



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

WHAT IS THE OSCE?

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is a pan-European security body whose **56 participating States** span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Recognized as a regional arrangement under **Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter**, the OSCE is a **primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation** in its area. Its approach to security is unique in being both **comprehensive and co-operative: comprehensive**

in that it deals with three dimensions of security – the politico-military, the economic and environmental and the human. It therefore addresses a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism, anti-trafficking measures, and economic and environmental activities. It is **co-operative** in that all 56 States enjoy equal status. Decisions are taken by consensus and are politically but not legally binding.

FROM CSCE TO OSCE

The OSCE traces its origins to the *détente* phase of the early 1970s, when the **Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)** was created to serve as a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation between East and West. Meeting over two years in Helsinki and Geneva, the CSCE reached agreement on the **Helsinki Final Act**, signed on 1 August 1975. This document contained a number of key commitments on politico-military, economic and environmental and human rights issues that became central to the so-called “Helsinki process”. It also established fundamental principles (the ‘Decalogue’) governing the behaviour of States towards their citizens, as well as towards each other.

Until 1990, the CSCE functioned mainly as a series of meetings and conferences that built on and extended the participating States’ commitments, while periodically reviewing their implementation. However, with the ending of the Cold War, the **Paris Summit** of November 1990 set the CSCE on a new course. In the **Paris Charter for a New Europe**, the CSCE was called upon to play its part in managing the historic change taking place in Europe and responding to the new challenges of the post-Cold War period. This led to its acquiring permanent institutions and operational capabilities, including a Secretariat, an Office for Free Elections and a Conflict Prevention Centre.

A major arms control agreement – the **Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)** – was also concluded on the margins of the Paris Summit and updated as the **Adapted CFE Treaty** in 1999. Other important military security treaties, including the 1992 **Treaty on Open Skies**

and the fourth **Vienna Document** of 1999, as well as the key **Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons** (2000), today form the *acquis* of the OSCE politico-military dimension.

In the early 1990s, with a Secretariat and the first institutions, meetings became more regular, missions were established and the Conference’s work became more structured. Recognizing that the CSCE was no longer simply a Conference, in 1994 the **Budapest Summit** agreed to change its name to the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**. As well as being a reflection of its rapid institutional development, following the end of the Cold War, this name change also gave the body a new political impetus.

The **Lisbon Summit** of 1996 stimulated the development of an OSCE **Charter for European Security**, eventually adopted at the **Istanbul Summit**, in November 1999. This was instrumental in improving the operational capabilities of the Organization and reinforcing co-operation with its partners. Since 2000, the OSCE has continually adapted itself to the new challenges of the 21st century by developing units and activities to improve policing and to combat terrorism, trafficking (in humans, drugs and arms) and xenophobia and intolerance.

Compared with other organizations, the OSCE is unique in several ways: its broad membership of Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian States; its co-operative and comprehensive approach to security; its conflict prevention instruments; its well-established tradition of open dialogue and consensus-building; its large, operational network of field missions; and its well-developed pattern of co-operation with other international organizations.

HOW IS THE OSCE STRUCTURED?

The **Permanent Council** is the OSCE's main regular body for political consultation and decision-making, a forum comprising the permanent representatives of the 56 participating States. It convenes weekly in the Hofburg Congress Centre, Vienna, to discuss all issues pertinent to the OSCE and take appropriate decisions. The Hofburg is also the venue of regular meetings of the **Forum for Security Co-operation**, which covers arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), and the **Joint Consultative Group**, which oversees the implementation of the CFE Treaty (see *first page*).

The foreign ministers of the 56 OSCE participating States hold an annual **Ministerial Council** meeting, except in years where a **Summit meeting** of Heads of State or Government takes place. These meetings provide an opportunity to review the activities of the OSCE, to adopt decisions and issue guidance or a new orientation to the Organization. Within the economic and environmental dimension, a special body, the **Economic Forum**, meets once a year in Prague.

Overall political responsibility for executive action is held by the **Chairman-in-Office (CiO)** of the OSCE, the foreign minister of the country currently holding the Chairmanship. This office passed on 1 January 2007 from Belgium to Spain and from 1 January 2008 it will be held for 12 months by Finland. These three countries constitute the current OSCE **Troika**, which advises the Chairmanship. The CiO has the power to appoint **Personal** or **Special Representatives** to deal with specific issues or geographical areas.

Support for the Chairmanship in attaining the goals of the OSCE is provided by the **Secretariat**, located in Vienna since 1993. It is headed by the Secretary General, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut from France, whose three-year term began in June 2005. The **Secretary General**, whose role includes the management of OSCE structures and operational activities, may also represent the CiO. Under the Secretary General's direction, the Secretariat provides administrative and operational support to the Organization. Besides the Office of the Secretary General, which contains strategic policing, anti-terrorism and anti-trafficking units, it comprises the Conflict Prevention Centre, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Management and Finance. The **Prague Office** assists with documentation, research and other information functions.

To help the OSCE fulfil its mandate, the Organization has developed several other instruments or specialized institutions. The **Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)** plays an active role in developing national electoral institutions, providing technical assistance, monitoring elections and training election monitors, as well as promoting the development of non-governmental organizations and civil

society, upholding human rights commitments and training legal rights monitors. It also acts as the OSCE contact point for Roma and Sinti issues and provides support for specialized OSCE human dimension seminars. The Director of the ODIHR, Austrian diplomat Christian Strohal, and his staff are based in Warsaw, Poland.

Of special importance in the field of early warning and conflict prevention is the Office of the **High Commissioner on National Minorities**, based in The Hague, Netherlands. The High Commissioner, Swedish diplomat Rolf Ekeus, assesses issues involving national minorities and seeks to defuse tense situations at the earliest possible stage. With advice and policy recommendations, he encourages the parties to pursue a non-confrontational course.

Created in 1997, the Office of the **Representative on Freedom of the Media** observes developments across the media of participating States and can assist and provide a rapid response in serious cases of non-compliance with OSCE principles and commitments on freedom of media and of expression. The Representative, Miklos Haraszti from Hungary, has his office in Vienna.

Currently, the OSCE has 19 **field missions** or other activities operating in 17 States: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Within the first dimension, the OSCE also serves as a framework for conventional arms control and CSBMs, the latter codified and updated in the latter updated in the 1999 **Vienna Document**. In 1994, the participating States adopted a politico-military **Code of Conduct**, setting out the principles to guide the role of the armed forces in democratic societies. In 2000, they decided to adopt a **Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons** to assist States in blocking the illicit trade.

In addition, the CSCE/OSCE has developed several mechanisms for peacefully settling disputes, including a **Court of Conciliation and Arbitration**. In 1999, the OSCE took under its auspices the **Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe**.

A distinct body, the **OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**, with more than 300 parliamentarians from OSCE participating States, exists to promote parliamentary involvement in the Organization's activities. In July 2006, Goeran Lenmarker of Sweden became President of the Assembly, which convenes to debate issues and adopt recommendations related to the role of the OSCE. Its members also engage in election monitoring, in full co-operation with the ODIHR. The Assembly's Secretariat is located in Copenhagen.

THE OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES

- Albania
- Andorra
- Armenia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Canada
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Holy See
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Malta
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Montenegro
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russian Federation
- San Marino
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Tajikistan
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- Uzbekistan

PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION

- Afghanistan
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Mongolia
- Thailand

MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION

- Algeria
- Egypt
- Israel
- Jordan
- Morocco
- Tunisia

OSCE IN FIGURES

OSCE Budget 2006: 168.2 million Euros. **Staff:** Some 3,400 people work for the OSCE, with the majority – around 2,800 staff – engaged in its 19 missions or field operations. There, the ratio of locally-contracted to international staff, paid by their “seconding” government, is roughly 4:1. In contrast, the Secretariat and the specialized Institutions (ODIHR, HCNM and RFOM) together employ some 500 staff out of the total of 3,400. These positions are divided almost evenly between internationally- and locally-recruited staff. Vacancies are posted regularly on the OSCE website www.osce.org/employment.

OSCE INSTITUTIONS

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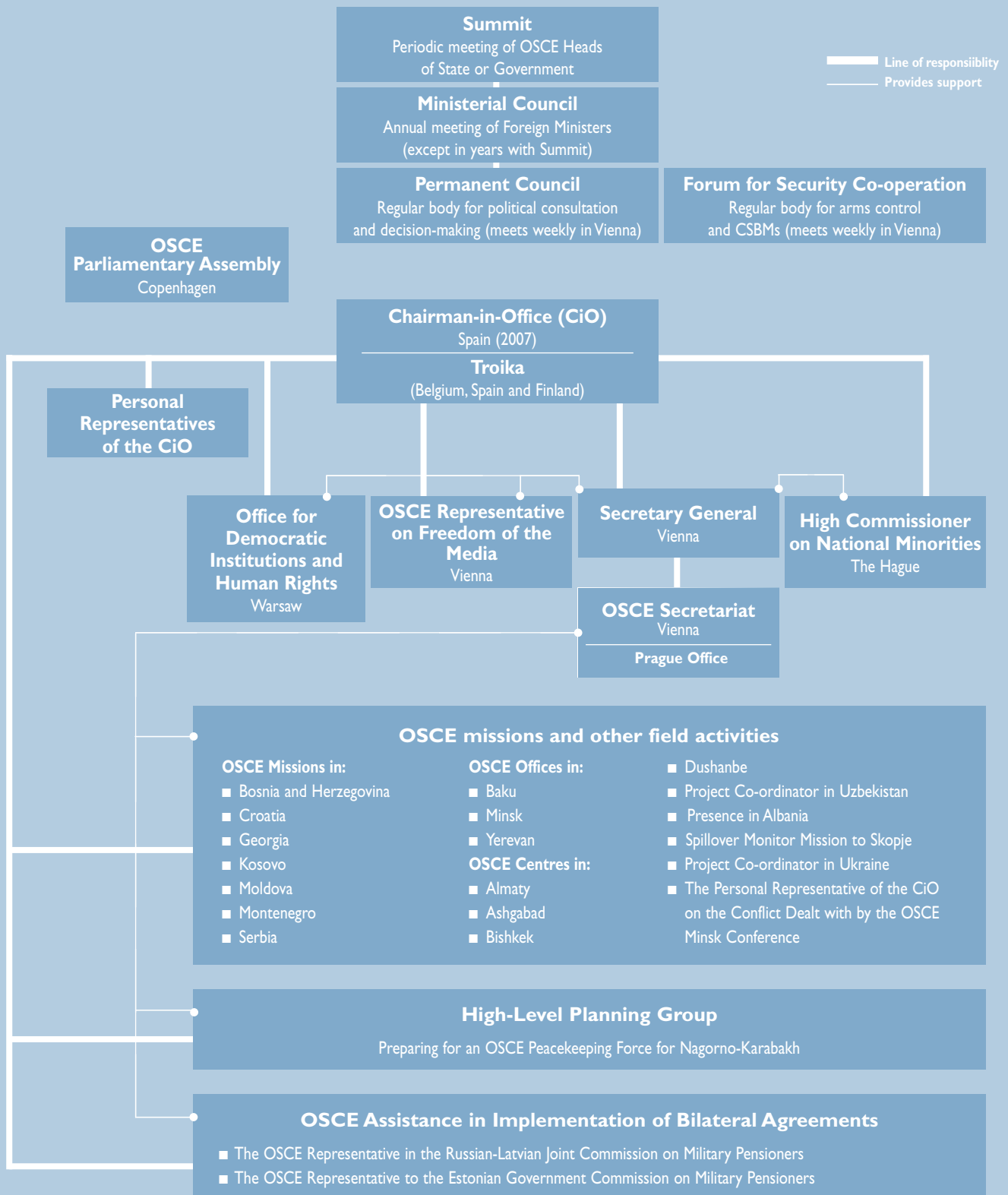
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

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STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS



OSCE-related bodies

Joint Consultative Group
Promotes implementation of CFE Treaty, meets regularly in Vienna

Open Skies Consultative Commission
Promotes implementation of Open Skies Treaty, meets regularly in Vienna

Court of Conciliation and Arbitration
Geneva