Chairmanship: Albania

2020 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

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CHAIRPERSON'S PERCEPTION

The 2020 Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) was held under one of the main themes of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship – "Building Stability through Dialogue" – and featured three days of intensive dialogue among the 57 OSCE participating States, 11 Partners for Co-operation and various international organizations. The Conference provided a platform for substantial exchanges and to review some of the most pressing security issues for the OSCE area: the crisis in and around Ukraine; conflict and crisis situations; the threats posed by transnational organized crime and terrorism; arms control and confidence- and security-building measures; and the OSCE toolbox for sustaining peace and security.

The exchanges during the opening session underlined the profound concern shared by participating States over the current security situation in Europe, with many delegations emphasizing the urgent need for the OSCE principles and commitments to be fully implemented and respected. The importance of engaging in a dialogue to review and assess the current challenges faced by the OSCE area was also stressed. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania, H.E. Mr. Edi Rama, reminded delegations that, without respect for what has been collectively undertaken, and without a genuine commitment to dialogue, participating States could not hope for, or expect to foster, a more stable and secure Europe. In the same vein, he encouraged delegations to undertake genuine efforts and make proposals for improving the current situation and building stability through dialogue. Many delegations echoed the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship's aspiration to strengthen the Organization's ability to make a difference on the ground. Several delegations stressed that it was necessary to make full use of the OSCE's tools, expertise and regional reach – notably through its 16 field operations – to build capacities and provide tangible security for people.

The special session on "Ensuring security and stability in the OSCE region in light of developments with respect to Ukraine" demonstrated the need for political will and a constructive approach in the efforts being undertaken towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Political commitments must be translated into action. Many delegations stressed the need for the OSCE principles and commitments to be respected and the Minsk agreements to be fully implemented. More has to be done to put into practice the conclusions agreed on at the Normandy Four summit held in Paris in December 2019. Further productive discussions and substantial efforts are needed within the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) format as well.

There was widespread agreement on the need for a full and comprehensive ceasefire. In that respect, strong concerns were expressed over civilian casualties, damage to civilian infrastructure, the threats posed by mines and unexploded ordnance, and the overall humanitarian and socio-economic impact of the conflict on civilians. The discussions underscored the vital role played by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) and drew attention to a number of alarming and unacceptable incidents in which the safety and security of SMM staff and assets had been threatened. Many delegations noted with concern that the restrictions faced by the SMM on its freedom of movement had been exacerbated by measures taken in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, some delegations noted the positive developments since the 2019 ASRC, including in particular the disengagement in near Stanytsia Luhanska and the repair of the broken section of the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, the renewal of disengagement in Zolote and Petrivske, several releases and exchanges of detainees, and the consensus in the TCG on the text of the so called "Steinmeier Formula".

The working session on transnational threats and security challenges focused on comprehensive approaches to tackling organized crime and terrorism, notably through enhanced co-operation among the participating States but also between the OSCE and other international organizations. The discussions underlined the importance of strong and resilient partnerships between governments, the public and private sectors, and civil society to enhance the OSCE's ability to counter transnational threats. As was highlighted by this session, the OSCE has a uniquely wide reach across various levels of society and is able to provide substantial "added value" in helping to build domestic, regional and international capacity to combat terrorism, organized crime and other transnational threats.

The COVID-19 crisis has made the fight against organized crime even more challenging, as organized crime groups have found new ways to engage in criminal activity, exploiting the vulnerabilities created by the pandemic. Efforts against organized crime, which drives illicit activities that undermine security and stability in the OSCE area, must be stepped up – among other things, by enhancing community resilience. Many delegations agreed on the need to jointly address emerging trends such as the misuse of technology for criminal activities and attempts by organized crime groups to expand their financial reach into the legitimate economy.

Many delegations stressed the need to tackle the nexus between terrorism and organized crime, in particular by countering illicit financing in an effective and comprehensive manner. In that specific area, the OSCE could enhance its assistance to participating States in relation to combating financial crime and money laundering, and also with regard to confiscating and recovering criminal assets. The discussions underscored the importance of reinforcing commitments and action to strengthen international co-operation, improve information exchange, and enhance the implementation of global standards in efforts to combat organized crime, which should be based on whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

The working session on conflict and crisis situations in the OSCE area explored how the Organization was keeping avenues of dialogue open even when faced with severe challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The keynote speakers emphasized the need to invest in building confidence, strengthen human rights, and make full use of agreed formats for dialogue and negotiation. The OSCE's tools and mechanisms must be used in a results-oriented manner. The transition from conflict to sustainable peace is a long-term endeavour requiring an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach with both long- and short-term objectives.

It was noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated the situation on the ground in several conflict zones across the OSCE area. In that regard, any measures restricting freedom of movement must be reversed as soon as possible in order to ensure that the lives and livelihoods of conflict-affected populations are protected.

The special session on the Structured Dialogue reaffirmed the importance of long-term constructive engagement and of striving for a joint understanding of security

among the participating States. Many delegations argued that the Structured Dialogue was a confidence- and security-building measure (CSBM) in its own right, and stressed the need to mitigate threat perceptions and engage in high-level political dialogue and military-to-military contacts. The exchanges on the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for transparency and co-operation, especially at times of crisis, in order to prevent incidents. Many delegations pointed out that it was necessary to continue to work together in resuming the full use of all available tools and instruments that were put on hold during the pandemic.

The special session also demonstrated that new technologies and voluntary measures for practical co-operation offered considerable scope for increasing the OSCE's ability to reduce risks, increase transparency and mitigate threat perceptions. Many delegations expressed their readiness to pay further attention to best practices in the prevention and management of military incidents.

During the working session on conventional arms control and CSBMs there was widespread agreement that the OSCE *acquis* – in particular the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe – must be preserved, as the instruments it comprised remain essential to security, stability and predictability in the OSCE area.

Many delegations acknowledged that the political context was challenging and that existing politico-military tools and commitments were under heavy strain. There was fundamental disagreement on some issues, such as compliance with OSCE commitments. For the OSCE's instruments to retain their value in a changing security landscape, it was necessary, in the view of many delegations, to fully implement and modernize them, including the 2011 Vienna Document.

During the working session on the conflict cycle there was broad agreement that the OSCE possessed the tools to stop violent crises and prevent conflicts from occurring in the first place. These tools include mechanisms for advancing long-term conflict prevention – notably by strengthening human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance, institutions and the rule of law – and efforts to respond to crises and facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Sustaining peace and security is a central goal of the OSCE's conflict cycle toolbox. Accordingly, many delegations noted that the strengthening of co-operation with both government and civil society actors, including women's groups and youth networks, remained crucial in order to promote comprehensive security on the ground and deliver tangible peace and security dividends for local communities. The need to enhance gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention and peace-building activities was stressed – an endeavour that involves ensuring the meaningful participation of women in peace processes and all other phases of the conflict cycle. For the OSCE's conflict cycle tools to be effective, it is necessary to ensure that the means of implementation are available and that there is sufficient political will on the part of all stakeholders.

In conclusion, the discussions during the 2020 ASRC were intense and at times controversial, but they were conducted in a frank atmosphere throughout all sessions. The discussions showed that there is profound concern over the current security situation in Europe, with OSCE principles and commitments continuing to be challenged in many ways.

Despite the differences in opinion that emerged, there was general awareness of the need to co-operate and further implement existing collective commitments. The discussions at all sessions of the Conference made it clear that the OSCE's principle of comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security remains essential to tackling the common challenges that the participating States must face together. The main conclusions from the Conference will guide the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship as it constructively advances the Organization's agenda in preparation for the Ministerial Council meeting due to take place in Tirana in December.

OPENING SESSION

Opening remarks:	H.E. Mr. E. Rama, Chairperson-in-Office, Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania
	Mr. T. Greminger, Secretary General of the OSCE
Moderator:	Ambassador I. Hasani, Chairperson of the Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna
Rapporteur:	Mr. F. Pema, Defence Adviser, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna

In his opening remarks, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, H.E. Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, stated that it was wrong to focus on challenging the actions of others or trading assertions and statistics; it was more important to use such scrutiny and evaluation for ensuring accountability, encouraging compliance and also focusing on conceiving, proposing and underlining actions capable of actually remedying the current situation. Mr. Rama underlined the need to reflect on the security implications of the crisis, which however should not shift attention from the fulfilling of existing commitments. Furthermore, regarding the conflicts, which were continuing to claim lives, exacerbate civilian hardship and take an especially heavy toll on women and children, it was time to pull back from hostilities and put aside mistrust and animosity. There was an urgent need to act in a spirit of solidarity, in full respect for OSCE principles and commitments and in full implementation of the Minsk agreements and other commitments, with one foremost priority being the reinvigoration of the Trilateral Contact Group aiming at a full and comprehensive ceasefire with the OSCE as a mediator.

Mr. Rama continued by stating that special attention must constantly be paid to women and girls in conflict prevention and resolution. In view of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, efforts to promote an enabling environment for women's meaningful participation needed to be redoubled. It was also time to make real progress in countering terrorism and organized crime in order to enable the OSCE to continue to offer a credible contribution in this field, building effective partnerships and strengthening participating States' capacities. The way to achieve this was to take a more holistic view of the impact of organized crime and terrorism in the OSCE area, not tackling crime in one area alone but looking across the whole cycle from prevention to recovering criminal assets, independently of institutional divisions, without neglecting cybersecurity across the OSCE area and, more generally, the implementation of the OSCE's confidence-building measures.

The Chairperson-in-Office also pointed out that there was a need not only to protect such proud commitments as the confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), including the Vienna Document 2011, which were essential tools for peace and security, but also to update, modernize and reinvigorate them in order to cope with a changing landscape.

To do this would be to demonstrate the part they have to play in ensuring transparency and risk reduction and to show that the OSCE possesses the means to tread this difficult path.

The OSCE Secretary General, Mr. Thomas Greminger, stated that the COVID-19 pandemic was not only a global health crisis but also a geopolitical event of historical proportions with immediate implications for peace and security. It was a stark reminder that the security of individual States is not only interconnected but interdependent and that we can best protect ourselves by working together to protect each other. This was the core concept of co-operative security, the bedrock principle of the OSCE. However, the pandemic could also offer a window of opportunity to increase trust across conflict divides by addressing threats to health and people's lives. The OSCE supported communication and co-operation wherever possible, but there was still insufficient political will to engage on measures to help conflict-affected populations and build confidence.

There was a need, the Secretary General continued, for the participating States to reaffirm their commitments to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building in the light of the anniversaries of the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter and the Astana Declaration, and to take stock of achievements in order to consider how to complement and further strengthen the toolbox. Also, in line with United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, celebrating its 20th anniversary in the current year, there was great scope for exploring ways to increase cross-dimensional synergies, further mainstreaming gender into instruments, substantially increasing the meaningful engagement of women in all phases of the conflict cycle, and adapting instruments to contemporary conflicts and security threats, not least by an increased use of conventional and new technology.

The Structured Dialogue, Mr. Greminger observed, remained a vital platform for inclusive discussions of threat perceptions as well as of military transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention. In addition to having incubated ideas on how to tackle shared security challenges, it had proved to be a crucial format for high-level participation from capitals and by military experts. As such it was especially important at the present time when trust was low and misinterpretation and miscalculation posed serious risks.

Regarding the Vienna Document, the focus should be on better implementation and incremental improvements. There was a need for participating States to engage in constructive and non-political debate at expert level, while addressing concerns about new threats reflecting the growing uncertainty, instability and tensions in the OSCE area.

Discussion

Twelve delegations took the floor, confirming the participating States' regard for the ASRC as a platform offering opportunities to discuss and review current security challenges and threats in the OSCE area, with a view to reinforcing collective efforts in the implementation of OSCE commitments related to politico-military aspects of security. What was needed, they emphasized, was respect and genuine commitment to dialogue aimed at fostering closer co-operation between States and offering a path towards a more stable and secure Europe. The participating States, it was reiterated, must pull back from hostilities, put aside mistrust and animosity and act in a spirit of solidarity to work towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Now more than ever, there was a need for political will, in order to prevent the exacerbation and further escalation of conflicts. The undertaken commitments be fully implemented. At the same time, the OSCE's tools at disposal to prevent conflicts,

notably the tools for reinforcing good governance, the rule of law and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, must be strengthened.

A number of delegates focused on the postponement of CSBM activities owing to the ongoing pandemic. The CSBMs were, it was asserted, essential to building confidence and trust among the participating States. The majority of the participating States that took the floor stated that there was a need for the long overdue substantial update and modernization of the Vienna Document. The Proposal for a VD Plus Draft Decision (FSC.DEL/213/19/Rev.2) aimed at modernizing the Vienna Document and currently supported by 34 participating States had the potential to increase military transparency and reduce military risks for the benefit of all participating States.

Several participating States stated that they did not accept the continuous anti-NATO narrative. NATO, they asserted, was a defensive alliance whose actions were a measured and proportionate response to aggressive activities on the part of others.

With regard to the Structured Dialogue, which was considered a CSBM in itself and appreciated as an additional, informal platform for participating States to discuss challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area, many participating States expressed their disappointment that one participating State had declined to take part in the discussion of hybrid threats at the June meeting, in spite of such threats being of such great concern to a large number of participating States.

Several participating States stated that they still considered the Open Skies Treaty a landmark arms control mechanism, in spite of current implementation challenges, certain limitations imposed by one participating State, and the announcement of its withdrawal by another.

Other participating States supported the appeal of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres for an immediate global ceasefire in support of the greater fight against COVID-19. Given the limitations on monitoring activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they called for all parties to refrain from actions that could aggravate the situation in conflict areas.

The main lesson of the current crisis, it was asserted, was that success in the fight against a pandemic was impossible without solidarity, mutual trust, partnership, mobilization of efforts and joint consolidated actions on the part of all countries and international organizations. All participating States noted with appreciation that even under the pandemic the OSCE was successfully managing to be fully operational.

The majority of the participating States fully supported the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States within their internationally recognized borders. They called for the resolution of conflicts in the OSCE area.

The keynote speakers and several participating States called for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) to be respected and granted full access everywhere in compliance with its mandate. The SMM was regarded as the eyes and ears of the Organization, ensuring an unbiased and objective assessment of the situation on the ground. Many participating States stated that the pandemic should not be used as a pretext to target

and limit or disrupt the Mission's mandate. One participating State recalled that it had asked the SMM for a consolidated report on civilian casualties covering the period since 2014.

Certain participating States proposed that the best way to build more trust in the OSCE area would be to engage in constructive dialogue and revitalize the confidence-building tools. Several delegations observed that the OSCE was the organization best suited to that task.

Noting the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, a number of participating States stated that in the present situation there was a need to strengthen the concept of comprehensive and co-operative security grounded in shared principles conceived to build trust and reduce tensions.

Finally, noting the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, the participating States stressed the need to redouble efforts to promote an enabling environment for women's meaningful participation and engagement in all phases of the conflict cycle. Gender mainstreaming and gender equality should be integral parts of our policies.

Conclusions and recommendations

1.   The ASRC is an indispensable event for assessing current security challenges by engaging in constructive dialogue aimed at finding ways forward. The ASRC also offers an opportunity to listen and reflect.

2.   Many delegations underlined the importance of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. However, its approach can only be comprehensive if all participating States adhere to common principles and implement common commitments. Given the current security challenges and threats, there is a need for more political will from the participating States.

3.   Continued dialogue is of fundamental importance; only through open and frank discussions can better understanding and common ground be gained.

4.   The Minsk agreements must be implemented in full and the SMM must be allowed to perform its tasks in line with its mandate with no restrictions.

5.   Settlement and resolution must be achieved in all conflict areas.

6.   The full implementation of current commitments, including the update and modernization of the Vienna Document to adapt it to the current security situation in the OSCE area, is of paramount importance.

7.   Bearing in mind the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, there is a need to strengthen the concept of comprehensive security as a means to reduce tensions and help build and reinforce trust and confidence.

8.   In the 20th anniversary year of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, more must be done to further promote the full and meaningful participation of women in

conflict prevention and peace processes, which is essential to the advancement of sustainable peace and security.

SPECIAL SESSION: ENSURING SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE OSCE REGION IN LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS WITH RESPECT TO UKRAINE

Keynote speakers:	Ambassador H. Grau, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group
	Mr. Y. Halit Çevik, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine
	Ambassador O. Herasymenko, Ambassador-at-large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
	Ms. O. Lubrani, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine
	Ms. F. Gillette, Head of Delegation for Ukraine, International Committee of the Red Cross
Moderator:	Mr. T. Greminger, OSCE Secretary General
Rapporteur:	Ms. E. Çalışkan, Permanent Mission of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna

The moderator, Mr. Thomas Greminger, Secretary General of the OSCE, opened the session by noting the absence of significant results in the efforts to resolve the crisis in and around Ukraine and by emphasizing that progress was needed on all tracks of the settlement process. The COVID-19 pandemic had aggravated the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine, with the closure of crossing points along the line of contact, making it harder for people to receive medical treatment. Of great concern were the continuing civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure, the problems of access faced by humanitarian actors on the ground, the additional restrictions on the freedom of movement of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), as well as the incidents endangering the safety and security of Mission members and targeting its physical assets. The OSCE remained ready to offer its good offices, however, it was essential for all the sides to demonstrate their goodwill.

Ambassador Heidi Grau, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), began her address by observing how the conflict was already in its seventh year, and that the children who were due to start school for the first time in September had been born after the outbreak of the conflict. She then cited the negative developments that had taken place since the last Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) in 2019: the COVID-19 pandemic, which, among other things, had complicated the TCG discussions; the growing divide between government- and non-government-controlled areas in Ukraine; the continuing civilian casualties, which highlighted the need for a lasting ceasefire regime and increased mine action (an improved security environment was a requirement for further steps towards full implementation of the Minsk agreements); and alarming trends with regard to the SMM's working environment. As

for the positive developments, she cited the implementation of the previously agreed disengagement in Stanytsia Luhanska and the renewed disengagement in Zolote and Petrivske, the reconstruction of the bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska, the various releases and exchanges of detainees, and the consensus reached at the TCG on the text of the "Steinmeier formula". Those encouraging developments had paved the way for the Normandy Four summit held in Paris in December 2019. However, it was a cause for concern that, despite two subsequent exchanges of detainees and one ceasefire recommitment, most of the common agreed conclusions of the Paris summit had not yet been implemented. The sides had shown a tendency to prioritize the discussion of procedural matters over focused work on substantive issues. Intensified discussions on some of the open issues were, however, expected to take place over the coming weeks. The Normandy Four had been working hard to expedite the settlement process, but it was crucial for all the OSCE participating States to remain engaged.

Mr. Yaşar Halit Çevik, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, provided an overview of the developments in the disengagement processes and related mine action activities, together with an update on the most recent meeting of the TCG Working Group on Security Issues, which had featured productive discussions on mine action and disengagement. The Chief Monitor emphasized that the SMM's effectiveness was due in large measure to its impartiality and rigorous standards in the corroboration of information. Since the beginning of the year, the SMM had reported a gradual increase in ceasefire violations, marked by several spikes and the escalation of aggressive rhetoric between the sides. There had been a rise in reported civilian casualties in recent months, many due to the explosion of mines and unexploded ordnance. In May, the SMM had noted the highest number of reported civilian casualties in two years. The Mission was corroborating those reports, despite a reduced capacity owing to the pandemic and systematic restrictions on its freedom of movement. There had also been a rise in the number of reported incidents of damage to civilian infrastructure. In recent months there had been a significant increase in the impediments faced by the SMM in the implementation of its mandate, especially with regard to the Mission's freedom of movement and the safety and security of its personnel and physical assets. Those impediments included the onerous conditions for crossing the line of contact that had been imposed after the onset of the pandemic. Additionally, the SMM had observed negative trends in the disengagement areas, with monitoring becoming increasingly difficult, notably in Petrivske, especially after the deliberate destruction of the Mission's camera in the area. A further SMM camera had been destroyed in Shyrokyne as recently as 22 June. Several incidents of gunfire or explosions close to SMM patrols, and the Mission's unmanned aerial vehicles were constantly targeted by small-arms fire. In view of such developments, the SMM "reserve[d] the right to reconsider its operational posture". The Chief Monitor stressed that political commitments must be translated into action and encouraged the participating States to use their influence to ensure that the sides assumed their responsibilities for normalizing the situation. While the SMM could not on its own bring peace, it could serve as an essential instrument in the resolution of the conflict by supporting the implementation of the commitments made by the sides, if it is not prevented from doing so.

Ambassador-at-Large Oleh Herasymenko from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine emphasized that the Russian Federation's destabilizing actions – notably its illegal attempt to annex part of the territory of a neighbouring country, the building up of its military presence in Donbas, its transformation of the Crimean peninsula and the surrounding waters into a "military outpost", and its persecution of the Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians in Crimea

– were a major security challenge for the whole OSCE area. Violations of international law must not become a "new normal" in Europe. The presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine in 2019 had opened a window of opportunity for Ukraine and the Russian Federation to accelerate negotiations on a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Ukraine for its part had taken a number of steps to that end. Thus, it had indicated its agreement to the text of the "Steinmeier formula"; renewed by a further year the "Law on the Special Order of the Local Self-Government in Certain Areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk Regions"; committed itself to finalizing the disengagement of forces and hardware in three agreed areas; initiated a 24/7 format of consultations within the TCG during the pandemic; strengthened the composition of its delegation to the TCG; and included representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in that delegation. Those steps had not been reciprocated by the Russian Federation, which, instead, had continued to issue passports to Ukrainian citizens and engaged them to vote in the Russian constitutional referendum. H.E. Mr. Herasymenko expressed his concern over the military convoys sent across the uncontrolled segment of the border. He underlined Ukraine's appreciation of the role played by the OSCE, through its mediation efforts in the TCG, as well as through the SMM and OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk. The imposition of any restrictions on the SMM's freedom of movement and the targeting of its assets were unacceptable. Greater transparency at the border was key to reducing hostilities. It was also important to think about the role to be played by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in the local elections to be held in eastern Ukraine. Resolution of the conflict was possible only if Ukraine regained control over Donbas and Crimea, and H.E. Mr. Herasymenko urged both the participating States and the OSCE Secretariat to explore possible ways of strengthening the OSCE's engagement on Crimea.

Ms. Osnat Lubrani, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, cited recent examples of progress in the humanitarian situation, such as the repair of the bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska and the improvement of the infrastructure at other crossing points. However, the conflict dynamics remained fundamentally unchanged. The COVID-19 crisis had made it even harder to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need. Ms. Lubrani underlined the close co-operation between the United Nations, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the TCG, and the SMM. Daily shelling and the explosion of landmines and unexploded remnants of war continued to cause civilian casualties. The conflict was further marred by instances of enforced disappearance, arbitrary and incommunicado detention, torture and ill-treatment. The United Nations' current lack of access to the detention facilities in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine was a cause for concern. Ms. Lubrani gave an overview of the potentially devastating socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on poverty, unemployment and the situation of women. The pandemic had exacerbated two long-standing concerns: freedom of movement and access to pensions and social benefits. The closure of entry-exit checkpoints (EECPs) had so far prevented almost half a million people from crossing the line of contact. Ms. Lubrani encouraged the relevant actors to co-ordinate with one another and communicate their plans for reopening and operating the EECPs. The United Nations fully supported discussions on the opening of two additional EECPs in Shchastia and Zolote. The procedures for civilians to access social benefits and pensions remained limited. On the whole, it was alarming to see the humanitarian space being increasingly instrumentalized for political purposes. Co-ordination, communication and connectivity were the key principles that all the actors had to embrace if they wished to make further progress.

Ms. Florence Gillette, Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Delegation for Ukraine, expressed her concern over the civilian casualties, especially those that were due to incidents involving mines and unexploded ordnance. The ICRC teams working close to the line of contact had been forced to suspend their activities because of ongoing hostilities. She commended the work of the technicians and engineers from the Voda Donbasa water company, and praised the SMM for its contribution in facilitating the security of those essential workers. Improvement of the infrastructure at the crossing point in Stanytsia Luhanska would help to uphold the dignity of people in the region. A way had to be found of balancing the measures introduced to contain the pandemic, on the one hand, and people's needs, on the other, which in some cases meant their being able to cross the line of contact. Until the conflict was resolved, it was essential for access to humanitarian aid and other humanitarian measures to continue. Ms. Gillette concluded by highlighting the situation of families with relatives who had been detained or gone missing during the conflict. Their concerns could not be traded as commodities in political talks. Rather, those families were entitled to learn the truth and to be treated with dignity.

Discussion

The participating States generally expressed their regret that there had recently been no significant progress towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis in and around Ukraine, emphasizing that political will was necessary to change that. Many delegations pointed out that the developments with respect to Ukraine constituted the most pressing challenge to security and stability in the OSCE area. Furthermore, they supported the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, expressed concern over the attempted annexation of Crimea, and called for respect for OSCE principles and commitments and for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. While some delegations urged one participating State to use its influence over the armed formations in order to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine, one participating State stressed that the key to resolution of the conflict in southeast Ukraine lay with the Ukrainians themselves, with the establishment of direct dialogue between Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk.

There was broad agreement on the need for a full and comprehensive ceasefire in view of the alarming developments in the situation on the ground: the continuing civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure, the threats posed by mines and unexploded ordnance, and the conflict's humanitarian and socio-economic impact on civilians, which had been intensified by the pandemic. One participating State called on the sides to stop their indiscriminate shelling of residential areas and civilian infrastructure, while another highlighted the situation around critical infrastructure and called for the creation of safety zones around such sites. A number of participating States referred to the importance of effective border monitoring in achieving a sustainable ceasefire. One participating State lamented that without a mechanism to military contacts – such as that provided by the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination, from which the Russian Federation had withdrawn – it was almost inevitable that ceasefire violations would continue.

Several participating States referred to the disengagement in Stanytsia Luhanska and the repair of the broken section of the bridge there, the renewal of the disengagement in Zolote and Petrivske, the various releases and exchanges of detainees and the consensus reached in the TCG on the text of the "Steinmeier formula". All those positive developments since the last ASRC demonstrated that progress was possible if the political will was there. The participating States agreed that, regretfully, progress had been limited on the

implementation of common agreed conclusions of the Normandy Four summit held in Paris in December 2019 – with the release and exchange of detainees being the only area in which progress had been made since then – and they expressed the hope that constructive discussions would take place in the TCG. One participating State appealed to the sides not to weaken the TCG by questioning its well-established format or working groups. While a number of participating States commended the attitude shown by Ukraine at the TCG, one participating State expressed regret on Ukraine's stance, citing the lack of progress on reaching agreement on additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire and on the socio-economic provisions of the Minsk agreements. That participating State also referred to Ukraine's inclusion of displaced persons in its delegation to the TCG as an attempt to edge the representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions out of the negotiation process, and pointed out that the plan on establishing an Advisory Council under the TCG Working Group on Political Issues had not been realized.

The rise in the number of incidents in which the safety and security of the SMM staff had been threatened was described as unacceptable by most participating States, as were the increased targeting of the Mission's physical assets and the restrictions on its freedom of movement. Many delegations stated that those restrictions had been exacerbated by the measures taken by the armed formations following the onset of the pandemic, which was being used as a pretext. Some participating States referred to the importance of allowing international organizations and humanitarian workers to continue operating effectively during the pandemic. Regarding the restrictions on the SMM's freedom of movement, one participating State pointed out that they were reasonable and milder than restrictions introduced elsewhere, and that the Mission was refusing to communicate directly with the representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Several participating States expressed their concern over the dire human rights situation in Donbas and Crimea, some referring specifically to the plight of ethnic and religious minority groups such as the Crimean Tatars and Jehovah's Witnesses. Some speakers expressed further concern over the militarization of the Crimean Peninsula and the Black Sea. A number of participating States criticized the steps taken by one participating State to simplify the process whereby Ukrainian citizens could receive passports issued by it and also the conscription of Crimean residents into its armed forces. One participating State called for international observers to have access to Crimea, including the detention facilities there, while another urged the OSCE institutions to remain seized of the situation in Crimea.

Conclusions and recommendations

1.   Six years after its outbreak, the crisis in and around Ukraine remains the most pressing challenge to security and stability in the OSCE area. Political will and a constructive approach are required to ensure the success of efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution of this crisis. Political commitments need to be translated into action. The sides should assume their responsibilities for normalizing the situation.

2.   Many participants called for OSCE principles and commitments to be respected and for the Minsk agreements to be implemented fully.

3.   The common agreed conclusions of the Normandy summit held in Paris in December 2019 have been realized only to a limited extent. The sides need to focus on fully implementing these conclusions.

4.   The participants expressed their hope for productive discussions in the TCG. At the same time, there were calls for a more focused approach to substantive issues during these discussions.

5.   A full and comprehensive ceasefire needs to be put in place. Civilian casualties, damage to civilian infrastructure, the threats posed by mines and unexploded ordnance, and the tremendous humanitarian and socio-economic impact of the conflict on civilians are matters of the gravest concern which must be addressed immediately. The closure of the EECPs following the pandemic has led to further hardship for civilians, and their reopening should be planned in a co-ordinated manner. Furthermore, the sides must adhere to the localized ceasefire arrangements around critical civilian infrastructure.

6.   The increasing number of incidents threatening the safety and security of the SMM staff and the deliberate targeting of the Mission's physical assets were described as alarming and unacceptable developments. Many participants also called for the restrictions on freedom of movement faced by the SMM – and exacerbated by the measures taken in response to the pandemic – to be lifted, as they hindered the Mission from implementing its mandate throughout the country.

7.   The disengagement in Stanytsia Luhanska and the repair of the broken section of the bridge there, the renewal of the disengagement in Zolote and Petrivske, the various releases and exchanges of detainees, and the consensus reached in the TCG on the text of the "Steinmeier formula" were all noted as positive developments since the last ASRC. Progress is clearly possible if the political will is there.

WORKING SESSION I: TRANSNATIONAL THREATS – CURRENT AND FUTURE TRENDS IN THE OSCE AREA AND BEYOND

Keynote speakers:
Ambassador V. E. Tarabrin, Director of the Department for New Challenges and Threats, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Mr. P. Vaky, Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe/Near East, Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training, United States Department of Justice

Ms. E. Kaçkini, Prosecutor at the Special Structure against Corruption and Organized Crime, Albania

Additional speaker:
Ambassador A. Kupchyna, OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats

Moderator:
Ambassador N. Bush, Head of the United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE and Chair of the OSCE Security Committee

Rapporteur:
Mr. J. Lee, United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE

In his opening remarks, the moderator emphasized the multifaceted nature of transnational organized crime, which undermines the rule of law and erodes trust in institutions. He stressed the need for a holistic view of the challenge in order to combat it effectively. That meant considering the whole cycle of action against crime – from prevention, through investigation and the administration of justice, to rehabilitation. The linkages between organized crime and other illegal activities, such as terrorism, were also highlighted, as was the need to trace and disrupt illicit financial channels in order to dismantle the nexus between terrorist and organized crime groups.

The first keynote speaker, Ambassador Vladimir Tarabrin, began by observing that the COVID-19 pandemic had not reduced the threat of organized crime; rather, it had created new complexities. The socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, coupled with increased digitalization, could lead to amplified radicalization of individuals and groups.

Ambassador Tarabrin argued that there was scope for the OSCE to be doing more to combat both terrorism and transnational organized crime. By drawing on the experience that was already available within the OSCE, the Organization's work could be brought into line with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Supressing terrorist financing channels was a key task in combating terrorism and transnational organized crime; it was, however, still an underexplored area. Attention should in particular be paid to the way in which terrorist groups legally set up commercial structures and financial institutions and then used those illegally to make profits and finance terrorism. A broader effort was also required to investigate foreign terrorist fighters. The supply of weapons to terrorists was difficult to trace, as weapons were often channelled through 'shell' companies in third countries and companies that were outwardly engaged in the legal supply of weapons.

The threat of drug trafficking was another area that remained relatively unexplored within the OSCE. Unlike other regional organizations, the OSCE did not have an effective mechanism to combat drug trafficking. In closing, Ambassador Tarabrin stressed that the OSCE had significant potential to enhance its contribution to international efforts aimed at countering the threat of transnational organized crime.

The second keynote speaker, Mr. Paul Vaky, opened his address by noting that increasing globalization had led to cross-border movement and transactions becoming an everyday part of people's lives. Criminal and terrorist organizations, which in the past had tended to view borders as a hindrance, were increasingly able to exploit technology and other conveniences of globalization to conduct their unlawful activities with greater ease.

Mr. Vaky continued by detailing the necessary practices and tools for a justice sector to be able to combat transnational organized crime effectively. He emphasized the importance of a systematic approach to tackling criminal enterprises, such as treating cases involving organized crime as part of a 'network of crime', rather than isolated criminal acts. The proactive investigation and prosecution of such organizations helped to strike at the root of organized crime. The use of task forces could be crucial in that respect. Such task forces – which brought together investigators, prosecutors, forensic scientists, experts in information and other technologies, subject matter experts, and other relevant officials and staff from law enforcement agencies, government bodies and NGOs – had been deployed to great success in the United States to combat transnational organized crime.

Corruption at all levels, and in both the public and private sectors, constituted an essential asset for organized crime groups. Tackling all types of corruption was a fundamental strand of efforts to combat transnational organized crime. Corruption cases were, however, among the most difficult cases to prosecute successfully. Building capacity for the effective investigation and prosecution of corruption was vital in that respect. Mr. Vaky concluded by stressing that the speed with which digital evidence moved through the Internet and across national borders meant that investigators and prosecutors had to become much more familiar with, and effective, at searching for, obtaining and presenting such evidence to support criminal charges.

The final keynote speaker, Ms. Elida Kaçkini, began by highlighting that organized crime was a derivative of globalization and coexisted with it. Organized crime was becoming increasingly transnational, and was characterized by ever more complex organizational structures. Ms. Kaçkini elaborated on the diverse nature of contemporary crime groups, which undertook activities across various forms of organized crime and were heavily involved in money laundering to move the profits of their illicit activities. The use of such profits to finance terrorism was a cause for great concern. The nexus between organized crime and terrorism manifested itself not only through the movement of profits, but also through the smuggling of weapons and people, and the production of falsified and forged documents.

Ms. Kaçkini continued by observing that organized crime did not respect any borders, and that efforts to combat it should therefore also know no borders, nor should it be obstructed by national bureaucracy. The barrier to co-operation created by national borders could be overcome by creating effective legal instruments and supporting international bodies that facilitated the immediate exchange of relevant information. On a similar note, joint

investigative teams were highly useful in conducting fast and timely investigations across borders and in the countries to which criminal activity extended.

There were a number of areas that Ms. Kaçkini saw as essential to combating transnational organized crime. Effective networks for co-operation between countries should be established. Law enforcement agencies needed to understand which and how criminal groups were operating within a country's territory. Government agencies must be accountable, transparent, trusted and have integrity. Greater investment in crime prevention, particularly through co-operation with NGOs and civil society, could help to prevent individuals in situations of vulnerability and groups from becoming involved in criminal activity.

As the final speaker of the session, Ambassador Alena Kupchyna presented a report in which she first highlighted the intricate landscape of transnational organized crime and the additional complexity brought about by the COVID-19 crisis. She emphasized the need for participating States to co-operate on combating transnational security threats, and confirmed the OSCE's readiness to support them in that endeavour. The added value brought by the OSCE lay in its holistic and comprehensive approach to security. The OSCE was able to assist participating States seeking to improve their capabilities across the entire criminal justice chain, from law enforcement, through prosecution, to the judiciary. Moreover, the OSCE could support States in the development of national strategies and action plans against organized crime.

Ambassador Kupchyna continued by singling out some evolving areas of organized crime that warranted additional attention, such as the link between terrorism and organized crime – in particular, the financing of terrorist groups through the profits of organized crime. Similarly, addressing the recent increase in cybercrime, and the related issue of how to handle volatile digital evidence, required a co-ordinated and co-operative approach. A whole-of-society approach – involving, among others, civil society and youth was crucial to tackle transnational organized crime effectively.

In concluding, Ambassador Kupchyna highlighted the need to develop co-ordinated and effective international co-operation in response to transnational organized crime. It was a question not merely of co-operation between States and within the OSCE, but also of co-operation with other relevant actors, including multilateral organisations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and INTERPOL.

Discussion

All participating States who made a statement welcomed the discussion on transnational organized crime, emphasized the importance of that threat, and agreed that it could only be tackled effectively on the basis of co-operation between States.

One delegation mentioned the need for a holistic, cross-dimensional, whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to address organized crime. Joint investigations were an important tool for tackling transnational organized crime, and the OSCE was supporting the development of relevant platforms for this purpose. The OSCE's regional reach through its field missions meant that it could play a vital role in helping to prevent and tackle organized crime. Moreover, the OSCE's unique comprehensive concept of security lent itself to a holistic approach in such efforts.

One delegation speaking on behalf of a number of delegations mentioned that the COVID-19 crisis had accentuated the need for closer co-operation across the OSCE area, as organized crime groups were seeking to exploit the pandemic for their own benefit. The same delegation drew attention to the increasingly transnational nature of organized crime and its links with other threats, notably terrorism. A whole-of-society approach – with the engagement, *inter alia*, of civil society – was necessary to prevent and counter organized crime and its links with terrorism. It was also important to have effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions that functioned in accordance with the rule of law and operated under democratic oversight and control to prevent and counter organized crime and its links with terrorism.

Another delegation emphasized the need to eliminate corruption and increase transparency as necessary steps in tackling organized crime. Preventing racially or ethnically motivated terrorism was a key priority, and the recent government designation of an organization in relation to racially or ethnically motivated terrorism was cited as an effort to counter this threat. Similarly, the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters was also a key priority. The delegation closed its statement by calling for human rights and fundamental freedoms to be respected as part of strengthening efforts to combat transnational threats.

One delegation highlighted the impact of the pandemic on cybercrime, including the use of the Internet by terrorist and organized crime groups to spread propaganda and recruit individuals. It was becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between terrorist and organized crime groups, as they became intertwined in their objectives of making money through criminal activity and financing terrorism. Democratic institutions and the rule of law were two major pillars of society threatened by organized crime and terrorism.

Another delegation pointed out that transnational security threats endangered human rights and hindered sustainable development. The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security was a unique asset that could be used to prevent and tackle such threats through co-operation across the OSCE area. The delegation referred to cyberattacks as a growing threat, and mentioned a recent attack that had taken place within its country's territory. It also cited recent domestic efforts against transnational threats, including the amendment of national legislation to more strongly criminalize terrorism, and the development of a strategy and action plan to fight terrorism. The delegation noted the need for preventive measures as a matter of priority and highlighted the role of women and youth.

One delegation referred to transnational threats as being cross-cutting in their nature and requiring a holistic approach to overcome. The convergence of transnational threats required a comprehensive approach to deliver a successful outcome in combating them. The delegation highlighted the need to work closely with multilateral organisations and agencies, in particular the UNODC, and to make use of the frameworks established by the United Nations. Territories beyond the control of participating States posed a specific challenge when it came to preventing and tackling organized crime.

Given the risks posed by transnational threats to the OSCE area, another delegation emphasized the need for greater solidarity and effective multilateralism in combating them. Commitments and tools developed within the OSCE could only be effective if fully implemented. The OSCE's efforts to counter transnational threats needed to be refocussed,

revisited and streamlined. The security risk posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters gave considerable cause for concern.

One delegation observed that hybrid threats could have serious consequences for regional security, and explained that its country had initiated the development of a national strategic document to deal with such threats. The delegation was willing to share its country's experience and to support other countries' capacity-building efforts aimed at promoting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to transnational threats. The increased frequency of cyberattacks during the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the relevance of such threats. The full implementation of OSCE commitments in the politico-military dimension was a priority for the delegation, which also called on the OSCE to harness its full potential to combat transnational threats.

A representative of a regional organization noted the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to transnational threats, including the risk of increased recruitment by terrorist and extremist groups. It was important to support education policies that countered the spread of terrorist ideologies, and to co-operate on international cybersecurity issues. Closer monitoring and the collection of more comprehensive data on illicit activities would help in identifying trends and addressing transnational threats. The representative called for stronger co-operation between his organization and the OSCE and other multilateral bodies.

Conclusions and recommendations

1.   Organized crime has become one of the most complex and dynamic transnational threats affecting the entire OSCE area. The grave risks it poses to regional and national stability and security must be addressed. Closer international co-operation and co-ordination are required to tackle the changing nature of organized crime.

2.   The OSCE has a role to play in preventing and countering transnational organized crime and could be doing more to assist participating States to tackle these threats through its comprehensive approach to security. It was noted that the OSCE has a niche role to play on the ground, working with governments and civil society actors to strengthen a comprehensive approach to tackling this threat. The assistance provided by the OSCE should complement the efforts of other international organizations.

3.   It is vital to promote capacity-building as a means to assist States in the fight against transnational organized crime and to help them meet global standards in key operational areas. The OSCE has a unique reach across various levels of society, which it can use to foster the development of national, regional and international capabilities and partnerships aimed at combating organized crime.

4.   It is important to employ a whole of government approach to tackling transnational organized crime, with effective flows of information between domestic agencies. There must be close co-operation between justice and law enforcement and the private sector to ensure thorough investigation and prosecution of those involved in organized crime.

5.   Many participating States referred to the importance of a whole-of-society approach in combating organized crime. Further work is necessary in this field to address the drivers and facilitators of organized crime, and to prevent vulnerable individuals and groups from being recruited into organized crime.

6.   There was a broad consensus on the linkages between terrorism and organized crime, and the pivotal role of tracking and confiscating money trails to combat illicit financial networks, which form linkages between organized crime and terrorist activities.

7.   Many participating States shared their views that the COVID-19 pandemic had made the fight against organized crime even more challenging, with organized crime groups finding new ways of undertaking criminal activities and exploiting vulnerabilities created by the pandemic. This was particularly evident in the recent rise in attempts to exploit technology for criminal purposes.

WORKING SESSION II: CONFLICT AND CRISIS SITUATIONS IN THE OSCE AREA: BUILDING SECURITY AND CONFIDENCE

Keynote speakers:	Ms. K. Marty, State Secretary, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
	H.E. Mr. R. Michalka, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus
	H.E. Mr. T. Mayr-Harting, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transdniestrian Settlement Process
Moderator:	H.E. Ms. P. Laivola de Rosière, Permanent Representative of Finland to the OSCE
Rapporteur:	Ms. M. Wyss Ross, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the OSCE, the United Nations and other international organizations in Vienna

The State Secretary of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Krystyna Marty, observed that the current volatile security environment in the OSCE area was marked by the polarization of political views, an upsurge in violent extremism, and by active and frozen conflicts. Constructive dialogue and political will were key to finding solutions. At times of crisis and conflict it was essential to have capable leadership. Ms. Marty outlined Switzerland's activities in the field of conflict resolution and crisis management and their impact within the OSCE area. Her country's efforts were based on the premise that peace and security could only be sustained if human rights were respected. The COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated humanitarian crises worldwide and had the potential to create new ones. As part of its humanitarian commitment, Switzerland had therefore, among other things, funded a project aimed at mobilizing civil society in conflict regions. Measures to combat the pandemic in Georgia had highlighted the significant capacity gap between the government-controlled areas and non-government controlled areas. The transition from conflict to sustainable peace was a long-term endeavour requiring an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach with both long- and short-term objectives. Ms. Marty gave examples of situations in which Switzerland had offered its good offices. Noting the efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, she reaffirmed Switzerland's support for the Normandy Four format and the Trilateral Contact Group, including the efforts undertaken by Ambassador Heidi Grau. With regard to the Transdniestrian conflict, Switzerland appreciated the progress made in implementing, within the "5+2" framework, the measures contained in the "package of eight" and welcomed the joint proposals for the development of further confidence-building measures. Switzerland hoped that work could soon begin on dismantling the ammunition depot in Cobasna.

The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus, H.E. Mr. Rudolf Michalka, emphasized that people were at the centre of the OSCE's activities. The Organization played a crucial role in the Geneva International

Discussions, which were aimed at de-escalating tensions, facilitating dialogue and helping to meet people's needs on the ground. The COVID-19 crisis had accentuated the importance of those efforts and at the same time shown that direct dialogue could not be fully replaced by virtual discussions facilitated by new technologies. H.E. Mr. Michalka pointed out that the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship, supported by the Conflict Prevention Centre, had continued to promote dialogue during the pandemic and had offered its good offices to those wishing to benefit from international health expertise. Although there had been some pragmatic approaches and genuine efforts to support conflict-affected populations, additional obstacles had emerged as part of an ongoing "borderization," and policies had been adopted that limited local residents' freedom of movement across the conflict zone. Such actions aggravated the severe socio-economic problems that already existed in local areas. In particular, the almost total self-isolation of the South Ossetia region had ultimately cost the lives of several people who had waited in vain to be allowed to cross the dividing line to receive medical treatment on the other side. H.E. Mr. Michalka reminded the audience that the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions had continued to urge all the participants in the Discussions to do their utmost to protect vulnerable, conflict-affected populations, especially in isolated areas. In a joint statement on 18 April, the Co-Chairs had echoed the United Nations Secretary-General's earlier call for a global ceasefire and noted that "the focus should be on collaboration, for the good of all people in the region and against the common threat of the COVID-19 pandemic". Possible priorities for the Geneva International Discussions once dialogue got under way again included the full and unfettered resumption – and perhaps intensification – of humanitarian co-operation, supported by international organizations, across dividing lines; lifting constraints on freedom of movement for local populations; and toning down any divisive rhetoric while increasing face-to-face dialogue, notably at the Geneva International Discussions themselves and in the related Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs). The need to resume and maintain those formats, with meetings being held in an uninterrupted manner, was emphasized. It was vital to seek new opportunities to engage in the Geneva International Discussions, and beyond, with a view to mitigating the economic and other impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the conflict-affected population. Referring to the ongoing security crisis near the two villages of Chorchana and Tsnelisi, H.E. Mr. Michalka noted the OSCE's work to promote stability and the welfare of the local populations. The OSCE fully supported the work on missing and internally displaced persons being facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and hoped that the partners on the ground would step up their efforts to resolve those issues. In conclusion, H.E. Mr. Michalka emphasized the role of women in peace and security, and mentioned the Co-Chairs' work to involve young people in peace and security processes in the region.

The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transdniestrian Settlement Process, H.E. Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, began his keynote address by noting how the Transdniestrian conflict was the only protracted conflict in the OSCE area on the desired outcome of which all 57 participating States were agreed – namely, Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, with a special status for the people of the Transdniestria region. H.E. Mr. Mayr-Harting pointed out that the "5+2" format benefited from "robust structures" enabling the Sides to meet regularly, with an important role also played by the OSCE Mission to Moldova. The measures contained in the "package of eight" tied in with the philosophy of the "5+2" process and were all conducive to strengthening Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity while preparing for a special status for Transdniestria along the lines endorsed by the participating States. H.E. Mr. Mayr-Harting remarked that he had taken up his mandate just before the

onset of the COVID-19 crisis. Although initially optimistic about the prospects for co-operation on health issues across the conflict lines, he, like others, had observed that interaction between the two Sides had not led to any breakthroughs or even just a meeting of health experts to discuss the issues faced by the region as a result of the pandemic. New control points had been established by the *de facto* authorities under the pretext of the pandemic. However, freedom of movement was a key principle that the settlement process was trying to promote. While it was clear that health-related measures had to be taken, they must be temporary and lifted as soon as possible. The situation of specific groups, such as commuters and farmers, must also be taken into account, and H.E. Mr. Mayr-Harting expressed his appreciation for the fact that the two Sides had in recent days come up with pragmatic solutions to several problems faced by those groups. During a recent visit to the region, he had met with leaders from both Sides. The opportunity was clearly there to resume efforts on confidence-building measures based on earlier protocols, and it was necessary to develop new measures of that kind. The OSCE Mission to Moldova was heavily involved in those efforts, notably on telecommunications and transport. The European Union, too, had helped by funding and facilitating relevant activities. A new meeting in the "5+2" format to discuss further work in those areas seemed possible. In conclusion, H.E. Mr. Mayr-Harting reiterated that the OSCE had been tasked with achieving progress in all three "baskets": on economic and environmental issues, on humanitarian and civil society issues, and on conflict settlement (including institutional, political and security aspects). Any steps undertaken must be building blocks towards a comprehensive settlement.

Discussion

All the delegations taking the floor agreed that the aforementioned protracted conflicts were among the most serious challenges facing the OSCE. The lack of progress in resolving those conflicts undermined the overall security and stability of the OSCE area, the economic development of the regions affected, and the quality of life of the people living in those regions. Many delegations emphasized that conflict prevention, conflict resolution and crisis management were at the heart of the OSCE's work. Reaching sustainable solutions based on the norms and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act was a priority in that work. The OSCE's tools and mechanisms must be used in a results-oriented manner. Many delegations stressed that the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, along with its wide membership and consensus-based decision-making processes, gave it a unique ability to play the part of an objective actor during all phases of the conflict cycle. Regarding the protracted conflicts themselves, there was a general consensus that more needed to be done to reinvigorate efforts aimed at settling them peacefully, within the agreed formats and in accordance with international law. Many delegations noted that the COVID-19 crisis had made it even more difficult to achieve progress and had aggravated the situation of people living in conflict zones. Several delegations emphasized that the conflict in eastern Ukraine had had a profound impact on European security as a whole. A few delegations lamented the lack of progress in the settlement of that conflict and called on the OSCE to do more with regard to protracted conflicts in general.

Regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, many delegations called for the ceasefire to be respected and for a political settlement to be urgently reached. Many reiterated their support for the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. One delegation stressed how the OSCE Minsk Group was the appropriate platform for finding a solution to the conflict. Another delegation lamented that its country was being constantly threatened with the use of force by another State, and condemned the large-scale military exercises conducted by the

latter along the border between the two countries and, more generally, the latter's attempts to alter the military balance in its favour. The same delegation expressed its agreement with the observation by the Special Representative, H.E. Mr. Michalka, on the importance of upholding the core principles of the Helsinki Final Act. The delegations of the two countries directly concerned insisted that the OSCE should enhance its role in the region and that any peace settlement should take into account the rights of all peoples involved. Apart from military provocations, one delegation asserted a lack of political will displayed by its country's counterpart in the peace process, and alleged the latter had failed to make use of opportunities to engage constructively in that process. The delegation claimed the principle of self-determination was being invoked selectively and out of context by its counterpart in order to preserve the status quo.

As for the conflict in Georgia, many delegations reiterated their commitment to a peaceful settlement based on the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. They also expressed their strong support for the Geneva International Discussions and their hope that dialogue would continue even during the COVID-19 crisis. One delegation welcomed the fact that there had been no armed conflict in the region in the past 12 years – a success which it ascribed to the Geneva International Discussions. One delegation claimed that the situation near the two villages of Chorchana and Tsnelisi threatened the lives and health of "people in the border zone" and that it was impossible to keep ignoring that issue. Another delegation noted that the *de facto* authorities in Georgia had tried to redraw the administrative boundary lines. Moreover, the same delegation lamented the intermittent nature of the IPRM meetings and expressed its hope that practical steps could be identified that would facilitate conflict resolution, such as re-establishing an OSCE presence in Georgia.

Many delegations reiterated their support for peaceful resolution of the Transdniestrian conflict in a way that respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova, within its internationally recognized borders, and that ensured a special status for Transdniestria. Recalling the substantial progress achieved within the "5+2" negotiating format in the past, several delegations expressed the hope that further progress would be made soon. Tackling the pandemic called for co-operation, but the Sides had yet to take advantage of that opportunity. A few delegations lamented that the progress of earlier years had so far not been matched by similar positive developments in 2020. One delegation expressed its hope that the forthcoming elections would not have a negative impact on the settlement process. The same delegation also stressed that any agreement must have "no clear winners" and had to be acceptable to people on both banks of the Dniester, adding that the "defrosted" settlement should not be allowed to "re-freeze". One delegation voiced its concern over the presence of troops and ammunition on Moldovan territory.

SPECIAL SESSION: THE STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

Moderator: Ambassador L. Cuesta, Permanent Representative of Spain to
                                   the OSCE, Chair of the Informal Working Group on the
                                   Structured Dialogue

Rapporteur: Mr. N. Cimarra, Deputy Permanent Representative for
                                   Politico-Military Issues, Permanent Representation of Spain to
                                   the OSCE

The special session on the Structured Dialogue focused on proposals for promoting transparency and mitigating threat perceptions during the COVID-19 crisis. It addressed the following guiding questions: How can technology be leveraged to promote transparency and mitigate threat perceptions during the COVID-19 crisis? What additional proposals should be considered to promote transparency and mitigate threat perceptions amongst participating States?

In his opening remarks, the moderator of the session, Ambassador Cuesta, Permanent Representative of Spain to the OSCE, recalled that since its inception the Structured Dialogue had aimed at giving States a better mutual understanding of threat perceptions and concerns and at increasing opportunities for constructive dialogue with a view to identifying joint solutions to common security challenges. This meant moving from pursuing national agendas to taking a co-operative approach. It also meant moving towards UNDERSTANDING, in capital letters, echoing the Spanish motto of the Structured Dialogue (Understanding4Security, U4S), based on four steps: listening, reflecting, sharing and learning.

The moderator further explained the content of these four steps, as follows. Listening: "Listening to each other, even if we disagree. I would say, especially, if we disagree." Reflecting: "Reflecting on everybody's views, and on the best way to move forward. The Structured Dialogue is a process, which needs to see progress. There isn't a predetermined outcome, but stalemate shouldn't be an option." Sharing: "Sharing our concerns, but also our constructive proposals. We need to identify problems, but this is not enough. We also need to identify the next steps, we also need to envision solutions." Learning: "Learning from each other and from the dialogue itself. We need to try an approach and, if it doesn't work, we need to learn from it, and try a new one. Persistence makes sense in the light of a learning process, otherwise it generates erosion and distrust."

The moderator recalled the principles still at the core of the Structured Dialogue process, namely, State ownership, inclusiveness and the long-term outlook. At the same time, he acknowledged profound differences between national positions on some issues driving the agenda of the process. In this regard, the moderator called on the participating States to be careful to create and maintain a climate conducive to dialogue. He also proposed adding "constructiveness" as an additional principle of the Structured Dialogue.

The moderator recalled that the discussion of the session was to build on the fruitful exchange that had taken place at the most recent meeting of the Informal Working Group

(IWG) on the Structured Dialogue in early June, which had focused on, among other things, the politico-military implications of the COVID-19 crisis.

Many participating States reiterated their support for the Structured Dialogue process in accordance with the Hamburg mandate. They also supported the motto of the Spanish IWG chairmanship with its focus on the four key phases of the Structured Dialogue. The nature of the Structured Dialogue as a confidence- and security-building measure (CSBM) was once again underlined.

Many participating States recalled the continued importance of transparency, especially in times when on-site verification is not possible owing to COVID-19. One participating State pointed out that the crisis showed the need for a shared understanding of security, and another participating State stated that COVID-19 showed the growing importance of constructive dialogue. In this regard, both States welcomed voluntary briefings to dispel concerns.

Many participating States stressed the need for the timely provision of information on military activities and exercises. In particular, several delegations expressed concern about the lack of transparency in connection with certain military activities during the COVID-19 crisis. In this regard, a call was made for the full implementation of existing commitments and for additional voluntary measures to dispel concerns. One participating State responded by expressing its surprise and drew attention to the information it had provided on its snap exercise conducted in March 2020.

One participating State drew attention to the linkage between the revitalization of CSBMs and, more broadly, security in the OSCE area, calling upon all participating States to ensure transparency with regard to their military activities. Several participating States voiced concern about the violation of OSCE principles and commitments and called for adherence to the principles and full implementation of the agreed commitments.

A number of participating States positively noted the use of digital means to support information exchanges, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purely digital Global Exchange of Military Information successfully conducted by the participating States and supported by the Conflict Prevention Centre was quoted as a good example of continuing transparency being supported by technology during the crisis situation. Several participating States also made concrete suggestions on how digital technology could support verification activities. At the same time, participating States noted that technology could not replace on-site activities. In this regard, many participating States highlighted the need for a common approach for the resumption of verification activities. Moreover, although many participating States underlined the need to commence verification activities as soon as possible, there were also calls for caution on account of the safety factor, with proposals by two participating States being mentioned. Some participating States expressed the importance of further discussing new technologies and their positive aspects with regard to upholding transparency and mitigating threat perceptions during the COVID-19 crisis.

Several participating States stressed the need to maintain strong military contacts, which could help de-escalation and enable States to learn more about each other.

Many delegations called to make use of proposals put forward on transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention, expressing support for further work on the development of

a template illustrating possible transparency- and security-building measures during all phases of an exercise. One participating State expressed its readiness to present such a template during the next Expert Level Workshop. Many participating States also expressed support for further work on collecting best practices on the prevention of military incidents among participating States, though such measures could not be a substitute for the full implementation of existing commitments and the modernization of existing instruments and measures.

Many participating States made repeated calls for the modernization of the Vienna Document and stressed the need to generate momentum to this end. In this regard, one participating State responded by suggesting taking measures to reduce risks on borders, fixing a minimum distance between vessels and aircraft in high seas, and agreeing on the use of transponders. Furthermore, the participating State suggested considering these issues in Structured Dialogue meetings.

Regarding the scope of the process, several participating States emphasized that the Structured Dialogue should focus on politico-military elements, including when dealing with the topic of hybrid threats. Other participating States suggested breaking the topic "hybrid" down into its various aspects, and continuing discussions in the relevant OSCE forums.

Several other participating States, on the other hand, stated that the Structured Dialogue should remain a forum to discuss all current and future security challenges and called for future discussions to be comprehensive in scope. They also referred to the recent discussion of hybrid threats, which had shown how important this topic was for the threat perceptions of the participating States. Given the detrimental effect of hybrid threats on trust, the topic should be kept on the agenda of the Structured Dialogue process. In addition, one participating State cautioned against interpreting the Hamburg mandate in a narrow manner and called for the process to address the concerns of all participating States, including counter-terrorism and hybrid threats.

Quoting the Hamburg mandate, one participating State cautioned that the process was created to address the need for constructive exchanges. To prevent a series of monologues of well-known positions, there should be a deepening of technical dialogue on issues related to politico-military aspects of security, in order to promote more constructive discussion.

Many participating States regretted the fact that one participating State had chosen not to participate in parts of the discussion of the tenth meeting of the Informal Working Group on the Structured Dialogue owing to the inclusion of the topic of hybrid threats on the agenda. Several participating States noted the impossibility of dialogue on the issue if one major participating State refused to participate in the discussion. In response, the participating State in question stated that the discussion of hybrid threats was heavily politicized and void of facts, which was preventing the process from looking forward. Its Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence would not participate in future meetings featuring discussion of hybrid threats. Furthermore, it called for a move to topics that would increase common understanding and reduce confrontation, stating that it was open for expert discussions.

WORKING SESSION III: CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL AND CONFIDENCE- AND SECURITY-BUILDING MEASURES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Keynote speakers:

Ambassador S. Baumann, Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control, German Federal Foreign Office

Ms. S. Rautio, Director of the Unit for Security Policy and Crisis Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland

Moderator:

Ambassador Y. Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the OSCE

Rapporteur:

Mr. E. de Matos, Permanent Representation of Portugal to the OSCE

The session was opened by Ambassador Tsymbaliuk, Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), who presented the work of the FSC since the 2019 Annual Security Review Conference with particular reference to the following: discussions on updating and revitalizing the OSCE's politico-military toolbox, including issues related to the implementation of the Vienna Document 2011 and discussions concerning Vienna Document Plus proposals; voluntary briefings in the FSC; Security Dialogues on regional security issues; the 2019 Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting; efforts in the field of small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, namely, enhancement of related norms and best practices and of implementation of assistance projects; the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security; implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and UNSCR 1540 on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and, finally, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global peace and security, recalling the appeal of the Turkish FSC Chairmanship that resulted in the majority of participating States postponing their verification activities. In conclusion, the FSC Chairperson stressed that these discussions had been reminders of the FSC's continued value as a platform for exchanging views on pertinent issues related to politico-military aspects of security, despite the deterioration of mutual trust in the OSCE area.

The first keynote speaker, Ambassador S. Baumann, Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control, Germany, referred to the difficult times for co-operative security, especially for arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) in Europe, highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on the security environment – in particular the standstill in verification activities – as well as other challenges such as the issues of non-compliance and developments around the Open Skies Treaty, including the notification of withdrawal. Ambassador Baumann stressed the need for immediate action and mentioned four concrete steps for reinvigorating conventional arms control in Europe. The first step she considered was to preserve and modernize the elements of the existing functioning arms control architecture, in particular the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna Document 2011. Although the existing regimes required adjustments, this did not mean they should be abolished; in this context, she mentioned some of the elements of the

Joint Proposal for a VD Plus Draft Decision (FSC.DEL/213/19/Rev.2) aimed at modernizing the Vienna Document 2011. Secondly, when discussing challenges to conventional arms control, to take geo-strategic changes into account. Thirdly, to re-think arms control and develop concepts for the arms control of the future. As this would be a complex and lengthy task, Ambassador Baumann urged that the issue be discussed as soon as possible and mentioned several relevant initiatives and platforms, including the Structured Dialogue, and called on all participating States to come forward with best practices in the field of transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention. The fourth and final step was to take account of the new technologies, considering both the challenges involved – a new level of complexity and a certain ambiguity in the context of modern conflicts – and also the opportunities – such as those inherent in new tools for arms control implementation and verification. The Information Management and Reporting System (iMARS) was a positive example. Ambassador Baumann stated that the emerging technologies would call for further attention in the upcoming German FSC Chairmanship.

The second keynote speaker, Ms. S. Rautio, Director of the Unit for Security Policy and Crisis Management, Finland, underlined the continuing relevance of the 2016 Hamburg commitment concerning conventional arms control and the CSBMs architecture in Europe. Trust and transparency were needed. Ms. Rautio stressed Finland's commitment to the implementation and substantial modernization of the Vienna Document 2011 and to the further development of the politico-military toolbox, calling on all participating States to engage actively in the related negotiations. As an example of enhancing compliance, Finland, in the spirit of transparency, had notified three military exercises in 2019. Ms. Rautio valued the Structured Dialogue as a platform for discussing threat perceptions and increasing mutual understanding and recalled Finland's support to the initiative of collecting best practices on transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention. Improved compliance was the first step to reinvigorating conventional arms control; consequently, participating States should try to address some of the underlying causes of non-compliance or challenges in compliance and suggest ways to resolve them. With respect to the need to improve efficiency in information-sharing, she recognized the challenges but first and foremost the opportunities of emerging technologies, such as the future use of iMARS by the participating States. In particular, COVID-19 had increased the need to develop new tools for sharing, analysing and verifying information. The application of new technologies to military use had also generated several issues that needed to be addressed, including the need for new multilateral control mechanisms. Concerning cyberthreats, the participating States should collaborate on ensuring a free, open and secure cyberspace; in this area, the OSCE had set a remarkable example in promoting security and stability. Finally, Ms. Rautio expressed her support for the involvement of academia, civil society and the private sector in discussions on conventional arms control/CSBMs and new technologies.

Discussion

Following the contributions by the keynote speakers, 20 delegations and one international organization took the floor.

The participating States agreed that the current security situation in Europe revealed a continued erosion of transparency, confidence, trust and predictability and that it was vital to reverse this trend. The arms control toolbox was beneficial to all in reducing the risk of misunderstandings and unintended escalations. The importance of the consistent

implementation of the principles of comprehensive, co-operative, indivisible security was emphasized.

Furthermore, it was of paramount importance to preserve the OSCE *acquis*, namely, the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the CFE Treaty, which remained the central pillars of the European security architecture and were powerful instruments for reinforcing peace and stability in Europe.

Several participating States raised concerns about recent developments with regard to the Treaty on Open Skies, namely issues of non-compliance and the impact of an announced withdrawal from the Treaty.

Many participating States emphasized the importance of implementation of the existing instruments fully and equally, in both letter and spirit. While they recognized the added value of voluntary measures, these were no substitute for common agreed principles and commitments. A return to constructive dialogue was the first step towards restoring mutual trust in the OSCE area.

The majority of participating States highlighted the need to update the Vienna Document on the basis of the existing proposals, including a Joint Proposal co-sponsored by over 30 participating States. Key factors were readiness to display political will and maintain dialogue. One participating State expressed the view that the appropriate conditions for such an endeavour were not in place and thus proposed enhanced implementation of the existing instruments and supplementary measures to restore confidence and reinforce transparency.

While stressing the need to be realistic, several participating States underscored the importance of taking evolving technologies into account in the continuing efforts to reinvigorate conventional arms control and CSBMs in Europe. Risk reduction was also mentioned as an important strand of work in the context of military activities.

Several participating States referred to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, arguing for a better use of existing technological tools as well as the development of new ones, and underscoring the need to collaborate on resuming verification activities as soon and as safely as possible.

A number of participating States drew attention to ongoing conflicts in the OSCE area, stressing the importance of compliance with fundamental principles and commitments. One participating State drew attention to the "grey zones" and the fragmentation of the zone of application. Another participating State expressed concern about the level of compliance with conventional arms control/CSBM instruments in its neighbouring region, calling for a better use of existing mechanisms.

Conclusions and recommendations

1.   Assessment of the current security situation in Europe reveals the constant erosion of transparency, confidence, trust and predictability. It is vital to reverse this trend.

2.   It is essential to preserve the OSCE *acquis*, namely, the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the CFE Treaty, as they remain central pillars and mutually reinforcing

instruments of peace and stability in Europe. The evolving situation with respect to the Treaty on Open Skies has an effect on the overall arms control system and is a concern.

3.   It is important to implement the existing instruments fully and equally, in both letter and spirit; furthermore, there is widespread support for updating the Vienna Document. Political will and dialogue are key factors.

4.   It is necessary, especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on arms control, to take emerging technologies into account in the continuing efforts aimed at creating an environment conducive to the reinvigoration of conventional arms control and CSBMs in Europe.

5.   Participating States need to collaborate on resuming verification activities in the safest way possible.

6.   Voluntary transparency measures bring added value. However, they are no substitute for common agreed commitments and principles.

WORKING SESSION IV: THE OSCE'S ROLE IN EARLY WARNING, CONFLICT PREVENTION, CRISIS MANAGEMENT, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, AND POST-CONFLICT REHABILITATION: LESSONS LEARNED AND THE WAY AHEAD

Keynote speakers: Ms. A. Söder, Chairperson of the European Institute of Peace (EIP) and member of the Swedish Women's Mediation Network

         Ms. S. Naraghi-Anderlini, Director of the London School of Economics (LSE) Centre for Women, Peace and Security

         Mr. J. Braathu, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Moderator: Ms. T. Yrjölä, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) and Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat

Rapporteur: Ms. N. Nilsson, Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE

Working session IV of the 2020 ASRC was dedicated to Ministerial Council 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.

Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä opened the session with a brief introduction to some of the efforts in line with the decision undertaken by the CPC, which, for example, acted as an OSCE-wide early warning focal point, facilitated dialogue, supported mediation and contributed through other conflict prevention and resolution efforts. One of the OSCE's main tools for addressing the cycle was its network of field operations. Ms. Yrjölä further explained the added value of OSCE's work and its contribution to enhancing crisis resilience and tools to address root causes of conflict, thereby promoting the achievement of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 – building peaceful and inclusive societies.

Ms. Yrjölä also considered the important added value the OSCE had for security and stability throughout its area; on this subject, the Organization could further consolidate its efforts by continuing to work at the local level through the missions and other actors. International co-operation was also valuable.

Keynote speaker Ambassador Annika Söder started by underlining the fact that the OSCE was well equipped to address and overcome the current and emerging security challenges in its area.

The OSCE played a key role in the rules-based European security order by maintaining transparency, hosting dialogue and defending the international law-based system. Though the current order was a politically complex and turbulent landscape, Sweden's overarching goal was the defence of this comprehensive security order and of the international norms established in the Helsinki Final Act and Paris Charter. These acts and

agreements were the foundation for a stable Europe and provided the basic principles and collective security arrangements with which all European nation States should comply. If these principles were followed by all OSCE participating States, tragedy and atrocities in Europe would be avoided. Conflicts arose from disrespect for these principles.

Ms. Söder further elaborated on the causes and roots of crises and conflicts. The present tumultuous times had thrown up many security challenges such as human rights violations, armed conflicts and disregard for the international order. The most prominent of these challenges often stemmed from the rejection of internationally protected rights, social exclusion from government and policymaking, and excessive desire for power and authority. These security challenges were best exemplified in the well-established relationship between internal repression and external aggression.

To identify and rectify these security challenges, the OSCE needed to take bold measures to reinforce and defend its purpose. The first such measure was to ensure space for civil society to contribute to and participate in dialogue, thereby building resilience and strength through diversity. The second measure was to give reinforced support to the OSCE's autonomous institutions: the ODIHR, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. These institutions played vital roles in the prevention and resolutions of conflicts, and it was critical that they should continue to freely exercise their autonomous mandates. Similarly, the third measure related to continued support for and mindfulness of the large OSCE presence in the field. The proper deployment of the OSCE's field capabilities would play a critical role in conflict prevention, management and resolution. The fourth measure related to the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda and its implementation by the OSCE. The most sustainable way to prevent and resolve conflict was to ensure equal participation of men and women, without which sustainable peace could not be achieved. There were many tools available, such as women mediator networks or gender-disaggregated data. The WPS agenda was about bringing women to the table – however, a lot still needed to be done with regard to UNSCR 1325, which was about advocacy, because without integration there would be no peace. This was also the responsibility of the OSCE field missions. It was about rights representation and resources.

As holder of the OSCE Chairmanship, Sweden would continue to build on the Albanian commitment to the WPS agenda, and to regard it as a key component in tackling the security challenges in the OSCE area. The fifth measure was defence of the confidence-building aspect of OSCE. Building confidence in the military and security fields was crucial to avoiding escalations of force and unintended incidents in Europe. The sixth and seventh measures were both concerned with building a framework for peace in co-ordination and co-operation with the European Union and the United Nations. The EIP recognized the potential of the OSCE, since its instruments were not part of the European Union, but close to it.

Finally, the OSCE needed to work at mitigating internal political rivalries hindering co-operation and progress. These rivalries had recently been highlighted because of the growing trend towards geopolitical advances, and further exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Wrapping up, Ms. Söder stated that the above-mentioned challenges and resolutions proved that the current framework was not obsolete. On the contrary, it required aggressive defence because the challenges mentioned resulted from the framework and order being

disregarded for the sake of political and geopolitical gain. In conclusion, the forthcoming Swedish Chairmanship was dedicated to restoring respect for and defence of the European security order, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter. It was one of the Swedish Foreign Minister's highest priorities that Europe should be enabled to re-establish its principles and continue cohesively moving forward. The OSCE was well equipped to handle challenges, but it was up to the participating States to be sure to use what was already in place wisely.

The COVID-19 pandemic had proved to be a devastating factor for global gender equality. Women were more exposed and at risk. Although more men were dying from the infection, women were affected to a broader extent and more harmed by secondary effects such as the restrictions and government actions. Both at home and in the workplace, women met new and/or increasing gender-based dangers and challenges. Following Ms. Söder, the second speaker focused on gender mainstreaming and the consequences of the absence of gender analysis in crisis response.

Ms. Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, Director of the London School of Economics (LSE) Centre for Women, Peace and Security stressed that gender equality was a key component that needed to be incorporated throughout the conflict cycle. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic had confirmed – and in some respects widened – the gap between women and men, especially with regard to their access to security and their place at the table in crisis response. Gender mainstreaming must therefore be at the heart of conflict prevention, response and resolution. An emerging threat for the future was the trend towards increasing national isolationism: between 2016 and 2019 there had been a 20 per cent decrease in State spending and/or investment in projects to build peace and international justice. It was therefore all the more important to be more effective in explaining the vital importance of implementation efforts.

Ms. Naraghi-Anderlini explained how women had become some of the most important players at local level in the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenge was that women were rarely present at the so-called "high" or political level of response-planning. As a result, the female perspective on security was often neglected in the broader societal response. During the pandemic these issues had become obvious and undeniable. It was therefore now important to learn from this and recognize the importance of gender analysis. Women were by no means a homogeneous group and women had to be allowed to be diverse. Sex-disaggregated data was vital in tracking and understanding gender-based discrimination. It was also an important tool for effective, targeted and successful implementation of policy and projects. Finally, Ms. Naraghi-Anderlini recalled the importance of continuing to see opportunities and not only challenges. And to think of conflict as a natural part of society. As well as being relevant on the ground, she said, women also need to be at the table at the top.

Jan Braathu, Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo, was the third and final speaker. He started out by presenting the challenging situation caused by the pandemic, both for the region as a whole and for the Mission. In the field of health co-operation, gaps could be bridged by making use of parties' experience of facing common challenges. Unfortunately, this had not always been the reality in conflict-affected regions during the COVID-19 crisis.

Mr. Braathu underlined the OSCE's important role in early warning and early action. Detailed reporting was used as a basis for action. To this end, the Secretariat, the autonomous

institutions and the field presences formed a stable unity in establishing reliable facts and conducting analyses. Early warning functions played an essential role in 21st-century conflicts. The Mission in Kosovo was no exception, as it had itself been the result of early action through co-ordination of actors at all levels. Interestingly, the success of the Mission in Kosovo could also be attributed to an abnormally diverse team. Of the 206-person team assigned to Kosovo, approximately half were based in the field, of whom approximately half were women. The diversity of perspective had strongly supported the reconciliation process between minority and majority communities in the area. Further, the success of the reconciliation process had allowed the local cultural and religious heritage to flourish and play a legitimate role in regional stability.

However, the Mission in Kosovo would not continue its success by resting complacently on its laurels. It needed to continue its "whole of mission" approach and to remain an honest broker of the reconciliation process. The primary goal was public safety, which needed to be promoted through the development and implementation of specific policies. For example, on account of local cultural values, it was well known that males had a calming presence during interaction. Furthermore, the dynamics of the region and culture required the teams in the field to show flexibility and creativity. It was surely possible to develop policy to cover instances of teams needing guidance and support.

Regarding the analysis and reconciliation processes, the holistic mission approach was still to be considered the best strategy. Given the sporadic violence and potential for flare-ups, intelligence-gathering and analysis was still necessary for the early warning functions. Should these functions fail, and violence commence, the intelligence and reporting would aid in the dialogue sessions, thereby promoting de-escalation. Finally, Mr. Braathu stressed the need for local efforts to ensure elimination of gender-based violence.

Discussion

All participating States stressed the importance of the full and effective implementation of Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 on elements of the conflict cycle. A large number of States agreed that there had been challenges to realizing this policy and assured the Secretariat of their efforts to prevent the loss of the original vision. In the end, however, most also agreed that the challenge to the implementation process lay in the fields of security, trust and political will. Some delegations called for a more prominent focus on the Organization's mediation capacities, while one delegation argued that all elements of the conflict cycle should be given equal attention. A large number of participating States recalled the important role of OSCE field operations, in all phases of the conflict cycle. Some delegations mentioned the importance of non-military confidence-building measures, as also mentioned by the keynote speaker Ambassador Söder. One delegation called for the updating of the Vienna Document.

A group of delegations delivered a joint statement to raise awareness of the tenth anniversary of the conflict cycle decision in 2021. The anniversary offered an opportunity to take stock of the work done, to assess the way the OSCE participating States addressed all phases of the conflict cycle, to review how the autonomous institutions and executive structures advanced their respective mandates, and to tackle remaining obstacles to its full implementation, first identifying these and then discussing and agreeing upon the best ways to overcome them. A group of participating States also drew attention to the need to consider a new strategy for the region of Central Asia.

The majority of participating States supported the idea of stronger co-operation and acknowledged the need to strengthen the synergies with international institutions, including the United Nations. Allocating human and financial resources more effectively could make international efforts in the field of conflict prevention and management more successful.

A large number of participating States stressed the need for gender analysis in conflict resolution and throughout the whole conflict cycle. The 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 was an important landmark for the OSCE as for other organizations. As with the conflict cycle decision, the challenge for the WPS resolution lay in its implementation. For many participating States it was unacceptable that implementation was so slow and that 20 years after its adoption there was still not sufficient political will to take the steps forward so long recognized as necessary and that so much still remained to be done. It was widely agreed that gender equality was a key component of security and stability. One delegation emphasized the importance of ensuring the increased participation of youth in the peace-building process. Furthermore, the meaningful involvement of women and civil society at all stages of a conflict was essential for long-lasting, sustainable and inclusive peace, and gender mainstreaming efforts needed to be prioritized. Some delegations noted the aspirations of the Albanian Chairmanship in this respect.

There was recognition for the important work done across the conflict cycle by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, autonomous institutions, field missions and other executive structures. In that regard, a number of delegations stressed the need for sufficient resources to be made available to the OSCE institutions, structures and field missions, in order to enable them to implement their mandates fully, the issue of resources also being underlined by the joint group of States. Some delegations underlined the role of the autonomous institutions in early warning and called for their strong and flexible mandates to be protected. Amongst these delegations, one stressed that OSCE field missions should play a greater role in monitoring, early warning, and dealing with conflict situations.

A large number of States called for the peaceful settlement of conflicts within the agreed formats and in accordance with international law. The delegations most directly concerned expressed their views.

Conclusions and recommendations

1.   The OSCE's relationship with the United Nations makes it a unique contributor in the efforts towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Co-operation between international, regional and local actors to this end is vital to overall success.

2.   All participating States welcomed and supported the implementation of Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 on elements of the conflict cycle. However, the great experience possessed by the OSCE and the tools at its disposal could be used more effectively to enhance prevention and deal with the root causes of conflicts.

3.   As noted in a joint statement by a group of States, advantage should be taken of the opportunities presented by the upcoming anniversary in 2021.

4.   Early warning, conflict prevention and resolution are fields in which the OSCE can provide much-needed added value to the participating States and the area as a whole. Some

stressed that it was important for the OSCE to strengthen its role in crisis response and mediation, for which, however, political will was needed. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine was pointed out as a good example.

5. States underlined the issue and importance of implementation of the commitments in Ministerial Decision No. 3/11 and pointed out that resources needed to be allocated to the CPC and the field missions to this end. This would ensure they had what they needed to maintain the flexibility and creativity to make a real difference for the people living in the OSCE area, especially in the regions affected by conflicts.

6. Some speakers stated that the necessary tools and frameworks were already in place and were not obsolete. However, implementation was sometimes marred by lack of resources and political will. Some delegations noted a global trend towards more unilateral approaches from some States, which was a cause of concern with regard to collective and comprehensive security.

7. Most participating States encouraged enhanced OSCE efforts in mediation. The OSCE toolkit "Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes" was an asset. Sex-disaggregated data was presented as a valuable resource in overcoming gender-based participation challenges.

8. The WPS agenda and the goal of women's participation throughout the conflict cycle were highlighted as being particularly vital. Women's participation in crisis response was specifically emphasized in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

APPENDIX

1272nd Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1272, Agenda item 3

DECISION No. 1371
AGENDA AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODALITIES OF THE 2020 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE (ASRC)

The Permanent Council,

Recalling Porto Ministerial Council Decision No. 3 on the Annual Security Review Conference,

Taking into account its Decision No. 1367 on the dates of the 2020 Annual Security Review Conference,

Taking into account the recommendation of the Forum for Security Co-operation,

Decides to organize the 2020 Annual Security Review Conference in accordance with the agenda and organizational modalities contained in the annexes to this decision.

2020 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE

Vienna, 23–25 June 2020

Building stability through dialogue

Agenda

Tuesday, 23 June 2020

1.30–3 p.m.	Opening session
3.30–5.30 p.m.	Special session: Ensuring security and stability in the OSCE region in light of developments with respect to Ukraine

Wednesday, 24 June 2020

10 a.m.–12 noon	Working session I: Transnational threats – current and future trends in the OSCE area and beyond
12 noon	Lunch break
1.30–3 p.m.	Working session II: Conflict and crisis situations in the OSCE area – building security and confidence
3.30–5 p.m.	Special Session: The Structured Dialogue

Thursday, 25 June 2020

10 a.m.–12 noon	Working session III: Conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures – challenges and opportunities
12 noon	Lunch break
1.30–3.30 p.m.	Working session IV: The OSCE's role in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution, and post-conflict rehabilitation – lessons learned and the way ahead
3.30–4 p.m.	Closing session

ORGANIZATIONAL MODALITIES OF THE
2020 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE

Vienna, 23–25 June 2020

Background

The Tenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, at Porto, by adopting its Decision No. 3 dated 7 December 2002, established the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) to provide a framework for enhancing security dialogue and for reviewing the security work undertaken by the OSCE and its participating States, as well as an opportunity to exchange views on issues related to arms control and confidence- and security-building measures, and to promote the exchange of information and co-operation with relevant international and regional organizations and institutions.

Organization

A representative of the Chairperson-in-Office will chair the opening and closing sessions. The Secretariat will issue a journal of the Conference.

Each working session will have a moderator and a rapporteur, as will each special session. The Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) will serve as co-ordinator for the preparation of the working sessions.

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) will contribute to the Conference in accordance with its procedures, mandate and competences. In particular, the third working session will be chaired by the Chairperson of the FSC.

The ASRC will be subject to the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE. The guidelines for organizing OSCE meetings (Permanent Council Decision No. 762) will also be taken into account.

Interpretation from and into all six working languages of the OSCE will be provided at the opening, special, working and closing sessions.

The OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office (Albania) will prepare the work of this year's ASRC, in close co-ordination with the FSC Chairperson and the OSCE Secretariat.

Following the Conference, the Chairperson-in-Office will distribute a comprehensive report of the Conference's proceedings.

The Communication and Media Relations Section (COMMS) will inform the press, as appropriate, and will work in close co-ordination with the Chairmanship.

Participation

The participating States are encouraged to be represented at a high level, by senior officials from capitals who are responsible for security-related policy in the OSCE area.

The OSCE institutions will participate in the Conference, as will the Secretary General and the CPC. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Partners for Co-operation are also invited to participate.

The Chairmanship may also invite heads of OSCE field operations to participate in the Conference. Heads of field operations or other high-ranking OSCE officials may also be invited to serve as keynote speakers or moderators.

The international organizations that may be invited are the security-related organizations mentioned in Permanent Council Decision No. 951 of 29 July 2010.

Consideration will be given to the possibility of inviting security-related scientific institutes, think tanks of international standing and NGOs to send keynote speakers or moderators, or to be represented as members of national delegations.

General guidelines for participants

The work of the ASRC will be conducted in eight sessions. The opening session is intended to set the stage for substantive, focused and interactive discussions during the special and working sessions. The opening session will include welcoming remarks by the Chairmanship-in-Office. The Chairmanship will explore the possibility of inviting high-level special guests to address the Conference.

Each working session and the special sessions will focus on a specific subject, introduced by keynote speakers, whose addresses will be followed by a discussion of relevant topics in accordance with the agenda.

The aim is interactive and free-flowing discussion.

In order to further enhance the effectiveness of security activities across all three dimensions of the OSCE, it is expected that each of the sessions will also address aspects of co-operation with international and regional organizations.

To encourage interactive discussion, interventions by delegations at the opening, special and working sessions should be as concise as possible, not exceeding five minutes in length. Moderators will be asked to enforce these time limits strictly. Prior circulation of statements and interventions will enhance the possibility of free-flowing discussion.

In accordance with the information circular regarding organizational aspects of the Conference sent out by the OSCE Secretariat, participants should inform the OSCE Secretariat of the composition of their delegations to the ASRC by 19 June 2020.

Participating States and other participants in the Conference are invited to submit any written contributions by 19 June 2020.

Written contributions should be submitted to Conference Services, which will then distribute them. Inputs to be circulated may also include, if appropriate, contributions by OSCE institutions and other international organizations.

Guidelines for keynote speakers

Keynote speakers should address the subject of their respective session, setting the scene for the subsequent discussion among delegations by raising appropriate thematic questions and suggesting potential recommendations for the work of the OSCE.

Presentations should be brief and concise and remain within the limit of 10 minutes per keynote speaker.

Keynote speakers should be present during the entire session at which they are speaking, and should stand ready to engage in the debate following their presentation.

Keynote speakers should provide a written contribution and their curriculum vitae to the CPC by 15 June 2020. Within their presentations, keynote speakers should touch upon the highlights (or core elements) of their written contribution.

Guidelines for moderators and rapporteurs

Moderators chairing the special and working sessions should facilitate and foster the debate among delegations. Moderators should facilitate the discussion by introducing items strictly related to the subject of the session they are chairing.

Following the Conference, the written reports provided by rapporteurs should address issues raised during the special and working sessions, covering suggestions elaborated during the sessions, and other relevant information. Personal views will not be accepted as part of the reports.

Moderators and rapporteurs should identify and summarize specific recommendations advanced during their respective session.

Guidelines for the participation of other international organizations

International and regional organizations may participate in all special and working sessions. They are kindly invited to focus on aspects of co-operation with the OSCE within the scope of the relevant session.

International and regional organizations should provide the participants of the ASRC with factual and relevant information on their work by sending such information to Conference Services by 19 June 2020.