



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretariat

Conflict Prevention Centre

Operations Service/Planning and Analysis

BACKGROUND BRIEF

OSCE Activities and Advantages in the Field of Post-Conflict Rehabilitation

1. Introduction

As with the other phases of the conflict cycle, the OSCE takes a broad and comprehensive approach to post-conflict rehabilitation, extending to the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human aspects of security. Moreover, the Organization has gained significant experience in this subject-area since the early 1990s, particularly through its field activities. Among the OSCE's past and current post-conflict rehabilitation tasks are institution- and capacity-building, including in such areas as judiciary reform, election reform, human rights training, multi-ethnic police training, educational reform, protecting the rights of national minorities and economic reconstruction. In all these activities, OSCE field operations promote the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments in host countries and establish and maintain close contacts with regional, national and local authorities, civil society and the local population. In some cases, OSCE activities in the post-conflict rehabilitation phase are also carried out during the crisis management phase of the conflict cycle while conflict settlement efforts are still ongoing.

2. OSCE Milestone Documents related to Post-Conflict Rehabilitation

Largely in reaction to the historical changes of the early 1990s, particularly the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the first OSCE milestone document in which 'post-conflict rehabilitation' appears as a term is Decision No.1 (on Strengthening the CSCE), adopted at the Budapest Summit in December 1994: "*The Heads of State or Government have directed that the future role and functions for the CSCE will include ... to further its principles and develop its capabilities in ... post-conflict rehabilitation, including assisting with reconstruction*". Thereafter, the term is regularly used in the Organization's milestone documents in the context of a core task of the OSCE, including in the 1996 Lisbon Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the 21st Century, the 1999 Charter for European Security, and the 2003 OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century.

3. OSCE Activities

In **South-Eastern Europe**, the mandates of most of the field operations directly foresee their involvement in long-term and sustainable post-conflict rehabilitation activities since the majority of them were established in a post-conflict context. Thus the range of OSCE post-conflict rehabilitation activities in this region is substantial:

- Assistance in reform processes: such as election-related assistance, institution-and democracy-building, rule of law, security sector reform, public administration reform, education and addressing the problem of ethnic segregation in schools, assistance to national parliaments, freedom of the media;
- Assistance in refugee/internally displaced persons (IDP) returns and assistance in addressing property-related issues;
- Facilitation of police re-deployment in former conflict areas;
- Monitoring of war crime proceedings and facilitation of inter-state co-operation in that area;
- Monitoring the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of persons belonging to national minorities;
- Assistance in combating organized crime and corruption;
- Assistance in demilitarization and the destruction of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and conventional ammunition;
- Promotion of cross-border and regional co-operation and initiatives.

Concrete example

The Ohrid Process on Border Security and Management was a joint effort by the South-Eastern European countries and the European Union, the OSCE, NATO and the *Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe*. The process began in May 2003 at the Ohrid Conference on Border Security and Management with the adoption of the *Common Platform*, a set of core goals and principles and the *Way Forward Document*, an action plan setting objectives and deadlines for reforming national legislation and management of border-related issues and developing regional co-operation across borders.

In **Central Asia**, post-conflict rehabilitation/post-crisis stabilization activities are intended to:

- Support the police in addressing the security situation by upholding the rule of law, respecting human rights and, *inter-alia*, restoring police-public confidence;
- Promote inter-community confidence-building and facilitate dialogue between law enforcement bodies and the population, and between the local authorities, civil society and community leaders;
- Contribute to constitutional and electoral processes and support democratic institution-building, electoral and justice sector reform;
- Foster political dialogue to encourage broader participation in public discourse and promote political pluralism;
- Enhance security by realizing successful SALW and conventional ammunitions disposal and stockpile management programmes, together with de-mining;
- Strengthen border security and management through a number of capacity building programmes aimed at addressing the major border threats and challenges, in particular through the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Concrete example

In 1993, an OSCE (then CSCE) Mission to Tajikistan was established to focus on building democratic institutions and processes. The multi-party parliamentary elections in February/March 2000 signified the end of the transition period after the 1997 peace agreement and allowed the Mission to focus on post-conflict peacebuilding activities rather than conflict resolution. Even though the immediate stability in the country remained fragile, activities included support for civil society and democratic institutions, the rule of law, monitoring of human rights, and local capacity-building. The Mission was strengthened in December 2000 and further included economic and environmental issues.

In the **South Caucasus**, the OSCE has continued to work actively since the mid-1990s to promote the settlement of protracted conflicts and to prevent their re-escalation while at the same time engaging in peacebuilding activities by:

- Assisting the parties in developing and implementing confidence-building, humanitarian and other measures through the efforts of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference and his team;
- Supporting economic reconstruction;
- Promoting the respect of human rights and the development of legal and democratic institutions and processes;
- Conducting border monitoring (for example, from 1999-2005 unarmed OSCE border monitors in Georgia observed and reported on movements at and across the border with the Russian Federation).

Concrete Example

The OSCE launched an extensive (EUR 8 million) Economic Rehabilitation Programme (ERP) in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict in 2006. The ERP involved both communities working together on projects of common interest. Regrettably, following the August 2008 conflict, most of the ERP activities had to be suspended as the OSCE was no longer granted access to South Ossetia.

In **Eastern Europe**, the OSCE serves, since 1993, as a co-facilitator and co-mediator with the Russian Federation and Ukraine in the Transdnistria settlement process. OSCE activities include both crisis management/conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation efforts aiming at:

- Facilitating the achievement of a lasting comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in the areas on the left bank of the Dniestr/Nistru River in all its aspects, consolidating the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova within its current borders and reinforcing the territorial integrity of the State along with an understanding about a special status for the Transdnistrian region;
- Gathering and providing information on the situation, including the military situation, in the region, investigating specific incidents and assess their political implications;
- Providing advice and expertise, as well as a framework for other contributions, on such parts of a political settlement as effective observance of international obligations and commitments regarding human and minority rights, democratic transformation, repatriation of refugees, definition of a special status of the Transdnistrian region;
- Ensuring transparency of the removal and destruction of Russian ammunition and armaments and co-ordination of financial and technical assistance offered to facilitate withdrawal and destruction.

Concrete Example

The OSCE Mission to Moldova from the beginning undertook efforts for confidence-building between the sides to the conflict in the political, military and social spheres. The Mission is currently supporting working groups on confidence-building measures established between the sides and has held a series of events gathering relevant officials from both sides to discuss specific areas of co-operation to spur progress in the direct channels of communication. The Mission will continue these series of workshops, seminars and other events aiming at increasing transparency and co-operation in areas such as economics and trade, transport and infrastructure, environment and agriculture, and health.

4. OSCE Comparative Advantages in Post-Conflict Rehabilitation

- The OSCE, as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, has adopted, since its beginnings in the 1970s, a broad and comprehensive approach to security in which the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimensions are seen as inter-linked and equally relevant. The OSCE has gained significant experience in these dimensions of security since the early 1990s, particularly in its field activities.
- The Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and the Charter for European Security, amongst others, provide an impressive array of politically-binding principles, norms and standards related to the comprehensive and co-operative security of participating States. Particularly relevant to the post-conflict phase, these serve as the foundations upon which sustainable peace can be built.
- The OSCE addresses all phases of a conflict or crisis situation, from early warning and the early stages of conflict, to civilian crisis management and conflict settlement, to preventing the outbreak of a recurrence of conflict through assistance in post-conflict reconstruction and inter-communal relationship building, as well as supporting the reform processes of countries in transition. The Organization thus provides a continuity and unity of effort that is beneficial in the post-conflict phase.
- The Organization can rely on an extensive toolbox of instruments: regular political dialogue and exchange of views among OSCE participating States and an extensive network of institutions, thematic units and field operations with significant hands-on experience in working on different aspects of security. In addition to its seventeen field operations, the OSCE has several thematic units within the Secretariat which continue to play an important role in post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization, such as the Operations Service/Borders Team and the Strategic Police Matters Unit. Moreover, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly all contribute significantly to, *inter alia*, the Organization's post-conflict efforts.
- The Forum for Security Co-operation Support Section in the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre assists participating States in the implementation of confidence- and security-building measures. Projects include, for example, the destruction of melange and assistance with the destruction of ammunition or stockpile management of SALW.
- Ownership is important not only in the peacebuilding phase, but in the process of democratization itself in order for post-conflict rehabilitation to be successful. The OSCE executive structures always co-operate with the host Government and civic organizations to develop projects and initiatives that are beneficial to the authorities and the population. Moreover, nearly 75 % of the approximate 2,300 OSCE staff working in the field is locally recruited. This contributes to local ownership during the design and implementation stages and, importantly, builds the local capacity necessary for a future hand-over of activities.
- The OSCE recognizes the political and operational imperative of working with other international actors, as evidenced by its 1999 *Platform for Co-operative Security* and its experience of working with other organizations at the headquarters and field level.