

conference is, in fact, a most timely and decisive contribution towards a successful result of an initiative which deserves our sincere praise.

Confidence building through the enhancement of openness and transparency has been among the main concerns of democratic societies. But, although confidence building is no doubt the primary objective of Open Skies, the regime we are about to structure will go beyond what has so far been achieved in the field of CSBMs; not only does it strive to promote trust and reduce the risks of misunderstandings, but it can be of great use to complement verification of ongoing of future arms control agreements.

It will also foster co-operation in areas other than security -- namely, for environmental purposes -- and it will be up to us to make the best use of the regime's potentially beneficial spin-off effects.

Our common endorsement of the Open Skies initiative is an additional guarantee of our commitment to accommodate peaceful change in Europe in a context of undiminished security for all.

In the military field, we have been pursuing these objectives in both Vienna CFE and CSBM negotiations and we are confident that recent proposals on the aviation, personnel and helicopter issues in CFE will gain wide consensus, thus paving the way to the completion of a CFE agreement in the course of this year. Both these negotiations have given us a chance to get to the heart of European security needs and have afforded an opportunity to eliminate factors which constitute a threat and replace them with confidence and co-operation.

This progress was possible because there is a new atmosphere in East-West relations which is linked to the fundamental and far-reaching changes which are taking place in Eastern European countries. These changes are radically altering the political architecture of Europe and we must ensure that the collateral reshaping of our security structures will not lag behind.

There is no real and lasting security without genuine confidence and trust. Yet, security is a global concept, encompassing not only disarmament and arms control issues, but also the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the promotion of greater understanding and interdependence.

Mr. Chairman, despite the division of Europe that prevailed for more than 40 years, there was always an awareness of a common destiny uniting the peoples of our continent. They were emphasized by the breathtaking changes that have swept through much of Central and Eastern Europe in the past year. But, to arrive at a whole united Europe, much remains to be done in the political, economic