Executive Summary to the Study "Shifting Bases, Shifting Perils: A Scoping Study on Security Implications of Climate Change in the OSCE Region."

The **2003 Strategy Document (Maastricht Strategy)** of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) calls upon the Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) to contribute to OSCE activities related to early warning and conflict prevention. This shall be done by monitoring economic and environmental challenges and threats to security and stability and collaborating with relevant international organisations.

The **2007 Madrid Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Security** acknowledges that climate change is a long-term challenge. In addition, the Declaration outlines that the OSCE, as a regional security organisation under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, has a complementary role within its mandate and its specific region to address these challenges outside of the United Nations (UN) level climate negotiations.

At the **2009 chairmanship conference in Bucharest**, the OCEEA announced a new extra-budgetary project focusing on the security implications of climate change. Its goal is to produce scenarios on the impacts of climate change on security and identify how the OSCE could contribute to mitigating potential challenges. The OCEEA and the European Environment Agency (EEA) will jointly implement the project. This report – commissioned by the OCEEA in the context of this project – is a scoping study on potential security implications of climate change. It has four main aims:

- **Reviewing** the state of the debate in current research on climate change and security. In addition, assessing the role of scenarios in policy planning and identifying the characteristics of scenarios related to climate change and security.
- **Identifying** potential security implications of climate change in several regions within or adjacent to the OSCE – in particular the Arctic, the Southern Mediterranean, South East and Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.
- **Assessing** the activities conducted by countries and international organisations – particularly the UN and OSCE member states – with regard to climate change and security.
- **Outlining** initial recommendations to the OSCE on addressing the potential security implications of climate change.

The scoping study was implemented by Adelphi Research, in cooperation with the Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House) and CIMERA. It reviews key literature, and includes desk-based research and input from regional experts.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY – INTERLINKAGES, CONCEPTS AND SCENARIOS

A significant body of literature on potential interlinkages between climate change and security has developed over the past years. This includes scientific studies as well as reports by political bodies. At a global level, the report of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the potential security implications of climate change identified several channels through which climate change impacts may translate into insecurity.

Climate change will alter the socio-economic foundations of society. It will **transform constants into variables**: Coastlines will be reshaped due to sea-level rise (SLR), thus altering maritime territory and borders. Infrastructure that has been designed for specific environmental conditions may suffer as

these conditions change, such as pipelines threatened by thawing permafrost. A particularly complex challenge is the **water-food-energy nexus**: Water is essential not only for drinking water, but also for food production and electricity generation, such as in the case of hydropower or when it is used as a coolant for power plants. Both agriculture and energy production are key economic sectors. Growing populations and increasing demands in food, energy and other resources converge with climate change impacts. These changes affecting water resources will thus also impact food and energy security issues, and by extension economies and employment.

The term **threat multiplier emerged as one of the key concepts** within the climate change and security debate. It states that climate change may contribute to insecurities and the likelihood of armed conflict depending on given circumstances and the interaction with other factors. Most importantly climate change can act as a catalyst deteriorating livelihoods, shifting population patterns and causing unequal distribution of resources. In this way, climate change exacerbates existing tensions, creates new ones and may under certain circumstances lead to armed conflict.

The concrete impacts of climate change, however, are still uncertain and making predictions remains difficult. While the above-mentioned impacts may materialise, their likelihood or their severity cannot be identified with certainty. **Scenarios are key instruments for addressing this uncertainty** by outlining a set of potential futures. They support early identification and preparation for trends by highlighting pathways in which climate change may threaten security.

REGIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

As a starting point for developing scenarios on climate change's challenges and subsequent policy recommendations, an assessment of the potential security implications of climate change is necessary. For the core regions of the OCEEA/EEA project, which have been assessed in this scoping study, the potential security implications can be summarised as follows:

- **The Arctic:** The melting of the Arctic will open up new shipping routes and will make natural resources accessible. Territorial claims need to be resolved to avoid potential political tensions and maritime border disputes. In addition, the climate-induced environmental changes are degrading livelihoods and threatening ecosystems. This will impact the local indigenous communities in particular. The key challenge for the region results from the novel situation of a melting Arctic, for which current international law may need to be adapted.
- **The Southern Mediterranean:** Climate change will likely lead to a severe reduction in available food and water resources, while demands will likely continue to rise due to population growth and economic development. This could lead to economic stagnation, social dissatisfaction and grievances, and weakened authorities. States may increasingly show uncooperative behaviour over the use of transboundary water resources. Ultimately, these changes may fuel extremism, but also erode tolerance and impact civil liberties as well as political rights if the situation deteriorates. As the region is already suffering from tense social, political and economic situations, climate change may become a significant burden overstretching the adaptation capacities of institutions.
- **South East and Eastern Europe:** Increased climate variability and global warming will likely imperil food and energy security in these regions. This may negatively impact the economic and political situation and increase social tensions within the countries, for example between ethnically diverse population groups or towards migrants. However, the close proximity to the

European Union (EU) and the candidate or potential candidate status of several countries will make them less vulnerable than for instance the Southern Mediterranean countries.

- **South Caucasus and Central Asia:** Climate change will negatively impact water resources, thus impacting intra- and inter-state relations. This includes also the Aral Sea, which may further diminish due to higher evaporation resulting from regional warming. Food and electricity production, as well as economic development, will suffer, which could impact relations between social groups within countries. The likely changing levels of the Caspian Sea will raise questions related to maritime territory. Both regions are situated at geopolitical fulcrums connecting Europe, Asia and the Middle East, thus tensions within both regions may also impact neighbouring regions, and vice versa.

From the perspective of comprehensive security, the direct potential implications outlined above are mainly in the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE. The politico-military dimension will be touched upon directly in the case of the Arctic and the Caspian Sea due to changing borders and territory. Managing these direct impacts will be of key importance to prevent the development of tensions within and between states. If not properly addressed, frustration and disaffection may lead to grievance and extremism, which could also challenge the human dimension of security.

AN EMERGING GLOBAL RESPONSE

The potential significant impacts of climate change are hardly disputed. Many OSCE participating states have already raised the issue at multiple international organisations. The United Nations debated the potential impacts of climate changes from their perspective at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). In June 2009, the UNGA adopted resolution A/63/281 calling upon all UN bodies to address the threats of climate change within their respective mandates. In addition, it requested the UN Secretary-General to produce a report on the potential security implications of climate change and to include the perspectives of the UN member states. Together, the resolution and the report provide a framework of action for the UN. In addition to the UN report, the EU, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), as well as several OSCE participating states have started to asses the security impacts of climate change from their perspective and to integrate the potential security implications of climate change into their policies.

In the emerging global response to potential security implications of climate change, the OSCE has an added value compared to other international organisations: With its regional focus, the OSCE might be more suited to develop tailored responses than the UN with its global perspective. Being the largest regional security organisation in the world, it is also more inclusive and encompassing than other bodies such as NATO. Thus, the OSCE may serve as an inclusive platform for dialogue and cooperation, allowing tensions to defuse before they arise. Its field presence is thereby a key asset for information gathering, dissemination and preparing for climate change.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the aftermath of the climate negotiations in Copenhagen, 76 countries – 41 from the OSCE – pledged early in 2010 to reduce their emissions. Despite these encouraging initial pledges, global emissions are likely to rise for the foreseeable future, while the impacts of past emissions will continue to unfold for the next decades irrespective of mitigation actions. The Arctic is currently among the most

visible symbols of how climate change is radically altering the geopolitical landscape. These trends will continue and impact the lives of millions around the globe.

Identifying early signs is vital for timely action. With conflict prevention and stability as core functions of the OSCE, it will be a key task for the organisation to identify the challenges of climate change and prevent them from turning into security risks. If managed adequately, climate change may serve as a catalyst for cooperation among countries. With its comprehensive approach to security, including the Maastricht Strategy as well as the Madrid Declaration, the ground has been laid to address the security implications of climate change within the OSCE. Building on this and against the background of the key findings, the following actions are recommended:

- **Collecting the perspectives** and priorities of OSCE participating countries to start a debate on a common understanding of the threats of climate change.
- **Organising joint sessions** between OSCE bodies responsible for different dimensions to increase understanding of the cross-cutting nature of climate change.
- **Partnering with international organisations,** such as the Arctic Council and the Union for the Mediterranean, when appropriate.
- **Approaching non-OSCE stakeholders** that are adjacent to the OSCE and will also be impacted by climate change, such as China in the case of Central Asia.
- **Actively seeking cooperation and coordination** with other relevant national and international agencies on the security implications of climate change.
- **Disseminating information** on the impacts of climate change, employing the OSCE field presences, the Aarhus centres, and other relevant mechanisms for this purpose.
- **Improving networking and communication** across borders and regions to appreciate the trans-regional impacts on climate change.
- **Conducting regional consultations and assessments** to identify concrete sub-regional and sub-national impacts of climate change as well as identifying potential policy responses.
- **Building capacity** within the OSCE by developing staff training courses and a potential manual promoting the integration climate change`s challenges into daily activities.
- **Improving research and analysis** on climate change by developing a dedicated climate centre, which could be integrated into existing bodies such as the OSCE academy in Bishkek. In addition, an expert group or related mechanism should be considered to support the analytical capacities of the OSCE.

The Bucharest chairmanship conference in 2009 was important in raising awareness for the role of the OSCE and bringing a broad range of stakeholders together. As the next years will be crucial in preparing for the impacts of climate change and potential security implications, the OSCE should consider holding periodic events on climate change and security. The events should serve as forums to exchange views within the OSCE and highlight specific regional aspects. The Bucharest chairmanship conference in 2009 could serve as a blueprint in this regard.

For the full study (in English) please see:

http://www.adelphi.de/files/uploads/andere/pdf/application/pdf/us_054_-_final_scoping_study_osce.pdf