

This is a crucial meeting. It comes at a time when confidence in some quarters seems to be eroding in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The results of our work here -- the decisions we adopt -- will have a decisive effect on the future of the Conference.

The credibility of the CSCE in managing crises and preventing or resolving conflicts is being questioned by the media and others, since it failed to deal successfully with the conflict in Yugoslavia. That experience dampened the enthusiasm that came out of the Paris Summit.

### **Security Framework**

Let's be clear, the CSCE is still the only institution with a mandate to deal with security in all its forms and with a pan-European and transatlantic membership. By warmly welcoming our new states, it is in all our interests to see our membership become as broad as possible. Our new members will take their CSCE commitments seriously. The CSCE will be called on if these commitments are broken.

But the CSCE cannot act alone. And it need not try to.

At their Summit in Rome three months ago, the leaders of the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) pledged to support the CSCE. They were not pretending to any right to "police" the CSCE region. But they recognized that, in Europe's "framework of interlocking institutions," NATO fosters a sense of security and confidence.

Assured by the security that NATO provides, the CSCE could proceed with more confidence in building co-operative security.

### **Human Dimension**

On the subject of threats to security, the seeds of tension and conflict also lie in the human dimension, a fundamental aspect of the CSCE.

But it is time to stop writing new normative standards on respect for human rights or the rule of law or democratic institutions. Now we need to focus on monitoring and implementation. We must use the human dimension mechanism in more effective ways as part of our conflict prevention machinery.

The human dimension mechanism should address the full range of human rights issues -- from minority questions to concerns about racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism. We need to ensure that our commitment to protect individuals and groups from racial, ethnic or religious discrimination is followed up. It must include the enforcement of laws and the prosecution of violators.