

Stability and security

By **TARJA HALONEN**

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND



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is the 11th and current President of Finland and the first woman to hold the office. Ms Halonen was previously a Member of Parliament, where she served six terms representing the constituency of Helsinki from 1979 to 2000, when she resigned after her election to the presidency. In addition to her political career she has had a long and extensive career in trade unions and different non-governmental organisations. A lawyer by profession, Ms Halonen is widely known for her interest in human rights issues.

Alexander Stubb (l), Finnish Foreign Minister with Signmark, a deaf rapper who serves as a special representative for promoting the rights of people with disability

It has been a great pleasure to be in Astana for the first OSCE Summit held in Central Asia. Kazakhstan has shown great commitment in taking our shared process forward. This highlights the Eurasian dimension of the OSCE.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe was first held in Helsinki in 1975. As it has been mentioned many times, the “Spirit of Helsinki” paved the way for a peaceful and democratic Europe without dividing lines. A comprehensive approach to security was adopted.

In 35 years, the OSCE area has changed a lot. Also the OSCE itself has turned from the initial political process into an organisation. Today it is involved in conflict resolution and crisis management as well as election observation, protecting minorities and monitoring human rights. The OSCE should step up its work in responding to security challenges. The OSCE has to intensify efforts to solve all conflicts in the OSCE area.

We can best commemorate the OSCE anniversary by giving direction to the organisation on the basis of the shared principles and values. In building a stronger security community, we should be able to address conflict situations more effectively. Finland has made proposals to improve the OSCE’s early warning and early action capacity as well as the follow-up mechanisms. Through the implementation of our human rights commitments we build healthier and more democratic societies. Finland highly values the work of the specialised OSCE institutions. They deserve our full support.



Strengthening the implementation of human rights commitments is of crucial importance in finding new dynamics to the human dimension of the OSCE. In this work, NGOs and the civil society play a vital role.

More attention should be paid to minorities. Especially, the OSCE must accelerate efforts to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti and we must fully implement our commitments. Furthermore, the cooperation between the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union is of utmost importance – the OSCE’s consensus approach and strong field presence are complemented by the Council of Europe’s norm-setting commitments and hard facts provided by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union.

The OSCE needs to pay more attention to gender issues, including in the context of peace and security and conflict prevention. The OSCE should prepare an Action Plan to implement the UN Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security”, like some other organisations have done already. Finland has adopted its own national plan and now helps Kenya to do that.

We commenced the focus on European security and the role of the OSCE in Helsinki in December 2008, and this reflection continued within the Corfu process. We welcome dialogue on our common broad security. President Medvedev’s initiative has been useful in this context. An enhanced security community from Vancouver to Vladivostok should build on the comprehensive approach to security, including respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. All these contribute to the stability of OSCE countries but also the well-being of our citizens.

This Summit aims to bring new dynamism to arms control as well as confidence and security building measures established in the OSCE framework. These must be based on inclusiveness of countries involved and take into account the current security environment. The OSCE can play a key role in building a more stable and secure environment for us all, if we comply with our commitments and give the organisation the right tools. A central objective must be to develop our area in a manner that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Now it is up to member countries to reach consensus that will revitalise and strengthen the OSCE to fulfil the spirit of Astana. Allow me to present my best wishes to the incoming presidency, Lithuania for 2011. **F**