

**A “FORGOTTEN PAGE” OF DIPLOMACY:
THE ASSUMPTION BY ROMANIA
OF THE OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP (2001)**

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*“...remembering is a triumph ver the fortresses’ dead”
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Abstract. The authors draw the attention of the reader to what they call a “forgotten page” of the Romanian diplomacy: the assumption by Romania of the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for the whole year as the CiO, at the very start of the century, and two years as a member of troika (respectively, 2000 and 2002). An input they consider to be Romania’s second major contribution to the heritage of that Organization after it counted as one of its “founding fathers”. Having been closely linked to the work of the OSCE Chair-in-Office, they bring together facts and events which occurred in Europe in that year, among which they particularly concentrate on the territorial reconfiguration under way in one part of Europe, as well as on the large variety of issues deriving from the dissolution of multinational entities and the new shape Europe was assuming. In the view of the authors that was to count as a significant evidence of the revival of Romania’s presence among the European nations and of its diplomacy on the European scene.

Key words: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Chairmanship, troika, mandate, crisis management, Helsinki Final Act, frozen conflicts, “task force”.

The Romanian always was looking towards “Europe” with sympathy and interest. The Princes of the Romanian Provinces had relations with the European chancelleries, and the modern history of Romania took shape and was structured in this context. The big saga of the continent started to include Romanians too, in a way or another, on the quite early stage, “Yet, Romanian’s reflex was to not hand down a project from one generation to another, each one cutting the thread” (**Martha Bibescu**).

These are the words we are frequently reminding when trying to bring to the attention the “forgotten” pages from the national history. In this case, an

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international forum such as the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** – which represented a lot for Europe when its future was yet impossible to predict and which, as Romania is concerned, for the first time after the Second World War, after a long period of “absence” brought back our country into European diplomacy – has entered for Romanians in an almost complete anonymity. Today, one can rarely see or hear somebody speaking about OSCE, as well as about other international organizations, which made, some of them are still making history. Or, Romania continues to be member of these organizations and Romanians should have the right to know what the country is doing in this capacity, at least to know why it is still paying contributions.

As the saying goes “everything transient remains only as a “symbol”. The assumption by Romania of the OSCE Chairmanship – an act of foreign policy and of diplomacy we want to recall – was, certainly, not only for Romania, but also for the Europe a “symbol moment”: by its significance, stressing the way a country of a middle importance could manifest itself in an international environment challenged by the crises and open conflicts, as well as by the competences it can use; by the performances and services it can make to the community. That’s why, such acts shouldn’t be forgotten and, moreover, included in the category of “transient”.

In the past, Romania had similar performances making her remarkable on the international level and ennobling its name. Two foreign ministers - **Nicolae Titulescu**, two years successively President of the Assembly of the Society of Nations, and, respectively, **Corneliu Mănescu**, elected as President of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization - are included with distinction in the annals of the world’s diplomacy. It was, also, usual, that, in many cases, due to the domestic policy, soon such performances were forgotten, revealing the way the Romanians know how to destroy their symbols. However, the ennobling services remain in the history of every nation. It is a must, particularly in this case, taking into consideration what represented **Romania** for the process of security and cooperation in Europe, its well known contribution to the promotion and support of the changes which took place on the continent, performances among which, we want to believe, is, also, holding the OSCE Chairmanship in 2001.

In ’70-es of the past century, **Romania**’s name was included in the European diplomacy by its role in formulating the objectives, principles and working rules of the CSCE, in the moment of its inception. Agreement, after intensive and difficult negotiations, on the democratic framework for the structuring and functioning of the new forum, which was designed to change the Europe’s face and to put the State’s behavior in the relations among them and towards their citizens on the new basis was considered as extremely important in the history of the continent. Romanian Ambassador **Valentin Lipatti**’s name is largely included

in the European literature on this subject among the main promoters of the course inaugurated by the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). That’s why, we dare to consider that a second major moment marked by **Romania**, as an OSCE member, was in 2001, when Romania was holding **the OSCE Chairmanship**, contributing in this capacity to the stabilization of turbulences resulted from the events and territorial reconfigurations accompanying the dismemberment of the two multinational federal states – **Yugoslavia and Soviet Union** –, processes which were at that time in their last phase, in order to prevent their escalation. The concepts, principles and modalities for approaching and identifying solutions for problems related to inter-ethnic relations, democratic rights, constitutional aspects by Romanian Chairmanship – sanctioned and verified by the previous OSCE activities – have been based on the same innovative spirit which characterized the Romanian’s contributions at the beginning of the process for security and cooperation in Europe. The tensions, conflicts and other problems the Organization had to face, though may be different in substance, motivation and way of manifestation, from the thematic specific for the Europe of that period, from the point of view of the modalities of approaching and solving them were in line with those which existed when the European forum was born by the signature of the **Helsinki Final Act**, in 1975.



Active OSCE involvement was, thus, in line with fundamental principles of the Organization, Romanian diplomacy, also, always believed in. Moreover, the new politico-diplomatic acts of the capital importance for Europe, designed to project the changes which took place on the continent, complimented the **Helsinki Final Act. The Paris Charter for a new Europe**,

signed at the Summit Conference of the Heads of State or Government of participating states in 1990, which represented the end of the Cold War, as well as following meetings and documents which have created the basis for the new, radically changed mechanisms, activities and models of coexistence on the continent, were still fresh, calling for action. As Romania continued to be one of the active participants in the drafting and adoption of these documents, assumption of the OSCE Chairmanship in 2001 was thus on the route Romania

used to be for several decades. This engagement raised its involvement to the new level, in a period when the OSCE itself was in the process of consolidation and reform on the basis defined by the changes which took place. Sufficient to say that the Organization encompasses now 56 participating states, to compare with 35 when the Helsinki Final Act was signed.

Holding the OSCE Chairmanship represented for Romania also an opportunity to assert its new profile, the capacities it disposes as an international actor. It was an deliberately assumed act to position itself in an international role which would confirm this.

II

First of all, few specifics on what represented the mandate of the OSCE Chairmanship assumed by Romania.

1. In the OSCE, the **Chairmanship** rotates annually, and the post of Chairman-in-Office is held by the Foreign Minister of that participating State. In this capacity, he is vested with “overall responsibility for executive action and the co-ordination “ of the OSCE activities during the respective year. He is not only “chairing” a session or a meeting, as it is the case in most of other forums or institutions, but he is effectively leading the Organization, including organizing the activities for negotiation and adoption of decisions , coordination of the work of OSCE structures, representing the Organization beyond the OSCE, supervising activities related to conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation – all being acute issues at the moment when Romania took-over the Chairmanship.

The Secretary general acts as the “representative” of the Chairman-in-Office, including, among, others, the management of the OSCE structures and operations.

2. Chairman-in-Office receives from the participating states an “international mandate”, more consistent that the mandate to “represent” them, investing him with the trust to implement the mandate “on their behalf”. It oblige him to be in permanent contact with the participating states.

The CiO is assisted by the previous and succeeding Chairmen; the three of them together constitute the **OSCE Troika**. The CiO may also form the *ad-hoc* steering groups and appoint personal representatives to deal with specific crisis or conflict situations, as well as issues of special interest.

3. The mandate of the CiO is comprehensive, consistent with the “unique place” OSCE has among the European organizations for security, characterized by: the comprehensive approach to “security” and its achievement “through cooperation”; a wide membership, a large number of mechanisms and activities, tradition of transparency, open dialogue and adoption of the decisions by consensus. Thus, the complexity of the mandate, but, also, a large freedom for “initiative”.

4. The mandate of the CiO imply, according to the OSCE veterans, duties and aptitudes of the “diplomat” in order to be able to communicate with member states and international environment and to orient Organization in line with objectives, principles and assumed functions; of the “politician”, in order to identify the priorities and the requirements of the day; of the “administrator” dealing with management of a complex working system, assuring its command.

5. CiO is using the following working methods:

- systematic consultations with participating states, in full transparency of actions;
- active involvement of the *Troika* members in the leadership of the Organization, including by transferring certain “files” to one of them;
- assignment of prestigious personalities as “Personal Representatives” of the CiO for special missions;
- cooperation with other international organizations;
- assessment, with the assistance of the Secretariat and other structures of the OSCE, of the evolutions in the Euro-Atlantic area for new measures and initiatives;
- frequent travel in the regions with tensions and conflicts (“*shuttle diplomacy*”).



Related to the abovementioned, one have to say that for us, members of the “CiOs Task Force”, despite the fact that we had a long experience of work in the international organizations, many aspects were new. The most important were those related to the “leading” the Organization “in consultation” with the participating States, a correct and apparently clear principle, but difficult to be

*implemented, when it is about cooperation with 55 member States. That's why, we were very happy when, at the end of the mandate, the Minister for foreign affairs **Mircea Geoana** was repeatedly congratulated and thanked for the way he lead the Organization "in the name of the states". There were no critics on this issue, which is unusual in the OSCE. On the contrary, the unanimous final conclusion was that Romania fulfilled its mandate with responsibility. The appreciations were extended, also, for Romanian diplomatic service, the working team accompanying the Chairman-in-Office . "We want to publically thank – has stated the head of the American delegation addressing to the Romanian Foreign Minister – to the exceptional team of diplomats, good professionals and valuable interlocutors you have in Vienna and Bucharest". The presence of the Chairman of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly **Adrian Severin**, was also remarked.*

III

Romania has scrupulously prepared every phase towards assuming the OSCE Chairmanship:

- The candidature was launched at the highest level during the OSCE Lisbon Summit (2-3 December 1996), when President **Emil Constantinescu** officially announced Romanian's "intention" to assume the OSCE Chairmanship in 2001.
- In 1997, at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Copenhagen, Romanian Foreign Minister reiterated the "offer", asking the support of the participating States for the assumption of the OSCE Chairmanship.
- In 1998, at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Oslo, Foreign Minister made known "the firm commitment" of Romania to take over the Chairmanship.

From that moment on, the offer to take over the OSCE Chairmanship became a priority issue on the Romanian foreign policy agenda.

1. A strategy to ensure the consensus of the participating states was elaborated. It envisaged consultations with the participating states and OSCE institutions; sending or appointing some diplomats at the Romanian Embassies in the main capitals – *Bruxelles, Washington, Moscow, Bonn, Paris, London etc.* – to serve as contact points for the respective countries; promoting the priorities and objectives of the Chairmanship.

The project was promoted through an intense diplomatic activity both in the capitals of the OSCE countries, as well as at the Headquarter of the Organization, in Vienna, or during some international meetings. The first visited countries were those which have detained the Chairmanship, among them *Hungary, Poland,*

Norway, Denmark, Austria, and the important players, such as United States of America and Russian Federation.

With the OSCE Secretariat, have been discussed issues related to technical aspects, fulfillment of the mandate, the needed staff, financial responsibilities etc. On this basis, was shaped a picture of needs and requirements involved by the Chairmanship, including working team (“task forces”) for the Chairman-in-Office in Bucharest and Vienna.

In order to ensure national consensus – claimed by the foreign interlocutors for assuming the Chairmanship – the Foreign Minister gave a presentation in front of the two Commissions for foreign policy of the Parliament, both of them supporting the objective. In the strategy was also stipulated to attract the public opinion in the promotion and fulfillment of the project. The Romanian diplomatic offices were updated on the evolution of preparations, through a special bulletin, making thus possible their active involvement in the process

2. The discussions in capitals and in *Vienna* emphasized an attitude, in general, favorable for the Romanian candidature, even if some “hesitations” still persisted. Some of the interlocutors put forward themselves arguments in favour of a Chairmanship assumed by Romania. The OSCE Secretariat prepared and handed over to us a Note on the trumps Romania has in this respect: democratic state, anchor of stability in a neighbourhood with tensions and risk of conflicts; important participant to the definition of principles and standards on which are based the OSCE activities; firm supporter of the Organization; active participant to the efforts of the international community for conflict resolution and assuring stability and security in the region; a “model” to be followed as for the resolution of bilateral disputes with neighbours. It was easy to notice the willingness from the part of most of interlocutors for Romanian candidature, emphasizing the good foreign image it built-up, particularly by its activity in international organizations.

Discussions revealed expectations of the participating States in case of a Romanian Chairmanship, which offered useful elements to formulate the objectives and priorities for Romanian Chairmanship.

The main objective Romania has pledge as the incoming OSCE Chairman-in-Office was the strengthening of the Organization’s role in the region in the field of security, stability and the connecting areas, such as strengthening of democratic institutions, reinforcing the rule of law, respecting human rights. From these resulted the priorities the Chairmanship had to follow².

3. The current topics, specific to the process of security and cooperation were present in all discussions. One of the major concerns were difficulties steaming from reaching consensus in the Organization. It was the case at the end

² Mircea Dan GEOANA, “The OSCE under the Romanian Chairmanship – A Retrospective View”, in: *Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed), OSCE Yearbook 2002, Baden-Baden 2003, pp.21-29.*

of the year preceding the assumption of the Chairmanship by Romania, when, at the Vienna Ministerial Council in December 2000, it was not possible to reach consensus and to adopt the OSCE Ministerial Declaration, document usually adopted by each ministerial meeting of the Organization. It was a serious signal for any international forum, showing its lack of capacity of action (the lack of consensus was due to the *Russian Federation's* refusal to join the document because of references to the events in *Chechnya*). It was a warning for Romania too, that, as a Chairman-in-Office, one could expect also difficult moments, inheriting some delicate folders.

However, the almost general concern was particularly related to the regional issues, turbulences and instability following the disintegration of Yugoslavia and Soviet Union, some of them with a certain potential for escalation. It was obvious that what was suppose to define the real stake of the mandate Romania was going to assume consisted in the action in the conflict and crisis areas, as OSCE had to justify the role incumbent on it in this area.

4. The decision of the *OSCE Istanbul Summit*, adopted in November 1999, Romania was going to take over the OSCE Chairmanship in Office, as from 1 January 2001. It implied that, from 2000, Romania entered in the leading OSCE troika, as the “incoming” Chair.

The 2000 was the year when the Austrian Chairmanship was confronted with the foreshadowed deadlock regarding the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration of the OSCE due to the situations of conflict over-helming a great part of the region, regarded differently by the participating states and without perspective to be ended soon. Next year, when Romania took over the Chairmanship, the warning received regarding the files which were going to be the “stake” of the mandate has proved to be true. Without neglecting other OSCE dimensions, the conflict zones were by far on the first place, claiming the priority attention from de Chairmanship. In addition to that, was terrible felt the shock produced by the terrorist act from September 11, 2001. The fact that 2001 ended without the escalation of the tensions in the OSCE area, which would get out of control; especially that all conflicts, both “open” and “protracted” at the end of the year were well framed towards final solutions, represented the success of the Chairmanship and of the Romanian mandate, certifying the OSCE contribution, the influence it was able to exert orienting the events toward a peaceful end.

5. In their final assessments on the Romanian performance as the OSCE Chairmanship, the delegations emphasized as the main outcome the answer to the issue which came off from the consultations as being the major concern of the states: week performance of the Organization. All delegations emphasized at the end of our mandate “growing influence” the OSCE registered during the year. It was, perhaps, the most convincing acknowledge of the Romanian success. The US President, **George W. Bush** welcomed the “excellent performance Romania had

as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office”, stressing the “Romanian role on regional level, having decisive importance for the following months and years”³. Other appreciations went in the same direction: “The Organizations became stronger and stronger under Romanian mandate” (**Hubert Vedrine**, Foreign Minister of France); “Romania has succeeded to successfully complete its mandate on the helm of OSCE, by growing up the role of this institution in the region” (**Igor Ivanov**, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation).⁴

IV

1. The OSCE Chairmanship started for Romania in the precarious conditions:

- The last OSCE Ministerial Council, as it was prefigured, wasn’t able to reach consensus for the adoption of a document which would be the landmark for future activities of the OSCE;
- OSCE was called to supervise, simultaneously, the too big number of areas facing different problems: tensions, open conflicts, unresolved and frozen post conflict situations;
- A number of administrative issues, with implications for the political issues – scale of contributions and the size of the budget – remained in suspension from the previous Chairmanship and threatened the very functioning of the Organization.

Ten years after the end of the Cold War, the political climate was, apparently, more optimistic than before, but the lack of confidence was still present, mostly due to the simple fact that the Organization was affected by the existence of different visions and interests, often contradictory, on the role it should have.

Continue to foreshadow a certain heating in US – Russia, NATO – Russia relations, each of the great powers declaring its expectations regarding the “Europe of tomorrow”, in security and cooperation, but each of them looking at it from the point of view of their proper interests.

From the very beginning of the Romanian Chairmanship, the MFA of the Russian Federation was sending signals on what it would like to see happening in OSCE under Romanian baton. In June, a Special Envoy from Moscow conveyed several suggestions regarding the organization of the Ministerial Council, which was going to take place in Bucharest, in December, at the end of the mandate, how should be structured the discussion on political issues and how should be

³ The letter, published according to the Protocol, on the occasion of the presentation of credentials by the newly accredited Romanian Ambassador to the USA.

⁴ OSCE, Ninth Ministerial Council Meeting (Bucharest, 3-4 December 2001), at <http://www.osce.org/mc>.

adopted decisions, what should contain the public statements on behalf of the OSCE (“only consensual positions”) and so on. The desire was expressed that OSCE field presences and missions should be better controlled, without releasing all kind of reports, Organization should establish the rules on how to use the OSCE Missions’ reports. From its part, the other power, USA, although considering the OSCE as an institution with a clear potential, was looking at it as “complementary to the bilateral relations”. “We look at our presence in the OSCE through the angle of complementing and strengthening strong bilateral relations we have with European and Euro-Asiatic States, with NATO membership and our special relations with European Union” – stated American State Secretary Colin Powell.

2. **Romanian OSCE Chairmanship** had to take into consideration this situation, setting as objective to consolidate the cohesion within the Organization, to improve its image and to coagulate its unity, by:

- i. restoring the confidence of the states in the OSCE – after the syncope in 2000 – as an organization having the will, direction and means, which can function in the interest of all states ;
- ii. revitalizing the role of the OSCE as a forum “for co-operative security”, to restore its involvement into the imperatives of the time, equipping it with conceptual and operational instruments adequate to the requirements of the day ;
- iii. enlarging the perspective by adding new values in order to give input to the cooperation, particularly regional one, for the areas of conflict;
- iv. assuring that the states recognize themselves in the Organization’s concerns;
- v. strengthening the ties of cooperation with other international organizations working complementary and in close synergy.

In order to achieve these goals, during the mandate the current activity was doubled by the intense work on reflection regarding the future. The Chairmanship was in a permanent effort to identify new ways and modalities of action, new items to include OSCE in the European security architecture together with other international organization, without overlapping with them, permanently targeting towards joining the immediate concerns requiring a “rapid reaction” and “the vision of perspective”. The organization of the activities was conceived with maximal exigency for the respect of OSCE standards and “*acquis*” and the balance among dimensions.

3. **Romanian OSCE Chairmanship** achievements were entirely inspired by the life, with deep roots in the reality of the region, based on the comprehensive contacts, consultations and visits . The Chairman-in-Office visited, practically, all areas of open or latent conflicts, as well as an important number of participating

States. The meetings he had allowed him to be personally acquainted with the situation in the region, the nature of the tensions, points of view and positions of the involved factors in order to make a fair judgment on the state of affairs, way of approach and fair solutions. He met OSCE representatives from the field presences, ambassadors of the participating States accredited in the respective countries. He conveyed everywhere a balanced message, urging to temperate the tensions and to look for solutions.

The contact with reality is part of the arsenal of means for diplomacy to operate in the crisis situation. In the capacity we had in the “task force”, we often accompanied the Chairman-in-Office in his visits. We also travelled separately, as representatives of the CiO. It was very instructive, useful and necessary to reach a judicious conclusion, to see on the spot the “military camp” atmosphere in the areas of conflict, to meet political leaders or opinion makers in the “commando” clothes the daylight in **Kosovo, South Ossetia, Chechnya**, among the Albanians in **Macedonia**. Agitation in the street, military vehicles, wiz-sound of the sirens everywhere, people harring to go home, food shops assaulted – all these were enabling to assess the direction of the events. Very often, relating to the **South Eastern Europe**, was mentioned that in the area would be strong manifestation of “nationalism” – Serbian, Croatian ... –, that there would be plan for a “Great Albania”. May be that such ideas did exist in the mind of one or another person. But it was, rather, a “stereotype”. The people was concerned about absolutely other things, about today and tomorrow. A journalist called it the “poverty with ethnical face”, not a “nationalism”. With a colleague from Vienna, we were in a Central Asian republic which was at the OSCE attention, as a zone susceptible to enter in the eddy of the event in neighboring Afghanistan. Local leaders seemed to be totally indifferent to what was considered in the OSCE as a serious danger – the infiltration of the Taliban. As in **Croatia** the attention was focused non on stopping the eddies around Balkans, but on the moment, certainly more distanced, when Croatia would be in the European Union. Nothing is more instructive, convincing and useful when you face with the controversial situation, than to discuss with the involved parties – “*Audiatur et altera pars*”.

The presence in the conflict areas in that eventful year represented a lot for Romanian diplomacy. We tried to be perceived – as we were – as friends, having good intentions, sensitive to the arguments presented to us. The most frequent terms mentioned during discussions were “freedom”, “right to choose”, “without being imposed” and so on. One has to say that often we were perceived, indeed, as friends by the interlocutors. Coming from a country which in a way or another experienced similar situation, the interlocutors were convinced that we want only good for them and that we understand them.

As diplomats, we realized that we had at our disposal an immense “reserve” of arguments – our own experience – to be credible. Certainly, the results of the

dialogue were not visible immediately. But in many cases, lately, they were obvious from the evolution of the events.

4. At the end of the Chairmanship, making a review of the problems it had to deal with, the survey of the achievements looks as follows:

- the role the Chairmanship has played in the management of the regional issues by calming the tensions, stabilizing the post-conflict situations and preventing new conflicts in the region; **South-Eastern Europe** was the priority area, always active, **Caucasus** represented an area of “frozen conflicts”, and **Central Asia** of “potential conflicts”;

- strengthening regional cooperation, the Chairmanship realizing the values of the “regional approach” in the management of the post-conflict situations, fully used them;

- grasping the new risks to security, the Chairmanship promptly reacted to the terrorist acts from 11 September 2001;

- launching a debate in the OSCE on the enlargement and consolidation of the economic dimension of activities, following, among others things, to combat at the “roots” the terrorism by strategies for economic development;

- launching a process of reflection on the strengthening the OSCE’s role, capacity of action and its influence, introduction of the new items on the OSCE agenda;

- strengthening the cooperation and parteneriat with other international organizations, in the framework of the “European security architecture”.

Impact of the political capital and image made out of these directions put Romania in an effective position of contributor to the building up a new European reality, OSCE was devoted to.

5. For Romania, OSCE Chairmanship meant, also, another very significant thing: enrichment of the “culture of strategy” for the closed or more distant zones we are neighboring with.

We don’t know at what extend were assumed and especially cultivated in the following years the lessons learned, the links **Bucharest** was able to establish in 2001 with the European capitals, with the leaders from the territories redesigned after the ethnic turbulences and the independent states which were formed. We can only say that the Chairmanship Romania held might have represent an important trump for Romanian foreign policy and diplomacy in the subsequent relations with the region and, even larger, with the world.

Let’s return to the abovementioned Marta Bibescu’s words about “the Romanian’s talent to not hand down a project from one generation to another, each one cutting the thread”.

6. In all its activities, the Chairmanship made use of the experience Romania accumulated from the launching of the process of security and cooperation in Europe, combined with the “democratic culture” obtained in ten years of transition towards democracy. To this, one should however add, without the lack of modesty, the personal efforts, often exhausting, made by the Chairman-in-Office and his aptitudes of “communicator”. The two “task forces” – from the **MFA** and the **Permanent Mission in Vienna**, as well as from the diplomatic representations of Romania in different capitals or territories – have closely supported and seconded him.

Cooperation among all these factors assured everywhere the credibility to the Romanian presence. There was, also, an excellent cooperation and support from the international environment.

A British diplomat, of European level, was effectively part from the “task force”, there were partners always ready to support us, practically in all ministries for foreign affairs of the Participating States. **Jan Kubish**, OSCE Secretary General, was, from the very first moment, together with us in everything what was the OSCE Chairmanship.

V.

The security environment, complex and unsure, characteristic for the Europe 2001, has determined all international organizations attached to the stability of the space to closely follow the dynamic of the events and to be involved in many ways in the activities to prevent the escalation of tensions and conflicts. Among them, by its comprehensive approach, the OSCE was on the highest place.

Operational dimension related to the conflict areas absorbed the main attention from the Chairmanship in the programmatic activities, as well as in those imposed by the events. In this framework, the priority was given to the South-East European space, with the most numerous problems. The attention determined also by the geography of the zone, as a part of Europe and, particularly, in close proximity to Romania, without neglecting, however, in any way, the other zones from the same category – **Caucasus and Central Asia**. And, again, as the turbulences were particularly in South-Eastern Europe and Caucasus in the context or as a result of disintegration of the two ex-federal states, the efforts to keep these changes under certain control have put OSCE and, implicitly, the Chairmanship on the honorable place as factor of balance and stability for de region.

1. The mission assumed was for the Chairmanship a situation of permanent warning to observe and assess the dynamic of the tensions, to identify the most adequate ways for involvement and the most appropriate factors having authority

and influence to supervise the events. It presupposed contacts, consultations and repeated visits in the areas (there were 10 such travels only in **Macedonia**), meetings with governments, heads of parties, political factors and representatives of the civil society, with the leaders of other international organizations in order to joint and coordinate efforts. Chairman-in-Office was in permanent contact with the High Representatives of the **UN, NATO and Council of Europe, with the Presidency of the European Union and European Commission, with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**. Romanian Minister for foreign affairs was the first OSCE Chairman-in-Office invited to address the **UN Security Council**⁵.

The OSCE Chairmanship stressed a permanent concern for the way out from the deadlock, when the things were stagnating. As the complexity of the problems found on the spot usually has outrun the OSCE capacity to react, and the “frozen conflicts” always had a latent risk to be reopened and escalated, the Chairmanship has been permanently also un “creative” exercise. The Chairman-in-Office resorted to the appointment of the “Personal Representatives” in the field or for certain domains (items), has obtained the agreement of the member states to dispatch missions in some areas and other forms of OSCE representation and assistance, even in more difficult situation, when there were some restraints or some governments were less willing to accept a “foreign presence”.

“Regional approach” was used by the Chairmanship, looking for the bridges of cooperation with international organizations in the framework of the “Platform for Co-operative Security”, adopted in 1999 at the OSCE Istanbul Summit, but without gaining a solid shape. It tried to give new impetus to the Stability Pact for the South-Eastern Europe, initiating or supporting new projects, such as the involvement of the private sector in the important workings (the project “*Quick Start*” for building roads), organizing a *Danube Conference* (Hombach Initiative), a “*Balkan Summit*”, proposed by the US Secretary of State.

Once this large number of forms and activities started to work, during the 2001 the capital of Romania became very well known as a center of consultations, meetings and debates. An incomplete list of the OSCE activities hosted in **Bucharest** during the Romanian Chairmanship include, apart from the OSCE Ministerial Council at the end of Romanian mandate, at least ten other important meetings related to some conflict situations (**South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh**), Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (regional conference), debates on the good administration (“good governance”, “rule of law”, “management of the economy”, “protection of the environment” etc.), issues of interest for newly born States from the ex-federal structures, on the subjects related to the respect of human rights, human security etc.

This was an honorable posturing for the Romanian capital, repeating the favorable page it has registered long time ago, in ‘60s-‘70s of the last century,

⁵ UN Document S/PV.4266, 29 January 2001.

when Bucharest was also on the diplomatic map, as a venue of numerous meetings and headquarters of some international organizations. Unfortunately, after on this attention has disappeared.

2. As for the **South-Eastern Europe**, on the list of the Romanian Chairmanship achievements are: reopening the OSCE Mission in **Belgrade** (very important act for the political signal, taking into consideration the mistrust showed by the Belgrade Government towards cooperation with international institutions, after the events which took place); encouraging democratic reforms in the field of justice, media and election legislation, human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities – sensitive problems for almost all new states from the former Yugoslavia. Was appointed an OSCE CiO Personal Representative for the Stability Pact and established bridges for cooperation with the European Union.

Also in the regional context, has been established the basis for the framework of cooperation among **Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro** for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their home.

In **Montenegro**, OSCE CiOs concern was to clarify the relations with **Serbia** in the framework of the existed at that time proposal to create a Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, by a democratic referendum. In **Kosovo**, the problem was to define the parameters for “self-determination” of the territory through elections organized with the UN assistance. The following dynamic of events led, however, to a different configuration.

As for other new states from **ex-Yugoslavia**:

Macedonia was confronted with the risk of a civil war after ethnical turbulences on the border with Kosovo. Chairman-in-Office appointed a Personal Representative for Macedonia and, in cooperation with NATO and EU, has determined dispatching of a strong OSCE Mission for border monitoring, which would take under control the events. He facilitated the conclusion of a “framework agreement” on the reduction of the tensions within society.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, OSCE, in cooperation with UN and NATO, Chairmanship has provided assistance for the authorities in preparing an election legislation which would allow the population to freely express its will, tempered the opposition from some nationalistic leaders, encouraged the return at home of refugees and displaced persons.

In **Croatia** the problems were less complex, and the main expectation was OSCE support for the integration in the EU.

Overall, at the end of the mandate, ex-Yugoslavia was advancing in a positive direction, although some areas with tensions still persisted.

In **Albania**, OSCE, in cooperation with other international organizations, provided assistance for the organization of elections and fight against some phenomena seriously affecting “human security”, such as organized crime, corruption, trafficking of arms and human beings.

3. The **Caucasus** was considered as a zone of “frozen conflicts”.

In the case of **Georgia**, the conflict consisted in the separation of the former autonomous region South Ossetia and of the former autonomous republic of Abkhazia from the rest of the territory. Chairman-in-Office convened a meeting of the “Group of political experts” monitoring the conflict and encouraged them to continue negotiations with the separatists leaders. The meeting took place in Bucharest. A Joint Commission was, also, functioning in the same direction.

Regarding the dispute between **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan** over **Nagorno-Karabakh**, the **Chairman-in-Office** invited to Bucharest for consultations the co-chairmen of the **Minsk Group** (Russia, Turkey, Belarus, USA, France, Italy, Armenia and Azerbaijan), a mechanism created to hammer out possibilities to solve the dispute. The presidents of the two countries - Armenia and Azerbaijan -, President Kocharyan and President Aliyev – were also encouraged to meet each other. At the meeting, which took place in Key West (USA), chaired by the US Secretary of State *Colin Powell*, participated the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office (the author of these pages). At that time, as also at present, the parties did not look eager to reach a solution in the OSCE framework. The solution was expected “from outside”.

An important political achievement of the Romanian Chairmanship was the redeployment of a new OSCE presence (Assistance Group) in **Chechnya/Russian Federation** to facilitate the solution of some humanitarian problems. It was not an action aimed at the political solution of the conflict, which was considered by Russia as an internal issue; however, the acceptance of the Assistance Group by Moscow was welcomed as an important signal of realism from its part.

In all three cases the problem was not so much to arrive to the solution of the conflicts, but rather to prevent reopening of the armed actions and resumption of violence. The visits of the Chairman-in-Office to the region and his contacts with political leaders were sending a signal that the region is in the attention of the international community. The main “player” remained, however, in each particular case, the Russian Federation.

4. **Central Asia** (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) was considered as a zone of “potential conflict”, because of its vicinity with the explosive situation in Afghanistan, and , also, some post-conflict situations (Tadjikistan) or latent conflicts (Uzbekistan). In his visits to the region, looking particularly at sending a signal of support for the stability and security in

the region, the OSCE CiO pleaded for attacking at the “roots” the danger of terrorism through economic development. He appointed Ambassador *Wilhelm Hoyneck* (FRG, former OSCE Secretary General) as Personal Representative for Central Asia, to coordinate the OSCE activities in the region; in Bishkek, in December 2001, he chaired the “International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism”, which adopted an Action Program on this issue; he encouraged different economic projects.

5. The file on the **Transdnestrian Conflict/Republic of Moldova**, treated separately from the areas of conflict, was entrusted since the beginning to be supervised by Portugal, as incoming Chairmanship, Troika member, to avoid claims of the “lack of objectivity and impartiality” for Romania. However, political responsibility remained with Romanian Chairmanship.

The only positive evolution was the withdrawal by the Russian Federation of a part of its military equipment stored on the territory of Transdnestria, the obligation assumed by the Russian Federation at the OSCE Istanbul Summit, in 1999.

VI.

On the Romanian OSCE Chairmanship’s agenda, beside “regional issues”, were also other items, much of them being traditionally in the Organization’s attention.

1. On the priority place was the **OSCE Reform**, strengthening the Organization’s role and its capacity of action. After the 2000 **Vienna Ministerial Council**, it became visible that the OSCE is confronted with an internal crisis, affecting its image and capacity of action. Identifying the further steps to rebuild the confidence in the OSCE appeared as a need, a central objective ; Romanian Chairmanship was involved in its achievement since the beginning of the assumption of the mandate.

In his first address to the OSCE Permanent Council, on 11 January 2011, Romanian Foreign Minister stressed the need to develop political dialogue between OSCE States, in parallel with the activities the Organization was already involved in, in order to consolidate the OSCE capacity to influence security and stability in the region, to make Organization known as a forum able to produce results, a mark of peaceful coexistence among the nations.

In this respect, Romanian Chairmanship has launched a large process of consultations among the Permanent Delegations of the participating States in Vienna, arranging an informal framework of open or restraint meetings, which allowed official inclusion of this item on the agenda of the Organization.

On the agenda of the OSCE Permanent Council was included a special item called “Strengthening the role of the Organization and making it more relevant to the participating States”, and a Working Group on OSCE Reform was created to consider the ways of strengthening the OSCE’s role and efficiency.

The Working Group has functioned under the chairmanship of the Romanian Permanent Representative to the OSCE in Vienna, Ambassador **Liviu Bota**, on the basis of working document tabled by Romania, as well as proposals by member States. Proposals were related, especially, to field activities, their role in the early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, aimed at – as it was stressed in the conclusions of the debates presented to Ministerial Council – “more efficient use of the OSCE means and mechanisms to face the risks and challenges to security and stability in the OSCE area”⁶.

The Working Group has continued its activity also after the end of the Romanian mandate, till 2004, when was presented the final report.

2. Another initiative which, also, remained included in the Romanian account, was the priority given by the Chairmanship in joining OSCE objectives with those of other international organizations, particularly **Euro-Atlantic partner organizations – NATO, EU, UN, Council of Europe** specialized agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Chairman-in-Office met with the heads of these international organizations to discuss measures which could be taken jointly for enhancing cooperation, including setting up compatible structures, developing common recruitment and training standards, enhancing consultations at the level of the heads of the organizations and their representatives in the field, and identifying new concrete areas of cooperation and establishing mechanisms for efficient interaction.

Vienna Ministerial Council Meeting in 2000 emphasized the risk that the OSCE was heading for an internal crisis of confidence. There were reproaches and reserves, particularly from Russia, regarding the OSCE relations with other Euro-Atlantic institutions, the concern that organization might become only a “service provider”. Romanian Chairmanship paid attention to these signals from the member States, acting towards the enlargement of cooperation with the international organizations in the framework of the “Platform for Co-operative Security” and, at the same time, to make OSCE relationship with partner organizations and institutions balanced, according to the mandate and means of action that dispose each of them.

Crisis and conflict situations in the OSCE area have emphasized the fact that they can not be solved efficiently by one organization, being necessary to enhance relations of cooperation, particularly in the field, between Euro-Atlantic

⁶ OSCE 9th Ministerial Council, Bucharest, 3-4 December 2001, MC.DOC/2/01, at www.osce.org.

organizations. Romanian Chairmanship has intensified the dialogue with these organizations, through coordination of efforts and efficient use of resources at the disposal of each of them, including establishment of the liaison offices at the headquarters of these organizations. A new relationship has been particularly materialized regarding **Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina**. The Chairman-in-Office, in his meetings with the leaders of the abovementioned organizations, stressed the need to practically implement the Platform for Cooperative Security, adopted at the OSCE *Istanbul Summit*, establishment of liaison-offices at the headquarters of these organizations.

- In January 2001, **Romanian Foreign Minister**, in his capacity as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, addressed the **UN Security Council**, and, on that occasion, presented several proposals aimed to enlarge the framework of cooperation between the two organizations on the basis of complementarity. He referred to the need to establish an efficient information exchange mechanism on existing and potential crisis and lessons learned from the joint field missions; the promotion of periodical joint assessments on the evolutions in the areas of mutual interest and the appropriate participation of the two organizations in each other's meetings on topics of common concern. Special emphasis was placed on the operational dimension of the co-operation between the OSCE, as a regional organization, and the UN, as a world forum.

- As for **relationship with the European Union** – the organization which acts in the OSCE framework on behalf of all its member states, as a reflection of the “common foreign and security policy” - , Chairman-in-Office met with the European Union Presidency Foreign Ministers (Sweden and Belgium) and discussed areas of common action aimed at enhancing co-operation between the two organizations, including co-operation in the field. The same spirit of co-operation and mutual reinforcement prevailed in contacts with EU Commissioner *Christopher Patten* and High Representative *Javier Solana*. Representatives of OSCE Chairmanship presented, in Bruxelles, assessments on the evolutions in the conflict areas.

- Based upon the imperatives of the evolutions in the field, Romanian Chairmanship acted for joint actions of the triad **NATO/UE/OSCE** as a driving factor for management of the relations and political cooperation in the European area, materialized particularly in Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Romanian Chairmanship was invited to present its assessments on the issues of mutual interests at the NATO events.

- Relations of cooperation and regularly exchanges of information between OSCE and **Council of Europe** were developed in different areas of common interests, such as election observation and human rights issues, democratic reforms, role of media in conflict situations and so on.

3. **The terrorist act** against the USA, on which Romanian Chairmanship reacted promptly, has opened a new page in the OSCE activity:

- On 13 September, Permanent Council has adopted a statement on this terrorist act;

- On 21 September, at the special meeting of the **Permanent Council in Vienna**, convened on this issue, the Chairman-in-Office highlighted the areas where the OSCE can bring its contribution in **combating terrorism**.

- On this basis, on 4 December 2001, the Bucharest Ministerial Council adopted the Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism⁷, which was drafted in Vienna, with direct involvement of the Romanian Chairmanship.

4. **The Economic and Environmental Dimension**. Since the beginning of its mandate, the Romanian Chairmanship pointed to the importance of the OSCE economic and environmental dimension and made sustained efforts to identify obstacles and ways to revitalize it.

Shortly after taking over the mandate, a discussion paper was submitted by the Chairmanship underlining the importance to pay due attention to the economic situation and sustainable development of the countries in transition, supporting their processes of economic reforms – an important issue for an important number of the OSCE countries. The paper suggested a number of procedural, institutional and operational measures to increase the effectiveness of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension⁸.

As the main reproaches from some member States, primarily Russia, were referred to the institutional and thematic lack of balance in organization's approaches towards the three dimensions of security – politico-military, human and economic and environmental - , at the Romanian Chairmanship initiative, a Sub-Committee of the Permanent Council on the Economic and Environmental Dimension was established, under Romanian co-ordination, with a view to give more prominence to these issues within the OSCE. The new body was tasked to consider in depth issues of interest for Participating States in the economic dimension, being considered as confidence building measures, including in the post-conflict areas. Support was given to the forms of sub-regional cooperation, including those launched by the OSCE presences in the field .

A particular attention was given to the identification of the theme for the annual meeting of the **OSCE Economic Forum**, in order to raise the visibility and importance of this dimension. It was the “Good governance and transparency in the field of economic management”, with focus on corruption, being of major interest for a number of participating states; this theme was , also, the subject of

⁷ OSCE Ninth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Bucharest, 3-4 December 2001, Decision No.1, Combating Terrorism (MC(9).DEC.1/Corr.1) and The Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism, Annex to MC(9) .DEC.1/Corr.1, 4 December 2001 – at www.osce.org.

⁸ OSCE Document CIO.GAL/8/01, 13 March 2001 – at www.osce.org.

the seminar, which took place in 2002, when Romania was member in the *OSCE Troika*.

5. **Human dimension**, which always had a priority on the OSCE's agenda, enjoyed the same attention during the Romanian Chairmanship. Beside issues traditionally considered by the OSCE related to the functioning of the rule of law, respecting human rights and cultural diversity, combating violence and organized crime, the Romanian Chairmanship introduced on the OSCE agenda new items such as "human security" and situation of Roma. Debates have been organized – some of them jointly with specialized institutions in the field – on the issues related to the "freedom of expression", "promoting tolerance and nondiscrimination", "combating violence against women", "affirmation of the moral and spiritual values", focusing on the dialogue between religions.

Particular attention attracted the Conference, organized in Bucharest jointly with the Delegation of European Commission in Romania, on "Equal opportunities and chances for Roma/Sinti: from words to deeds", concluded with some recommendations for an OSCE Action Plan in this field. A Working Group was created to prepare the proposed Action Plan, which has been adopted after two years and continue to be the basic document, concentrating the OSCE efforts in this field.

OSCE reacted, also, on some needs coming from the specificity of the area, particularly as a result of the events taking place in the ex-yugoslav space, paying attention during debates to the protection of national minorities, creation of an integrated society, access of minorities to the public administration etc.

VII

OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting (Bucharest, 3-4 December 2001) represented the Moment to stock of results and lessons learned of the Chairmanship.

The meeting took place in a new climate, characterized by greater confidence in the Organization's capacity of action, doubled by some positive evolutions in the relationship between the great powers.

At the Bucharest Ministerial were present 64 national delegations, led by 57 Foreign Ministers from the OSCE participating States, the Mediterranean partners and partners for co-operation, high representatives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, OSCE institutions and missions, as well as of 29 international organizations and institutions. It was the largest Ministerial Council ever organized till then, and after that. The Meeting was an excellent opportunity to assess the OSCE achievements, as well as difficulties it faced during the year. The debate was constructive in substance, without major controversies. Combating terrorism has dominated the debates, reflecting the solidarity of all participating States.

New political objectives were set for the future and specific measures were adopted to strengthen the capacity of the OSCE. The adoption by consensus of several important documents, imposed by the existing challenges, particularly the Bucharest Ministerial Declaration, the Decision on Combating Terrorism and the Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism, the Decision on fostering the role of the OSCE as a forum for political dialogue – all these reflect the spirit of cooperation that prevailed, by comparison with the ministerial meeting, in 2000. The new spirit of solidarity that emerged from the events of 11 September 2001, have also contributed to this end.

The OSCE has ended the year on the optimistic note, the note of hope. As all delegations have stressed, the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office has fulfilled its mandate with responsibility. Romania made a major investments in its image, foreign policy and diplomacy.

The way it fulfilled the mission assumed represents a new evidence of the importance Romania, as an European State, has been paying since the beginning of the OSCE to its principles and objectives, to the role it was going to play in the building up the future of the region. In the year which was approaching to the end, Romania has decisively contributed to the bringing back the OSCE's credibility, to restoring the confidence of some participating States deceived by its lack of performance.

By this performance, Romania was regaining in Europe a place according to its real weight, and the Romanian Foreign Minister included his name on the plaque of honour with the list of personalities which led the Organization during the most fruitful years in its history.

VIII

We could not end this short survey of what has represented the OSCE Chairmanship, without a word about the institutional and human mechanism behind the fulfillment of this act of foreign policy and diplomacy, which during a whole year put Bucharest among the centers of the world politics, attracting the attention of the Governments and the political circles of that time.

Certainly, the central pillar of the whole mechanism was the Minister for Foreign Affairs **Mircea Geoana**, vested by the OSCE participating States to lead the Organization during one year. For this mission, the person vested – beside representing the country accepted to take over the mandate – had to demonstrate the abilities required for a Chairman-in-Office: those of diplomat, politician and manager, the aptitudes fully confirmed by the Romanian Minister. The taking over the OSCE Chairmanship by Romania involved, however, a great responsibility by assuming a “mandate” on behalf of 56 participating States. Such mission can't be assured without an appropriate, well regulated working

mechanism, at the level of international standards, composed by professionals with diplomatic experience in this area.

We have to register that the Romanian Chairmanship had such a working mechanism, conceived and made up jointly with the OSCE Secretariat, based on the long experience, specific to an international organization.

Working mechanism was based on the cooperation of all echelons of the **Ministry for Foreign Affairs**, as a “**task force**”, composed by diplomats from the MFA, Romanian Permanent Mission in Vienna, some Embassies, with permanent tasks individually, or being involved by the entrusted responsibilities. The whole operation, internally and externally, according to the OSCE practice and procedures, was led by the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office together with the General Director of the OSCE Department in the MFA, holding the overall “registry” of the OSCE issues . The concrete duties within the “task force” have been distributed by areas and dimensions. The setting up of the “task force” and checking up its functionality was made during the year before effectively taking over the mandate. On 1 September 2000, the working mechanism and the internal procedures envisaged for the Chairmanship were already functioning as CiO “Task Force”.

A particular attention regarding the functionality of the “Task Force” was given to the “data centralization”, to be used for assembling and analyzing information, in order to facilitate the assessment of the situation and anticipation of events, important particularly for cooperation with participating States and international organizations, as an essential chapter of the mandate. There was a “center for information systematization and dispatcher” (“Situation Room”), able to assure and follow the information from and for Romanian diplomatic offices, Romanian Missions to the international organizations and, upon the case, the Foreign Ministries from the OSCE area. To assure the operative decision making, a “**fast chain**” for the circulation of notes and decisions was established in the MFA.

This was, also, an unique experience for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and for Romanian diplomacy. The way the working mechanism of the OSCE Chairmanship functioned was considered as satisfactory by the OSCE participating States, as well as by the Romanian state leadership. At the end of the mandate, the President of Romania awarded members of the CiOs “Task Force” with “Diploma for merits” for their contribution to the fulfillment of the OSCE Chairmanship by Romania, in 2001.

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In this presentation, we didn’t have in mind to describe a multitude of important moments, actions and consistent diplomatic discussions which took place during OSCE Chairmanship – meeting with state leaders, ministers, political

leaders, participation at the meeting, statements and interview, internal analysis and programs - an “echaphodage” supporting any far-reaching diplomatic activity. They could be found in the reports, information notes, narrations by those directly involved – Romanian Foreign Minister, as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and leader of everything related to this mandate, together with diplomats from the “Task Force” in Bucharest and in Vienna, in cables from the Capitals, from diplomatic offices and from the spot, in numerous travels in the field. May be in the future, when and if the Ministry for Foreign Affairs would restore the team of historians, which started once to work diligently on the MFA archive, those who are interested could find details in the documentary folders which, eventually, will be published.

For the time being, we wanted to do what, in our belief, remained important for Romania and its diplomacy after fulfilling, during an year, the Chairmanship of the Organization which was registering at that time, as a barometer, the changes taking place on the continent and even beyond it. It was not in our intention to look for and to find another **Nicolae Titulescu** for Romania. The historical period and conditions are too different. Intention was, particularly, to mark the fact which is distinct by itself: that the *OSCE Chairmanship was for Romania its return in the European diplomacy, regaining by the Romanian diplomacy of the place which it had in the time of turmoil from the Europe’s past, that, despite the vicissitudes it had to pass on, Romanian diplomacy was able to keep the biggest part of the values it was formed with.*

We have pledged and we pledge that Romanian OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office in 2001 be included in the European history of Romania with this meaning.

We want this, also, because, for us, those have witnessed this event, fulfillment of the OSCE Chairmanship was an act of perfection for a generation of diplomats. We are those witnessing the long waited moment when the Europe was taking note of a new Romania, the visit card it presented for integration in NATO and EU. But, as the *“old soldiers do not die, they just fade away”*, we have to say, also, with sorrow that, as it proved to be clear soon, for the generation of diplomats we represent, the three moments – OSCE Chairmanship, joining NATO and EU – were, unfortunately, a kind of final of the history: for the Romanian capacity to know how to matter among the countries of Europe, to be respected and appreciated. For the simple reason that, again, Romania choose not to be heard anymore.

1. Even if we did not know how to take advantage, we like to talk about the *special significance* of the OSCE Chairmanship for Romania and for Romanian diplomacy, such as:

- The country appreciated for a long time in the postwar period for its independence in the foreign policy, but also stigmatized in other respects, Romania was able to obtain the confidence of the European States to “represent”

them at the helm of an organization, whose main stake was precisely the "democratic future" of the continent. It conclude its mandate in an unanimously appreciated way and remains in the history through an European message for change and novelty, solidarity among the countries of the continent, respect for the peoples' aspiration for freedom. It is making a solid step in the European civilization. Europe is welcoming her and is considering its part.

- For *Romanian diplomacy*, OSCE Chairmanship was an unique exercise of professionalism regarding the preparation, planning, organizing and leading a comprehensive diplomatic mission.

In each dialogue, Romania was starting from the respect for the partner, the conduct which was imposing the similar reaction and openness by the interlocutor. It was a way to proceed, without an air of superiority - from the position it was -, without the accents of "firmness" when the partner was not ready to admit that you are right. This manner was well known in other times and it does not mean at all a concession or feebleness, but a desire to be closer to the partner in order to jointly find a solution, particularly when he comes from a country with a turbulent domestic situation and was looking for solutions.

It was a *chance for the Romanian diplomacy to be able to manifest itself since the first moment of the return to the European diplomacy, by an European manner and from an "European creuzet"*.

2. Secondly, we have to say that the assumed mandate and the way it was fulfilled did not represent stability, in the sense of "keeping the things without move". Romanian OSCE Chairmanship was a "*mission which has been adding values*". Diplomacy is a creative activity, which can not be judged otherwise than upon its results and impact. The fact that *none of the existing conflicts in that year did not registered an escalation*, was a success, though the conditions could have repeatedly lead to such an end. A success was the fact that during the Romanian Chairmanship, *the evolution of the conflicts was according to the anticipated solutions*.

At the end of the mandate, all delegations have stressed that the OSCE had at its *disposal a larger horizon, was better situated on the time's direction, more alert to the events and more aware of its role, more consolidated from institutional point of view*.

"Helsinki Declaration – The Challenges of Change", from 1992, has emphasized ten years ago, what was expected from the OSCE, what was its new mission after the changes which took place on the continent: "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) – is stated in the Declaration – has been instrumental in promoting changes, now it must adapt to the task of managing them"⁹, to become more operational and efficient.

⁹ CSCE Helsinki Summit Document 1992: Challenges of Change, par.18, See –[www.osce.org/Summits/CSCE Helsinki Summit Document – 1992](http://www.osce.org/Summits/CSCE_Helsinki_Summit_Document_-_1992).

Romania has pledged for this, too. The CSCE was born in an era characterized by bloc-to-bloc confrontation. It thus promoted both stabilization and peaceful change in Europe. In 2001, OSCE was acting for a “single world”, a world of communication, joint solutions and confidence among nations.

3. Finally, the OSCE Chairmanship has insistently emphasized the *role and capacities the international organizations in the modern world are disposing of*. An important message, to be taken into consideration by all those disposed to hear it.

In a world more and more globalized, the international organizations are becoming, by definition, more and more important. As every retrospective view is bringing necessarily to the *parallel with the present day*, we have to say that, as we are concerned, if the participation of Romania in the international organizations it is member of will continue to follow the current trend, we will hear and know less and less about Romania and its place on the continent and in the world, and at the same time about its future. With the inherent consequences.

The reduced interest Romania is showing today toward the use of international organizations is difficult to understand, in the circumstances when it defined its future and directions exactly as a member of the most representative and powerful organizations: **Nord-Atlantic Alliance and European Union**.

We have to learn again how must be used international organizations in the new phase we are moving through in the international policy, but also more and more in the internal one. To learn how to correlate our own interests with the objectives of the organizations Romania is member of. To know how to cooperate with the other states in the framework of the organizations. To establish for each organization what are the national interests we want to promote through it and what kind of interests would be promoted by our own ways. The existing today confusion in this respect can lead to serious complications. There is an imperative need for the rapid and exigent professionalization of the internal services managing this field, introduction of the “European career” in the list of professions to put an end to the improvisations.

In 2001, the OSCE cooperation and joint efforts with other international organizations, their participation to the common actions have demonstrated abundantly their values, saving the whole communities from disaster, by preventing the escalation of the conflicts, determining the present and the future of some nations. These are the lessons Romania has than patronized. Today, Romania has to learn itself from these lessons.