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**264th Plenary Meeting**

FSC Journal No. 270, Agenda item 2

**DECISION No. 5/99**

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC),

Recalling the provisions from the *Charter of Paris for a New Europe: Supplementary Document*, regarding the establishment of a communications network, and other decisions of the former CSCE Council concerning the use and management of the network,

Recognizing that the OSCE Communications Network is important for the successful implementation of agreements and treaties,

Recognizing also that the OSCE Communications Network is used for the exchange of information under the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Treaty on Open Skies, and other OSCE correspondence,

Recalling FSC Decision No. 15/97, whereby the Forum for Security Co-operation decided to conduct a review of the Vienna Document 1994, and in accordance with FSC Decision No. 4/99,

Expressing its appreciation of the services rendered by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with the establishment and operation of the OSCE Communications Network,

- Adopts the attached "OSCE Communications Network Document" dated 6 October 1999 which supersedes, *inter alia*, Chapter IX of the Vienna Document 1994.

FSC.DEC/5/99  
6 October 1999  
Annex

OSCE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

DOCUMENT

October 1999

## I. PURPOSE OF THE OSCE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

(A) The OSCE Communications Network is a computer-based system which provides direct communication links between participating States' capitals for the transmission of messages relating to, *inter alia*, provisions contained in the Vienna Document, the CFE Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty. The Network supports the preparation, transmission and receipt of treaty and agreement notifications. It will be maintained to meet the functional requirements defined and approved by the governing bodies of the treaties and agreements which it supports.

(B) The participating States are responsible for the implementation of the provisions set out in this document. They commit themselves to connect to the Network and undertake to use it efficiently and cost-effectively for communications between States concerning treaty and agreement notifications as well as other OSCE-related matters. The Network will complement the use of diplomatic channels.

## II. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### (A) Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC)

1. The FSC has responsibility for the management of the Network in accordance with a decision of the December 1993 Rome Ministerial Council which dissolved the Consultative Committee of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) and assigned its responsibilities to the Permanent Committee and the FSC, and with the Helsinki 1992 mandate for the FSC to implement Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs).

2. The FSC will inform other OSCE-related bodies about Network operations as required and will also consider their proposals to enhance their use of the Network. The FSC will co-ordinate with the Joint Consultative Group (JCG) and the Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC) on, *inter alia*, issues affecting Network security.

3. The FSC will request the Secretary General to take into full account financial requirements stemming from its decisions on the Network.

### (B) Communications Group (CG)

1. The CG, established under the Vienna Document 1994, is a Working Group subordinate to the FSC and is responsible for:

- (a) oversight of all Network operations;
- (b) maintenance and further development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs);
- (c) design and development of future-oriented communications architecture;

- (d) design and development of automated notification systems;
- (e) identification and implementation of Network security measures;
- (f) organization of automated annual data exchanges;
- (g) hardware and software configuration management;
- (h) agreements on functional, procedural and technical matters;
- (i) preparing FSC decisions relating to the Network, including a possible review of the financial arrangements described in Section IV below as Network modifications, which might affect costs, are incorporated;
- (j) network and notification system(s) life-cycle maintenance;
- (k) establishment and management of technical sub-groups as appropriate; and
- (l) other matters as may be referred to it by the FSC or other OSCE-related bodies.

2. The CG will be chaired, on behalf of the Chairman-in-Office, by a representative of the Secretary General of the OSCE. The chairman organizes and conducts meetings of the Group on a regular basis and reports the proceedings of the Group to the FSC. He performs his tasks in close co-operation with technical sub-groups. The CG will serve as a link to the use and development of the Network in support of the implementation of this Decision.

3. The CG meets three times a year. Additional meetings may be convened as necessary.

### III. NETWORK OPERATIONS

#### (A) Functional Requirements

1. Network operations are designed in accordance with the technical requirements approved by the FSC in FSC.DEC/3/98. As advances in information technology occur, the CG will review and, when appropriate, draft updates to the technical requirements. The FSC will co-ordinate action on the draft updates, as appropriate, with the JCG, the OSCC and other OSCE-related bodies. The CPC will maintain an archive of Network related reference documents.

2. Participating States will monitor the Network so that notifications can be transmitted and received on a 24-hour basis.

3. Messages will be considered official communications of the sending State.

4. Each participating State will designate a point of contact capable of transmitting messages to and receiving them from other participating States and will notify in advance any change in this designation.

5. Participating States may agree among themselves to use the Network for other purposes.

(B) Standard Operating Procedures

1. The CG will review the SOPs on an annual basis and issue an updated version as necessary.

2. Participating States will use the SOPs and enforce user discipline in such a way as to maximize the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Network. They will, among other things, ensure the proper utilization of agreed software applications.

3. All official communications between participating States over the Network are considered to be "messages". Network communications in an agreed format are considered to be "notifications".

4. Participating States will use formats available in all six OSCE working languages for each treaty or agreement. As formats are subject to modification, the CG will provide technical expertise on the impact of such changes on the notification software and will make appropriate recommendations.

5. Any narrative text, to the extent it is required in such formats, and messages that do not lend themselves to formatting will be transmitted in the OSCE working language chosen by the transmitting State, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6 below.

6. Communications may be in any one of the six working languages of the OSCE. Without prejudicing the future continued use of all six working languages of the OSCE, according to established rules and practice as set out in the Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations, the participating States will:

- in order to facilitate an efficient use of the Network, give due consideration to practical needs of rapid transmission of their messages and of immediate understandability. A translation into another OSCE working language will be added where needed to meet that principle;
- indicate at least two OSCE working languages in which they would prefer to receive the message or its translation.

7. In accordance with FSC.DEC/3/96, the CPC will forward messages received over the Network to those participating States that are not connected to the Network. To this end, participating States connected to the Network will include the CPC as an information addressee on messages that should be forwarded to non-connected States.

#### IV. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

(A) The cost of the Network will be covered as follows:

1. Procurement, installation, configuration, operation, technical improvement and maintenance costs for the Central Mail Server (CMS) are shared on the basis of the OSCE scale of distribution, in accordance with the financial rules and procedures of the OSCE.
2. Each participating State is responsible for procurement, acceptance testing, installation, operation and maintenance of its respective end-user station (EUS) and for training of the requisite staff.
3. Each participating State is responsible for transmission costs from its EUS to the CMS.
4. Each participating State is also responsible for the costs of onward transmission of messages from the CMS to the addressees. These costs are calculated by the CMS accounting module and charged to each State through the CPC. In accordance with FSC.DEC/9/98, such costs are invoiced by the CPC to each participating State on an annual basis.

(B) The CG will endeavour to identify cost-saving approaches for message transmission, including alternative means of communication.