



Toespraak

Voorzittersconferentie Oslo - Inbreng thema 2

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ons kenmerk EB/TS/011

Theme 2 - Democracy, Sovereignty and Security in Europe

Thank you Chair.

In Leviathan Thomas Hobbes wrote "that the state of men without civil society is nothing else but a mere war of all against all".

According to Hobbes the natural state of men, before we entered into society, was mere war. A social contract between the individual and the state, with which people give up some of their liberties in order to enjoy peace, was necessary. This legitimizes the state as the sovereign power.

When we look at Europe today, there are large problems lurking on most of our borders. Currently, we do not seem to face a great war in the sense of all states against all states. Warfare is increasingly being waged between non-state actors, both within states and across borders. In some regions, these wars can be characterized as "war of all against all". The consequences, that we already perceive today, are the fragmentation and undermining of the state. Civil society, and other state structures, are being destroyed.

In this sense, I wish to underline the importance - in the member states of the Council of Europe - of the linkage between us parliamentarians and our citizens. As parliamentarians we represent the people in our countries. The people have entrusted us with the task of guaranteeing social order, peace and stability. By representing and respecting *all* of the people, and giving *all* the people a voice that is heard, both the majority and minorities, we fulfil one of the most essential roles of the state which is preventing war and conflict, preventing a "war of all against all".

Thank you.

