



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretariat

Conflict Prevention Centre

Operations Service/Planning and Analysis

Co-ordination and Co-operation among International Actors in Support of the Host Country

Food-for-Thought Paper

Introduction

In the Astana Commemorative Declaration “*Towards a Security Community*,” OSCE heads of state and government reaffirmed their determination to ensure strengthened “co-operation among our States, and among relevant organizations and institutions of which they are members.” The 2009 Athens Ministerial Decision No. 1/09 on *Furthering the Corfu Process* identified interaction with other organizations and institutions on the basis of the 1999 *Platform for Co-operative Security* as a key issue for dialogue on the future of Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security.

In times of scarce resources and against the background of often overlapping mandates, co-ordination of activities benefits both international organizations and host countries. The common goal should be to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts, to use effectively the comparative advantages of each organization, to increase efficiency in the utilization of limited resources and to maximize the impact of activities, including on post-conflict rehabilitation processes. Stressing the commitment to such co-ordination has become a standard practice in documents and statements of all international organizations and has been a recurring message. However, as the experience in the field of post-conflict rehabilitation shows, actual co-ordination between international organizations is often less than optimal.

Guiding Framework for International Co-ordination and Co-operation

The *Platform for Co-operative Security*, adopted at the 1999 Istanbul Summit as part of the *Charter for European Security*, recognizes that inter-organizational co-operation is needed to promote comprehensive security. The *Platform* commits the OSCE to co-operate with organizations and institutions whose members:

- adhere to the *United Nations Charter* and OSCE principles and commitments;
- subscribe to principles of transparency and predictability in their actions in the spirit of the *Vienna Document 1999*;
- implement fully the arms control obligations to which they have committed themselves;
- proceed on the basis that those organizations and institutions of which they are members will adhere to transparency about their evolution;
- ensure that their membership in those organizations is based on openness and free will;

- actively support the OSCE's concept of common, comprehensive and indivisible security and a common security space free of dividing lines;
- play a full and appropriate part in the development of the relationships between mutually reinforcing security-related institutions in the OSCE area; and
- are ready to deploy institutional resources for co-operation with the OSCE.

The *Platform* names the following modalities for co-operation: regular contacts, including meetings; a continuous framework for dialogue; increased transparency and practical co-operation, including the identification of liaison officers or points of contact; cross-representation at appropriate meetings; and other contacts intended to increase understanding of each organization's conflict prevention tools. In addition, the *Platform* anticipates that the OSCE may engage in special meetings with other organizations, institutions and structures operating in the OSCE area that could be held at a political and/or executive level.¹

In the field, modalities for co-operation include: regular information exchanges and meetings; joint needs assessment missions; secondment of experts by other organizations to the OSCE; appointment of liaison officers; development of common projects and field operations; and joint training efforts.

The validity of the *Platform* was reaffirmed by participating States in the *OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century*, adopted at the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council, and during the discussions in the framework of the Corfu Process.

Co-ordination and Co-operation Mechanisms in the Field

Host countries and the international community are confronted with a number of challenges when aiming to secure sustainable peace in the aftermath of a conflict or crisis. For instance, post-conflict rehabilitation/post-crisis stabilization entails parallel efforts to strengthen the rule of law and security sector reform, to promote inclusive dialogue and reconciliation, to support basic services and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, but also to support the restoration of core government functions and economic revitalization. The multiplicity of tasks within a successful transition from conflict/crisis to peace thus requires considerable efforts. No single state or organization can meet these challenges on its own. A coherent and effective response by national and international actors is the only way to avoid that a host country relapses into conflict/crisis.² As there is inevitably a multitude of international actors present in the host country, each often with its own mandate and agenda, co-ordination and co-operation among international actors and with the host country is imperative.

OSCE executive structures, in particular the field operations, are only one of the international actors involved in post-conflict/crisis activities within the OSCE area. Co-ordination and co-operation with other international organizations is indispensable for the fulfilment of their mandates. Although in some cases co-operation is pre-structured by peace agreements or by strategic guidance from the headquarters/secretariat of involved international organizations, the translation of co-operation and co-ordination into practice, is usually left to the individual

¹ The background paper for the 2010 Review Conference, '*Co-operation with international, regional, sub-regional organizations, institutions and initiatives*' (RC.GAL/24/10), provides an overview of the implementation of the *Platform for Co-operative Security*.

² Please see *the Report of the UN Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of a conflict, A/63/881 – S/2009/304* for more information on the challenges of a post-conflict environment.

field operations and their staff as it depends on the concrete conditions on the ground. In practice, field operations use many of those mechanisms and modalities for co-operation mentioned in the *Platform for Co-operative Security* in a pragmatic way and in accordance with their individual mandates.

Successful examples of co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms in the field throughout the three dimensions of security and in the four regions of OSCE field activities include, *inter alia*:

- division of labour in the context of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) by the EU (“political track”), NATO (“security track”) and the OSCE (“police development track”);
- close co-ordination between the UN, OSCE and EU in the aftermath of the April and June 2010 events in Kyrgyzstan, including high-level consultations and joint visits and statements of their Special Envoys or Representatives, as well as regular working level co-ordination meetings on the ground;
- the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) including the OSCE, UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), NATO and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), which addresses environmental problems that may threaten security and offers joint expertise and resources in co-operation with relevant national ministries, national experts, NGOs and think-tanks;
- regular Technical Co-ordination Meetings (TCMs) hosted by the OSCE Mission to Moldova with international organizations, bilateral donors, host country authorities and NGOs on activities to combat trafficking in human beings; and
- the Ambassadorial Working Group on Elections in Georgia, co-chaired earlier by UNDP and the OSCE Mission to Georgia, and since 2009 by UNDP and the Council of Europe, which brings together international organizations, bilateral donors and Ambassadors of OSCE participating States in Georgia to discuss and agree on joint approaches to election-related matters.

Good Practices

A wide range of international co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms are thus used by the OSCE. The following good practices can be identified, without claiming to be exhaustive:

- Co-ordination meetings are important for information exchange, discussing possible joint activities and ensuring a coherent approach to issues of concern for international actors in the host country. For the OSCE, its Regional Heads of Mission Meetings are important opportunities to enhance co-operation with invited international organizations and other actors present on the ground. In general, sharing operational information is more easily achieved than formulating joint strategic policy.
- If possible, an agreed division of labour between stakeholders on specific issues/in specific cases strengthens co-operation. Agreements seeking an end to hostilities in the region; i.e., the Dayton Agreement, the OHRID Framework Agreement and UN Council Resolution 1244 (establishing UNMIK) can facilitate co-ordination and a division of labour. Also, co-operation is easier if the mandates of the international organizations are clear and allow for such a division of labour.

- Co-operation also depends on the interests, capacities and agendas of international actors. Rather than seeing different focuses as an obstacle, different perspectives can facilitate an effective division of labour based on each organization's comparative advantages and lead to the different activities of international organizations being mutually reinforcing.
- In most post-conflict/crisis societies, the capacity of the host country authorities can be considerably constrained. Nonetheless, where possible, local authorities should be involved in international co-ordination mechanisms to make the post-conflict rehabilitation/post-crisis stabilization process more sustainable. The host government may sometimes establish its own department with responsibilities for co-ordinating contributions from the international community. This can help in ensuring that local ownership works efficiently and effectively.
- Co-operation and co-ordination are continuous processes, taking place at different levels and changing over time due to altering conditions. Therefore, the use of liaison officers or focal points can significantly improve the scope and effectiveness of co-ordination between international organizations. Having an organization that takes the initiative can equally support co-ordination. Often, the UN takes the leading role in organizing co-ordination, but depending on the context, the EU and the OSCE have also done so.
- Although the existence of mechanisms and structures is important, successful co-operation is often dependent on the personalities involved. Thus, more effort is needed on building people-to-people relations in the initial stages in order to foster a co-operative spirit. Also, combining formal and informal mechanisms has proven to be useful.
- While co-ordination should always occur, joint project implementation should be guided by the benefits for the beneficiaries, and the overall results of projects and programmes. Co-operation should be demand-driven as some issues, especially security-related, may prove to be too sensitive or not practical enough to co-operate upon. Co-ordination efforts at the headquarters/secretariat level should take this into account.

Some Areas for Improvement

International co-operation and co-ordination in the field should be strengthened further. In many post-conflict/crisis situations, mandate overlaps still prevent a clear division of labour, and activities are carried out without sufficient, timely information sharing among relevant stakeholders. Information sharing needs to take place as early as possible, in the pre-planning and planning stages when situation assessments are made and options are developed. Joint planning of activities should be considered more regularly. In the implementation phase, the sharing of updates and reports remains vital. Also, co-operation during the evaluation of activities needs to be further strengthened, if possible through joint evaluations.

Furthermore, co-operation and co-ordination at the strategic policy-making level needs improvement. Frameworks for political dialogue, working level consultation mechanisms and possibly formal co-operation agreements between headquarters/secretariats, in parallel with national efforts to encourage co-operation and coherence among international organizations, should ensure a co-ordinated approach at the strategic level to allow staff at all levels to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of collaboration in the field.