



PERCEPTIONS OF THE OSCE IN EUROPE AND THE USA

Edited by Alexandra Dienes and Reinhard Krumm
With a foreword of Thomas Greminger, OSCE Secretary General

**FRIEDRICH
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**FES Regionalbüro für
Zusammenarbeit und
Frieden in Europa**

FES Regional Office for
Cooperation and Peace
in Europe

»Even though the OSCE is one of the most suitable diplomatic platforms for inclusive dialogue between East and West, this thought-provoking publication shows that it is perceived through different lenses in different participating States. Nevertheless, although perceptions and expectations for the OSCE might be diverse, the ultimate goal of achieving peace and stability is still a shared aspiration. In order to achieve it, we need to understand each other better, and this publication is an important contribution toward that end.«

Thomas Greminger,
OSCE Secretary General

Which role does the OSCE have in today's unpredictable and turbulent security environment? Experts from 14 different OSCE member states assess the perception of the organization in their respective countries.

The following questions concerning each country were asked:

- What is the perception of the OSCE?
- What are the expectations with regard to the OSCE?
- What is the role and significance of the OSCE in foreign policy?
- How have the above aspects changed over time?

With this publication the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung hopes to clarify each country's perceptions of the OSCE and thereby bring into sharper focus the goals and aims of the organization, which historically made such an important contribution towards ending the Cold War.

Perceptions of the OSCE in Europe and the USA

Edited by

Alexandra Dienes and Reinhard Krumm

*With a foreword of Thomas Greminger
OSCE Secretary General*

Vienna 2018

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Foreword

International security today is marked by increasing instability and tensions, with an ever greater risk of conflict. Traditional politico-military threats are joined by increasingly complex and interconnected transnational and global challenges in creating a widespread sense of uncertainty. Multilateral diplomacy should be a key instrument for addressing these challenges through meaningful dialogue and cooperation. Instead, deterrence and confrontation seem to be the main approaches to today's crises. Politics and diplomacy are increasingly governed by a zero-sum mentality, thus jeopardizing the very idea of co-operative security, one of the hallmarks of the Helsinki Final Act and the core concept of the OSCE.

Unfortunately these trends are not alien to our region. Indeed, European security is undergoing huge upheavals that have a destabilizing effect: core principles of the international security order are being challenged; military conflict has re-emerged against a backdrop of increasing unpredictability; nationalist and populist rhetoric is fostering identity-based politics; and distrust both between States and within societies continues to grow. Although multilateral diplomacy should be a key instrument for resolving these challenges, in the current context it is increasingly difficult to engage in meaningful diplomatic dialogue.

The Irish philosopher George Berkeley stated in his *Principles of Human Knowledge* that *esse est percipi*: to be is to be perceived. This is of particular relevance when it comes to developing the full potential of the OSCE. The Organization's decision-making structures, governed by the

participating States and the consensus rule, rely on how policymakers and senior diplomats in both Vienna and their capitals perceive the OSCE. Is it seen as a useful platform with the required toolbox and conceptual resources needed to achieve lasting stability and security? That is an extremely relevant question, particularly in the difficult times our region faces today. It is even more important – and difficult – to determine how to do it. I am firmly convinced that the OSCE has a critical role to play in responding effectively to the many challenges confronting our region, and it is the shared responsibility of both the participating States and the Organization itself to ensure that we are well prepared to do so.

The OSCE has the flexibility, tools and expertise to be a robust force for stability and peace. This is our mandate and our *raison d'être*. The OSCE should be perceived as the natural diplomatic forum for solving today's crisis of trust between the West and Russia, just as it was perceived as the organization best placed to monitor the crisis in and around Ukraine and to steer the political process working toward a peaceful solution. In full compliance with our core principles and commitments we need to find pragmatic ways to rebuild trust among participating States. For example, the Structured Dialogue initiative, our flagship dialogue process launched at the 2016 Hamburg Ministerial Council, is designed to overcome the stalemate in discussions on politico-military security. It has already provoked useful discussions on threat perceptions, force postures, military doctrines and military risk reduction measures. Further down the road I hope it will lead to a renewed focus on conventional arms control.

Our organization is already seen by participating States as the appropriate forum for enhancing co-operative security in some areas. For example, the OSCE Secretariat, Institutions and field presences already

assist participating States in addressing a number of common challenges, including terrorism and violent extremism, cyber-threats, large flows of refugees and migrants, and trafficking in drugs, arms and people. I encourage participating States to identify other areas of converging interests and shared challenges – what the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung has called »islands of co-operation« – and to use the OSCE to start taking incremental steps to address them.

The OSCE still has room to do more and better. I have identified a number of areas for reform that would, with the support of the participating States, ensure that the Organization is »fit for purpose«. For example, the Organization needs to maximize its impact on the ground through its existing field operations, but we should also consider new, flexible approaches to adding value, both East and West of Vienna. Leveraging our partnerships, in particular with the UN but also with other regional organizations and with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, is another crucial element. Further steps are needed to bring gender and youth into the mainstream of our work. There is also room for improving administrative and organizational procedures on issues such as the budget, human resources policies and information technology systems. We must also work to promote the Organization better, so that it receives the attention it deserves, not only from senior officials but also from ordinary citizens, for its role in preventing conflict and strengthening stability and security.

Even though the OSCE is one of the most suitable diplomatic platforms for inclusive dialogue between East and West, this thought-provoking publication shows that it is perceived through different lenses in different participating States. Nevertheless, although perceptions and expectations for the OSCE might be diverse, the ultimate goal of achieving peace and stability is still a shared aspiration. In order to achieve it, we need to

understand each other better, and this publication is an important contribution toward that end. I am grateful to the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe for undertaking this important effort.

Thomas Greminger
OSCE Secretary General

Introduction

It seems difficult not to describe the current precarious security situation in Europe as a »Return to the Cold War«. Robert Legvold, a specialist on the history of the original Cold War, used this term as the title of his latest book.¹ His colleague Eugene Rumer calls the current situation »Cold War, Twenty-First-Century Style«. ² Others are more cautious and emphasize that the world is not facing a global East-West conflict, but experiencing rather heavy turbulence in the foreign relations of Russia and the West (the West herein meaning the EU and the US). More broadly the situation might be described as a conflict between liberal-democratic regimes and authoritarian regimes.

Nonetheless the fact remains that no matter how the status quo is described, today the West and Russia seem poised on the edge of serious confrontation. Europe currently faces a situation in which the trust of the EU and the US towards Russia (and vice versa) is at a very low level. This does not reflect a sudden change of circumstances brought about overnight, but is the result of the development of the European security order over the last 25 years. The countries involved have seen unfulfilled or changing expectations concerning a European security order, as well as almost contradictory perceptions of threats. Consequently, almost everyone feels threatened: the EU by Russia, the US by Russia, and in turn Russia feels under threat foremost by the US and NATO.

1 Robert Legvold, *Return to the Cold War*, Cambridge 2016.

2 Eugene Rumer, *Russia and the West in a New Standoff*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., June 14, 2017, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/06/14/russia-and-west-in-new-standoff-pub-71250>.

Introduction

Because of the gravity of this situation some experts and politicians have looked to the Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE) for inspiration and solutions. It is the only organization whose membership includes all states challenged by the crumbling security order in Europe. Today's situation is a far cry from the optimistic wording expressed in the Paris Charter in 1990³, »For a New Europe«, which at the time was the goal of all member states of the Conference for Co-operation and Security in Europe (CSCE), known since 1994 as the OSCE.

The crisis in and around Ukraine did much to bring the OSCE back to life. Today the organization is responsible for preventing a serious deterioration of the situation. Furthermore, the reports by the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM)⁴ are considered the most valued information source for events on the ground. The OSCE has many tasks to perform in accordance with the concept of comprehensive and co-operative security achieved through its three dimensions: politico-military, economic and environmental, and human.

To explore what kind of role the OSCE has in today's security environment, the Regional Office for Co-operation and Peace in Europe (ROCPE) of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung asked experts from 14 different OSCE member states to assess the perception of the organization in their respective countries.

The following questions concerning each country were asked:

- What is the perception of the OSCE?
- What are the expectations with regard to the OSCE?
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- How have the above aspects changed over time?

3 <https://www.osce.org/mc/39516?download=true>, last visited 21.11.2017.

4 <http://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine>, last visited 21.11.2017.

With this publication the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung hopes to impart the wide range of opinions articulated in the texts, clarify each country's perceptions of the OSCE and thereby bring into sharper focus the goals and aims of the organization, which historically made such an important contribution towards ending the Cold War. The OSCE's values and vision may again become very relevant in these unpredictable and turbulent times.

Austria – Engaged Neutrality

Heinz Gärtner

The Origins

The neutral and non-aligned states of Europe heavily influenced the content of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, as the outcome of negotiations within the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).¹ At the CSCE Austria, together with other Neutral and Non-Aligned States, formed the NNA Group, a loose association of Neutral and Non-Aligned European States, which were not members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Warsaw Pact or any other alliance. From 1975 until the end of the Cold War, these states offered mediation and good offices and fought against the stagnation of the détente policy.

Neutrality as an option was explicitly included in the Final Act²:

»Within the framework of international law, all the participating States have equal rights and duties. (...) They also have the right to belong or not to belong to international organizations, to be or not to be a party to bilateral or multilateral treaties including the right to be or not to be a party to treaties of alliance; they also have the right to neutrality.«

1 P. Terrence Hopmann, *From Helsinki I to Helsinki II? The Role of the Neutral and Non-aligned States in the OSCE, Engaged Neutrality: An evolved Approach to the Cold War*, Heinz Gärtner (ed.), (Lexington/Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, Maryland), 2017, 43–160.

2 Conference on Security, and Co-operation in Europe, Final Act, Helsinki 1975.

Austria and the other NNA states saw in the CSCE an opportunity to break down barriers between the two dominant alliance systems in Europe, NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and to try to override the Cold War divisions with a new normative structure to enhance security in a divided Europe. The importance of the CSCE and since 1995 the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) for small neutral states is widely recognized; the importance of small neutral states to the CSCE/OSCE and to international relations more generally has been underestimated, however.³ The focus on power in the international system, rather than influence within international organizations, has in many ways led the great powers to dismiss the possibility that small neutral states can act strategically to preserve their security while at the same time contributing to the stability and efficacy of the CSCE.

The small neutral and non-aligned states were able to engineer influence in the organization. They could do this by using the built-in rules, decision-making procedures and strong norms favoring equality and negotiation over confrontation. The consensus decision-making rule gave small states a voice in the operations of the CSCE during the East-West Conflict. In fact, without too much exaggeration, the operational modalities of the CSCE itself gave the opportunity for any state, regardless of size, to engineer influence, but the small NNA states were the ones who had one of the largest stakes as regards keeping the process alive in order to have their voice heard. It is no surprise, then, that the NNAs were able to get their interests across in the CSCE. The CSCE held three major review conferences after the signature of the Helsinki Final Act, all in capitals of neutral or non-aligned countries, namely Madrid, Belgrade, and Vienna. For the most part, the OSCE Chair-in-Office, the

3 Michael W. Mosser, *Engineering Influence: The Subtle Power of Small States in the CSCE/OSCE*, Heinz Gärtner/ Erich Reiter (ed.), *Small States and Alliances*, The Hague-London, 2000.

most important political post in the OSCE, has been held by neutral or non-aligned states, as well as by middle powers that are aligned with a major power bloc.⁴

The status of non-alignment had both a realist and an idealist dimension during the East-West Conflict. Realist insofar as it kept political independence in a bipolar environment, at the apex of which Austria and Sweden formed a neutral barrier between the two blocs. Austria served as a buffer zone that had limited effect between the highly armed military blocs. Sweden contributed to the Nordic balance; had it become a NATO-member the Soviet Union would have increased its influence on Finland. The neutral states acted as idealists because they tried to reduce the tensions between the blocs by mediation and through the offer of good offices. The CSCE provided an institutional basis. Like other neutral states Austria opposed conflict resolution by force and committed to non-participation in this type of operation unless they became the target of a violent attack themselves. However they participated in the peace operations of the United Nations. Austria wanted to demonstrate that neutrality does not mean isolation and staying out of international affairs. Austria committed itself to adopting a position that could not be interpreted as hostile by other states, no matter whether they were members of an alliance or not.

After the East-West Conflict the OSCE Remains Attractive for Austria

After the end of the Cold War the major states assigned the OSCE a lesser role and the expanding NATO and a newly formed Collective Security Treaty Organization a larger role in European security. In contrast to the

4 P. Terrence Hopmann, *From Helsinki I to Helsinki II? The Role of the Neutral and Non-aligned States in the OSCE, Engaged Neutrality: An evolved Approach to the Cold War*, Heinz Gärtner (ed.), (Lexington/Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, Maryland), 2017, 43–160.

military and economic powers that otherwise dominated the international relations of Europe and the North Atlantic area, Austria continued to consider the OSCE as a vehicle through which its views about security issues could be addressed.

The OSCE is based on the concept of comprehensive and co-operative security. It still has the legacy of its predecessor, the CSCE process, which at the height of the Cold War built on the idea that security in Europe is indivisible. Adopting the academic concept of Karl Deutsch, the CSCE developed the concept of a security community in which a group of states with a certain level of common values and mutual accountability came together for the purpose of creating a stable and peaceful order. Although the tensions between Russia and the West were already increasing, the OSCE-summit in Astana 2010 produced a remarkable document. The Heads of State or Government of the fifty six participating States of the OSCE recommitted themselves »to the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals«. The conflict in Ukraine prevented any later Chairmanship from reviving the concept. However, Austria's Chairmanship in 2017 still provides an opportunity to contribute to its renewal.

The normative underpinnings of the OSCE remain attractive to Austria, which rejects power politics in international relations that leave less powerful states with little or no influence over matters that concern their vital security, as well as their economic and humanitarian interests. Co-operative security offers the possibility of co-decision for every operation with neutral states. Crisis management, conflict prevention, and humanitarian aid efforts can be conducted within the framework of the EU, NATO-Partnerships or the OSCE.

Austria's Engaged Neutrality

Austria as a small neutral state can contribute to conflict prevention in the framework of the OSCE-process by offering not only »good services« (e.g. election monitoring) and mediation, but also troops for peacekeeping operations (e.g. for Ukraine after a ceasefire with UN-authorization). The focus of Austria's civilian contribution is on the »Special Monitoring Mission« (SMM) of the OSCE in Ukraine. In 2015 the Austrian Ambassador Martin Sajdik was appointed as the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and to the Trilateral Contact Group on the implementation of the peace plan in the East of Ukraine.

The Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project of November 2015 formulated some practical lessons for the OSCE from the crisis in and around Ukraine. It presents solutions for the Central and Eastern European countries »in-between« Russia and the West that seek to provide reassurance about their future. Apart from alliance membership, the proposals include military co-operation outside the alliance framework and permanent or time-limited neutrality. Austria's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2017 could raise the issue of neutrality for Ukraine. The Chairmanship could apply the lessons learnt from Austria's experience of neutrality to Ukraine. As a diplomatic solution, the Austrian model could be an interesting alternative for Ukraine and other »in-between« states.

Diplomacy and conflict prevention are traditionally fields in which Austria can be active. Neutrality must not be interpreted as »sitting still« in the integral sense of sitting on the sidelines as has been seen in the past. This definition would support economic neutrality and equidistance between the blocs, and would be incompatible with Austria's role in the OSCE. Austria's neutrality has never oriented itself along the lines

discussed in literature on neutrality, allowing it to prove its flexibility. In contrast to disengagement and staying out, »engaged neutrality« means active participation in the international security policy in general, and in international peace operations in particular. Engaged neutrality means involvement whenever possible and staying out of international affairs if necessary; it does not mean staying out of international affairs whenever possible and engagement only if necessary. Multilateralism within the OSCE, readiness to talk, and co-operative security take priority for Austria. There is a significant difference between a policy that orients itself along the lines of the principles of the OSCE, and one that primarily supports military intervention, arms build-up, and military alliances.

Belarus – From crisis to new initiatives

Arseni Sivitski

The Republic of Belarus has been a full-fledged member of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) since 30 January 1992. Before entering the OSCE, Belarus joined such fundamental documents as the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Today Belarus actively participates in the processes of elaborating and adopting OSCE decisions and documents, thus making its contribution to the development of the European dialogue on security and co-operation issues. As Belarus is the only country in Europe outside of the Council of Europe, it has no choice but to take the OSCE seriously as it remains the largest European forum in which Belarus can promote its own international initiatives and co-operate with the West. However, since 1991 Belarus has become a constant target of criticism as a result of violations of human rights and democratic procedures.

Today Belarus takes part in the Organization's activities within the framework of the OSCE Permanent Council, Forum for Security Co-operation, Joint Consultative Group, Open Skies Consultative Commission and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as well as through practical implementation of the OSCE principles and mechanisms stipulated in the basic documents.

The neutral position of Belarus in the light of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, along with the provision of a negotiating platform for reaching agreements in Minsk in the autumn of 2014 were concrete contributions by Belarus to the OSCE anti-crises efforts. Now Belarus is trying to advance

a new grand peacekeeping initiative, the so-called Helsinki 2.0, a broad dialogue aimed at overcoming the existing differences in the relations between the countries in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region. In this way Belarus is trying to avoid involvement in the Russia-West confrontation on the Kremlin's side and seeks to find a new source of legitimacy with respect to the West.

Crisis in Relations

In the early 1990s, the relationship between Belarus and the OSCE developed well. Belarus quickly reduced its military arsenal, which had remained in the country after the collapse of the USSR and agreed to the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from the Belarusian territory to Russia. In 1992, Belarus initiated the creation of the OSCE Minsk Group on the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in order to facilitate negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In 1996, after Alexander Lukashenko's Constitutional referendum and the dissolution of the thirteenth Supreme Soviet of the Belarusian Parliament, the relationship between Belarus and the OSCE deteriorated significantly. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) joined in the criticism and the question of the legitimate representatives of Belarus in this body became an issue. As a consequence, the representatives of the new parliament of Belarus formed after the Constitutional referendum were not granted a seat at the OSCE PA and therefore the opposition delegates from the thirteenth Supreme Soviet continued their duties.

In order to overcome this crisis, the Credentials Committee of the OSCE PA offered to form a working group of the OSCE PA on Belarus and the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group (AMG) in Belarus. These mechanisms

became the most important channels of influence for the OSCE and its structures on the political process in Belarus. The mandate of the OSCE AMG was to assist the Belarusian authorities in promoting democratic institutions and in complying with other OSCE commitments, as well as to monitor and report on this process.

Serious accusations regarding the OSCE AMG and its work began after the 2000 parliamentary elections. President Alexander Lukashenko took the view that the time had come to reconsider the role and the place of the OSCE AMG in Belarus. This immediately generated a new wave of criticism from officials, governmental institutions and Belarusian television. Lukashenko also declared that the OSCE AMG had openly supported the opposition during the 2001 presidential election campaign. As a result of this conflict, Ambassador Hans-Georg Wiecek was forced to retire as the Head of the OSCE AMG in Belarus, a position that he had held since its creation in December 1997.

In 2002, all foreigners who worked for the OSCE AMG were required to leave Belarus, in the main because their visas or accreditations were not extended. The work of the Mission as a whole was paralysed. According to the official statements, the OSCE AMG would no longer be able to operate in its present form. However, the Belarusian side did not completely reject co-operation with the OSCE, but made relations conditional on mutual trust, respect for the opinions of the host country, and clear and understandable definitions of its goals and tasks.

Overcoming Contradictions and a New Crisis

In November 2002, the OSCE Secretary General Ján Kubiš paid a visit to Belarus in an attempt to overcome the crisis and to make a fresh start in

relations between the OSCE and the Republic. The emphasis of his visit was to look to the future, leaving behind the recent problematic period in relations. As a result, the OSCE Permanent Council resolved to close the AMG by 31 December 2002 and to open an OSCE Office in Minsk on 1 January 2003. The OSCE and Belarus also signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

In accordance with the Decision of the Permanent Council, the main tasks of the Office were: firstly to assist the Belarusian Government in further promoting institution building, consolidating the rule of law and in developing relations with civil society in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments; secondly to support the Belarusian Government in its efforts to develop economic and environmental activities; and thirdly to monitor and accurately report on the above mentioned objectives.

However, in December 2010, Belarusian officials closed the OSCE Office in Minsk following massive criticism of the Presidential election, which related to the brutal crackdown on the opposition and civil society on the evening of 19 December. According to official statements however, the decision was taken because there were no objective reasons for retaining the OSCE Office any longer as the mission had fulfilled its mandate.

In fact, since 1996, all presidential and parliamentary elections in Belarus have been criticised by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) for violations of democratic procedures. However, sharp criticism of Belarus in regard to concerns about human rights and democratic standards have never been a serious obstacle in co-operation with the OSCE on other questions such as in political-military and economic-environmental dimensions.

A Proactive Approach

According to the official position, Belarus is interested in a wider use of the scope and potential of the OSCE, with a view to strengthening security in the Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian areas and to creating favourable conditions for the development of co-operation. In this regard Belarus traditionally positions itself as one of the most active and consistent supporters of a comprehensive reform of the OSCE and seeks to eliminate current imbalances and shortcomings in the Organization's activities.

In 2003, under the chairmanship of Belarus, the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension was drafted and adopted at the OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Maastricht, the Netherlands. Belarus successfully chaired the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (April-July 2005), and the Open Skies Consultative Commission (September-December 2008). In 2009 – 2010, the Republic of Belarus made a substantive input to the development of the «Corfu Process» – a broad dialogue within the OSCE on issues of European security and the functioning of the Organization. The Permanent Representative of Belarus to the OSCE acted as Coordinator of the «Corfu debates» on economic and environmental challenges to security. Belarus also took an active part in the «Helsinki +40» process that started in 2012 and was aimed at the practical implementation of building a security community and forming the strategic vision of the OSCE's future, as highlighted in the Final Declaration of the Astana OSCE Summit of 2010.

In both general and thematic discussions, Belarus has promoted the need to strengthen mutual confidence as an integral component of building a genuine security community in the OSCE area. Belarus emphasized also the inadmissibility of the application of sanctions and restrictive measures among the participating states, advocated the harmonization

and complementarity of integration processes and stood against the formation of new dividing lines on the continent. The Belarusian side has underscored the importance of effective reform of the OSCE while continuing to preserve the consensus procedure, securing the OSCE's legal personality and its transformation into a full-fledged international organization. In addition, the need for an equal approach to all participating states, and the inadmissibility of geographical and thematic distortions in the activities of the OSCE has been stressed. As well as the importance of developing and harmonizing common criteria for monitoring elections, optimizing the activities of the humanitarian programme cycle has been mentioned.

A Security and Stability Provider

Since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014, Belarus has become a regional security and stability provider, providing a neutral negotiating platform and hosting consultations of the OSCE Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine. However, the real contribution of Belarus to regional stability and security does not end with diplomatic efforts. Belarus has also formulated security guaranties, which prevent foreign states from establishing military bases on their territory or using it to commit acts of aggression against other countries. (It was for this reason in 2015 that Russia was not permitted to create an airbase on Belarus territory, because Minsk's status as a peacemaker and intermediary in negotiations would have been compromised).

Belarusian authorities are focusing on and promoting some additional transparency and trust-building measures between Belarus and neighboring countries, as well as NATO, in order to avoid miscalculations and misinterpretations, which could lead to significant changes in the threat

perception between Belarus and NATO. These measures are related to military activities in accordance with the Vienna Document, including joint ones with Russia. Minsk therefore invited more than 80 observers to the Zapad-2017 drills, which took place on 14–20 September. The observers came from neighboring countries as well as from international organizations such as the UN, OSCE, CIS, the International Committee of the Red Cross and for the first time NATO – even though the parameters of the drills were below the threshold figures that trigger the notification protocols of the Vienna Document.

Belarus has successfully converted its contribution to the security and stability in the region into a positive source of normalizing relations with the EU and US. The perception of Belarus in the West has changed significantly and Belarus is now seen as a regional security and stability provider. As the result of these shifts Belarus was honored to host the 26th session of the OSCE PA in Minsk on July 5–9, 2017, during which the Belarusian authorities tried to advance the diplomatic success of the Minsk negotiating platform. In order to consolidate progress Belarus promoted the nomination of the outstanding Belarusian diplomat, the Ambassador to Austria, Alena Kupchyna for the position of OSCE Secretary-General. However the crackdown on civil protests during the Freedom Day rally in Minsk on 25 March 2017 made this appointment impossible.

Helsinki 2.0

In late 2016 the Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko suggested starting a new negotiation process, similar to the Helsinki Process, to regulate the relations between the East and the West. In his words, this idea was based on the positive effect of the »Normandy Four« events in Minsk.

In his Address to the 26th OSCE PA plenary session in Minsk, President Lukashenko once more repeated this suggestion. According to the President, there is an apparent need to renew the pan-European dialogue on measures to strengthen trust, security and co-operation. This he believes should be done bearing in mind the enormous positive experience associated with the Helsinki Process of the 1970s that resulted in the creation of the OSCE. Lukashenko believes that all this points to the relevance of launching a new Helsinki Process, with a broad dialogue aimed at overcoming the existing differences in relations between the countries in our Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region, including China.

From the official point of view, such a process could facilitate the signing of a global pact by the world's major powers that would finally put an end to the Cold War that is long concluded, and would exclude the possibility of its renewal and escalation in a more tragic form, whilst offering a strategic vision of new constructive relations in the OSCE region. If this idea gains support, Belarus is ready to become the launching ground for the process and would announce an enlarged OSCE meeting within the framework of the new Helsinki Process, starting preparations for a final summit in 2020. Belarus is also in favor of setting up a group of like-minded stakeholders to promote this idea, and intends to use other international organizations alongside the OSCE to this end.

Although OSCE PA President Christine Muttunen has supported the idea, there is still a lack of understanding and conceptualization of this initiative. It seems that such a grand initiative is irrelevant to ongoing discussions within the framework of so called Structured Dialogue, proposed by Frank-Walter Steinmeier during Germany's OSCE Chairmanship in 2016. However, the 26th session of the OSCE PA has already brought some dividends to Minsk – the resolution criticizing Belarus was not included in the final declaration. Without doubt, Belarus is trying to promote the

idea of a new Helsinki process in order to avoid involvement in the Russia-West confrontation on the Kremlin's side, and to provide itself with a new source of legitimacy in the international arena. It remains to be seen whether this initiative will gain real support or not.

France – Keeping the organization afloat

Barbara Kunz

Introduction

Although initially skeptical, France is associated with a number of milestones and important events in the history of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and later the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). As the name of course indicates, the Charter of Paris was signed in the French capital in 1990. French diplomat Marc Perrin de Brichambaut served as the Organization's Secretary General from 2005 to 2011.¹ Yet the OSCE is not a key topic in the French foreign policy debate. Largely unknown to the wider public, the organization does not seem to play a significant role for politicians either. For instance, although pan-European security conferences were proposed by several candidates during the 2017 presidential campaign – the OSCE was never mentioned. Likewise, within the context of the Ukraine conflict and Russia's foreign policy behavior, references to the Paris Charter, or the Helsinki acquis more broadly, are generally absent from the public debate.

At the same time, French engagement within and for the OSCE was and continues to be considerable. For instance, Paris always ensures that it sends observers on election monitoring missions. France of course also

¹ The fact that France never sought the Chairmanship – be it on its own or, as suggested some years ago, along with Germany or even in a Weimar constellation – is generally explained by a (tacit) agreement that none of the four participating states with a permanent UNSC seat would do so.

plays a key role in the attempts at solving a number of the conflicts dealt with by the organization. Moreover, since the summer of 2017 France has held one of the key positions in the organization – former Socialist Minister for European Affairs Harlem Désir was appointed OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Across the organization, there are more than forty French nationals working directly for one of its bodies.

It has long been the policy of EU member states to speak with a single voice in OSCE decision-making bodies.² Specific French approaches to the OSCE are thus not always easy to identify. Yet there are of course a number of issues of particular relevance to Paris, just as there is French expectation vis-à-vis the organization.

Internal Matters: An Organization at a Crossroads

As French ambassador to the OSCE, Véronique Roger Lacan explained in a recent speech on the occasion of France's national holiday on 14 July 2017, the OSCE is »an organization at a crossroads«.³ Concerns pertain to a number of issues, ranging from the organization's governance and ability to handle its activities at the resource and capabilities levels, to issues directly linked to the current political situation between Russia and the West. The organization's funding – and in particular the inequalities at EU member states' disadvantage – is also widely perceived as a problem, leading to questions about the »added value« of the OSCE. France would most certainly like to see the organization's governance improved. For the time being, general ambitions within and for the OSCE

2 See: [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquartershomepage_en/2297/Organisation%20for%20Security%20&%20Co-operation%20in%20Europe%20\(OSCE\)](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquartershomepage_en/2297/Organisation%20for%20Security%20&%20Co-operation%20in%20Europe%20(OSCE)).

3 Author's translation, <https://osce.delegfrance.org/Intervention-de-l-Ambassadeurice-Veronique-ROGER-LACAN-le-14-juillet-2017>.

are nevertheless limited given the realities that need to be dealt with. Keeping the organization afloat is thus already an objective in itself.

Overarching Issues: the European Security Order, Hard Security and the Third Dimension

As became clear during the 2017 presidential campaign, Emmanuel Macron intends to follow his predecessor's line when it comes to issues pertaining to the European security order. No major changes in French policy are consequently to be expected: any violation of the Helsinki acquis is unacceptable. This sets the tone for the general outlook on OSCE affairs in France.

With questions pertaining to the very fundamentals of the European security order being at the centre of attention, arms control is one key issue. France deplores the unilateral suspension of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe; last December's failed Vienna Document update; as well as interpretations that run counter to the Open Skies Treaty's spirit, thus hampering this important instrument's potential for transparency and confidence building.⁴ Accordingly France calls for a »permanent and fully efficient conventional arms control regime in Europe«. Regarding the Vienna Document, France recently proposed lowering the notification threshold for exercises and was supported by forty-five participating states in this matter. At the same time, French support for the Steinmeier initiative and the OSCE's recently launched structured dialogue⁵ arguably, given the

4 <https://osce.delegfrance.org/Maitrise-des-armements-conventionnels-difficultes-et-perspectives>.

5 The OSCE Structured Dialogue on current and future challenges and risks was launched by Foreign Ministers at the OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2016. It addresses »challenges in the wider politico-military sphere, explore possibilities of overcoming divergences and reversing the negative developments that have marked European security in the past years«. For more information, see <http://www.osce.org/chairmanship/310481>.

gravity of the crisis, stems more from Franco-German loyalty than from a genuine belief in the potential of those ideas to overcome East-Western divides.

Yet, France is also wary of attempts at reducing the OSCE's role to hard security matters. The »dismantling« of the third dimension by Russia and others is thus perceived as a real danger, given that they view attempts at rejecting anything related to the human dimension as interference in national affairs or as the promotion of Western values and interests. The newly appointed Representative on Freedom of the Media, Harlem Désir, declared in an interview in August 2017 »the safety of journalists is my absolute priority. In terms of the physical safety of journalists and impunity for crimes committed against them, I will address this issue whenever it occurs in the OSCE region«. ⁶ Désir also stressed that he would address many other challenges brought about by the digitalization of media, including violent extremism.

France, the OSCE and Conflict Resolution

From a French perspective, not unsurprisingly, Ukraine is the single dominant issue. French diplomacy plays a crucial role in Western efforts to solve the Ukraine crisis. Not only is France one of the four Normandy format countries; it is also involved in the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine⁷. While the link between the two is perhaps not entirely clear,

6 See Committee to Protect Journalists, Q&A: Impunity and journalist safety are priority says new OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Harlem Désir, 8 August 2017, <https://cpj.org/blog/2017/08/qa-impunity-and-journalist-safety-are-priority-say.php>.

7 The Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine is composed of representatives of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the OSCE and serves as a mediator in the crisis. Currently headed by Martin Sajdik from Austria, its work takes place in four sub-groups on political issues, security, economics and humanitarian issues respectively. The political sub-group is headed by the French diplomat Pierre Morel. The three other sub-groups are headed by representatives from Turkey, Germany and Switzerland.

France is a key actor in attempts to solve the Ukraine crisis. Within the Normandy format, meetings regularly take place at the level of heads of state/government, foreign ministers or political directors. As President Macron explained during a joint press conference on the occasion of Ukrainian president Poroshenko's visit to Paris in June 2017, he wants to »intensify« the efforts made within the Normandy format with the participation of the OSCE. At the same meeting, he also emphasized that the Minsk agreements were the best basis for negotiations on a settlement. Pierre Morel, a senior French diplomat and (among many other postings) former ambassador to Moscow, has headed the Contact Group's sub-group on political issues since May 2015. Furthermore, France funds roughly 11 per cent of the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission. Germany and France also send observers and support the Mission with information.

Ukraine is not the only conflict in the OSCE area in which France is actively seeking a solution. France is one of the co-chairs of the Minsk Group along with the United States and the Russian Federation, attempting to find a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict facing Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The OSCE and Wider French Foreign Policy Priorities

With respect to general French foreign policy priorities, two areas dealt with in an OSCE context might appear as being of particular interest to France: the Mediterranean dimension and the fight against terrorism. Enhancing co-operation with the OSCE's Mediterranean partners is thus indeed seen as potentially beneficial, not least because European experiences in terms of diversified notions of security or confidence building could be valuable in that particular regional context.

As far as the fight against terrorism is concerned, Paris is, in turn, rather careful. While undoubtedly the issue is a top priority for France, there are also fears that talking terrorism at the OSCE primarily serves Russian interests. Moreover, the OSCE lacks the necessary expertise in this matter to be of interest to Paris. Beyond co-operation in certain niche areas (such as passenger data exchange) and more generally the exchange of best practice, the organization thus does not seem to be the most useful framework to work within.

In sum, in France the OSCE is perceived as a potentially valuable tool – a tool that does not, however, come without limitations and pitfalls. Unlike perhaps some of its European partners, France has a primarily instrumental view of the OSCE. Many view it as a useful tool among others, but do not necessarily attach the same sentimental value to it as do representatives from some other countries. It is not a political priority, yet there certainly is an interest in the organization in so far as it embodies the corpus of principles that govern (or at least should govern) the European security order. Likewise, the OSCE is the forum for discussions for that framework. This is the primary reason behind France's interest in preserving the organization.

Georgia – Optimism has diminished

Paata Gaprindashvili

After the Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has reasserted its relevance and has become more visible on the global stage. However, Georgians also believe that the OSCE as a platform for co-operation has been diminishing as the OSCE is increasingly being used as a forum for mutual accusations about violations of key commitments. Efforts to underpin the strong leadership of the Secretariat of the organization and independence of its key institutions: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative of Freedom of the Media are being constantly tested.

The State of Georgia's Foreign Policy

Georgia continues to believe that the OSCE together with its institutions is an important organization which should play a leading role in promoting security, strengthening peace, stability, democracy and human rights in Europe. Georgia highly values the OSCE's role in the Geneva International Discussions, as well as in the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) and will further support the OSCE in order to ensure its increased role in confidence building¹.

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, *Georgia's foreign policy strategy 2015–2018*. Available at <https://goo.gl/kvqu2U> last accessed on October 12, 2017.

Much remains to be done in Georgia in terms of democratic institution building, although the country has made considerable progress in building a functioning state since gaining its independence in 1991. Georgia and its citizens have firmly decided to integrate with the West, particularly by deepening ties with the EU and NATO. Despite certain setbacks, notably the ruling political party's unrivalled power, there is no alternative to upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as well as developing the market economy for ensuring the long-term development and stability of the country.

For the first time, in 2012 Georgia had a peaceful change of government through democratic elections. The ruling party, the Georgian Dream has been in power ever since. There have been a number of controversial messages from government high officials, including the former Prime Minister and allegedly current informal leader, Bidzina Ivanishvili, about the country's foreign and security policy; but overall the foreign policy priorities of the country have not changed. »Georgia's membership to the EU and NATO constitutes the top priority for the country's foreign and security policy, which is strongly supported by the majority of the population.«²

At the same time the government has tried to pursue a »new, more balanced policy« vis-a-vis Russia by establishing a bilateral channel for dialogue with Moscow. Georgian and Russian representatives are mandated to talk about and promote trade relations, transport, communication and humanitarian-cultural relations between the two countries. Interestingly, according to the mandate of this forum, it can also address »other possible spheres of co-operation«.³ With the launching of bilateral talks Tbilisi

2 The Government of Georgia, *Communication Strategy on Georgia's Membership to the EU and NATO for 2017–2020*. Available at <http://www.eu-nato.gov.ge/en/news/7079> last accessed on October 13, 2017.

3 #39 Decree of the Prime Minister of Georgia, available at <https://goo.gl/naKm5p> last accessed on October 13, 2017.

hoped that the government's »new policy« towards Russia would bring some positive results. The limited progress hitherto achieved in certain areas, however, has not crossed into the security sphere. Moreover, the situation has even deteriorated and Russia has further solidified its unlawful position in Georgia⁴.

The OSCE's Mission to Georgia

In the early 1990's, separatist movements in South Ossetia and Abkhazia resulted in ethnic cleansing and the forcible displacement of several thousand citizens, mainly ethnic Georgians. In 1994, 1996 and 1999 Ministerial and Summit meetings, OSCE participating states, including Russia, recognized the ethnic cleansing and called for appropriate actions to reverse it. Finally, as a result of the 2008 war between Russian and Georgia, Russia unilaterally recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia and established military bases on these territories.

To respond to the challenges that Georgia's young democracy faced in the early 1990's, the OSCE deployed one of its largest missions to Georgia, which unfortunately was discontinued in 2008 due to Russia's opposition to it. In addition, the OSCE has served as a political platform for Georgia to raise concerns, to make its voice heard as well as for working with its partners to address common security threats.

The OSCE and particularly its Mission to Georgia struggled with the deterioration of the South Ossetia situation. However, throughout the decade the OSCE, together with the Mission, were rightly perceived by the public as a positive force and stabilizing factor. In addition, the OSCE

4 Interview with Government official, who wished to remain anonymous.

Border Monitoring Operation that operated from 1999 to 2005 was a success; at its full capacity it was able to monitor 140 km of the border between Russia and Georgia. In 2005, the OSCE Mission led an international needs assessment study of the socio-economic infrastructure in the conflict zone of South Ossetia. After more than 8 million euros was pledged by OSCE donor states at the OSCE donor's conference in 2006, the Mission began implementing projects involving agriculture, roads, social infrastructure, business and finance and the energy sector. At the OSCE Ljubljana Ministerial Council meeting in 2005, a decision welcoming the Peace Plan of Georgia was adopted. This Plan was to serve as a basis for the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Tskhinvali region / South Ossetia. The Statement encouraged the OSCE's increased involvement in the conflict-resolution process.

Despite the importance of the OSCE to Georgia and the Mission's significant work in all dimensions, the OSCE's ambitious plans and its activities in Georgia gradually decreased. In 2005, Moscow forced the Border Monitoring Operation to be discontinued when it broke a consensus on a mandate extension⁵. Despite the effectiveness of the Mission and counter to the request of the host country (Georgia) for the mission to continue its activities, the Russian delegation to the OSCE stated that »the qualitative improvement of the situation on the Georgia-Russian border, positive developments in the normalization of the situation in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation and substantial progress in the strengthening of co-operation between the Russian and Georgian border services make it possible to find an effective solution to the problem of guarding this segment of the state border using Russia and Georgia's own forces, without involvement of the OSCE. Moreover, the

5 Rory McCorley. *The 1992–2004 Georgia Border Monitoring Operation and the 2005–2009 Follow-up Projects – Lessons Learned and Potential Offerings for Future Engagement*. OSCE 2015 Yearbook, pp. 343–357.

practical gain from the monitoring has been negligible, something to which the Russian delegation has repeatedly drawn attention over the last few years. All these factors make the further continuation of this operation inappropriate.«⁶

Furthermore, amid increased tensions in the conflict zone and despite the rest of the OSCE community's continued call on Russia to allow an increase in the number of the military monitoring officers of the OSCE Mission to establish transparent international control over the Roki tunnel and adjacent areas (with Russia's participation), there was no agreement. Since 2006 Russia has opposed every decision over Georgia and its support for OSCE's activities in Georgia, and consequently no ministerial decision has been adopted on Georgia to date.

By the end of 2005, the position of Moscow was changing, and it was Russia's Foreign Minister Lavrov who personally negotiated the text of the Ministerial decision on Georgia and the OSCE's increasing role in Georgia, which included conflict-resolution. However, a few months later, when Russia disregarded a Peace Plan, which included the introduction of wider transparency measures in South Ossetia with the OSCE's involvement, Minister Lavrov informed his Georgian counterpart that Georgia had to »forget« about the OSCE's role in their (Russian-Georgian) relations⁷. Although Georgia and peaceful conflict resolution of the situation was one of the top priorities of the OSCE, delegations in Vienna were restricted by mandate and were unable to take more robust steps to pressure some of the participating states even harder to uphold their commitments to strengthen security, trust and good-neighbourliness.

6 Statement by the Delegation of the Russian Federation to the OSCE during meeting of the Permanent Council. December 2004.

7 Personal notes from the meeting between Ministers Lavrov and Bezhuashvili in 2006.

Thus far, the OSCE's efforts to re-establish its presence some way or another in Georgia have failed. In 2009 long and extensive negotiations, guided by the status-neutral approach aimed at the establishment of an OSCE office in Tbilisi and the deployment of OSCE monitors, ended without success. After five months of hard negotiations, on 8 May 2009 the OSCE Greek Chairmanship put forward a draft decision in which a »fair, balanced and status-neutral compromise package« was forged.⁸ The draft decision was supported by an overwhelming majority of the OSCE participating states, with the exception of the Russian Federation⁹. On 14 May 2009 the OSCE Greek Chairmanship declared that consensus had not been reached for the adoption of the draft decision, »despite the fact that this text has been the final outcome of a long and difficult consultation process and was accepted as the optimal compromise solution by the overwhelming majority of the participating states«.¹⁰

Since then, attempts have been made to establish a Vienna-based OSCE Team which could give technical support to the activities of the special representative of the Chairperson-in-Office (CiO) for the South Caucasus in Geneva International Discussions, as well as in IPRM meetings. One of the tasks should be to assist the OSCE in developing and implementing concrete projects of confidence building or of a humanitarian character. Although the expectations of implementing this idea are low, there is a chance to redouble efforts and to pursue the OSCE's role in identifying and developing practical options for economic co-operation, thereby contributing to the establishment of legal trade between the Ossetian/Georgian and Abkhaz/Georgian communities.

8 Delegation of Canada to the OSCE. Statement by Ambassador Fredericka Gregory during 761st meeting of the Permanent Council. May 14, 2009.

9 EU Statement on OSCE presence in Georgia during meeting of the Permanent Council #761. May 14, 2009.

10 Statement of the Chairperson of the Permanent Council on the state of play concerning the draft decision on the OSCE Office in Tbilisi and the deployment of OSCE monitors. Permanent Council #761. May 14, 2009.

Not Too Late: the OSCE's Future with Georgia

The OSCE still remains an important multilateral platform (of a mostly political nature) for Georgia to voice its position and for information sharing vis-à-vis the Russian-Georgian conflict. Following the deployment of several thousand military personnel and the occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Russia has pursued a creeping policy of annexation. The annexation policy has become especially visible since 2014, when Russia signed treaties of alliance and subsequent agreements with Tskhinvali and Sokhumi, which imply full integration of defence, security and customs spheres into the Russian legal area. A full annexation remains highly likely in the future. To counter the annexation threat Georgia needs a comprehensive and long-term anti-annexation strategy that can work effectively in conjunction with close co-ordination with the international community, including the OSCE.

The OSCE as a co-Chair, through the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office participates in Geneva International Discussions as well as in IPRM meetings. There is perhaps a need for the OSCE, together with the EU and the UN, to re-energize their efforts to »revamp« the talks, for instance to facilitate a dialogue between Moscow and Tbilisi that includes security matters on the one hand, and on the other hand facilitates a channel of communication between Tbilisi and Sokhumi, as well as between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali primarily on matters of legal trade and freedom of movement of people and goods.

The 2016 Parliamentary election created a new political landscape in Georgia, accompanied by serious vulnerabilities, such as a weak system of checks-and-balances, and a lack of accountability and transparency in public institutions. The ruling party, Georgian Dream, has a constitutional majority and has demonstrated its increased appetite for unlimited power.

This has given the party enough leverage to dominate the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and make unilateral decisions. In contrast, the opposition has become weaker and more fragmented, with marginalized pro-European parties that have little capacity to balance the majority. Single-handed constitutional reform by the ruling party failed to seek and achieve broad public and political consensus over the constitutional draft. Concerns over the independence and the politicization of the justice system, impunity and the lack of accountability of the law-enforcement and security services is furthered by the deteriorating media environment, which might challenge Georgia's Europeanization path. The OSCE should find a way to help Georgia to uphold its commitments.

The OSCE and its independent institutions are still regarded as impartial arbiters in Georgia, whose recommendations should not be disregarded. Therefore, we anticipate that the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative of Freedom of the Media will continue in more robust ways to engage with the Georgian Government and civil society in order to make a sustainable success of Georgia's democratic institution building.

Conclusion

During the OSCE's active phase of engagement in Georgia, there were instances when the OSCE delayed responses to grave security incidents, most notably in the period before the Russian / Georgian war. Before 2008, there was optimism that a peaceful conflict resolution could be negotiated. The OSCE played a significant role in defusing tension and promoting confidence building measures. Where the OSCE failed most was in facilitating true dialogue between Moscow and Tbilisi.

Optimism for the role of the OSCE has diminished in Georgia in recent years. Hopes for creating a free Europe, democratic and at peace have largely vanished. Georgia now faces not only threats from the ongoing occupation and illegal Russian military forces present in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, but also the threat of annexation of these Georgian regions. Hopes that the OSCE's actions could be both sufficiently rapid and meet today's needs have diminished. Innovative ideas and responses are of crucial importance. To this end, establishing an OSCE office with a regional and thematic focus (one in Georgia for instance), is worth thoroughly considering and pursuing.

Germany – Important tool for cooperative political action

Wolfgang Zellner

This text does not refer to the German population as a whole, which is not familiar with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) or mixes it up with the OECD – the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Rather, it refers to those sub-groups of the politically active population that deal with European security issues – Members of Parliament, officials in executive structures, some scholars and a few journalists. When I use the terms »Germany« or »Germans«, I mean these groups of politically active people. Beyond that, the paper focuses on the German Federal Foreign Office because this is the institution that has continuously dealt with the OSCE, particularly in the wake of the German 2016 OSCE Chairmanship. All parties represented in the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag) share the comparatively high appreciation of the OSCE held by German political actors and commentators. Differences depend more on individuals than on parties, although the OSCE might be a bit more popular on the left of the political spectrum.

Perceptions of the OSCE

It is not difficult to discover that the OSCE is better appreciated in Germany than in comparable Western (EU, NATO or related) states. In the Federal Foreign Office, there is an OSCE division and a division for conventional arms control, whereas other foreign ministries have only one or two coordinator(s) for these issues. Germany is one of the few

states to maintain significant secondments of personnel to the OSCE. Germany's OSCE engagement also includes civil society actors. Thus, since 1999, the Federal Foreign Office has supported the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE), which is part of the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH), and also supports the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions. Finally, the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship and the high presence and visibility of the Chairperson-in-Office (CiO), Frank-Walter Steinmeier, underlined Germany's commitment to the OSCE. It is no contradiction to say that the marginalization of the OSCE, particularly between 2000 and 2013, has clearly also left its mark in Germany. However, the irreplaceable role the OSCE has played in Ukraine since 2014 and Germany's OSCE Chairmanship have compensated for this loss of importance to a significant degree.

Reasons for Germany's OSCE Commitment

The key reason for Germany's OSCE engagement lies in the conviction that the OSCE is irreplaceable for an inclusive *norm-based European order* that embraces all European states, including Europe's transatlantic link (the United States and Canada) as well as all successor states of the Soviet Union. Thereby, the elements of »norm-based« and »European order« are distinct, but closely interlinked items. In his first address to the Permanent Council as CiO, Steinmeier stressed:

»This compass, our common compass, is formed by the canon of principles and commitments to which we all signed up in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and the Astana Final Document.«¹

1 OSCE, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Chairperson-in-Office, Renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust, restoring security, Speech to the OSCE Permanent Council, 14 January 2016, CIO.GAL/2/16/Corr.1.

The Helsinki and Paris principles and values are closely linked with the Helsinki and Paris order. In the words of State Secretary Markus Ederer:

»For more than two decades, we worked within the framework of a European security order based on the rules and principles enshrined in the Charter of Paris signed in 1990. Trust and predictability prevailed. Today, however, we are confronted with a Russia that is attempting to use the unpredictability of its foreign policy actions to assert sovereignty as well as to demonstrate and project strength.«²

This quote clearly shows that the Helsinki / Paris principles and order are closely related to Russia and to the objective of integrating Russia into a stable and sustainable European order. The quote also reveals that the disappointment and consternation in Germany (and other Western States) concerning Russia was so great, because the Russian action in Ukraine was not only seen as an attack on Ukraine, but also as a fundamental attack on the foundations of the European order.

In historical terms Germans have a special relationship with the Helsinki principles and order, because these are perceived as key elements of a process that finally led to German reunification. Again as Steinmeier acknowledged:

»We Germans, in particular, know how much we owe to the institution and to the CSCE process – on the path to détente between East and West, to ending the Cold War and finally to the reunification of my country.«³

2 Auswärtiges Amt [Federal Foreign Office], Rede von Staatssekretär Markus Ederer bei der Konferenz [Speech by State Secretary Markus Ederer at the conference] „EU-Russia: in search of a new modus operandi“, 6 April 2016, at: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2016/160406-StS_E_DGAP.html?searchArchive=0&searchEngineQueryString=Reden+Ederer&path=%2Fdiplomatie%2FDE*&searchIssued=0&searchIssuedAfter=27.11.2013.

3 OSCE, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Address to the OSCE Permanent Council, 2 July 2015, PC.DEL/919/15.

At least some in Germany are aware that this did not happen by chance, but intentionally, as witnessed by the formulation of Principle III of the Helsinki Decalogue that reads »inviolability of frontiers« (not unchangeability), which allows the peaceful change of frontiers. Because Germans gained so much from the Helsinki Process and order, it is more than likely that they will bank again on the OSCE in the slow-starting scouting exercise on how a future European order could look.

German Expectations of the OSCE

Beyond general perceptions, German political actors associate a number of concrete expectations with the OSCE. Currently, the five most prominent aspirations are dialogue, arms control, conflict prevention and resolution, economic and environmental connectivity, and the OSCE's human dimension.

Dialogue. In his address to the OSCE Permanent Council on 2 July 2015, Steinmeier said: »In Germany's experience, the CSCE process has always been a dialogue process [...]. And I am convinced that the OSCE must be *the* platform for this dialogue.«⁴ Dialogue is seen as a key instrument by almost all German political actors, even vis-à-vis a rather aggressive Russia. The idea of a strategy of military containment combined with disengagement (minimal co-operation) has very few followers in Germany.

Arms control, and particularly conventional arms control in Europe, is a continuous German priority that is perceived as an indispensable element of a stable European security order. On 26 August 2016, the-then

4 Steinmeier, *ibid.* (emphasis in the original manuscript).

Foreign Minister Steinmeier published an article titled »Reviving Arms Control in Europe«⁵ in which he called for a »re-launch of arms control«. And although he wrote: »The OSCE (...) is one important forum for such a dialogue« – with NATO, where the Western position on conventional arms control is traditionally negotiated, being another – much of this initiative points to the OSCE. And indeed, the Steinmeier initiative has led, via the adoption of the Hamburg Ministerial Council decision »From Lisbon to Hamburg: Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Framework for Arms Control«⁶ to the start of a »structured dialogue« on European security issues in the OSCE, beginning in April 2017. This example also nicely shows how tightly *dialogue* as an instrument, and *arms control* as an objective are interlinked.

Conflict prevention and resolution has regained the utmost relevance in the context of Ukraine as stressed by the-then Foreign Minister Steinmeier in his 2015 address to the OSCE Permanent Council:

»The OSCE is and remains a key instrument of conflict prevention and resolution in Europe. This is precisely what it is currently demonstrating in Ukraine! The OSCE has proved to be irreplaceable. I do not even want to imagine what the situation there could have been without the OSCE, without the Special Monitoring Mission.«⁷

This was underlined by the German Chairmanship programme, which devoted not only a chapter to »Crisis and Conflict Management«, but also another to »Strengthening the OSCE's Capacities over the Entire

5 See: Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Reviving Arms Control in Europe, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid_7383B-FAEDD3C4C3072B14E584A6FE639/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2016/160826_BM_Arms%20Control.html?nn=546780.

6 OSCE, Ministerial Council, Hamburg 2016, From Lisbon to Hamburg: Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Framework for Arms Control, MC.DOC/4/16, 9 December 2016, <http://www.osce.org/cio/289496?download=true>.

7 Steinmeier, note 3 (emphasis in the original manuscript).

Conflict Cycle«⁸, which is frequently – and wrongly – seen as a merely technical issue.

Economic and environmental connectivity represents a new item on the OSCE agenda that was only included as an official OSCE topic following the decision of the 2016 Hamburg Ministerial Council on »Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity«.⁹ One suggestion is to initiate channels of dialogue, where unregulated competition among different economic integration structures has led to conflict. Thus, CiO Steinmeier remarked at the Chair's »Connectivity for Commerce and Investment« conference on 18 May 2016: »For example, I have called for a dialogue between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as with China within the framework of the EU-China platform.«¹⁰

Work in the OSCE's *human dimension* has become more and more difficult because of the almost open obstruction by the Russian Federation and some other states. For example, the agendas of major human dimension conferences, such as the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, are only adopted very shortly before the meeting itself, leaving little time to organize it. Against this background, the German 2016 OSCE Chairmanship programme states that: »The German Chairmanship will devote particular attention to the OSCE's human dimension (...). A devaluation – let alone a lowering – of these commitments must not be allowed.«¹¹

8 The Federal Government, Federal Foreign Office, *Renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust, restoring security. The priorities of the German OSCE Chairmanship in 2016*, Berlin 2016, pp. 3–5.

9 OSCE, Ministerial Council, Hamburg 2016, Decision No. 4/16, *Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity*, MC.DEC/4/16, 9 December 2016, <http://www.osce.org/cio/289316?download=true>.

10 OSCE, Speech by Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the opening of the business conference organized by the German OSCE Chairmanship »Connectivity for Commerce and Investment«, 18 May 2016, <http://www.osce.org/cio/242161?download=true>. This conference might have been the first OSCE meeting that included a Chinese delegation led by a deputy foreign minister.

11 *Priorities of the German OSCE Chairmanship 2016*, note 8, p. 10.

Awareness of the Limits of the OSCE

Almost everybody in Germany dealing with OSCE issues is aware of the political limits of this organization. Typically, the OSCE's consensus principle is seen as a major impediment to the capability of the Organization to act.

A somewhat deeper perspective, shared by many, is that the OSCE is good for arranging soft security issues including arms control, but unsuitable for hard security issues. This is also part of the reason there is great scepticism in Germany about mandating the OSCE with armed peacekeeping operations, although the Organization mandated itself, as early as 1992 at the CSCE Helsinki Summit meeting with this task.

An even more far-reaching perspective suggests that the OSCE is well suited for the second most important tasks, but not for the real key issues, such as economic and political integration (EU) or military defence (NATO). This perspective is also widely shared other than by those who try to position the OSCE against NATO. However, such efforts are far less relevant than in the early 1990s.

In sum, most Germans perceive the value and utility of the OSCE predominantly as an important supplementary tool for inclusive and co-operative political action, one arena, among others, with relevant comparative advantages in some areas, and view it as an organization that under certain conditions can even play an irreplaceable role, as is currently the case in Ukraine.

Italy – Relaunching the »spirit of Helsinki«

Ettore Greco

Active participation in the Euroatlantic and global institutions has been a central pillar of Italy's foreign policy since the end of World War II. The belief that multilateral diplomacy can be an effective means to advance national interests in a wide spectrum of policy sectors has been widely shared both among policy leaders and public opinion. Despite the recent rise of nationalist tendencies, mostly linked to social and economic populism, there remains solid support for a foreign policy stance characterized by a high level of commitment to the promotion of the co-operation agendas of multilateral organizations.

Italy's prominent role in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) reflects this basic tenet of its foreign policy. More specifically, Italy has seen the development of a pan-European framework of co-operation centred on the OSCE as a process that can effectively complement and reinforce the stabilizing and integrative roles played by NATO and the EU and provide a crucial contribution to the consolidation in the OSCE area of regimes based on democratic institutions, the rule of law and respect of human rights. Italy has fully supported the idea that the initiatives of dialogue and co-operation undertaken within the OSCE are a key component in the transformative agendas pursued by the Euroatlantic actors, notably the EU.

During and after the Cold War Italy has consistently underlined the need to create or preserve institutional mechanisms that can provide for the

involvement of countries not belonging to NATO or the EU in the management of European security. In particular, ensuring that Russia has a say on major European security issues has been seen as crucial for the continent's stability. In the eyes of Italian leaders, the role of the OSCE in achieving that goal has become even more important following the suspension in 2014 of practical security co-operation with Russia within the context of NATO, notably the NATO-Russia Council, in response to the Russian annexation of Crimea and the subsequent conflict over the control of the Donbass region in eastern Ukraine. An ardent promoter of the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002, Italy has always cultivated an ambition to play a prominent role in the Western engagement policies towards Russia and, even in periods of tensions with the Kremlin such as the current one, has shied away from taking confrontational attitudes towards Moscow. The multiple avenues for co-operation that the OSCE can offer has been traditionally seen in Rome as one of its most valuable comparative advantages. This also applies to the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and the emphasis it places on co-operative forms of security. However, Italy, a country with a deep-rooted atlanticist orientation, has consistently rejected the idea intermittently promoted by Russia (especially in the 1990s and early 2000s), that the OSCE can play an overarching security role in Europe, which, in the view of Moscow, would make military alliances superfluous and hence imply the dissolution of NATO.

Italy has also been at the forefront in promoting the so called »Mediterranean« dimension of the OSCE, that is, the establishment within the framework of the organization of special forms of dialogue and partnership with South-Mediterranean countries. This has been part of a wider effort pursued since the 1970s by such Italian leaders as Aldo Moro to ensure that international organizations take into due consideration Mediterranean security issues and do not overlook the prospect

of constructive engagement with South-Mediterranean countries. It was at the initiative of Italy and Malta that a specific Mediterranean chapter was included in the Helsinki Final Act, i. e. the founding document of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). This decision laid the groundwork for the subsequent developments of the OSCE Mediterranean dimension. Italy also played a prominent role in the process that led to the creation in 1994, within the OSCE context, of the Mediterranean Contact Group, a forum that meets periodically to discuss regional problems and other issues of common interest and to assess possible forms of practical co-operation. The Group currently involves six South-Mediterranean partner countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) whose representatives also have the opportunity to exchange ideas with those of the OSCE participating states as well as with other officials and experts at an annual OSCE Mediterranean conference. Moreover, since 2014 the Italian government has supported the New-Med network, a two-track initiative, linked to the OSCE, which aims at fostering the debate on the new political, social and economic dynamics in the Mediterranean and looks into the opportunities for co-operation with the aforementioned Mediterranean partners on issues covered by the OSCE agenda.

It must be noted that, given the OSCE's structural limitations in dealing with Mediterranean issues – the region lies outside its »from Vancouver to Vladivostok« geographical area of responsibility – the focus of the organization's activities related to the region remains necessarily focused on dialogue rather than practical co-operation. In the early nineties, the then Italian Foreign Minister, Gianni de Michelis championed the idea of a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) modeled on the principles and experience of the CSCE, but it received very little support, even from the South-Mediterranean countries – only Spain embraced and actively promoted it. Recently, in the face of the persistent

difficulty in advancing co-operation plans in the region, including in the Euro-Mediterranean context, the Italian government has re-emphasized that the co-operative security model of the OSCE can provide a source of inspiration also for advancing co-operation in the Mediterranean region.

It is also worth noting that participation in the OSCE has offered Italy the opportunity to play a role in dealing with security issues in more remote areas. In the early 1990s Italy chaired the Minsk Group, a diplomatic format established within the OSCE context to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. In that period Italy also promoted a debate within the OSCE about the possible legitimization of the Russian peacekeeping activities in the Caucasus and Central Asia, provided that they submitted to effective OSCE monitoring. However this initiative was soon abandoned due to the renewed tensions between the Western countries and Russia over conflict management in the former Soviet states.

The fact that two Italian ambassadors have held the post of Secretary-General of the OSCE – Giancarlo Aragona in 1996–1999 and Lamberto Zannier in 2011–2017 – testifies to the importance that Italian diplomacy has historically attached to the pan-European organization. On Aragona's watch the organization expanded its presence and activities in the Balkans; stabilization of the region remains one of Italy's chief foreign policy goals. Several Italian diplomats have held key positions in the OSCE's missions in the region. Zannier was particularly active in promoting the organization's role as a forum for the discussion of issues such as Mediterranean security, migration governance and transnational threats, including terrorism, cybersecurity and illegal trafficking. More generally, he gave impulse to the strategic reflection on the new security dynamics affecting the European continent and the related new tasks that the organization could assume. Zannier was then assigned the post of High

Commissioner on National Minorities, whose early warning function has in recent time acquired renewed importance because of the rising nationalism and ethnic tensions in a number of European countries and regions. In 1991–1994 an Italian Ambassador – Luchino Cortese – was appointed the first Director of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which soon became one of the most important bodies of the organization, especially regarding its role in monitoring electoral processes in the participating states.

Another major responsibility undertaken by Italy was the OSCE's Chairmanship in 1994. In that year the transformation process of the OSCE culminated in the Budapest summit that decided, *inter alia*, to rename the then Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), reflecting the creation of various new bodies, instruments and procedures within the organization. In 1994 other important steps were taken to expand the organization's role, including an increase in the number of its field missions, the enlargement of the mandates of some of them, and the adoption of the Code of Conduct on the political-military aspects of security.

The 1990s was therefore a period of remarkable Italian activism within the OSCE, based on the aforementioned concerns about the post-Cold War security environment in Europe. There was solid bipartisan consensus in Italy on the objective to strengthen the OSCE's organizational structure and expand its tasks. In the first decade of the new century, especially following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001 and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the focus of Italian diplomacy shifted towards the Middle East where new worrying conflict dynamics were developing. By contrast, the security environment in Europe appeared to have reached a relatively high degree of stability. However, the re-emerging

tensions between the Western countries and Russia since the war in Georgia (mentioned above) have raised fresh concerns about Europe's security situation, prompting a debate on the role that the OSCE can play through conflict prevention and mitigation in countering the new destabilizing trends. At the same time, especially following the Arab uprisings in 2010–2011, the European leaders have become more aware of the far-reaching impact that the conflicts in the MENA region and the related phenomena of youth radicalization and terrorism have on European security. Therefore in recent years, Italy, like other European states, has paid renewed attention to the OSCE's assets, comparative advantages and potentialities. The OSCE's continued (if not greater) relevance in coping with the deteriorating security situation in Europe became apparent when it was given the task of monitoring the implementation of the Minsk agreement in eastern Ukraine. Indeed, the activation of other security organizations for that task proved too controversial and they did not enjoy the required consensus.

It is against this backdrop that the Italian government declared its readiness to take over the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2018, a proposal that was readily accepted by the other participating states. Italy's declared intention to relaunch the »spirit of Helsinki« has taken the form of a comprehensive programme in which traditional Italian priorities, such as the dialogue with the Mediterranean partners and migration governance figure prominently. In dealing with these issues Italy plans to build on the work it did in 2017 as Chair of the Mediterranean Contact Group, and on the outcomes of the Mediterranean annual conference held in Palermo in December of that year. It remains to be seen, however, whether during the Italian chairmanship term there will be time for making substantial progress on these two issues, for instance to approve breakthrough documents and declarations. There are indeed deep divergences among the participating states on the principles on which migration governance

should be based and the concrete measures needed to cope with migration flows. For this reason, even the idea of appointing a co-ordinator on migration has proved controversial. Moreover, in order to play a more operational role in the field of migration, the OSCE would need substantial additional resources, whereas at this time it is struggling to obtain those resources that have already been pledged. An expanded role for the organization on Mediterranean issues through the strengthening of the Mediterranean Contact Group continues to be prevented by the belief of some participating states, notably Russia, that the OSCE should remain focused on its geographical area of competence, as well as by the reluctance of the South-Mediterranean states themselves to engage in practical co-operation endeavours.

During its chairmanship term the Italian government also plans to undertake a series of initiatives to give more prominence to the economic and environmental dimension, that is, the second basket of the OSCE. Various thematic meetings will be organized on increasingly topical issues such as energy, the digital economy and models of good governance. This will be part of a wider effort undertaken by the organization in recent times to promote a deeper dialogue on the link between security and a sustainable and inclusive growth in the economy.

In the security sector a priority area of the 2018 Italian chairmanship will be the fight against illicit cross-border trafficking, a problem to which Italian diplomacy has dedicated special attention in the last few years, including within the framework of the OSCE. In the field of police activities, Italy is interested in emphasizing the national expertise it can offer. An important asset in this regard is the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU), which was established in 2005 in Vicenza and is run by the Carabinieri. The CoESPU has already been involved in various activities linked to the OSCE.

In the security field the Italian chairmanship will also have to deal with two other broad problems of great strategic relevance for the OSCE. One is the future of the OSCE's field operations, which have become uncertain and are therefore the subject of intense debate. The operations in Central Asia and in the Caucasus have been closed, while those in the Western Balkans continue to perform important functions. More generally, there is a widespread consensus that the current concept of field operations needs to be reviewed, as it appears outdated. One key aspect of such a review will concern the contribution that the field operations could make in addressing various cross-border threats, including those linked with migration flows. This applies in particular to the Balkan region.

The Italian chairmanship will also have the demanding task of promoting and stimulating the »Structured Dialogue« on the current state and the future of European security, which takes place within the framework of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). Reaching a common understanding on the challenges and risks that undermine the post-Cold War security system will remain a complicated process due to the deep divergence of views between Russia and the Western countries. However, in the absence of a dialogue more specifically focused on how to revise and update the regimes of conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures, which have suffered from a process of gradual erosion (Russia suspended the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in 2007) and are widely considered outdated, the »Structured Dialogue« process remains a valuable instrument to advance a common reflection on the current shortcomings of the security architecture built in the 1990s. In any case, the security dialogue within the FSC is unlikely to make big breakthroughs in the short term, or until the ongoing efforts to manage the Ukrainian conflict produce tangible results.

In the field of human rights the Italian chairmanship will concentrate on such issues as racism, intolerance and religious and cultural discrimination. Gender equality also figures prominently in the chairmanship's agenda, which reflects a wider effort recently undertaken by the Italian diplomacy to promote the debate on the rights and role of women within various international frameworks, particularly the UN. Deepening the dialogue on the principles of democracy and the rule of law, as well as addressing such fundamental human rights as the freedom of the media, has become increasingly difficult – although they have a prominent place in the OSCE's mandate – due to the emergence among the participating states of different and competing models of political and constitutional regimes.

Major reforms of the institutional architecture of the OSCE or a revision of the mandates of its bodies are unlikely to be undertaken in the short or medium term. Such proposals as giving the organization a legal personality, introducing new exceptions to the rule of consensus, or entrusting the Secretary-General with new powers will continue to be discussed, but with little prospect of making substantial progress. However, the current framework of institutions, mechanisms and established practices offer plenty of opportunities to advance the organization's agenda in several fields. Thanks to that, but also based on its past record, Italy can make an important contribution during its chairmanship to further reinvigorate the OSCE's central role in Europe's security system and support its capacity to promote the respect of human rights and sustainable models of economic governance.

Kazakhstan – Mastering the art of selective engagement

Nargis Kassenova

A Source of Inspiration Turns into an Object of Criticism

Since the early days of independence Kazakhstan's foreign policy has been driven by the desire to integrate into the international community and position itself as a forward-looking dynamic country. In the 1990s joining international governmental organizations (IGOs) and playing an active role in them was perceived as one of the main avenues to pursue. Kazakhstan's membership of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) from 1992 was of particular importance for a number of reasons.

Firstly, following the disintegration of the USSR the OSCE kept Kazakhstan linked to the European security system, and any security arrangements were most welcome. Secondly, it provided institutional evidence of the country's claim to partial European identity. Thirdly, it influenced Kazakhstan's concept of security during the first formative years of state building. The National Security Law adopted in 1998 defined it in broader terms (similar to the comprehensive security concept underlying the OSCE) and featured economic, societal, environmental and information security in addition to traditional military and foreign policy aspects. The OSCE also inspired the Kazakh leadership to propose the Conference for Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) at the UN General Assembly in 1992, to be launched in 1999.

In the first decade of the 2000s, the organization retained its importance for Kazakhstan. However, the relations with the organization and its Western member-states became more complex. This was largely due to the change in the geopolitical scene in Eurasia and an anti-Western stance most forcefully articulated by Moscow, particularly in the aftermath of the «colour revolutions». Astana also acquired more self-confidence: it now had oil revenues and a more developed diplomatic apparatus to promote its ambitious global and regional foreign policy initiatives through various intergovernmental organizations, with the OSCE becoming the partner of choice.

In 2003 the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the OSCE, together with its colleagues from Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia sponsored a Food-for-Thought paper «On the Issue of Reform of the OSCE Field Activities». In the document the OSCE was accused of «efforts to influence the political processes in a number of sovereign states, which was rightly considered as interference into the internal affairs of these countries» and it concluded proposing tighter co-ordination with the host governments.¹ In a similar vein, in 2004 Kazakhstan signed a joint statement initiated by Moscow and presented at the Sofia Ministerial Council that reproached the OSCE for not sufficiently observing «the fundamental Helsinki principles, such as non-intervention in internal affairs and respect for the sovereignty of nations», «a clear imbalance between the three dimensions of security» in favour of the third basket, and «double standards and selective approaches».²

1 Permanent Delegations of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia, Food-for-Thought Paper, On the Issue of Reform of the OSCE Field Activities (PC.DEL/986/03), 4 September 2003, as cited in Frank Evers, «Appropriate Ways of Developing OSCE Field Activities», CORE Working Paper 22, Hamburg, April 2011.

2 Website of the President of Russia, «Statement by CIS Member Countries on the State of Affairs in the OSCE», 3 January 2004, (<http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/4865>).

Kazakhstan's 2010 OSCE Chairmanship: Ambition Fulfilled

At the same time Astana invested significant resources in its campaign for the position of the OSCE chair-in-office. In 2003 Kazakhstan proposed itself to chair the organization in 2009. Russia and other post-Soviet states supported its bid as a way to fix the »geographic and thematic imbalance« of the OSCE. Astana had to overcome serious opposition triggered by its problematic human rights record. However, at the 2007 Madrid Ministerial Council it made a series of concrete promises to reform and received the approval of the member-states to chair the organization in 2010.

In its campaign Kazakhstan tried to elaborate elements that could define its own relevance for the organization. It offered itself as a regional power in Central Asia – that remote part of the OSCE space where a lot could be done especially in the economic-environmental basket with a specific focus on developing transit and transport routes and improving the use of water and energy resources; as a country having good relations with all its neighbours and political weight in regional organizations, such as the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), it was thus able to bridge Europe and Eurasia not only geographically, but as a responsible neighbour of Afghanistan, ready to contribute and pull together the efforts of others to stabilize and reconstruct it.

Since the chairmanship was supposed to demonstrate Kazakhstan's coming of age as a regional power, it was used to showcase the country's achievements. Among them was »interethnic and religious accord« in multiethnic Kazakhstan, repackaged as Tolerance in the four T agenda of Trust, Tradition, Transparency and Tolerance. This allowed it to kill two birds with one stone: advertising Kazakhstan's know-how and filling the

third »problematic« basket with cultural co-operation, inter-confessional concord, and the dialogue of civilizations.

Kazakhstan made full use of the opportunity of chairing the OSCE to organize high-profile settings where it could play a central role. In June 2010 it organized the High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination. It also proposed and hosted an OSCE summit in December 2010. Both events were held in Astana, the country's rapidly built up capital that serves as a symbol of Kazakhstan's grand ambitions.

The implementation of the official agenda that Kazakhstan formulated for its one year of Chairmanship proved to be challenging. There was no progress on updating the Vienna and the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE Treaty), no breakthroughs on the »frozen conflicts« in Georgia, Transnistria and Nagorny Karabakh, and no foundations laid for the new European/Eurasian security architecture. Astana could not achieve tangible results in Central Asia, and while its handling of the two crises in Kyrgyzstan was praised on some counts, it was criticized on others.³ The OSCE also failed to come up with a plan for substantive engagement in Afghanistan.

The year 2010 marked the highlight of Kazakhstan's engagement with the OSCE, and the ultimate opportunity for the Kazakhstani public to learn about the organization. *OSCE Kazakhstan 2010* logos were omnipresent and could be found even on dairy product cartons. OSCE-related topics became popular with students and faculties at universities. However, after the summit the interest in the organization in Kazakhstan virtually disappeared, as evidenced by Google Trends data.⁴

3 Anna Kreikemeyer, »Trust in a Traditional, Tolerant and Transparent Multi-level Game? The Kazakhstani OSCE Chairmanship 2010«, Central Asia Security Policy Brief No.3, 29.11.2010 (<http://www.osce-academy.net/en/research/policy-briefs>).

4 Google Trends, 10 November, 2017 (<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?cat=16&date=all&geo=KZ&q=Z&q=>).

For a number of years the Astana summit was mentioned in official documents and speeches as a triumph of Kazakhstan's diplomacy and the sign of the country's maturity. However, the focus of attention shifted elsewhere. Currently it is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that plays the role of the »object of desire« and features prominently in all the key policy making documents.

After 2010: Mastering the Art of Selective Engagement

In 2014 Kazakhstan was successful in downgrading the status of the OSCE Center in Astana to the Program Office level (with effect from 1 January 2015). The new office was to carry out its activities, which are »designed to assist the host country in the implementation of the OSCE commitments« and »requested by the relevant authorities or civil society of Kazakhstan and in consent with its Ministry of Foreign Affairs«. ⁵ Interestingly, Kyrgyzstan followed the example of its neighbor. In May 2017, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek was transformed into a Programme Office.

Overall, the chairmanship experience proved to be a learning curve for Kazakhstani authorities on how to manage its own civil society and the Western international community in a more sophisticated way: diluting criticism without making substantial progress in the areas of democratization and human rights. In this regard, one lasting legacy of the chairmanship is the Consultative-Advisory Body »Dialogue Platform for Human Dimension« that brings together government officials and representatives of civil society and international donors. It is run by the

5 OSCE Permanent Council, 1031st Plenary Meeting, Decision No 1153 »OSCE Programme Office in Astana«, PC/DEC/1153/Corr.1, 18 December 2014.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and provides an opportunity to discuss human dimension matters »at home« and not just at OSCE fora, as was the case on the eve and during the chairmanship.

Currently, Astana's official agenda for its engagement with the OSCE is formulated around the promotion of the legacy of the Astana Summit. In the first basket Kazakhstan »continues to support multilateral efforts to ensure the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security, confidence-building measures and settlement of the »frozen conflicts«. It also pays special attention to the OSCE's activities in connection with the situation in Ukraine. In the second basket, it focuses on »the development of transcontinental transport corridors uniting Asia and Europe« and »addressing the Aral Sea and the effective management of water resources in Central Asia«. In the third basket the prioritized issues are »the fight against all forms of intolerance and discrimination, tolerance, human rights, the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, promotion of gender balance and the fight against human trafficking«. Traditionally, Astana supports the efforts of participating states to improve the work, structures and institutions of the OSCE, maintain the balance among the dimensions, reform the ODIHR and establish uniform requirements for the implementation of election observation.⁶ It is also intent on using the OSCE platform for the promotion of Kazakhstan's new initiatives, such as the Global Strategic Initiative proposed by President Nazarbayev, including the creation of a nuclear-free world by 2045 and equal access of states to world infrastructure, resources and markets.⁷

6 Web-site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan (<http://www.mfa.kz/ru/content-view/obse>).

7 »Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan H. E. Erlan A. Idrissov at the plenary session of the OSCE Council of Foreign Ministers«, December 8, 2016, Hamburg.

Latvia – Decrease tensions and promote mutual trust

Ilvija Brūge and Andris Sprūds

In just over twenty seven years since the restoration of its independence Latvia has turned from a country in a need of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) (formerly the CSCE¹) missions on its own territory into a country that actively engages in the OSCE missions and takes a true interest in the organization's future development and activities. Just as Latvia has changed, so has the OSCE, as has its role in securing peace, averting conflicts, regulating crises, and ensuring human rights and democracy.

At the core of the OSCE's establishment was ensuring pragmatic and peace oriented relations among countries on both sides the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. Later it was ensuring gradual and successful democratic transitions in the post-Communist states, and, ultimately, the organization has turned towards observation missions and crises regulation in various conflict-ridden countries in Europe and beyond its borders. The advancement of Latvia from a communist country to a country in transition, and later to a developed country, largely reflects the development of the European continent and the OSCE itself. At the same time, Latvia's ability to go down this route has much to do with OSCE initiatives, even those from before the nation declared its independence on 4 May 1990.

¹ The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was renamed the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in January 1995. For the clarity of this article, assuming that the reader is acquainted with the general history of the OSCE, the authors will only use the abbreviation OSCE regardless of whether the reference is made to the period of time prior to or after January 1995.

The OSCE and Latvia 1986–2004

At the Helsinki Conference in 1975 representatives of the Baltic exile organizations expressed their serious concerns that the support for the Soviet Union's initiative to recognize its then-borders would also result in recognition of the Baltic annexation. Luckily these fears did not materialize. Meanwhile, the Conference and its Final Act gave some legal backing for human rights organizations throughout the communist countries.² The Latvian Human Rights Defence Group »Helsinki-86« was founded in Liepāja in July 1986, and it called for respect of human rights and freedoms in the Soviet Union, restoration of social justice and democracy in Latvia, and the Latvian right to self-determination. Although the organization was short-lived, this was a significant and formative act of organized political dissent and for the first time, in 1987, several thousand people with Latvian flags openly lay flowers at the Monument of Freedom commemorating the victims of deportations.³ The role of Helsinki-86 was immense, as it prepared the ground for civic and political activism in Latvia, and led to a non-violent dissent that could no longer be fully oppressed by the Soviet dictatorship.

After regaining independence, Latvia became a member of the OSCE on 10 September 1991, making this the first international organization that Latvia joined (prior to even the United Nations, which it joined a week later).⁴ This and the OSCE's impact on ensuring Latvia's independence in the following few years, demonstrates the importance Latvia's

2 Dzintra Bungs, „EDSO attīstības scenāriji. Kā rīkoties Latvijai?» in Žanete Ozoliņa (ed.) *Latvija starptautiskajās organizācijās. Stratēģiskās analīzes komisija*, Rīga: Zinātne, 2005, p. 44.

3 Dace Stirāne, „Trīsdesmit gadi kopš grupas „Helsinki-86» dibināšanas,» LSM, 31.7.2016, <http://www.lsm.lv/raksts/dzive--stils/vesture/trisdesmit-gadi-kops-grupas-helsinki-86-dibinasanas.a194206/http://lnvm.lv/?p=10874>; Elīna Vītiņa, „Helsinki 86« dalībnieks: Otrreiz tā vairs nerikotos», Tvnet, 19.11.2006, http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/latvija/317579-helsinki_86_dalibnieks_otrreiz_ta_vairs_nerikotos.

4 „Starptautiskās organizācijas,» Ārlietu Ministrija, 13.10.2016, <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/arpolitika/starptautiskas-organizācijas>.

political leadership ascribed to the organization. First and foremost, in the early 1990s the OSCE was the organization that supervised the implementation of the agreement on the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Latvia. The agreement envisaged that the troops would be withdrawn by 31 August 1994. Upon a request from Latvia, the OSCE agreed to supervise the process and monitored the closure and liquidation of the Skrunda Radio Location Station in 1999. The role of the OSCE in the implementation of this bilateral agreement (until the mission was terminated in October 1999) was seen in a decidedly positive light.⁵

The story is less positive with regard to another mission established in 1993 (closed on 31 December 2001) for observation of the citizenship legislation and treatment of minorities, which anticipated regular visits by the OSCE High Representative on National Minorities to Latvia.⁶ Because of the sensitivity of ethnic and national issues in Latvia, the visits were not seen quite as unambiguously as was the OSCE's involvement in the withdrawal of the Soviet Army. The government had taken a strong position regarding the national issue and naturalization process, seeing the two as crucial for the Latvian statehood in the 1990s. The issue of non-citizen rights, particularly concerning their political rights in Latvia, received some criticism from the OSCE. Although there was the potential for improvement, some of the statements resonated with society as unjust, and the OSCE was seen as an outsider that lacked a comprehensive understanding of both history and inter-ethnic relations in Latvia. Simultaneously, the »friendly« visits by the then High

5 „Eiropas Drošības un sadarbības organizācija (EDSO),» Ārlietu Ministrija, 24.2.2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/arpolitika/starptautiskas-organizācijas/eiropas-drosibas-un-sadarbibas-organizacija-edso>; Dzintra Bungs, „EDSO attīstības scenāriji. Kā rīkoties Latvijai?» in Zānete Ozoliņa (ed.) *Latvija starptautiskajās organizācijās. Stratēģiskās analīzes komisija*, Rīga: Zinātne, 2005, p. 46.

6 „Eiropas Drošības un sadarbības organizācija (EDSO),» Ārlietu Ministrija, 24.02.2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/arpolitika/starptautiskas-organizācijas/eiropas-drosibas-un-sadarbibas-organizacija-edso>.

Commissioner, Max van der Stoel, to Moscow were viewed with suspicion.⁷ Unsurprisingly, the OSCE's criticism was actively used by Russia in its rhetoric against Latvia. However, overall the OSCE's evaluation of improvements in Latvian democracy and its human rights record and its move to label Latvia an example of a peaceful settlement of ethnic relations, contributed to the EU and NATO's decisions to provide Latvia with full-fledged membership.⁸

The OSCE and Latvia 2004–2017

In the years after Latvia and other Eastern European countries joined the EU and NATO, the OSCE's role somewhat diminished. Latvia, of course, acknowledged the organization's role in the Balkans, Nagorno-Karabakh and elsewhere, as well as supporting the election of observation missions to democratically challenged environments. The High Representative on National Minorities continued to voice some criticism over national minority rights in Latvia⁹; while Latvia continued to call for a joint interpretation of history among the OSCE member states, and contributed to the OSCE missions. In 2012, in his speech at the OSCE's 19th Council of Ministers in Dublin, Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Edgars Rinkēvičs named the resolution of the frozen conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh; armament control and aversion of transnational threats; as well as human rights in various regions, including Russia, as the top priorities of the OSCE.¹⁰ In December 2013, in the 20th Council

7 Dzintra Bungs, „EDSO attīstības scenāriji. Kā rīkoties Latvijai?» in Žanete Ozoliņa (ed.) *Latvija starptautiskajās organizācijās. Stratēģiskās analīzes komisija*, Rīga: Zinātne, 2005, p. 60.

8 „EDSO komisārs Latvijā,» *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 6.5.1995, <https://www.vestnesis.lv/ta/id/35002>.

9 „Arī EDSO Parlamentārā Asambleja aicina piešķirt pašvaldību vēlēšanu tiesības nepilsoņiem,» *Apollo*, 09.07.2004, <http://apollo.tvnet.lv/zinas/ari-edso-parlamentara-asambleja-aicina-pieskirt-pasvaldibu-velesanu-tiesibas-nepilsoniem/285817>.

10 „E. Rinkēvičs EDSO sanāsmē Dublinā uzstājās ar runu,» *Baltic-Ireland*, 07.12.2012, <http://baltic-ireland.ie/2012/12/23683/>.

of Ministers in Kiev, the issues of human rights and freedoms in Ukraine were added to the Rinkēvičs' list.¹¹

However, the overall influence of the OSCE in the years between the EU and NATO 2004 enlargement and the Ukraine crisis that erupted in 2013–2014 was relatively limited. Above all, the organization was criticized for its failure to solve the frozen conflicts in Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh, and for its inept reaction to the Russia-Georgia War in 2008.¹² Hence Latvia, like other countries, sees the current security situation in Europe as an appropriate time for the OSCE to reconsider its *modus operandi* and expand its activities. This is not just because Latvia is one of the strongest advocates for the Eastern Partnership countries and strongly supports their advancement through development aid programmes and various missions, but also due to the fact that Latvia was and is wary of Russia's geopolitical ambitions and the deteriorating human rights situation. Even back in 2013, Rinkēvičs addressed the Vice President of Switzerland Didier Burkhalter (who then held the Chairmanship of the OSCE) calling for a »more sharp-toothed OSCE« in reference to Russia's military training on the Latvian borders.¹³

In July 2017, the Latvian Foreign Minister stressed the important role that the OSCE plays in the solution of current security challenges, and in conflict resolution in Ukraine in particular. He also stated that the organization should put the utmost effort into solving the crisis as soon as possible, while taking into account »Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the territory of Crimea illegally annexed by

11 „Rinkēvičs EDSO sēdē Kijevā aicina ievērot iedzīvotāju tiesības brīvi paust savu viedokli,» LSM, 05.12.2013, <http://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/rinkevics-edso-sede-kijeva-aicina-ievrot-iedzivotaju-tiesibas-brivi-paust-savu-viedokli.a71573/>.

12 Uldis Kezberis, „EDSO ieguvusi jaunu elpu,» Diena, 04.08.2015, <https://www.diena.lv/raksts/pasaule/cits/edso-ieguvusi-jaunu-elpu-14106979>

13 Ģirts Vikmanis, „Rinkēvičs vēlas zobaināku EDSO,» Latvijas Avīze, 01.08.2013, <http://www.la.lv/rinkevics-velas-zobainaku-edso%E2%80%A9-2/>.

Russia». Simultaneously, the Minister voiced support for a solution of the Ukrainian crisis in the Normandy format, aimed at full implementation of the Minsk Agreements.¹⁴ This call for a more active OSCE in the Ukraine crisis solution, and mediation of the relationship between the OSCE's post-Soviet members and Russia, directly reflects the Latvian foreign policy priorities – support for the Eastern Partnership and defence against Russia's aggression.¹⁵

Latvia strongly supports the efforts to decrease tensions and promote mutual trust within the OSCE, but simultaneously it has not lost its sober attitude towards Russia, its ambitions and human rights problems. This attitude has duly dominated Latvian foreign policy since the 1990s and has not changed since Latvia joined the EU and NATO. Latvia sees the OSCE, like the other international organizations, as a guarantor of its security, and as a tool to counter Russia's influence. This was the case in 1986 when the Helsinki-86 was created in order to stand up against human rights abuses in the Soviet Union. This will remain the case now that Latvia is a fully-fledged OSCE member with high democratic and human rights standards, who actively seeks to support its partners who suffer from Russia's geopolitical ambitions as well as their own shortcomings with regard to democracy and human rights.

14 „Rinkēvičs: EDSO aktīvāk jāiesaistās Ukrainas krīzes risināšanā,» Diena, 11.07.2017, <https://www.diena.lv/raksts/latvija/viedokli/rinkevics-edso-aktivak-jaiesaistas-ukrainas-krizes-risinasana-14176102>.

15 „Ārlietu ministra ikgadējais ziņojums par paveikto un iecerēto darbību valsts ārpolitikā un Eiropas Savienības jautājumos,» Ārlietu Ministrija, 2016, http://www.mfa.gov.lv/images/ministrija/Arpolitikas_zinojums_2016.pdf.

Poland – Flexibility to address a broad area of subjects

Marcin Bużański

The End of the Cold War and the Active 1990s

The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)/OSCE's position in Poland's foreign policy has its roots in four main areas: historically strong engagement in the CSCE process; the legacy of peaceful democratic transition; engagement in developing the post-Cold War arms control regime, as well as strong engagement in conflict prevention processes.

Poland held a significant role in the origins of the CSCE. The Polish Foreign Ministry's initiatives to start dialogues on social rights, economic co-operation and cultural fields date back as far as the mid-1960s – a bold stance among the countries of the Warsaw Pact at that time. As 1989 marked a peaceful transition to democracy, Poland underscored its readiness to abide by human rights principles and promote democratic institutions and fair electoral processes. After 1989, Poland proposed establishing a permanent council for European Co-operation. Although it never materialized, Poland continued to endorse the institutionalization of the CSCE into more permanent structures. Democratization and open electoral processes of the Human Dimension have been a continuous priority of successive Polish governments for the OSCE who emphasized the strong legacy of the Solidarity movement, and the developments that led to the first free and fair elections in the post-Soviet era in 1989. Based on the agreements of the 1990 Paris Charter, the Office for Free Elections was

established in Warsaw.¹ In 1992, during the Ministerial Council meeting in Prague, the mandate of the Office was extended, to include broader aspects of the Human Dimension. The Office was then renamed the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The 1990s also saw strong Polish activity in addressing conflicts in the post-Soviet space. In 1992 Adam Daniel Rotfeld was appointed as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office to elaborate the political settlement of the conflict in the Trans–Dniester region of Moldova. In 1996, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office appointed Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk as Personal Representative for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which was being dealt with by the Minsk Conference process. Poland's commitment to conflict prevention in the OSCE region was further highlighted by the appointment of Ambassador Adam Kobieracki as head of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center in Vienna. Poland was active in negotiating the Treaties on Conventional Arms Control in Europe (CFE) and the Open Skies Treaty, as well in the development of the Vienna document, which together form the current European conventional arms control framework. Poland has attributed great value to politically and legally binding confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) in the Vienna document, seeing them as key for openness and transparency in military activities conducted within the OSCE's area. These values were underlined during Poland's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 1998.

The Declining Position of the OSCE in Poland's Foreign Policy

Poland's proactive role in the platforms of the CSCE, and later the OSCE started to visibly slow down after accession to NATO in 1999, and yet

1 <http://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/ekspert-o-wkladzie-polski-w-obwe-i-zagrozeniach-dla-bezpieczenstwa>.

further after it joined the European Union in 2004. The common perception was that Poland's security policy needed to be premised on effective integration with the NATO Alliance structures; »harder« security guarantees provided by the NATO were seen as prevailing over all others. Accession to the EU meant efforts were concentrated on integration, and activities in areas of the Human Dimension were increasingly focused on actions of the European Communities.

Poland also noted that there was a general trend for European governments to lose interest in the OSCE as a forum for conducting foreign policy, which effectively contributed to its decline. Successive Polish governments have seen few opportunities to achieve real breakthroughs at the OSCE given the consensus-based decision-making mechanism governing the fifty-seven participating States, which makes the adoption of decisions with meaningful impact hard to achieve. With the growing polarization of major powers, it has become even more difficult to reach that consensus, leaving the organization strained. Another major challenge has become more evident – namely that much less attention is being paid by the militaries of Member States to the existing arms controls and CBSM mechanisms, or to monitoring formats such as the Open Skies treaty and CFE. Little progress has been seen in political processes on protracted conflicts led by OSCE, and the added value of the OSCE's missions has been increasingly questioned.

Changes After the Eruption of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

The events on Maidan, and subsequent eruption of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict have strongly influenced Poland's foreign policy – and subsequently its engagement with the OSCE. Poland has sharply criticized Russia's intervention in Ukraine, and in particular the annexation of Crimea, as

a stark breach of international law – it has shifted threat perceptions in the security sphere creating a serious crisis in trust; it has undermined the existing OSCE arms control and CSBM’s regime, and furthermore threatens the organizations’ founding principles. Warsaw, however, recognizes the value of the OSCE as a forum to respond to crises. It has supported the Minsk II process as the best crises-containment initiative possible in the current political circumstance, and sees it as an important face-saving measure for all parties involved. It has also strongly supported its provisions on humanitarian responses. At the same time, Warsaw has often expressed scepticism towards the stated objectives of the process, underlining its view that it does not pave a path for a true and permanent resolution to the crises.²

Poland has been also very supportive of the establishment, and is actively participating in the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM), with one of the highest deployment of monitors of all the OSCE Participating States.³ The SMM has been seen by Warsaw as the OSCE’s most significant deployment in years, raising the value of the organization. At the same time, Poland has been very wary of the constraints of implementing the mandate of the Mission, especially with regards to limited resources; noting the observers’ diminished access to the zones of interest, and continued risks to their security.

Views on Security Dialogue and Arms Control

Poland has emphasized the need to update current arms controls and the CSBM’s regime, and has argued that dialogue on transparency, risk

2 Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski 8th December 2016; www.osce.org/cio/287576?download=true.

3 <http://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine>.

reduction, and support for political processes to address the current crises in European security is key. Given this position, Poland has supported the current efforts of Structured Dialogue as a valuable platform for discussion and debate, yet views it with caution and little optimism as regards reaching any new normative outcomes.

Poland takes the position that security dialogue and revisions of arms control are founded on a base of non-aggression, and that incidents of aggression against sovereign states cannot be awarded with recognition of »facts on the ground«. Therefore Warsaw is against any activity or concessions which suggest recognition of Russia's actions in Georgia and Ukraine, or in recognizing broader spheres of influence. This position transcends party lines – and is likely to be upheld by any Polish government in the near future. As such, in this regard, Poland's position has been close to that of the United States.⁴

At the same time Poland has been a strong proponent of continued dialogue on reforming and strengthening CSBM's and revising the Vienna document to adapt it to current realities. However, the inspections regime is not seen as functioning well – a fact underlined on multiple occasions (most recently visible during the Zapad 2017 manoeuvres in Belarus and Russia).⁵ This position was strongly emphasized during Poland's chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).⁶

Warsaw has sponsored a proposal to reform the Vienna Document to include new elements related to risk-reduction procedures. Some of these elements include real-time incident management, finding effective ways

4 Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski 8th December 2016; www.osce.org/cio/287576?download=true.

5 <http://www.dw.com/en/nato-voices-skepticism-over-size-of-russias-zapad-military-exercise/a-39682346>.

6 http://wiedenonz.msz.gov.pl/en/c/MOBILE/news/fsc_security_dialogue_on_conventional_arms_control_and_cs_bms_

to investigate the details of specific incidents, and drawing lessons from such events to include avoiding their repetition. Other proposed changes relate to more detailed requirements on incident reporting, introducing time limits for providing information and clarifications, and introducing the possibility of convening an explanatory meeting between the countries involved in any incident.⁷

Continued Engagement and Challenges in the Human Dimension

Warsaw has continually underlined its commitment to the OSCE's principles of the Human Dimension, and has seen value in supporting the work on democratization, promoting human rights and good governance, and conducting effective electoral observation. Through ODIHR, Warsaw annually hosts the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meetings (HDIM), which mark the largest annual Human Rights gatherings in Europe.

The current government of the Law and Justice party (PiS) has also recently faced criticism from a number of OSCE bodies. The Representative on Freedom of the Media has criticized the actions of Poland's government towards investigative journalists. Legal opinion sought from ODIHR on legislation to introducing changes in the judicial order in Poland was critical pointing out the challenges to the constitutionally guaranteed independence of the judiciary. Given that the government plans further controversial legislation, more criticism from bodies like the ODIHR or the Office of the Representatives on Freedom of the Media can be expected.⁸

7 <http://www.osce.org/fsc/240936>.

8 <http://www.osce.org/odihhr/336546>.

Expectations and Limited Optimism for the OSCE

Despite several negative perceptions, Poland still has high expectations of what the OSCE should be; namely a useful platform for sustaining security and political-military dialogue, and a normative base on (re-formed) CSBM's. The hope remains that if political will and consensus can be found, the OSCE will have the flexibility to address a broad area of subjects and respond to crises.

Warsaw's major expectation is for the OSCE's arms control framework to be updated to reflect current realities; to include modern types of warfare and military activity (such as transparency in hybrid actions) and the use of new technologies, particularly in the area of cyber-warfare. There is little expectation however, given the current political constraints that major changes will come into effect in this area in the foreseeable future.

Poland also sees the OSCE as a good format for co-ordination on counter-terrorism measures and in the prevention of and/or countering of violent extremism and organized crime, which have been a growing concern in the OSCE region. The added value of this platform has been promoted in recent years, not least because of the political implications of the refugee crises throughout Europe.

Russia – Controversial perception

Andrei Zagorski

»Russia views the OSCE as an important mechanism for building an equitable and indivisible system of pan-European security, and is interested in strengthening its role and authority. Setting clear priorities, primarily regarding countering transnational challenges and threats, as well as drafting the OSCE Charter and reforming its executive bodies with a view to ensuring appropriate prerogatives of the collective intergovernmental bodies, are the prerequisites for making the OSCE even more relevant.«

Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016.

»We see constant attempts to turn the OSCE, a crucial mechanism for ensuring common European and also trans-Atlantic security, into an instrument in the service of someone’s foreign policy interests. The result is that this very important organization has been hollowed out.«

President Putin at a meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club, October 27, 2016.

The two citations above reveal a fairly complex, if not controversial perception of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Russia. Moscow still praises the Organization as a crucial mechanism ensuring European security – a legacy of the past championship of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) by the Soviet Union in the early days of the Conference and by Russia in the 1990s. At

the same time, Moscow finds the OSCE an increasingly uncomfortable place for the pursuit of its interest. This occasionally triggers debates over whether it any longer makes sense for Russia to remain in the organization.¹ The OSCE fatigue manifested itself, *inter alia*, in the decision not to pursue the Russian flagship initiative of 2008–2011, the draft European Security Treaty, within the Organization. The response to the Ukraine crisis, particularly the establishment of the contact group and the deployment of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) produced some sort of OSCE renaissance in Moscow in 2015.² Meanwhile, this spirit has largely evaporated, although not yet entirely.

Russian Perception of the OSCE

Since early in the last decade, the prevailing mainstream perception of the OSCE in Russia has been that of an organization captured by the West, thus leading to the feeling of an increasing isolation of Russia within the OSCE and the sense of lost ownership of the Organization.³ This sense was increasingly reinforced after the parallel enlargement of NATO and the European Union in 2004 and the debate over the need to expand the Organization's engagement in and with the post-Soviet states. While resisting this trend, Moscow launched a campaign, supported by a few other post-Soviet states, accusing the OSCE of hypocrisy and biased concentration of its activities predominantly on countries »East of Vienna« and in the human dimension, at the expense of addressing

1 Mark Entin, Andrei Zagorski, »Should Russia Leave the OSCE?«, *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2008, No 3 (July–September). Available at: http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_11274.

2 Igor Ivanov, »Europe Needs the OSCE, Just As It Did 40 Years Ago« / IFSH (ed), *OSCE Yearbook 2014*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015, pp. 53–59; Andrei Kelin, »ОБСЕ наконец-то работает так, как должна была работать всегда« [»The OSCE finally operates the way it should have operated always«], *Index bezopasnosti [Security Index]*, 2014, No 3, pp. 17–21.

3 Andrei Zagorski, »Make the OSCE institutions less dependent on politics, not more«, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 16 (2005), No 3, pp. 209–213.

security concerns of the participating states, not least those related to the policies of the West.⁴

This development had several consequences. Most importantly, Moscow sought to »double capture« the OSCE by insisting on the need to strictly adhere to the consensus rule and to reducing, if not abolishing the autonomy of OSCE institutions, such as the Office for Democratic Institutions. Ever since, abandoning or even amending the consensus rule and expanding the freedom of action of OSCE institutions has been a taboo subject in Moscow, as reflected in the debates since 2009 over the possibility of expanding the mandate of the OSCE institutions to allow for early action in areas of evolving conflicts. Instead, since 2004, Russia has proposed OSCE reform, including the need to underpin it by a statute (a constituting document), aimed at curbing autonomous operations of the OSCE institutions by making them subject to consensus in the Permanent Council.

The engagement of the OSCE in Ukraine since 2014 seems to be an exception from the general trend of Russian policy to decrease, rather than increase the OSCE's engagement in/with the post-Soviet states. However, against the background of an internationalization of the settlement of the Ukraine crisis, this engagement was largely seen as a damage reduction exercise. Delegating the job to the OSCE was a lesser evil as compared to the option of any internationalization through the European Union, not to speak of NATO.⁵ Eventually, its role could have grown beyond that of damage reduction. But it has not, at least as yet.

4 Andrei Zagorski, »The OSCE in the context of the forthcoming EU and NATO extensions«, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 13, (2002), No 3, pp. 221–232.

5 Andrei Zagorski, »Es kommt nicht allein auf die OSZE an. Russland, die OSZE und die europäische Friedensordnung«, *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, 22. Februar 2017, available at: <http://www.bpb.de/internationales/weltweit/241628/meinung-es-kommt-nicht-allein-auf-die-osze-an>.

Expectations

The OSCE can still play a role in agreeing necessary adjustments to the European security order whenever and if ever the dialogue on broader issues, rather than exclusively on the settlement of the Ukraine crisis, is resumed. In that case, the Organization would certainly become an important platform for such dialogue, although not the only one.

The official Moscow line does not question the relevance of the Helsinki principles. Nor does it suggest rewriting them.⁶ Rather it suggests strengthening them by agreeing on a more uniform interpretation and further elaboration. There is a broad range of issues raised in Moscow that would fit into the OSCE agenda. Those include, *inter alia*, the desire to give effect to the principle of indivisibility of security; the need to revisit the principle of non-intervention against the background of the contemporary debate over »hybrid« forms of interference, by reaffirming the impermissibility of any subversive action or support of unconstitutional change of power in any participating state; to clarify the relationship between the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination,⁷ or between the freedom of alliances and the participating states' commitment to »bearing in mind the legitimate security concerns of other States« while implementing this freedom.⁸

Although there is little to no appetite in the West for discussion of these questions, and there are no alternative proposals from the West, there is some recognition of the need of some sort of an arrangement with

6 Alexey Meshkov, »Россия-Европа: что делать?« [»Russia and Europe: what next?«], *Международная жизнь* [Mezhdunarodnaya Zhisn'], 2015, No 9, p. 14.

7 Alexey Meshkov, »Russia and Europe: what next?«, p. 14; Andrey Kelin, »Взгляд в прошлое и безопасность мироустройства сегодня« [»Looking back and the security of the world order now«], *Международная жизнь* [Mezhdunarodnaya Zhisn'], 2016, No 1, pp. 64–65.

8 OSCE, Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, 3 December 1994, DOC.FSC/1/95, para. IV.10.

Russia that would require a negotiation within the OSCE in parallel with the settlement of the Ukraine crisis.⁹

The Role and Significance of the OSCE in the Foreign Policy of Russia

There are two important aspects to this question: Firstly, it is recognized that the resumption of dialogue within the OSCE, *inter alia*, on issues mentioned above, could and should become an important avenue for looking for a way out of the current crisis in Russia-West relations. However, the OSCE can become only part of the solution, not *the* solution as such. In other words, even bearing in mind that the repair of Russia-West relations may be marked by an OSCE summit, the alleviation of tension cannot be solved by the OSCE alone.

There are issues that Moscow prefers to deal with in different frameworks. In particular, the resumption of arms control is supposed to be predominantly a matter for Russia-NATO negotiation, while accompanying confidence and security-building measures can be tackled both between Russia and NATO and within the OSCE framework (Vienna Document).

Most economic issues are supposed to be dealt with not within the OSCE, but between Russia and the European Union, as well as between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the EU. Although establishing a formal EAEU-EU relationship remains a controversial issue, it is the EU rather than the OSCE which is seen in Moscow as a relevant counterpart in the economic dimension.

⁹ Markus Kaim, Hanns W. Maull, Kirsten Westphal, *Die gesamteuropäische Ordnung vor einer Zäsur – drei Leitlinien für einen Neubeginn*, SWP-Aktuell, 2015, No 14; Wolfgang Zellner et al., *European Security – Challenges at the Societal Level / OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions*, Hamburg, 2016 pp. 4, 15.

In other words, the alleviation of Russia-West relations would require parallel progress within the OSCE as well as with NATO and the EU.¹⁰

Secondly, the long-term relationship between Russia and NATO and the EU needs to be revisited. In the mid 1990s, against the background of the forthcoming enlargements, Russia concentrated on developing direct partnerships with NATO and the EU, which took different forms over time, but generally were at the expense of the OSCE. It is meanwhile recognized that this change in Russian policy did not yield any tangible fruits.¹¹ While a new relationship between Russia and NATO and the EU has yet to be identified, this does not automatically lead to a return of Moscow to its former focus on the OSCE. In a European security landscape or architecture that is generally believed to be EU and NATO-centric, a simple return to the OSCE no longer appears plausible. Now Moscow seeks to erect a Eurasian Community of states and to institutionalize its relations with both NATO (via the Collective Security Treaty Organization, CSTO) and the EU (via the EAEU) rather than to address relevant issues within the OSCE.

¹⁰ Andrei Kelin, »The OSCE finally operates the way it should have operated always«.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 18–19.

Switzerland – A crucial multilateral framework

Christian Nünlist

In 2014, Switzerland was the first Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) participating State to chair the organization for the second time. This was no coincidence. For neutral Switzerland, which is neither a member of the EU nor NATO, the OSCE is together with the United Nations the most important multilateral organization dealing with peace and security. Through the OSCE, Switzerland can make its peace policy activities more visible on a global stage. In addition, it can also contribute to conflict prevention and security promotion in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region, thereby displaying solidarity with the international community despite its traditional neutrality policy.¹

The rules of the game of the OSCE benefit Switzerland: constructive dialogue, the ability to compromise and the search for consensus are all hallmarks of Swiss policy.² The values, principles and commitments of the OSCE also fit with the value-based Swiss foreign policy after 1990. With its field missions, institutions, and tools for democracy promotion, rule of law, human rights, confidence building, and conflict prevention, the OSCE defines co-operative security comprehensively, including economic and environmental, human rights, and politico-military aspects. This »soft security approach« of the OSCE – that includes electoral observation,

1 The OSCE is prominently mentioned, in addition to the UN, in the chapter »peace and security« in the current Swiss foreign policy strategy. Swiss Federal Council, *Aussenpolitische Strategie 2016–2019*, 17 February 2016, pp. 5 and 25.

2 Christine Egerszegi-Obrist, *Vortrag gehalten an der Jahresversammlung der schweizerischen Helsinki-Vereinigung*, Universität Bern, 21 January 2013.

mediation, strengthening of border security, police reform, the fight against corruption and human trafficking, and media freedom – better suits Swiss foreign policy than »hard« military crisis management.³

In July 2013, the Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter during a presentation of the priorities of the Swiss OSCE chairmanship of 2014 described Switzerland as a »mini-OSCE«, arguing that the Swiss political system, like the OSCE, includes all political forces and works in a consensual manner.⁴ Co-operative and comprehensive security, inclusiveness, and dialogue fit perfectly with Swiss (foreign) policy.⁵

Already in the Helsinki Process during the Cold War, Switzerland was able to bring its independent and participatory foreign policy into play – a new, but highly valuable experience for neutral Switzerland, which had previously abstained from international diplomacy. For the two OSCE chairmanships of 1996 and 2014, Swiss diplomacy received much domestic and international praise. A further chapter was added to the success story of Switzerland and the OSCE in June 2017 when Swiss diplomat Thomas Greminger was among the leading candidates for the job of the next OSCE Secretary General.

Influence by Neutrality: Swiss Foreign Policy in the Helsinki Process

Switzerland is one of the thirty-five founding members of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), the predecessor of the

3 Christian Nünlist, »Die Schweiz ist eine Mini-OSZE: Perspektiven auf das Schweizer OSZE-Vorsitzjahr 2014«, in: *Bulletin zur schweizerischen Sicherheitspolitik* (2013), pp. 11–41, p. 8.

4 Swiss Foreign Ministry, *Ansprache von Bundesrat Didier Burkhalter beim Ständigen Rat der OSZE*, Vienna, 2 July 2013.

5 See Swiss Foreign Ministry, *Der Schweizer Vorsitz in der OSZE 2014: Schlussbericht*, 27 May 2015, p. 6.

OSCE, established in 1973. Participation in the Helsinki Process, in particular as host of the multilateral negotiations in Geneva from 1973 to 1975, marked a golden era of Swiss multilateral foreign policy. The active Swiss foreign policy was positively noted with surprise in Washington, Moscow, and other capitals. Switzerland acted as an intermediary between East and West, together with other neutral and non-aligned countries (the NNA countries).⁶ Swiss diplomats substantially shaped some dossiers and had comparatively great freedom of maneuver, since they were not constrained by the straitjacket of intra-bloc consultations like NATO, the Warsaw Pact, or the European Communities (EC). Switzerland's »Mr. CSCE«, diplomat Eduard Brunner, understood the CSCE negotiations from the outset as a highly political event and quickly became a key player in the marathon of talks.⁷

Switzerland's high-profile role in the early Helsinki Process marked the beginning of a new phase of Swiss foreign policy. It was the most concrete implementation of the landmark Swiss security policy strategy adapted in 1973. The »Report on the Security Policy of Switzerland« of June 1973 outlined a two-pillar strategy, modelled after NATO's famous 1967 Harmel report of *defence cum détente*. In addition to territorial defence, Swiss foreign policy was to become more flexible and more active.⁸ Switzerland's ambitious performance in the CSCE signified a late beginning of Swiss multilateral diplomacy after 1945. Switzerland's strict neutrality policy was reinterpreted and Swiss diplomacy in the Helsinki Process was seen as a prime example of Switzerland's new active neutrality policy. Switzerland

6 Christian Nünlist, »Expanding the East-West Dialog beyond the Bloc Division«, in: Andreas Wenger / Vojtech Maszny / Christian Nünlist (eds.), *Origins of the European Security System: The Helsinki Process Revisited, 1965–1975* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 201–221, at pp. 216–217. See also Thomas Fischer, *Neutral Power in the CSCE: The N+N States and the Making of the Helsinki Accords 1975* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009); Hans-Jörg Renk, *Der Weg der Schweiz nach Helsinki: Der Beitrag der schweizerischen Diplomatie zum Zustandekommen der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa (KSZE), 1972–1975* (Bern: Haupt, 1996).

7 Paul Widmer, *Schweizer Aussenpolitik und Diplomatie* (Zürich: Ammann, 2003), pp. 383–393.

8 Kurt Spillmann et al., *Schweizer Sicherheitspolitik seit 1945* (Zürich: NZZ, 2001), p. 111.

for the first time participated in multilateral Cold War diplomacy and tried to contribute original and innovative ideas for security and stability in Europe.⁹ In his memoirs, Hans-Dietrich Genscher characterized Swiss CSCE diplomacy as a »new dimension of Swiss foreign policy«.¹⁰

More Responsibility for European Security: Switzerland's OSCE Chairmanship of 1996

A paradigm shift in Swiss foreign policy took place in 1990. Switzerland's foreign and security policy strategy now focused on »security through co-operation«. To contribute to international stability in Europe was declared to be an aim of Swiss foreign policy. Noble words were followed by concrete action, including Swiss accession to NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) and Swiss chairmanship of the OSCE in 1996. In addition Switzerland joined UN sanctions against Iraq, former Yugoslavia, and Libya, and it actively contributed to military peacekeeping operations in the Western Balkans.¹¹

After the CSCE's transformation into the OSCE in 1995, Bosnia became a first test for the new institutions and the operational capabilities of the organization during the Swiss OSCE chairmanship in 1996. Switzerland made the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement of December 1995 the focus of its OSCE year. Within the OSCE framework, Switzerland substantially contributed to the stabilization of Bosnia, sending almost 70 »yellow caps« and 160 experts to the Western Balkans, mostly as electoral and human rights observers. Thanks to Swiss diplomacy, the OSCE for

9 Philip Rosin, *Die Schweiz im KSZE-Prozess 1972–1982: Einfluss durch Neutralität* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013), pp. 129–130. See also Elisabeth R. Glas, »Aufbruch der Schweiz in die multilaterale Welt: Die schweizerische Aussenpolitik 1965–1977« (unpublished MA thesis, University of Zurich, 1999).

10 Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1995), p. 304.

11 Christian Nünlist, »Swiss Security Policy after 2014«, in: *European Security & Defense* 3–4 (2015), pp. 18–21.

the first time played a prominent, visible role in the peace consolidation of a civil war in 1996.¹² Swiss diplomat Tim Guldemann also succeeded in bringing the conflict parties in Chechnya to the negotiating table.¹³ Overall, the OSCE chairmanship of 1996 was considered to be a huge success for Swiss foreign policy. Active peace-building policy, as conceived in the influential Swiss foreign policy report of 1993 had been put into practice. The original foreign policy aim of preserving Swiss independence had been updated in 1993 with five new objectives, including the preservation and promotion of security and peace.¹⁴ The OSCE chairmanship helped Switzerland to break out of its self-elected political isolation in Europe and to expand the room for maneuver of neutral Switzerland's foreign policy.¹⁵

For a while, the 1996 OSCE chairmanship had made the organization known in Switzerland beyond expert circles. Yet, the OSCE increasingly lost relevance after 1999. Swiss strategy papers still called for strengthening the OSCE.¹⁶ In Switzerland as in other Western countries, the OSCE in the early 21st century was again increasingly confused with the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OSCE moved up on the international political agenda only in February 2014 with the outbreak of the Ukraine Crisis. By coincidence, at that moment the OSCE chairmanship had been in Swiss hands for barely two months.

12 Andreas Wenger et al., »Das schweizerische OSZE-Präsidentschaftsjahr 1996«, in: *Bulletin zur schweizerischen Sicherheitspolitik* (1997), pp. 4–46. See also Mario Sica, »The Role of the OSCE in the Former Yugoslavia after the Dayton Peace Agreement«, in: *Helsinki Monitor* no. 2 (1996), pp. 5–12.

13 Tim Guldemann, »Die OSZE-Unterstützungsgruppe in Tschetschenien: Ein Erfahrungsbericht«, in: Laurent Goetschel (ed.), *Vom Statisten zum Hauptdarsteller: Die Schweiz und ihre OSZE-Präsidentschaft* (Bern: Haupt, 1997), pp. 109–125.

14 Bundesrat, *Bericht über die Aussenpolitik der Schweiz in den 90er Jahren*, 29 November 1993.

15 Laurent Goetschel (ed.), *Vom Statisten zum Hauptdarsteller: Die Schweiz und ihre OSZE-Präsidentschaft* (Bern: Haupt, 1997).

16 See e.g. Bundesrat, *Aussenpolitischer Bericht 2000: Präsenz und Kooperation: Interessenwahrung in einer zusammenwachsenden Welt*, 15 November 2000, p. 286 und p. 329; Bundesrat, *Aussenpolitischer Bericht 2007*, 15 June 2007, p. 5554; Bundesrat, *Aussenpolitischer Bericht 2011*, 18 January 2012, p. 2933.

The OSCE and the Ukraine Crisis in 2014: Swiss Crisis Management

Similar to the 1996 experience, Switzerland's second OSCE chairmanship in 2014 was again characterized by the management of an unexpected crisis. Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter used the »double impartiality«¹⁷ of both Switzerland and the OSCE to effectively respond to the developing crisis in and around Ukraine, and to act as honest broker (or facilitator) between all sides in the conflict, including Kiev, Moscow and the rebels in Eastern Ukraine. National conservatives in Switzerland predictably criticized Burkhalter's active diplomacy in the Ukrainian Crisis as dangerous interference in a foreign conflict and a breach of Swiss neutrality.¹⁸ A Swiss daily newspaper even called Switzerland a »useful idiot of Moscow«.¹⁹ However, the wider Swiss public supported Burkhalter's policy of peace promotion within the framework of the OSCE.²⁰ In an annual TV gala show, Burkhalter was even awarded the title of »Swiss of the Year 2014« in January 2015 – an honor that had previously been awarded primarily to exceptional athletes such as Roger Federer (2003) or Dario Cologna (2012) rather than politicians.²¹

Switzerland's performance during the 2014 OSCE chairmanship was widely praised both within Switzerland as well as abroad. Burkhalter brought the foreign ministers of Russia and Ukraine to the negotiating table, which led to the Joint Geneva Statement of April 2014. On behalf

17 »Die Schweiz hat in der Ukraine eine besondere Rolle«, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 18 March 2014.

18 »Eklat im Bundesrat: Maurer wirft Burkhalter Neutralitätsbruch vor«, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 20 March 2014.

19 »Schweigen in der Krim-Krise: Macht sich die Schweiz zur nützlichen Idiotin?«, in: *Die Nordwestschweiz*, 8 March 2014.

20 »Der Welt einen Dienst erwiesen«, in: *Tages-Anzeiger*, 3 December 2014; »Schweizer Bevölkerung zeigt sich offener gegenüber dem Ausland«, in: *SRF News Online*, 29 May 2015.

21 »Schweizer des Jahres 2014: Burkhalter überaus deutlich gewählt«, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 11 January 2015.

of the OSCE Chairmanship, Swiss diplomat Heidi Tagliavini facilitated a fragile ceasefire agreement between Moscow, Kiev, and the pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine. In December 2014, Burkhalter launched an independent panel of experts to deliver a report by the end of 2015 on how to (re-) consolidate European Security as a common project. Yet, the greatest success of Swiss OSCE diplomacy in 2014 was the achievement of a unanimous OSCE Permanent Council decision on 21 March 2014 to send a Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine.²²

Overall, Switzerland was able to mediate between Russia and the West in a difficult year for the OSCE. In addition, OSCE participating States were able to find consensus at the Ministerial Council in Basel in December 2014 and adopt co-operative decisions on important issues such as the fight against terrorism, protection of human right defenders, security sector reform, the prevention of natural disasters, gender equality, and the inclusion of youth.²³

The OSCE chairmanship enhanced the image of an engaged Swiss foreign policy. In 2014, Swiss foreign policy once again made useful contributions to the promotion of conflict resolution, peace and security in Europe and assumed responsibility at the helm of the OSCE. Strengthening the OSCE served a key purpose of Swiss foreign policy, namely reinforcing this important multilateral framework. Swiss involvement in the OSCE also improved the credibility of its (neutral) foreign policy and enhanced visibility for the competence of its diplomats. The multilateral and bilateral contacts nursed during the 2014 OSCE chairmanship are of particularly importance for an independent actor like Switzerland.²⁴

22 Nünlist, *Testfall Ukraine-Krise*, pp. 43–54.

23 Christian Nünlist, »Summing Up Switzerland's 2014 Chairmanship of the OSCE«, in: *ISN Blog ETH Zurich* (isnblog.ethz.ch), 18 December 2014; OSCE, *21st OSCE Ministerial Council*, 4–5 December 2014, http://www.osce.org/event/mc_2014.

24 See also Bundesrat, *Schweizer Vorsitz*, pp. 3–8.

Co-operative Security and European Security after 2014

With the end of the Swiss OSCE chairmanship, the strong commitment of Switzerland to the OSCE did not end. Switzerland also shaped the policy agenda of the Serbian OSCE chairmanship of 2015, as the two countries had jointly applied for a »double presidency« of the OSCE for 2014–2015. Swiss diplomats like Gerard Stoudmann (West Balkans), Angelo Gnädinger (South Caucasus), and Heidi Tagliavini (Ukraine) continued their mandates as OSCE special representatives in 2015.²⁵ This model of multiple year commitment of special representatives has been taken up by the next chairmanships (Germany and Austria).

At the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel in December 2014, Didier Burkhalter emphasized that Swiss foreign policy would continue after the end of the Swiss OSCE chairmanship to prevent conflicts, build bridges and strengthen security and co-operation in Europe.²⁶ It was not an empty promise. In August 2015, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein in a Ministerial Declaration of German-speaking countries decided to co-operate more closely on OSCE matters to strengthen all three OSCE dimensions. In particular, the four countries promised to co-ordinate their efforts for achieving a peaceful solution of the Ukraine conflict and to strengthen the OSCE's toolbox and the organization's capacity to act. Based on the recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons (the so-called »Ischinger panel«) presented at the Ministerial Meeting in Belgrade in December 2015, it was decided that the dialogue about European Security should continue within the OSCE. Finally, it was agreed that the Swiss slogan of »economic connectivity« should be

25 Christian Nünlist, »In Switzerland's Shadow: Summing Up Serbia's 2015 OSCE Chairmanship«, in: *ISN Blog ETH Zurich* (isnblog.ethz.ch), 23 December 2015.

26 Didier Burkhalter, »We Swiss will build bridges to strengthen security and co-operation in Europe beyond our Chairmanship«, *Opening address at 21st OSCE Ministerial Council*, Basel, 4 December 2014.

further implemented with the aim of avoiding exclusionary economic zones and building confidence through economic interdependence in the OSCE area.²⁷

Within the Swiss public, however, the »Burkhalter effect«, namely an increased readiness to internationalize Swiss foreign policy, seemed to be already exhausted again, just one year after the conclusion of the Swiss OSCE chairmanship.²⁸ In June 2017, Didier Burkhalter – a clear »OSCE turbo« – surprisingly announced his plans to retire as a Federal Councillor.²⁹ Other concerns, such as the future relationship with the EU dominate the international policy agenda. It is by no means sure that the next Foreign Minister will be similarly closely attached to the OSCE as Burkhalter who had lived through the experience of the Swiss OSCE chairmanship of 2014.

However, Swiss OSCE diplomacy was energized by the election of Swiss top diplomat Thomas Greminger as OSCE Secretary General on 12 July 2017. Swiss foreign policy will once again make the strengthening of the OSCE a priority for the next few years. The long-held »OSCE nostalgia« of neutral Switzerland and the disproportionate importance of the OSCE within Switzerland's foreign policy strategy will continue – and a new chapter will be added to the success story of Switzerland's engagement with the OSCE.

27 *Ministerielle Erklärung zur Kooperation zwischen Deutschland, Österreich, Schweiz und Liechtenstein zu sicherheitspolitischen Fragen mit OSZE-Fokus*, Centre Dürrenmatt, Neuenburg, 16 August 2015.

28 Tibor Szvircsev Tresch et al. (ed.), *Sicherheit 2016: Aussen-, sicherheits- und verteidigungspolitische Meinungsbildung im Trend* (Zürich: ETH Zürich, 2016), p. 130.

29 „Rücktritt von Didier Burkhalter: Je ne regrette rien«, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 14 June 2017.

UK – Not meaningful for addressing British foreign and security objectives

Shatabhisha Shetty

The UK and the OSCE

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is neither well known nor well understood in the United Kingdom. With limited public profile there is little awareness of the organization, what it does, how it is relevant to British foreign policy objectives, or even how the UK engages with the organization.

When featured in the British media, the OSCE is generally mentioned in reports about the Ukraine conflict and refers to the activities of the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission. Although it has an active UK delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the British members lament the lack of understanding of the organization among fellow parliamentary colleagues. During a House of Lords debate on the OSCE in March 2017, Lord Bowness, Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly remarked:

»In 2012, in Questions for Short Debate about Her Majesty's Government's view of the role of the OSCE and, in November 2013, about their hopes and priorities for the Helsinki+40 process, I raised the whole question of the OSCE. I ask this further question as circumstances have changed and because there is, even in Parliament, a lack of awareness of the OSCE, what it does and the complex and varied issues with which it is concerned in some of the most troubled

parts of its region. It is difficult to get attention. I failed abysmally with even our own The House magazine, and in two long debates in your Lordships' House on the UK's international relations post-Brexit and our future engagement with the UN and US, I could not find a single reference to the OSCE.»¹

The last time the OSCE was debated in the main chamber of the House of Commons was in November 1990 when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher opened a debate on the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) summit, the signing of the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty (CFE) and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.² This present-day lack of parliamentary awareness contrasts somewhat with the period between the 1970s and early 1990s when issues relating to the CSCE, the Helsinki Final Act and the OSCE were discussed more regularly.³

Nevertheless, limited UK government engagement with the OSCE and its earlier incarnation is not new. During the Cold War the government was reticent about engaging with the Warsaw Pact's proposal for a European Security Conference, being mindful of the deep concerns of its most important ally the United States and wary of the Soviet Union's intentions. By the late 1960s the UK had agreed to the CSCE negotiations to maintain western unity, establish better East-West contacts, and to try to exact concessions from the Soviets. By 1974, British negotiators were expressing greater enthusiasm for the value of the conference in

1 Lord Bowness, Question for Short Debate »Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe«, 30 March 2017, Volume 782; <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2017-03-30/debates/1C9CC6CE-E34A-45B7-BEDD-F8C6F5B79173/OrganisationForSecurityAndCo-OperationInEurope>.

2 CSCE Summit, House of Commons Debate, November 1990 vol 181 cc291-310 http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1990/nov/21/csce-summit#column_291.

3 The CSCE is mentioned 1,272 times in Hansard in the 1970s, 359 times in the 1980s whilst the Helsinki Final Act was mentioned 835 times and the OSCE was mentioned 1,153 times in the 1990s. The OSCE was mentioned 472 times from 2000 until 2005. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/search/>. Between 2006 and September 2017 there were 208 mentions. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/search?startDate=2006-01-02&endDate=2017-09-27&searchTerm=osce>.

light of the Soviet Union's concessions over the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, expansion of contacts, cross border flow of information and the freedom to travel. The British government signed the Helsinki Final Act and intended to maintain pressure on the Basket III provisions on Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union. To this day it still places significant value on the Human Dimension of the OSCE yet, in spite of this, the CSCE and the OSCE have never been a prominent feature of British foreign policy.⁴

Despite its low profile in recent times, the UK makes a notable contribution to the functioning of the OSCE. It is the third joint largest financial contributor providing 9.35 % of the OSCE's regular unified budget.^{5,6,7} With 9 staff members and a new military attaché, it also has one of the largest delegations at the OSCE's headquarters in Vienna.^{8,9} It champions the work of the autonomous institutions and the field missions and contributes to activity in field operations through extra-budgetary and in-kind contributions. It has also invested significantly in the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and is the third largest financial contributor to its operations, providing approximately 8.1 million euros (11.9 %) of its 2017 budget as well as training, support and secondees (57 staff); second

4 The British Security Culture in National Security Cultures: Patterns of Global Governance, Emil J. Kirchner, James Sperling, Routledge, 12 Jul 2010.

5 PC.DEC/1196, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 17 December 2015, Permanent Council, 1083rd Plenary Meeting, PC Journal No. 1083, Agenda item 3, DECISION No. 1196, SCALES OF CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2016–2017 <http://www.osce.org/pc/212816?download=true>.

6 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: Written question – 4287 <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-11/4287>.

7 Although it adopts a zero-increase policy towards the budget, with the steadfast position that the OSCE Secretariat should find efficiencies in staffing costs so that more resources are focused on the OSCE core programmatic activities.

8 Foreign & Commonwealth Office Annual Report and Accounts 2016–17 (For the year ended 31 March 2017), p64 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-and-commonwealth-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2016-to-2017>.

9 PC.DEC/1197, 31 December 2015, Attachment 7, Interpretative Statement Under Paragraph Iv.1(A)6 Of The Rules Of Procedure Of The Organization For Security and Co-operation In Europe, By the delegation of the United Kingdom; <http://www.osce.org/pc/215416?download=true>.

only to the United States.^{10,11} Moreover, the UK government provides voluntary contributions towards the deployment of election observers to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) missions, has two secondees based at the OSCE's Mission to Moldova and the Office of the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media, along with other secondees in senior posts in South East Europe.¹²

The government considers the OSCE's comprehensive approach to Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian security worth its (relatively small) investment. Official statements highlight its support for the OSCE's activities in all three of its dimensions. As indicated earlier the UK has historically taken a keen interest in the Human Dimension and is chairing the Human Dimension Committee in 2017.¹³ Official statements stress the importance of the OSCE's activities in defending and upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly through the autonomous institutions – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.¹⁴

The UK strongly supports activities under the politico-military dimension including reducing the risk of military accidents and incidents, encouraging greater military transparency and co-operation, promoting confidence and security-building measures and calling for all participating states to

10 Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Annual Report and Accounts, 2016–17 (For the year ended 31 March 2017)<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-and-commonwealth-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2016-to-2017>.

11 Written question 4287, Asked by Mr Kevan Jones, 11 July 2017, To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much funding the Government has provided to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe in each of the last 10 years. <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-11/4287>.

12 In the mid to late 2000s the UK reduced the number of secondees it sent to the OSCE (from 113 in 2004 to 14 by March 2009). This increased in 2014 after Russia's intervention in Ukraine. See Westminster Hall debate »Election Observation« 3 Mar 2009 : Column 250WH; <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090303/halltext/90303h0011.htm>.

13 Human Rights in Europe during the Cold War. Mariager, Rasmus Mølgaard (Editor); Molin, Karl (Editor); Brathagen, Kjersti (Editor). 1 ed. London / New York: Routledge Falmer, 2014. 197 p. (Cold War History), p. 130.

14 FCO annual Human Rights and Democracy Report for 2014. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-statement-at-osce-permanent-council-on-human-rights-and-democracy>.

fully adhere to the Vienna document.¹⁵ As such it takes a particularly tough stance on Russia, regularly criticizing the Russian government for its illegal annexation of Crimea, its activities in Ukraine, efforts to circumvent the Vienna document through snap military exercises, and not adhering to the Helsinki principles. In spite of its criticisms of Russian behaviour the UK is nonetheless open to the Structured Dialogue process¹⁶. It participates in the Informal Working Group meetings and is willing to be part of the process even without (the British inclination for) clear established objectives and outcomes for the process.

Brexit and Future British Foreign Policy

Brexit has ushered in a period of deep uncertainty as the country grapples with detangling itself from the European Union and establishes a new role within Europe, but outside of the EU. The government is tightly focused on the Brexit negotiations. Given the complexity of exiting the European Union, this process will take years, necessitating time, money and resources. Tough demands are being made of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with no promise as yet of additional funding to ease this extra burden. Moreover British foreign policy objectives are broad and unguided, lacking an overarching strategy for managing the changing environment, in spite of the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson's call for a new »Global Britain«.¹⁷

15 OSCE Informal Ministerial Council, Potsdam: Written statement – HLWS203

WS Foreign and Commonwealth Office Made on: 18 October 2016, Made by: Baroness Anelay of St Johns (The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-10-18/HLWS203/>.

16 Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 30 March 2017, Volume 782, Column 96GC, Question for Short Debate <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2017-03-30/debates/1C9CC6CE-E34A-45B7-BEDD-F8C6F5B79173/OrganisationForSecurityAndCo-OperationInEurope>.

17 Global Britain: UK Foreign Policy in the Era of Brexit, 2 Dec 2016, Chatham House <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/events/special/2016-12-02-Boris-Johnson.pdf>.

Brexit therefore presents an opportunity for the British Foreign Office to use the OSCE to demonstrate its continuing interest in developments on the European continent. This includes continuing support for the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security through activities undertaken in all three dimensions, engagement in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Balkans, as well as diplomacy with Russia. On the question of the Western Balkans in particular, the UK has the potential to carve out an important foreign policy position given its strong and long-standing interest in the region. It currently fields operations in six Western Balkans countries and after Brexit has the opportunity to demonstrate that it values continued development and integration of the region.

Despite the untapped potential for the OSCE to project British influence and values, the government's most recent policy paper on foreign policy, defence and development post-Brexit refers to the OSCE only once in passing.¹⁸ This is indicative of the OSCE's current low priority in British foreign policy-making. In his December 2016 speech on «UK Foreign Policy in the Era of Brexit», Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson made no mention of the OSCE. Although this does not augur well for a more prominent role for the OSCE in the future foreign policy, internal discussions are nonetheless taking place as to how the UK could better use the OSCE after Brexit.

British Foreign Policy and Multilateralism

The UK derives influence from membership of a range of multilateral institutions and forums. It occupies a privileged position as a UN permanent Security Council member and is the largest European military

¹⁸ HMG Policy paper, «Foreign policy, defence and development – a future partnership paper» <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-policy-defence-and-development-a-future-partnership-paper>.

power within the NATO alliance. It is a member of the G7 and G20 as well as all the major Euro-Atlantic security bodies including the OSCE, the Council of Europe, NATO, and the EU (with the Brexit caveat). Yet two of the three fundamental pillars of British foreign policy – membership of the EU, and the special relationship with the United States (the third being membership in NATO) – are under acute pressure.

Although the OSCE is valued for its multilateralism and multidimensional approach to security, it is not considered a meaningful forum for advancing major British foreign and security policy objectives. Other multilateral organizations, in particular the EU and NATO are considered more significant and powerful. The OSCE's principle of consensus rule and the way in which it is used by participating states to occasionally paralyze its work, coupled with its lack of legal personality could be seen as reducing its value and usefulness. Although it is acknowledged that there is some value to the OSCE's consensus rule.

The UK must decide how it should best secure its interests in its changed circumstances. It should reappraise its foreign policy strategy and conduct an honest assessment of its changing role in Europe. It should reinvigorate key bilateral relationships and explore how it can better work within multilateral organizations, including the OSCE. Within its OSCE delegation specifically, it could encourage its military attaché to develop more regular contacts with the attachés of other national delegations to promote efforts in the first dimension. Since it no longer needs to be aligned with the EU's position at the OSCE, this presents the opportunity to either reinforce the EU's position or even challenge it. From the onset of the Ukraine crisis, the British government has also been one of the most hawkish states with respect to Russia, limiting bilateral engagement and making public calls to resist any so called return to »business as usual«. The UK should use this new opportunity for constructive engagement

with Russia through increasing bilateral contact to take a leading role in working to overcome and address core security problems in the Euro-Atlantic space. The British government should attempt to raise its profile and expand its role within the OSCE in order try to influence events across wider Europe, as well as strengthen its co-operative relationships within the context of the OSCE.

Ukraine – Important element of the international security order

Oleksiy Semeni

Perceptions of the OSCE in Ukraine since the 1990s

The history of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) activity and the respective perceptions by the citizens of Ukraine can be subdivided into two periods – prior to 2014 and post 2014. If the OSCE and its activities in general were not very well known or followed before 2014 (other than the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) evaluation of elections and Ukraine's chairmanship in 2013), then after 2014 the OSCE's presence both in the media of Ukraine and citizens' consciousness substantially increased (although it is not a prominent issue in opinion polls or public interest). The OSCE has been represented in Ukraine since 1994 – initially by the Mission expert group from 1994–1999 and since 1999 by the OSCE Project Coordinator (with mission) who supervised all respective OSCE projects and activities within Ukraine (examples of organizational details can be seen in the Memorandum of Understanding between Ukraine and the OSCE of 13 July 1999¹). Therefore the problem of perception pertained to the »non-visibility« of the OSCE for many citizens of Ukraine in so as far as they did not come into contact with the organization in their daily life and the mission did not tackle their major day-to-day problems. Until 2014, only experts, officials

¹ Memorandum of Understanding between the government of Ukraine and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) concerning the creation of a new form of co-operation. July 13, 1999. Retrieved at: <http://www.osce.org/ukraine/37928>.

and persons interested in the international agenda paid any attention to the OSCE, and then more particularly with regard to the OSCE's missions in various conflict areas in Europe (e.g. wars in the former republics of Yugoslavia and in the post-Soviet republics in the 1990s).

Ukraine's chairmanship in 2013 (a decision unanimously adopted at the OSCE annual meeting in Astana in December 2010) did not bring about breakthroughs or significant results. According to priorities² announced in January 2013, Ukraine initially wanted to achieve progress in areas of protracted conflicts (specifically with regard to a peaceful settlement in Transdnistria, where Ukraine is one of the key stakeholders and influential actors). Other priorities included combating human trafficking, promoting media freedom, and promotion of the Helsinki+40 process. Tragically and ironically, Ukraine itself will suffer before long from many of the problems mentioned as its 2013 chairmanship priorities, not least because of the protracted conflict that emerged on its own territory. Nevertheless, the chairmanship became quite significant as its final OSCE Ministerial meeting was held on 5–6 December 2013 at the Exhibition center on the left bank of Kyiv, while the events of Maidan unfolded on the right (historical) side of the city. During the meeting ongoing events in Ukraine were widely discussed and mentioned in many official statements³. Some delegations and officials, including the then OSCE Secretary General Zannier, even visited the protesters at Maidan. It should be noted that the OSCE Mission in Ukraine had warned of rising problems in the country (for example, OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media), but there was no reaction to their warning from government leaders at that time.

2 Protracted conflicts, human trafficking and media freedom amongst Ukraine's OSCE 2013 priorities. 17 January 2013. Retrieved at: <http://www.osce.org/cio/98763>.

3 OSCE. Twentieth meeting of the Ministerial Council. 6 December 2013. Retrieved at: <http://www.osce.org/mc/kyiv?download=true>.

However, since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, and the OSCE's Permanent Council decision on 21 March 2014⁴ to deploy a Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) at the request of the government of Ukraine, the perception that the OSCE was »not on the radar« in Ukraine has changed. Because millions of people within the country are affected by the conflict and its repercussions, the OSCE itself (primarily the SMM and the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) in Minsk) became much better known in Ukraine. Many aspects of the conflict and war activities, if reported at all, came from the media along with mentions of the OSCE (TCG and SMM) as negotiators in Minsk. Moreover it was reported that the staff of the OSCE were standing along the contact line trying to lessen the tensions and casualties, and in some places were being stopped by the separatist forces from monitoring ceasefire agreements. Although the Project Coordinator in Ukraine promotes a number of very important projects dedicated to key areas of Ukraine's development (both for state and society), the activities do not cover or involve a critical mass of people, consequently the OSCE is not well known around the country. But the increase of attention given to the organization and its activities in Ukraine since 2014 has a two-fold nature – both positive and negative.

Negative attitudes towards the OSCE (especially in the war affected regions) stem mostly from issues related to over-expectation by those members of the public who believe that the OSCE missions could or should stop the conflict and are angry therefore that to date this has not been the case. This feeling corresponds to many other conflicts wherein people commonly suppose such organizations to be capable of stopping violence or conflicts, thus overestimating their capacities and blaming the situation on the organization's lack of efficiency. Negative emotions

4 OSCE. 991st Plenary Meeting. Decision #1117. Deployment of an OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. 21 March 2014. Retrieved at: <http://www.osce.org/pc/116747?download=true>.

towards the OSCE were expressed by the local population on both sides of the contact line, who perceived that somehow shelling stopped during the presence of the SMM and then started again as soon as the mission left – people thought the mission should be constantly present in order »to protect« them from shelling. Others supposed that the OSCE could be more effective in its facilitator role in Minsk (Trilateral Contact Group) where according to common perception little progress has been made thus far. For example, according to the Gorshenin Institute's poll on the Minsk agreements, Ukrainian citizens evaluate the OSCE activities more negatively than positively⁵ (49,6 % and 35,6 % respectively). What evidences this split in the public's mind regarding the OSCE? Negative emotions were expressed by people in the affected regions of the Donbass who saw that the international monitors were well equipped and using modern and comfortable facilities (in what is absolutely normal practice), whereas they the citizens were or are in »survival mode«, thus provoking »feelings of envy« towards the OSCE staff.

The positive aspect of more attention being paid to the OSCE in Ukraine lies increasingly in its capacity to influence the dynamics of the conflict (albeit on a limited scale). All of the parties see the OSCE as a neutral broker who can be referred to and accepted as a reliable source in case of substantial disagreements. This increases the influence of the OSCE on the ground, and in Vienna as well, when discussing the Ukraine crisis. Moreover, the latest proposals of the newly elected French President Emmanuel Macron (namely to include the OSCE as a part of the Normandy format), confirms the rise in possibilities for the institution. Russia also pays attention to OSCE activities in Ukraine and tries by all means to minimize any negative reporting by the OSCE with regard to separatist

5 Gorshenin Institute. All-Ukrainian sociological study on Minsk agreements. February 2016. Retrieved at: http://institute.gorshenin.ua/programs/researches/2398_obschestvenopoliticheskie.html.

entities or their links to Russia. As Russia is one of the key actors in the Ukraine crisis, this creates some space for the OSCE to influence the whole process in a positive way.

The Role of the OSCE in Ukraine and Ukrainian Expectations

Looking back at Ukraine's foreign and security policy over the last 15 years we can evidence substantial changes as a result of intense political and geopolitical dynamics. If before 2004 Ukraine followed and promoted a more or less cohesive »balancing policy« (accepted by all key actors), then thereafter a period of serious fluctuation started – initiated both from outside and inside. This resulted in a loss of balance inside and outside the country and substantially influenced security in the whole of Europe, which had played an important role for stability in Eastern Europe up until 2014. Since 2014, as a result of the Russian aggression and radical dynamics inside the country, Ukraine has been transformed from a »security contributor« to a »security consumer«. That in turn has radically changed the whole security architecture in the region, and especially called into question the feasibility of the OSCE's comprehensive and inclusive approach to Euro-Atlantic security architecture. All parties involved may and should be blamed for such a negative outcome, although the OSCE is probably the least culpable.

Evaluating the OSCE's role in Ukraine today produces an ambiguous result. On the one hand the OSCE is of minor significance in the day-to-day foreign policy activities of Ukraine. The exception is the part it plays in the Trilateral Group in Minsk, where much attention is devoted to contact with Western partners, issues of Euro-Atlantic integration, and resistance to Russia. Some kind of ignorance towards the activities of the OSCE is explained by the absence of quick and concrete outcomes

resulting from its actions, whereas this mix is a vital requirement for Ukraine today. It should be mentioned moreover that the appointment of the OSCE chairmanship plays an important role in this regard, especially if we start with the example of the chairmanship held by Ukraine in 2013 as it used almost every opportunity suggested by the OSCE regarding measures to reach de-escalation of the conflict and to move forward in its resolution.

However, on the other hand the OSCE plays a crucial role in holding the *de jure* ceasefire regime (actually the essence of Minsk agreements is precisely about ceasefire – resolution of conflict needs another document and summit), in the first instance through its SMM activities and negotiations in Minsk under the auspices of the TCG. It secures an international presence in many discussions, providing real instruments to stop Russia and its proxies in their destructive actions against Ukraine. Moreover, the OSCE is accepted by all parties as an »unbiased arbitrator« and for this reason greater attention is paid to its reports and recommendations. In addition, the organization is used as a comfortable platform to discuss the most urgent issues among »adversarial parties« and even finds specific practical solutions to tactical issues.

In general, for Ukraine the OSCE presents an important element of an international security order where agreements are adhered to and security is guaranteed. Therefore Ukrainian foreign policy refers frequently to many of the OSCE's founding documents and to the institution as a whole as a basic anchor in its activities to return to the »status quo ante«, i. e. the situation pre 2014. Another general element of the OSCE's role is the possibility of establishing new security architecture in Europe, initiated and promoted by the organization. Although previous attempts failed, Ukraine would definitely support a new attempt if it were duly prepared.

Major expectations of Ukraine by the OSCE are related to the resolution of conflict in the Donbass and some progress in the issues concerning Crimea. The majority of the citizens and even many experts are not fully aware of the possibilities offered by the involvement of the OSCE or the instruments available to it, nor well informed about its full range of activities in Ukraine. Due to the dynamics of the last three years, the major expectation is connected with a possible peacekeeping mission by the OSCE (TCG and SMM initially), which could stop shelling and start peaceful processes in the Donbass, as well as providing the OSCE with access to Crimea – initially for monitoring purposes. Other issues, such as the actual priorities put forward by the OSCE Coordinator in Ukraine – be it rule of law, human rights aspects, elections procedures, countering human trafficking, ecological problems, media freedom, or gender questions are of minor significance.

The Ukrainian expert community evaluates the OSCE as being the number one possibility for creating a ceasefire across the contact line; for introducing some transitional administration to currently occupied districts of the Donbass and for getting full control over the Ukrainian-Russian border at the end of this process. But at the same time there are substantial doubts concerning the applicability of this scenario due to a possible veto from Russia for such steps, and the fear that too much time has already been lost in finding a settlement to the crisis.

Another important expectation refers to the possible role of the OSCE as an inclusive and effective security organization for the whole Euro-Atlantic area (which it should be according to its founding purpose). For Ukraine it would mean finding some solution to the crisis and current war activities in the Donbass, as well as to the Crimea problem. If successful, Ukraine could evolve as an important element of stability in the new continental security architecture. But this expectation can only be realized upon

successful reform of the OSCE itself and a new security summit of the OSCE states, laying foundations for the new order.

Options for the Future

Due to the wide range of instruments available to the OSCE it could enlarge the scope of its activity and improve its image, which accordingly would provide more possibilities for success in new activities and initiatives (i. e. people would see practical gains from the OSCE's presence). In the case of Ukraine the OSCE should concentrate on establishing a sustainable ceasefire in the Donbass, followed by set of measures for reaching a real settlement of the Ukraine crisis, while at the same time not losing sight of the problem of Crimea – altogether quite a difficult and ambitious task.

The OSCE might also modify its activities regarding crisis prevention and settlement in the Euro-Atlantic area – sometimes it does not operate efficiently due to a number of objective constraints. Many such ideas have been already been expressed in the Panel of Eminent Persons Report of June 2015⁶. If the OSCE does not succeed in reforming, its image will be negatively affected and it risks having to confront questions about its general purpose for participating states and their citizens.

Another important point to be addressed is the »visibility issue« – i. e. the OSCE should pay more attention to self-promotion, especially with regard to disseminating information about its real successes in problem solving, informing many more people of its available capabilities and thus

6 Lessons learned for the OSCE from its engagement in Ukraine. Interim report and recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project. June 2015. Retrieved at: <http://www.osce.org/networks/164561?download=true>.

creating a «feedback channel». By raising its profile and putting itself into the sharp focus of society, the OSCE could expect much more attention from the states it represents, as almost all governments in the OSCE area are sensitive to the demands of their voters. This combination in turn could bring increased weight to the OSCE and offer more possibilities for it to influence security development in the region.

USA – Key platform for reducing risks of direct conflict between major powers

Matthew Rojansky

U.S. Participation in the CSCE and OSCE

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in its present form was the product of a unique process that began at the very depth of the Cold War. In what was then known as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), 1970–1975, the United States and the Soviet Union pursued different, but ultimately compatible objectives. For Washington, the Helsinki process was part of a broader détente-era effort to reduce Cold War security risks following two decades of dangerous escalation, including Soviet attempts to cut off West Berlin, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the wars in Korea and Vietnam. The Soviet Union sought formal recognition of the post-World War II status quo in Europe, and limits on what it viewed as Western backing for anti-communist activists in the Eastern Bloc.

Yet negotiations intended to manage such hard security risks by establishing norms of non-use of force and inviolability of borders also unlocked unprecedented progress in the areas of human rights, international law, and economic and environmental security.¹ The 1975 Helsinki Final Act »was essentially an agreement born of continued disagreement in the thematic areas concerned«. Rather than a comprehensive settlement of

1 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. »OSCE Parliamentary Assembly A Helsinki + 40 Project Final Report«. 6 Jul 2015.

the Cold War conflict, it was an effort to manage and contain security risks, by agreeing on at least some basic principles and establishing a comprehensive forum for addressing inevitable future challenges and disagreements.

With the end of the Cold War, the context for the Helsinki principles and process shifted once again. The 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe reiterated the Helsinki principles and embraced the shared vision of U.S. President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev of a Europe »whole, free and at peace«. Yet it was not until the 1994 Budapest Summit that the CSCE's participating states endorsed the creation of an Organization committed to advancing these principles. It is ironic that at the very same summit, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom gave assurances of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in exchange for Ukraine's promise to give up the nuclear weapons it had inherited from the Soviet Union. In this sense, the roots of the OSCE's gravest contemporary crisis were visible at the very moment of its creation.

The Role of the OSCE in U.S. Foreign Policy

The OSCE and the Helsinki principles are generally far better known in the former Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet space, than in the United States, Canada or Western Europe. In part, this is because of the higher visibility in those states of the OSCE's field missions and election observation missions under the auspices of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCEPA). In Washington, the OSCE is often confused with a number of UN and other »alphabet soup« international institutions, and there is relatively little understanding of its unique history or current role.

Americans also raise concerns about the apparent overlap between the OSCE's mandate and that of NATO, the UN and even the EU. Since by tradition and consensus neither the United States nor Russia seeks the Chairmanship in Office of the OSCE, senior U.S. political leaders have little opportunity or incentive to consider the OSCE as a platform for advancing their top policy priorities. Thus, while Americans are often pleased to see smaller European states in the driver's seat of the OSCE's work on security, they may be inclined to perceive the organization itself as little more than a talking shop for European diplomats.

Yet in the past two decades, the OSCE has played a key role in advancing U.S. interests from the Balkans to the post-Soviet protracted conflicts. The OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, has been a crucial implementer of the U.S.-brokered Dayton Accords since 1995, supporting civic engagement and education, as well as ongoing legal and institutional reforms which have helped Bosnia and Herzegovina advance its stated aim of EU membership. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo has played a similar role since 1999, consistent with decisions of the UN Security Council and the OSCE Permanent Council, focusing on human rights and security. Although the conflicts in Moldova / Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh remain unresolved, OSCE-facilitated processes provide vital early warning, support formal negotiations among the parties to the conflict and other interested regional states, and facilitate implementation of confidence-building measures that offer real benefits to the people of the region.

Does the OSCE Still Matter to Washington?

Since the Russian seizure of Crimea and the outbreak of fighting in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, the OSCE has been at the sharp end of discord between

Moscow and Washington. The regular meetings of the Permanent Council in Vienna have featured back-and-forth recriminations, underscoring the basic disagreement over Ukraine.

Some U.S. diplomats and experts worry that Russia's violation of the Helsinki principles, and what they see as abuse of the OSCE Permanent Council's consensus principle, is making the OSCE increasingly irrelevant for U.S. foreign policy, and even destroying the organization itself. Co-Chair of the U.S. Helsinki Commission Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) has said that the OSCE »embodies the core values that we share with our European allies and partners in terms of sovereignty of states and the inviolability of borders – so that the big states don't just get to grab parts of smaller states, just because they can.«² Alexander Vershbow, former Deputy Secretary General of NATO and U.S. Ambassador to Russia, has argued that the OSCE matters to Washington »because of the norms and values that it upholds – even though the Russians are violating a lot of these right now – it gives us a basis on which to challenge their misbehavior.«³

Despite their concerns, these and other U.S. officials have singled out the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine for praise. Vershbow has called it »very courageous«, adding, »I don't see any alternative right now in trying to manage a conflict like in Eastern Ukraine.«⁴ Wicker called the SMM the »international community's eyes and ears in the conflict zone«, agreeing with former Supreme Allied Commander in Europe General Philip Breedlove, who termed it the source of »real news of what was actually going on on the ground.«⁵ Even the Russian side,

2 U.S. Helsinki Commission. »Chairman Wicker Highlights Importance of CSCE Mission in Stabilizing Europe«. 21 Mar 2017.

3 U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services. »Hearing to Receive Testimony on U.S. Policy and Strategy in Europe«. 21 Mar 2017.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

which participates in the SMM, agrees, and, according to one Russian expert, »Russian officials now praise the Organization for finally coming back to its proper business«. ⁶

Beyond the complex problems of the war in Ukraine, the OSCE offers potential value for U.S. foreign policy in several areas. All OSCE participating states, including the United States and Russia, face common challenges related to terrorism and transnational organized crime, including trafficking in drugs, weapons and human beings, radicalization on the Internet, and laundering of money in support of these activities. Although the OSCE formed an »Action against Terrorism Unit« in 2002 to focus on »enhancing legal co-operation in criminal matters related to terrorism, suppressing terrorist financing, and protecting human rights in the fight against terrorism«, much more can and should be done in these areas. This should be a top agenda item for the United States mission to the OSCE in the years ahead.

The OSCE is a key platform for reducing risks of direct conflict between major powers. Since the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis, Russian and NATO military forces have come into close, potentially dangerous proximity on multiple occasions, especially in the Baltic Sea region. Likewise, both sides have increased their concentrations of ground forces near one another's borders, and the Russian military has conducted a number of snap exercises that have raised concerns for NATO. Both the United States and Russia have a compelling interest in ensuring that such incidents and exercises are handled in a way that prevents unintended escalation. The 1990 Vienna Document on military transparency and predictability is a »pillar of OSCE's politico-military acquis«, and can be the basis for

6 Zagorski, Andrei. »Russian Views of the OSCE and the 2016 German Chairmanship«. Security and Human Rights. Dec 2015.

strengthened reporting requirements, clarified definitions, and better mechanisms for consultation and de-escalation.⁷

At the same time, the OSCE's human dimension is a platform for advancing goals related to what many Americans think of as important shared values. ODIHR, for example, coordinates by far the best known and most credible election observation missions throughout the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region, distinguished by their openness to observers from each of the OSCE participating states. ODIHR observers' reports therefore carry enormous weight relative to any of the more limited national or sub-regional observer missions that may be deployed.

The High Representative on Media Freedom has for years been a vital voice standing up for the rights of embattled journalists. This function is increasingly important today, since journalists and media organizations in several states in the region have been targeted, pressured and even physically attacked by governments or shadowy forces with apparent business or political motives. On a similar note, conflict between Russia and the West has become increasingly concentrated in the media and information space, which both sides have even described as a theatre of war. The OSCE can provide a platform for re-examining, clarifying and reaffirming principles of media freedom in a context that also takes states' security interests into account.

Finally, the Helsinki principles are also very much in line with U.S. values and interests in the protection of minority populations at home, in the region and beyond. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities plays the role of »first responder« in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region,

7 Simonet, Loïc and Veera Tuomala. »How can the OSCE help to reduce the risk of hazardous military incidents?« *NATO Review Magazine*. 2016.

engaging in objective examinations of the facts, and consulting quietly, outside the political spotlight, with national governments to address concerns. The High Commissioner also leads the OSCE's work to highlight and strengthen standards of conduct, an OSCE responsibility, which is now especially vital in the face of a worsening refugee and migrant crisis affecting nearly every state in the region.

Making the OSCE Work

Despite the OSCE's potential role in advancing U.S. national interests, the Organization is now severely hampered by both structural and political constraints. As the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has noted, the Organization depends on »political will, steadfast commitment to dialogue, trust and compromise and, in particular, observance of the Helsinki Decalogue of Principles«.⁸ Although Participating States have routinely come up short on each of these measures in recent years, it would be far better to reform and adjust the OSCE to new challenges than to abandon it to irrelevance, since »no agreement of similar strength could be expected to be reached today«.⁹

Ironically, the Ukraine crisis has elevated attention to the OSCE, and even generated some high level enthusiasm for the OSCE's field capabilities, such as the SMM, yet it has also underscored the fundamental paralysis of political dialogue between Russia and the West in the face of deep distrust and mutual insecurity. The danger is that rather than seek to repair and adapt the OSCE to overcome these current challenges, the United States, Russia and other participating states may increasingly shift

8 OSCE PA Helsinki + 40 Final Report, 2015.

9 Ibid.

attention and resources away from it altogether. As one Russian expert put it, »deepening divisions within the Organization and increasingly diverging visions of its future virtually killed any appetite among most of the participating States to seriously engage in a discussion of any substantial reform«. ¹⁰

Reform would require political will, and even in the current crisis atmosphere, the OSCE has a visibility problem in Washington. Its meetings are often closed, with only dry transcripts released to the public, and it is largely ignored by members of Congress, except for a few who participate regularly in the Parliamentary Assembly and the Helsinki Commission. Furthermore, the U.S. Permanent Representative to the OSCE has generally lacked the political stature of the U.S. Ambassadors to the UN and NATO, and has seldom been perceived as enjoying direct access to the President. Above all, because the OSCE is based on the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, rather than a treaty like the UN Charter, its decisions and documents carry only political force, and are not enforceable under international law like decisions of the UN Security Council.

The OSCE's lack of legal personality, relatively limited funding, and reliance on voluntary contributions and seconded personnel keeps its Vienna-based Secretariat and its various institutions weaker than would be necessary to fully address their ambitious and important mandates. The OSCE has not been seen as capable of providing significant »muscle« in post-conflict peacekeeping or conflict prevention, while the safety and status of personnel operating under the OSCE's auspices is often uncertain, as illustrated by the kidnapping of German and Ukrainian OSCE observers in Donetsk in 2014, and the killing of a U.S. OSCE observer in Luhansk in April 2017.

¹⁰ Zagorski, 2015.

Yet to increase the political or financial commitment to the OSCE from Washington, the President and Congress would have to be convinced that the OSCE could deliver real results for U.S. foreign policy. Therein lies the dilemma, because as long as deep divisions on core issues of European security persist, the OSCE will be unable to take decisions by consensus. Any attempt to work around the consensus requirement – like the so-called »qualified majority«, »virtual consensus«, or »consensus minus one« approaches – is an absolute taboo in Moscow, as is any idea of expanding the independence of relevant OSCE institutions.¹¹ Yet any approach to OSCE reform that alienates Moscow risks undermining the OSCE's enduring value as the only fully inclusive regional security organization.

These daunting challenges are not a reason to abandon the principles and institutions built up over more than four decades of diplomacy. On the contrary, now is a time for U.S. policymakers to recall that the origins of the OSCE and the Helsinki principles lie in the Cold War that divided Europe in even deeper and arguably more dangerous ways than today. As Stephan Lehne has written, the OSCE is relevant again today, »not because the West and Russia have overcome their differences, but because their relations declined to a point at which both sides needed (...) to contain the risks of a dangerous escalation«.¹² The current conflict may appear intractable, yet it is also clear that peaceful solutions can only be found through negotiation and diplomacy. For those noble and necessary ends, there is no better platform than the OSCE, and no more urgent time than the present to make full use of it.

11 Ibid.

12 Lehne, Stefan. »Reviving the OSCE: European Security and the Ukraine Crisis«. Carnegie Europe. 22 Sep 2015.

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»A very timely and necessary book emphasizing the role and expectations towards one of the principal European security organizations. Despite the varying national assessments and expectations, an excellent proof how much the OSCE principles are continuing to influence our thinking on European security. A flow of ideas and reflections that stimulates serious thinking on the conditions for regaining trust and forming a sustainable security environment.«

Aleksander Kwaśniewski, President of Poland (1995–2005)

»The major value of this volume is the wide spectrum of national views beyond the traditional “West versus East” cleavage within the OSCE area. This kaleidoscope of national concerns gives the readers a sense of how difficult it is to work in a consensus-based organization. Learning to take each other’s expectations, grievances or fears as a part of objective reality is a way forward to sustainable regional security.«

Yulia Nikitina, Associate Professor of World Politics at the Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO)

»With a perception of instability and insecurity on a rise globally, it is indispensable that OSCE have greater presence in vulnerable regions including South Caucasus. Otherwise, there is a strong likelihood that the status quo, that has been raising many concerns at least over the past decade, may get even worse.«

Giorgi Khelashvili, Professor of International Relations, Tbilisi State University

This volume is a timely reminder of the significance of the OSCE in the current debates about European security. It brings together think tank experts and academics who map the perceptions and expectations tied to the organization from the perspective of a wide range of member states, including Russia, the USA, Germany, Poland, Ukraine and others. By putting these accounts side by side, the editors manage to highlight both the scope of the OSCE and the structural and ideational challenges it faces.

Gwendolyn Sasse, Director, Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS), Berlin

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