

success of the Open Skies initiative and its willingness to make an active contribution to this success through its commitment to hosting the second phase of the conference and through the execution, jointly with Canada, of a trial flight evaluated at the Budapest meeting of experts of the 23 states in January.

Sceptics were convinced of the usefulness and the timeliness of the Open Skies initiative by the rapid pace of events in recent months. The treaty, if signed in the near future, will ease concerns that arms control and security policies are increasingly lagging behind the accelerated pace of political changes.

If the participants of our current talks do not lose sight of the political significance of the treaty to be worked out, and they rely on the confidence created among the 23 states, the treaty could be signed as soon as May 12, the first anniversary of the initiative.

It is likely that the first treaty will not be able to satisfy every expectation and need of all participants, but we are convinced that these can be met later on the basis of experience accumulated and mutual confidence further strengthened through improvement and expansion of the operational system.

Signing a treaty as early as the first half of this year would give a boost to the Vienna CFE and CSBM talks and would undoubtedly have an impact on all other arms control fora, too.

Hungary as a Central-east European state is particularly aware of the importance of creating soon a stable security policy background to the rapid and deep political changes. Our conference can be an important step in a longer process putting changes occurring in our continent in a solid framework through interconnected confidence and security building as well as disarmament measures and leading to the emergence of a collective security system.

The Open Skies regime can serve as a building block of this collective security system, as the execution of flights requires a high degree of openness and co-operation among the parties. We deem it important that this treaty be an agreement of 23 sovereign states and thereby offer an opportunity for expansion through involvement of all interested European states.

We must strive to create a system that is not overly complicated and does not pursue maximalist goals. This will help us avoid unduly protracted negotiations as well as flights resulting in wariness rather than strengthened confidence. The composition and technical level of the instruments used, the quotas, the minimalization of areas closed to flights, will ensure that the flights result in an actual increase in military openness and transparency.