

# The OSCE at a glance

From Vancouver to Vladivostok, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, with some 3,400 staff members in 19 field operations and several specialized institutions and bodies, is committed to fostering security in the region for its 56 participating States and 11 Partners for Co-operation.

## The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for stability, prosperity and democracy in 56 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

**Mandate.** The OSCE, recognized as a regional arrangement under the United Nations' Charter, is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation in its area. Its approach to security is unique in being both comprehensive and co-operative: *comprehensive* in that it deals with three dimensions of security – the politico-military, the economic and environmental and the human. It therefore addresses a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism, anti-trafficking measures and economic and environmental activities. It is *co-operative* in that all 56 States enjoy equal status. Decisions are taken by consensus and are politically but not legally binding.

**History.** The OSCE traces its origins to the *detente* phase of the early 1970s, when the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe was created to serve as a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation between East and West. Meeting over two years in Helsinki and Geneva, the CSCE reached agreement on the *Helsinki Final Act*, signed on 1 August 1975. This document contained a number of key commitments on politico-military, economic and environmental and human rights issues and also established fundamental principles governing the behaviour of States toward their citizens and toward each other.

Following the end of the Cold War, the CSCE took on a new role in managing the historic change taking place in Europe and responding to the new security challenges of the post-Cold War period. This led to its acquiring permanent institutions and operational capabilities, including a Secretariat, an Office for Free Elections and a Conflict Prevention Centre. A major arms control agreement, the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe*, was concluded in 1990 and updated in 1999. Other important military security treaties include the 1992 *Treaty on Open Skies*, the *Vienna Document 1999* and the *Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons* of 2000. In the early 1990s, meetings became more regular, field operations were established and the Conference's work became more structured. Recognizing that the CSCE was no longer simply a Conference, in 1994 the Budapest Summit agreed to change its name to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

**Governance and operation.** The OSCE is chaired by one of its participating States, a role which rotates annually. In 2006,

Belgium held the Chairmanship. Together with Slovenia (2005) and Spain (2007), it formed the OSCE Troika. This body ensures continuity of the OSCE's activities and advises the Chairman-in-Office. Finland will chair the Organization in 2008.

The Chairman-in-Office may also appoint Personal or Special Representatives to deal with specific issues or situations.

Summits of OSCE Heads of State or Government are held periodically. Between Summits, the Ministerial Council of foreign ministers meets annually to review the OSCE's activities and to provide guidance and direction. The *Economic and Environmental Forum* meets every year to focus on selected economic and environmental issues. The *Annual Security Review Conference* and the *Human Dimension Implementation Meeting* focus, respectively, on key issues in the politico-military and human dimensions.

The Permanent Council is the main regular body for political consultation and decision-making. Composed of the Permanent Representatives of the participating States to the OSCE, it meets weekly in Vienna to discuss all pertinent issues and to take appropriate decisions.

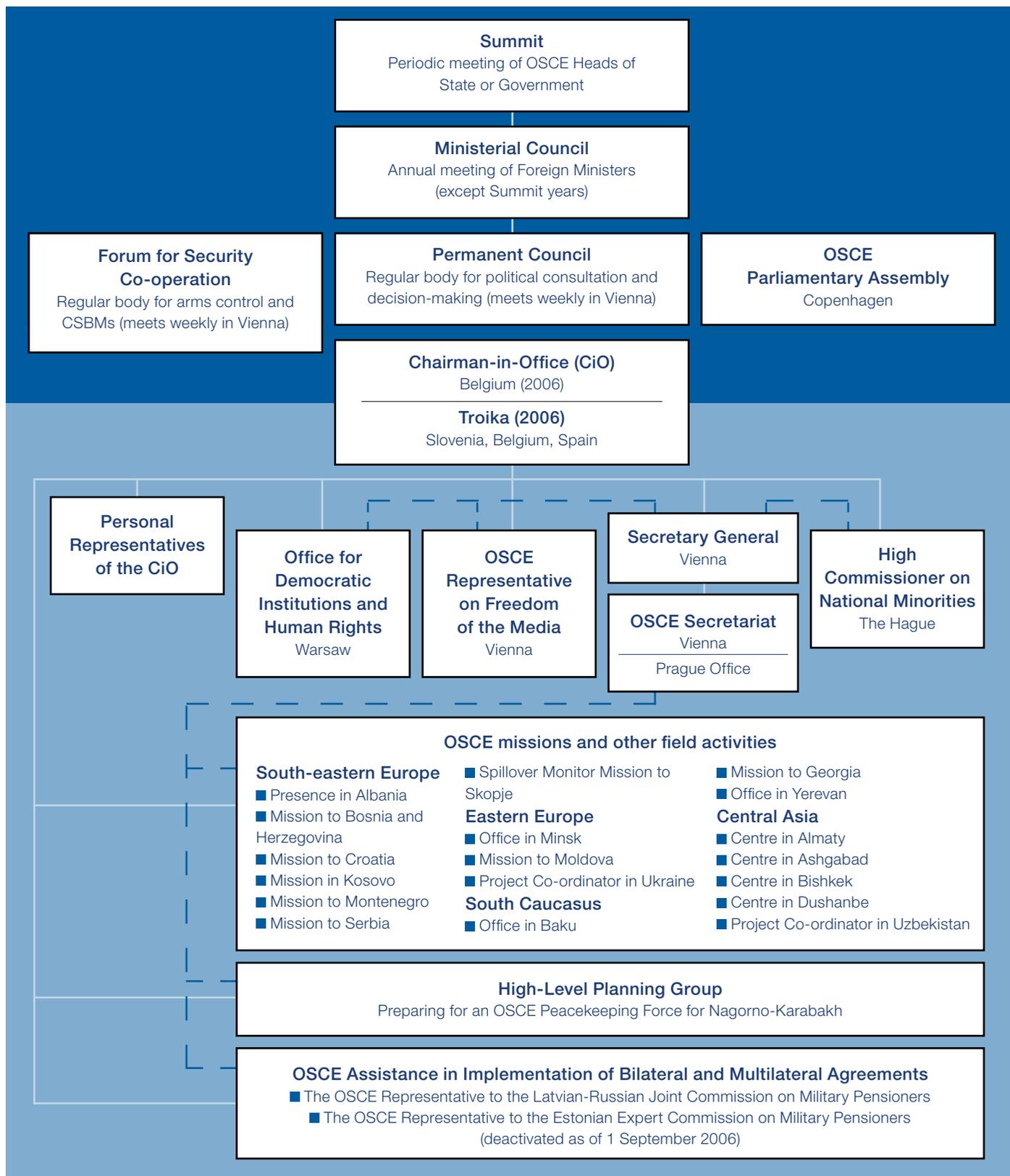
The Forum for Security Co-operation – overseeing the OSCE's politico-military dimension – also convenes weekly in Vienna's Hofburg.

The Secretariat of the OSCE is based in Vienna. It is headed by Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut of France, who was appointed in June 2005 for a three-year term. As Chief Administrative Officer, Ambassador Perrin de Brichambaut manages the OSCE's structures and operations and supports the OSCE's Chairmanship.

To assist States in complying with OSCE principles and commitments, the OSCE includes the following specialized institutions: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (established as the Office for Free Elections in 1990) based in Warsaw, Poland, the High Commissioner on National Minorities (1992) based in The Hague, Netherlands and the Representative on Freedom of the Media (1997) based in Vienna. A distinct body, the Copenhagen-based OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (1991), consisting of more than 300 parliamentarians from all the participating States, supports inter-parliamentary dialogue and also plays an important role in election monitoring.

The OSCE has 19 field operations in 17 States. Seventy-one per cent of the OSCE's 2006 Revised unified budget of €162,712,100 was allocated to field operations, 18 per cent to the Secretariat and 11 per cent to its institutions.

# OSCE Organigram



## OSCE-related bodies

### Joint Consultative Group

Promotes implementation of CFE Treaty, meets regularly in Vienna

### Open Skies Consultative Commission

Promotes implementation of Open Skies Treaty, meets regularly in Vienna

### Court of Conciliation and Arbitration

Geneva

— Line of responsibility

— Provides support