

Opening Address By High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko At a Conference on the Implementation of the OSCE Code of Conduct On Politico-Military Aspects of Security in South Eastern Europe



Learning from Positive Experience

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank Ambassadors Herbert Salber and Gary Robbins for inviting me to speak at this important event. The OSCE continues to play a crucial role in Bosnian and Herzegovina and my office and myself are having a close working relationship with the OSCE in a number of important areas.

On the concrete topic you are going to discuss at today's Seminar:

Among other things, the OSCE's Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security specifically links

- *"economic and environmental co-operation with peaceful inter-State relations."*

It requires signatories to

- *"pursue their own security interests in conformity with the common effort to strengthen security and stability in the OSCE area and beyond"*

and it mandates

- *"democratic control of military, paramilitary and internal security forces as well as intelligence services."*

I draw out these key points because they illustrate the underlying fact that the work being done under the Code of Conduct in the countries represented at this meeting is complementary to and consistent with the broader social, economic and political development trajectory of Southeast Europe.

Learning from Positive Experience

This is particularly important because in many countries in the region, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, military and security reform has been at the cutting edge of the broader reform process. States that were heavily militarised and in which democratic control of the armed forces and security apparatus was tenuous have successfully altered the relationship between citizens and those whose job it is to protect them. They have established democratic oversight, while increasing efficiency and accountability. In almost every case, they have been able to reduce the size and the cost of the military and security sector and they have done

this without diminishing operational capacity or effectiveness.

This is a sector where it is possible to build on success.

In the last two decades the whole of Southeast Europe has gone through a transition that has been tumultuous. It has involved political, economic and social upheaval. Not only has the military and security sector routinely been in the vanguard of successful change, reforms in this sector have touched one way or another on key political, social and economic issues.

It is important, therefore, that we learn from this positive experience.

I believe there are two main lessons and they are encapsulated in the points I listed at the beginning of my remarks.

The Code of Conduct requires signatories *to pursue their security interests in conformity with the common effort.*

In other words, security is indivisible – if one country goes its own way, the collective well-being of its neighbours will be placed in question.

This principle applies in a particular way to Southeast Europe, where we have seen in the very recent past the tragedy that ensues when neighbours go to war.

The Code of Conduct provides the mandate and the operational capacity to develop military and security structures that will help prevent any repetition of the disasters of the last twenty years.

Not just on paper, but in reality.

The fact is that the implementation of the Code has been more successful in Southeast Europe than most observers would have dared to hope even a decade ago. The region is militarily stable; collective security is embedded in formal military and

diplomatic structures and fully supported by all of the OSCE member states.

In this respect, I want to commend the work that the OSCE has done in developing and facilitating cooperation programs – the fact that all of us are participating at this conference is, politically and logistically, thanks to the work and mission of the OSCE, and this is the tip of the iceberg as far as the organisation's efforts in the military and security field in Southeast Europe are concerned.

A Positive New Image

If security is indivisible: what about diplomacy? What about trade? What about economic development? This is especially important now, during the global economic recession.

Well, I do not believe there can be any lingering doubt that these too are areas that are regionally indivisible.

We are all going to stay poor together or we are all going to get rich together.

In the best-case scenario we are all going to move into the European Union and NATO together – because one country's experience helps another, and it is easier for countries to make progress along the accession path if their neighbours are making comparable progress.

And the same goes for political, social and material progress as a whole. The region will develop a mature and resilient democratic culture and a vibrant market economy if neighbouring countries move in the same direction.

In order to foster and facilitate this common progress I believe one of the things that we must do together is begin the long process of changing the way that the rest of the world looks at Southeast Europe.

The truth is that this region has moved on from the violence and failure of the nineties – but its image in the rest of the continent and further afield does not always reflect the progress that has been made. Although the image too is changing; the fact that tourism in BiH is up by 12% this year on last year is an indication that confidence in BiH's security is growing.

Here too, on BiH's image in the rest of the continent, a lesson can be learned from the experience of military and security reform.

The relationship between citizens and their military and security services has been fundamentally altered, and this changed relationship has affected society in a profound way. In order to effect such momentous change it has been necessary to address and modify popular perceptions, and this has been done through proactive and dynamic communication.

Today, Southeast Europe is emerging from a long period of dramatic change, and it is crucial that this change is communicated and explained to those outside the region, through diplomacy and through the media, so that potential partners in progress – and these include private investors as well as foreign governments – are brought to understand that this is a region of growth not decay, a region of creative cooperation not violence, a region of enormous economic potential not one of economic lethargy.

The region as a whole represents 55 million consumers; bilateral trade is worth billions of Euro and there is the potential for this figure to be even greater. Now is the time to invest in BiH

Democracy Has to Be Promoted and Defended

The second principle that I mentioned concerns the Code of Conduct's stipulation that signatories must ensure *“democratic control of military, paramilitary and internal security forces*

as well as intelligence services.”

The fact is that democracy doesn't just magically appear in countries and impose itself benignly on the political and military system. It has to be promoted and defended.

Here again, I believe that in many of our countries the military and intelligence sectors have led the way.

This may have been because the need to place military and security structures under democratic control was self evident at the very beginning of the transition process, and politicians focused their attention on doing this (although there were of course some remnants of previous regimes who sought to do the opposite and maintain *undemocratic* means of control).

One way or another, we have seen democratic oversight of the military emerge as the norm throughout the region, and this has sent an important signal to every other sector in society. The military and security agencies are accountable to the citizens whom they protect; they are not at the disposal of a small group of powerful individuals and nor should they be.

The same is true of every asset that belongs to citizens – including, for example, public companies and state property.

Treating Voters with Contempt

This meeting is being hosted by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, an institution that now has a wealth of positive experience that can be shared with governments elsewhere in the region. Defence reform in this country has been sensibly conceived and carried out with exceptional professionalism. The results are clear: Bosnia and Herzegovina now has armed forces that are operationally effective as well as cost effective, and which have made a positive and important

contribution to international peacekeeping missions in Africa and the Middle East.

In other sectors, as you may know, Bosnia and Herzegovina is going through a period of considerable turbulence, arising largely from a flight from pragmatism on the part of a handful of political leaders. Across a wide range of urgent and indispensable reforms we have not in recent years seen the same focus on sensible solutions and creative implementation that we saw in the case of defence and intelligence reform.

However, we are going to see this focus.

I am sure of this..

For two reasons.

The first is that there is a growing groundswell of popular frustration with the conduct of the main party leaders. Tens of thousands of jobs have been lost in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the end of last year, and the political leadership has so far failed to display any real or constructive interest in the economy.

This isn't ignoring voters; this is treating voters with contempt.

The plain truth is that electoral support evaporates for governments that preside over economic catastrophe.

The second reason is that the International Community has the means to focus political attention on real problems and oblige domestic leaders to work towards solutions. We will continue to facilitate solutions with whatever means we judge to be necessary – this requires patience, but patience does not mean inaction. And we will act as necessary in order to achieve the breakthrough that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina so desperately want.

In conclusion, allow me to express the hope that this will be

a productive conference – because the issues that you are dealing with will have an impact far beyond the defence and security sector. In the past, that fact has always been positive, since progress in defence and security has contributed to overall progress and is a basis for progress in other areas. You are working in a sector where success has been more common than failure – and all of us can learn and benefit from that.

Thank you.