Module 2

OSCE Field Operations

By the end of this module participants will be able to:

• What are the focus areas of Field Operations (FOs)?
• Explain how the OSCE Field Operations are managed.
• Identify techniques used by the OSCE to avert the outbreak of violent conflict through the Field Operations.
• Identify techniques used by the OSCE in post-conflict security building through the FOs.
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CHAPTER 1

Overview

The OSCE is the world’s largest regional security organization. Over half of its resources are deployed in its field operations in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia. The network of field operations (FOs) are the OSCE’s effective on the ground method for addressing the entire conflict cycle. Each FO is unique, with varying mandates, sizes, and activities, doing the practical work, a mixture of assistance and project work with political follow-up through monitoring and reporting, illustrating the flexibility of this tool.
Field operations

OSCE field operations developed out of the need to address the intra-state and inter-state conflicts that have occurred since the 1990s. The primary focus of the first missions were potential and/or actual conflicts between 1992 and 1999 in the wake of the breakup of the 15 union republics of the USSR, and the six states that composed federal Yugoslavia.

History

The formation of newly independent states was accompanied by violent conflicts in some formerly autonomous regions within them, which resisted integration with the central governments: in Chechnya in the Russian Federation, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Transdniestria in Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, and Kosovo in 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 Albania, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia in the former Yugoslavia, and Tajikistan.

Between 2001 and 2007, overt violence in the OSCE region seemed to have subsided, but this was broken by a short but intense war in 2008 between Georgia and Russia, and then in 2014 the annexation of Crimea by Russia, and then a sharp turn came with the conflict in and around Ukraine. Questions about the OSCE's effectiveness in using political commitments rather than armed forces to preserve security in the OSCE area have emerged in connection with its inability to prevent or contain the conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine, in the case when one of its participating States such as Russia has used force to advance its interests.

On the other hand, it is likely that the mere presence of the OSCE, especially the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (SMM), which has observed and reported on ceasefire violations committed by all parties to the conflict since 2014, and has effectively contained the conflict, prevented its further escalation and minimized loss of life.

Generations of Field Operations

The function and focus of OSCE's field missions and operations has changed over time. The first two CSCE field missions were the CSCE Missions of Long Duration in Kosovo, Sandjak, and Vojvodina and the CSCE Spillover Mission to Skopje, which were deployed in September 1992. The first generation of missions were set up between 1992 and 1995 in response to crisis and tasked with preventing the escalation of open conflict (Chechnya, Georgia, Tajikistan), the outbreak of violent conflicts in unstable peace situations (Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine and Minsk), or to address protracted conflicts (PRCIO and Moldova). The second generation of missions were set up in Albania, BiH, Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro in the Balkans between 1995 to 2001 to address open conflicts, to address post-conflict security building, and were generally larger with a broader mandate. The third generation FOs were set up from 1995-2000 in Central Asia and Baku and Yerevan, and were smaller, and the latest, fourth generation FOs were established in 2014 and consist of the SMM and the Observer Mission at two checkpoints in the Russian Federation. Over time, several field operations have been closed, in other cases their mandates have been transformed, as the paradigm has in many cases shifted from missions to offices and centers.
Creation and extension of FOs

The creation of a field operation or the extension of its mandate requires that:

- Agreement and invitation from the host country concerned
- The mandate is tailor-made (to the extent possible) to the unique conditions and needs of the host country
- The mandate delivers on comprehensive security through the OSCE’s three-dimensional concept and encompasses one or more of the OSCE dimensions
- A mandate and budget are adopted by consensus by the Permanent Council

The OSCE’s Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) is responsible for planning the establishment, restructuring and closure of field operations (see more on CPC below).

Field operation mandates, the crucial foundation for their work, are determined through negotiations with the host government, consultations with States, and consensus by the Permanent Council. They may be withdrawn or closed by the host government. Mandates are open-ended or time limited. They are timebound and usually cover the calendar year—set for twelve months. Exceptions are the Mission in Kosovo, which is automatically extended on a monthly basis without a formal decision through a silence procedure, and through ad-hoc periods: the PCU, which has 6-month extensions, and the Border Observer Mission, which has a four-month mandate. The Open-ended mandates are the Centre in Ashgabat and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict (PRCio) dealt with by the Minsk Conference.

Size

The size of the FOs varies from around 20 to over a thousand staff. The largest field operation is the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine, followed by the Mission in Kosovo. More details can be found in the Survey of OSCE field operations.

Management

A Head of Field Operation (HoFO) is a position normally held by a senior diplomat seconded by a participating State (the exact title depends on the mandate). The post is at the Ambassador level. HoFOs are appointed by the Chair-in-Office (CiO) and report to the CiO (who negotiates with the host country) and the Permanent Council (PC) about their activities, since the FO mandate derives from the PC as OSCE engagements require consensual political support.

Heads of field operations and institutions meet once a year in Vienna in January, in a meeting known as the Annual Heads of Mission Meeting (AHOMM). These meetings provide an opportunity for heads of field operations, representatives of the Secretariat, the Chairmanship and institutions to take stock of OSCE activities in the field, share challenges and lessons learned, compare notes and experiences, and discuss individual, thematic and regional issues, and how to improve the effectiveness of FO work. There are also two regional HoFO meetings – one in Central Asia and one in South Eastern Europe.

HoFOs lead the OSCE field operations and are able to act flexibly, within their mandate and
budget, and to adapt to diverging priorities of pS and to changing conditions on the ground. Almost all FOs have a Deputy HoFO, who are also seconded by an OSCE pS and appointed by the CiO, who manage the day-to-day work of the FOs. They are usually responsible for coordinating the complex operating environment of the FOs, the departments, programmes, and operational work of the FO, and for providing strategic advice on the development, planning and implementation of policies, programs, administration and management, in accordance with the FO’s mandate and objectives. The Deputy also leads the FO in the absence of the HoFO.

The FOs also have a Chief of Fund Administration (CFA), who is a contracted staff member reporting to the SG and the Secretariat’s Department of Management and Finance (DMF). The CFA ensures that FO resources are used according to all OSCE rules and policies and aligned with the OSCE’s Performance Based Programme Budgeting (PBPR). In addition to the unified budget (UB), FOs receive extra-budgetary (ExB) contributions to carry out specific projects. As the OSCE is operating on zero-nominal growth, FOs are called upon to do more with less, and need to fundraise as they rely on ExB funding for many projects. Note that the SMM and the BMSC (as a flagship project) are ExB funded.

FO international staff are typically area/subject experts and diplomats seconded by their respective states, except for the CFA and security staff who are contracted. In addition, there are staff, citizens of the host country, who are not subject to the periods of service, and whose contracts can be extended indefinitely upon positive performance reviews. Staff include administrative, political and public affairs officers, as well as interpreters/translators, logistics/transport, security officers. The specialized functional staff varies in size and the roles performed according to the mandate of each particular FO.

The field operations work closely with the Conflict Prevention Center (CPC). CPC supports the FOs, provides them with advice on programmatic, policy, and management issues; and implements common operational and organizational practices. CPC provides mediation and dialogue facilitation, monitors political developments in the field and ensures the information flow between the FOs, the Secretariat and the OSCE Chairmanship.

The Forum for Security Co-operation Support Section (FSC)

The Forum for Security Co-operation Support Section includes the Communications Network Unit. It provides advice and practical support to FSC Chairmanships and helps OSCE participating States with implementing their commitments in the politico-military dimension through capacity-building, awareness-raising and technical assistance. The FSC Support Section also serves as the depository of all military information exchanges among the participating States.

The OSCE’s field operations in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia often co-operate with national governments and the FSC Support Section to conduct on-the-ground assistance in areas such as demining, the control of small arms, the safe management of ammunition depots, and strengthening chemical and biological security.

The Policy Support Service (PSS)

The PSS within the CPC is divided into four regional desks covering Central Asia, Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, and the South Caucasus. Each desk is staffed by a team of three Policy Support Officers which provide analysis and policy advice to the Secretary General, the
Chairmanship in leading all work on the conflict cycle and supporting the various negotiating formats dealing with regional conflicts. Additionally, each PSS regional desk team is responsible for receiving and processing all OSCE Field Office reports, oversight of monitoring, analyzing and reporting on developments in their area and the implementation of the mandates of designated field operations, assisting field operations in implementing policy guidance from the pS and the SG, facilitating the co-ordination of programmes and activities among field operations, the Secretariat and Institutions, organizing regular HoFO meetings in Vienna and in the region, and taking part in consultations with partner organizations on related issues.

The Programming and Evaluation Support Unit (PESU)

PESU is the primary point of contact for the CiO and pS’ delegations on programmatic and project management matters in relation to the Unified Budget (UB) process, as well as the Extra-budgetary contributions from pS. PESU is responsible for the Organization’s Results-Based Management framework and policy development, in line with recognized international standards. It advises the OSCE and field operations on implementation of programme and project management as well as Performance-Based Programme Budgeting (PBPB) in the field and by its institutions and Secretariat. Effective programme and project management requires efficient planning, proper implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The CPC defines and implements the OSCE’s management methodology/tools and builds the capacity of staff through training and coaching activities on strategic planning, programme management, project management. The PESU team is responsible for programmatic aspects related to donor relations, and the design as well as the evaluation of Extra-budgetary (ExB) projects. This role is designated by the OSCE’s Financial/Administrative Instruction #4 on Extra-Budgetary Contributions (FAI 4) and requires that all approved ExB projects meet certain criteria.

Additionally, the PESU team’s assessment process allows for shared accumulated experience among the field operations, institutions and the Secretariat. It also provides institutional memory, ensuring that records are kept, important lessons learned, and that knowledge is passed down through the Organization despite turnover of Secretariat and FO mission personnel.

The Operations Service (OS)

The Operations Service is broken out into four thematic units:

1. The Planning and Analysis team is tasked by the SG and pS as the CPC body responsible for planning and implementing OSCE field missions in line with requirements outlined by OSCE mission mandates agreed on by the Permanent Council. This includes operational logistics, creating standard operating procedures (SOPs) and all other operational requirements to meet the OSCE field mission mandate. It is also responsible for planning the establishment, restructuring and closures of field operations. It also identifies best practices and lessons for the improvement of field operations.

2. The Mediation Support Team provides support and advice to OSCE senior officials in its protracted regional conflict mediation efforts. Mediation is provided through a combination of instruments: CiO and his/her Special/Personal Representatives and
The OSCE’s field operations are key to the work of the organization, they promote regional stability and security by assisting host countries to put their OSCE commitments into practice and fostering local capacities through concrete projects that respond to their needs. Ministerial Decision No. 3/11 on elements of the conflict cycle, related to enhancing the OSCE’s capabilities in early warning, early action, dialogue facilitation and mediation support, and post-conflict rehabilitation was adopted in 2011 to strengthen OSCE capabilities in early warning, early action, dialogue facilitation, mediation support and post-conflict rehabilitation on an operational level. It also urges pS to implement the UN Security Resolution on Women, Peace and Security UNSCR 1325 by ensuring increased representation of women at all levels in conflict resolution and peace processes, for more sustainable peacebuilding.

The FOs are the OSCE’s primary tool for addressing elements of the entire conflict cycle, they help promote regional security and stability based on the OSCE’s comprehensive and co-operative approach to security. This OSCE approach to security is closely tied to the four stages of conflict regulation:

- early warning
- conflict prevention
- crisis management
• post-conflict rehabilitation

Field operations are flexible and can be nimble, can work where other international organizations (IOs) are slower to respond or stuck, they continue their focused work away from the political heat at the PC, and are witnesses, the eyes and ears on the ground. Every CIO has sought to address the most pressing issues from the protracted conflicts in the region.

Focus

The focus of OSCE field operations is on implementing all three dimensions of comprehensive security. OSCE FOs’ mandates vary, are tailor made, and their wide range of activities focus on aspects of OSCE’s three dimensions in keeping with the organization’s comprehensive approach to security.

FOs maintain their traditional focus on the conflict cycle, including conflict prevention and work with the CPC to support dialogue and co-operation and confidence-building measures (CBMs) to build trust between parties to conflicts.

Globalization has increased world-wide economic interaction and greater contact, but it has also facilitated environmental degradation, corruption, organized crime, as well as violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT) on a global scale.

In the first dimension FOs address transnational threats, which often come from non-state actors, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, arms control of the illegal arms trade, especially the spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW) - which kill more people every year than weapons of mass destruction.

OSCE field operations promote economic connectivity, trade, transport and good governance including anti-corruption, in economic and environmental activities in the second dimension, and to combat money laundering.

In the third dimension, the Human Dimension, the FOs focus on the promotion of democratic practices, on elections, strengthening the rule of law, justice reform, media freedom and development, work to uphold human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination, and to address hate crime.

FOs also work on cross-dimensional issues such as Cyber/Information Communication Technologies (ICT), to ensure gender mainstreaming, the inclusion of youth, democratization, migration, and to combat and prevent trafficking in human beings.

Project work

FOs support the capacity of the host countries through concrete projects that respond to citizens and their needs, to facilitate reforms and political processes, at the request of the host states. These include initiatives across all the OSCE dimensions to support community policing, promote tolerance and non-discrimination, minority rights, rule of law and legislative reform, press freedom, fight corruption and border management, as well as many other areas. Field operations partner with local and national agencies and institutions, civil society, as well as with other international organizations in order to coordinate efforts and mutually reinforce impact in areas of shared engagement. The OSCE builds networks of professionals to work more efficiently against
terrorism, smuggling of small arms and light weapons, and trafficking in human beings.

**Reporting**

Field operations keep the OSCE community informed though monitoring and reporting on a daily basis. Field operation reports include regular: Activity Reports—which may be daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or bi-monthly depending on the field operation, Spot Reports, Background or Thematic Reports, and Incident Reports. Reports from field operations are as a rule classified as “OSCE Restricted”, meaning that they are not for general distribution outside the OSCE. The capacity of FOs to provide analytical reports are vital for further planning. The FO reports are crucial to keep the OSCE informed about developments and are the principal method of conveying information from FOs to the CiO, delegations and the OSCE Secretariat.

HoFOs report to the Permanent Council as a rule once a year, apart from Kosovo and Moldova, who report twice a year. The Chief Monitor of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Chief Observer of the Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk report to the PC on an ‘as-needed basis’.

**Delicate position**

Field operations are in a delicate position in their efforts to promote cooperative security and manage interdependence in the country where they are working. FOs must ensure that their activities are carried out on the basis of a common agreement and mutual understanding. Over the past 10 years, increasingly States with field operations have associated the presence of FOs with stigma, as if their status as a State is unequal in an organization predicated on equality and consensus. FOs are always mindful of their mandate, and position situated between a host government and civil society, as well as the governments of pS/delegations in Vienna, where pS hold different positions on these issues and reflect them vocally in and outside of the PC. While human rights groups in a country may complain that the OSCE is not being sufficiently forceful in representing their grievances and pressing their demands, host governments may become irritated with the perceived involvement of OSCE FOs into what they consider to be the internal affairs of their own country.

The OSCE remains neutral and impartial as it establishes contact and dialogues with all sides of a conflict. The presence of OSCE field operations ensures that mediators are familiar with the situation on the ground as well as having possibilities to liaise with local actors. Owing to its quiet diplomacy that operates outside the limelight of international media, the OSCE is accepted, flexible, and particularly effective in situations that are deadlocked and politically sensitive.

OSCE officials and personnel, who must support OSCE commitments and principles to the fullest extent possible while respecting the sovereign rights of the host government, must carefully balance all of these demands. The perceived failure to do so may cause the state hosting the mission to deny the OSCE access or may cause other pS to oppose renewal of their mandates.

Since the renewal of mandates requires a consensus decision by all participating States, the failure to renew means that a mission must be closed down, even if its continued existence is supported by an overwhelming majority of participating States, and even the state in question. This is unfortunately what happened with some of the OSCE Missions in the South Caucasus.
Current operations

This section describes the current OSCE field operations divided by region. A summary of OSCE field operations and their respective mandates can be found in the links to each FO.

Central Asia

OSCE Centre in Ashgabat


The OSCE Centre in Ashgabat implements a number of activities across the OSCE’s three dimensions of security such as border management and transnational threats, good governance, environmental protection, gender equality and media freedom. The Centre works to promote CSBMs and ethical standards in law enforcement, to facilitate economic connectivity and sustainable water management, to support the Ombudsperson’s Office, and to promote the implementation of human rights commitments.

OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek


The Programme Office in Bishkek implements programmatic activities in accordance with its mandate and of reform priorities set out by the host country and in cooperation with partners from state institutions, international organizations and civil society. The Office focuses on countering terrorism and transnational threats, border management, implementation of justice and election reform, building open and resilient societies and developing the country’s regions, trade facilitation, as well as strengthening efforts to combat corruption at all levels. Initiatives to promote youth and gender equality in the host country are also supported.

OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe

The OSCE Mission to Tajikistan was established in June 1994 in accordance with Decision I.4 at the Rome Ministerial Council, 1 December 1993. With effect from 1 July 2017, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan was renamed the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe and the five Field Offices (in Khujand, Kurgan-Tyube, Garm, Kulyab and Shaartuz) were closed.

The OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe engages with the host country to support the implementation of projects focused on disaster risk reduction, practical support and awareness-raising to pave the way for Tajikistan’s ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and investing in the knowledge and skills of young people. The Office also focuses on increasing national ownership and regional cooperation throughout its work, with the inauguration of the Regional Explosive Hazards Training Centre in Dushanbe and regional, tailored training courses for law enforcement from all Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan

was set up in Almaty in March 2003. In the first half of 2007, the Centre moved to Astana, and the OSCE Centre in Astana was transformed into the OSCE Programme Office in Astana on 1 January 2015. It was renamed the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan after the change in the name of the capital of Kazakhstan on 20 March 2019.

The OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan promotes security in Kazakhstan and in Central Asia through its strong relationships and partnerships with institutions from government, civil society, academia, the private sector and the international community to promote security. It develops approaches with key partners in P/CVERLT and works to promote sustainable economic growth, the green economy and gender equality. It supports Kazakhstan’s efforts to help victims of human trafficking, to promote judicial and penitentiary reform and to prevent torture. The Office actively engages youth, media and academia in regional security dialogue.

**OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan**

The OSCE Centre in Tashkent was established by the Permanent Council, 14 December 2000, Journal No. 314, Agenda item 7, PC.DEC/397. After the establishment of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan on 1 July 2006, a new MoU was subsequently agreed upon between the Secretary General of the OSCE and Uzbekistan.

Since 2019, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan (PCUz) engages with the host country to support the implementation of its commitments in all three dimensions of comprehensive security. It continues to support the host country’s efforts to address transnational threats, promote transparency in governance, fight corruption, combat money laundering, improve labour migration policies, to combat trafficking in human beings and drugs, and to promote judicial and legal reforms.
Eastern Europe

**OSCE Mission to Moldova**

The Mission started to work in Chisinau on 25 April 1993 after it’s establishment at the 19th Meeting of Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), 4 February 1993, Journal No. 3, Annex 3.

The OSCE Mission to Moldova continues to facilitate the Transdniestrian settlement process in line with the principles endorsed by all OSCE participating States: the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova, with a special status for Transdniestria within Moldova’s internationally recognized borders. It supports Moldova’s efforts to fulfil its commitments to uphold human rights and to promote tolerance and inclusivity which are important confidence-building measures (CBMs) for the settlement process.

**OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine**

The Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine was established on 1 June 1999 in accordance with Permanent Council Decision No. 295, 1 June 1999, PC Journal No. 231 (PC.DEC/295).

The OSCE Project Co-ordinator’s work helps Ukraine to meet its OSCE commitments and undertakes joint efforts aimed at strengthening democracy, rule of law, human rights and security of the country’s people. In pursuit of those goals, the PCU continues to achieve practical results through projects implemented across all OSCE dimensions, including on e-governance, addressing gender-based violence, using technology for voter rights, supporting dialogue between the authorities and civil society, and strengthening prevention of chemical security risks.

**OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine**

In accordance with Permanent Council Decision No. 1117 of 21 March 2014, the advance teams started arriving in Kyiv on 22 March 2014.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine works to establish facts, gather information and report on the security situation throughout Ukraine, including monitoring in Eastern Ukraine as well as outside Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The SMM also monitors and supports respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and facilitates dialogue. It also works in mediation, gender mainstreaming and on public communication/outreach. The SMM aims to contribute to reducing tension and fostering peace, stability and security.

**OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk**

OSCE observers were deployed following the invitation of the Russian Federation to deploy observers to the two Russian border checkpoints of Donetsk and Gukovo, as announced in the Berlin Joint Declaration of 2 July 2014 and extended in the letter of 14 July 2014 by the Russian Foreign Minister to the OSCE CiO, in accordance with the Permanent Council Decision No. PC.DEC/1130, 24 July 2014.

The Observer Mission (OM) operates under the principles of impartiality and transparency and has ensured an uninterrupted presence at the two border-crossing points (BCPs) since the beginning of its mandate. As part of the OSCE’s overall efforts to foster stability and security in the region, the OM continues to represent a unique and reliable source of information on movements across the two BCPs. The OM continues to issue weekly updates and bi-lingual spot reports, which
inform the CiO, pS, and the OSCE Secretariat and institutions about movements across the two BCPs. 

**Southeastern Europe**

**OSCE Presence in Albania**

The OSCE Presence in Albania works with Albanian partners in support of justice and electoral reform, the rule of law and progress towards gender equality; to empower civil society and young people; to strengthen local self-governance, media freedom and the capacities of the parliament; to improve border management, counter violent extremism, as well as to fight corruption and trafficking in human beings.

**OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina**
The Mission in Sarajevo commenced working in October 1994 after the its establishment through the Permanent Committee, 2 June 1994, Journal No. 23.

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continues to play a vital role in enhancing BiH’s ability to foster a sustainable and stable security environment, to strengthen environmental governance and to encourage its consolidation as a democratic society governed by the rule of law. The Mission supports key reforms and worked to promote and protect the human rights of every citizen. It focuses also on elections, youth, quality and non-discriminatory education, promoting gender equality and responding to hate crimes.

**OSCE Mission in Kosovo**
The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) was established effective from 1 July 1999 in accordance with Permanent Council Decision No. 305, 1 July 1999.

The OMIK works closely with public institutions in promoting inter-community dialogue and community rights, addressing domestic violence and gender equality, as well as youth participation. The Mission enhances public safety and security, and supports gender equality in the police, in fighting corruption and VRELT, and in court monitoring. The Mission promotes the safety of journalists, facilitates election reform processes; and assists public universities in expanding media and information literacy teaching in the higher education system.

**OSCE Mission to Montenegro**
The Mission was established by Permanent Council Decision No. 732 of 29 June 2006.

The Mission continues to assist the host country in achieving its strategic national priorities: from technical assistance support to electoral reform, strengthening democratic institutions and promoting gender equality to building a free, resilient and professional media landscape and fostering security sector co-operation and reform, as well as regional youth co-operation with the Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO).

**OSCE Mission to Serbia**
The Mission works in partnership with Serbia’s institutions, media and civil society to foster their ownership over the country’s ambitious reforms. Its assistance helps to strengthen the rule of law and separation of powers, including through constitutional amendments on the judicial independence. The FO works to foster an accountable security sector and to combat organized crime, corruption and transnational threats. It helps to promote human rights, gender equality, and the integration of national minorities. In addition, it also helps to increase media freedom and improve ethics and professionalism, as well as on the inclusive development of the country’s new media strategy.

OSCE Mission to Skopje


The Mission to Skopje continues to support reforms pertinent to judicial independence, media freedom, community rights, democratization, police professionalization, strengthening Parliament and improving electoral processes. The Mission focuses on assisting further implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and provides early warning on security-related developments in the country.

South Caucasus

The Personal Representative of the CiO on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference

The CiO appointed a Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference as of 10 August 1995. The present Personal Representative (PR), Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk (Poland), was first appointed by the Chairperson-in-Office on 1 January 1997.

In accordance with a MoU with the Government of Georgia, an office in Tbilisi was established in order to facilitate the movements and activities of the PR and his/her field assistants. The field assistants are present on a rotating basis in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert/Khankendi (monitoring the NK line of contact from both sides). In addition to the Personal Representative, there are five internationally recruited and 11 locally recruited posts, totalling 17 posts. As its work is politically sensitive, it is very quiet.

Other field activities

The following list contains example of other OSCE activities or special projects. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

- OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners
- OSCE Bishkek Academy
- Border Management Staff College
- Armenia Cooperation Programme - a number of targeted OSCE ExB projects
- OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions
• **Election Observation** Missions, which may occur in all pS, regardless of whether they host an FO.

**U.S. Government contributions**

The U.S. government contributes to the OSCE current operations with two congressional earmarks:

- the Freedom Support Act, which covers the Former Soviet Union
- the Support to East European Democracy (SEED)

These determine funding levels to support secondee and election observers, and set the geographical limitations of where deploy them. For example, election observers thus may be deployed to Azerbaijan and Belarus, where the OSCE does not have FOs. However, the US does not support EOs where the EU is funding them.
CHAPTER 2

Conflict prevention

Field Operations facilitate OSCE efforts related to conflict/crisis prevention and early warning and action. FOs play a preventative role and contribute to early warning through:

- Primary prevention: before violence has broken out
- Secondary prevention: preventing expansion of the conflict
- Tertiary prevention: peace-building, to prevent recurrence of violence

Instruments and mechanisms include political dialogue, including through the personal and special representatives and envoys, the SG and D/CPC, the High Commissioner on National Minorities HCNM and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

OSCE field operations carry out their mandates 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 operations provide a place for:

- Individuals and groups to inform the OSCE staff of their grievances
- Regular contact with local civil society organizations (CSOs) depending on the mandate (see developing civil society section below)

OSCE contact with individuals, human rights activists, and CSOs helps to build up civil society—a necessary component of a democratic society. Local contact also helps to spread democratic values and information on human rights to governments and individuals.

- ODIHR implements a project to support Human Rights Defenders. When FOs host delegations they meet with the CSOs on the ground to hear from those people about their country’s compliance to OSCE commitments
- The FOs feed into the processes of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting HDIM and at the Parallel Civil Society Conference on the side of the annual OSCE Ministerial Conferences.
Government contact

OSCE field operations work with local governments to improve their comprehensive security across all three dimensions, as well as through cross dimensional activities. When concerns are identified, the OSCE FO will alert the relevant governmental unit about the problem and address the issues and seek immediate relief at that level.

OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK)’s work with municipal/government officials

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) works with municipal government officials to ensure sustainable funding for the shelters for victims of domestic violence. Shelters have been established in the region and were funded by three municipalities, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, and Skenderaj/Srbica. The shelters offer vital and specialized services to women and children who are victims of domestic abuse. When the Mission learned that the financial support due from the three municipalities to sustain the shelters had not been paid and the shelters were threatened with closure, the Mission held a series of successful meetings with the leaders of the municipalities, after which full payment was made for the shelters. Additionally, Mayors and municipal officials of the municipalities in Prishtinë/Priština, Prizren and Gjakovë/Đakovica were invited into discussions with the Mission in 2019 to define levels of funding that each could contribute to sustain their respective regional shelters.

In cooperation with the Office of the Language Commissioner, OMIK helped to establish an annual award in November 2019, for “Best Practices in Implementing the Law on Use of Languages”, to promote increased compliance with legal provisions on the use of languages. Government institutions eligible for the award are ministries, executive bodies, and agencies.

The participating institutions were assessed by the following criteria: 1) provision of services to the public in both official languages (Albanian, and Serbian), verbally and in writing; 2) ensuring that public communication (calls for proposals, tendering, press conferences, news releases, etc.) is conducted in both official languages, simultaneously and at equivalent quality; and 3) ensuring that all signs identifying offices or facilities are in both official languages. Three different government institutions won the award in 2019. In 2020, municipal level institutions will also be eligible to compete for the award. The award is a successful product of the strategic partnership between the Mission and the Office of the Language Commissioner.
Information and capacity building

OSCE field operations provide information and capacity building to government officials and civil society representatives. This is often achieved in the form of technical assistance and training on such topics as anti-corruption, border management, connectivity, climate change, electoral reform, human rights, rule of law, freedom of the media, hate crime, minorities’ rights, police practices in a democratic society, and VERLT.

Kosovo Albanian youth attend Serbian language classes organized by the OSCE Mission, Obiliq/Obilić, 26 June 2019. (OSCE/Besfort Oruci)

OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK)

The OMIK builds the capacity of law enforcement in the procedures forenforcing human rights principles. For example, the Mission continues to enhance the capacities of local law enforcement institutions in tackling hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents, following up on the Co-operation Agreement in Addressing Hate Crimes, signed in 2018 upon Mission facilitation. The Agreement was signed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Kosovo Police, the Chief Prosecutor’s Office, and the Kosovo Judicial Council, and entails measures aimed to enhance early identification and the adequate prosecution of hate and bias-motivated crimes. The Mission held round-table discussions where it facilitated discussions on the investigation of hate crimes for police and Police Inspectorate of Kosovo officers. A set of workshops were organized targeting police officers and prosecutors to discuss the recently amended Criminal Code and challenges in qualification of hate crimes. The Mission also printed and distributed pocket size cards with relevant information related to hate crime and bias indicators to assist the police in identifying such crimes in the field. The impact of these activities was demonstrated through effective police action on a bias-motivated crime in a municipality. A Kosovo Albanian suspect physically assaulted a five-year old Kosovo Ashkali girl, driven by his hatred toward beggars and this Ashkali community. The police responded to the case, detained the suspect, and identified the bias motive of the perpetrator, processing the case accordingly. Both the police officer and the prosecutor involved in the case had attended Mission training on hate crimes.
**Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan (PCUz)**

The PCUz has been building the relationship and providing technical assistance on women and supporting media in response to the Uzbek government’s requests. The PCUz has worked to support the government on strengthening its legislative framework and capacity to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings (CTHB). Over 2018-2020, such support included the organization of a conference on the role of the judiciary in combating trafficking in human beings, together with the Office of the Special Representative on CTHB; educational presentations on World Anti-trafficking Day, opened by Tanzila Narbaeva, the Chairperson of the Senate of Uzbekistan; study visits and training for government officials, prosecutors, law enforcement and civil society are organized by ODIHR and PCUz, as well as the NRM Inter-Agency Group and community governments (mahallas). Recommendations from an ODIHR assessment on strengthening the National Referral Mechanisms (NRMs) in the Republic of Uzbekistan were adopted by a Presidential Decree in 2019. This was followed by a focused on the implementation of the Presidential Decree and on draft anti-trafficking legislation, co-organized by the PCUz, ODIHR, the Uzbek National Anti-trafficking Commission and UNODC, as well as an ODIHR legislative review for a draft Anti-Trafficking Bill. The work resulted in an amended Anti-Trafficking law, which was signed by the Uzbek President and came into force in 2020.

**Programme Office in Dushanbe (POiD)**

The POiD works with Tajik government and civil society partners to build the capacity and resilience of communities in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism (VERLT), in line with the National Strategy. Law enforcement officers and representatives of the judiciary, youth, teachers and parents have improved their knowledge in areas such as countering the use of the internet for terrorist purposes, strengthening rule-of-law compliant criminal justice responses to terrorism, countering terrorism financing, and enhancing community resilience against violent extremism at the grassroots level.

These activities led to fruitful discussions on countering violent extremism and terrorism online while upholding fundamental freedoms and human rights and resulted in a set of actionable policy responses and recommendations that are expected to be considered and integrated in day-to-day operations at the executive level. The Office supported the first plenary session of a working group from the Office of the Prosecutor General on the development of a new national strategy on countering violent extremism and terrorism (2021-2025).
Economic and environmental governance

Corruption, poverty, and environmental degradation are often associated with conflict. The OSCE addresses the intersection of these economic and social ills to reduce the propensity for violence in society, forming the Economic and Environmental Dimension (EED), the second (2nd) Dimension of OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security.

Field operations cooperate closely with the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) to address the EED of the OSCE, and to assist at their request in the identification, monitoring and mitigation of risks to security and stability in the economic and environmental fields.

Most FOs have economic and/or environmental officers and oversee the implementation of EED project activities on the ground, providing assistance on:

- Economic Activities: Good Governance, Migration Governance, Transport and Connectivity.
- Environmental Activities: Climate Change and Security; Disaster Risk Reduction; Energy Security issues; Good Environmental Governance; Hazardous Waste Management; and in implementing the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative.

Water management

The OSCE’s Economic and Environmental Dimension has fulfilled an early warning mandate by enhancing water dialogue and exchange on transboundary Water Management work in Central Asia, and increasing capacity in the sustainable management of transboundary water resources. The second phase (2017-2021) of the Women, water management and conflict prevention in Central Asia project implemented in cooperation between the Gender Section, OCEEA and FOs in
Central Asia supports gender mainstreaming in water governance, sharing best practices in transboundary water management with a gender perspective, and improving young women’s professional capacities in water and environment management, including through regional training, the development of a manual on Gender Mainstreaming in Water Governance, and career development and conflict resolution in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Regulatory governance
The OSCE Project Office in Bishkek, played a key role in “Strengthening Regulatory Governance in the Kyrgyz Republic” through the project whose goal was to assist the Government in improving the competitiveness of the country, stimulate market-driven growth and reduce corruption by:

- simplifying and streamlining the legal framework regulating private economic activity, lessening the opportunities for corruption, and
- systematic regulatory review (SRR) through the application of improved Risk Impact Assessment (RIA) methodology and practical consultations to align its regulatory policies, practices, and procedures with international best practices.

The project, and all of its activities and sub-activities, revolved around the SRR, which entailed regulatory governance reform through a bottom-up review of the existing regulations and consisted of:

- a systematic review of all normative acts that impact upon private business, and identifying those that unduly impeded businesses by imposing excessive regulatory requirements
- the development of recommendations to rescind or amend such identified normative acts.

Upon request from the Kyrgyz Government the POiB experts assisted the relevant state bodies in the implementation of the recommendations on legal normative acts and administrative procedures approved by the Regulatory Reform Council, along with the development of new recommendations. Expert analysis indicates that the implementation of all four packages of recommendations allows for businesses to reduce administrative costs by around 20 million EUR or save 10,8 million hours annually.

The OSCE Presence in Albania supports the Albanian government’s good governance efforts. The Presence trains officials on issues such as conflict of interest and ethics and assists with legislative amendments and revisions to the government’s anti-corruption strategy and action plan. The Consolidated Action against Corruption in Albania project – Phase 2, aims to support the Albanian government to enhance the implementation of the country’s anti-corruption policy and legal framework and develop key stakeholders’ capacities to diagnose and prevent corruption. The Presence will promote corruption prevention and integrity measures by:

- following up on recommendations of the Inter-Sectorial Strategy against Corruption 2015–2020 and lobby for their endorsement in the new strategy, particularly by
advocating for a sectorial approach

- monitoring the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2019-2023

- supporting research of possible correlations between corrupt practices and gender discrimination. The Presence supports the authorities to strengthen the capacity and accountability of the Public Procurement System which has improved transparency through e-procurement.
Election Reform

Some OSCE field operations carry out elections-related activities, including reform of electoral codes, advising election commissions, training for election commission members, media and police, strengthening the participation of women in elections, as well as voter rights and education initiatives. They do not, however, take part in Election Observation Missions (EOMs) in their countries of operation. EOMs are organized by the ODIHR independently from field operations.

OSCE Mission to Montenegro

The OSCE Mission to Montenegro has strengthened the country’s election capacity and assists by supporting the State Election Commission and Municipal Election Commissions development of training programme for polling staff and in ensuring the accessibility of all voters as a key responsibility of the election commissions through State Election Commission and Association of Blind discussion on polling station accessibility to jointly identify polling stations that could be made accessible.

Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan (PCUz)

The PCUz coordinated the assistance of ODIHR and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe to support the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the Oliy Majlis in the drafting of a new Electoral Code for Uzbekistan. The new Electoral Code, approved by the Oliy Majlis in June 2019, replaced old legislation, which had been a recommendation of the Report of ODIHR’s Election Observation Mission for the 2016 Presidential Election.

With the new Code in place, the PCUz joined with the CEC to conduct a series of roundtables in various locations in Uzbekistan to introduce the new Electoral Code and allow ODIHR and Venice Commission experts to explain its implementation, and to improve current practices in election administration via familiarization with best practices in the field of democratization of electoral systems and election legislation within the OSCE region. This support, amongst others, in particular focused on developing and maintaining of the unified voters register and on providing technical support to the CEC in making its activities more transparent for the general public, as well as in building the capacity and improving the skills of the CEC staff members, to incorporate knowledge gained in their daily work.
Rule-of-law

Field operations work assist participating States in developing legal principles to strengthen the rule of law, including in close cooperation with ODIHR’s Rule of Law section.

Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

The Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has worked to support the justice sector in BiH as a part of its mandate derived from the Dayton agreement. The OSCE rule of law unit, as member to the consultative group to the Structured dialogue on justice, consultative group chaired by the EU, provided data and technical inputs to the EU on justice related issues and priorities. The three ministries of justice (Federation, Republika Srpska and State level) were assisted to negotiate a number of justice reforms which BiH had to fulfil to become an EU candidate country.

OSCE Mission to BiH rule of law unit supports the development of an independent justice system that upholds human rights. The Mission conducts trial monitoring, mostly focused on war crimes and other serious crimes, such as corruption, domestic violence, hate crimes, human trafficking and terrorism related offenses, monitoring at the state and entity level. The Mission has assisted monitoring of transferred cases from the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY), provided valuable inputs for the assessment of training needs and impact assessment afterwards, conducted tailored training for Court legal staff, judges, prosecutors, investigators and police academies, designed a dedicated investigative manual for war crimes investigation as well as specific training of the use of ICTY multimedia resources and valuable inputs to the supervisory body for the processing of war crimes; and issued a spot report titled “War Crimes Case Management at the Prosecutor’s Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, which raised public awareness about systemic problems hindering the processing of war crimes cases at the state level, and consequently denying victims justice.

Due to the BiH Mission’s work through advocacy and capacity-building, the Banja Luka District Court issued the country’s first judgment awarding a victim of human trafficking full compensation, and assisted with amendments to the anti-trafficking legislation, balancing subject matter jurisdiction among different levels. In addition, the Mission supports the judicial response to
Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Ambassador Kathleen Kavalec (l) and Milan Tegeltija, President of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC) of BiH (r) at the ceremony of the official handover of the War Crimes Map, a web-based application developed by the OSCE, to the Judicial Documentation Centre of the HJPC Secretariat; Sarajevo, 9 December 2019 (OSCE/Elma Kadic)

Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

In the spring of 2019, the PCUz coordinated the assistance of ODIHR and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe to support the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the Oliy Majlis in the drafting of a new Electoral Code for Uzbekistan. The new Electoral Code, approved by the Oliy Majlis in June 2019, replaced 23 pieces of old legislation. The replacement of the many old references to elections in old legislation had been a recommendation of the Report of ODIHR’s Election Observation Mission for the December 2016 Presidential Election.

With the new Code in place, the PCUz joined with the CEC to conduct a series of roundtable in various locations in Uzbekistan (June to August 2019) to introduce the new Electoral Code and allow ODIHR and Venice Commission experts to explain its implementation.
Early Warning

The OSCE’s working definition of the term ‘early warning’ as it applies to the OSCE is: Early warning is the collection, collation, analysis, assessment, and communication of information to appropriate policy makers, all with the purpose of facilitating a response to developments which, if not appropriately addressed in a timely and effective manner, are likely to lead to an inter-State and/or intra-State conflict or the escalation thereof. The internal OSCE Early Warning Guidelines were produced and circulated to delegations in 2012, and CPC has since produced a number of other internal reference documents that build on the guidelines.

Role of the OSCE

MC.DEC/03/11 tasks the OSCE Secretary General (SG) to provide early warning to PS by bringing to the PC’s attention any situation of emerging tensions or conflicts in the OSCE area, complementing the early warning functions already contained in the existing mandates of all relevant OSCE executive structures. In the event of an emerging high-level conflict situation, the SG sets up and chairs a Task Force consisting of representative of the CiO, all relevant Secretariat Units, relevant OSCE institutions and, if existing, the field operation in the affected country (or countries).

The OSCE Network of Early Warning Focal Points was created among OSCE’s executive structures, including the FOs, to ensure that a comprehensive, cross-dimensional and coordinated approach is taken towards the provision of early warning analysis and reporting. The CPC serves as the OSCE-wide early warning focal point, and the other structures contribute to early warning through their respective expertise: HCNM—Cross-dimensional expertise on national minority issues; ODIHR—on the human dimension; RFoM—on freedom of the media and protection of journalists; OCEEA—on the economic and environmental dimension; FOs—Country and cross-dimensional expertise (if present); TNT Expertise on transnational threats and challenges; Gender—Expertise on gender-sensitive early warning, etc.

Early warning requires the OSCE to collect and collate early warning information, to effectively analyze and assess this information, in order to separate the real dangers from false alarms before communicating the information according to standardized procedures. This work is crucial, as there is often a narrow window of opportunity to recognize the signals of a developing confrontation and to prevent escalation of a crisis. Thus, the timing of preventive diplomacy is critical, but often hard to gauge accurately.

When events on the ground appear to be heating up, the OSCE field operation may 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. The OSCE is forward looking, conducting field security training, crisis response simulations and trend analysis of changes over time, to prepare for and be able to respond to early warning of the outbreak of a crisis.

The OSCE response impending violence can take the form of quiet diplomacy, creation or revision of the 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. OSCE is ready to take early action through its operational framework for crisis response, including phased deployment of staff from the rapid deployment roster which it maintains.

While the OSCE can identify the signs of potential conflict, recommend action, respond quickly, and perform well due to its sustained presence on the ground, a key challenge is that early action to respond to early warning relies on the political will of participating States to attain the required consensus at the Permanent Council.

OSCE Mission to Skopje

The OSCE Mission to Skopje’s early warning work is one of the Mission’s distinctive and comparative advantages continues to be in monitoring security-related developments throughout the host country, with a main focus on political polarization at the municipal level. The Mission monitors all major protests and facilitates early action to address identified problems. In 2020, together with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Mission organized dialogue facilitation and mediation workshops for municipal councilors, municipal administrations, and mayors of municipalities. In addition, it monitored the sanctioning of violations of restrictions, movement, and assembly during the COVID-19 crisis, its impact on the economy and standards of living; effects of the pandemic and related measures on the postponement of the parliamentary elections; discrepancies between central and local levels in the management of the crisis; allegations of corruption and nepotism; and addressed the needs of smaller communities and women, completing a survey on local responses to the crisis from a gender perspective.

Ukraine: The SMM mandate was initially tailored around early warning (regarding the conflict in the Donbas). Then the monitoring in the East was (and is) largely organized around the implementation of the Minsk Agreement, which also gives OSCE an early warning mandate, including daily monitoring and reporting work.
CHAPTER 3

Conflict Resolution

One of the challenges facing the OSCE has been focused on conflict resolution and preventing renewed violence in “protracted conflicts.” Though the goal is to find peaceful solutions to them, still no long-term solutions have been found since 1992 for the conflicts: in the Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as in the Transdniestria region—all of which exist at present as international “black holes.” The absence of effective governance contributes to lawlessness, allowing illegal activity to take place in and across these regions, with outsiders unable to exert any influence.

The secessionist regions have achieved varying degrees of de facto independence; although formal independence has not been recognized by most other states in the international community—at least until Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent in late 2008 after its war with Georgia.

OSCE missions were established in the countries with protracted conflicts, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, although the mandate for the OSCE Missions in the Caucasus were terminated after the lack of full PC consensus on the annual renewal of the FOs in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia and were closed down. The primary responsibility of OSCE FOs in crisis areas has been to try to negotiate a resolution to these conflicts through some kind of political settlement of the status of these regions within the sovereign territory of the country in which they are located. To date the efforts have not yet been successful, while violence resumed in these areas, in 2008 with outbreak of fighting in Georgia in August 2008, with ongoing hostility in Nagorno-Karabakh, and conflict in Donetsk-Luhansk since 2014.

The OSCE remains impartial and neutral in working with the conflict resolution process, to be able
to dialogue, to talk to all sides, to establish contact. This diplomatic and sensitive approach to field work allows the OSCE FOs to be flexible and accepted by all parties to a given conflict.

Some field operations enable the OSCE to better address crises as and when they develop, and play a critical post-conflict role, helping to restore trust, reinforce confidence and security-building measures. This section describes some techniques used to prevent renewed violence and to try to find a lasting resolution of these conflicts and provides some examples of operations that focus on these areas.

Launch of the toolkit on inclusion of women and effective peace processes, Bratislava, December 2019 (OSCE)
Good offices and mediation

Mediation is one of the most effective means to prevent, manage and resolve conflict, both in terms of cost and results. In the OSCE, this entails process advice and capacity-building for OSCE actors involved in mediation processes and facilitated dialogues. The most frequent approach utilized by OSCE field missions has been to provide “good offices” to facilitate dialogue and other forms of third party intervention to assist parties to a dispute in reaching agreement. OSCE mission staff often serve as go-betweens or mediators between disputing parties.

The (MC.DEC 3/11) called for a systematic mediation-support capacity within the CPC, which is the OSCE-wide focal point for the development of mediation support, incorporating four elements: 1) training and capacity-building, 2) knowledge management and operational guidance, 3) outreach, networking, co-operation and co-ordination, as well as 4) operational support. The OSCE Mediation Reference Guide contributes to enhancing knowledge management and operational guidance related to OSCE mediation and dialogue facilitation activities. The OSCE has provided “good offices” and other forms of third-party intervention to assist parties to a dispute in reaching agreement. While only a few OSCE FOs act as mediators, most FOs may be engaged in some dialogue facilitation.

The Chief Negotiators from Moldova and Transdniestria - Cristina Lesnic and Vitaly Ignatiev - during a press briefing, 2018. (OSCE/Iurie Foca)

Mission to Moldova

The OSCE Mission to Moldova HoM and staff have served as mediators between the government of Moldova and the breakaway region of Transdniestria. Thanks to the OSCE’s mediation efforts the two sides were able to establish practical cooperation on a range of issues, such as vehicle registration and electricity production. The Mission remained heavily engaged in the settlement process on the ground through shuttle diplomacy by the Head of Mission, by supporting the meetings of the Chief Negotiators and by supporting the 13 expert working groups.

Within the framework of the Transdniestrian settlement process, the co-mediators of the Russian
Federation and Ukraine are closely co-operating with specialized international and joint Moldovan-Transdniestrian NGOs in carrying out track parallel processes with civil society, academic experts and community groups that feed into the formal negotiations. The international partners were particularly unified in their efforts to advance the settlement process during a period of political transition in Moldova. This is reflected in joint visits by the mediators and observers in the 5+2 format led by the Special Representative of the CiO, who continue their dialogue during 5+2 rounds of talks and at events on CBMs.

Thanks to the OSCE’s mediation efforts, the two sides were also able to establish practical cooperation on a range of issues, such as vehicle registration and electricity production. The Mission has also engaged the OSCE PA, of which the Moldova Team has facilitated several joint events for Moldovan and Transdniestrian parliamentarians.

**Special Monitoring Mission Ukraine (SMM)**

Another prominent example of OSCE Good Offices and Mediation is the SMM’s involvement in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), where the SMM Chief Monitor is the Co-ordinator of the Working Group on Security Issues aiming to achieve a full and comprehensive implementation of the Minsk provisions and ceasefire agreements between the pro-Russian separatists and Ukraine. The SMM mandate includes references to dialogue facilitation, and facilitation of local ceasefires in eastern Ukraine. Press statements by the Special Representative of the CiO on Ukraine and in the TCG are issued by the OSCE CiO after regular meetings of the TCG. SMM teams play a crucial role in supporting local ceasefires/windows of silence between the Ukraine government and pro-Russian separatists in frontline areas which allow for the repair of utilities or evacuation of the sick and wounded. The SMM is the only international presence having access to both sides in the conflict, and it facilitates contacts between the government forces and the rebels. They also played a very important role in the aftermath of the downing of the MH 17 Malaysian airlines plane. Both sides had to be in agreement for the international community to get involved. It was SMM that ensured this agreement.

In August 2020, the Albanian CiO held a special PC to offer its good offices to facilitate dialogue in Belarus as a part of early action to address the confrontation after the August 2020 Presidential elections, and to prevent conflict.
Formal groups of states

Another approach to conflict resolution 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, such as the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) for Ukraine
- “Friends” of a particular country
- A formal group of states, such as the Minsk Group
- Participating as part of larger formats in the settlements of conflicts, such as the Geneva International Discussions on the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian–Ossetian conflicts

The OSCE Minsk Group

A pertinent example is the “Minsk Group” which was established after the collapse of the Soviet Union to address the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) conflict between the then newly independent states of Armenia and Azerbaijan. When both Armenia and Azerbaijan joined the CSCE in January 1992, the organization immediately addressed the conflict. In 1994 the CSCE created a group of eleven member states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, and Turkey, as well as the “troika” co-chairs, special envoys from France, Russia and the United States). The Minsk Group is one of the elements of the OSCE set up to deal with the conflict – the other ones are the Personal Representative of the CiO on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference whose office participates in monitoring exercises on the line of contact and the border, and the High Level Planning Group (HLPG).

The Minsk Group Co-Chairs ensure that channels of dialogue are open at the highest-level, providing mediation services and good offices, organizing fact-finding missions and developing settlement plans. They visit the region regularly to conduct high-level talks with the parties to the conflict and hold meetings with the OSCE CiO and the Minsk Group members to brief them on the process.

The Minsk Group holds on-going meetings and dialogue between its members to review the situation and regularly issues press releases on the current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Notably, during Covid restrictions and challenges, the Co-Chairs managed to ensure that ongoing high-level channels of dialogue and cooperation remained open and effective. After a breach of the ceasefire resulting in casualties in July 2020 on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, the Co-Chairs and PR CiO were able to directly contact Armenian and Azerbaijani officials for purposes of dialogue and mediation. Both sides have accused each other of initiating the fighting. The Minsk Group CoChairs condemned the ceasefire violations and called upon the sides to take all necessary measures to prevent any further escalation, including by use of the existing direct communication channels between them. They issued calls for continued peace and stability and for the return of OSCE Monitors to the region as soon as circumstances allow.
Morning mist over Stepanakert/Khankendi. @Nina Stössinger on Flick
Overseeing implementation of agreements

Where agreements have been reached, the OSCE may play a role in overseeing their implementation, especially through confidence and security building measures. The organization’s critical work to support implementation of agreements is based on the OSCE principle that all parties are accountable to one another and also with respect to their treatment of their own citizens. Work by FOs on the ground to promote trust between the different sides of the conflict, including affected communities and civil society organizations, can help make the implementation of agreements more sustainable.

OSCE Mission to Moldova

The OSCE Mission to Moldova has continued to lead the dialogue in the Transdniestrian Settlement Process. With a particular focus on conflict resolution and confidence-building, the Transdniestrian settlement process benefits from the strong support of the OSCE CiO. The Chief Negotiators from the Republic of Moldova and Transdniestria and their teams continue to work towards improving the lives of people on both banks and achieving a final settlement.

The Sides achieved notable progress in facilitating unimpeded travel by officials and consolidated the achievements, in particular with regard to the Berlin-plus package of confidence-building measures. These measures were jointly designed by the Sides and reflect the internationally agreed principles of the Transdniestrian settlement that define the Mission’s mandate.

The Mission organized workshops on human rights monitoring for ombudspersons’ representatives from both banks and confidence-building activities for legal and civil society professionals. These activities promoted better communication, co-operation and capacity-building for professionals on topics related to the thematic areas of the expert working groups, such as gender equality, obtaining civil status documents and combating human trafficking.

Citizens, communities and civil society participation can make important contributions to the peace process. As a result of FO’s support to implementation of the agreement, the Mission reported that the number of pupils enrolled in Moldova-administered Latin-script schools located in Transdniestria increased; students from the Transdniestrian university received apostilles on their diplomas, which enabled them to pursue studies abroad; jointly operated vehicle registration offices in Ribnita and Tiraspol enabled Transdniestrian vehicle owners to travel on international roads with Moldovan neutral-design license plates and Moldovan farmers from the Dubasari district reported tilling their lands and collecting harvests without any obstruction. The Mission also commissioned a technical assessment of the Gura Bicului–Bychok bridge, which is part of an international transport corridor, to estimate repair works necessary to bring the bridge to its initially designed capacity and to unlock economic potential. An OSCE Ministerial Council statement commended the commitment, leadership and political will of the two Sides, which led to the resolution of the above-mentioned long-standing issues affecting lives of people on both banks.
Thirty students from both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River practice their diplomacy skills at the 6th edition of the Model OSCE for Youth, Vadul-lui-Voda, Moldova, 29 September 2019. (OSCE/Iurie Foca)

**Ohrid Framework Agreement**

A key strategic priority of the OSCE Mission to Skopje is to support implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) on constructive inter-ethnic relations. A review of the role of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) in enhancing social cohesion was conducted, focusing on anti-discrimination, de-centralization, education, equitable representation, the use of languages and numerically smaller communities. By supporting the Local Youth Councils, the local branch of the Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO), working with national youth organizations, the Agency for Youth and Sport and civil society, the Mission works to foster social cohesion by bridging divisive trends in society and to foster social cohesion.

Ambassador Nina Suomalainen, addresses the discussions on OFA review process along with Deputy PM Musa Xhaferri and representative of European Institute of Peace Pieter Feith, Skopje, 2015. OSCE/Mirvete Islam
Crisis Response and Peace Operations

The OSCE may undertake crisis response and peace operations to oversee political agreements between disputing parties.

Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine

On 21 March 2014, the OSCE Permanent Council (PC) resolved to establish a Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), composed of several hundred monitors (female and male) from 44 participating States. The unarmed civilian monitors work to contribute, throughout the country and in co-operation with relevant OSCE executive structures and actors from the international community, to reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability, and security, and to monitoring and supporting the implementation of all OSCE principles and commitments.

Through PC.DEC/117, the PC tasked the SMM to: Report the facts as we observe and establish them in response to specific incidents and reports of incidents, including those concerning alleged violations of OSCE commitments and principles; Gather information and report on the security situation in the area of operation; Monitor and support for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of all persons belonging to national minorities; Establish contact with local, regional and national authorities, civil society, ethnic and religious groups and members of the local population; Report on the humanitarian situation and people’s needs, and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid of other organizations; Help to establish dialogue and local ceasefires; Report on any restrictions of the monitoring mission’s freedom of movement or other impediments to fulfilment of its mandate; Coordinate with and support the work of the OSCE executive structures, including the HCNM, ODIHR, RFoM, in full respect to their mandates, as well as with the CoE and the UN and other relevant international actors/organizations.

The Mission engages with authorities at all levels, as well as civil society, ethnic and religious groups and local communities to facilitate dialogue on the ground. The monitors also report on humanitarian situation, including referring individual needs of vulnerable civilians to the stakeholders that could be representatives of Government, IO and NGOs. Note that the OSCE does not provide humanitarian aid.

The monitors are tasked to observe, establish and report facts. The SMM monitors gather information and report on the security situation on a daily basis, for example on the number of ceasefire violations and explosions recorded. The monitors establish facts on the ground by visiting the places, conducting meetings and interviews with wide range of interlocutors on the ground. They report on the humanitarian situation and people’s needs. When needed SMM facilitates the delivery of humanitarian aid of other organizations. SMM also helps to establish dialogue and ceasefires (SMM monitors and reports and provides platform for dialog and liaison, especially in relation to ceasefire for vital infrastructure repair (gas or electricity damaged in shelling).

SMM reporting work

SMM publishes the SMM daily and weekly reports on the security situation and spot reports in response to specific incidents, as well as status reports that present a general overview of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), its main activities and latest news are on its website.
Example of a Daily report:

In the Donetsk region, between the evenings of 21 and 22 August, the SMM recorded 60 ceasefire violations. The majority of the ceasefire violations were recorded in an area south-south-east of Styla (non-government-controlled, 34km south of Donetsk). In the previous reporting period, the Mission did not record any ceasefire violations.

Gender

To enhance gender-mainstreaming, a Mission-wide responsibility, gender expert structure has been established. It includes a Gender Officer and Senior Gender Adviser reporting directly to the Chief Monitor. They take part in SMM senior management meetings and are therefore able to directly provide gender mainstreaming advice at the strategic and decision-making levels. In addition, a network of 13 SMM Gender Focal Points (GFPs) supports the Gender Office in different Monitoring Teams (MTs) throughout Ukraine. The OSCE published a report on Women on the Contact Line and issues Gender Thematic Reports.

The Mission has regularly conducted outreach events with a particular focus on gender equality, implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and combating human trafficking in the context of conflict. As an example: during the reporting period, the SMM hosted eight OSCE Cafés on either Women, Peace and Security or Ending Gender-Based Violence throughout Ukraine, in which an estimated total of 400 men and women participated. Such outreach activities, intensified during the global 16 Days Campaign to End Gender-Based Violence (25 November – 10 December) and International Women’s Day (8th of March), brought together different stakeholders, including representatives from the UN8 and NGOs, as well as government and law enforcement officials in order to facilitate dialogue on relevant issues and answer questions from the general public.
CHAPTER 4

Post-conflict Rehabilitation and Reconciliation

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 fragile. 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.

Among 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. The OSCE played a role in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation in Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia and Tajikistan. The OSCE also 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. This section describes some techniques used by field operations in post-conflict security building and provides some examples of field operations that focus on these areas.
Promote reconciliation

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.

OSCE Presence in Albania

The OSCE Presence in Albania facilitates regional youth reconciliation, in co-operation with the Municipality of Tirana and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), Promoting OSCE Values among Youth, and held the second edition of #YouthTrail2018 in Tirana, Albania. The Youth Trail is a learning, exchange and creative week in Tirana for young people from RYCO contracting parties (Western Balkan 6). The Youth Trail is part of a series of activities organized by the Presence in Albania to support regional connectivity among young people as a means of promoting peace and security in the region. Through interactive sessions, simulations and outdoor activities Youth Trail Participants explore activism, youth engagement, human rights, gender equality, fight against corruption, and countering violent extremism. The RYCO is an independently functioning institutional mechanism, founded by the Wester Balkans participants: Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region, through youth exchange programs.

OSCE Mission to Skopje

The Institute for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth in Skopje received a grant from the OSCE Skopje Mission’s Building Bridges programme to support work on the inclusion of youth with disabilities and the integration of students from different backgrounds. In June 2019, students from the Institute and its partner, the Rajko Zinzifov Primary School, told the OSCE CIO of their
positive experiences participating in activities with students from different ethnic backgrounds and students with disabilities. The Building Bridges Fund was established in response to the persisting trend of communal separation that is reinforced by education system fully separated along linguistic lines.
Democratization

Post-conflict security-building 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. ODIHR works with FOs to support OSCE’s in strengthening their judicial independence and accountability. ODIHR democratic governance work focuses on regional initiatives to promote parliamentary oversight (in co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly), strengthening networks for women leaders at the national and regional levels, engaging young leaders as academics and policymakers and publishing new Guidelines on Promoting the Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities. ODIHR also published Gender, Diversity and Justice.

Women’s participation

The OSCE PCUz, jointly with the Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, launched a series of roundtable discussions aiming at advancing women’s participation in political and public life. The roundtables ensured a focus on substantive aspects of women’s leadership and political participation. Female candidates from political parties are empowered with leadership skills and knowledge on international standards on women’s rights and gender equality. The PCUz established a platform for dialogue between female parliamentarians and police, as well as women’s organizations and launched a series of roundtable discussions on the role of women in preventing crime within their communities. The roundtables focused on the concept of community policing, the importance of civic-law enforcement partnership in preventing criminal activities, as well as on the existing international practices and promising experience of Uzbekistan in the re-integration of women returning from conflict zones.

In order to strengthen the national capacity to reduce violence against women and to administer justice for and to improve support service for victims, the PCUz, jointly with the Oilla Centre and the Supreme Court, conducted a roundtable discussion on relevant legal and policy frameworks, hands-on experience of practitioners representing Uzbekistan, the OSCE Gender Section, and other PSs. To advance within national police the knowledge and skills required to respond in an effective and appropriate manner to violence against women, the PCUz developed a Manual for police officers on the methodology of working with potential offenders and preventing acts of violence to protect rights of victims of domestic violence.

The PCUz launched the Uzbekistan version of the “Men Engage Network” with a video clip of ten prominent men saying “No” to gender-based violence to raise awareness about the important role men can play in the elimination of Violence against Women and Girls. The PCUz signed an agreement with a leading women’s rights NGO “Civic Initiatives Support Centre” to provide personalized, non-judgmental support, information about services available and access to free legal aid and psychological counselling for women in a difficult life situation. Due to recent national reforms in the judiciary, national partners proposed to focus on specialization of judges on family disputes instead of creating specialized pilot family courts. PCUz organizes the specialization of judges on the use of mediation in the consideration of family disputes and offenses against women and children.
Participants of the round-table discussion on the advancement of women’s participation in politics and business, Uzbekistan, 2019. (OSCE/Malika Urinboeva)
Strengthen security

While the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security comprised of the first, second and third as well as cross cutting dimensions, the first, political-military dimension, focuses on traditional strengthening security. Field Operation work on strengthening security may involve assisting in verifying disarmament agreements; or arranging and providing training for institutions required to address transnational threats and to maintain law and order, such as civilian police.

Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R) plays an essential role throughout the conflict cycle – from early warning and conflict prevention through crisis management and resolution to post-conflict rehabilitation and peacebuilding.

Human rights abuses can constitute early warning indicators of emerging conflict. A persistent lack of security and justice can become a driver of subsequent violence and instability. Establishing and maintaining resilient security and justice systems is vital to effectively addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict and thereby contributing to sustainable peace and security.

The OSCE published Guidelines on SSG/R for OSCE staff as a practical tool while providing expertise on aspects of SSG/R, including police reform, border management and security, counter-terrorism, anti-corruption, justice sector reform and others. The concept of SSG/R is already supported by a broad normative framework within the OSCE, with the 1994 Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security as a key point of reference.

OSCE support to national SSG/R processes includes support to: policy development and implementation; security and justice provision, security sector management and democratic oversight as well as cross-cutting support (gender and security reform, human rights, migration, organized crime).

OSCE Forum for Security and Cooperation (FSC)

The OSCE Forum for Security and Cooperation (FSC) works with the FOs to create trust through transparency and openness, provide a platform for dialogue, fight illicit small arms and ammunition production, work towards non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, establish democratic control of armed and security forces, and connect pS as they work to address these issues. Many major producers of small arms and light weapons (SALW) are located in the OSCE area. These arms cause the majority of deaths in non-combat and conflict situations. The pS have adopted a number of key documents to regulate the production, transfer, storage, collection, and destruction of such weapons, and to control their export. The FSC is instrumental in helping states implement these documents, providing assistance with collection and destruction of small arms, light weapons and conventional ammunition upon request, helping to improve legislation to effectively control small arms, and assisting in improving stockpile management. It also promotes information exchange on small arms and light weapons; conventional arms transfers; and anti-personnel landmines.

The OSCE has undertaken numerous projects guiding pS on the ways to ensure management and destruction of stockpiles of armaments left over from the Cold War era. The Document on SALW and the OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on Conventional Munitions were published to provide member states and national policy makers information regarding techniques and procedures for the destruction of conventional ammunition, explosive material, and detonation...
devices, safe ammunition transportation techniques, as well as for the management and control of stockpiles of ammunition. The OSCE developed a Best Practice Guide on National Procedures for Stockpile Management and Security, which provides guidance for the effective management and security of national SALW stockpiles and contributes to and facilitates the development and application of high common standards in this field.

**OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe**

The OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe has implemented the Tajikistan Anti-Personnel Demining Project providing support to Tajikistan’s National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC), which provides management, administrative services and oversight to the Humanitarian Demining Company of the Ministry of Defense (HDC/MOD). In 2018 the OSCE supported the HDC/MOD in offering 4 weeklong demining training for 96 persons at the TNMAC training ground in Dushanbe. The participants worked in teams and learned about mine action standards, the location of mines in Tajikistan, types of mines, and the marking of minefields. The teams began demining work in April 2018 in the Sohin District in the Khatlon Region.

The publication Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach illustrates the OSCE’s comprehensive and co-operative approach to security and provides guidance on one of the crucial and sensitive challenges faced by its pS in preventing terrorism. The guidebook was developed under a joint project by the OSCE Transnational Threats Department (TNTD) ATU, SPMU and ODIHR’s programme on Human Rights and Anti-Terrorism, as well as OSCE field operations as well as as external experts from other organizations, including USIP.

**OSCE Mission in BiH**

The OSCE Mission in BiH led a post-conflict trilateral agreement (BiH, Serbia and Croatia) to reduce SALW and maintain a system of verifications through regular visits in order to control arsenals.

The Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine works on small arms light weapons, chemical safety and security, humanitarian mine action and democratic control of armed forces.

The OSCE Project Office in Bishkek implements a project on and promotes the engagement of civil society and public stakeholders in the stabilization, restoration and disposal of uranium mill waste, also known as uranium tailings remediation.
Transnational Threats

FOs work closely with the Transnational Threats Department (TNTD) in addressing transnational threats (TNT), and to optimize support provided to pS on TNT-related matters. This cooperation is illustrative of how field missions often operationalize projects, while the institutions or Secretariat bring the international expertise.

The Strategic Police Matters Unit (TNTD/SPMU) provides expertise to FOs on: Community Policing; Intelligence-Led Policing; preventing gender-based violence; addressing organized crime; combating threat of illicit drugs and precursors; combating and preventing migration-related crime, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings; and responding to cybercrime. TNTD/SPMU has established a network of law enforcement education and training institutions – the OSCE Police Academies Network (PAN), including in States with field operations.

OSCE Mission to Serbia

The OSCE Mission to Serbia organizes advanced training courses on “Interactive Money Laundering Investigative Techniques” as part of the project “Enhancing Capacities of Serbian Police to fight corruption”. Police investigators and prosecutors participated in a case study-based training relating to money laundering investigations. TNTD, OCEEA and the OSCE Mission to Serbia organized a regional workshop to enhance cooperation and mutual legal assistance in asset recovery to support coordinating regional efforts in combating transnational crime, which was attended by representatives from criminal prosecutors’ offices, financial organized and police investigators from in financial investigations and financial organized crime units. The participants from Albania, BiH, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia discussed regional co-operation in relation to financial investigations, anti-money laundering, seizures of criminal proceeds and the management of assets seized from persons suspected of organized crime.

FOs work also closely with the The Action against Terrorism Unit to implement activities and
projects on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (P/CVERLT); preventing and countering use of internet for terrorist purposes; countering financing of terrorism; and promoting implementation of the international legal framework, promoting the rule of law and enhancing legal co-operation in criminal matters related to terrorism. Efforts by FOs in Central Asia to support PS to build capacity to combat terrorism while respecting human rights are often conducted with both the ATU and ODIHR.

**Project Office in Dushanbe (POiD)**

The Project Office in Dushanbe (POiD) supported the working group from the Office of the Prosecutor General on the development of a new national strategy on countering violent extremism and terrorism 2021-2025. The POiD in partnership with government bodies and civil society, continues to build the capacity and resilience of communities in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism (VERLT), in line with the national strategy. Law enforcement officers and representatives of the judiciary, youth, teachers and parents who have participated, have improved their knowledge in areas such as countering the use of the internet for terrorist purposes, strengthening rule-of-law compliant criminal justice responses to terrorism, countering terrorism financing, and enhancing community resilience against violent extremism at the grassroots level. These activities also led to fruitful discussions on countering violent extremism and terrorism online while upholding fundamental freedoms and human rights, and resulted in a set of actionable policy responses and recommendations that are expected to be considered and integrated in day-to-day operations at the executive level.

FOs support the capacity of Border Security and Management (BSM) services through initiatives such as: Identification and prevention of cross-border travel of potential foreign terrorist fighters (FTF)/returnees; Travel Document Security/detection of forged documents and imposters; promotion of advance passenger information; promotion of efficient practices on border delimitation and demarcation; promotion of gender mainstreaming policies in BSM. The FOs support the OSCE Border Security and Management National Focal Point (BSM NFP) Network. FOs in Central Asia are engaged with the Central Asian Border Management Initiative (CABMI) Conferences, which are organized annually.
Border Management Staff College

The POiD established the OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC) to train senior border officials from all pS as well as Partners for Co-operation (especially Afghanistan). The BMSC based in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, provides its students with an overview of the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security, involving economic and environmental issues, human rights, and politico-military issues.

Since its inception in 2009, the BMSC has operated as a regional Academic Centre of Excellence, delivering high-quality education for mid-to-senior ranking Border Security Officers from across the entire OSCE region, as well as PfC, especially Afghanistan, thus enhancing professionalism within pS’ border security agencies. For over a decade the BMSC has conducted 169 specialized training courses and thematic events, including 24 one-month Border Management Staff Courses, and two one-year blended learning Border Security and Management for Senior Leadership Courses.

The BMSC continues to promote women within the traditionally male-dominated border management profession. Since the introduction of the annual women-only staff course in 2014, female participants have accounted for nearly half of the annual staff course graduates. In addition to its annual staff course for women leaders, the College included gender modules in the curricula and the online training on Gender Mainstreaming in Border Security and Management, developed within the ExB project on Women Leadership and Empowerment of the OSCE TNTD/BSMU.

An ‘Advanced Course’ on Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R) and Border Security Management was jointly conducted by the BMSC along with the Secretariat’s TNTD.

Afghan border police officers conduct river crossing near Karatag during a patrol leadership course, Gissar, 16 December 2015. (OSCE/Firdavs Kurbanov)
Develop civil society

Civil society and civil society organizations (CSOs) are important partners of the OSCE across the conflict cycle from prevention of conflicts and early warning, to long term peacebuilding and to the inclusion of women and marginalized groups. Collaboration with civil society is focused on CSOs, which share in the OSCE’s principles and commitments, and can positively affect the peaceful resolution of disputes (as opposed to CSOs who may act as proxies to conflict parties). Support for the civil society and assistance in the promotion of the rule of law, and other activities across all the OSCE dimensions, especially the human dimension.

OSCE Presence Office in Albania

The OSCE Presence Office in Albania held a series of Civil Society Forums across Albania to support public discussions on civil society’s challenges and its future through the participation of CSOs in Civil Society Forums.

Discussions built on good practices established during the extended meetings with CSOs, through which, the POiA reached out to CSOs and community activists at the local level centered on capacities and responsiveness of the civil society sector outside the capital.

Participants discussed the current state of civil society and general activism, challenges and obstacles, and shared their know-how on improving donor-CSO co-operation at the local and regional level. The series brought a clearer picture of the situation of Albanian CSOs at both the regional and national level. An audience of active and highly motivated civil society stakeholders shared their views on the CSOs’ capacities, opportunities, challenges and concerns with the OSCE.

The Presence continuously seeks to take stock of concerns, capabilities and co-operation opportunities with CSOs across the country. In fulfilment of its overall commitment for a strong and proactive civil society in the country, the Presence seeks to promote and support an enabling environment for civil society development.

OSCE Project Office in Dushanbe

Through training courses, technical assistance and dialogue platforms, the POiD continued to build the capacity of government and civil society to create sustainable responsive mechanisms to prevent and to combat domestic violence civil society has indicated has increased globally during lockdowns associated with COVID-19.

Women’s Resource Centers, operated by the Office’s implementing partners throughout the country, provided free legal and psycho-social counselling to 6,465 women and 1,238 men to address domestic violence and support victims, empowered women through vocational training courses, and informed women and men about domestic violence and available support services. The Office continues to give this work priority and adapt assistance by online means despite COVID-19 restrictions. Wider public awareness on the domestic violence law and available services for victims was achieved during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign. The Office-organized sports festival, radio and television broadcasts and other events reached approximately 2.8 million people across Tajikistan.

The Office supported dialogue platform meetings for the Inter-Agency Commission to Combat...
Violence in the Family and the MIA Subgroup on Gender Issues and Police, resulting in a more gender-sensitive approach to improving regulatory acts and police responses to domestic violence. To strengthen institutional response to domestic violence, the Office supported monitoring of implementation of the domestic violence law. Recommendations of the study are currently under consideration by key state actors.

POID also trained Deputy Heads of MIA Departments and five heads of Multidisciplinary Working Groups on Combating Violence in the Family on best practices in domestic violence response and victim referral and support.

**Project Coordinator in Ukraine (PCU)**

The National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service signed a memorandum with the PCU focused on making dialogue and practical instruments for cooperation between authorities and civil society a part of the new public service culture. The government used OSCE support in organizing dialogues to address reform challenges in the education of national minorities, decentralization, public administration and healthcare. To strengthen the community of local experts in dialogues, the PCU trained hundreds of civil servants and activists, some of whom received mentorship support in running dialogues to address a variety of conflicts in their communities.

In promoting practical ways to enhance co-operation between the authorities and civil society, the PCU trained officials and staff from CSOs on public consultation mechanisms, management of state-funded projects and the provision of social services by civil society. An online course on state-funded projects was launched.

![Representatives of local government, self-government bodies and civil society learn how to use dialogue for decision making to resolve conflict issues in their communities at a training organized by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Kyiv, 5 March 2020 (Photo@ Maxym Levin/OSCE)](image)

**OSCE Academy in Bishkek**

The **OSCE Academy in Bishkek** was established in 2002, provides expert training and education in conflict prevention, management, resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation; human rights, media
development, and in economics, governance and development. It offers two Master of Arts (MA) programmes, in politics and security and in economic governance and development, which are complemented by shorter, tailor-made courses for professionals. The Academy also supports the exchange of information and scientific co-operation among Central Asian academic institutions and their international partner organizations. In addition, the Academy undertakes demand-driven and practice-oriented research on relevant Central Asian topics aiming at local, national and regional security-building, and has developed a regional network of professionals and researchers.

Students at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek (OSCE)
CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Field operations are instrumental as the eyes and ears of the organization and also provide support and assistance on the ground. They are able to address the full conflict cycle, to establish respectful relations with all relevant actors, to serve as a trusted interlocuter. FOs continue to coordinate and cooperate with other international and regional actors/organizations as an important force multiplier.

The OSCE has moved from Missions of long duration to the third and fourth generation of FOs of more active conflict monitoring missions. The OSCE will continue to play an important role as long as regional national and ethnic conflicts occur in the OSCE area.

The organization continues to develop new forms of cooperation beyond the mandated field operations. Innovative initiatives, instruments and special ExB projects have been developed, such as the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the Border Management Staff College, and other field activities listed earlier. Thematic or roving missions have also been discussed as a future option where “light” Missions would retain a physical OSCE presence (and internal reporting capacity) on the ground while running no or only few activities themselves. The OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions published a report the future of OSCE field operations to stimulate discussion on such instruments, projects and missions.

While sufficient financial and human resources are required, FOs do their best to be flexible to evolving developments and needs, to maximize the use of available resources on the ground. However, the OSCE and its FOs can only be effective if participating States demonstrate common purpose and political will to use the tools available, to ensure a comprehensive approach to cooperative, inclusive and comprehensive security across all dimensions, the added value of the OSCE.
Young experts of the OSCE’s ‘Perspectives 20-30’ initiative met in Vienna on 15 and 16 May 2019 to develop a vision for a safer future (OSCE/Micky Kroell)