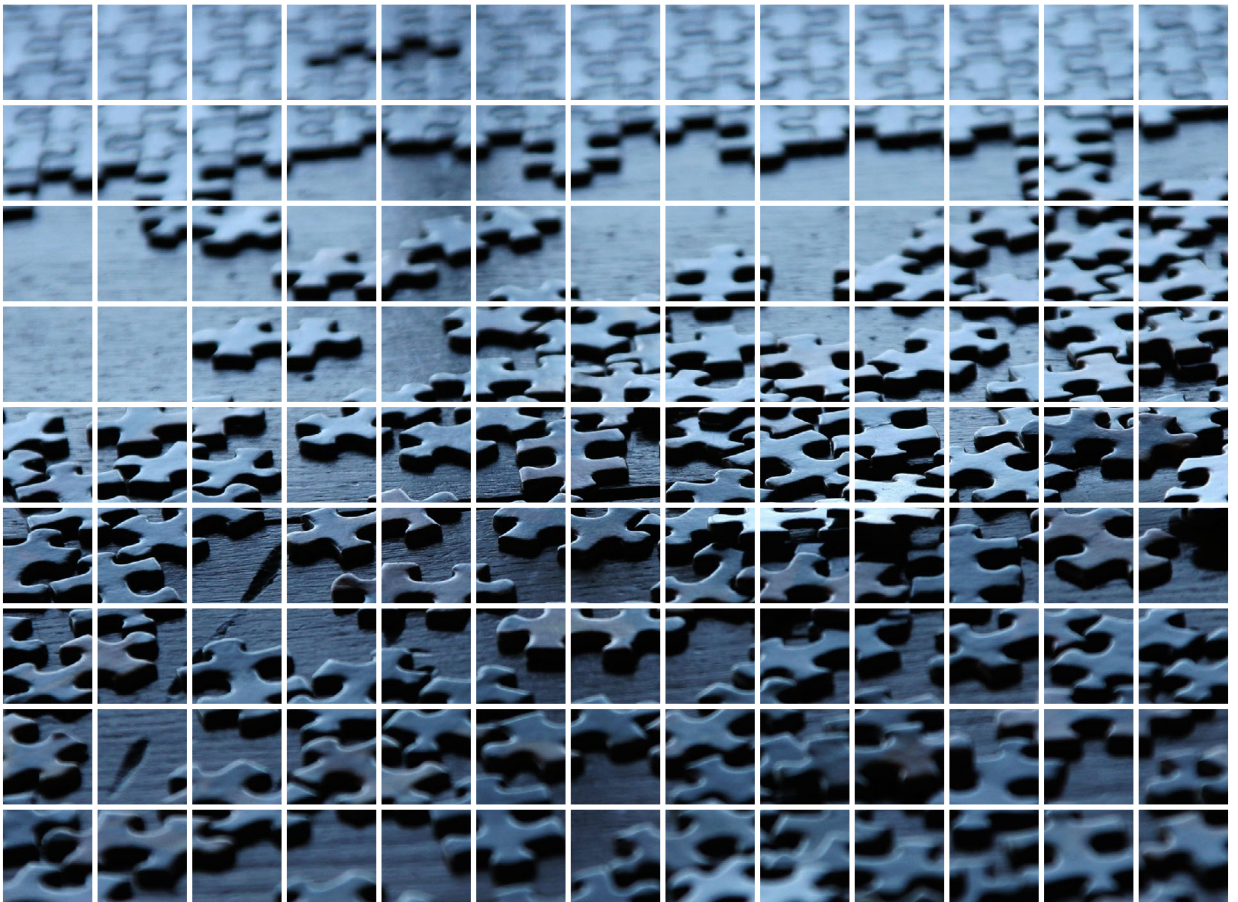# Reviving Co-operative Security in Europe through the OSCE

Reviving Co-operative Security in Europe through the OSCE

Contribution of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks
and Academic Institutions

to the Panel of Eminent Persons

2015

Edited by Teija Tiilikainen

OSCE Network

OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions

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List of Abbreviations

CAC	Conventional Arms Control
CBM	Confidence Building Measure
CFE Treaty	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CoE	Council of Europe
CPC	Conflict Prevention Centre (in the OSCE)
CSBM	Confidence- and Security-building Measure
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EU	European Union
FTF	Foreign Terrorist Fighter
FYROM	Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PEP	Panel for Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project
SG	Secretary General (of the OSCE)
TNT	Transnational Threats Department
UN	United Nations
VD 11	Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures 2011

Preface

You hold in your hands the results of the third project of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions. This network was created in 2013 to provide expertise and to contribute to the ongoing security dialogue within the OSCE framework.
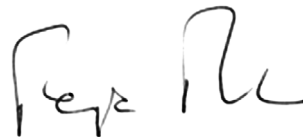
The initiative for this report came from the *Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project*. The OSCE research network was happy to take up this invitation and came up with this project proposal. The call for contributions was forwarded to the network. The task set for the OSCE research network was to analyse pre-formulated questions dealing with the functions and future of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The questions were initially formulated by the 2015 OSCE Troika — Switzerland, Serbia, and Germany. On this basis, the PEP's editorial staff summarized the questions that appear in this report. As the report consists of nine main chapters, each chapter responds to one pre-formulated question. The questions are reflected in the sub-heading of each chapter.

Seventeen of the key research institutes and university departments OSCE-wide contributed to this project with their written papers. Geographically, the contributions cover 14 countries including Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria, through the Baltic states and several Central European countries, from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean and all the way to the US. Papers represented various perspectives on OSCE developments, and are not all convergent in their views. This report follows the main common ideas for the strengthening of OSCE as proposed in the contributions. All participants of the project don't necessarily approve every proposal here. The group of contributors discussed the initial draft report in a workshop in Vienna in September 2015. This paper is a summary report edited on the basis of the contributions received from the members of the OSCE research network. The topics cover the main functions of the OSCE, analyzing general trends for the future from a broad perspective and putting emphasis on recommendations for how to improve the organization's position and efficiency in the field of cooperative security. This project was coordinated and the summary report edited by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. The list of contributing institutions can be found at the end of the report.

The report will be presented at the Belgrade Security Forum on 1 October 2015 and will be handed over to the Panel of Eminent Persons on the following day.

With best regards,

Dr. Teija Tiilikainen
Director,
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Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

The prevailing deep political confrontation and distrust between Russia and the West hampers the efficient utilization of existing structures and instruments for cooperative security in the OSCE's framework. The confrontation is furthermore fuelled by the ever-diverging value systems between the key participating States and more broadly within the OSCE community. At the same time, the role that the OSCE could play today in the form of providing a common platform for mediation and conflict prevention is more important than ever, as military tension and the likelihood of accidents and conflict escalation is increasing.

Reviving the OSCE should start from the consolidation of commitment to its key principles and documents as agreed jointly in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris. Many pragmatic changes and reforms of the OSCE system are important in working towards this general goal. The OSCE's leadership should be enhanced both by strengthening the organization's role in the foreign policy agendas of its participating States and by increasing the autonomous capacities and resources of its key institutions.

The OSCE can play a crucial role in conflict prevention thanks to its early warning systems and field missions. These functions should be respected by the participating States, and their extent and resources should be increased. The protection of human rights and the rights of national minorities form a crucial dimension of the OSCE's agenda for comprehensive security. There is a need to strengthen both, firstly by boosting the monitoring of human rights, and secondly by broadening the concept of minorities in the entire human dimension to encompass newer minorities and refugees.

When it comes to protracted conflicts, the OSCE should adopt a more strategic and long-term approach to managing them, including more targeted measures. Currently, in addition to trying to provide fresh impetus for the Nagorno-Karabakh peace negotiations, a status-neutral field presence should be established in Georgia with access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Arms control plays another key role in the OSCE's agenda of consolidating trust and confidence among its participating States. As this system is now challenged, the OSCE should first seek to establish a stable dialogue between Russia and the West in order to revitalize and update the system of confidence- and security-building measures (CBSMS). Both the Vienna Document and the Open Skies Treaty should subsequently be adapted to the prevailing situation and full compliance with them restored. Once the crisis in and around Ukraine has been resolved, discussions about a new agreement on conventional arms control (CAC) should be launched.

Transnational threats and external partnerships constitute a significant common agenda for the OSCE states in the current challenging security environment. When it comes to tackling transnational threats, the OSCE can provide a platform for the exchange of best practices and information-sharing, for example concerning operative and legislative mechanisms.

Through the organization's partnerships, these best practices, as well as the model of cooperative security in general, can be extended to the OSCE's neighbourhood. Security in the OSCE cannot be divided

into internal and external security as many of the most pressing security challenges facing the OSCE region emanate from regions outside its area. These can only be managed in co-operation with states and civil societies in those areas. Strengthening co-operation with OSCE neighbouring regions and improving the framework for partnerships is extremely important.

Recommendations

- A stronger role given to the OSCE **on the political agenda of its participating States** would increase their commitment and improve the implementation of the OSCE decisions. For this purpose, the OSCE's ministerial council could meet more often.

- **The position and autonomy** (in terms of budgets and personnel) of the **OSCE institutions** should be strengthened. The SG should be mandated to take initiatives and decisions with respect to the OSCE missions. The staffing and functions of the CPC should be enlarged.

- Field missions are instrumental in the OSCE's role in crisis prevention and early warning. **Possibilities for strengthening them** — and even for extending the OSCE's presence to all crisis regions in its geographical field with the support of local actors and networks — should be studied.

- The OSCE should engage in bilateral **quiet diplomacy** in human rights issues. Quiet diplomacy aimed bilaterally at governments could be more efficient in improving the human rights record and especially in improving the *will* for a better human rights record.

- **Strengthening the capabilities of the HCNM** (*High Commissioner on National Minorities*) would be a concrete step in reinforcing international co-operation on issues related to national minorities. It is a well-functioning institution whose activities have contributed to the decrease in tensions in numerous minority-related situations. Although its mandate and resources may limit its performance, strengthening the capabilities of this institution could create a positive outcome.

- The OSCE should promote a holistic, multi-level approach to interfaith relations matched to each particular context where it is applied. An event like the *OSCE Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue for European Security* could be created as a permanent annual discussion forum. Also, the **OSCE should keep on supporting secular-Islamic dialogues** in participating States. The issue of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) is a concrete topic in religious-related radicalization that the OSCE should focus on.

- The OSCE should define **a long-term strategy towards protracted conflicts** for the chairmanships to implement. This strategy would be built on co-operation with other international and regional actors.

• Due to increasing risks of military accidents and escalation, the OSCE should establish a **permanent dialogue between Russia and the West** in order to revitalize and update the system of conventional arms control and **confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM)**. The long-term goal of the dialogue would be to adapt both the Vienna Document and the Open Skies Treaty to the current security situation and to initiate new negotiations on a future conventional arms control agreement

• In general, the OSCE should further engage in **co-operation with other international and regional organizations like the EU and the UN** to avoid duplication and to create positive synergies. This applies to the field presence in crisis regions as well as to human rights issues, extremism and cyber security for example.

• In the current global political situation, the OSCE should provide the forum for a direct, **non-propagandistic dialogue between Russia and the West**. An independent panel of contemporary historians could help to break down ingrained interpretations and myths and, consequently, promote historical reconciliation and (peace) mediation.

Introduction – The Political Context for the Strengthening of the OSCE

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) – together with its predecessor, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) – has provided an important platform for the consolidation of cooperative security in Europe. First, it contributed to the ending of the Cold War confrontation. And second, it provided the normative framework for the post-Cold War system of cooperative security by introducing the 1990 *Charter of Paris* and the 1999 *Istanbul Document* and fostering consensus around them. Throughout its existence, the legal-institutional character of the OSCE has remained ambiguous, but this has also served to strengthen its adaptability in a changing political environment.

During the past decade, controversies around the OSCE have increased along with the tightening global struggle over norms and values. Commitment to the OSCE's values and principles – adopted jointly in the 1990s – has weakened, and the role and legitimacy of the organization is increasingly being questioned. The OSCE itself has become a victim of the international power struggle as those participating States that have turned away from its common values of democracy and human rights now perceive these values as the ideological underpinnings of an international order designed by the West to ensure continued Western dominance.

In the current political circumstances, not only the growing political confrontation

between Russia and the West but also the broadening set of security challenges emerging from North Africa and the Middle East, as well as the changing regional balance of power in Asia, affect the strategic landscape. Along with the major transformation of the international political order, the emerging new powers have seized the opportunity to challenge the current international institutions with the aim of constructing a global order more to their liking. Russia has long been extremely vocal in its criticism of the current security political order in Europe, claiming it represents a betrayal of the agreements made after the end of the Cold War. Russian dissatisfaction with the existence – and enlargement – of NATO, and its willingness to contain it with an all-European treaty arrangement more beneficial to its own interests, forms the major bone of contention in relations between Russia and the major Western powers, with repercussions for a wide range of policy fields, many of which are also linked to the OSCE's functions and agenda.

As a result of the recent Russian violations of the key principles of international law and of the OSCE, with the annexation of Crimea and the military operation in Eastern Ukraine, the mutual trust between Russia and the West has hit an all-time low since the end of the Cold war. A strengthening militarization of European security politics has consequently ensued, with NATO taking a more active role in

support of its European allies in response to a ramped-up Russian military presence in Northern and Eastern Europe. This time, the worsening relations are also having a concrete effect on the European Union, whose Eastern Partnership policy and subsequent sanctions against Russia have made it a key target of Russian criticism.

Against this grave background of deepening mutual distrust and increasing military tension between Russia and the West, the crisis in and around Ukraine can be seen to have influenced the OSCE in two contradictory ways. While challenging the key norms of the OSCE, the crisis has also revitalized the organization and brought its potential for crisis prevention and the peaceful settlement of conflicts to the fore. Awareness of the huge risks posed by the current increasing military tension underlines the merits of the previously well-functioning arms control regime which has, by now, become partly outdated and abandoned.

However, the fact remains that a deep political confrontation and distrust between Russia and the West hampers the efficient utilization of existing structures and instruments for cooperative security both in the OSCE's framework and elsewhere. This negative atmosphere is furthermore intensified by the heavily competing narratives – including propagandistic elements and the use of enemy pictures – about the key political reasons behind the emergence of the confrontation.

At the general level, when developing the OSCE, three different strategies can be discerned which all stress somewhat different qualifications of the organization, and which all play an important role in ensuring its vitality. The OSCE should

be strengthened in its current status as a guardian of the common principles of the international order and an inclusive platform for political negotiations and dispute settlement (*status strategy*). In some respects, it should be steered towards more focused functions and activities (*niche strategy*) on the basis of the strategic needs emerging with respect to the maintenance of peace and international stability. The third strategy would steer the OSCE towards refining its role through a division of labour and co-ordination with other relevant multilateral actors (*added value strategy*).

While recognizing the larger political context – and the constraints it imposes – for any reform of the OSCE, this project approaches the more immediate possibilities that exist for the organization to address the alarming problems that currently beset European security.

The summary report is structured around ten questions that were considered essential with respect to the agenda of the Panel of Eminent Persons chaired by Wolfgang Ischinger. The responses to each question have been compiled on the basis of the contributions made by the 17 research institutes of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions participating in this project.

The proposals made and recommendations given to address these problems and weaknesses will not necessarily solve the underlying political problems of the organization. They will, however, provide some pragmatic approaches as to how one could, in the current political circumstances, re-consolidate cooperative security in Europe through the OSCE.

1

Strengthening the Leadership and Implementation

How can the OSCE's leadership and decision-making be made more effective within the consensus rule? How can the implementation of OSCE decisions and commitments be strengthened?

First, the OSCE's role should be strengthened on the political agendas of the participating States as its political role and importance starts from the capitals. One should consider the possibilities for the ministerial council to meet more often to reinforce the role of the organization in the capitals and, consequently, the commitment of the participating States to its principles and decisions. In view of the fallout from the Ukraine crisis, one could have the key OSCE norms from the *Helsinki Final Act* and the *Charter of Paris* reconfirmed at the highest political — eventually summit — level.

Second, the merits of the consensus rule are indisputable for the legitimacy and functioning of the OSCE. However, while respecting the consensus rule, one should try to instil some flexibility within it. One possibility could be to allow operational decisions to be taken without consensus in the framework of cases where a more overarching OSCE decision has been reached by consensus.

Further, one should empower the OSCE's leadership, firstly by paying more attention to the commitment shown by states selected for chairmanship, as well as to the possibilities for multi-annual planning and budgeting, thus giving more political weight to the Troika system. The Chairmanship/Troika should adopt a more political function in fostering agreement between the participating States on important OSCE issues. The same applies to the supervision of the implementation of OSCE commitments; this function should also be more efficiently carried out by the Chairperson-in-Office.

One possibility to strengthen the Chairmanship and Troika is to change the OSCE calendar. Changing from calendar year to school year would enable a more efficient rhythm whereby the summer break would not interrupt the term at a strategically important stage.

As proposed by the Panel of Eminent Persons, the legal personality of the OSCE should be recognized in order to ensure the proper fulfilment of the OSCE's functions. The realization of this, in the absence of consensus, through a specific treaty arrangement constitutes a reasonable option.

Various possibilities to strengthen the OSCE's institutions, particularly the function of the Secretary General, should be considered. First, the SG's independent capacities should be increased in the context of field missions, their supervision, and key appointments. The autonomous capacities of all OSCE institutions to fulfil their mandate should be improved by strengthening their budgetary and personnel resources. Furthermore, a solid role and function for the Parliamentary Assembly provides the OSCE and its institutions with the necessary democratic backing.

The implementation of OSCE commitments could be improved through a strengthened follow-up procedure. This procedure should involve external auditors that could bring expertise from those international institutions with a strong legal framework.

2

Innovations for Better Early Warning and Conflict Management

What innovative approaches could be devised for better early warning, and the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts?

The OSCE's field presence — together with sufficiently autonomous and well-functioning institutions — is the key to its early warning and conflict prevention capabilities. Arms control is an equally important asset, which will form a separate topic in this report (question 7). Establishing or maintaining field missions in regions with a high risk of conflict provides the most important instrument for these functions. Careful strategic planning needs to precede the launching of the missions, which should be tailored to the needs of every individual region with a potential for crisis. The missions should be of an appropriate size and should have an adequate mandate.

A situation in which the host country prevents the launching of a mission — or limits its operation — in a seriously conflict-sensitive region, poses a huge challenge for the OSCE. The ability of field missions to provide support for the host country in areas of interest to them is vital as, together with the use of projects, it is one way to ensure the interest of the host country.

The OSCE should try to establish a more or less continuous presence in the participating countries with the help of national partners and networks in order to be able to react to potentially looming crises in a timely manner.

When it comes to field missions, the need for more robust military capabilities — which might also be linked with sudden changes in the political and security situation in the region — must be taken into account. With regard to field presence, the OSCE should, in general, cooperate more closely with other international organizations, particularly the UN and EU. Such co-operation should promote a more rational use of the organizations' resources and a better division of labour among them. It would also improve the capacity of the OSCE missions to adjust to changing conditions in the course of the field presence.

The OSCE should be further operationalized as a regional arrangement under chapter VIII of the UN charter.

To enhance the possibilities for early warning and early action, the capacities of the Secretary General (SG) and Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) should also be addressed. First, the possibilities of each to assess and analyze the situation in

regions with a high risk of conflicts should be improved by various means. A specific budget should be created for these kinds of tasks — taking the form of fact-finding missions, deployment of special envoys or the like — together with sufficient autonomy for the SG to carry them out. There is an urgent need to strengthen the CPC in respect of its capacity for both military and civilian planning and general capabilities to provide analysis and expertise. The scope of the CPC's functions should be furthermore enlarged to cover the OSCE regions more broadly — from the conflict prevention point of view — and not just regions with OSCE missions. The public relations functions of the CPC as an expert body supporting the political processes of conflict prevention could also be strengthened.

The coordinator of OSCE economic and environmental activities could be elevated into an OSCE institution as it would facilitate the use of his/her office for early warning and conflict prevention measures touching upon the second dimension.

Finally, in order to improve the OSCE's possibility to provide a platform for the mediation of conflicts, an informal mediation group could be established under the leadership of the Chairperson-in-Office or SG. This would enhance the OSCE's importance and prevent this function from being transferred to ad hoc groups of states.

3

The Human Dimension as an OSCE Core Function

What are the most important building blocks in the osce's human dimension for a strategy of reconfirming the organization's basic principles and rules and how can the osce support the international human rights mechanism?

The osce has placed strong emphasis on the human dimension ever since its inception as the csce. The Decalogue of values and commitments forms the cornerstone of all osce functions. The osce is a norm-based organization and developed as such in the aftermath of the Cold War. The existing osce normative base was codified in the documents published in 1975, 1990, 1999 and 2010. The *Charter of Paris* set out the value base for future osce co-operation, including such values as the rule of law, democracy, human rights and good governance. All participating States have agreed that lasting security cannot be achieved without these values. They are particularly important in the human dimension and should be regarded as non-negotiable.

Despite the deep commitment to common osce values by the participating States, today's political situation is characterized by growing normative divergence between states and within states.

None of the osce States have officially revoked the current common value base, but it has become evident that this value base is not strong enough at present. The basic principles are not challenged as such, but their implementation by different states is characterized by divergence. The challenge that the osce is up against revolves around the fact that the abovementioned normative divergence is not going to go away.

As democracy and democratic institutions are one of the building blocks of the osce, the current developments can be seen as a worrisome trend. There has been a visible erosion of democracy and a rise in authoritarian views in parts of the osce region, also within established democracies, namely in parts of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and the Black Sea region. Divisive tendencies cast the biggest cloud over the osce's functions.

Something that the osce lacks in the human dimension is a general monitoring instrument or effective review mechanism. Switzerland introduced such monitoring models as early as 2006, but the suggestions were not taken up by other participating States at that time. The Council of Europe (CoE) and the un Human Rights Council, for instance, have developed review mechanisms. Deeper co-operation with

these organizations will be increasingly important for a more effective outcome.

The OSCE runs several human dimension-related events annually. A concrete suggestion here would be to reform the *Human Dimension Implementation Meetings* (HDIMs). Efforts at reform duly failed a few years ago. The HDIM is the biggest annual meeting on this topic in Europe, and as the meeting is open to NGOs, it forms an important link between states and civil societies. However, the HDIM is also time-consuming, lacks a standard agenda and is consequently not attended by some of the most important NGOs. The reform could be aimed at a briefer and more attractive event with a well-established agenda.

In terms of supporting the international human rights mechanism, the most important building block inside the OSCE is the *Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights* (ODIHR). The ODIHR mandate includes assisting participating States to achieve full respect for human rights. The office's activities are multifaceted, and it is engaged in numerous fields and activities throughout the OSCE human dimension.

In terms of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the OSCE should further enhance dialogue with other institutions such as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Council of Europe. In multilateral co-operation, human rights concerns should be prioritized in order to address the issues of paramount concern first. No organization has the resources to tackle all of the issues at once. The OSCE should also take it upon itself to safeguard the human rights of the Roma/Sinti minorities.

Addressing human rights issues in a subtle way can sometimes be the most effective course of action. This kind of quiet diplomacy in human rights aimed bilaterally at the governments in question might prove to be a valuable tool not only for improving the human rights record, but particularly for improving the *will* for a better human rights record. Publicly 'naming and shaming' in the OSCE context is to be avoided, as it is ineffective in most cases.

Human rights issues have become increasingly intertwined not only with protracted conflicts but also with other political or value-driven disputes. Hence, there is a need to prevent any regression in the human dimension. Nonetheless, the human dimension has been the target of major controversies in the OSCE. The criticism has been twofold: a number of countries have been critical towards the developments in Eastern European and Central Asian states, yet the use of Western standards for assessing the progress made by those countries in the human dimension has also been criticized. All OSCE participating States should be subject to scrutiny since there are issues in the human dimension framework that affect all of them. Safeguarding the human rights of (national) minorities, migrants and refugees, for instance, is an important topical issue, which is discussed in more detail below.

A Multi-Ethnic OSCE — National Minorities

What can be done to prevent national minorities from becoming sources of political conflict? How can one strengthen international co-operation in dealing with national minorities?

The OSCE area is multi-ethnic and is also undergoing heavy unevenly distributed migration and rapid demographic change. The protection and promotion of minority rights are essential factors for democracy, peace and stability. Such values are at the core of the OSCE's human dimension but their implementation is not in keeping with promises made.

In today's pluralistic environment, the concept of 'national minority' has been criticized due to its partly anachronistic nature. Nevertheless, many conflicts involve or, rather, affect national minorities in some way. In the OSCE area, none of the conflicts in the recent past were caused solely by the presence of national minorities. The actual causes of such conflicts might lie elsewhere. Minorities of all kinds have to be taken into consideration, as inter-ethnic tensions can sometimes lead to violent conflicts, as witnessed in the OSCE's neighbouring areas.

OSCE commitments on national minorities exist (e.g. the *Copenhagen Document*) but better implementation is of the utmost importance. The OSCE *High Commissioner on National Minorities* (HCNM) is a unique institution. It is well-established and smooth-functioning with tasks ranging from analysis capacity to diplomacy, and especially early-warning and early action activities. The HCNM's mandate defines the institution as an important instrument for early warning, and as such it is involved in conflict management at its earliest possible stage. The HCNM's tasks include the de-escalation of any predictable tensions where minorities are involved or affected, and its efficiency is based upon its ability to act independently within certain limits, without the approval of the Permanent Council.

The HCNM should work with the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to intensify collaboration with national governments in supporting the better implementation of minority rights. The dissemination of good practices for conflict and post-conflict situations is also essential. The HCNM could also further develop measures for monitoring commitments by the participating States, especially in a post-conflict situation where national minorities are involved (e.g. in the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and FYROM). The HCNM issued *Bolzano/*

Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations to provide guidance for OSCE participating States on how best to manage their relations with neighbouring states when national minority issues are involved. These recommendations should be followed more efficiently.

Strengthening the capabilities of the HCNM would be a concrete step in supporting international co-operation in issues related to national minorities. It is a well-functioning institution which has contributed to the alleviation of tensions in numerous minority-related situations.

The OSCE should, in general, address the minority question more broadly and not just from the perspective of established *national* minorities. Questions relating to so-called *new minorities* (minorities resulting from more recent immigration) should be addressed as well as the migrant and refugee question in this context.

5

Engaging in Interfaith Dialogue

What should the OSCE do in order to support interfaith dialogue and the cooperative management of interfaith relations? Is there a need for a new structure/institution for this purpose?

The goal of interfaith dialogue is to enhance mutual understanding, respect and co-operation between different religious traditions. Given that there is a need for greater interfaith dialogue in the OSCE and neighbouring areas, it is nonetheless important for the management and content of such dialogue to remain in the hands of religious organizations and their leaders. The role of the OSCE within this dialogue should be that of facilitator, and the organization could provide a forum for sharing best practices in developing interfaith communication.

The OSCE does have functioning structures for supporting such a dialogue. Three Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson are currently active in the field of interfaith relations, the ODIHR has a department related to interfaith issues, and expertise of this kind exists in field operations. Hence, new structures might not be needed for this task, although there is a need to use the existing ones more efficiently.

Yet challenges exist in interfaith relations. They surface particularly when the topic is implicated in a conflict. If religion is fuelling the discourse around the dispute, communication between parties from different religious backgrounds can be fraught due to the sensitive nature of the issues. It also appears that in conflicts that seemingly have religious aspects, the role of religion can be overestimated. In conflict resolution, interfaith dialogue is one possible approach among other instruments. It should seek to engage communities as a whole and aim at sustained, long-term dialogue.

The dialogue needs to address aspects of faith, but as a part of a broader context. Tolerance and preventing radicalization and extremism should be at the heart of the dialogue. However, one should remember that radicalization usually affects a rather small minority in a religious group, even though it is at the core of current concerns. The catalyst for radicalization lies outside of the OSCE area, but recruitment and propaganda are currently being targeted at the population in Europe as well.

The OSCE should support a multi-level approach and also enhance secular-Islamic dialogue. Interfaith dialogue is also about increasing respect and religious freedom and decreasing intolerance and discrimination towards the faithful. Fostering understanding through communication throughout the OSCE area should be the main impetus for interfaith dialogue.

6

Tackling Protracted Conflicts

Protracted conflicts are a continuous threat to security in the OSCE area. How can one improve the existing mechanisms for dealing with protracted conflicts in order to enhance their resolution?

Protracted conflicts are ultimately political conflicts and would thus require a political solution to resolve them. The current protracted conflicts also differ notably with respect to their political background.

The OSCE should define a clearer long-term strategic approach to the conflicts and decide which conflicts it will actively try to resolve and where its role has to be limited to enhancing stability and preventing a further escalation of violence. This would bring more continuity to the use of the existing OSCE instruments and contribute to a better focusing of the rotating chairmanships. The current procedure, whereby almost every chairmanship focuses on the protracted conflicts with the intention of bringing some deliverables to the ministerial meeting, leads to short-term thinking and vague results.

The OSCE's strategy for managing protracted conflicts should, in general, include more co-operation with regional actors and other international organizations such as the EU. The existing areas of shared responsibility between the international actors involved are growing and cover such functions as confidence-building measures, monitoring and mediation, humanitarian assistance, anticorruption activities, support in security and defence sector reform, and building peace and security. The OSCE should take the lead in coordinating these international efforts, and see to it that close co-operation with civil society and grass-roots movements takes place in order to foster popular support for the proposed solution.

Developments stemming from the current crisis in and around Ukraine have had a negative impact on prospects for peace negotiations to resolve the Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniestria conflicts. Although the crisis has had less of an impact on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, international mediation efforts had already lost momentum since the failure of the Astrakhan Summit in 2011; and in the past year there has been a sharp uptick in violent incidents and bellicose rhetoric. The OSCE should focus on preventing the re-ignition of armed hostilities in all of these conflicts and should make an effort to provide fresh impetus for the Nagorno-Karabakh peace negotiations in the OSCE Minsk Group.

A small status-neutral field presence should be established in Georgia with access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the Geneva International Discussions should focus on substance issues more than on status.

7

Strengthening the System
of Arms Control

How could one strengthen arms control systems — including confidence-building measures and discussions on military doctrines — as a means of reconsolidating cooperative security?

The OSCE used to be the key platform for the previously well-functioning arms control regime in Europe. The growing problems in this field have contributed to the growing disunity between Russia and Western countries. As a result, all three pillars of European arms control — the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures 2011 (VD 11) and the Open Skies Treaty have either become outdated or been abandoned. Disagreements around the system of arms control foster distrust and a lack of transparency between Russia and the West, and the risk of military escalation and accidents increases.

Due to the increasing risks, a permanent and stable security dialogue between Russia and the West should be established immediately in order to revitalize and update the system of conventional arms control and of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). The OSCE could provide the platform for this dialogue.

Its key goal should be to restore military confidence and transparency between the parties and to find the necessary means for that. Immediate measures should include a set of new CSBMs addressing alarm exercises (short-term exercises out of garrisons) and exercises close to borders, as well as possible military incidents and accidents caused.

The long-term goal of the dialogue should be to adapt both the Vienna Document and the Open Skies Treaty to the current security situation and to restore compliance with them. This should be done by adjusting the thresholds for notification and inspection of military activities by raising quotas for inspections, reviewing categories for information exchange and updating the definition of 'unusual military activities' (VD, chapter III). A special mechanism should be established for transparency and the verification of unusual military activities and force concentrations in crisis situations with the right to conduct follow-on inspections. They should be supplemented with an institutional measure: either the SG or Chairperson-in-Office should have the right to initiate fact-finding missions on their own in co-operation with potential conflict parties if the tension in or between states could lead to the use of violent means.

Once the conflict in and around Ukraine has been settled, discussions should get underway on a new agreement on conventional arms control. The negotiations and agreements should be open to all participating States of the osce.

To diminish tension and confrontation, a seminar on military doctrines should be organized at a high political level, including representatives of the armed forces. The seminar should pave the way for a more common understanding of security policy threats and challenges.

8

Transnational Threats in the OSCE

How could one improve the possibilities to address common transnational threats in the OSCE? Is there common ground for dealing with issues such as the fight against radicalization and extremism or the promotion of cyber security?

Transnational threats have been an area in which the OSCE participating States have found a common agenda. It is one of the fields were consensus has emerged during the last decade. Examples of joint efforts in tackling threats include police co-operation, counter-terrorism and combating drug smuggling and human trafficking. The OSCE Secretariat has a *Transnational Threats Department* (TNT), established in 2012. TNT addresses issues such as terrorism, organized crime, cyber threats and illicit trafficking. The department also cooperates with various other OSCE structures and its main purpose is to coordinate work and resources in an efficient manner.

Given that one of the OSCE's strengths is local knowledge and local presence, the organization could first and foremost provide best practice support and a forum for exchanging best practices between participating States on how to deal with transnational threats in differing domestic surroundings. Transnational threats, such as radicalization, usually have domestic roots, yet the domestic landscape and local drivers behind the threats also have to be understood as being part of a broader phenomenon.

Recently, the OSCE has found common ground on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). The organization functions well as a forum for discussing and sharing best practices in countering FTF recruitment. The root causes of the FTF phenomenon are various, ranging from excitement and economic inducements to genuine (religious) radicalization. A current, rather new topic within the FTF phenomenon that some of the OSCE states are facing is returning fighters. Addressing the returnees is important in order to prevent further alienation and radicalization.

The OSCE's comprehensive and cross-dimensional approach can yield more results in combatting transnational threats — such as terrorism and the FTF phenomenon — than narrower security and counterintelligence-based approaches adopted elsewhere. A more comprehensive approach seeks to understand and address local drivers underpinning extremist behaviour. The OSCE already takes action in several fields, including mainstreaming the gender perspective in threat

prevention. Counter-measures against the FTF phenomenon range from research and strategic communication to raising awareness at the grass-roots level.

Cyber security is another common transnational threat which is high on the OSCE agenda. In recent years, cyber security and cyber threats have become an urgent issue throughout the international community. The 2015 OSCE Serbian Chairmanship has raised the question of supportive efforts to tackle cyber threats OSCE-wide as one of its priorities. In effect, the OSCE has taken some promising steps in addressing cyber security, having agreed on a set of confidence-building measures (CBMS) in late 2013. This was unique in the sense that states were willing to agree on specific measures related to cyber security — a topic usually handled in domestic secrecy. It is now important for the OSCE to further engage governments to implement the set of CBMS.

Ensuring cyber security and fighting cyber threats call for joint efforts among OSCE participating States. Sharing practices should start at a very basic level since many countries are lacking operational as well as legislative mechanisms related to cyber security.

Transnational threats and the current security environment is a constantly evolving landscape. The existing *OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century* was adopted over ten years ago, in 2003. It should be revised and adapted to the prevailing security environment and growing threats, like cyber security, radicalization and violent extremism.

9

Stability in the OSCE Neighbouring Regions — A Mutual Benefit

Security in the OSCE is dependent on security and stability in its neighbouring regions. How can co-operation with OSCE neighbours and partners be strengthened?

The OSCE has 57 participating States and 11 states with the status of Partners for Co-operation. Geographically, this group covers a significant part of the northern hemisphere, including the whole of Europe and major parts of North America and Central Asia. The OSCE forms a regional order between these states. The OSCE's structure could serve as a model for other geopolitical regions, and as an example of a forum for security dialogue and shared values.

Strengthening co-operation with OSCE's neighbouring regions is highly important. Some of the most pressing security challenges currently facing the OSCE region emanate from regions outside of its area. Conflicts in the vicinity of the OSCE area include serious crises like those in Libya and Syria, and the developments relating to ISIS and heavy migratory pressure, which is particularly onerous for Mediterranean countries. All of this indicates that security cannot be divided into internal and external OSCE security concerns. Well-functioning co-operation could give rise to

opportunities and joint efforts to address common security issues.

However, for the time being, the issue of strengthening co-operation remains a challenging one. The situation is turbulent; geopolitical shifts are taking place, and new actors and centres of power are emerging. The most alarming issues have to be settled before cooperative structures can be built. On the other hand, the momentum for interregional co-operation has also gained attention and support from other regional organizations, as an increasing number of countries are affected by transnational threats such as terrorism and its ramifications.

The OSCE has mechanisms for co-operation and mutual dialogue, such as *Asian Partners for Co-operation* and *Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation*. These should be used more actively and good practices for co-operation explored more deeply and extended to further geographical areas. Strengthening co-operation with Mediterranean partners and the whole MENA region is crucial in the current situation. Afghanistan is important and the OSCE should strive to deepen the partnership to improve the security situation in the country.

Iran would be an important partner in the future. The situation in the country and its future developments are among the key priorities of the OSCE. There is a broad range of issues of common interest to both actors, such as defeating ISIS even though some views are discordant. The OSCE also has common interests with Iran regarding Central Asia and Russia. Another big regional player and important partner would be China, not least because of the country's leading economic role in its area. Libya also has the potential to be a very important future partner for co-operation.

The key question is how to deepen co-operation. For successful partnerships to be created, the OSCE needs to elaborate on the nature of its cooperative aims to its neighbouring partners and non-partners. The OSCE could try to improve the framework for its partnerships. There should be more follow-ups of joint seminars and a stronger, more equal role for the partners in contact groups. At the same time, it is important to strive to overcome practical difficulties in projects. Tackling transnational threats provides a convenient topical platform for co-operation with neighbouring regions.

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This report is the third joint production by a group of 17 of the more than three dozen current members of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions.

This OSCE Network is an autonomous OSCE-related track II initiative. It is neither an OSCE structure nor is it subordinated to the OSCE or its participating States. The Network's members are research institutions from across the OSCE area, engaged in academic research and policy analysis on issues relevant to the OSCE's security agenda. It is a flexible and informal format created by more than a dozen research institutions during the OSCE Security Days on 18 June 2013. Its creation was preceded by in-depth discussions among the founders, the delegations of participating States and OSCE institutions. The Network was inspired by a proposal made by OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier in his inaugural speech in July 2011. It is open to think tanks and academic institutions that are willing and able to contribute academic expertise and policy analysis on OSCE-relevant issues. It provides expertise, stimulates discussion and raises awareness of the OSCE. The Network is used for sharing expertise and the co-ordination of activities among its members.