



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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Developments in the OSCE's political-military dimension

Initiated as a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiations between East and West, and subsequently developed into the first multilateral instrument to take stock of the end of the Cold War and the opening of a new era, the CSCE/OSCE has proven to be a unique and innovative process in fostering security and stability in Europe. For the first time in history, in fact, security had been recognised as indivisible and comprehensive in its character, encompassing three dimensions: politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimension.

The OSCE politico-military dimension has been an integral part of the OSCE security architecture for almost three decades. By developing its scope and agenda, and by acquiring a more defined structure, it has developed over the years in order to respond to the evolving security environment. In 1993, with the aim of enhancing the security dialogue, participating States decided to establish the Forum for Security and Co-operation (FSC). Its task is to deal exclusively with the politico-military aspects of security, and to serve as a forum for negotiations on further developments of politico-military issues. Despite the absence of a structured agenda, and of a specific decision body in the first years of its existence, the Organization, by developing a very advanced range of tools and confidence and security building measures, has from the very beginning played a key role in improving and changing the security environment in Europe.

The OSCE experience with confidence and security building measures is rightly regarded as a success story. Established at a time when many threats to security stemmed from mistrust, and most contacts were characterised by alternating phases of tension and ambiguous *détente*, the "first generation" of CSBMs – originally called confidence building measures (CBMs)¹ – have had a profound impact on European security. They were intended to "contribute to reducing the dangers of armed conflict and of misunderstanding or miscalculation of military activities which could give rise to apprehension, particularly in a situation where States lack clear and timely information". These key words reflect the main concerns of that time, and the efforts taken by participating States to dispel them. The emphasis was on predictability through increased openness and transparency. These measures opened the door to pan-European negotiations on military issues, which led to a series of negotiations on limitations of conventional arms, and the creation of a formal aerial observation regime, that resulted in the adoption of the treaties on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and Open Skies. The negotiations on CSBMs culminated in the adoption of the Vienna Document in 1999, which introduced specific, politically binding and verifiable provisions that included a chapter on regional security issues, addressing the importance of regional aspects of security within the OSCE. These measures underline the indivisibility of security - the principle that comprehensive, mutually beneficial relations between countries in any region are possible

¹ These were: 1) Prior notification of major military manoeuvres and movements; 2) Exchange of observers; 3) "Other confidence-building measures", such as the exchange of military personnel.

only under conditions of stability and security, which is guaranteed by mutual confidence, openness and predictability. The OSCE experience demonstrates the effectiveness of such measures, when applied at both bilateral and sub-regional levels. These measures encompass more traditional military CSBMs, selected arms control elements, and other, broader CBMs involving the institutions and the civil society. This evolution of politically binding commitments into legal obligations in the defence realm was the logical extension of transparency in military activities. In spite of some views that CSBM implementation has become somewhat routine, the OSCE participating States strongly feel that the results achieved do not diminish the role of CSBMs. On the contrary, they have significantly reduced tensions by increasing transparency and improving predictability between States.

The landmark in the evolution of the OSCE's co-operative concept of security was the Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security, which was adopted in 1994. Meeting the need for political guidance and providing the OSCE with a new instrument of arms control, it has proven to be a living document, with significant potential for responding to new security challenges.

The Code addresses the issue of transparency in the democratic control of armed police and security forces. Its political significance lies in the fact that OSCE States have undertaken to base the internal control of their armed forces on agreed international guidelines. Its provisions should be considered an integral part of the security policy-making process, in which both governments and parliaments play equally important roles. Transparency and accountability toward parliament require detailed information on the defence budget, force structures, and roles and missions of military and security forces. By linking the politico-military dimension with the human, economic, and environmental aspects of security it has become a specific tool of arms control, and thus a modern political instrument for conflict prevention of a cross-dimensional nature. However, it can contribute to internal and external stability only to the extent that states comply with its provisions, which in turn will be a reflection on to democratic developments throughout the OSCE area. The Code was first implemented through awareness raising seminars, and through the elaboration of a questionnaire that was launched and circulated to all participating States in 1998 and updated in 2004.

The considerable improvement of the military security situation in the OSCE area over the years, as a result of the progress achieved in CSBM and arms control implementation, has allowed the Organization to shift its focus from state-level armed conflicts to other security related issues. Conversely, the evolution of the security environment in the first years of the new millennium has also brought new challenges to security, and has evidenced the need to broaden the scope of the OSCE politico-military agenda.

This need to develop new responses to the changing threats to security was first recognised by the OSCE States at the Bucharest Ministerial Council in 2001, and further discussed in 2002 at the Ministerial Council in Porto, where the OSCE participating States decided to develop a Strategy Document to address threats to stability and security in the XXI century, and to review, on an annual basis, the security work undertaken by the Organization within the framework of an Annual Security Review Conference. Adopted in 2003 at the Maastricht Ministerial Council, the "OSCE Strategy to address threats to stability and security in the XXI century"² contributes to a more cohesive and effective international system for responding to global threats and challenges. By identifying new threats, and by outlining guidelines and recommendations to address the new challenges to security, the Strategy

² See the "OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Stability and Security in the XXI Century", available at <http://www.osce.org/documents>

reinforces existing commitments of the OSCE participating States and provides them with a more flexible tool to streamline and enhance their co-operation.

Many of the threats of a politico-military nature identified in the Strategy, such as destabilising accumulations of conventional weaponry, illicit transfers of arms, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, had already been addressed in former OSCE documents³, yet continue to remain of great concern to the OSCE participating States. Indeed, the changing of the nature and impact of these threats, have shown the existence of areas that are not yet dealt with properly by the wider security regime of arms control and CSBMs, and in which additional multilateral measures and steps are required.

With the crumbling of the Cold-War order, the excessive accumulation and increased spread and availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) has become suddenly of great concern to the international community, and to the OSCE States in particular, which note up as the main producers and exporters of such weapons. It is therefore understandable why the Forum for Security Co-operation had strongly encouraged a responsible approach to international armaments transfers, in particular regarding those states accumulating conventional weapons beyond legitimate defence needs, and in regions of tension.

The effort to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking in SALW has become a major part of the OSCE's work, and a very advanced document encompassing commitments relating to the entire spectrum of SALW control was adopted in 2000⁴. The Document on SALW is a politically binding agreement which contains norms, principles and measures covering each stage of the life of a weapon: production, transfer, storage, collection or seizure and destruction. Many of its provisions are similar and correspond to the commitments set forth in the UN Programme of Action⁵. It has been noted that implementation of the norms, principles and measures contained in the OSCE Document could contribute substantially to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action.

The Document provides for a set of transparency measures aimed at enhancing confidence among States, and serves as an instrument for providing assistance. Most of the measures in the Document are implemented at the national level, and participating States are required to co-ordinate the activities of a number of their ministries, including foreign affairs, defence, trade, and interior. In many cases States can ask for an assistance to implement their respective commitments, and in order to define the scope of the aid needed, information exchange plays a key role. The information exchange regime set forth in the Document covers, among others, national procedures for the control over national stockpiles management and security procedures.

The Document on SALW also defines Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) as part of the category of light weapons. The work carried out on this issue has been closely linked to the activities falling within the field of small arms, so becoming a relevant part of the overall small arms framework. When in 2003, the OSCE States recognised the considerable threats these weapons would pose to civil aviation if possessed by terrorist groups, the MANPADS issue became high on the OSCE agenda and the FSC decided to promote the application of effective and comprehensive export control of such weapons. The Maastricht Ministerial Council endorsed the decision in December 2003, underlining that

³ Defence Planning, Stabilising Measures for Localised Crisis Situations, Global Exchange of Military Information, Questionnaire on Ottawa Convention on Prohibiting Anti-Personnel Landmines and the Questionnaire on the Status of Ratification of the Chemical Weapon Convention.

⁴ Including manufacture, marking, export controls, brokering, stockpile/surplus management and security destruction and Disarmament, demobilization and re-integration measures

⁵ The UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) was adopted at the first ever UN Conference on "The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects", which took place in New York in July 2001.

MANPADS should be given special attention and consideration. Equal relevance to this issue is also given by the OSCE Strategy, which recommends all participating States to use all their tools to address proliferation of MANPADS. The Strategy document also encourages States, so to ensure the security and integrity of national stockpiles to guard against theft or illicit transfer.

As an additional tool to guide and support individual States in improving their standards in this respect, the OSCE has also published the Handbook of Best Practise Guides on eight different areas related to the control of SALW. The aim of the Handbook is to serve as guidelines to national governments on how to improve the implementation of the commitments related to the Document on SALW. It is not a politically binding document, but a recommendation on how to reach common standards to the fullest possible extent. One of the chapters of the Handbook deals with National Procedures for Stockpile Management and Security, and addresses the different aspects of stockpile security, i.e. stockpile locations, physical security, access control measures, inventory management, emergency situations and security training for personnel.

Although the Handbook was launched last December, some of the guidelines were already in use, mainly within three areas: cross-border trafficking, stockpiles security management, and destruction of SALW surpluses.

As regards SALW destruction, the OSCE is co-operating closely with UN and EU agencies on different projects aimed at providing support and assistance for collecting and destroying SALW in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The destruction process has taken place in many participating States. According to data provided in the framework of the SALW Document information exchange, 33 OSCE States destroyed 934,227 units of SALW deemed as surplus, and 175,010 those seized from illicit trafficking during 2002. These total 1,109,237 SALW destroyed.

Further steps have also been taken as regards the combating of illicit trafficking in SALW. In particular, in 2002 and 2003 the OSCE has conducted two targeted assistance projects on border control in the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan border region, upon the request of the Uzbek government, which was concerned about the number of arms available across its borders. To improve the situation, in 2002 the OSCE launched a border management project at the Termez-Hayraton crossing point, aimed at enabling the law enforcement authorities, in particular the border control and customs agencies, to search, seize and destroy illegally trafficked SALW in the region. A follow up project with a similar aim but with a special emphasis on both internal co-operation among State authorities and the international co-operation between States sharing a common border, was conducted in October 2003. The participants consisted of border, customs and police officials from Uzbekistan, and border and customs officials from Afghanistan, both serving at the check-point and in the capitals. This was the first OSCE project involving Afghanistan as the new OSCE partner for co-operation. The participation of Afghan officials gave considerable added value to the training, since officials from both sides of the same border discussed together the issue of trafficked weapons and possible solutions.

The work on SALW issues is ongoing. Currently there are two meaningful issues being discussed within the FSC. The draft decisions on minimal standards for end-users certificates, and the OSCE principles on brokering activities in SALW, which are expected to be agreed upon this year. They should be submitted as a so-called "bundle" together with the MANPADS decision for Ministerial Council in Sofia next December.

An additional instrument addressing security risks arising from stockpiles of ammunition, explosive materials and detonating devices in surplus and/or awaiting destruction within the OSCE area, is the Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA). The document was adopted by the FSC in November 2003, and subsequently endorsed the same

year by the Maastricht Ministerial Council. Its relevance lies in the fact that it sets out not only general principles reflecting the recognition of the security risks posed by the presence of stockpiles of conventional ammunition in the OSCE area, and defines five different categories of conventional ammunition, explosive material and detonating devices. It also reflects both a State's primary responsibility for its own stockpiles, as well as identification and reduction of surpluses, with the aim of strengthening its national capacity to deal with such specific problems on its own. At the same time, it calls for transparency in requesting assistance from others, and prescribes appropriate procedures for stockpile destruction, upgrading their security and management practices. It is important to note that any participating State may request the assistance of the international community through the OSCE, and that participation is voluntary.

Another issue that, as a result of the transition to the post-Cold War order, has gained increased importance on the OSCE politico-military agenda in the course of the last decade, is non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The FSC has begun to develop a structured dialogue on this issue, that, together with a voluntary exchange of information on national initiatives to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), constitutes a valuable contribution to general transparency and security. The issue was recently discussed in the 2004 Annual Security Review Conference, where all participating States have agreed on the need to further enhance the discussion on countering proliferation/non-proliferation of WMD within the Organisation. This is particularly true in the aftermath of the recent terrorist events that have added a new dimension to this issue, with the awareness of an increase risk that terrorist groups may use WMD.

September 11th was a landmark for the development and the broadening of the OSCE politico-military agenda. In 2001, the participating States adopted the Bucharest Action Plan for Combating Terrorism⁶, in which they committed themselves to addressing the new challenges posed by terrorism. Since then, the efforts in combating terrorism have become an integral part of the politico-military dimension, and in 2003 led to the establishment of an Action Against Terrorism Unit within the OSCE Secretariat, tasked to co-ordinate the Organization's activities and measures undertaken within this field. Such measures include denying safe havens to terrorists, and eliminating conditions in which terrorists may recruit and gain support. They also aim at preventing terrorists from increasing their capabilities, including by preventing terrorists from gaining access to SALW and other conventional weapons as well as WMD and associated technologies. Close interaction with other relevant international organizations and bodies, in particular the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (UN CTC) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), is sought through joint meetings, contacts at all levels and specific programmes and projects. The OSCE has also decided to establish a Counter-Terrorism Network to promote the strengthening of co-ordination of counter-terrorism measures and information sharing between OSCE participating States and to support and supplement the work of the UN CTC in implementing Security Council resolution 1373.

Since intensifying counter-terrorism work is supported by consensus, the counter-terrorism activities are developing fast and successfully and focus, *inter alia*, on border security and management, policing, the combating of trafficking and suppression of terrorist financing,

⁶ The Action Plan endorses and is based on UNSCR 1373 and pledges all OSCE participating States to become parties to the 12 UN terrorism conventions and protocols by December 31, 2002. The States also pledged to take steps to prevent terrorist groups from operating on their territory, to share information on such groups with other participating states, and to take action to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist organisations. The Plan tasked all OSCE bodies to prepare roadmaps with timetables and resource requirements for implementing their portions of the Action Plan. For further detail, see the document available at <http://www.osce.org/documents>.

with a special accent to capacity building. Currently, the major efforts are focussing on the promotion and implementation of the 12 universal counter-terrorism conventions and protocols and other relevant UN Security Council resolutions, in particular UNSCR 1373⁷, as well as on the promotion of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) eight special recommendations on suppressing terrorist financing, and combating money laundering.

Closely linked to counter-terrorism efforts, is the issue of security of travel documents. The relevant decision taken by the Maastricht Ministerial, an expert meeting on this issue in March 2004 and a series of regional workshops on fraudulent travel documents (next one, for Central, Eastern Europe and Caucasus will be in Tallinn on 15-16 September, 2004) aim at implementing by participating States of ICAO standards for the handling and issuance of passports, by December 2004, beginning to issue machine-readable travel documents passports, by December 2005, and later introducing into these biometric identifiers.

In close co-operation with the FSC, the current counter-terrorism activities also aim at addressing the threat of MANPADS. The OSCE organized and hosted in 2004 the first international workshop on the threat that these weapons pose to civil aviation. There was also a decision taken to ensure export controls of MANPADS.

As a result of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference held in June 2004 some new proposals are now being considered by the participating States for possible future OSCE counter-terrorism actions. Among them are: container security, addressing the threat of terrorist use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material, supporting INTERPOL database of lost and stolen passports, addressing the issues of cybercrime, and the role of the media and civil society in combating terrorism.

In parallel with the work conducted in the field of counter-terrorism, the OSCE is also addressing the new challenges posed by organised crime, which is closely connected to terrorist activities. In 2001 the OSCE States decided to establish a Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU) to improve the capacity of participating States to address threats posed by criminal activity and to assist them in upholding the rule of law. The aim is to enhance key policing skills, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, assisting authorities of Participating States, including at the local level, in fighting crime and criminal networks, and defining and developing core competencies for police activities such as training and capacity-building activities. The Organisation's work in this field focuses in particular on the growing threat of trafficking⁸ in human beings, in SALW as well as, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in narcotic drugs. Specific measures addressing issues such as smuggling of migrants and illegal migration have also been undertaken.

Within this context, border security plays a fundamental role in fighting terrorism and cross-border organised crime: cross-border movement of persons, resources and weapons as well as trafficking for the purpose of financing and providing logistic support play an increasing role for terrorist activities, threatening our security environment. The OSCE's role in borders dates back to the very beginning of the Helsinki Process, when the participating States had committed themselves in securing free and secure cross-border movement of persons and goods. However, it has nowadays acquired greater relevance within the politico-military dimension. As a means to enhance capacity building and mutually beneficial inter-State co-operation in addressing the new challenges to security, the OSCE States agreed in 2003 on elaborating an OSCE Border Security and Management Concept, with the support of a newly established sub-unit within the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre. Moreover, following the

⁷ Since 11/09/01 the level of ratification in the OSCE area of these conventions and protocols has risen from 65% to 86%.

⁸ An OSCE Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted by the Maastricht Ministerial Council, in December 2003 (see <http://www.osce.org/documents>).

Ohrd Border Management and Security Conference that was held in May 2003, they also agreed on launching a Regional OSCE South Eastern Europe Cross-border Co-operation Programme (OSCCP), of which the OSCE has assumed a leading role, by organising a series of technical seminars. In addition to that, on 7-8 September, 2004 a Joint OSCE/UNODC Technical Experts Conference on Border Management and Security will take place. The aim of this Conference will be to share international organisations' experience in promoting more effective border management and security, and to develop a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to delivering international assistance. The results of this Conference will hopefully lead to improved co-ordination and the avoidance of duplication, while providing assistance in the area of border management and security capacity building.

As we have seen, there have been fundamental developments within the OSCE's politico-military dimension. Over the years the Organisation has updated its capabilities and adapted them to an evolving security environment. Will the OSCE succeed in responding also to the various new challenges and further improve the overall European security architecture? Will CSBMs and "hard" arms control still be needed and remain the essence of the OSCE politico-military dimension of the XXI century?

Looking back at all the agreements and measures for improving the arms control process, and at their ability to prevent new conflicts, there has been a great degree of success. Lack of openness and transparency in politico-military matters could have had and can still have serious negative consequences. Failure to comply in a full and timely manner with existing arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and confidence- and security-building agreements and instruments may further affect common security significantly. At the same time, we have to accept the limitations of these instruments when we are engaged in new emerging conflict situations. For in spite of a number of positive elements, they can never completely prevent or resolve the conflicts, but at least they can facilitate the confidence building to some extent and therefore have some use. As past experience has shown, in the long run mutual confidence, openness and predictability of the States in the region guarantee stability and security. And it is also true that, despite the improvements made, the arms control tools, designed for old bloc-to-bloc political and military configuration, are still inadequate to face new security challenges and requirements. Rapid political developments, the internal character of today's conflicts based on the great variety of ethnic, religious, social and economic contradictions do not allow for the elaboration of quick and effective recipes applicable to all conflict regions.

It is also true that the security environment we are faced with today is characterised by both old and new threats and challenges to which the Organization cannot and should not respond without a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach that goes beyond the traditional military issues. The OSCE States have recognised the cross-dimensional character of today's threats to security that cut across the politico-military, economic and environmental and human dimensions, and that they no longer arise from major traditional armed conflict. We live in a world where States still have armed forces and will continue to have them in the future. However, new actors have now come on the scene, and they are not States, but terrorists and criminal organisations, whose ability to use asymmetric methods to bypass traditional security and defence systems pose a serious threat to our security.

Against this background, the OSCE States have achieved to broaden the scope and the agenda of the Organization's politico-military dimension, addressing a variety of old and new security-related issues. But this is certainly not enough: commitment, political will, co-operation and flexibility remain the key elements for an Organization that can still give its great contribution to the security and the stability of Europe.

