

**U.S. Online Training Course for OSCE,
including REACT**

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**Module 2. OSCE Mission Structures and
Functions**

Developed by the
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Introduction

OSCE missions

Background

Since the first OSCE mission entered the field in 1992, there have been a total of 28 field missions and activities deployed, mostly throughout the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union. There are currently 19 missions and other field activities deployed, with about 3,450 international and national staff.

The 1990s

The function and focus of OSCE field operations has changed over time. In the early 1990's the primary emphasis was on managing the many violent conflicts that broke out on former Soviet and Yugoslav space, including the initial prevention of conflict, mediation of cease-fires for ongoing conflicts, and post-conflict security-building, combined with continuing efforts to prevent these conflicts from re-igniting.

The early violence of the 1990's was largely stimulated by the breakup of the two multi-national states that covered much of this region, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. As the units within these structures – the 15 union republics of the USSR and the 6 states that composed federal Yugoslavia – broke apart, formerly autonomous regions within these new states resisted integration with the central governments, typically because a majority of the people living in these regions did not share markers of identity with the nationality of the new state in which they found themselves. Thus a series of secessionist struggles broke out: in Chechnya within the Russian Federation, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Transdniestria in Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan, and Kosovo within Serbia. Violence also erupted in other new states with mixed ethnicities: particularly in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Other states tottered on the brink of collapse, torn by internal conflict, including Tajikistan and Albania. Many other situations also approached violence, but successful preventive action averted large-scale violence: such as in Crimea in Ukraine, Tatarstan in the Russian Federation, and Macedonia in the former Yugoslavia. These potential or actual conflicts were the primary focus of most OSCE field missions between 1992 and 1999.

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OSCE missions, Continued

Since 2000

Overt violence in these areas has declined substantially. The primary problems facing OSCE missions have more to do with implementing the human dimension of OSCE principles than with direct security measures. Of course, the OSCE comprehensive approach to security emphasizes the essential role of human dimension activities in the long-term prevention of violent conflict. The OSCE has operated on the assumption that good governance is not only a value in itself, but is a major contributing factor to peace between states and within states. Authoritarian rule, corrupt regimes, denial of freedom of the press, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, or basic human rights can all contribute to the outbreak of violence.

Current focus on good governance

The vast majority of OSCE missions now focus on good governance, including the promotion of democratic practices, free elections, and the rule of law. Missions must take into consideration that many OSCE participating states are only starting down the road toward democratic governance, as well as the reality that democracy cannot be imposed from outside on countries that have no prior history or experience with democratic practices. Therefore, the OSCE has often taken a gradual approach to socializing political elites and publics to the better practices of good governance.

OSCE missions know that security is a necessary condition for good governance; just as improved government performance enhances both the security of the state and its people. The newest threats to security, however, are not secessionist conflicts or wars between states. Rather, they stem from non-state actors participating in terrorist activities, smuggling drugs and human beings, money laundering, and other criminal activities that cross state borders. Globalization has brought increases in world economic interaction and greater cultural contact, but it has also facilitated crime, corruption, and environmental degradation on a global scale. Thus another goal of OSCE missions has been to promote globalization in activities such as commerce and tourism, while providing protection against its undesirable “underside.” This does not mean that the threat of mass violence has been eliminated, but does underline that issues like illegal arms sales, especially the spread of small arms and light weapons – which kill more people every year than weapons of mass destruction – have become a high priority for OSCE field activities alongside traditional measures of confidence-building and conflict prevention.

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OSCE missions, Continued

Mission functions

The major functions of OSCE missions and field activities today include the following:

- democratization and good governance
 - election monitoring
 - rule of law
 - human rights
 - rights of persons belonging to minorities
 - freedom of the media
 - economic and environmental affairs
 - conflict resolution
 - confidence building
 - border monitoring
 - police training
-

Mission sizes vary

Missions differ substantially in size and staffing. The smallest missions consist of only three or four international staff, and each individual must assume responsibility for multiple aspects of the mission's mandate. The largest mission in Kosovo has a staff of 262 international personnel and 990 national (local) personnel engaged in the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, election support and monitoring, and police training. The mission is currently structured to provide municipal monitoring of Kosovo's 33 municipalities. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina is slightly smaller and also performs a full range of functions, including overseeing disarmament in the aftermath of the Dayton Accords.

Mission coordination

Overall mission activity is supervised and coordinated by the Conflict Prevention Center, which is part of the OSCE Secretariat located in Vienna. Missions receive their mandates from the OSCE Permanent Council (PC) and report to the PC about their activities. The Conflict Prevention Center maintains an Operations Centre open 24 hours every day of the year to maintain continuous contact with field missions and to respond to any emergency situation that might arise.

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OSCE missions, Continued

Mission staff

A Head of Mission (HoM) serves as the chief officer of each mission, a position normally held by a senior diplomat seconded by a participating state. HoMs are appointed by the Chairperson-in-Office. Larger missions like Kosovo have a Deputy HoM as well as a Chief of Staff. Missions also have political, administrative and public affairs officers, as well as a staff of interpreters/translators. The specialized functional staff varies in size according to the mandate of each particular mission.



Ambassador Tim Guldemann, the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 1 October 2007. (OSCE)

Mission categories

In general, mission mandates may be grouped into three broad categories:

- Conflict Prevention
- Conflict Resolution (and avoidance of conflict re-ignition)
- Post-conflict security-building

Each of these categories is described in detail later in this module, along with a brief description of the current missions (as well as some closed missions) that have sought to fulfill each of these functions. Detailed background to the situations in the regions where these missions are stationed may be found in the regional modules (Modules 4-7). Focus is exclusively on the role that the OSCE, often in conjunction with other multilateral institutions, played or plays in these regions.

Conflict Prevention

Principles

Overview

From its very beginning, the CSCE linked the human dimension of security with the effort to avert the outbreak of violent conflict. Both the original Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the Copenhagen Document of 1990 set forth the major principles of the OSCE role in human dimension activities. Being fundamentally a security organization, however, the OSCE was not only interested in the human dimension for its intrinsic value, but also for its role in addressing many of the underlying issues that might give rise to violent conflicts.

Violence

In virtually all societies, conflicts of interest arise. However, in most cases, these conflicts do not lead directly to overt violence, especially mass violence. Violence may occur when individuals and groups believe that they are being unfairly deprived of their fundamental rights and share in the well being provided by society. Violence also arises when there are weak or no institutions, and no ways to resolve conflicts of interest, in a fair and open process, and by peaceful means. Groups may resort to violence when they fear that their identity -- perhaps national, ethnic, territorial, linguistic, or religious -- is threatened. Violence can also be the means chosen by individuals and groups that seek to attain their goals outside the rule of law. Criminality, corruption, lawlessness, and systematic discrimination threaten individuals and entire societies with violence, not primarily from warfare but through threats to the personal security of citizens.

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Principles, Continued

Philosophy

The underlying philosophy behind the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the Copenhagen Document of 1990 is that the best antidote to violence is:

- the creation of democratic societies governed by the rule of law
- respect for the rights of persons belonging to minority groups and for individual members of that society, and
- broad-based economic development and a healthy environment

The "democratic peace hypothesis" has been widely accepted by OSCE participating states, namely the belief that democratic states seldom or never engage in violent conflict with other democratic states. Consistent with this belief has been the assertion by leading OSCE states that the long-term foundations for peace may be best constructed by encouraging the widespread development of democratic regimes throughout the OSCE region.

This view sees building democracy as a long-term process that cannot be imposed by outsiders but must be built from within. Therefore, the OSCE emphasizes not only free and fair elections, but the strengthening of institutions of civil society such as active and vibrant NGOs, and the incorporation of democratic values into all forms of training and education, including schools, universities, police academies, etc.

In addition to its focus on the long-term prevention of conflicts, missions have the added advantage of being on the ground and close to developments in the country where they are stationed, so that may also enhance their capacity to engage in early warning and early action when conflicts appear to be escalating rapidly and may threaten to break out into violence.

Human dimension

Virtually all OSCE missions have a human dimension component. The mandates for all missions and field activities assign an important role to the promotion of democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mini-quiz

- Multiple choice** The "democratic peace hypothesis" that is the basis of most OSCE activities is that:
- democratic institutions take a long time to develop
 - democracy and peace are unrelated concepts
 - democratic states seldom or never engage in war with each other
 - peace leads to democracy
-

- Multiple choice** A key aspect of effective preventive diplomacy is:
- avoiding the window of opportunity
 - waiting until the threshold of violence has been crossed
 - developing early warning
 - peace enforcement forces
-

Techniques

Overview OSCE missions carry out their human dimension mandate in a wide variety of ways. This section describes the various techniques that the OSCE uses to address long-term conflict prevention.

Local contact A key technique in long-term conflict prevention is the "open door" that OSCE field offices provide:

- a place for individuals and groups to inform the OSCE staff of their grievances
- a place for regular contact with local NGOs

OSCE contact with individuals, human rights activists, and NGOs helps to:

- build up civil society, a necessary component of democratic society
- spread democratic values and information on human rights to governments and individuals

Government contact OSCE missions also work with local governments in an effort to get them to improve their protection of human rights and human dimension activities. When problems are uncovered, the OSCE mission will alert the relevant governmental unit about the problem and seek immediate relief at that level. While performing their human dimension role, mission members must be able to distinguish between:

- intentional violations of human rights perpetrated by governmental authorities
- frequent neglect or abuse of human rights due to bureaucratic ineptitude or indifference

While both may represent some degree of a human rights violation, the methods to solve the problems may be different, i.e., political dialogue for the former case or training for the latter case.

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Techniques, Continued

Reporting

The human dimension monitoring function is performed by continuous reporting through various OSCE mechanisms:

- Missions
- Secretariat
- Permanent Council
- Chairperson-in-Office
- High Commissioner on National Minorities
- Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- Parliamentary Assembly
- Human Dimension Implementation meetings

This continuous reporting is important because it provides a clear signal to governments that their observance (or lack thereof) of the Helsinki principles is widely known in both governmental and public circles outside their own country.

Mission reporting is also important because it constitutes the lion's share of material used by the Secretariat, CiO, Parliamentary Assembly, and Permanent Council and provides an on-the-ground evaluation of the situation.

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Techniques, Continued

Information, education, and training

Another major activity of the OSCE mission is to provide information, education, and training to government officials and NGOs. This is often achieved in the form of seminars about:

- human rights
- rule of law
- democratic process
- freedom of the media
- other aspects of international norms and codes about humanitarian issues
- police practices in a democratic society
- civilian control of the military

In most societies where OSCE missions are stationed, there is little or no historical experience with the democratic process among government officials or individual citizens. Therefore, there is an immense need in these societies for basic education about the fundamental principles of modern democratic processes and values. OSCE missions can be very effective in introducing such information at the local level.



Participants at an OSCE workshop on sustainable property restitution, and the returns and reintegration process in Kosovo, discuss in working groups, Prishtine/Prishtina, 27 November 2007. (OSCE/Hasan Sopa)

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Techniques, Continued

Economic and environmental health

Many missions have economic and/or environmental officers assigned to their professional staff. Although these areas have not been the principal focus of the OSCE in the past, the OSCE has integrated them into current human dimension activities, and they are increasingly becoming a part of mission mandates. The OSCE can thus provide information about:

- economic reform
- the legislative basis for regulation of economic and environmental activity
- threats to the physical environment
- good governance and anti-corruption activities

Poverty, desperation, and environmental degradation are often associated with violence, so efforts to deal with these social ills may reduce the propensity for violence in many of the societies where the OSCE works.

Due to its limited resources in these fields, however, the OSCE cannot tackle these problems alone. Its role has generally been to bring these problems to the attention of other organizations and governments in the hope that they will identify resources that can help alleviate them.

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Techniques, Continued

Elections

Whenever OSCE monitors an election, the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) creates an Election Observation Mission. An Election Observation Mission head is appointed by ODIHR and sent with a core team to prepare for the arrival of long term and short-term observers.

Election Observation Missions are entirely separate from OSCE field missions (if present in the country), but they cooperate as part of the OSCE family. Election Observation Missions report to ODIHR in Warsaw, whereas field missions report to the Conflict Prevention Center in the Vienna secretariat.



Long-term observers meet with members of the core team, in Tbilisi 2 January 2008, at the headquarters of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission to the 5 January presidential election in Georgia. (OSCE/Urduur Gunnarsdottir)

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Techniques, Continued

Election observers

There are two types of election observers: Long term and short term.

Long-term observers monitor the:

- run-up to elections
- use of media during campaigns
- access of candidates to the electorate

Short-term observers are generally sent in for the period immediately prior to and during an election to monitor:

- access to polling places
 - integrity of ballots
 - secrecy of the voting process
 - tabulation process
 - the methodology in which outcomes are determined and certified
-

Special cases

Kosovo and Bosnia are special cases where the ODIHR role was modified. These OSCE field missions had full time staff that supervised and conducted elections; they then played the more limited role of election monitoring.

Rule-of-law

ODIHR's section on the rule of law has also assisted states in developing legal principles to strengthen democratic processes; i.e., the rule of law ought to prevail over the will of individuals.

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Techniques, Continued

HCNM

Whenever a dispute breaks out involving persons belonging to national minorities, the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) may travel to an OSCE participating state to consult with the mission members as well as with the parties to the dispute. Typically, the HCNM works with the mission to develop both short-term solutions to the dispute and alleviate the underlying conditions that produced the dispute. Generally, the HCNM avoid media attention and tries to operate quietly in order to resolve problems early on rather than after they have expanded into full-blown crises.



OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek during his visit to Kosovo, Prishtine/Prishtina 11 September 2007. (OSCE/Hasan Sopa)

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Techniques, Continued

Delicate position

The OSCE mission must always be mindful of its position, situated between a host government, non-governmental sectors and civil society, and the governments of participating states represented in the Permanent Council. On the one hand, host governments often become irritated with the intrusion of OSCE missions into what they consider to be the internal affairs of their own country. On the other hand, often, human rights and other activist groups and NGOs perceive that the OSCE is not being sufficiently forceful in representing their grievances and pressing their demands. Participating states hold different positions on these issues, and reflect them vocally in and outside of the PC. In the final analysis, OSCE officials and personnel, who must support OSCE norms to the fullest extent possible while respecting the sovereign rights of the host government, must carefully balance all of these demands.

Role of OSCE mission

The role of the OSCE mission is not to become an advocate either for participating states or for organizations engaged in advocacy on behalf of human and minority rights issues. Rather its role is to serve as an ombudsman, as a go-between, assisting these different groups to reconcile their differences peacefully. In performing this function, it must constantly remind governments of their responsibilities undertaken when they signed the various OSCE human dimension documents and, as appropriate, carrying out their own laws to protect human rights. At the same time, it must remind government critics of the necessity of pursuing their grievances through domestic legal channels, and seeking legislative changes when they appear to be necessary.

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Techniques, Continued

Early warning When these long-term preventive measures are not sufficient, however, and events on the ground appear to be heating up, the OSCE mission may also serve as a source of early warning and even as a “first responder” when violent events appear to be imminent. The first requisite for effective preventive diplomacy is “early warning” to detect situations that might lead to violent conflict. Violent incidents involving governments or their opponents, or conflict between different domestic factions, could provide indications of future, more widespread violence.

There is often a very narrow window of opportunity during which a third party may intervene to prevent violence. The signals of a developing confrontation may be so unclear that the seriousness of the situation may not be recognized. Premature intervention may create a “self-fulfilling prophecy” by spurring some parties on the ground to escalate violence to bring about outside involvement. Waiting too long may allow the threshold of violence to be crossed. The timing of preventive diplomacy is critical, but often hard to gauge accurately.

Analysis Identifying potential trouble spots is a first step, but effective analysis of early warning indicators is necessary to separate the real dangers from false alarms. States and multilateral organizations that “cry wolf” about violence that might, but does not actually occur, lose their effectiveness and ability to focus attention in a timely way. They also alienate parties if they try to intervene in situations that do not require a drastic response. And they can exhaust both international willpower and limited resources by trying to intervene in too many conflicts.

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Techniques, Continued

Mobilizing for action

Once early warning of violence is has been provided, timely action is required to bring the parties into negotiation or for outside parties to intervene. Political will is necessary to craft an effective response to warnings of violence, but it is not always present. Once a commitment to act is made, however, there is still the need to agree on an appropriate intervention.

OSCE responses to impending violence can take the form of verbal protests, sanctions, creation of or a revised mandate for a mission of long duration, mediation to assist in finding a peaceful solution, deployment of a monitoring team, or activation of any other means at the disposal of the organization. But the primary function that the OSCE can perform better than most other organizations, due to its sustained presence on the ground in many societies living in conditions of unstable peace, is to see the early signs of potential violence and to recommend action before it is too late. As with all institutions, however, whether effective action is taken in a timely fashion or not remains in the hands of the officials who lead and manage the OSCE, together with the participating states in the primary institutions based in Vienna.

Tools

The Chairperson-in-Office may decide to call the OSCE into action or intervene directly (or through special representatives), often serving as a mediator between conflicting parties;

The High Commissioner on National Minorities may travel to areas of potential conflict involving minority issues, may offer advice to local government officials and to leaders of the minority communities, and also issue warnings to the Permanent Council and to the governments of the participating states; or

The Permanent Committee may authorize special mission activities, impose sanctions or call for the creation of a monitoring or even a peacekeeping force.

Conflict Prevention Missions: Case Studies

Overview

Overview The vast majority of the 19 OSCE missions and their subordinate offices operating today focus primarily on the broad conflict prevention function, emphasizing human dimension activities.

Central Asia: OSCE Centres

Emerged from collapse of Soviet Union The five Central Asian states emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Union have encountered serious difficulties in democratization. Strong national leaders, many with close connections to the Soviet past, remained in charge.

In 1995, the OSCE initially established an OSCE liaison office in Tashkent covering the entire region, and subsequently in 2000 “centres” were established in the national capitals of all five of these countries to encourage movement in their domestic politics towards greater openness and eventually democratization. Special seminars were organized for local elites and civil society groups in which outside specialists in various human dimension issues are brought into the country to discuss the obstacles that must be overcome to construct a democratic state.

In the case of Tajikistan, a mission had been established in 1993 in response to the civil war going on in the country. This mission played a significant role in support of a Commission of National Reconciliation, created after talks among Tajik factions in Moscow in 1997, which brought an end to major violence that had torn the country apart since independence. In Tajikistan, unlike many other post-Soviet states, this conflict had not centered on ethno-national differences, but rather on a broad popular movement (including Islamist elements) and the entrenched, secular government and party officials held over from Soviet times. In late 2002, after five years of supporting the work of the Commission of National Reconciliation in Tajikistan and with the return of relative peace and stability to the country, the OSCE mission was reorganized as a centre similar to the OSCE offices in the other four Central Asian states.

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Central Asia: OSCE Centres, Continued

Central Asian push for economic dimension

Recently, the Central Asian states have pushed for more economic dimension activities. This reflects a desire to "balance" OSCE activities in the region and to do something to bolster their weak economies. Unfortunately, corruption and lack of good governance remain the primary obstacles to economic and business development. At the same time, several Central Asian countries -- especially Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan -- are well endowed with natural resources, especially petroleum and gas, that promise to bring substantial wealth in the near future; the other three countries of the region, however, are not so well endowed.

In the wake of September 11, 2001, the Central Asian states renewed their calls (first made in 1999) for assistance in countering the terrorism threat (and related criminal activity) emanating from Afghanistan. The OSCE responded with tailor-made programs in the economic dimension and counter-terrorism.

The human dimension situation grew so serious in Turkmenistan in late 2002 that the OSCE invoked the "Moscow Mechanism" for the first time, when ten states requested information about serious and pervasive threats to human rights and appointed an OSCE Rapporteur, Emmanuel Decaux of France, to investigate. However, he was denied access to the country by its government and was forced to prepare his report with information available outside Turkmenistan.

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Central Asia: OSCE Centres, Continued

Recent Issues in Central Asia

In 2003 Chairperson-in-Office de Hoop Scheffer emphasized OSCE attention to democratization in Central Asia by visits to four of the five countries of this region, and he emphasized not only regional security cooperation, but also good governance, the environment, media freedom, cooperation with NGOs, and strengthening human rights protections. He also appointed former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari as his special representative to Central Asia. Ahtisaari made several trips to the region as well and discussed with government leaders, political figures, and representatives of civil society and nongovernmental organizations ways to strengthen democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the observance of human rights. He also focused on the fight against terrorism and trafficking in drugs and other contraband into and through the region.

ODIHR became significantly involved in the 2005 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, which produced a disputed result similar to those in Georgia and Ukraine. Violence broke out in several parts of the country when President Akayev relinquished his post and fled the country. The CiO and Secretary General traveled to Bishkek to mediate the government crisis, along with senior officials from several major OSCE states. A new human rights center was opened in the Osh region, containing a significant population of ethnic Uzbeks, and the situation was eventually stabilized. Presidential elections were held in July 2005 with ODIHR monitors present, and they reported considerable progress in meeting OSCE standards. However, this crisis in the Central Asian state with the greatest potential to democratize simply underscored the fragility of democratization throughout the entire region.

The Caucasus: OSCE Offices in Baku and Yerevan

Overview

The OSCE offices in Baku (capital of Azerbaijan) and Yerevan (capital of Armenia) are similar in structure and purpose to those in Central Asia. Their mission mandates focus almost exclusively on the promotion of the human dimension within both countries, although the conflict between them over the status of the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh (discussed below) implies that there is also an indirect mandate to avert violent conflict between these two neighbors and historic rivals.

Both offices opened early in 2000 and are staffed by six international personnel. Ambassador Jose Luis Herrero Ansola of Spain heads the office in Baku, and the Yerevan office is headed by Ambassador Sergey Kapinos of the Russian Federation. Their mandates include promoting the implementation of OSCE commitments, facilitating the sponsorship of events organized by the OSCE with educational institutions and NGOs, training of police and prison officials, encouraging increased freedom and responsibility on the part of the mass media, and dealing with gender and youth issues. Finally, both offices focus on border security and issues of illegal trafficking across borders of human beings, drugs, currency, and other contraband.

Southeastern Europe: OSCE Mission to Serbia

Republic of Yugoslavia

In 2001 a new mission was set up in the Republic of Yugoslavia, replacing the one terminated in 1993, to focus on democratization and human rights in the aftermath of the 2000 election that brought a democratically elected regime into power to replace the Milosevic government. This new mission's mandate stressed peaceful development through democratization and good governance. When Serbia and Montenegro separated in 2006, Montenegro became a participating state within the OSCE and separate missions were established in both, now independent countries.

Serbia

The primary mandate of the mission in Serbia is the promotion of democratization. It advises on legislation designed to institutionalize democratic practices, monitors the performance of the government in carrying out its functions, provides training for police and judicial officials, provides advice in the field of media freedom and responsibility, and works with the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees to support refugees from neighboring countries and internally displaced persons. It also coordinates much of the work on the ground of other international institutions that do not have such a field presence, as well as the work of international NGOs. It runs a multi-ethnic police training facility in southern Serbia. Headed by Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad of Norway, the mission has an international staff of 51 and 123 national staff.

OSCE Mission to Montenegro

Overview

The newly established OSCE mission in Montenegro replaced the OSCE mission to Serbia-Montenegro's previous field office in the capital city of Podgorica in June 2006. It also operates a police-training center in Damilovgrad. The mission's mandate is to assist Montenegro to fulfill all of its OSCE commitments in political-military, economic and environmental, and human aspects of security. The Head of Mission is Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu of Romania. The mission has 15 international staff and 30 national staff.

The OSCE Monitor Mission to Skopje

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The second OSCE mission, officially known as the "OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje," was established in September 1992. Its primary mandate was to monitor developments on the border with Serbia and other neighboring states that might "spill over" into the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

The original CSCE mission of eight persons also worked closely with a European Community Monitor Mission. United Nations peacekeeping forces in the FYROM complemented the small CSCE and EC missions. Their major function was to deter Serbian intervention in Macedonia, or any potential spillover of conflict in the Kosovo region of Serbia across its common border with the FYROM.

Attention subsequently shifted to the internal scene later in the 1990s when tensions appeared between the Albanian minority and the ethnic Macedonian majority. Special efforts were made to respond to conflicts erupting in several cities in the northwest, especially Tetovo and Gostivar, where ethnic Albanians demanded the creation there of an Albanian-language university. After several incidents between Albanian crowds and Macedonian police, both the mission and the High Commissioner on National Minorities intervened frequently to prevent further escalation of these incidents. Due to these efforts, large-scale violence was averted, even following the 1999 war in Kosovo when many ethnic Albanian refugees poured over the borders to escape the fighting in Kosovo. However, tensions continued to rise between the increasingly militant and armed Albanian (and Muslim) community and increasingly nationalist Macedonian (and predominantly Christian) majority that held most major posts in the government.

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The OSCE Monitor Mission to Skopje, Continued

OSCE response to violence in 2001

Albanian nationalist aspirations were fueled by a ready availability of weapons and fighters from neighboring Kosovo. Violence flared up in the spring of 2001 between Albanians near the border areas and the Macedonian armed forces. After a ceasefire and peace agreement (the Ohrid Framework Agreement) were negotiated in August 2001, several units of NATO troops deployed in Macedonia to disarm the Albanian nationalists, after which the NATO forces withdrew.

Subsequently, the OSCE enlarged its mission in Macedonia to about 210 unarmed monitors, protected by some 1,000 NATO troops. While the OSCE mission's mandate remained basically unchanged, the necessity for intensive conflict prevention at the local level had been clearly shown by the outbreak of violence and the increased radicalization of the two communities involved in the violence. Recent events in Macedonia have presented what had been regarded as one of the more successful preventive diplomacy missions with new challenges.

Currently the mission's priority is to assist with the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and to build confidence between the ethnic Macedonian majority and the ethnic minorities in Macedonia.



Young people learn to overcome their prejudices and stereotypes during a multi-ethnic youth leadership workshop supported by the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and held in September 2005 in Struga, near lake Ohrid. (Nansen Dialogue Centre/Albert Hani)

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The OSCE Monitor Mission to Skopje, Continued

Parliamentary elections

Parliamentary elections were held in September 2002, which the ODIHR observers judged overall to be "conducted largely in accordance with OSCE commitments and international standards for democratic elections." As the political transition occurred without major incident, Macedonia appears headed back on the road towards democratic development, although the potential for violence still exists.

The OSCE mission staff currently consists of 92 international and over 200 national staff. Ambassador Giorgio Radicati of Italy heads the mission. Its current focus is on assistance in the implementation of the Ohrid Accords, training police officers in a multi-ethnic force, and monitoring detect events that might signal new threats to peace and security.

Eastern Europe: OSCE Office in Minsk

Belarus

Belarus is one of the few post-Soviet countries that is relatively homogenous ethnically, with a population overwhelmingly made up of Slavs, including Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians. While there is no danger of ethnic conflict in Belarus, a divide did open up between liberal reformers and the supporters of a Soviet-style *ancien regime* mostly made up of former communist elites.

Under the government of President Alexander Lukashenko, who came to power in 1994, there was a substantial reversal of the regional trend towards democratic reform and economic liberalization that Belarus had also embarked on following independence. Belarus seemed to be turning the clock back. Indeed, Lukashenko extended his term of office and forced all political opposition out of the already weakened parliament.

The OSCE mission in Belarus became a point of contact for the political opposition and for the many non-governmental organizations that had been harassed and threatened by the Lukashenko government. It also engaged in organizing seminars on:

- democratic process
- free elections
- the rule of law

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Eastern Europe: OSCE Office in Minsk, Continued

Election monitoring

The OSCE actively sought to monitor both parliamentary and presidential elections in Belarus, but its efforts to do so have frequently been frustrated by the government of President Lukashenko. Throughout much of 2001-02, OSCE officials, including the Head of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus, were denied visas to enter the country by the government, forcing the Group to close its mission at the end of 2002.

At the start of 2003, agreement was reached to open a new OSCE Office in Minsk with a changed mandate to assist the government in "institution-building, in further consolidating the rule of law and in developing relations with civil society, in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments." It is also supposed to assist the government in developing economic and environmental activities. It has done extensive work in trying to improve environmental conditions in those regions of Belarus affected by the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in nearby Ukraine, as well as assisting the country in complying with the Kyoto environmental protocol. In the economic area, it has emphasized assistance for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs

The head of the office is Ambassador Hans Jochen Schmidt of Germany, who is assisted by an international staff of five and eight national employees. The office devotes considerable attention to supporting the work of independent NGOs, monitoring trials of individuals suspected of arrest for political reasons, and providing an open office to hear individual grievances regarding alleged violations of basic human rights. The office has effectively been the only international opening for the protection and support of the fragile civil society that still survives under difficult conditions in Belarus.

ODIHR monitored parliamentary elections in Belarus in 2004 and stated that they fell significantly short of OSCE and international standards, and more recently noted that the 2006 presidential elections did not meet international election standards for free and fair elections.

OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine

Ukraine

The OSCE established its first mission in Ukraine in 1994, largely to respond to a developing crisis involving the status of the region of Crimea within the Ukrainian state. The Crimean peninsula was originally attached to the Russian Federation until 1954, when Soviet General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev transferred it to Ukraine. At the time, the transfer was largely meaningless in practical terms, but this changed with the independence of Ukraine in 1991. The region has a majority of Russian speakers and served as the headquarters of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, and thus it had strong traditional ties with Moscow. The election of a nationalist Russian as the first president of the Crimea region in 1994 touched off the crisis.

The initial OSCE response came from the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador (and former foreign minister) Max van der Stoep of the Netherlands. He made several trips to the region and organized a series of seminars with leaders of both the Ukrainian government and the Crimean government, along with international experts on regional autonomy and related constitutional issues. These seminars produced a series of recommendations about how to reconcile the constitutions of Ukraine and Crimea to grant the region substantial effective autonomy within the sovereign territory of Ukraine. This work was supported on a continuing basis by the OSCE office, based in Kyiv with a branch office in Simferopol, the capital of Crimea. By 1995 a new Ukrainian constitution was drafted, along with a parallel constitution for an autonomous region of Crimea that satisfied the major demands of both parties. Thus the OSCE played a vital role in preventing what could have been a very destructive conflict from breaking out on post-Soviet territory.

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OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine, Continued

Mission terminated

The successful conclusion of the Crimea crisis enabled the situation in Ukraine to stabilize. Therefore, the OSCE Mission to Ukraine was terminated in June 1999, being replaced by a somewhat scaled-down OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Currently the OSCE office has an international staff of only three persons, headed by Ambassador James Schumaker of the United States. The primary mandate of this office is to coordinate joint projects, including activities such as a review of human rights legislation, reform of the *propiska* (residency permit) system, support for the Office of the Ombudsman appointed by the parliament, assistance to the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court, combating trafficking in human beings, and promoting structural reform of the armed forces.



Part of an advertisement for hotline services provided by La Strada Ukraine, an NGO dedicated to fighting human trafficking and supported by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. (La Strada Ukraine)

The office also provides a base for ODIHR and other OSCE institutions to operate short-term observer missions. Of special significance was the ODIHR monitoring of the 2004 presidential elections. Largely as a result of the preliminary ODIHR report on the second round of the presidential elections, the Ukrainian Constitutional Court invalidated those elections and called for a new round of elections. In what has become known as the “orange revolution,” this led to the ultimate victory of Viktor Yushchenko and the ensuing arrival in power of a more democratic government, facilitated in part by the international election observers coordinated by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator and by ODIHR.

Preventing Renewed Violence and Conflict Resolution

Techniques

Overview

One of the most difficult problems facing the OSCE for the past ten years has been the so-called “frozen conflicts.” Many of the conflicts that broke out on the territory of the former Soviet Union occurred during the years of transition from 1989-1992, before the CSCE had an effective conflict prevention mechanism in place. Therefore, it was impossible for the CSCE to exercise a conflict prevention role in these early conflicts. However, in most of these cases, cease-fires were brokered after the initial round of fighting, in one case – the conflict in the Russian republic of Chechnya – with the assistance of the OSCE. However, in four post-Soviet republics, secessionist regions have achieved varying degrees of *de facto* independence, although that independence has not been recognized by most other states in the international community. This is the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, two regions of Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), the Transnistria region of Moldova, and in a lesser sense in the Russian region of Chechnya. All of these regions, therefore, exist at present as international “black holes,” where no recognized government is completely in control; this permits vast amounts of illegal activity to take place in and across these regions, with outsiders unable to exert any influence.

OSCE missions have been set up in all four cases, although the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya was terminated in 2003. In all four cases, however, a primary responsibility of the OSCE missions has been to try to negotiate a resolution to these conflicts to create some kind of political settlement regarding the status of these regions within the sovereign territory of the country in which they are located. So far, none of these efforts have proven completely successful, and all of these conflicts remain to some degree “frozen” in place. However, a second aspect of the OSCE mandate has generally been more successful, again with the exception of the case of Chechnya – namely preventing the re-ignition of the violence that tore these countries apart in the early 1990s. This section thus focuses on these secessionist conflicts, on the efforts to resolve them, and on the process of averting renewed conflict while efforts to reach a negotiated solution are underway.

Seminars and shuttle diplomacy

The High Commissioner on National Minorities, for example, has organized seminars, often with the non-governmental Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations. He has also undertaken "shuttle diplomacy," traveling between disputing parties, listening to their grievances and suggestions, and then following up with specific recommendations directed to the parties involved.

Good offices and mediation

Another approach, utilized especially by the missions of long duration, has been to provide "good offices" and other forms of third party intervention to assist parties to a dispute in reaching agreement. The OSCE mission head often serves as a go-between or mediates during formal meetings between disputing parties.

For example, OSCE mission heads have served as mediators both between the government of Moldova and the breakaway region of Transdniestria and between the government of Georgia and the separatist regime in South Ossetia.

Similarly, the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya engaged in "shuttle diplomacy" and mediated a ceasefire in 1996 that brought the first war there to an end. After successfully organizing elections in Chechnya and assisting a new regional government as it took office, the OSCE was unable to take the steps necessary to prevent a second attack on Chechnya in 1999 by Russian soldiers and security forces, resulting in a renewed war in Chechnya. That fighting has now largely come to an end, though guerrilla attacks continue on Russian forces in the region and occasional terrorist attacks have been carried out by Chechen radicals elsewhere in Russia, including a dramatic seizure of a theater in Moscow and a school in Beisan in southern Russia.

Formal groups of states

A third approach at mediation has involved the establishment of formal groups of states operating under OSCE auspices to try to assist disputing parties to resolve their differences peacefully. These may take the form of:

- contact groups
 - "friends" of a particular country
 - a formal group such as the "Minsk Group" which was established to prepare for an eventual peace conference to resolve the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh
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Techniques, Continued

Overseeing implementation of agreements

Where agreements have been reached, the OSCE may play a role in overseeing their implementation. For example, the OSCE set up special missions to assist in the implementation of bilateral agreements between Russia and Latvia concerning the withdrawal of Russian troops stationed there during the Soviet period, decommissioning of a Russian radar station at Skrunda, and monitoring agreements between Russia and both Latvia and Estonia on the operation of a joint commission on military pensioners who decided to remain in these two countries after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Similarly, the OSCE mission in Moldova is charged with monitoring the 1994 treaty between Russia and Moldova on the withdrawal of the Russian 14th army and associated equipment and supplies stored on the left bank of the Dniester River. It has also overseen the removal of Russian troops from Georgia, in addition to monitoring the border in the high Caucasus between Georgia and the Russian republic of Chechnya.

Peacekeeping

In principle, but thus far not in reality, the OSCE may undertake a peacekeeping operation, perhaps with assistance from NATO, other military alliances, or individual participating states, to oversee political agreements between disputing parties.

The OSCE anticipated establishing a peacekeeping operation as part of a political settlement between the parties to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh at the 1992 Helsinki Summit. At the 1994 Budapest Summit it created a High Level Planning Group to prepare for such an operation. However, a political settlement has remained elusive there. More recently, the OSCE has envisaged a possible peacekeeping role for itself as part of a political settlement in Moldova.

The OSCE Mission to Moldova

Brief history

The history of the east bank of the Dniester River (also known in Romanian as the Nistru) makes it somewhat distinct from the rest of [Moldova](#), since it had been part of the Russian Empire as long ago as the 18th century, while the rest of Moldova had been part of the Russian province of Bessarabia and later part of Romania. Furthermore, about sixty percent of the population of this region is made up of Russian and Ukrainian speaking peoples, and a good deal of industry was built there during Soviet times, so that even the ethnic Moldovans living there were generally more "Sovietized" than their compatriots living west of the Dniester River. Finally, the Soviet 14th Army was (and its Russian successor still is) stationed in this region.

Moldovan independence

During the Gorbachev period, Moldovan nationalists began calling for independence from the Soviet Union, and some even called for unification with Romania. The Moldovan language, which had been written in the Cyrillic alphabet in Soviet times, was renamed Romanian and written in the Roman alphabet. The residents east of the Dniester resisted these moves and responded to Moldovan calls for independence by declaring themselves to be the Transdniester Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic within the Soviet Union, and their leadership continued to proclaim its loyalty to the Soviet Union even after its collapse.

In the spring of 1992 the authorities in Chisinau, Moldova's capital, insisted on enforcing the primacy of Moldovan law throughout the country. Their attempts to implement this decision by force led to fighting between the Moldovan Army and the Transdniestrian Republican Guard, which was supported by elements of the Russian 14th Army.

Ceasefire

A ceasefire was reached in Moscow on July 6-7, 1992, after approximately 800 people had lost their lives, and a peacekeeping force of Russian, Moldovan, and Transdniestrian forces was established to police the ceasefire. In the aftermath of the Moscow ceasefire agreement, the CSCE mission in Moldova was created to monitor the performance of the peacekeeping forces, report on the human rights and security situation, and to assist the parties to achieve a permanent political settlement that would recognize some form of autonomy for the Transdniester region within the Moldovan state.

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OSCE Mission to Moldova, Continued

CSCE proposals

At the outset, the CSCE mission set out to create transparency and assure that the "peacekeeping" forces would prevent a resumption of fighting along the lengthy border, which mostly coincided with the Dniester River. Once the situation was stabilized, the OSCE entered as the primary third party mediator, later joined by Russia and Ukraine, and recently also joined by the United States and the European Union. Following the precepts of the Helsinki Decalogue, they sought to preserve the territorial integrity of Moldova, while allowing for substantial "self determination" for residents east of the Dniester River. This would provide a common economic and political space, while allowing all decisions that did not require central authority to be taken at the regional or local levels.

Three categories of jurisdiction

The CSCE missions also proposed three categories of jurisdictions:

- those residing exclusively in the central authority
- those shared between the center and the region
- those falling exclusively within the regional jurisdiction

Finally, it noted that Transnistria should be given a right to "external self-determination" if Moldova should ever decide to merge with Romania.

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The OSCE Mission to Moldova, Continued

HCNM

The OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities became active in Moldova and Transdniestria in December 1994, concentrating on problems faced by ethnic minorities in both parts of the country. He focused on three Romanian-language schools in Transdniestria that claimed that Transdniester authorities had harassed their efforts to teach in the Latin alphabet.

The harassment of schools in Transdniestria offering instruction in the Latin script led to tensions again in 2004 with the beginning of the new school year, and the OSCE mission, supported by the CiO, made renewed efforts to reduce tensions over this issue. HCNM Rolf Ekeus declared in July 2004 that a forced closure of the Moldovan schools in Tiraspol teaching the “state language” in the Latin script “is nothing less than linguistic cleansing.”



Moldovan schools teaching the state language in Latin script in the breakaway region of Transdniestria continue to be harassed by the authorities. (OSCE/Walter Kemp)

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The OSCE Mission to Moldova, Continued

Tentative agreement

In early 1996 the OSCE achieved an agreement signed by the President of Moldova and leader of Transdniestria in which they agreed to settle their differences peacefully, without future resort to force. Thus, even though a political agreement remained elusive, the likelihood of a return to violence was nonetheless significantly reduced.

OSCE Mediation

Negotiations between Moldova and Transdniestria, mediated jointly by the OSCE, Russia, and Ukraine, have proceeded in cycles of apparent progress followed by stalemate or breakdown.

The OSCE has worked on several fronts to try to keep the negotiation process moving forward:

- The OSCE focused on functional issues where common interests exist between the parties, including facilitation of trans-border economic activity, rebuilding of bridges across the Dniester destroyed during the fighting in 1992, and coordination of energy distribution across the line of division.
 - The OSCE brought the two sides together in seminars with outside experts in conflict resolution and power-sharing arrangements in multinational states to try to identify acceptable political arrangements.
 - The OSCE mission has overseen the withdrawal of armaments and troops of the Russian Army based in Transdniestria. The OSCE hopes that full withdrawal of these forces and military depots left over from the Cold War era will facilitate progress in negotiations. By the end of 2001, all military equipment covered by the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe - tanks, artillery, armored personnel carriers, combat aircraft and helicopters - had been either destroyed or removed from the region. Further withdrawals have continued, but the deadline to have all Russian armaments and troops withdrawn has not been met. At the OSCE Sofia Ministerial in December 2004, most participating states that are parties to the CFE Treaty announced that they would not ratify the adapted CFE Treaty until this withdrawal was complete. No progress has been made on this issue since that time.
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The OSCE Mission to Moldova, Continued

Equipment removal



OSCE Mission to Moldova verifying the removal of Russian military equipment from Transnistria OSCE

Kiev Document

Meanwhile, OSCE-mediated negotiations in 2002 produced the "Kiev document" outlining proposed solutions to key issues in dispute. Under OSCE auspices a joint commission was formed to draft a new constitution for Moldova. The OSCE also offered to create a multinational force to monitor the border between Ukraine and Moldova, including the Transnistria region, to ensure compliance with whatever agreement is reached. After this burst of progress in 2003, however, momentum towards a political settlement stalled.

In February 2004 the three mediators – the OSCE, Russia, and Ukraine – issued a set of recommendations for a political settlement in which Moldova would become a single federal state based on the democratic rule of law. Transnistria would be a “subject of the Federal State,” with its own constitution and legislative capacity consistent with the Constitution of the Federal State. Specific competencies would fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Federal State (Moldova as a whole) and other competencies would fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal subject (i.e., Transnistria). Confidence-building measures would take place during a transition period as the Federal State takes shape. During this transition the three mediating parties, would offer to provide military guarantees to the fair implementation of the terms of the agreement. None of these proposals have yet been accepted by either of the parties.

In October 2005, the United States and the European Union entered the negotiating process as observers. The negotiating process has been stalled since 2006, after the Transnistrian side refused to continue in response to government introduction of new customs rules for Transnistrian exports.

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The OSCE Mission to Moldova, Continued

Summary

The situation in Moldova illustrates many of the difficulties and frustrations faced by the OSCE in its role as a third party. These frustrations have resulted from the continuing failure of the parties to reach an agreement. Lack of progress in the withdrawal of Russian military equipment from Transdniestria remains an important obstacle. There are also doubts that the de facto Transdniestrian authorities are interested in any changes that might reduce their power. Nonetheless, patience by the OSCE in its third party role is necessary until the conflict is ripe for resolution. When such a moment occurs, the presence of the OSCE, and its extensive experience as a third party, may be able to help the parties reach a political settlement, and the OSCE will be available as a potential guarantor of any agreement that is reached.

OSCE Mission to Georgia

Georgia

After the Soviet Union broke up, Georgia was wracked by a civil war over control of the central government and by two wars of secession, one in Abkhazia and another in South Ossetia. The United Nations took primary responsibility for dealing with the former conflict, while the OSCE mission became the principal intermediary in the latter.

During the Soviet period, South Ossetia was an autonomous region (oblast) within Georgia and had close ties with its neighbor across the Caucasus in North Ossetia, itself an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation. Resisting South Ossetia's moves to leave an increasingly nationalistic Georgia, the latter's first post-Soviet president sent troops to the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali to establish Georgian authority throughout the region. This met with violent resistance from the Ossetian population. An agreement reached in June 1992 declared a ceasefire and created a peacekeeping force in South Ossetia of Russian, Georgian, and South Ossetian troops.

The OSCE mission entered Georgia after this ceasefire was signed. It was charged with preparing an international conference, in cooperation with the UN, aimed at resolving the conflict and settling the status of South Ossetia within the Georgian state. The mission organized roundtable discussions with all the parties to try to overcome their major differences. It was also charged with overseeing the peacekeeping force to ensure that its mission was carried out in conformity with OSCE principles. Both parties to the conflict generally credit the OSCE with having, at a minimum, prevented a resumption of fighting.

In May 2005 the Russian Federation agreed to close down its bases and remove troops from Georgia -- which had been a bone of contention between the two states since 1991 although this appeared to have no positive effect on negotiations over the status of the two breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Indeed, several incidents of limited violence since then have required rapid intervention by OSCE officials to calm growing tensions between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali.

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OSCE Mission to Georgia, Continued

Border Monitoring, 1999-2005

Another major OSCE role has been monitoring the border between Georgia and the Caucasus regions of the Russian Federation to prevent spillover of the fighting in Chechnya into northern Georgia. Starting in December 1999 along the Georgian border with the Chechen Republic, observation posts were established along the border at the highest ridges of the Caucasus Mountains staffed by unarmed OSCE monitors, reaching 144 in the summer and 111 in the winter months. The mission was expanded in 2002 to include the border between Georgia and the Ingush Republic of the Russian Federation, bordering Chechnya on the west, and in 2003 to include the border with Dagestan to the east of Chechnya. The OSCE observation mission along the Georgian border was terminated at the end of 2004 when the Russian Federation refused to support its extension. During 2005, the OSCE mission supported the training of Georgian officers to take on this monitoring role.

Ajaria

After tensions rose between President Saakashvili and Ajarian strongman Abashidze, OSCE CiO Passy met with the two and established a dialogue. This effort, however, failed to resolve their differences. The power struggle between Saakashvili and Abashidze soon led to Abashidze's departure from Ajaria. Subsequently, the OSCE assisted in easing tensions over the autonomous status of Ajaria, a region composed largely of nominally Muslim Georgians.

The OSCE Minsk Group

The Minsk Conference

Another OSCE mission whose primary function is to promote conflict resolution is the "Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference."

Nagorno-Karabakh, formerly an autonomous region within the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan (SSR), was originally populated by a mix of ethnic Armenians and Azeris. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh began even before the breakup of the Soviet Union. In 1988 the Regional Council of Nagorno-Karabakh petitioned the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR and that of the Armenian SSR to transfer sovereignty over the region from the former to the latter. This was followed by sporadic violence between Armenians and Azeris both within Nagorno-Karabakh and along their common border.

When the Soviet Union collapsed and both republics became independent, the fighting became more intense as the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh drove virtually all ethnic Azeris out of the territory and began to fight in earnest to separate from Azerbaijan and to unite with the newly independent Armenian state.

When both Armenia and Azerbaijan joined the CSCE in January 1992, the organization immediately addressed the conflict. In March 1992 the CSCE created a group of eleven member states to prepare a peace conference in Minsk. (Since 1996 this group has been led by a "troika" of "co-chairmen," special envoys representing France, Russia, and the United States.) During the Helsinki Summit in July 1992, the CSCE considered undertaking the organization's first peacekeeping operation to enforce whatever agreement might emerge, perhaps calling on NATO, the WEU, and the CIS for support. A High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) was created for this purpose, and staffed with a dozen military officers from participating states.

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The OSCE Minsk Group, Continued

Primary Nagorno-Karabakh issues

By May 1994, when a ceasefire was agreed upon, the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh had not only gained complete control of the territory to which they lay claim but also of nearly 20% of Azerbaijani territory outside the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The military outcome encouraged ethnic Armenian leaders in both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh to dig in their heels. The Azeris have also been reluctant to negotiate from a position of military weakness.

The primary issues involve:

- the formal, legal status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and its relationship to Azerbaijan and Armenia
- security guarantees demanded by the regime in Karabakh, as a condition for withdrawal from the occupied territories in Azerbaijan outside of the Karabakh region, especially control over the Lachin corridor which connects Karabakh with Armenia through what would once again become Azeri territory
- provisions for the safe return of displaced persons, especially of Azeris displaced from their homes in the regions occupied by the Karabakh army
- the extent and role of OSCE peacekeeping forces

At the 1996 Lisbon Summit, the OSCE declared its support for the principle of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, while calling for "self rule" for Nagorno-Karabakh within its original frontiers and security guarantees to protect Armenians against retribution and to assure safe passage along the Lachin corridor between Karabakh and Armenia.

In 1998 the Minsk Group introduced a new proposal calling for an Azerbaijan-Karabakh "common state." This proposal called for two coequal parties to form a common state, similar in structure to the Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina, which is divided into the Republika Srpska (primarily Serb) and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (primarily Croat and Bosniac). Furthermore, the Minsk Group advocated a return to a "package" approach for negotiations. The parties to the conflict have not so far accepted any of the proposals of the Minsk Group.

The conflict dealt with by the Minsk group currently remains frozen in place. Efforts in recent years to move the conflict resolution process forward have not produced any concrete results.

Mini-quiz

Multiple choice OSCE conflict resolution efforts include:

- "good offices" provided by a mission of long duration
 - seminars and shuttle diplomacy by the High Commissioner on National Minorities
 - overseeing the implementation of agreements that have been reached
 - all of the above
-

The OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya

OSCE role in Chechnya unique

Although the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya was closed in 2003, it is worth reviewing because it was the only case in which the OSCE played an active role to broker a ceasefire during an ongoing war. This was during the 1994-1996 war between Chechnya and the Russian Federation. OSCE missions might play a similar role in future violent conflicts.

The OSCE has been generally reluctant to intervene in ongoing conflicts that have taken place within the formal jurisdiction of a single participating state. Typically those states contend that secessionist conflicts are internal matters. In addition, the OSCE lacks the capability for coercion that other parties, such as the United States and Russia, have brought to bear to impose ceasefires and political settlements in places such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Moldova, and Abkhazia. The OSCE has therefore tended to intervene more often either before conflicts turn violent or after violence has been brought to a halt.

Brief history of Chechnya

Chechnya is a predominantly Sunni Muslim region in the [northern Caucasus](#), with a population consisting largely of mountain-dwellers that had resisted Russian occupation for centuries. Its population in 1989 consisted of about 65% ethnic Chechens and 25% Russians, the latter mostly living in the capital of Grozny and on the northern plains.

Following the Moscow coup attempt in August 1991, General Dzhokhar Dudayev seized power in Chechnya. Shortly thereafter, he declared Chechnya's independence from Russia and refused to sign Yeltsin's Federation treaty. After a long period of political skirmishing, on December 11, 1994, approximately 40,000 Russian troops entered Chechnya, resulting in a full-scale war, among the bloodiest of the post-Cold War conflicts in Eurasia.

Violations of CSCE Norms

The conduct of Russian Federation troops violated many CSCE norms and principles. The massive military activity in the region, which was undertaken without the presence of international observers, represented a formal violation of the many confidence-building agreements, most recently incorporated in the Vienna Document of 1994. Furthermore, the war began only days after the signing of the Code of Conduct on Political-Military Affairs at the CSCE Summit in Budapest, which established extensive norms for military engagement and especially respect for the rights of non-combatants.

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The OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya, Continued

OSCE Assistance Group

Once a consensus on intervention was achieved, an OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya was created by the Permanent Council on April 11, 1995. Its mandate was to "promote the peaceful resolution of the crisis and the stabilization of the situation in the Chechen Republic in conformity with the principle of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and in accordance with OSCE principles."

In addition, the OSCE Assistance Group was assigned to monitor compliance with human dimension norms, including human rights, the unfettered return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes, and allowing for the operation of international humanitarian organizations in Chechnya. Finally, they were mandated to "promote dialogue and negotiations between the parties in order to achieve a ceasefire and eliminate sources of tensions," the first such mandate of this kind.

Cease-fire negotiations

At the outset, the OSCE Assistance Group found that there was little basis for productive negotiations between the parties. However, negotiations were opened at the OSCE offices in Grozny. An initial ceasefire agreement brokered by the OSCE Assistance Group in 1995 soon broke down. The Russian troops resumed military action against Chechen villages in the mountains, and Dudayev and his associates took advantage of the ceasefire to rearm their supporters in Grozny.

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The OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya, Continued

OSCE active mediation role

In January 1996, the HoM of the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya, Ambassador Tim Guldemann of Switzerland, took a much more activist role as a mediator between the parties to the conflict. Several ceasefire agreements were reached and soon broken. Finally, on August 31, the OSCE Assistance Group Head arranged for a formal meeting between the two parties. The resulting agreement called for a cease-fire and withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya, but it deferred a final settlement of Chechnya's future for five years (until the end of 2001) during which time the two sides would negotiate their relationship.

The OSCE monitored elections that brought a new government to power in Chechnya in 1997. However, the new government was unable to establish law and order throughout the country, and Chechnya increasingly fell under the influence of radical Islamists. Their actions led to Russia's breaking of the ceasefire agreement in 1999, when it sent troops into Chechnya again. The fighting and lawlessness in Chechnya had grown so serious that, out of concern for the safety of its personnel, the OSCE Assistance Group moved its office to Moscow.

The OSCE returned to Chechnya in 2001, when it set up a new office in the northern city of Znamenskaye. From this location, however, active monitoring of the ongoing violence could only be limited, and it focused on refugees and other human dimension activities.

Subsequently, the OSCE and Russian government failed to reach agreement on extending the mandate of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya, following Russian proposals involving serious changes to the mandate of the mission. The mission was closed on March 21, 2003.

Post-conflict security-building

Overview

Promoting long-term peace and security

The OSCE has frequently promoted long-term peace and security in regions where conflicts have occurred and where a political settlement has been achieved, but where war and violence have left a legacy of hatred and bitterness, so that peace remains conditional. In a number of these cases, the OSCE mission entered after a long period of widespread violence, death, and destruction, and thus had to deal with the distrust and hatred that still existed among different ethno-national groups within the population. The most important of these missions have been the ones in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia that were established following the 1995 Dayton Accords bringing an end to those violent conflicts, as well as the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, which also entered following the war in the spring of 1999 in which Kosovo came under exclusive international administration. Finally, the OSCE has played a role in post-conflict security building in Albania, following a collapse of the government in 1997 that led to a brief period of anarchy in what essentially became a failed state.

Principles and tools

Creating a more stable peace may involve OSCE efforts to promote reconciliation that goes beyond a formal settlement of the dispute and moves the parties towards a deeper resolution of their differences.

It may also involve assistance with building democracy to establish non-violent means to resolve differences that were previously settled by violence or the threat of force.

Strengthening security can involve assisting in verifying disarmament agreements; or arranging and providing training for institutions required to maintain law and order, such as civilian police.

Support for the development of civil society, holding elections that meet international standards, assistance in the creation of new constitutions and power-sharing arrangements, promotion of the rule of law, and other human dimension activities constitute other possible OSCE interventions.

OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bosnia- Herzegovina

The most dramatic illustration of the OSCE role in post-conflict security building is in the implementation of the 1995 Dayton Accords. Bosnia-Herzegovina experienced the longest and most deadly of the wars in the former Yugoslavia. A country that was composed of about 44% Bosniacs (primarily Muslims), 31% Serbs (mostly Orthodox Christians), 17% Croats (mostly Catholic) plus another 8% from other ethnic groups, soon fell into violent conflict among the three primary ethno-national groups. As a result of the Dayton Accords, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina was partitioned into two entities, the Republika Srpska (with 49% of the territory mostly inhabited by Serbs), and the Federation (composed of 51% of the territory and mostly inhabited by Bosniacs and Croats).

Under the terms of the Dayton Framework Agreement for Peace, signed at Paris in December 1995, the OSCE was given primary responsibility for implementing many of the provisions of the peace accords. The mission established its headquarters in Sarajevo, as well as four regional headquarters in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Mostar, and Banja Luka, plus 20 smaller field offices around the country. The mission has been headed by a series of senior U.S. diplomats, initially Robert Frowick, then Robert Barry, and currently Douglas Davidson. The mission currently has 101 international and 586 national staff.

The OSCE:

- organized and monitored elections at all levels
- implemented the regional stabilization and arms control measures of the Dayton Accords
- organized negotiations on confidence and security-building measures
- worked with the international community regarding displaced persons (particularly on property rights)

While NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) and after 2005 the EU follow-on EUFOR provided a military presence and a secure environment, the OSCE played a lead role in the implementation of the political dimensions of the security-building process established by the Dayton Accords, in collaboration with the High Representative. Since 2006 the Office of the High Representative has been reducing its field presence, leaving field activities primarily to the OSCE, while focusing on activities at the central governmental level in Sarajevo.

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OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Continued

OSCE activities OSCE activities have focused on election supervision and monitoring, beginning at the local level and expanding to entity (Federation and Republika Sprska) and then to elections for the overall Federation, an activity that it turned over to local authorities in 2005. The OSCE has also implemented arms control and disarmament provisions of the Dayton Accords; supervised destruction of land mines and small arms left over from the period of fighting, restructuring of the military under civilian authority, training of civilian police, monitoring human rights, and assisting in the development of an impartial and independent judiciary to assure rule of law. The goal is gradually to return political authority to local officials, but in the early post-conflict years the OSCE Mission and the Office of the High Representative performed many functions of governance jointly.

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OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Continued

Major functions

Presently activities of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina include four major functions:

- **Education:** The OSCE is assisting the country in implementing an education reform package that was adopted in 2002. The goal is to bring the educational system of the country up to EU standards in curriculum, teaching methods, funding, and management.
- **Democratization:** The OSCE is assisting in the development of transparent democratic practices at all levels of government. It has provided assistance to strengthen the work of parliamentarians; reform of public administration, stressed transparency and accountability; and strengthened civil society, especially local NGOs, encouraging active participation especially by the young.
- **Human Rights:** The OSCE works closely with domestic human rights associations. It is also assisting refugees to return to their original homes, in the settlement of property disputes; in judicial reform; and by encouraging and supporting the development of a network of ombudsmen that assist in the settlement of disputes between individuals and institutions.
- **Security Co-operation:** The goal is to reduce military forces to the minimum size and capability required for national defense, while preventing them from being used ever again as an instrument to resolve internal conflicts. This includes assisting in the implementation of disarmament and confidence-building measures adopted as part of the Dayton Accords. They have finally provided assistance to the armed forces to enable them to fulfill their obligations under the OSC Code of Conduct for Political-Military Affairs adopted at the 1994 Budapest Summit, especially civilian control over the military.

The overall goal of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is to assist the country in recovering from the trauma of the four-year long war and to put in place structures, norms, and institutions that will make future violence unlikely. In the end, the goal is to enable Bosnia-Herzegovina to follow other former Yugoslav states to enter the European Union, as Slovenia has already done and Croatia and Macedonia are preparing to do.

OSCE Mission to Croatia

Croatia

The OSCE Mission in Croatia assists the government with settlement of many issues left over after the end of the 1991-1995 war. Fighting in Croatia had largely centered around enclaves of ethnic Serbs residing within the borders of the former Yugoslav republic of Croatia, especially in Eastern Slavonia in eastern Croatia near the borders with Hungary and Serbia (Vojvodina) and in the region known as the Krajina (or borderlands) that lie in Croatia to the north and west of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serbs took to arms, supported by remnants of the Yugoslav National Army, para-military bands, and newly released criminals, all of whom contributed to a bloodbath in these regions.

As the fighting came to an end, hundreds of thousands of citizens were displaced from their homes, and many ethnic Serbs fled across the border to Serbia. Restoring order and assuring that the rights of all parties were respected in the aftermath of the violence was a sensitive and difficult task, largely undertaken by the OSCE with the participation of the office of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) and UN peacekeepers. The OSCE cooperated with the UN Transitional Authority in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium, which was largely responsible for overseeing the political transition in this most war-scarred region of the country. The mission's mandate focuses on implementation of democratic processes and the rule of law.

OSCE assistance

The OSCE has assisted in the:

- return and reintegration of displaced persons, and the restitution of private property
 - promotion of human rights and the rights of persons belonging to minorities
 - work of the International Tribunal for Yugoslavia in identifying war criminals in Croatia and has encouraged the government to locate and turn them over to the tribunal encouraged freedom of the media
 - police training consistent with OSCE principles and has encouraged recruitment of ethnic minorities into the police academies; subsequently it has engaged in active monitoring of police
 - support of NGOs and the development of civil society in Croatia
 - implementation of elections at all levels of government
-

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OSCE Mission to Croatia, Continued

Transition from mission to office

The Mission's 2006 Report on Croatia's Progress in Meeting International Commitments noted a continuous improvement in the democratic atmosphere in Croatia since 1991. It pointed to greater media freedom and debate on mandate-related issues; responsiveness by many national and local government bodies and institutions to reform, including the fight against corruption; the development of transparency in government; increased acceptance of national minority groups; growing acceptance of the role of civil society; and improved relations between the police and the public. The Report also noted, however, that progress in the rights of minorities and human rights more generally was satisfactory in some areas but lagged behind in others. As a result, the Mission urged that institutions and legal frameworks had to be strengthened, and consistent application of existing laws and regulations had to be pressed even when politically difficult.

The OSCE Mission to Croatia had a headquarters in Zagreb, and six regional field offices in Karlovac, Sisak, Vukovar, Gospic, Split, and Knin. The mission had 300 international personnel and about 500 national staff at its high point in 1999, but in the end had dropped to 27 internationals plus national staff. This mission closed at the end of 2007, followed by the establishment of a small [OSCE Office in Zagreb](#) with a mandate to monitor the prosecution of war crimes and report on the housing care program. Ambassador Jorge Fuentes Monzonis-Vilallonga of Spain had been final head of the Mission, and then took charge of the new Office.

OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Previous Kosovo Missions

The very first CSCE mission of long duration was stationed in three regions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in August 1992, namely Kosovo (with a majority of ethnic Albanian Muslims), Sandjak (with a majority of Bosniac Muslims), and Vojvodina (with a plurality of ethnic Hungarians), all of whom feared for their safety at the hands of the Serb majority that assumed control after Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia broke away from Federal Yugoslavia one by one. This mission thus focused on issues of human rights in these regions. However, the FRY (also known as Serbia-Montenegro at the time) was suspended from participation by the CSCE in 1992, and in retaliation the government in Belgrade refused to renew the memorandum of understanding governing the operation of the mission, so it was withdrawn in June 1993. Therefore, the OSCE had no direct access to Kosovo for the following five years.

Following an escalation of hostilities throughout 1997 and 1998, especially frequent violent conflicts between Serb police and para-military units and an increasingly militant and well-armed Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke (the primary mediator of the 1995 Dayton Accords in Bosnia-Herzegovina) brokered an agreement in October 1998 calling for a cease-fire to be monitored by the OSCE. To fulfill this task, the OSCE created the Kosovo Verification Mission, which was intended to be a force of 2000 unarmed civilian ombudsmen to monitor the ceasefire and assist in the repatriation of many of the refugees from the violence. However, while this force was still being assembled and put into the field, violence continued to escalate in the region, so, after only 1400 of the planned observers had taken up their posts, the entire mission was withdrawn in March 1999 preceding a NATO air campaign directed against Serb forces in the region. This military campaign lasted through June 1999, and hundreds of thousands of refugees fled their homes, many entering Albania and Macedonia.

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OSCE Mission to Croatia, Continued

Kosovo (since 1999)

Following the NATO military campaign in the spring of 1999 and the withdrawal from Kosovo of Serbian police and military units, a new government authority was established under UN auspices in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo, operating under the auspices of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), took the lead role on democratization, human rights, rule of law, and elections after it started operating in Kosovo in July 1999.

Mission headquarters is located in Pristina, and there are a total of eight field offices covering the 30 municipalities into which the region is divided politically. The mission is authorized up to 310 international staff, along with 990 national staff, making it the largest OSCE field mission at present. Ambassador Tim Guldemann of Switzerland heads the mission, and also holds the title of Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Institution-Building, reflecting the role of the OSCE mission as a component of the overall UN operation in Kosovo. The mission works closely with other UN agencies, especially the UN High Commissioner on Refugees and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Kosovo Stabilization Force (KFOR) provides military security, operating under UN Mandate and consisting of peacekeeping troops largely from NATO countries.

Kosovo declared its independence in February 2008 and has asked for an international presence consistent with the Ahtisaari plan to remain. The OSCE plans to stay engaged in Kosovo, but this is dependent upon continuation of a supporting consensus in the Permanent Council.

OSCE Presence in Albania

Overview

The OSCE played a major role in resolving the conflict that broke out in Albania in early 1997, and in the rebuilding of a political and social order after the fighting ended. This role was slightly different from the ones it played in the other regions of large-scale violence in the Balkans, since the chaos and violence largely resulted from the collapse of the Albanian state rather than from a civil war. Yet it represents one of the real “success stories” of the OSCE, where rapid action quickly restored political order and prevented larger violence from ensuing.

Origins of the crisis

Albania was one of the most repressive regimes in the communist world, as well as the poorest country in Europe. Prior to the collapse of communism, Albania experimented only once (in 1924) with parliamentary democracy. The communist regime in Albania under President Enver Hoxha was authoritarian internally and isolationist externally from 1944 through 1985, when Hoxha died. He was replaced by a moderate communist, Ramiz Alia, who began a modest reform process. Nonetheless, by 1991-92, anarchy had swept across Albania. Disputes between the Gheg clan in the north and the Tosks in the south largely divided the country along regional lines, destroying the dominant authority of the once powerful central government and the communist ruling elite based in the capital city of Tirana. Sali Berisha was elected president and tried to establish an effective government that would prevent chaos from spreading.

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OSCE Presence in Albania, Continued

Collapse of Albanian government in 1997

Private banks in Albania had for several years been organizing "pyramid schemes" to attract funds, and these programs attracted major public investment. In January 1997 the entire scheme collapsed. The Albanian public vented its anger at the government. A spontaneous, chaotic, and unorganized uprising against the government followed. The police refused to enforce the law. Albania fell into anarchy, with criminal gangs and local clan leaders gaining control in many parts of the country. The central government collapsed. Arms warehouses were looted and as many as 700,000 or more light weapons, mostly Kalashnikov rifles, were stolen. (Many of these weapons later found their way to ethnic Albanians in both Kosovo and Macedonia.). Some 1800 people were killed by criminals, in local disputes, feuds, and by random gunfire as a consequence of the breakdown of law and order.

International response

The OSCE assumed a major political role in the Albanian crisis. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Danish Foreign Minister Petersen, appointed former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky as his Personal Representative in Albania. Vranitzky visited Albania in March and met with President Berisha and the opposition. The OSCE brokered an agreement that created a Government of National Reconciliation, including all major political groups. An amnesty was declared, all weapons were ordered turned over to an international authority, and new elections were scheduled for June 1997 under international supervision.

Despite the agreement, fighting continued and rebels captured Tirana and its airport, causing Berisha to flee. Italy was being swamped by refugees fleeing across the Adriatic Sea, and wanted to intervene militarily, preferably by taking a lead role in a military force composed of troops from "a coalition of the willing." On March 28, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1101 authorizing "Operation Alba," a multinational peacekeeping force headed by Italy, with a mandate to intervene in Albania on the basis of the UN Charter's Chapter VII.

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OSCE Presence in Albania, Continued

The OSCE presence

Vranitzky's visits convinced him the OSCE should create a long-term mission in Albania, and the Permanent Council established an OSCE Presence in Albania on March 27, 1997. The "Presence" was mandated to assist in democratization, the development of free media and human rights, election preparation and monitoring, and monitoring the collection of weapons.

Vranitzky served as coordinator in his role as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, and Ambassador Grubmayr of Austria was appointed his resident deputy in Tirana and *de facto* Head of Mission on the ground.

[OSCE Presence in Albania](#)



The Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Albania, former Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Franz Vranitzky, speaks with journalists about the issues that are of concern for the OSCE in Albania, April 1997. (OSCE)

OSCE Presence in Albania, Continued

Election monitoring

The major focus of the new OSCE Presence was preparing for the elections to be held in June, as agreed by the Albanians. The OSCE coordinated international monitoring and did its best to see that the election process was open and fair. The OSCE role was extensive. ODIHR deployed 250 teams composed of over 500 short-term observers, including representatives from 32 OSCE participating states. An Operation Alba rapid-reaction force was also on stand-by to respond to any incidents that might threaten the safety of the international observers. After the election, ODIHR concluded that the election had been "acceptable" under the prevailing circumstances in Albania and especially in light of the recent governmental crisis.

The election results produced a significant victory for the opposition Socialists and a defeat for President Berisha. The new government requested that the OSCE coordinate the international efforts to support the reconstruction of Albania, and asked for technical assistance from ODIHR in drafting a new constitution. At the same time, Operation Alba, without whose security presence OSCE monitoring of the elections would have been impossible, withdrew.

Post-election security-building

The government initiated a program to have weapons turned in, although only a small fraction of the looted weapons were actually retrieved. The Western European Union set up police training to try to improve internal security, while NATO worked to assist the rebuilding of the Albanian armed forces under an Individualized Partnership-for-Peace Program.

The economic crisis was also a major threat to the restoration of political stability, especially in the southern part of the country. The International Monetary Fund and the European Union agreed to provide economic assistance, and the OSCE agreed to coordinate international economic assistance for the reconstruction of the Albanian economy.

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OSCE Presence in Albania, Continued

OSCE accomplishments and current activities in Albania

The OSCE Presence in Albania has been one of its most successful activities in post conflict security building. The ad hoc nature of the OSCE proved to be an asset, enabling it to respond promptly without significant bureaucratic or political delays. Its pragmatism and flexibility also enabled it to adjust rapidly as circumstances changed.

After the restoration of calm, the OSCE Presence in Albania has assumed a fairly typical long-term conflict prevention function through its emphasis on democratization, good governance, rule of law, human rights, and the rights of persons belonging to minorities. It has continued to assist in the preparation of elections and to monitor elections at all levels. It has assisted the parliament in capacity-building, and has promoted judicial reform and the reform of property laws inherited from the socialist era. Its efforts to enhance good governance have also included active support for the development and freedom of civil society to operate in the country. Finally, it has provided substantial technical advice to border police, especially to aid in the prevention of the large-scale trafficking of human beings and contraband that frequently transit Albania. Although the situation in the country has stabilized, much still needs to be done to promote good governance, and ODIHR has ruled as recently as February 2007 that local elections still fail to fully meet international and OSCE standards.

The OSCE Presence in Albania has its headquarters in the capital city of Tirana, with regional offices in four other cities, Gjirokastra, Kukes, Shkodra, and Vlora. The Presence is headed by Ambassador Robert Bosch of the Netherlands, and is currently staffed by about 30 international personnel.

Mini-quiz

- Multiple choice** Which of the following was not an aspect of OSCE post-conflict security building in Albania?
- election preparation and monitoring
 - coordinating efforts of non-governmental organizations to build a stronger civil society
 - assistance in development of a new constitution
 - deployment of an OSCE peacekeeping force
-