

Efforts converge to strengthen a dialogue of culture and peace

Archbishop Dominique Mamberti at the Ministerial Council of OSCE

Introduction.



The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to thank His Excellency Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, as well as the 2011 Lithuanian Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) not only for its exquisite hospitality in these days, but also for their efforts in promoting a growing political will that seeks to reinforce a dialogue of culture and of peace within the OSCE region.

Last year, in the Astana Declaration the Heads of State or Government of the fifty-six participating States of the OSCE recommitted themselves to the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community that stretches from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The Vilnius Ministerial offers an opportunity for the participating States to keep the momentum gained in Astana going as “our commitments in the politico-military, economic and environmental and human dimensions need to be fully implemented.”

Politico-military dimension.

As far as the politico-military dimension of the OSCE is concerned, the Holy See has taken note with interest of the report of the Chairman of the Forum for Security Cooperation on the activities carried out during 2011, complemented by progress reports on specific aspects of that activity. My Delegation values the great achievements in this field, namely: measures further strengthening the fight against the proliferation and illegal transfer of Small Arms and Light Weapons and on securing Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunitions; their implementation would greatly contribute both to the fight against terrorism and organized crime and to dispelling environmental concerns of the population.

Appreciation is also due to the progress in fostering the implementation of the “Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of Security”. Equally valid are the initiatives concerning the contribution of the Forum to the implementation of the UNSCR No. 1540 on Non Proliferation of Weapons of Mass

Destruction. The OSCE no doubt has something original and valuable to offer to the international community.

There have also been achievements in the field of Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building Measures. The tasking of the Astana Summit for the updating of Vienna Document 1999 was unequivocal, and fruit of what really appeared a genuine political will of the participating States. Here again the three Chairs and the Coordinator have spared no efforts to bring conflicting positions closer that have prevented so far to tackle the real core issue of the modernization of Vienna Document 1999.

Turning now to the non-military aspects of security dealt with in the Security Committee, my Delegation praises the large number of important draft decisions developed there on relevant threats that affect the OSCE area and would like to express our appreciation and support for the Ministerial Council decisions hopefully to be adopted on “Strengthening Co-ordination and Coherence in the OSCE’s Efforts to Address Transnational Threats”; an “OSCE Concept to Combat the Threat of Illegal Drugs and Chemical Precursors” and on “Further measures in the area of Cyber Security.”

Economic and environmental dimension.

This year has also revealed the growing importance and relevance that participating States attach to the second or economic and environmental dimension. For the Holy See, the topic of migration takes a central place in this field. To this add the influence of the current global financial and economic crisis and there emerge obvious connections between migration policies and security.

In this context, there is a growing consensus on the necessity to pay more attention to migrants themselves, and not only to their economic role as temporary workforce or permanent settlers. Family reunification must be a primary consideration. The family plays a fundamental role in the integration process, in giving stability to the presence of the immigrants in the new social environment, and even in the dynamics of temporary migration. Migrants, aware of their rights, can be more secure in offering their services and talents and the receiving community, well-informed and respectful of these rights, will feel freer in extending its solidarity in order to build together a common future.

The Holy See welcomes the fact that next year the economic and environmental dimension will focus on good governance issues. In fact, for the Holy See, in order for governance to be “good”, it must take into account the common good, namely, the good of all people and of the whole person. The reason that public administration exists is to serve the human being at every level of a State in order to build a more free and responsible society. As democratic, good governance should promote the participation in public life of all people living within society, including Churches, religious communities and believers. Good government is that government in which political authorities do not forget or underestimate the moral dimension of political representation.

Human dimension.

The OSCE has carved out for itself over the years impressive commitments in favour of the defense of fundamental freedoms and human rights. These commitments still remain valid and need clearer articulation, so they can serve as a platform for a positive program for peace. It is the dignity of the human person that motivates the desire of our Organization to work for the effective realization of all human rights.

Among these fundamental freedoms is the right to freedom of religion. In fact, the Astana Summit Declaration clearly stated that “greater efforts must be made to promote freedom of religion or belief and to combat intolerance and discrimination.” The right to religious freedom, despite being repeatedly proclaimed by the international community, as well as in the constitutions of most States, continues to be widely violated today.

In his Message for the World Day of Peace 2011, the Holy Father insisted that “at present, Christians are the religious group which suffers most from persecution on account of its faith. Many Christians experience daily affronts and often live in fear because of their pursuit of truth, their faith in Jesus Christ and their heartfelt plea for respect for religious freedom. This situation is unacceptable, since it represents an insult to God and to human dignity; furthermore, it is a threat to security and peace, and an obstacle to the achievement of authentic and integral human development” (n. 1). There may be more than two hundred million Christians, of different confessions, who are in difficulty because of legal and cultural structures that lead to their discrimination. Last September’s Meeting in Rome on the theme “Preventing and responding to Hate Incidents and Crimes against Christians” was a successful and hopeful event, and revealed the possibility of constructive dialogue toward mutual understanding and respect among Christians, members of other religions, and nonbelievers. The Holy See appreciates the outstanding work that was done under the Lithuanian Chairmanship to combat intolerance against Christians. It is the desire of my Delegation that these efforts be continued. In encouraging participating States to report hate crimes against Christians, I would like to express the hope that more follow-up to the Rome Conference will be forthcoming, especially in our discussions with our Partners for Cooperation. The celebration of an International Day against persecution and discrimination of Christians might prove to be an important sign that Governments are willing to deal with this serious issue.

The OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti calls for enhanced access to quality education as a key to overcoming the vicious cycle of poverty and social exclusion that so often affect people on the move, including Roma and Sinti. The dignity of Roma and Sinti populations must therefore be safeguarded, their families protected, their collective identity respected, initiatives for their development encouraged, and their rights defended.

Trafficking in human beings, especially of women and minors, and not just for sexual exploitation but also for labour exploitation and domestic servitude, has become a powerful global business involving many countries of origin, transit and destination. To counteract the scourge of trafficking in human beings with greater determination and more concrete results, a convergence of efforts is necessary: a mentality that is centered on the unique dignity of every person, a sure punishment of traffickers, fight against corruption, a correct teaching in schools of the mutual relations between man and woman, the fairness of mass media in reporting the damages created by trafficking. While legislation should be continuously adjusted and adapted to the evolution of the phenomenon of trafficking, the working together of public and private institutions, including religious ones, and the contribution of volunteers

will guarantee that no person may be bought or sold in violation of his or her dignity and fundamental human rights because he or she is created free and in God's image and not to be treated as a slave.

Mongolia and future CiOs.

The Holy See welcomes Mongolia's desire to become the fifty-seventh OSCE participating State and looks forward to working with that ancient people and culture to contribute to the implementation of OSCE commitments.

Additionally, the Holy See welcomes the offer of Switzerland and Serbia to chair the OSCE in 2014 and 2015 and assures these countries of its desire to work constructively with them.

In conclusion, I would like to renew my gratitude to the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2011 for its leadership, as well as to wish the incoming Irish Chairmanship all the best as we work together to reach the goals identified in the Astana Commemorative Declaration – that common vision and those common values agreed upon and shared by all participating States of the OSCE.

L'Osservatore Romano- Archbishop Dominique Mamberti