Module 1

Introduction to the OSCE

This document is designed to introduce you to the Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The document will help answer the following questions:

- What is the OSCE?
- What does the OSCE consist of?
- How was the OSCE formed?
- How does the OSCE compare to other organizations?

This document is designed for people who may be seconded to the OSCE on diplomatic missions. This is an introduction; therefore it is not intended to provide an exhaustive description of the history and functions of the OSCE. For more detailed information, please refer to the OSCE website.
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CHAPTER 1

The OSCE

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the world’s largest regional security organization. It offers a forum for political negotiations and decision-making in the fields of:

- Early warning
- Conflict prevention
- Crisis management
- Post-conflict rehabilitation

This chapter provides a brief overview of the OSCE’s participating states and operations. For more information about the OSCE, please refer to the OSCE website.
Overview
The OSCE has 56 participating states from Europe, Central Asia, and North America, and its area spans from Vancouver to Vladivostok.
The OSCE also maintains regular dialogue and cooperation with Mediterranean and Asian partners.

Operations
The OSCE possesses most of the normal attributes of an international organization: standing decision-making bodies, permanent headquarters and institutions, permanent staff, regular financial resources, and field operations.

At the start of 2010, the OSCE employed about 450 persons in its primary institutions, as well as some 3,000 persons in its field missions, including both direct hires and seconded personnel. Its 2010 budget was relatively modest, at 150 million Euros (about $230 million).

Comprehensive view of security
The following three areas are considered by the OSCE to be equally important for maintaining peace and stability:
- Security
- Economic and environmental cooperation
- Human rights

The consensus of OSCE participating states is that all have a common stake in the security of Europe and should therefore cooperate to prevent crises from happening and/or to prevent their escalation, and to promote post-conflict peace building.

Political dialogue
To maintain security throughout its region, the OSCE relies on political dialogue about shared
values and develops partnerships with governments, civil society, and the private sector. The OSCE often works away from the headlines to foster discussion to defuse tensions and divert potential conflict.
CHAPTER 2

OSCE structure

The OSCE functions using a combination of:

- Decision-making bodies
- Operational institutions
- Field operations

This chapter introduces you to the main OSCE structures. By the end of this chapter, you should be able to describe how OSCE decisions are reached and which institutions are responsible for OSCE operations. For more detailed information, please refer to the OSCE website.
CHAPTER 2

OSCE structure

MODULE 1

Introduction to the OSCE

OSCE structure including decision-making bodies and operational institutions.
Decision-making bodies

The OSCE decision-making bodies consist of:

- Summits
- Ministerial Council
- Permanent Council
- Forum for Security Co-operation
Summits

Summits are periodic meetings of Heads of State or Government of OSCE participating states that set priorities and provide orientation at the highest political level. Summit meetings tend to be “scripted” by the professional diplomats who staff the OSCE offices. The last summit was held in Istanbul in 1999.

Heads of State or Government of CSCE participating States stand for a group photo at the Paris Summit, Palais de L’Elysee, 19 November 1990. (George Bush Presidential Library)
Ministerial Council

The Ministerial Council, made up of foreign ministers of the participating states (or their representatives), meets annually, except in years when summits are scheduled. The Ministerial meetings are held to take major decisions, and often approve documents that have been adopted by the Permanent Council or the Forum for Security Co-Operation.

The Ministerial Council meetings help to maintain a link between the political decisions taken at the summits and the day-to-day functioning of the OSCE. Since a summit has not been held since 1999, the Ministerial Council meetings have become the highest political decision-making body in practice.

Activities

The Council meets in order to:

- Consider issues relevant to the OSCE
- Review and assess the activities, accomplishments, and problems of the OSCE
- Make appropriate decisions, including adoption of the annual operating budget

Decisions

The Council makes all of its decisions by consensus, although during the last few years the Chair-in-Office has made summary statements reflecting views shared by the vast majority of participating states, but not universally agreed.

The closing session under way at the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council, Athens, 2 December 2009.
(OSCE/George Kontarinis)
Permanent Council

The Permanent Council (PC) meets weekly throughout the year at the Hofburg Palace’s Congress Centre in Vienna to engage in the day-to-day direction of OSCE affairs. It is composed of representatives at the level of ambassadors from all participating States to the OSCE. Senior officials from capitals may reinforce the PC on special occasions, and then it is referred to as the Reinforced Permanent Council. The Permanent Council is chaired by a permanent representative of the current Chair-in-Office.

![The flags of the OSCE in front of the Hofburg in Vienna, 27 April 2009. (OSCE/Blanca Tapia)](image)

Activities

Permanent Council activities include:

- Making decisions on the operation of the OSCE, its institutions and its field missions
- Hearing reports from senior officials and invited guests on matters of concern to the OSCE
- Developing responses to emergency and ongoing situations
- Engaging in debate, dialogue, and discussion on issues before the OSCE

Function

The Permanent Council serves an important function as a catalyst for dialogue among the participating states. It provides an opportunity to exchange views and voice criticisms, serves as
an instrument of early warning, and allows smaller states to make their opinions known to major players. Increasingly, spontaneous dialogue tends to take place during advance informal consultations, on the “margins” of the formal meetings, or in the various subsidiary bodies that prepare plenary sessions.
Forum for Security Co-operation

The Forum for Security Co-operation meets weekly throughout much of the year in Vienna to discuss and make decisions regarding military aspects of security in the OSCE area, in particular confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs).

The Forum consists of representatives of the OSCE participating states—usually the same individuals who serve in the Permanent Council.

Responsibilities

The Forum is responsible for:

- Discussing and clarifying information exchanged under CSBM agreements
- Implementation of CSBMs
- Annual implementation assessment meetings
- Preparation of seminars on military doctrine

Delegations of the 56 OSCE participating States, including Russia and the United States, discuss the missile defence initiative at a meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation, in Vienna, 31 October 2007. (OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev)
Operational institutions

This section focuses on the operational institutions of the OSCE including:

- Chair
- Secretariat
- Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- High Commissioner on National Minorities
- Representative on Freedom of the Media

Refer to the OSCE website for details about all of the OSCE operational institutions.
Chair

The Chair-in-Office (CiO) is vested with overall responsibility for executive action and the coordination of OSCE activities. CiO duties include:

- Representing the Organization before other organizations and to participating states
- Coordinating the work of OSCE institutions
- Supervising activities related to conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation
- Seeking consensus as the basis for regular decision-making
- Mediation and conciliation of conflicts among participating states, either directly or through special representatives appointed by the chair.

Rotation

The Chair rotates annually. The foreign minister of the country chairing the organization traditionally holds the position of CiO. The country that is elected must provide substantial personnel to carry out the many functions of the Chair during the term as a member of the Troika/Quintet.

Troika/Quintet
Traditionally, the CiO has been assisted by the previous and succeeding Chairs; the three of them together constituting the Troika. Finnish OSCE Chair-in-Office Alexander Stubb took an initiative in 2008 to expand the Troika to a “Quintet” by including states slated to assume leadership in future years. He invited Kazakhstan (2010) and Lithuania (2011) to meet with the then Troika of Spain, Finland and Greece to develop ideas for longer-term priorities. It is unclear whether this will be a permanent change in the governance structure or is just a temporary experiment with a new approach.
Secretariat

The Secretariat, under the direction of the Secretary General, provides operational support to the Organization.

Secretary General

The Secretary General acts as the representative of the Chair-in-Office and supports him/her in all activities aimed at attaining the goals of the OSCE. The Secretary General, in consultation with the Chair-in-Office, is authorized to bring any matter that he/she deems relevant to the attention of the Permanent Council.

Duties

The duties of the Secretariat include:

- Managing OSCE structures and operations within the political guidelines set down by the Permanent Council and other political decision-making bodies
- Working closely with the CiO in the preparation and guidance of OSCE meetings
- Ensuring implementation of the decisions of the OSCE
- Publicizing OSCE policies and practices
- Maintaining contacts with international organizations
- Advising on budgetary proposals and financial implications of proposals
- Overseeing personnel issues, including gender equity within the OSCE

OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut addresses Part 1 of the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in Vienna, 1 February 2010. (OSCE/Susanna Lööf)
Structures
The Secretariat includes the following structures:

- Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU)
- Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC)
- External Co-operation
- Gender Section
- Office of Internal Oversight
- Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
- Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
- Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU)
- Training Section

Refer to the OSCE website for more information about the various structures in the Secretariat.
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) works to:

- Promote democratic elections
- Support the development of democratic institutions
- Monitor human rights
- Strengthen civil society and the rule of law
- Combat discrimination
- Improve the situation of Roma and Sinti
- Assist in protecting the rights of trafficked persons and vulnerable groups

ODIHR is based in Warsaw, Poland. Michael Georg Link of Germany became Director of ODIHR on July 1, 2014.

East & West monitoring

Since its establishment in 1991, ODIHR has become the international “gold standard” institution in developing a systematic methodology for evaluating all stages of the electoral process, including:

- The process for the selection of candidates
- The campaign process
- Media coverage
- The actual voting process
- The counting of ballots and determination of outcomes.

In addition to recruiting election monitors, it often works closely with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament. With a few exceptions it observes all major elections for parliament and heads of state in all OSCE participating states, and in some newly democratizing countries (such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo) it has also played a major role in organizing, implementing, and monitoring municipal elections.

ODIHR’s efforts in election monitoring in its early years tended to focus on the former communist states in Eurasia and the Balkans, and this has led to some criticism that there is an implicit assumption that the only problems with democratic processes occur in the former communist states.

In part to respond to this criticism, ODIHR has monitored elections in the West as well, such as French presidential elections; U.S. presidential and congressional elections; and elections in the UK involving devolution of authority to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Although ODIHR
reported occasional problems in several of those elections, its reports generally concluded that the elections were held in these Western countries in the context of a long history of democratic practice. This finding, however, has led to criticism from Russia and several other countries that ODIHR is utilizing “subjective” criteria in its election monitoring, rather than focusing on concrete, material evaluations.
High Commissioner on National Minorities

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities works to identify and seek early resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, stability, or friendly relations among OSCE participating states.

Role

The role of the High Commissioner is not necessarily to act as an advocate on behalf of persons belonging to minority groups; rather the mandate is to promote dialogue between persons belonging to minority groups and governments or other institutions and organizations representing the national majority. The HCNM, acting as an impartial third party, negotiates at the highest political level.

The HCNM decides when and where to travel in response to incidents that might produce greater violence or an escalation of attention. This flexibility makes the office of the HCNM a unique role pioneered by the OSCE and is often considered one of the most innovative steps it has taken to prevent violent conflict.

Most significantly, the High Commissioner does not require prior approval of his activities from any central institution of the OSCE, and he may seek to enter any participating states when he believes that the situation can benefit from his involvement. Although he typically coordinates his visit with the government involved, he does not need their formal approval to enter into a conflict involving persons belonging to minority groups.

Limitations
The High Commissioner’s involvement is subject to limitations.

The situation must include:

- Persons belonging to national minorities
- Potential for conflict emanating from minority issues
- Potential to affect inter-state relations or regional security.

The situation must not involve:

- Groups actively engaged in terrorist activities
- Ethnic conflicts that are engaged in open violence

Collaboration

In many cases OSCE field operations and the office of the High Commissioner have collaborated closely in their effort to resolve underlying tensions involving the rights of persons belonging to minorities. A substantial number of field operations have come into existence in part because of recommendations by the High Commissioner.
Representative on Freedom of the Media

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media works to assist governments in the furthering of free, independent, and pluralistic media.

Miklos Haraszti, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, speaks at the Permanent Council in Vienna, 27 November 2008. (OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev)

Role

The role of the Representative is to observe relevant media development in all participating states in order to advocate and promote full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments regarding freedom of expression and free media.

Limitations

The Representative on Freedom of the Media will not communicate with and will not acknowledge communications from any individual or organization carrying out or publicly condoning acts of terrorism or violence.

Authority

The Representative is authorized to observe media development in all participating states and advocate and promote full compliance with relevant OSCE principles and commitments.

Actions

The office has frequently conducted seminars to inform journalists, government officials, and nongovernmental organizations about international standards for protecting a free media.

The office has also been a watchdog, reporting on systematic violations of media freedom in participating states; and identifying and publicizing attacks on journalists, including “disappearances” and killings in an apparent effort to silence outspoken journalists.
Field operations

Most of the OSCE's staff and resources are deployed in field operations in South-eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the South Caucasus. The operations are established at the invitation of the host countries.

The majority of the current OSCE field operations focus on:

- Good governance
- The promotion of democratic practices
- Free elections
- The rule of law
- Early warning and conflict prevention

Field operations are described in more detail in Module 2: OSCE Field Operations.
CHAPTER 3

History of the OSCE

The OSCE traces its origins to the early 1970s, to the Helsinki Final Act, and the creation of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Of special importance is the way in which the OSCE has evolved from a series of conferences and multilateral agreements into a regional, multilateral organization.

It’s important to know how the OSCE started in order to understand how it is viewed today by participating states. It’s also important to understand the persistent issues among participating states.

This chapter introduces you to the history of the OSCE. By the end of this chapter, you should be able to describe how the OSCE was formed. For more detailed information, please refer to the OSCE website.
The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

In 1969, Finland offered to host a conference on security and co-operation that consisted of preparatory meetings, a working phase, and follow-on meetings. The three-stage conference is often referred to as the “Helsinki Process”, and consists of:

- Preparatory meetings
- Working phase
- Follow-on conferences
Preparatory meetings

Helsinki 1972-73

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) negotiations opened with 35 delegations present including: the United States, Canada, and all the states of Europe (including the USSR and Holy See), with the exception of Albania. These states tended to coalesce into three major groups, reflecting the existing political alignments at the time:

- Warsaw Pact
- NATO / European Community
- Neutral / Nonaligned

The preparatory meeting resulted in a detailed outline of the practical organizational arrangements for the conference.

Foreign Ministers at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Helsinki, 1973 (OSCE)
Working phase

*Geneva 1973 to 1975*

The working phase of negotiations amounted to the first multilateral East-West negotiation process in Europe. During this phase, issues were grouped together into three major substantive “baskets.” The inclusion of such a wide range of issues reflected a comprehensive approach to security that remains one of the OSCE’s greatest assets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basket</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Security</td>
<td>Security and confidence building measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Co-operation</td>
<td>Co-operation in the fields of economics, science and technology, and the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Human rights</td>
<td>Human rights and the movement of peoples, ideas, and information across national boundaries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three baskets are also referred to as “dimensions” of security.
Final Act

Helsinki 1975

The result of the working phase of the conference is referred to as the Helsinki Final Act, which was signed by the heads of state of all 35 countries at a summit meeting in Helsinki on August 1, 1975. The Final Act is not a treaty, but a politically binding agreement that contained recommendations in each of the Baskets, preceded by the Decalogue.

The Decalogue

The Decalogue is a declaration of ten principles guiding relations between participating states.

1. Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty
2. Refraining from the threat or use of force
3. Inviolability of frontiers
4. Territorial integrity of states
5. Peaceful settlement of disputes
6. Non-intervention in internal affairs
7. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief
8. Equal rights and self-determination of peoples
9. Co-operation among states
10. Fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law

Importance of the Decalogue

The ten principles of the Decalogue created the normative structure under which the CSCE and the OSCE have operated. Continuing elaboration of these principles created the normative core for an OSCE regional cooperative security regime.

The provision in the first principle allowing for the peaceful, negotiated change of borders, creating the possibility for a peaceful unification of Germany, was particularly important in the creation of today’s Europe.

Other principles of the Decalogue emphasized the desirability of resorting to diplomatic means rather than the use of force to settle all disputes among participating states.
Benefits of Helsinki process

The Helsinki process offered the participating states an additional channel of communication, a normative code of conduct (for inter-state and intra-state relations) as well as a long-term vision of cooperation. It thus promoted both stabilization and peaceful change in Europe. As a result, during the Cold War the CSCE maintained the promise of qualitative changes in East-West relations at a time when most contacts were characterized by alternating phases of tension and ambiguous détente.
Follow-on conferences

1977—1989

The Helsinki Final Act called for a series of follow-on conferences to review progress in the implementation of the Final Act and to consider new provisions to strengthen security in Europe. The follow-on conferences took place in Belgrade in 1977, Madrid from 1980—83, and Vienna in 1986—89.

The conferences were predominately focused on confidence building measures (Basket I) and on human rights (Basket II). Western countries regularly criticized the human rights performance of Communist Bloc countries, which responded with accusations of interference in internal affairs.

Vienna

1986—1989

The most significant accomplishments of the Vienna Review Conference were in the area of human rights. The 1975 Helsinki Act had focused primarily in its substantive provisions upon enhancing human contacts across cold war lines rather than on individual political rights.

At Vienna, the conference concluded that individual citizens have a right, “individually or in association with others,” to advocate for and openly promote the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Perhaps even more important in terms of its historical significance was a provision noting that citizens had a right to live where they chose within their own country and to freely leave and re-enter their own country, a right that had previously been denied to citizens of all communist bloc countries (except for Yugoslavia, formally a member of the neutral and nonaligned group within the CSCE).

Just eight months after the adoption of the Vienna Document in January 1989, the government of Hungary cited this principle when it opened its borders with Austria, allowing many (including East Germans) to cross freely to the West. The flood of emigration that followed was a major factor in the East German decision to open the Berlin Wall in November 1989. The Vienna Review Conference thus had profound historical implications that were barely recognized at the time.

Stockholm

1984—1986

In addition to the general review conferences, the Madrid follow-on conference mandated a special conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, which took place in Stockholm from 1984—86. The major focus was on strengthening the regime of military confidence-building measures contained in Basket I of the Helsinki Final Act. President Reagan and new Soviet leader Gorbachev’s influence in European security matters was reflected in these negotiations taking place under CSCE auspices.

The Stockholm follow-on conference broadened the scope of the CSBM provisions in the Helsinki Final Act including lower thresholds and a longer time frame for prior notification of certain military activities. Most importantly, for the first time in the history of modern arms control, mandatory inspections as a means of verification were agreed upon, extending as far eastward into Soviet territory as the Ural Mountains.
Impact of the CSCE

The CSCE had a direct impact on East-West relations and helped create a post-Cold War cooperative security regime that was no longer divided into three groups: West, East, and Neutral/Nonaligned.

Undermining communism

The CSCE had an impact on the security situation in Europe by undermining the legitimacy of the communist governments throughout Central and Eastern Europe, where governments signed agreements that created norms about human rights and openness, but where their actual behavior often fell far short of those principles.

Human rights

The CSCE certainly inspired and made possible the formation of a wide variety of human rights movements in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia and Solidarity in Poland, which lobbied their governments to observe their commitments undertaken when they signed the Helsinki Final Act.

Human rights, a long-standing taboo for the Soviet Bloc, became by virtue of the Final Act a legitimate subject of East-West dialogue. The CSCE was thus important in keeping the spotlight on human rights and linking progress in that sphere with cooperation on other more traditional security questions.

Military security

The CSCE can be credited with reducing tensions through its implementation of confidence-building measures agreed upon by participating states, which enhanced military transparency through inspections of armed forces and military activities. This significantly reduced fears that war might start through the misinterpretation of routine military activities, which might have mistakenly been perceived as the initiation of offensive action.
Uniqueness of CSCE

There are a number of things that make the CSCE unique in comparison to other organizations.

Wide participation
In an era characterized by bloc-to-bloc confrontation, the CSCE had wide participation and all states participating in the Conference did so as “sovereign and independent states and in conditions of full equality.”

Comprehensive view
At a time when most negotiations and security organizations adopted a piecemeal approach to security, the CSCE endorsed a comprehensive view. The linkage between different elements of security would prove to be one of the CSCE’s greatest assets.

Decisions by consensus
Decisions of the Conference were taken by consensus thus often making the decision-making process as important as the decisions themselves. This way, no state had to fear that a decision to which it strongly objected would be imposed upon it.

Flexible
CSCE decisions were politically rather than legally binding, giving the Conference considerable flexibility. This meant that its decisions did not risk getting tied up in the sort of lengthy debates that often occur during the ratification of legal instruments, which could delay implementation of CSCE decisions by years, when action was required in weeks, days, or even hours.

No institutional structures
Prior to 1990, the CSCE had no institutional structures; the result being that the very impetus needed to keep the process going was an end in itself. This also added to the capacity of the CSCE to adapt rapidly and effectively to the changing international environment in which it operated.
CSCE becomes the OSCE

With the disintegration of the Warsaw Treaty Organization following the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, the CSCE began a rapid process of transformation to respond to the new post-Cold War security situation. The creation of a genuine Transatlantic system of “cooperative security” appeared possible.

The CSCE took on new responsibilities and challenges in this period of transition characterized by institutionalization, strengthening of operational capabilities, development of field activities, and further elaboration of commitments and principles.

Charter of Paris

Paris, 1990

The Charter of Paris, signed by the Heads of State from all CSCE participating states, represented the first high-level multilateral instrument to reflect the fall of the communist bloc and the end of the Cold War. In its preamble, the Paris Charter announced the opening of a new era for European security based on a reaffirmation of the Helsinki Principles.

After the Charter of Paris, the CSCE began to take on features of an established international organization, rather than consisting of a series of ad hoc meetings about security issues.

The Paris meeting established the following structures for the CSCE:

- Secretariat
- Conflict Prevention Centre
- Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (originally the Office of Free Elections)
- Parliamentary Assembly
One of OSCE’s fundamental documents, the Charter of Paris, was signed on 21 November 1990 at the Second CSCE Summit. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France/Frédéric de la Mure)

Formal name change

The Budapest Summit formally changed the name of the CSCE to OSCE (effective Jan. 1, 1995), in recognition of the institutionalization that had taken place.
OSCE today

The OSCE today occupies a unique place in international organizations in general and transatlantic security institutions in particular. It has also been experiencing a “mid life crisis” in recent years that has raised some fundamental questions about itself, requiring a new set of adaptations if the organization is to continue to play a leading role in regional security and cooperation.

This crisis reflects a declining consensus about the normative foundations of the OSCE, especially of the human dimension documents adopted in the years immediately following the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe; several renewed crises in the realm of security, especially between Russia and NATO countries; and the stalemate in the arms control regime and other political foundations of cooperation that had created a favorable context for the OSCE to develop in the 1990s.

Basic priorities

The basic priorities of the OSCE at present are:

- **Democracy**: to consolidate the participating states’ common values and help in building fully democratic civil societies based on the rule of law and principles of “good governance”
- **Peace**: to prevent local conflicts, restore stability, seek to resolve “frozen conflicts,” and bring peace to war-torn areas
- **Security**: to overcome real and perceived security deficits and to avoid the creation of new political, economic, or social divisions by promoting a cooperative system of security

New activities

Despite stalemate on some of the larger political issues, the OSCE continues with “business as usual” on a large number of activities that seldom grab headlines, but which make a significant cumulative contribution to improved security throughout the region. These new activities help in the following ways:

- Nineteen field missions that continue to monitor ongoing events and to assist in a wide range of conflict management tasks on the ground.
- The Action Against Terrorism Unit, which continues to assist participating states to improve their capacity to respond to the threat of terrorism.
- The Strategic Special Police Matters Units engages in training of police forces in improved police work within a democratic context that respects human rights.
- The Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings assists states in preventing trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, across state borders to serve as sex slaves, forced labor, or other servile roles.
- The Forum for Security Cooperation is expanding assistance to states in monitoring and
reducing the flow of small arms and light weapons across state borders and in
decommissioning arms within their own territories.

**OSCE institutional challenges**

In recent years, the OSCE has lost momentum built up after the end of the cold war, causing it to reevaluate its role in regional security. There are several major causes of this crisis:

- Russia has grown suspicious of the OSCE, which it sees as focusing too much on intervention in states “east of Vienna” while ignoring problems in states “west of Vienna;” it also asserts that focus has become “unbalanced” in favor of human dimension and democratization activities to the neglect of security, economic, and environmental functions contained in the first two baskets of the Helsinki Final Act.
- The United States has shifted much of its foreign policy attention to Southwest Asia and the Middle East and has reduced its presence in the Balkans and other areas of concern to the OSCE, leading to a lowering of U.S. foreign policy attention in this region.
- The European Union has enlarged and now includes over half the OSCE participating states, and has developed independent security institutions that potentially compete with those of the OSCE.

**Consequences**

The crisis that has affected the OSCE has had several significant consequences for the operation of the OSCE:

- Consensus has been increasingly difficult to achieve, and every Ministerial Meeting from 2002 to 2009 failed to adopt a consensus communiqué.
- There has been conflict over the budget, and it is now common for budgets to be adopted well into the fiscal year.
- Several key OSCE missions have been closed in locations such as Estonia, Latvia, Chechnya and Georgia; and the mandates for other missions have been watered down, as in Belarus and Uzbekistan.
- ODIHR (Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) has been placed under great pressure to make its election monitoring more “objective,” to expand its activities “West of Vienna,” and to avoid issuing reports that are likely to influence the outcome of domestic electoral processes in countries where it monitors, largely as a reaction to its perceived central role in the “Rose Revolution” in Georgia and the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine that created substantial concern in Russia, Belarus, and several other former Soviet states.
- ODIHR opted to cancel its observation of the 2007 Duma and 2008 presidential elections in Russia rather than accept what it termed unprecedented restrictions on its mission, including limits on the number of observers it could deploy and the duration of their stay in Russia.
OSCE responses
In 2005, the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dmitrij Rupel, commissioned a report by “eminent persons” to evaluate the structure and function of the OSCE. This report was presented at the Ljubljana (Slovenia) Ministerial meeting in 2005. See http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2005/06/15432_en.pdf.

There was also an unofficial report of a group of “experts” that was created in parallel and which reported to the 30th anniversary conference in Helsinki in 2005, which was more concrete in its recommendations than the eminent persons report. See http://www.core-hamburg.de/documents/CORE_Working_Paper_13.pdf. Although some of its recommendations were adopted at the Brussels Ministerial in 2006, little has been done to carry out any of them. However, modest progress has been made in several specific areas:

- A new scale of contributions was adopted that slightly reduced Russian contributions, while slightly increasing those of the U.S., thereby resolving the budgetary crisis for the short term.

- The OSCE Chair-in-Office has adopted the practice of presenting documents representing the consensus of “most delegations” at annual ministerial meetings, thereby avoiding objections from Russia and a few other participating states.

- ODIHR has increased its election-monitoring activities in Western Europe and North America, while resisting efforts to place political restrictions on its freedom of action in carrying out its mandate wherever it observes or assists in the elections process. This included ODIHR’s monitoring of the 2008 presidential election in the United States, a process that overall was found to meet high standards for democratic elections.
CHAPTER 4

Other relevant multilateral organizations

There are several international and regional organizations working in the field of European security, many established during the Cold War to deal with the security and political realities and threats that existed at that time. Some overlap, at least in part, with the OSCE in participation and functions.

It is important to understand what functions can best be performed by the OSCE and its field operations, what can be accomplished only (or more efficiently) by others, and how the OSCE and other institutions may coordinate their work to achieve common objectives.

Other organizations in the European area that are most relevant in the security field are:

- United Nations (UN)
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- European Union (EU)
- Council of Europe (CoE)
- Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
This chapter introduces you to other organizations that are similar to the OSCE. By the end of this chapter, you should be able to describe how the OSCE compares to other organizations. For more detailed information, please refer to the OSCE website.
United Nations

The United Nations (UN) was founded in 1945 at the end of World War II as a universal international organization, open to membership for all states within the international system. Unlike the OSCE, the UN is a legally binding organization—all states that sign its Charter are obligated to fulfill the commitments contained therein.

Members

The UN includes all of the participating states in the OSCE except the Holy See (Vatican City).

Chapter VI

Chapter VI of the UN Charter deals with the “pacific settlement of disputes,” and calls upon all states to pursue peaceful means such as negotiation and conciliation to resolve any dispute that might endanger international peace and security.

Although the Charter gives primacy to the Security Council to deal with such disputes, it also acknowledges that under certain conditions conflicts may be submitted to the International Court of Justices or to the General Assembly for resolution.

Chapter VII

Chapter VII of the UN Charter on “action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression” deals with overt situations where violent conflict appears imminent or has already broken out. Responsibility for Chapter VII activities is lodged primarily with the Security Council, which may apply sanctions against violators or authorize the use of
force by some or all members of the United Nations to enforce security collectively within the international system.

**Chapter VIII**

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter explicitly recognizes the role of regional arrangements for dealing with peace and security. In Article 52 it specifically requires member states to “make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council.” However, enforcement actions undertaken under regional arrangements generally require authorization from the Security Council.

Since 1995, the OSCE has been recognized as a regional security institution under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, and thereby it has also accepted an obligation to keep the Security Council informed of activities that it undertakes or even contemplates undertaking for the maintenance of international peace and security.

**UN role in security**

The UN role in the security field has also grown considerably beyond the level of activity contemplated in 1945 when the Charter was adopted. Perhaps most important has been the development of UN “peacekeeping” operations, falling between pacific settlement of disputes and actual engagement of military forces in a full-scale collective security mission.

Originally these operations consisted largely of the interposition of UN “blue berets” between combatants after a cease-fire had been agreed upon, intended largely to prevent a resumption of direct hostilities. Since the end of the Cold War, however, UN operations have also entered into “peace-making” and “peace enforcement” in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, as well as providing military assistance for complex humanitarian emergencies. These latter missions may place UN forces in situations where they may have to engage in combat operations rather than police lines of division between parties that have previously agreed to a cease-fire.

**Preventive diplomacy**

Preventive diplomacy has been identified as a principal area of activity for the UN Secretary General and his staff of special emissaries, thereby giving the UN a special role in the same domain where the OSCE is also active.

This conflict prevention function has generally been performed by senior UN officials based in New York or Geneva rather than by missions permanently stationed in the field, as has generally been the case for OSCE activity on conflict prevention. Of course, a number of UN agencies such as the UN High Commission for Refugees and the UN Development Program maintain offices in many countries throughout the world and often play an indirect, and at times even a direct role in conflict prevention. In some specific cases, the UN and the OSCE have worked together to prevent the re-ignition of violence in post-conflict situations. An example is when the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo serves under the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

**Other UN agencies**

In addition to the Security Council, there are a number of other UN agencies and programs that
work in the peace and security field, and some of these frequently overlap with the areas normally covered by the OSCE.

- UN Secretary General's “Good Offices”
- International Court of Justice
- UN Commission on Human Rights
- Election Assistance Unit
- UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**OSCE overlap with UN**

Many of the functions that have been created in the OSCE, especially since 1990, overlap and even duplicate functions of the United Nations. This naturally raises the question about when states will turn to the UN versus those occasions when they should utilize the OSCE to deal with particular threats to international peace and security.

One key determinant in states’ consideration is their influence in the organization under consideration and the likelihood of using it to achieve their goals. There is also the view that efforts to deal with threats to peace should originate at the regional level before coming to the UN, while efforts to take enforcement action should generally be launched with specific authorization by the UN Security Council.

In general the OSCE participating states have sought to obtain UN authorization for their major activities. At the same time, states have found that the OSCE can play a useful role by relieving an overburdened UN from having to assume too many responsibilities for peace maintenance in Europe, allowing it to concentrate on other global regions.
The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949, in the early years of the Cold War, as a collective defense institution, as defined in Article 51 of the UN Charter. The essence of the NATO Treaty is found in Article 5, which declares that an attack against any member of the alliance shall be considered an attack against them all, and that they may then decide to take collective action, including the use of force, in their defense against the act of aggression.

Cold War strategy
NATO’s strategy and tactics were geared to the assumption that a European conflict would involve a threat, or actual military attack, by the Soviet bloc upon one or more members of the alliance.

Post Cold War changes
With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, NATO remained after 1991 the only significant multilateral military organization in Europe. Since then, NATO has reconfigured itself to meet the demands of the new security situation in Europe.

NATO’s major transformation has been visible in the following areas:

- Partnership-for-peace (PfP)
- Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)
- Peacekeeping and peace enforcement
• Expansion to 28 members, including former Warsaw Pact members
• NATO – Russia Council

Current strengths
NATO has used PfP and the EAPC to assist transformations in the former communist states, and has included contingents from them alongside NATO forces in peacekeeping and enforcement roles in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Overlap with OSCE
With the entry of Albania and Croatia into NATO on April 1, 2009, NATO has 28 member states, which are also participating states in the OSCE. Therefore, half of the OSCE participating States are also NATO members. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has also been invited to join NATO after a solution is found to a dispute with Greece over its name. Moreover, 49 countries, all OSCE participating states, participate in NATO’s North Atlantic Partnership Council, embracing a wide range of cooperative activities between NATO’s full members and other states in the region.

NATO’s major functions do not overlap with the OSCE’s. NATO is a defensive organization with significant military capability. The OSCE has no military forces of its own except those that can be made available by participating states or military organizations in which they participate, such as NATO and to a far lesser degree, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

When matters go beyond preventive diplomacy, peaceful resolution of disputes, and cooperative security, it will be necessary to call for military forces with capability such as those provided by NATO. The fact, however, that NATO is both a military organization and one that excludes certain key states (such as Russia) from its central decision-making institutions means that many political functions in enhancing security and cooperation cannot be performed by NATO, at least not as easily as they can be performed by the OSCE. At the same time, Russia does have a special consultative relationship with NATO, defined in the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security. In 2002, in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S., this relationship was further institutionalized through creation of the NATO-Russia Council.

NATO relations with Russia have become strained in recent years in part due to plans to include former Soviet republics bordering Russia, and the Bush Administration’s decision to deploy components of a new missile defense program in Poland and the Czech Republic. The decision taken by the Obama administration in September 2009 to substantially modify the missile defense program was met with a positive response from Russia, and it led to new initiatives by NATO to enhance cooperation between NATO and Russia in defending against a potential threat from Iran.

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Missions like the recent one in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) represent a model for institutional cooperation that may be emulated elsewhere. NATO took the lead in bringing the war to an end in 1995. The OSCE, along with the High Representative of the international community (effectively...
of the European Union), then assumed a lead role in virtually all political and arms control measures, while NATO held responsibility for peace enforcement.

NATO’s military forces are best used for military missions, rather than to run elections, promote human rights, assure freedom of the media, assist in the repatriation of refugees, or engage in many of the other activities eventually undertaken by the OSCE Mission in BiH. The OSCE presence, therefore, served a useful division of labor and contributes to improvement in the political conditions that necessitated IFOR (Intervention Force)/SFOR (Stabilization Force) deployment in the first place. At the same time, given the tensions and insecurity that existed in BiH after the war, it would have been impossible for unarmed OSCE mission officers to fulfill their mandate without the security provided by IFOR/SFOR troops.

The joint missions in BiH illustrate effectively the principle that peace and security can be built best when institutions each specialize in doing what they can do most effectively, dividing the labor among themselves, and cooperating to assure that all essential tasks are fulfilled with a minimum of overlap and duplication of effort.

NATO turned its peacekeeping mission in BiH over to the European Union’s EUFOR in December 2004, leading to the withdrawal of virtually all U.S. troops stationed in BiH since 1995. NATO continues to maintain a presence in BiH through a Military Liaison and Advisory Mission (NATO HQ Sarajevo) to assist with defense reform.
European Union

Another contender for a role in European security is the European Union (EU). The major attraction of the EU is based on its significant success at promoting economic integration and prosperity in Europe.

With 27 members, the EU includes almost half of the participating states of the OSCE. Three more states that also participate in the OSCE are listed as candidates for EU membership, namely Croatia, Montenegro and Turkey. Since the EU tends to vote together as a bloc in the OSCE, it has become a formidable factor in OSCE decision-making.

Common foreign and security policy

The European Union agreed on a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with the 1991 Maastricht Treaty.

In the early 1990’s, the CFSP tended to consist more of common rhetoric and procedural actions than substance. Its limitations were perhaps best shown by its ineffective response to the crises in the former Yugoslavia after 1991, especially in Bosnia. Cooperation tended to be limited mostly to the adoption of joint positions on international issues. Within the OSCE, the EU generally made joint statements and adopted common positions on issues addressed by the Permanent Council as well as Ministerial and Summit Conferences.

However, in 1999 the EU began to give substantive content to the CFSP and to the creation of what is referred to as the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI).

In 1999, the EU created a “High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy” to
present itself more visibly and effectively on the world stage. Javier Solana, a former NATO Secretary General and Spanish Foreign Minister, currently holds the position.

Limitations
The EU has been limited in its ability to take a leading role in providing security for Europe in the post-Cold War period.

- It is primarily an economic organization, although it is clearly seeking to add security functions as well.
- Its military capabilities and ability to project force outside its members’ borders have been limited.
- In contrast to the OSCE, neither Russia nor the U.S. are members.

Effective function
The EU is especially effective when it focuses the dynamism of its economic integration, which serves as a magnet to all of the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

It is often essential for the OSCE to seek assistance from the EU, and other related financial institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, when confronting conflict situations that require a substantial influx of development assistance in order to alleviate some of the economic and social conditions that provided the environment for violent conflict to develop in the first place.

The EU has often worked alongside the OSCE on such important activities as election monitoring and post-conflict reconstruction activities, such as those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia.

Support for OSCE
OSCE missions may also call upon the support of the EU when dealing with candidate countries seeking EU membership, several of which have had OSCE missions stationed on their territory. For example, the Estonian and Latvian efforts to meet the criteria for being placed high in the priority list for EU expansion probably encouraged their governments to cooperate more actively than they might otherwise have with OSCE demands regarding the treatment of their large minority of ethnic Russians.

Monitoring and peacekeeping missions
In The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), EC/EU Monitor Missions operated alongside NATO peacekeepers and OSCE missions (and alongside the UN force UNPROFOR/UNPREDEP during 1993-99) with related mandates. The EU police mission Proxima also operated in Macedonia from 2003 to 2005, and was followed by an EU Police Advisory Team (EUPAT).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina a somewhat complicated structure was established to implement the non-military provisions of the 1995 Dayton Agreement.
An EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) was established to assist Moldova and Ukraine in controlling their border in 2005. It currently has about 100 EU police personnel.

The EU has deployed a 200-person civilian monitoring mission (EUMM) in Georgia to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreements. It is also tasked with monitoring the stabilization and normalization of the situation in the areas affected by the war, the deployment of Georgian police forces, and compliance with human rights and rule of law. Although its EU mandate provides for it to operate throughout Georgia, Russian military forces and secessionist authorities in South Ossetia and Abkhazia have rejected their entry into these areas.

**EULEX**

The EU launched its largest civilian mission ever with the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) on February 16, 2008. The Mission’s mandate is a follow-on to the international presence in Kosovo contained in UN Security Council Resolution 1244, although this view is not accepted by Serbia or Russia. It effectively began its work, and thereby replacing the UN Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for the most part, on December 9, 2008.

EULEX includes police, justice and customs components. It has certain executive responsibilities, and also carries out its mandate through monitoring, mentoring and advising. EULEX’s planned size is 1,900 EU staff and 1,100 local employees. It is co-located with Kosovo counterparts throughout Kosovo.

The new EU role in Kosovo is a work in progress. EULEX is seeking to define its role, authority, and responsibilities as others do the same: the new Kosovo state, the Serb de facto authorities in north Kosovo and the enclaves (supported by Belgrade), as well as other international actors in Kosovo (like KFOR and OSCE), and what remains of UNMIK.

EULEX also works under the authority of the International Civilian Office, which became the primary international party in Kosovo following its declaration of independence in 2008; the ICO is headed by Pieter Feith as the European Union Special Representative in Kosovo and the International Civilian Representative. The ICO was originally intended to replace UNMIK altogether, but the transition has not taken place, given that Serbia and others have refused to accept this change.
Council of Europe

The Council of Europe (CoE) has also become an important actor regarding the human dimension of security. Established in 1949, the Council of Europe drafted the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, and created the European Court of Human Rights in 1959 at Strasbourg. Its statutes require that its members “must accept the principles of the rule of law and of the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

It has also taken a leading role in promoting European cooperation in culture, education, environment, parliamentary democracy, and social policy. It has thus focused almost entirely on the human dimension as an essential component of security.

Members

The Council of Europe consists of 47 states, including 22 former communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe, all of which are also OSCE participating states. Membership in the Council of Europe is effectively, though not formally, a prerequisite for candidacy for entry into the European Union. Neither the U.S. nor Canada is eligible for membership, largely because the Council has defined its geographic scope more narrowly than the OSCE, although both hold observer status. One other OSCE participating state, Belarus, has also applied for membership.

The Council operates primarily by setting up strict criteria for membership prior to the admission of new member states. In contrast, the OSCE requires states to affirm their intent to live up to a series of commitments contained in the cumulative set of OSCE documents and monitors their performance in fulfilling those commitments after they have become participants.
The Council of Europe requires its current members to certify that candidates meet the following criteria before they can be qualified for participation:

- Their institutions and legal system must provide for the basic principles of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights
- Their government must include a parliament chosen by free and fair elections with universal suffrage
- They must guarantee free expression including a free press
- They must have provisions for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities
- They must demonstrate a track record of observance of international law

Responsibilities
A Summit meeting of Council of Europe leaders in Vienna in 1993 added a new set of responsibilities, calling for its members to combat racism, intolerance, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism, while also promoting the adoption of confidence-building measures to avert ethnic conflict, mostly in the new member states to the East.

Influence
States that fail to fulfill the membership obligations may be suspended. For example, Russia’s membership was suspended in 1995 due to the behavior of its armed forces in Chechnya. Other countries that continue to maintain a death penalty as part of their penal code have also been denied membership, since the Council of Europe considers the death penalty to represent a violation of fundamental human rights. However, as a general matter of practice, once accepted into membership there are no sanctions for violations of these CoE principles other than suspension.

Furthermore, unlike the OSCE, once a state is admitted into membership, there are no permanent missions stationed on its territory. Therefore, CoE monitoring of its members is quite minimal.

Techniques
The Council of Europe fulfills its role in conflict prevention and the promotion of democracy using techniques similar to those of the OSCE, but always by sending in experts from outside the country. As requested, staff from a relevant Council section in Strasbourg may be sent in to set up seminars, to offer expert advice, and to run training courses. It is these staff members who interact most frequently with OSCE mission members who are already in country.

Cooperation with OSCE
The OSCE and the Council of Europe co-operate in the four priority areas of fighting terrorism, combating human trafficking, promoting tolerance and non-discrimination as well as respect for the rights of national minorities. Other fields of co-operation include election observation, legislation reform, Roma and Sinti issues, human rights, democratization and local government.
By defining its primary mission as encouraging good governance as a long-term mechanism for conflict prevention, the Council of Europe has carved out for itself a role that overlaps with that of the OSCE in many important areas. Close coordination between OSCE and CoE missions is essential in those countries where the two operate side-by-side.

The OSCE differs from the CoE in having:

- a broader mandate in conflict prevention and resolution
- a broader base defined by geography, not political system
- continuous, long-term presence through its missions
- decisions that are politically rather than legally binding

**Central Asia**

The OSCE also has a special role to play in the five countries of Central Asia that fall outside the geographical territory covered by CoE, while also falling short of the entry criteria in any case.
Commonwealth of Independent States

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine in 1991 following dissolution of the Soviet Union. Its membership includes 11 of the original 15 independent states that emerged following the dissolution of the Soviet Union:

- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Moldova
- Russia
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan

The CIS was conceived as a successor to the USSR in coordinating foreign and economic policies of its member states. Its headquarters are located in Minsk, the capital city of Belarus, and Sergei Lebedev has been chairman of its Executive Committee since 2007. Two of the 11 members, Ukraine and Turkmenistan, signed the CIS charter in 1991, but they have not ratified the document, thereby effectively staying outside of the CIS.

Georgia withdrew from membership in 2008, following the war with Russia. The Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) chose not to join.
The receptivity of members to integration or even coordination with Russia has varied widely. The CIS formed a collective security treaty, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, signed in Tashkent in 1992 by Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, with Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Georgia signing the following year. However, when the treaty came up for renewal in 1999, only six states remained with Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan withdrawing. Moldova, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine never signed the Tashkent Treaty and have refused to participate in its activities.

Operations

Some CIS forces have supplemented Russian troops along the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Elsewhere in the region CIS peacekeeping operations have been composed almost exclusively of Russian forces. The CIS also includes non-security groups, such as the Eurasian Economic Community.

The CIS created an election observation mission in 2002, which has often reached diametrically opposed conclusions to those reached by ODIHR concerning elections in post-Soviet states.
Conclusion

The OSCE has several potential points of “comparative advantage” relative to other organizations, largely because it is the only pan-European institution dealing with comprehensive security. This provides it with certain advantages as part of a European security “architecture.”

**OSCE is unique**

No other institution has:

- Universal participation of all of the states in the region
- Linkages between human dimension and political-military foundations of security
- Such a broad and extensive mandate to work in conflict management at the regional level
- Capacity to engage in these activities on a scope comparable to that of the OSCE

**Multiple organizations for security**

The thick web of security organizations that has evolved since 1990 has not resulted in reliance on a single, dominant institution in Europe. What has emerged is a network of overlapping institutions and a political process in which states rely on different organizations for different purposes, as each seeks to build its vision of a more solid structure for security within the broad European/Transatlantic area.

**Important functions**

The interconnected areas of preventive diplomacy, conflict mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction, resolution, and reconciliation constitute the important functions that the OSCE can handle effectively. All require efforts to redress grievances that have given rise to violence, as well as to alleviate the structural conditions that make it more likely that conflicts of interest will assume violent forms.

**Vital role**

Peace and security conditions cannot be fulfilled by the OSCE acting alone, in isolation from other international institutions and non-governmental organizations working on the scene. But the OSCE has a key role to play in these areas, and has the capability to do so.