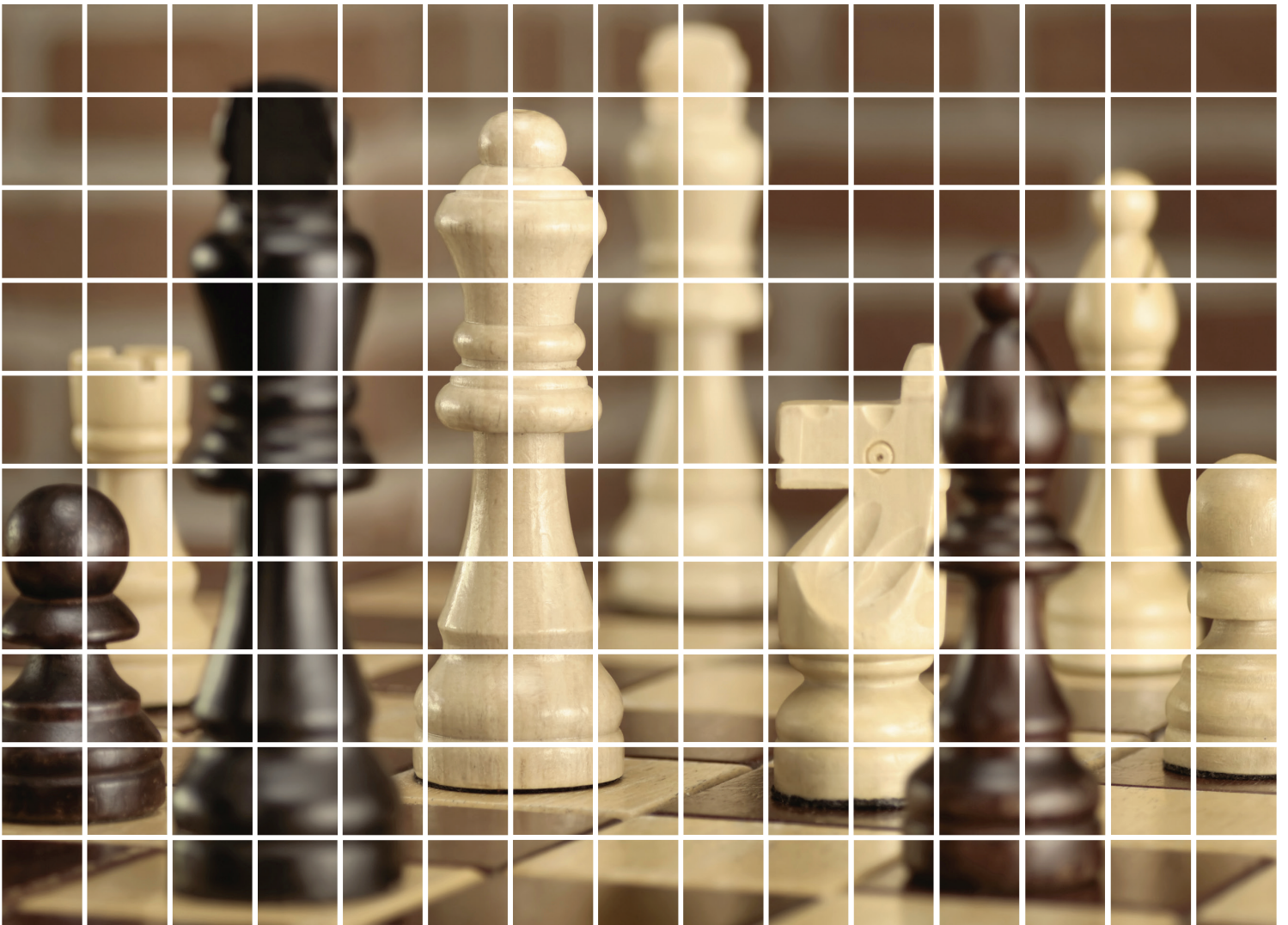


## Threat Perceptions in the OSCE Area



# OSCE Network

## OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions

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Design and typesetting | red hot 'n' cool, Vienna

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## Dear reader,

You hold in your hands the results of the first project of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions, which was created in 2013.

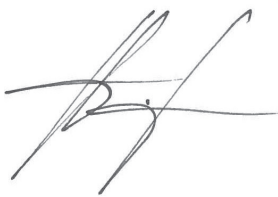
This study, called “*Threat perceptions in the OSCE area*”, analyzes and compares the threat perceptions of 18 governments of the OSCE participating States. It is based on country reports from institutions and think tanks from all over the OSCE area.

Three specific points of this study should be highlighted.

*First, its conclusions.* One of the main conclusions is the prominence of perceived domestic threats combined with questions about the efficiency and legitimacy of governance. The common denominator is concern about weak, insufficient and/or worsening governance capacities and this concern is shared by all types of countries.

*Second, the timeliness of the report.* While the

With our best regards,



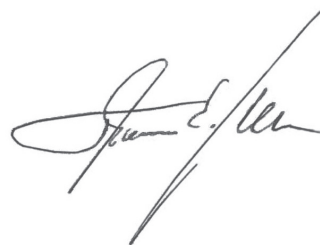
**Ambassador Heidi Grau**

Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force  
Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

interviews and country reports started to be drafted before the events in the Ukraine, this study also includes some initial considerations about the impact of these events on the threat perception of several OSCE participating States. The study shows that a new level of divergent perceptions of military and other external threats has emerged in the OSCE area.

*Third, its relevance for the Helsinki + 40 process.* The so-called “Helsinki + 40” was launched in 2012 at the Ministerial Council in Dublin. Eight co-ordinators were nominated and have started their work on the eight thematic clusters chosen for the process. Some of the proposals made in the recommendations are thought-provoking. They provide interesting inputs for the follow-up of the process, especially in light of the current events in the OSCE area.

While this report does not necessarily reflect the positions of the Swiss Chairmanship of the OSCE and the German Federal Foreign Office, we think it is thought-provoking, very interesting and timely reading,



**Mr. Thomas E. Schultze**

Head of the OSCE, CoE Division  
German Federal Foreign Office



# Executive Summary

The current report on “Threat Perceptions in the OSCE Area” presents the results of the first project of the “OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions”. The subject of this study is an analysis of a broad spectrum of threat perceptions that governments have and a comparison among them. This may provide background information for the OSCE’s Helsinki + 40 process.

The present report is based on 18 country reports from institutes and think tanks of participating States that are well distributed over the OSCE area. As almost all country reports were completed in late January and early February 2014, a separate chapter was added in an attempt to follow possible changes in threat perceptions in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis.

*Domestic threats* The real surprise of this study is the salient prominence of perceived domestic threats combined with questions about the efficiency and legitimacy of governance. The common denominator is concern about weak, insufficient and/or worsening governance capacities. This concern is shared by all kinds of countries. For the transformation states, the key concern is weak institutions. For the EU states, the key concern is the multiple consequences of the economic and financial crisis. For larger states, perceptions of internal threats are linked to neighbouring regions. For the U.S., it is related to a partial loss of global leadership.

*Transnational threats* Although all states analyzed harbour perceptions of transnational threats, their strength and the urgency to address them are quite unevenly distributed. Almost all of the more developed states feel

strong enough to deal with these perceived threats. On the other hand, those states which face the most serious domestic challenges are also hardest hit by transnational threats.

*Military threats* States perceive a broad spectrum of military threats ranging from “no threat” to “outstanding threat”. While the large majority of the states in our sample reported “no threat”, “minimal threat” or “threat unlikely” perceptions, two states involved in conflicts, Georgia and Greece, perceived an outstanding direct military threat by Russia and by Turkey, respectively. The Polish perception of politico-military threats is somewhere in the middle, stressing the need to build up the country’s political and military capacity to address potential external threats.

*The Ukraine crisis* The Ukrainian / Crimean crisis has led to a new level of divergent perceptions of military and other external threats. This divergence is by no means new. Rather, it has built up in waves of crises from Kosovo in 1999 to Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, interrupted by attempts to re-establish pan-European co-operation, such as the OSCE’s Corfu process.

Altogether, the convergence in the perception of domestic and transnational threats, which would allow for more and deeper co-operation, interacts with divergent perceptions of military and other external threats that might hamper co-operation and incite unilateral behaviour. While it is idle to speculate which tendency might become stronger over time, it remains the task of the OSCE to provide a forum for discussion and to foster co-operation.

# Recommendations

The Helsinki + 40 process is currently the OSCE's main format for informal consultations. This kind of communication should be maintained in difficult times. However, one cannot continue with a routine dialogue as if nothing had happened. Therefore, the Helsinki + 40 process should include the key questions of the current disputes while searching for options for future co-operation. The following items could be addressed:

*First*, the participating States could discuss the surprising convergence and also, in part, the divergence of perceptions of different kinds of threats that have been described and analyzed in this report.

*Second*, the participating States should look for ways in which the normative consensus within the OSCE might be re-strengthened.

*Third*, the participating States could discuss preventing the formation of dividing lines between existing and emerging political-economic groupings and consider whether this represents a way to make the vision of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community more concrete.

*Fourth*, the participating States could discuss steps to conceptualize and concretize the role of the OSCE as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

*Fifth*, the participating States could discuss how to achieve a more structured approach to better satisfy the various needs of different groups of participating States in addressing domestic and transnational threats and challenges.

*Sixth*, the participating States could look for ways and means to reform the OSCE's field operations, adapting them to changed needs.

None of these suggestions will provide an easy return to the *status quo ante* before the events in Ukraine. However, even under difficult conditions, there is no alternative to communication and, where possible, co-operation, within the framework of the OSCE.



# Foreword

The current report on “Threat Perceptions in the OSCE Area” presents the results of the first project of the “OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions”. The subject of this study is an analysis of a broad spectrum of threat perceptions that governments have and a comparison among them. This will provide background information to and thus facilitate discussions in the OSCE’s Helsinki + 40 process. This is important because many perceived threats are not formulated in the official discourse. Thus, the report aims at providing more clarity and transparency.

This report analyzes *threat perceptions* that governments have and not any “objective threats” defined by whomever. There will also be no analysis of whether the threats perceived by this or that government are “true” or “realistic”. However, explanations by government officials and experts on the nature, quality and origin of the threat perceptions, as given in interviews, will be taken into account.

The present report is based on 18 country reports from institutes and think tanks of participating States that are well distributed over the OSCE area. Thus, the report cannot claim to be representative in a strict sense, but gives good insight into the threat-related thinking of governments in different parts of the OSCE area.

As almost all country reports were completed in late January and early February 2014, they neither cover the dramatic events at the Kyiv Maidan in mid- and late-February nor the

subsequent conflict over Crimea. Therefore, we have added a separate chapter (4) that attempts to follow any possible changes in threat perceptions. Chapter 4 builds on additional material provided by most participating institutes by the end of March.

The country studies provide the empirical basis for the present report that draws almost exclusively on them. The country studies have been shared among all 20 institutes participating in this project. However, there is no intention of publishing them within the framework of the OSCE Network – reviewing more than 400 pages of analysis represents an effort far beyond the project’s budget. The country studies are simply cited as “Dutch Study” or “Russian Study” etc.

A draft of the present report, elaborated by Wolfgang Zellner (CORE), was circulated among the 20 institutes in March 2014 and discussed at a workshop in Vienna on 31 March and 1 April and again on 1/2 April 2014 at a subsequent meeting of an editorial group comprising Barend ter Haar, Walter Kemp, Philip Remler (for Jim Collins), Andrei Zagorski, Wolfgang Zellner and, in supporting roles, Ursula Froese from the OSCE Secretariat, and Frank Evers (CORE). After many suggestions were incorporated, a second draft was circulated on 9 April and the final product was completed by 17 April 2014.

The elaboration of the present study would not have been possible without the generous support of the Swiss Federal Department of

Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Foreign Office, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The authors and the participating institutes express their sincere gratitude for the financial and intellectual support received.

# Terminological and Methodological Deliberations

The analysis of threat perceptions raises a number of terminological and methodological problems that will be briefly addressed here as will the solutions we found for our study.

## *Who speaks?*

The chapters 1 to 4 are strictly based on the materials provided by the country studies, official documents and interviews with experts within or outside of governments. If documents are addressed, their substance can be attributed to the government or ministry mentioned. If interviews are quoted, their substance cannot necessarily be attributed to the respective government. And finally, the conclusions and recommendations in chapter 5 are those of the authors of this report and cannot be attributed to any government.

## *Defining the term “threat”*

The term “threat” is used without any definition in OSCE documents. A good example is the 2003 OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century (Maastricht Document) that refers to “threats” that “are transnational in character”<sup>1</sup> without explaining either of these

terms. The Dutch Study “defined a threat as any phenomenon that can have a negative influence on the wellbeing of a country and its inhabitants” and explains: “The term ‘threat’ is traditionally used to denote an external, purely negative phenomenon that simply has to be stopped or defeated.” (Dutch Study) Here, the Finnish Study adds that

“‘[t]hreat’ as a singular, overriding or leading term seems too rude or simplistic to signify today’s complex set of phenomena. One solution is to place security questions under the umbrella concept of challenge” and “to distinguish between threat, risk and uncertainty as challenges to security.” (Finnish Study)

The Mongolian Study points to the fact that “a threat can mean a harmful object [...], a phenomenon [...], a process, results [...], a situation [...] or an intervention” (Mongolian Study). This implies that “threats” can result from the activities of identifiable actors (military threat), but they can also represent the indirect consequences of the activities of a multitude of actors (climate change) or even the result of processes without human causality (natural disasters).

In the scholarly literature, which cannot be discussed here in detail, we find a rich array of attempts to differentiate among threat,

<sup>1</sup> OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, in: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council, 1 and 2 December 2003, MC.DOC/1/03, Maastricht, 2 December 2003, para. 7. OSCE documents are available at: <http://www.osce.org>.

challenge, risk, uncertainty, vulnerability, fear, danger or concern and to relate these terms to each other.<sup>2</sup>

The other option, which we, together with the vast majority of our country studies, have chosen for the present report is to use “the term ‘threat’ [...] in a wider sense” with the consequence that it “includes problems that do threaten us, but cannot be easily defeated.” (Dutch Study)

### ***Distinguishing among domestic, transnational and external threats***

More in detail, we distinguish among domestic, transnational and external threats, or, in the language of the U.S. Study: “The first set comprising those threats that arise from inside the U.S., the second comprising those arising in other regions of the world, and the third comprising transnational threats.”

The Albanian, the Greek, the Russian and the Ukrainian Studies handle the problem in almost the same way. The other studies use language that can rather easily be translated into this simple scheme.

The categorization into domestic, transnational and external threats also means that “external threats” refer not only to the military dimension, but also to a range of other issues in which state actors are involved, such as, for example, border delineation, trans-border water use or kin state-minority relations. In practice it is, as the Greek Study notes, “no longer possible

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hans Günter Brauch, Concepts of Security Threats, Challenges, Vulnerabilities and Risks, in: H.G. Brauch et al. (eds), *Coping with Global Environmental Change, Disasters and Security*, Springer Publishers, Berlin and Heidelberg 2011, pp. 61-106.

to draw a clear distinction between external security and internal security,” (Greek Study). At the analytical level, however, we must at least try this.

### ***Dealing only with perceived threats***

The present study deals solely with perceived threats, not with objective threats. “[P]erceived threats are never objective: they are external phenomena mediated through a psychological landscape”, as the U.S. Study puts it. Perception “is the mechanism with which a person evaluates inputs from the external environment which, in turn, determines their behavioural responses.” (UK Study) Perceptions can, however, change and actually do so according to changing contexts. Thus, it is advisable to be aware that all threat perceptions are snapshots that can change when contexts change.

### ***Relying on sources: official documents***

The two principal sources of this study are official documents and semi-structured interviews with governmental officials and other experts. In dealing with official documents, one has to keep in mind some inherent limitations of their significance. *First*, as the Dutch Study puts it,

“[o]fficial publications do not, however, necessarily reflect the real threat perception of governments. Governments might be hesitant to admit that they are worried about a threat as long as they have not decided whether and how to respond. Governments might, furthermore, be inclined to underplay certain risks because they do not want to alarm the population”.

*Second*, in some cases, “threats are not easily identifiable as a distinct category” (Finnish Study) in related documents. *Third*, even a Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not necessarily “have a ministry-wide foreign policy strategy, let alone a government-wide foreign policy strategy.” (Dutch Study) But if there is no integrated strategy among different state institutions, there is probably also no uniform perception of threats. It is likely that a number of states will exhibit at least elements of this. *Fourth*, many governmental documents dealing with threats provide no explicit ranking of these threats. This is reported by the German, Latvian, Polish, Slovak and the U.S. country studies:

“[T]he basic public document of U.S. threat perceptions, the Statement of Record of the annual *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community* [...] is a tour d’horizon of vulnerabilities and areas of concern throughout the regions of the globe. With a few exceptions, it is impossible to tell which of these the U.S. government considers to be most serious.”

***Relying on perceptions: interviews with officials and other experts***

Because official documents *alone* cannot be considered sufficient sources, supplementation by expert interviews has been crucial. Almost all country studies (apart from one) have worked with interviews. In one case, interviews, which were conducted at an earlier stage, were used. In all other cases, the interviews were conducted specifically for this study between November 2013 and April 2014. Between three and 27 interviews were conducted for each country

study – on average around 14. The range of interviewees was quite broad, going far beyond the classic ministries of foreign affairs and defence. In the Dutch case, representatives of ten ministries and thirteen advisory bodies were interviewed (cf. Dutch Study).

It is interesting to note that, in at least two cases, the interviews led to results that significantly differed from the official documents. In the Latvian Study, for example, we read: “[H]owever, the analysis of official documents [...] leads to different conclusions than the interviews with a number of members of Parliament and officials from various ministries and institutions”. And in the Dutch Study: “[W]e noticed that, in the Netherlands, a study of official documents leads to quite different conclusions about threat perceptions than the interviews we conducted.”

***Ranking threats***

The majority of the country studies include some ranking of the answers they got from the interviewees. But this approach is also not without problems, as the U.S. Study shows:

“[A]lthough most informants could provide some rank order, they also provided frequent revisions to the order during the course of the interview, leading to legitimate questions of which rank ordering really mattered more: the order in which threats popped into their minds or the order which, on reflection, they thought more rational for one reason or the other”.

As a consequence, we will use rankings provided by the country studies, while always bearing

in mind that these rankings could take on different forms after some rounds of discussion. More generally, this reminds us of the fact that this report is not based on strict quantitative methods, but on qualitative assessments. In the words of the U.S. Study: “For these reasons we have viewed this study as an art, not a science, and we provide our best judgments in organizing the thoughts of all our informants as coherently as we can.”

# Threat Perceptions by OSCE Participating States

As mentioned, we distinguish among domestic, transnational and external threats, well knowing that these analytical categories, which are dealt with in the subchapters 3.1 to 3.3, are interlinked in many ways. The analysis of the country studies shows that we can distinguish between two groups of countries with significantly different patterns of threat perceptions.

## *Countries with a dominant perception of domestic and transnational threats*

This first group of countries comprises the vast majority of states, from countries in transition to developed countries, from Albania to Germany, Kyrgyzstan, the Netherlands, Spain, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States, to name only a few. Despite all the differences, the general pattern of threat perceptions of these countries is characterized by a mix of domestic and transnational threats. External threats in general and military threats in particular are perceived in different ways, but all in all, they play a subordinate role. In Ukraine, the security environment is perceived as characterized by a specific merger of domestic and external threats.

## *Countries with a dominant perception of external threats*

The second group comprises states involved in violent or potentially violent conflicts – in our sample, Georgia and Greece. For these states, the external threat and particularly its

military dimension is absolutely dominant. All other kinds of threats are subordinated to or amalgamated with the perception of a strong military threat.

## *Ukraine as a strategic surprise*

Although the country studies were completed by the end of January or early February 2014, none of them foresaw the Ukrainian crisis that came along as a strategic surprise.

## *3.1 Perceptions of Domestic Threats and the Problem of Governance*

*The real surprise of this study* is the salient prominence of perceived domestic threats, combined with questions of the efficiency and legitimacy of governance. The common denominator is concern about weak, insufficient and/or worsening governance capacities, and this concern is shared by all kinds of countries. For the transformation states, the key concern is weak institutions combined with the impact of corruption and organized crime. For the EU states, the key concern is the multiple consequences of the economic and financial crisis. For larger states, perceptions of internal threats are linked to neighbouring regions. For the U.S. it is related to a partial loss of global leadership. In the light of the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, it is worth noting that a number of governments expressed concern about the estrangement of sectors of the population with different ethno-cultural and national identities,



increasing extremism and rising potentials for ethno-political conflicts.

The Albanian Study comments that “the interviews show that the causes of the current threats identified are predominantly of a domestic nature.” (Albanian Study) This is confirmed by the Latvian Study that “conclude[s] that the most dangerous and imminent threats within the threat perception of Latvia stem from increasingly important challenges across political, social and economic sectors of the country.” (Latvian Study) The Finnish Study stresses that the capability of the government and the society at large to act is seen as much as a challenge as the domestic and external threats themselves:

“The essence of Finland’s security emerged as a domestic, systemic and long-term *problematique*. Irrespective of their professional backgrounds, interviewees raised the issue of the socioeconomic and, consequently, political sustainability of the Finnish domestic order under the pressure of current and future transformations in the European and global order.”

This formulation highlights two tendencies: *First*, the real challenge of adapting to quick European and global change is so far from the traditional understanding of threat that the author chose the more suitable term *problematique*. *Second*, it shows how inseparably linked domestic and transnational challenges are: Transnational factors impact on domestic environments, where they are perceived as domestic threats. That these findings are not limited to European countries is shown by the Mongolia Study that notes that

“90 per cent of the threats identified as most relevant by the interviewees were domestic threats.” (Mongolian Study) These conclusions were confirmed by the Spanish Study that counted “increasingly blurred” borders as a factor which “will be key to shaping the world of tomorrow.” While the economic and financial crisis is addressed in almost all studies, transformation states, Russia, EU states and the United States exhibit different patterns of concern and threats perceived.

### *Perceptions of internal threats by transformation states*

The perception of internal threats by the governments of transformation states focuses on their comparatively ineffective systems of governance and their weak and weakly legitimized institutions. Thus the Kyrgyz Study enumerates a long list of “internal threats”, the items of which refer mainly to weak governance and its conditions and consequences:

1. Exacerbation of separatist trends, inter-ethnic tensions and ethno-regionalism and localism.
2. Worsening of the educational and cultural quality of the population in light of the rising influence of non-traditional religious groups [...].
3. The ineffective system of governance.
4. Economic crisis and energy vulnerability.
5. Corruption and the growing scale of the black economy.
6. The level of crime, drug and alcohol abuse and unemployment”. And: “The main problem and source of key threats to the statehood” is said to be “the state of the political elite”.

Or, in the words of the Kyrgyz President Atambayev: “[T]he main enemies of Kyrgyz are



Kyrgyz themselves” (quoted from Kyrgyz Study). These threat perceptions are echoed by those contained in the Mongolian Study:

“Threats to internal security: 1. Corruption. 2. Party-centred political system. 3. Eroding legitimacy of government [...]. Threats to economic security: 1. Economic dependence. 2. Energy security threats [...]. Threats to human security: 1. Threats to food security [...]. 3. Threats to drug security [...]. 4. Ecological threats [...]. 5. Decline of national values, traditions and social ethics”.

In the view of the Mongolian Study, these threats emerged “due to the changes in national values, social stratification, dependence on the two neighbours in terms of energy and mining exports, loss of state control and a poor system of responsibility.” A third threat perception from Ukraine, a country that is roughly comparable with respect to its transformation level, is formulated as follows:

“According to the new edition of the National Security Strategy, the most urgent challenges of today’s national security are the internal challenges, such as: ineffective and weak public authority (violations of the rule of law, ineffective judiciary, crisis of civic credibility to the public authority, human rights infringement, inadequate addressing of conflict escalation), the non-competitiveness of the national economy [...] the decline of the welfare state, social tensions and protest behaviour [...] spreading of corruption”.

Even before the February 2014 crisis in Ukraine, it was assessed, that “under certain conditions, there is a risk of the emergence of a

crisis situation that could have the potential to escalate into military conflict.” (Ukraine Study) However, that does not mean that the events in Crimea in March 2014 were foreseen by this or any other study.

The Albanian list of threats perceived during the expert interviews is quite comparable:

“1. Organized crime. 2. Corruption, 3. Economic and financial crisis, [...] 5. Natural and manmade disasters, 6. Political instability, [...] 8. Erosion of religious tolerance, 9. Criminality”.

In the Serbian Study we read that

“the greatest number of threats comes from the political sector. This is an indicator of the weakness of state institutions”. And: “The common theme or cause of insecurity for listed threats is inadequate governance capacity to manage crises and to provide services to all citizens”.

It is important to note, that the studies from the five transformation states, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Serbia and Ukraine, share a strong focus on domestic threat perceptions and display many parallel features – weak structures of governance, weak and poorly legitimized institutions, corruption and irresponsible behaviour by political elites. As the OSCE includes at least a dozen comparable transformation states, these findings are important.

### *Perceptions of internal threats by Russia*

In the Russian Study we read: “Domestic issues have become an important part of the broader

security policy definition in Russia including particularly such issues as:

- Challenges to and vulnerability of the Russian economy to external shocks, due to its dependence on increasingly volatile export markets.
- Fears of criminalization of the economy and endemic corruption.
- High probability of natural and man-made disasters.
- Instability or even insurgency in some regions of the Russian Federation, particularly in the North Caucasus.”

The Russian perception of internal threats shows similarities with the perceptions in the transformation states, but in addition, focuses specifically on the vulnerability of the economy and internal instability.

### *Perceptions of internal threats by EU member states*

Among the German experts interviewed, the following domestic threats figured high on the agenda: “financial and banking crisis, economic decline, global economic blackmailing, growing gaps between social groups, between poor and rich and between people with high and low education” (German Study). Likewise, the Polish Study points to the risks stemming from the economic crisis – radicalization of the society and possible deepening of disparities within Polish society, but also between Poland and other EU member States.

In the case of Spain, “[e]conomic and financial instability [...] was highlighted by virtually all interviewees as posing a double – direct

and indirect – threat.” *First*, “[a] collapse of state finances could potentially cripple the government’s capacity to allocate funds” to institutions responsible for security. During interviews this indirect relationship between overall economic soundness and a well-endowed security apparatus was stressed as being particularly acute and relevant for Spain”. *Second*, “financial instability and economic weakness directly challenge Spanish security, as the severe economic downturn has been a catalyst for social instability, conflict and uprisings” (Spanish Study).

These concerns were echoed by the Greek Study:

“What has been rather surprising is that almost all of the interviewees – professionals from the foreign policy-defence-security sector – have expressed concerns about the impact of the economic crisis, and especially the very high levels of unemployment (28 per cent for the total population, 60 per cent for the youth) and the increasing number of individuals and families living below the poverty threshold”.

Also in the Latvian perception, “political and societal threats” figure high:

“1.7: Public disorder/internal disturbances/ threat to public safety and security. [...] 1.10: Organized crime network activities. [...] 1.12: Threat to internal administrative capacity of country. 1.13: Development of non-democratic processes. [...]. 1.15: Welfare recession. [...] 1.17: Radicalization of society / spread of radical ideologies due to economic, social and ethnic challenges.”

In the Slovak Study's ranking of threat perceptions, acquired through interviews, internal socio-economic issues – economic instability, immigration, social clashes, ethno-political conflict and the Roma minority – occupy four of five top rankings. Finally, the British threat perception focuses on natural disasters. Thus, in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, “natural hazards, including major flooding and pandemics” are ranked among the four “highest priority risks” (UK Study).

Beyond the general concern that the economic crisis would damage the social cohesion of societies, three more specific observations can be made: *First*, although countries such as Greece, Latvia or Slovakia are EU member states, they share a number of characteristics with the transformation states dealt with in the last paragraph, though to a substantially lesser degree: They represent weak economies and still harbour a number of institutional and governance deficits. *Second*, several studies stress the danger of an increase in political, social, cultural or religious extremism as a consequence of economic and social hardship. *Third*, the economic weakness of certain countries exacerbates already existing ethno-political tensions and separatist tendencies. Thus, we read in the Spanish Study: “According to some records, hardship has stimulated an increased desire for independence by some parts of Spanish society”. In the Slovak case, interviewees were divided on the impact of the economic crisis on ethno-political relations:

“This situation has the potential to grow into clashes between the ethnic majority and the Hungarian minority according to some experts. On the other hand, other

interviewees do not consider clashes with the Hungarian minority as a threat. However, the unbalanced demographic development and failed integration of the Roma minority represent a threat according to the majority of interviewees.”

Finally, we read in the Latvian Study: “The threats to the national identity are more straightforward. They involve attempts to heighten separate ethno-cultural identities of groups within the target state.”

### *Perceptions of internal threats by the United States of America*

The U.S. Study is unique among the studies of this project in that it deals not only with threat perceptions related to the OSCE area, but also with threats to the whole world. Consequently, the study's chapter on “Threats Arising Internally to the United States” does not so much focus on the relevance of economic, ecological or governance threats for the U.S., but rather on the United States' ability to exert global leadership. In this respect, three features are mentioned: “Isolationism”, “The “Broken” U.S. Political System” and “Loss of Competitiveness in Science and Technology”. Isolationism may result from the fact

“that the ‘costly and ineffective interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, plus the War on Terror, created the perception, shared by the American leadership and people alike, that we make a bigger mess when we engage’ (This quote is from an informant who rated isolationism as the number two national security threat facing the United States)” (U.S. Study).

This concern about the political will is supplemented by a concern about the ability to exert leadership: “As one informant succinctly put it, the worry over the condition of the American political system is less over the specific challenges facing the United States than that ‘the U.S. is losing its structural ability to cope with challenges.’ This concern focuses largely on the paralysis of the legislative and budgetary process”. And finally: “America’s potential loss of competitiveness in scientific and technological fields was stressed as a serious national security threat by so many informants that we need to give it a prominent place.” (U.S. Study)

### *3.2 Perceptions of Transnational Threats*

The analysis of official documents and the interviews have produced more or less long lists of perceived transnational threats. Their key items are summarized in the following subchapter.

#### *Transnational threats: terrorism*

Terrorism is mentioned in all country studies, although the degree of importance attributed to it, as well as the contexts into which terrorism is placed, vary considerably. Terrorism is mentioned as a threat by Albanian interviewees, although only in four of the 15 interviews (Albanian Study). In Russia, “terrorist attacks against the state or society or against critical infrastructure” are ranked among the “top five most challenging transnational security threats” (Russian Study). Also in the UK, terrorism ranks among the four priority risks: “Within

Europe, the UK has a long history of dealing with terrorism since the time of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.” (UK Study) In the more recent past, there “was less a focus on foreign born threats to security, [...] but rather the focus was on the young Muslim men raised in London, Birmingham and northern cities like Leeds that had been radicalized through foreign-born preachers.” (UK Study) And in Germany, “international and Islamic terrorism” is “qualified as one of the “greatest” threats by the Federal Ministry of the Interior.” (German Study) In Spain, the terrorist attacks in Madrid on 11 March 2004

“had profound implications for Spanish national security [...]. First, the 11-M attacks contributed to fostering already existing considerations to withdraw the Spanish military presence from Iraq, as well as to downscale, in general, Spain’s military commitments abroad. Second, the attacks contributed to shifting the centre of attention and financial and other resources from Basque nationalist terrorism to identifying, neutralizing and dismantling dangerous Islamist cells.” (Spanish Study)

More recently, there has been concern in Spain about Spanish citizens returning from Syria, who had fought as jihadists there. However, there are also a number of states that assess the relevance of transnational terrorism as rather low, as far as their own countries are concerned. Thus, the Finnish Study states: “While the threat of international terrorism in Finland remains low, the rising number of persons that may have terrorism-related connections and the increasing threat of terrorism in neighbouring areas must be monitored.”

This is echoed by the U.S. Study that distinguishes between terrorist threats against the United States and its allies:

“International terrorism and transnational organized crime are given widely varying weights as threats to the U.S., with more informants considering their capacity to destabilize friends, partners and entire regions as their primary threat, rather than their ability to strike directly at American interests.”

Also the “majority of respondents” in the Polish Study “perceived terrorism as posing no threat to Poland’s security” with the exception of where the “security of Polish forces participating in international peace or stabilization operations is concerned.” An even stronger accent of dismissal of a terrorist threat was expressed in the Dutch Study: “What is noteworthy is that terrorism is missing from the list of threats that were mentioned more than twice. If terrorism was mentioned it was usually because of the negative consequences of an overreaction to terrorism.”

Some countries have put their terrorism-related threat perceptions in the context of other external or internal threat perceptions. In the Turkish Study, we read: “Turkey, as a country which has been exposed to different types of terrorist threats for more than 30 years, is an example where the ideology and methods of terrorist movements can be observed extensively.” (Turkish Study) In the Georgian perception, terrorism is linked with activities of Russia: “Another important issue is the threat of terrorism. The new document declares that ‘Russia uses [South Ossetia and Abkhazia] for recruiting and training terrorists with the

aim of carrying out terrorist acts on Georgian territory.” (Georgian Study) This means that the Georgian threat perception is less related to transnational, but more to international terrorism – terrorism sponsored by a state. By contrast to these perceptions that are mainly related to external threats, the Greek Study frames terrorism as an internal threat:

“Concern was expressed about domestic terrorism, which is, according to experts as well as the authorities, in a transitional phase, characterized by blind rage and fewer inhibitions regarding the use of force.”

Overall, it is interesting to observe how different are the contexts and the relative importance of terrorism as a perceived transnational threat, mentioned in almost any country study. For some countries, terrorism is of salient relevance, for others of little importance, at least with respect to their own territories. Whereas terrorism is usually put in the context of other transnational threats, some states perceive links between terrorism and external military threats.

### ***Transnational threats: organized crime and trafficking***

Organized crime is top-ranked in the threat perceptions of Albanian interviewees, mentioned in 12 of 15 interviews, followed by corruption mentioned in ten interviews (cf. Albanian Study). The Turkish Study points to the

“close connection between terrorism and organized crime. Terrorism in contemporary terms needs strong financial support, high tech weapons and an expensive organization. Trafficking in drugs and human beings, arms



smuggling, and money laundering are major revenue sources for terrorist groups and the financing of terrorism.”

In Serbia, the “strategies [2009 National Security Strategy and 2009 Defence Strategy] identified, among other things, organized crime and corruption as serious threats to the society’s and country’s development” (Serbian Study). In the Russian “top five most challenging security threats” we find two crime items, namely “transnational organized crime” in general and “illegal narcotics trafficking” in particular (Russian Study). This is echoed by the Georgian Study, which notes that another “important threat for Georgia’s national security is the level of crime in the occupied territories, which creates fertile soil there for transnational crime.” Thus, in the same way as with terrorism, organized crime is linked with the perception of a threat by Russia. And also in Kyrgyzstan, two of the eight perceived internal threats – “corruption and the growing scale of the latent economy” and “the level of crime, drug and alcohol abuse and unemployment” – are related to organized crime (Kyrgyz Study). Likewise, “organized international crime” is mentioned in Polish strategic documents (Polish Study). In Germany, too, “criminal networks” are mentioned, among, however, many other items listed in the 2011 Defence Policy Guidelines (German Study). Almost the same thing happens in the Finnish Study, where “organized crime in different forms, drug and human trafficking” is part of a longer list comprising many issues.

All in all, one can observe that the salience of perceived threats of organized crime depends on the level of governance. Where institutions are weak and corrupt, crime is a prominent

problem. This is substantially less so the case in more developed countries with functioning law enforcement institutions.

### *Transnational threats: migration*

While illegal immigration has been mentioned again and again in longer listings of transnational phenomena (cf. Finnish and German Studies), some states in our sample have more urgent threat perceptions with respect to illegal immigration. In the Greek Study we read:

“All interviewees included irregular immigration on their lists of challenges to Greek security.” And: “Today there may be as many as one-and-a-half million economic immigrants from South-Eastern Europe and countries such as Egypt, Nigeria and Pakistan in Greece, although more than half of them originate from Albania. This number comprises approximately 10 to 15 per cent of the total population of 11 million.”

Also in the Spanish Study “[c]oncern was expressed about migration exceeding the absorption capacity of Spanish immigrant reception centres, the society and the economy.” Likewise, the Latvian Study notes “threats to the border of the Republic of Latvia as the outer border of EU and NATO” in the sense of an over-stretch by immigrants.

In the Turkish Study we find comparable perceptions:

“Turkey is on a major migration route with ever-increasing numbers of illegal immigrants from its economically and politically unstable East trying to cross its

territory towards Europe. Nearly 700,000 illegal migrants were apprehended in Turkey within the period 1995-2007. Illegal immigration is basically being conducted by organized networks.”

More recently, the “asylum-seeker inflow from Syria has created and will also continue to create security risks and threats for Turkey in the mid- and long-term.” (ibid.)

Illegal immigration is also mentioned in the Polish Study, however, in rather hypothetical terms. At the same time, the study points to threats from migration in general, namely increased flows of population from and out of the country. Coupled with a decreasing birth rate, migration is perceived as a potential destabilizing factor for the country’s social structure and public pension system.

In general, one can conclude that migration issues in general and illegal immigration in particular concern different states in quite different ways. For many countries, this is perceived as one problem among others, but for a few countries it is of key importance.

### ***Transnational threats: cyber threats***

The more developed countries, in particular, assess cyber threats as a serious issue. In the Finnish Study we read: “Cyber threats pose a wide-ranging and serious challenge” (Finnish Study). Also the “German Defence Guidelines” list “possible threats to critical infrastructure such as information technology.” (German Study) Consequently, Germany has adopted a national cyber strategy. Also Spanish officials attributed ever greater importance to cyber threats (Spanish Study). In the Polish perception

“[p]ossible cyber-attacks are unquestionably at the top of the threat list” (Polish Study). Also in the British perception, “cyber security, which addresses threats from States, criminals and terrorists” ranks among the top four threats (UK Study). Finally, the U.S. Study reads as follows:

“Cyber threats were the first category addressed in the *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the United States Intelligence Community*. Informants generally considered the broad category of cyber threats to be significant and high on their list, but for widely different reasons. For one informant, who rated it the top threat, corporate espionage had the potential to damage the U.S. economic position worldwide [...]. From a defense point of view, state-sponsored cyber threats were rated the number two threat by several informants.”

Also in the ranking list of Dutch interviewees the “vulnerability of ICT infrastructure” and “cybercrime” figure rather high in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> place (Dutch Study).

### ***Transnational threats: other issues***

Resource scarcity is named as a threat by a number of countries, for example Finland and Germany (cf. Finnish and German Studies). The Polish Study also mentions resource dependence with a focus on energy. Climate change and infectious diseases are also occasionally mentioned (Finnish, German, Polish and UK Studies). The U.S. Study nicely describes the usual management and, at the same time, neglect of these issues:

“As mentioned above, few informants mentioned climate change and pandemic

disease on their list of threats, though more felt regrets about leaving them off the list. One informant decried the “woeful attention” to these threats, and another charged that no adequate policies or mechanisms have been put in place to deal with either of these potential catastrophes.”

From a completely different perspective, German officials saw weak, failing and failed states as one of the greatest security risks (German Study). The U.S. Study mentions the “Challenge of Autocracy” as a transnational threat:

“A number of informants who did not worry directly about China and Russia found a threat in the challenge to democratic values posed by linkages among regimes characterized by autocratic tendencies as well as high levels of corruption.”

While this goes beyond what is usually understood as transnational threats, it highlights one point of key importance for the OSCE, namely the question of whether democracy remains the only legitimate model of state order in the OSCE area or whether some hybrid autocratic regimes are successful in securing some degree of de-facto legitimization.

### ***Summary: perceptions of transnational threats***

Although all states analyzed harbour perceptions of transnational threats, their strength and the urgency to address them are quite unevenly distributed. Almost all of the more developed states feel strong enough to deal with these perceived threats. Typically,

these states are not so much concerned with their own well-being in view of transnational threats, but rather with that of their allies. On the other hand, those states which face the most serious domestic challenges are also hardest hit by transnational threats. The only exception to this rule is cyber threats directed against key infrastructural vulnerabilities of highly developed societies.

## ***3.3 Perceptions of Threats from Outside***

The perception of external threats is not limited to military threats, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but also includes a range of other issues from geopolitical pressure, threats to the territorial status quo, border disputes as well as spill-over of instability from neighbouring states. However, the core of all of these perceived threats is the concern that organized violence might be used to reach this or that objective.

### ***Threats from outside: military threats***

The large majority of our 18 states analyzed ordered military threat perceptions in a range from “no or minimal threat” perceived to “threat is improbable, but”. At the other end of the spectrum, Georgia and Greece have very strong and direct military threat perceptions related to Russia and Turkey, to which all other threat perceptions are subordinated.

In the Albanian Study we read: “The NMS [National Military Strategy from 2007] emphasizes that the possibility of an armed aggression against Albania has become



minimal” (Albanian Study). This is echoed by the German Study that comments

“[w]ith the end of the East-West conflict there is no longer any perception of a major military threat or risk in Germany.” And: “The Defence Policy Guidelines emphasize that a ‘direct territorial threat to Germany by conventional military means remains an unlikely event’”. The threat by nuclear weapons is restrainedly described as follows: “The necessity of nuclear deterrence will continue to exist, as long as nuclear weapons can be a threat.” (ibid.)

The Mongolian Study also rules out the possibility of a military threat against that country:

“In these documents, there are no clearly defined articles on military threat.” (Mongolian Study) And: “Since Mongolia maintains an equal and friendly relationship with both Russia and China and does not have any territorial disputes or other issues that may give rise to a conflict, we can assume there is no imminent threat from our two neighbours.”

Some other states perceive no *direct* military threats or say that threats of this kind are unlikely. A good example for this is the Finnish Study that formulates its response as follows:

“The threat of large-scale armed aggression has diminished [according to a government report], but it cannot be categorically ruled out over the long term. Military force can be employed in a limited fashion in regional and internal conflicts and as an instrument of power projection.”

“No interviewee saw a direct or actual military threat against Finland, even in the foreseeable future – although no one can say what may happen in 40-50 years, as one noted. Most included the issue of military threat in their list of three items, if not for any other reason than because it cannot be ruled out considering the legacy of Finland’s history and its geopolitical position as well as its system of territorial defence as identity-like features.” (ibid.)

This quote shows that threat perceptions may result not only from sober assessments of the current and future situations, but also from historical legacies and traditions, as well as from the institutional structure of defence inherited from the past.

In the Serbian perception, “the National Security Strategy and the Defence Strategy do not foresee major military threats”. However, “the sources of possible military threats, i.e. armed clashes, uprisings, or other conflicts involving the use of armed forces, have not been entirely eliminated.” (Serbian Study) The key threat perceived, however, is of a political nature:

“The unresolved status of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija and secessionist aspirations of the Albanian national minority are seen as the greatest threats to the internal security of the Republic of Serbia.” (ibid.)

The Ukrainian Study combined the low probability of war with the assessment that a military conflict could happen under certain conditions. Thus, it notes that “armed

aggression that could lead to a local or regional war against Ukraine in the medium term is considered to be unlikely. However, under certain conditions, there is a risk of the emergence of a crisis situation that could have the potential to escalate into military conflict.”

The Russian Study argues in the same direction and stresses that

“[t]raditional security policy preoccupations are thus no longer high on the general agenda of either politicians or experts. The single exception from this general trend was and is the expectation that Russian security may be affected by inter-ethnic or other local or regional conflict in the proximity of Russian borders.” And: “The 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation echoes this conclusion by noting the ‘diminishing threat of a large scale war, including of the nuclear one.’”

This trend has been fully confirmed by the Russian budgetary allocations. “The Russian state budget has two separate aggregate lines of appropriations for national defence and national security. The latter includes, in particular, spending on law enforcement institutions (...), security agencies, border security, combating narcotics trafficking, civil protection and disaster relief, fire security, and migration policy.” (Russian Study) The Russian Study shows

“that the share of defence in national budgetary allocations continuously declined between 1997 and 2014 from almost 20 per cent to less than 8 per cent of the consolidated federal budget. At the

same time, the share of national security appropriations surged from less than 9 per cent in 1997 to 12.5 per cent in 2014.”

It is striking that both in the Ukrainian and in the Russian threat perception a war, as such, is seen as rather improbable, but that there is, however, a potential that a regional crisis could escalate into a war as happened in the case of the 2008 Georgian-Russian war. However, as mentioned, neither study related this to the March 2014 events in Crimea.

Along similar lines, the U.S. Study comments: “It is worth noting that no part of wider Europe – the OSCE region “from Vancouver to Vladivostok” – was seen as a source of instability or direct threat to the United States”. Although, “[s]everal informants thought Russia could become a threat if the current sovereignist leadership were replaced by hard-line nationalists”, they most specifically denied that Russia was a threat; when U.S. officials identified any country as a potential direct military or security threat to the U.S., it was invariably China” (ibid.). Also from the Spanish perception, “[e]merging transnational threats that are dynamic and interrelated have pushed traditional military threats to the background. The National Security Strategy acknowledges this shift” (Spanish Study).

In the context of a perception of a “[r]isk of destabilization of the Euro-Atlantic security frameworks and the potential weakening of the EU”, the Polish threat perception stresses classic military threats somewhat more strongly and puts them back at the centre of strategic thinking and acting:

“Although a possible eruption of an armed conflict immediate to Poland’s territory is unlikely, in the authorities’ view, the risk of rapid deployments of military potential, practical demonstrations of strength or military blackmail remain a challenge, which should not be lost from sight. A direct armed threat now remains highly improbable, but cannot be completely ruled out in the long-time frame.” (Polish Study)

This general threat perception is supported by a number of more detailed concerns that are closely related to the military threat dimension:

“NATO shifting away from its defensive character and undermining the validity of Article 5 regime.” (Polish Study) “Consistent lack of political will to improve the EU-based security system, particularly Common Security and Defence Policy” (ibid.). “The “withdrawal” of the US from European security matters and its increasing engagement outside the Euro-Atlantic zone raises concerns pertaining to regional security.” (ibid.)

Again, this is underlined by the concern that “the possible withdrawal of the US tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe [...] is seen as a concept, which – if implemented – may further disengage the US from European security matters.” (Polish Study)

Compared with the Polish 2007 National Security Strategy, the 2013 White Book seems to pay greater attention to traditional politico-military threats. Interestingly, the “[m]ajority of respondents noted Poland’s clear emphasis on addressing security threats mainly through the

modernization of the army”. At the same time, some of the interviewees noted “a worrying, yet persisting trend of looking at security matters through the lens of “military” focused expertise rather than wider multidisciplinary perspective.” (Polish Study)

For two states in our sample, Georgia and Greece, military threats are of absolutely central relevance in their overall threat perception. For Georgia, the pattern of perception is as follows:

“In the view of the Georgian public and political circles, the main threat to the existence of the country throughout the entire period of independence has come from the north – from the Russian Federation. All other possible external and internal complications are tied to this danger.” (Georgian Study)

In more detail, the following external threats, almost all related to the military dimension, are enumerated:

“According to the National Security Concept adopted in 2005, the list of existing and potential threats is as follows: territorial disintegration, spillover of conflicts from neighbouring countries, military intervention, Russian military bases stationed in Georgia, contraband and transnational organized crime, international terrorism.” (Georgian Study)

In the Georgian view, international terrorism does not mean transnational terrorism, but rather Russian governmental efforts to sponsor terrorist activities against Georgia via Abkhazia and South Ossetia (cf. subchapter 3.2). The

Georgian threat perception is aggravated by the assessment that “[t]he reality that is in place after the Russian military aggression is not acceptable for Russia’s ruling elite. This increases Russian-borne threats and risks for Georgia.” (Georgian Study) Thus, from the Georgian perspective it is likely that the “Russian Federation will continue its intensive and large-scale anti-Georgian informational and diplomatic campaign to hinder Georgia’s integration into European and Euro-Atlantic organizations.” (ibid.) It must be added, that in the Russian threat perception, Georgia is not explicitly mentioned.

Comparable to Georgia, the Greek threat perception is primarily focused on Turkey: “Not surprisingly, there was a broad consensus [among interviewees] that the main – and, for many years, constant – threat to Greek security is Turkey’s policy vis-à-vis Greece.” (Greek Study) In more detail, the following perceived threats were listed:

“The goal of this newly formed policy against Greece was and is changing of the territorial status quo provided for in international treaties – the Treaty of Lausanne being pivotal among these – and the legal status of the maritime zones and airspace as they legally derive from international law” (Greek Study).

Therefore “Turkey remains the prime security concern for Greece and as long as the core of their differences remains unresolved (namely Cyprus and the Aegean), Greece will continue to invest substantial resources to its defence capability.” (Greek Study) It should be mentioned, however, that the intensity of the

perceived threat is lower than in the past, for example in the 1990s. It must also be added that, in the Turkish threat perception, Greece is not explicitly mentioned.

Georgia and Greece are focusing their threat perceptions almost entirely on Russia and Turkey. At the heart of a number of external threats, which are seen as existential, stands the perception of a military threat. Other dimensions of perceived threats, such as transnational threats, are subordinated to or amalgamated with the perceived military threat. The perceived threat is shaping the whole foreign and defence policies of these countries.

### *Weapons of mass destruction (WMD)*

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are mentioned in a number of threat rankings, however, in different contexts: While some states mention WMD in general, others point to their possible use by terrorists or to regional contexts. Thus, the “proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons” ranks high in a list of “threats [...] mentioned in both the [Dutch] National Security Strategy and in the International Security Strategy” (Dutch Study). Also the German Study, with reference to the 2011 Defence Policy Guidelines, mentioned “the increasing risk of proliferation of WMD and related technologies”.

In Spain, “one high-ranking official expressed specific concerns over the possibility of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical or biological) falling into the hands of fundamentalist terrorists, especially jihadist organizations.” (Spanish Study)

Two country studies placed specific emphasis on WMD-related threats, either from a more global perspective (U.S.) or out of a concrete concern (Turkey). The key U.S. concern about proliferation is clearly focused on the Near East:

“[I]nformants agreed that should talks with Iran fail, it would be hard to stop other states from trying to develop their own nuclear weapons. As one put it: ‘If Iran develops a nuclear capability [note: capability, not weapon], how far behind will Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt be? Saudi Arabia bankrolled the Pakistani nuclear program – what do they get in return?’” (U.S. Study)

Turkey perceives a concrete threat from Syrian WMD: “Biological and chemical weapons are a serious concern for Turkey’s security and stability today. This threat perception mainly stems from the recent developments in the unstable neighboring country to Turkey, namely Syria.” (Turkish Study)

### *Threats from outside: other issues*

There are perceptions of a number of other-than-military external threats that share the feature that they are related to external state actors and have at least an indirect relationship to perceived military threats.

### *Geopolitical pressure and border disputes*

Geopolitical pressure is meant when Georgia perceives that “Russia is putting pressure on all six EaP [EU Eastern Partnership] countries and the next objects of this tactic will be Moldova and Georgia.” (Georgian Study)

Greece perceives threats by Turkey aimed at its territorial status quo. In Ukraine, there is the

perception that the country’s exposure to multi-vector geopolitical influences will remain high (Ukrainian Study).

### *Border disputes*

Perceived threats related to border disputes below the level of deliberate attempts to change the territorial status quo are reported by two states. The Kyrgyz Study mentions under “external threats” “incomplete border delimitation between Central Asian states”. The Ukrainian Study raises the “pending issue with defining state borders in the waters of the Black Sea as well as the Kerch Strait, absence of state border demarcation with the Russian Federation, Republic of Belarus and Republic of Moldova”.

These issues are perceived as rather high on the agenda because they concern key attributes of sovereign states, namely exerting statehood within certain borders, as well as being or not being members of economic, political or military alliances.

Another issue that may give rise to threat perceptions is instability in neighbouring countries. This was mentioned in the Polish Study:

“Persistent instability beyond the eastern border of Poland is among the essential security concerns. It is not a military attack, but much more generally, the lack of economic and political stability in the region which are considered to be among the most significant threat factors.”

Similarly the Slovak Study notes that “the current process in Ukraine may represent



a threat if worsened.” The Ukraine Study mentioned the “[p]resence of an unresolved conflict in the neighbouring Transnistria region of the Republic of Moldova”. Comparably, according to the Serbian Study, “the interviewees have put on the top of the list of possible insecurities, the tensions in the Western Balkans”. Finally, Turkey perceived threats deriving from the situation in Syria:

“The recent clashes and civil war in Syria caused a vacuum of authority in the country. The chaos and instability in the country have brought about risks and challenges to Turkey’s national security and stability. The asylum-seeker inflow from Syria has created and will also continue to create risks and threats for Turkey” (Turkish Study).

Finally, the Spanish Study emphasizes that the “National Security Strategy, which the interviewees fully endorsed, regards the geographical area comprised between the southern Mediterranean basin and the Sahel, and that between the Gulf of Guinea and the Horn of Africa, as vital to Spanish national interests.”

### *Summary: perceptions of threats from outside*

States perceive a broad spectrum of military threats ranging from “no threat” to “outstanding threat”. While the large majority of the states in our sample shared “no threat”, “minimal threat” or “threat unlikely” perceptions, two states involved in conflicts, Georgia and Greece, perceived an outstanding direct military threat by Russia or Turkey, neither of which, interestingly, mentioned Georgia and Greece explicitly. These threat perceptions are so

dominant that other dimensions of threats, such as transnational threats, are subordinated to or amalgamated with the perceived key threat. In the case of Greece, this is barely contained by the fact that the conflict with Turkey is rather old, that there have been no recent incidents and both states are members of NATO.

The Polish perception of politico-military threats is somewhere in the middle. It is also an example of a change in the threat perception narrative, stressing the need to build a national political and military capacity to address potential external threats. This reminds us of the fact that further changes in the overall security environment, such as a serious conflict between Russia and the West on Ukraine, would certainly have an impact on the further development of threat perceptions. It must be noted again that almost all country studies were completed before the Ukrainian crisis peaked in February 2014.

There are no ‘pure’ military threat perceptions. These are almost always linked to more concrete objects of conflict, be it perceived occupation, the perceived attempt to change the territorial status quo, or perceived threats deriving from instability in neighbouring countries.

## *3. 4 Changes in Threat Perceptions after the 2014 Ukrainian Crisis – Some Initial Considerations*

The developments in Ukraine in February and March 2014 confronted the authors of this report with a dilemma: On the one hand, we could not pretend that nothing had happened.

On the other, it is impossible, at the current stage, to assess the longer-term impact of these events on governments' threat perceptions. Apart from the fact that some governments have not yet taken an official position on the Ukraine crisis (cf. Mongolian supplement (supp.), "no one really knows how this crisis will be seen in a month or two, let alone a year or a decade." (U.S. supp.; for this reason the U.S. Study did not include analysis of post-crisis changes to threat perceptions.) Two decades of recurring tensions on various subjects have passed since the last Crimean crisis in 1995. Despite this historical record of conflict, "no one in any of the studies [...] mentioned the specific threat of a clash between Russia and Ukraine." (U.S. supp.; cf. Slovak supp.) Despite these restrictions, we make an initial attempt here to sketch at least a few possible changes in the threat-related thinking of governments based on supplementary material – documents as well as additional interviews – collected by 14 institutes participating in this project.

### *Increased attention to domestic stability*

It is interesting to note that in a number of countries, in particular transformation countries, it was stressed that one of the initial elements of the Ukrainian crisis was domestic instability. Thus, the Ukrainian supplement emphasizes that: "The weak institutional capacity of the public authorities in Ukraine still remains the most serious challenge in solving the current conflict." This is echoed in an assessment by Mongolian experts: "From the Ukrainian example we learn that a state must not only institutionalize the equal rights and privileges of its citizens, but also work

towards an equal distribution of wealth to unify its people." (Mongolian supp.) The view from Latvia comes to the same conclusions:

"[A]ll interviewees confirmed their previous point of view that social and political threats, such as further economic and financial crises, threats to the social order/ personal security, organized crime networks/ criminality could lead to further escalation of tensions in Latvia, taking into account that before the Russian military involvement in Ukraine, there was a substantial breakdown of economic political and social order in that country." (Latvian supp.)

Whereas the Latvian concern is more related to its own domestic weaknesses, the Polish view deals with possible outside challenges that the society has to absorb:

"[t]he crisis emphasizes some of the issues listed in the report that are of relevance for Poland's internal security. These relate specifically to Poland's energy security, the need to prepare for a possible increase in migration from Ukraine and, more generally, the need for increased protection of Polish borders with Ukraine" (Polish supp.).

The Slovak supplement specifically raises the concern that there "could be a mix or the diffusion of extremist ideas from Ukraine, represented by Right Sector, with extremist groups in Slovakia." While the original country studies focus on the key role of domestic stability as such, this is now more related to the possibility of external military interference or the avoidance of such interference.

### *Mixed attitudes towards economic sanctions*

The discussion on economic sanctions against Russia has triggered an increased awareness of their threat and counter-threat potentials. Not surprisingly, opinions in this area depend on how extensive a state's economic exchange with Russia is. For Spain, there is not much impact: "Although Spanish exports to Russia have increased, they do not represent more than one per cent of Spain's total exports." (Spanish supp.) For Slovakia, the situation looks quite different: "Definitely, the most vulnerable is the economic area. If Slovakia is cut off the oil and gas stream for a longer period, it would have catastrophic effects on the national economy." (Slovak supp.) The Mongolian assessment points in the same direction: "If the Ukraine crisis is prolonged and Western nations place economic sanctions on Russia, surely Russia's economy will suffer with effects on Mongolia for we are desperately dependent on our northern neighbour in terms of petroleum and other energy products." (Mongolian supp.) In Poland, there is the view that a "[d]eterioration of relations with Russia might lead to backlashes of a political or economic nature, for instance through obstacles to export" (Polish supp.). These concerns might be shared by other states that depend on Russian energy and raw material deliveries or have substantial exports to Russia. However, according to Foreign Minister Steinmeier, Germany would be ready "for reactions and measures, even if they hurt ourselves, should Russia further divide the Ukraine or use the "Crimea Model" for other countries in Eastern Europe." (German supp.) However, Germany hopes that such dramatic economic actions can be prevented.

### *Attitudes towards demands for self-determination*

For a number of states, the Russian action in Crimea has raised principled questions of how to deal with demands for self-determination by ethno-political communities on the one hand, and with the claim of kin states to protect the rights of "their" national minorities abroad – even with military means. The Spanish supplement comments on the first aspect:

"In the present context, some observers have mentioned that the self-determination referendum in the Crimean peninsula shares some similarities with the internal situation in Spain, whilst others disputed this stating that Crimea was simply annexed by Russia. In Spain, some regions including Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia have claimed historical rights to self-rule. In particular, the Catalanian regional government has expressed its desire to hold a pro-independence referendum this year."

This problem might be particularly evident in Spain, but Spain is not the only country to which it applies. The second aspect is addressed by the Kyrgyz supplement:

"[T]he very formal reasoning used by Russia (protection of Russian citizens and Russian people) as a justification for the use of its own armed forces on a foreign territory, is something very dangerous in general, especially given that Kyrgyzstan has a large population of ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan."



More generally, a German official asked: “What are the reasons for the threat with military means and where is the new Russian borderline between the established mechanisms to protect minority rights by the Council of Europe and the OSCE and the Russian threat to use force?” (German supp.) In principle, this problem is not restricted to external Russian minorities, but relates to all sizeable groups of national minorities, e.g. Albanian, Hungarian or Uzbek minorities residing outside their kin states.

***Increased fears of military threats and changes in the geopolitical environment***

Not surprisingly, the Ukrainian supplement comes to the following conclusion: “The previous perception, which declared that armed aggression, which could lead to a local or regional war against Ukraine in the medium term, was unlikely, completely failed to capture the reality, because of the imminent threat of military aggression [...] originating from another OSCE participating State – the Russian Federation.” From a Georgian point of view, Russia’s action in Crimea “follows the pattern in which Russia launched its aggression in Georgia [...] ending in the occupation of its territories, and the international community still remains unable to bring Russia to comply with its obligation to withdraw troops from Georgia.” (Georgian supp.) Also in the Slovak Republic, “experts consider the current situation (19 March 2014) a direct threat to the Slovak Republic in mid-term and long-term horizon.” (Slovak supp.)

Experts from some other states do not perceive direct threats for their country, but recognize a

bad political precedent. In the Polish view it was stressed that

“[a]lthough the crisis is not seen as a direct threat to Poland’s security, the continuing instability and a possible frozen conflict in Poland’s immediate neighbourhood are perceived as destabilizing factors that might have a bearing on the state’s security. Primarily, however, the crisis is viewed as a threat to the international order.” (Polish supp.)

The Greek supplement also warned that a “continuation of the confrontation” might lead to negative consequences for the management of various European and regional security problems.” (Greek supp.) In Germany, Chancellor Merkel used the term “threat” that neighbouring states of Russia, including Germany, might perceive, Foreign Minister Steinmeier spoke of “fears” (German supp.), if Russia were to go ahead with politics seen as aggressive. The perspective from Latvia is also interesting because it links a basically unchanged threat perception with the guarantees under Article 5 of the NATO Treaty:

“[N]one of the interviewees considered a direct military threat from Russia as realistic for the time being, except if further confrontation in Ukraine were to lead to military confrontation between NATO and the Russian Federation, which was considered an unlikely possibility. The main argument of the interviewees was that there is a fundamental difference between the status of Ukraine and Latvia, as a member of EU and NATO. Subsequently, Article 5 would be an argument which would rule out

direct military action against the Republic of Latvia. However, the level of public and governmental fear has increased dramatically since February of 2014 and consequently, both the general public and the government were seeking confirmation of the validity of NATO Article 5 provisions if needed.” (Latvian supp.)

A third group of governmental perspectives are framed less in terms of threats, but more in terms of the validity of principles and the possibility of malign developments if principles fail. Thus, the Turkish supplement reads: “If any discussion starts on the territorial integrity or political unity of any OSCE participating State in the OSCE region [...] it can have spill-over or domino effects on the other frozen conflict zones in Eurasia.”

Even these few examples show that the recent events in Ukraine with their mix of weak governance, political protest, ethno-political tensions, and the unilateral declaration of self-determination and sovereignty by one ethno-political group, combined with the Russian action in Crimea in March 2014, will probably lead to a change in threat perceptions.

### *The crisis and the OSCE*

It is particularly important that the host state of the current crisis, Ukraine, considering the illegal actions of the Russian Federation as a breach of basic OSCE principles, attaches relevance to the OSCE’s assistance: “Ukraine continues to believe that the OSCE has a very

important role to play in helping to solve the crisis, both in terms of short-term de-escalation, and contributing to a long-term solution” (Ukraine supp.). This assessment is underlined by the activities of five missions that are or were active in Ukraine – a group of military observers according to the Vienna Document 2011, the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission for the presidential and parliamentary elections on 25 May, the National Dialogue Project in Ukraine, the ODIHR Human Rights Assessment Mission, and the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. In view of the challenge Ukraine represents for the international community, one respondent from Poland noted “that the crisis in Ukraine is an opportunity for the OSCE to reform and strengthen its role in the area of security.” (Polish supp.) In a more general and fundamental view, the Finnish supplement describes the OSCE’s role in the current international environment as follows:

“All in all, it seems that the OSCE in its various roles and forms of activity, the most basic of which is serving as a forum for permanent dialogue and discussion, would be needed to prevent a fateful division of the security order, which has been constructed since the Final Act, the Paris Charter and the Astana Declaration.”

## Views of the Participating States on the OSCE

As is well known, a number of countries attribute a rather low relevance to the OSCE, whereas others perceive a relatively high importance of this organization. These different perceptions are reflected in the States' more detailed assessments of what the OSCE could and should do and what not.

Interviewees from a number of countries deplored the fact that not enough is being done to address identified security threats and challenges. In the Turkish Study we read: "All respondents clearly state that all threats, which were ranked as most relevant for Turkey, are addressed in an unsatisfactory manner." This is echoed by respondents from Albania, Greece, and Mongolia (respective Studies). Thus, in principle, there seems to be enough political demand for the OSCE to further develop its menu of policy options.

However, it is not so easy to bring together political demand and supply, because the participating States have widely divergent views on which international organization should do what. The two most important participating States, in particular, the Russian Federation and the United States, share views on the (non-) usability of the OSCE that lead them to at least partially bypass this organization, although their motivations differ substantially.

In the Russian Study we read: "The conversion of threats' perceptions did not translate, however, into substantially overhauling the

agenda and boosting co-operation between Russia and relevant European security organizations, such as NATO or the European Union. Nor did it help to boost co-operation within the OSCE despite numerous initiatives put forward to this effect, particularly since 2002." Rather, Russia prefers to act on new transnational threats either at bilateral and global levels. "At the same time, the practical relevance of various European security organizations for helping Russia to address new risks and threats with which it is confronted is considered to be relatively low." (Russian Study) This not only applies to the OSCE, but also to the EU and to NATO.

The U.S. Study comes to the same result, but with different arguments. Although all U.S. interviewees

"saw value in the OSCE, one of them remarked: 'But it does not operate in the areas where we face threats. And it has become ineffective because Russia has changed its perception of the threats facing it. Instead of threats coming from a 'traditional' direction – i.e. foreign military threats, Russia now perceives its threats as coming from its internal political opposition – thus impinging on just those areas in which the OSCE operates: democratization, fair elections and human rights.'"

Both the Russian and the U.S. positions on the usefulness of the OSCE in addressing a range

of new and old threats are influenced by their being world powers, which provides a much wider range of options than those available to the vast majority of the OSCE participating States that are of small- or medium-size.

Insofar as these states are members of EU and NATO, they are primarily focused on these organizations (cf. the Albanian, Finnish, and Polish Studies). With respect to the OSCE, interviewees in some countries perceived a kind of result vs. expectation gap: While the OSCE is perceived with a “positive image” (Finnish and Greek Studies), it does not deliver sufficiently or, as we read in the Finnish Study, the “2012 Finnish Security and Defence Policy Report sees no significant steps being taken recently” by the OSCE. Similarly, respondents of the Polish Study noted the OSCE’s “dysfunctional structure and bureaucratization” as well as “lack of political will among states to increase the OSCE’s role, especially in the field of security”, factors that hamper the organization’s potential. In the view of a Serbian interviewee, the OSCE is sometimes perceived as a second-grade organization (Serbian Study).

Overall, we see an “institutional fragmentation or compartmentalization of the OSCE region” (Russian Study). While Russia and the U.S. prefer bilateral or global options for most issues, the European and Eurasian OSCE States have different institutional preferences including the EU, NATO, the CSTO and the SCO. It is this kind of institutional environment, in which the OSCE has to assert its place in addressing all kinds of threats and challenges.

In the following, we analyze which *functions* and *issue areas* the OSCE should work on in

the eyes of its participating States. This analysis cannot claim to be fully representative, as our 18 country studies cover only about one third of the participating States and because this question was not explicitly included in the original research design. However, certain trends might become visible.

### *Functions the OSCE Should Fulfill*

Six functions, which the OSCE is successfully implementing, in the view of its participating States, are mentioned again and again in the country studies:

1. Providing a framework for dialogue
2. Norm-setting and rule-making
3. Review and supervision
4. Providing lessons learned and best practices
5. Providing capacity-building and training and
6. Providing policy co-ordination

### *The OSCE as a framework for dialogue*

This function is the most frequently mentioned of all. It was mentioned by interviewees from the German, Greek, Polish, Slovak, Spanish, Turkish, and Ukrainian Studies. Some states, however, link specific aspects to the notion of the ‘OSCE as a framework for dialogue’. In the Russian case, “it is exactly the difference of responses by different groups of states to contemporary transnational threats that has motivated Russia to seek a modest dialogue within the OSCE on those policies in the expectation that, over time, this dialogue could help to gradually bridge the gap.” (Russian

Study) In the U.S. Study, one “informant pointed out that the OSCE ‘gives Eurasian states a European Forum to register their problems that is an alternative to purely Eurasian organizations, such as the CSTO [...] SCO [...] and Eurasian Union. It is also attractive in that smaller states can play a disproportionately larger role in OSCE’”. And the Kyrgyz Study calls on the OSCE to “help building-up a dialogue between the Central Asian states” and “mediate among the Central Asian states”.

### ***The OSCE as a norm-setting and rule-making organization***

This OSCE function was explicitly stressed by interviewees in the German, Greek, Latvian, Mongolian, Polish, Slovak, Spanish, and Turkish Studies.

### ***The OSCE as a review and supervision institution***

Review and supervision, as key functions of the OSCE, were mentioned by a number of interviewees, among them respondents from the Albanian, Greek, Turkish, and Ukrainian Studies. These respondents did not limit the OSCE’s review function to any specific dimension.

### ***The OSCE as a lessons learnt and good practices agency***

Sharing of experiences, lessons learnt and good practices were mentioned as important functions of the OSCE by a significant number of the interviewees, among others in the Greek, Latvian, Mongolian, and the Turkish Studies.

These tasks were also not confined to certain issue areas.

### ***The OSCE as a capacity-building and training institution***

Training enjoyed about the same support as a relevant OSCE task by the respondents from several participating States – from the Albanian, Greek, Latvian and Mongolian Studies.

### ***The OSCE as a policy co-ordination institution***

Finally, *policy co-ordination* among international organizations was named as a key OSCE function by a surprisingly high number of respondents in the Greek, Latvian, Mongolian, Spanish, and Turkish Studies.

It is striking that these six functions and no others were mentioned again and again by interviewees from several participating States that differ from each other in many respects. This indicates that the OSCE’s basic *modus operandi* enjoys broad support.

## ***Issue Areas in Which the OSCE Should Remain / Become Active***

Quite different from the OSCE’s functions, where the interviewees concentrated on six tasks, the same respondents named almost two dozen issue areas where the OSCE should remain or become active. Almost all of these items are already on the OSCE agenda, whereas really innovative proposals were in short supply. The following presentation of the interviewees’



preferences is structured along the lines of the OSCE's three dimensions.

### *Tasks in the politico-military dimension*

Respondents from three countries, namely Poland, Turkey, and Finland, strongly supported the modernization of the conventional arms control (CAC) regime, with the key being the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. In the Polish Study we read:

“Apart from one respondent who made no reference to the CFE, all noted the unprecedented value of the CFE arms control regime. [...] A new functioning regime, which would cover conventional arms control and acknowledge states' considerations about the evolution of modern warfare, is a condition for OSCE's attuned modernization.”

It is remarkable that almost all Polish interviewees see a close relationship between the further development of CAC and the chances for the OSCE's re-vitalization. The Turkish Study also underlines the relevance of the CFE regime:

“The CFE regime is designed for several purposes in consolidating security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region. This regime provides comprehensive and equal guarantees for all States Parties. [...] In this respect, the CFE Flank Agreement, an integral part of the legally binding CFE regime, is the basic international instrument for maintaining regional and military stability and security in the Black Sea and the Caucasus.”

Experts from Finland, which is not a CFE State Party, also expressed interest in a future CAC regime: “Several experts saw specific added value to Finnish security in the prospect of updating the regime of conventional arms control for the future, albeit that Finland, as a militarily non-allied country, would have to work to guarantee an equal seat at the table of any post-CFE process.” (Finnish Study) The modernization of confidence- and security-building measures was also mentioned i.e. in the Greek Study, whereas the Serbian Study named the OSCE's politico-military dimension as one of the Organization's major strengths.

### *Tasks in the conflict cycle from prevention to post-conflict rehabilitation*

All phases of the conflict cycle from conflict prevention to conflict solution and post-conflict rehabilitation were named as key OSCE tasks by a number of interviewees: “Its [the OSCE's] core mandate remains conflict prevention and resolution.” (Greek Study) For conflict prevention this was echoed by respondents from the Latvian, Slovak, Spanish, and Ukrainian Studies, and for the resolution of the protracted conflicts by respondents from the Finnish and the Turkish Studies. For post-conflict rehabilitation, the Turkish Study emphasized: “The OSCE is a particularly successful and efficient organization in the post-conflict rehabilitation process.” This was echoed by respondents from the Slovak and the Serbian Studies. However, “all [Turkish] interviewees point[ed] out that the OSCE could not be used as an enforcement tool” (Turkish Study).

***Tasks related to ethno-political conflicts***

Ethno-political conflicts as an issue area for the OSCE were mentioned in the Turkish and in the Slovak Study that suggested that the “OSCE should contribute via the HCNM to sharing best practices and lessons learned in the integration of the Roma minority.”

***Tasks related to transnational threats***

Transnational threats, in general, as an OSCE task were addressed by respondents from the Mongolian and the Turkish Studies. More specifically, terrorism was mentioned by interviewees from the Greek, Kyrgyz, and Turkish Studies, that is, roughly by those who had expressed specific concern about terrorism in different respects. Drug trafficking and migration are mentioned in the Greek Study, cyber threats also in the Greek, the Slovak, and the Turkish Studies.

***Tasks related to police issues, border control, and field operations***

Police and border control issues as tasks of the OSCE were mentioned in the Greek and in the Turkish Studies. More specifically, the Kyrgyz Study sees “space for greater involvement of the OSCE in [...] border delimitation”. The Turkish Study notes that “the OSCE can make a substantial contribution [...] by effectively using its field missions”. An official Georgian draft document emphasizes “the importance of the resumption of an OSCE presence in the occupied regions of Georgia” (Georgian Study).

***Tasks in the economic and environmental dimension (EED)***

Interviewees brought forward only very few EED issues. “[E]nergy and environmental security” was mentioned in the Greek Study, energy security also in the Slovak Study. Ukrainian experts, however, rather critically assess the OSCE’s toolkit for addressing energy security threats (cf. Ukrainian Study). Finally, Kyrgyzstan would welcome OSCE assistance with the highly contentious issue of the use of water resources (cf. Kyrgyz Study). A role for the OSCE in good governance issues was addressed by respondents from the Greek and the Ukrainian Studies, with respect to corruption in the Kyrgyz Study.

***Tasks in the human dimension***

As expected, the most frequent mention as a key OSCE task was election monitoring, which was addressed by, among others, respondents from the Albanian, Spanish, and Turkish Studies. Interviewees from Kyrgyzstan asked more specifically for support of electoral reform (cf. Kyrgyz Study). The role of the OSCE in establishing democratic institutions was addressed by respondents from the Albanian, Georgian, Spanish, and Ukrainian Studies. The relevance of a common normative base was highlighted in the Finnish Study and the “implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms” by the Greek Study. Interviewees from Kyrgyzstan asked for assistance in the reform of the country’s education system (Kyrgyz Study).

To stress it again: These results cannot claim to be representative. However, the emerging trend of the statements largely reflects the current OSCE *status quo* on issue areas dealt with. The next chapter will consider in what way this *status quo* could be further developed.



## Conclusions and Recommendations

Different from the rest of this report, which solely reflects the threat perceptions of governments and related experts derived from official documents and interviews, the conclusions and recommendations in this chapter are those that the authors of the report have derived from the results of their research. They build on the analytical chapters of the report with additional assessments of the Ukrainian / Crimean crisis, which were incorporated into only some of the country studies due to the project schedule. The following conclusions and recommendations cannot be attributed to any government or interviewee but are the responsibility of the authors.

### *Convergent and Divergent Threat Perceptions*

The 2012 IDEAS Report “Towards a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community. From Vision to Reality” came to the conclusion: “Over the past two decades, the process of increasing convergence within the OSCE area has significantly advanced in many areas”<sup>1</sup>. But it also warned: “More recently, however, new lines of divergence have formed between the

OSCE participating States.” (ibid.12) This also applies to the development of the governments’ threat perceptions in the OSCE area.

There has been a strong trend of convergence of threat perceptions towards a focus on perceived internal and transnational threats, whereas the perception of classic military threats has faded away, at least in most states. However, this trend is not irreversible, and it has been called into question by opposing trends, most recently by the perception of military threats connected with the Ukrainian / Crimean crisis. The task of this chapter is to shed light on the question of what these mutually interfering trends of convergent and divergent threat perceptions could mean for the role and the tasks of the OSCE.

### *Strong Convergence of Domestic and Transnational Threat Perceptions*

While some perceived domestic threats are entirely generated internally, domestic and transnational perceived threats are often tightly linked. Transnational factors and global concerns can impact in many ways on internal affairs and cause what are then perceived as domestic threats and challenges. It is striking that the trend of a strong convergence of perceptions of domestic and transnational threats concerns both transformation and developed countries, countries involved in conflicts or situated in zones of instability as well as countries not involved in conflicts. The dominant problem seen almost everywhere

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Zellner (co-ordinator), Yves Boyer, Frank Evers, Isabelle Facon, Camille Grand, Ulrich Kühn, Lukasz Kulesa, Andrei Zagorski, Towards a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community. From Vision to Reality, Hamburg, Paris, Moscow, Warsaw 2012, p. 11. IDEAS was the acronym for “Initiative for the Development of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community”, jointly carried out by the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH), the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS), the Polish Institute of International Relations (PISM), and the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Russian Foreign Ministry (MGIMO).

is a general lack of governance capacity at all levels to address a multitude of threats perceived: transformation states complain of a lack of norms, rule and institutions; more developed states deplore a lack of suitable policies at national and international levels. The strong convergence in the perception of domestic and transnational threats constitutes a basis among the participating States for addressing these challenges with co-operative policies.

*What can the OSCE do to increase the governance capacities of its participating States to address transnational and related domestic threats? What constitutes the added value the Organization can contribute in this respect?*

Transnational threats and challenges represent, almost without exception, issues of a global character that concern different groups of participant States in different ways. Small and weak states are primarily looking for assistance in institution-building; states bordering crisis regions outside the OSCE area are striving for contributions to strengthen stability there; established democracies and larger powers desire contributions to strengthen global governance. If the OSCE wants to become more effective in addressing transnational threats and challenges, it must continue to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach in favour of a more structured strategy. Furthermore, the OSCE should remain aware that it is not the only international organization that is active in these fields. Other organizations, be they governmental or non-governmental, should not be considered as competitors but as partners. To arrive at an optimal co-operation and division of labour will require continuous attention.

To satisfy the needs of its smaller participating States, the OSCE can provide, through its field operations and other instruments, capacity-building and training, lessons learnt and best practices. In suitable areas where it enjoys specific strengths, it can also serve as a platform for sub-regional dialogue and policy co-ordination (cf. chap. 4). To fulfil the particular demands of participating States bordering crisis regions outside the OSCE area, the OSCE can strengthen the co-operation with its Mediterranean and Asian partner States in a focused manner, reflecting the specific needs of both groups. Finally, the OSCE should conceptualize its role as a UN regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter by implementing global UN conventions, striving for more parallel UN / OSCE initiatives, and acting to relieve the UN by taking over tasks of a genuinely regional character. As the discussion on the role of the OSCE as a UN regional arrangement is still rather empty in conceptual terms, further research and discussion are necessary.

### *Divergence of Military and Other External Threat Perceptions*

The Ukrainian / Crimean crisis has led to a new level of divergent perceptions of military and other external threats. This is by no means new; rather this divergence has built up in waves of crises including, but not limited to, Kosovo in 1999, Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, interrupted by attempts to re-establish pan-European co-operation such as the OSCE's current Helsinki + 40 process.

Another area of divergence which could lead to a dividing line is the relationship between the European Union and the Eurasian Union as manifested in the case of Ukraine, unless their mutual relations and ties with third countries are developed in accordance with OSCE and other international principles.

This is underpinned by a still-growing normative divergence. This particularly concerns the interrelationship of OSCE principles and norms in concrete situations. This is true for a number of issues, currently most prominently for the 1975 Helsinki principles of refraining from the threat or use of force, the inviolability of frontiers and the territorial integrity of States. Other important issues involve the self-determination of peoples, the protection of the rights of national minorities, the right to be or not to be a party to treaties or alliances, as well as the 1991 Moscow Document saying that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.

Today, we must acknowledge that the normative consensus within the OSCE has been challenged, at least in terms of the interpretation of still shared basic principles. It is clear that in Ukraine precedents have been created – for example, for the conditions under which military intervention is permissible – that can be used by other states to justify their actions in future crises, further eroding the normative consensus. These divergent perceptions and actions have further undermined the mutual confidence

among States that had already been shaken by earlier disputes. Multi-lateral co-operation has become more difficult, unilateral and bilateral approaches have received new impetus.

Altogether, the convergence in the perception of domestic and transnational threats, which would allow for more and deeper co-operation, interferes with divergent perceptions of military and other external threats that might block co-operation and foster unilateral behaviour. It remains the task of the OSCE to provide a forum for discussion and to foster co-operation – particularly in difficult times such as the current period.

### *The Prospects of the Helsinki + 40 Process*

The Helsinki + 40 process is currently the OSCE's main format for informal consultations. This kind of communication should be maintained in difficult times, particularly in view of the OSCE's inclusive character. Consequently, the Helsinki + 40 process should be continued. However, one cannot go on with a routine dialogue as if nothing has happened. Therefore, the Helsinki + 40 process should include the key questions of the current disputes searching for options for future co-operation in an environment hostile to such co-operation. The following items could be addressed:

*First*, the participating States could discuss the surprising convergence and also, in part, the divergence of perceptions of different kinds of threats, challenges and concerns that have been described and analyzed in this report. By doing

so they could learn to see things through the others' eyes.

*Second*, the participating States should discuss the question of how the normative consensus within the OSCE, embodied in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and other CSCE/OSCE documents, might be re-strengthened, specifically with respect to the relationship between self-determination and territorial integrity, and with respect to the relations between ethnic minorities in one state and "kin" states. Beyond any formal reconfirmation of the OSCE's normative *acquis* this requires an in-depth discussion of the OSCE principles and norms, and their mutual relationship in concrete cases.

*Third*, the participating States could discuss preventing the formation of dividing lines between existing and emerging political-economic groupings. It should also be discussed whether this represents a way to realize the vision of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. This issue might also require further research.

*Fourth*, the participating States could discuss steps to conceptualize and concretize the role of the OSCE as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

*Fifth*, the participating States could discuss how to achieve a more structured approach for better satisfying the various needs of different groups of participating States in addressing domestic and transnational threats and challenges. More

specifically, this could include sub-regional cross-border co-operation, an issue that needs further research and conceptualization.

*Sixth*, the participating States could look for ways and means to reform the OSCE's field operations adapting them to changed needs. The different forms of OSCE on-site engagement in Ukraine, and in particular the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, which could facilitate re-establishing a shared factual baseline on Ukraine, show the vitality of what has rightly been called one of the most relevant comparative advantages of the OSCE.

The whole range of threat perceptions analyzed in this report provides a long-term agenda for the OSCE. Even under difficult conditions, there is no alternative to the OSCE as a forum for communication and co-operation, striving for negotiated solutions for all kinds of problems including the Ukrainian / Crimean crisis.





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This report is the first joint production of a group of 20 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.

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Bishkek, Bratislava, Frankfurt/Main,  
The Hague, Hamburg, Helsinki, Kyiv,  
Madrid, Moscow, Riga, Tbilisi, Tirana,  
Ulaanbaatar, Vienna, Warsaw,  
Washington DC, April 2014**

**ISBN 978-3-00-045811-8**