



General Assembly

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/C.1/46/22  
22 November 1991  
ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH AND FRENCH

Forty-sixth session  
FIRST COMMITTEE  
Agenda item 68

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE  
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Letter dated 18 November 1991 from the Permanent  
Representatives of the Netherlands and the United  
States of America to the United Nations addressed  
to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit the text, in English and French, of a statement on peaceful and democratic transformation in the East, issued on 9 November 1991 by the European Community and its member States and the United States of America (see annexes).

We should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 68 on the agenda for the forty-sixth session.

(Signed) Robert J. VAN SCHAIK  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative  
Kingdom of The Netherlands

(Signed) Thomas R. PICKERING  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative  
United States of America

Annex

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA, ON PEACEFUL AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION IN  
THE EAST, ISSUED AT THE HAGUE ON 9 NOVEMBER 1991

We, the European Community and its member States and the United States, support the citizens of the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and its republics in their struggle to rebuild their societies and their economies on a democratic basis after decades of dictatorship and decay. We reaffirm our willingness to assist them as they confront the challenges they must overcome on the path to democracy and free-market economies.

One of the greatest of those challenges is dealing with ethnic diversity and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. Ethnic diversity has enriched immensely the member States of the European Community and the United States. In Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and its republics, however, communism suppressed the legitimate concerns of those who sought to express and exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Many States of the region now face the re-emergence of inter-ethnic tensions, which can lead to ethnic intolerance and aggressive nationalism and other dangers. The problem is currently most acute, and most dangerous, in Yugoslavia where the full benefits of democratic reform have not yet been realized. It also exists elsewhere and threatens to undermine progress towards democracy and prosperity in all the countries of the region.

The potential for inter-ethnic tensions and aggressive nationalism to destabilize the emerging democracies of the region can best be addressed through adherence to the principles and commitments enunciated through the CSCE process, including as reaffirmed at the recent Geneva meeting of experts on national minorities. Failure to observe these can, as we have seen in Yugoslavia, lead only to tragedy and human suffering.

We specifically want to underline that political freedom is not the cause of such problems but is the necessary precondition for achieving durable solutions in the spirit of compromise and mutual tolerance.

We call on the Governments and citizens of the region to join us in openly and publicly confirming their support for CSCE norms and commitments, including, specifically:

(a) The resolution of disputes consistent with democratic values, principles and practices;

(b) Reliance on dialogue and negotiation rather than the use of force to settle political differences. The use of force in such matters is absolutely unacceptable and will result in the international isolation of those who resort to it;

(c) Respect for all existing borders, both internal and external, and agreement to change them only through peaceful means and by the agreement of the parties concerned;

(d) Rebuilding their societies based on democracy and the rule of law, including in particular democratic practices such as free and fair elections, due process of law, free media and fostering tolerance and cross-cultural understanding. Democracy is based not only on the principle of majority rule, but also on the protection of the fundamental human rights of those in the minority;

(e) Safeguarding of human rights, with full respect for the individual, including fair and equal treatment of members of national minorities;

(f) Respect for international law and obligations, as well as the values, principles and commitments enunciated through the CSCE process, especially those contained in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, and the Copenhagen, Geneva and Moscow documents.

We note that the full observance and implementation of all CSCE principles and commitments and the respect for the diversity of minorities in a spirit of tolerance are essential to the development of close, cooperative and mutually beneficial relations in the new Europe.

As the CSCE proclaimed categorically and irrevocably in Moscow, respect for fundamental human rights in any CSCE State is a legitimate concern of the CSCE community. Indeed, they are among the primary obligations of responsible government. The citizens and Governments of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and its republics should understand that the respect for these principles will be fundamental to the development of our relations.

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