application of legal norms and rules, disregard for business ethics and lack of sustainable interstate cooperation in these areas make it impossible for the OSCE Member States to secure sustainable social development and to effectively tackle challenges and threats to security and stability.

In recent years, people have become increasingly concerned about the state of environment. Its degradation, unsustainable use of natural resources and inappropriate waste management have serious consequences for human health and well-being, and for stability and security of our countries, and can disrupt the functioning of ecosystems.

It is impossible to achieve economic growth and to benefit from globalization without the introduction of proper management practices, including political measures to ensure effective functioning of market mechanisms, public and private sectors and a well-tuned-up system of international relations.

Economic cooperation remains a key principle of the OSCE. Cooperation among its Member States and international and regional institutions and organizations is one of the most important ways to strengthen security and stability and to prevent potential conflicts in the OSCE region.

However, in recent years, especially after the terrorist attack against the United States on 11 September 2001, there emerged a new priority issue - the issue of new threats to international peace and security. That attack has made every person on Earth aware of the scale of the threat posed by international terrorism.

International terrorism is intertwined with many traditional threats, such as:

- risk of the spread of nuclear and other types of weapons;
- unsettled regional conflicts;
- existence of a number of "unaccomplished" states, that is states which were declared as such without solving territorial problems, with growing genocide and mass exodus of refugees, and which face humanitarian crises;
- growing threats of narcotraffic and traffic in arms and human beings as sources of financing international terrorism;
- religious extremism fueling separatism and fraught with even more negative consequences;
- continuing trend towards drawing the dividing lines between civilizations and religions, as well as attacks against Islam as a religion, splitting the international community and provoking terrorist acts.

Transport, energy, information and financial infrastructure, as well as priority industries which constitute the very basis of any modern state have become the most attractive targets for terrorists. Experience shows that they are largely unprotected.

There is a pressing need to set priorities in protecting national security interests, that is to determine areas where to concentrate efforts in fighting terrorism: either on eliminating its sources or on involving the entire civil society and private sector in collective endeavors to counter the threat of catastrophic terrorist acts. Also, there is a need for the concentration of international efforts and for the creation of a common institutional infrastructure to promote a more viable society. Ordinary people have to develop the ability to live in the environment of terrorist threats and they should be prepared to invest money in reasonable projects to reduce risks.

Today, sponsors of terrorism know that the main advantage of strikes against key infrastructure facilities is not their ability to cause an immediate damage but their side effects undermining the trust of people in state institutions which are of vital importance for them. Terrorist acts cost the United States billions of dollars. They caused damage not only to facilities and people in major cities but also to airlines well known in the world. The daily income of Americans dropped and construction costs soared, as did the costs of protecting buildings and other facilities from possible attacks.

The most attractive targets for terrorists are those strikes against which are likely to produce large-scale social and economic shocks.

There are two concepts of ensuring security which often "collide". On the one hand, state authorities believe that they should take care only of those areas which cannot develop on the market basis, such as defense or border protection.

It is quite common for governments to be more inclined to finance expenditures on conventional armed forces and armaments related to state security rather than to invest into national security-related programmes.

More resources are spent, for instance, on ensuring the physical safety of servicemen in military bases than on measures to protect public, civil infrastructures or commercial sea ports.

Police and firemen are usually the first who arrive at the site of a terrorist act and they have to act all by themselves for 12 to 24 hours. At the same time, as a rule, they do not have adequate communication means or individual breathing devices. Medical emergency teams, in most cases, have no instruments to determine which chemical or bacteriological agent has been used.

Bacteriological strikes against cities with the use of radioactive materials are fraught with large-scale and heavy consequences. Most developed countries, let alone low-income countries, lack public programs designed to prevent or mitigate the consequences of the use of such means. A study carried out at the request of a Washington-based Council on

Competitiveness just a year after September 11 showed that 93 per cent of companies' executives do not believe that their companies may become a target for terrorists. Only 53 per cent of respondents noted that their companies had increased their expenditures on security. That suggests that, as long as public authorities will try to share the mutual responsibility for security with private owners, threat to the population will grow.

Improvements in means of detection and prevention of terrorist acts will lead to improvements in methods of combating crime, drug trafficking, illegal migration and traffic in arms, children and women. Measures to protect infrastructure will make it more resistant not only to terrorist attacks but also to force majeure or emergency situations.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that an effective struggle against the evil of terrorism is a struggle against both its visible manifestations and its root causes. Terrorist activities often acquire a global character, but their are in many cases determined by local conditions. They include mass unemployment, lack of social policy, low educational level of young people and even the possibility to get an education.

In the framework of evolving events of the European integration and the Helsinki Agreement, a Treaty on the Constitution for Europe was signed in Rome on October 29, 2004.

After 50 years and four attempts Europeans managed to bring the integration process into a constitutional framework. Treaties signed in Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice helped to settle three key issues.

Due to delegation and combination of powers of various countries, the European integration has turned into a pillar of the entire architecture of the political power. The fact that integration has reached such a high level means that viability and legitimacy of the European structures are in the interests of all partners.

In the process of rapid expansion there emerge a vast political and geographical space requiring lasting order based on common principles.

Europe assumes new functions, attracts new members and really needs safeguards of stability.

There emerge a political structure capable of withstanding a considerable pressure.

The text of the Constitution contains both positive and some negative elements, which requires a detailed analysis of the document. However, its hard to deny that it is a future political culture of Europe as a pledge of formation of strategical unity that is the basis and the driving force of the ideas embodied in the Constitution. Its ratification will be followed by the practical testing of its provisions, their revision and further development.

Our response and actions

We should respond to political, economic and environmental challenges and threats to security by further developing cooperation between Member States in various areas.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has enough capabilities to coordinate efforts of parliaments aimed at improving the quality of governance at all levels in accordance with the Platform for Security in the OSCE regions based on cooperation and the desire to make a special contribution to the prevention of new dividing lines and the reduction of inequality both between our countries and inside them.

Cooperation should be based on solidarity and transparency, equal partnership without discrimination, mutual accountability and full respect for interests of all OSCE Member States. We should guide public and private interaction in such areas as trade, transport, energy, finance, investments, communications, science and technology, and promote business contacts. That would be a real contribution to the meaningful implementation of the Helsinki document entitled "Challenge of the Time of Change" and to

the expansion of the OSCE powers to prevent and settle local and regional conflicts, and to strengthen peace on Earth.