



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**The Secretariat**

**Conflict Prevention Centre**

**DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF ARMED FORCES AND  
THE CODE OF CONDUCT ON POLITICO-MILITARY ASPECTS OF SECURITY**

**A Joint Seminar of the Conflict Prevention Centre  
And the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly  
(Belgrade, 4 - 5 November 2002)**

**Welcome Address by Ambassador Lamberto Zannier,  
Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre of the OSCE Secretariat**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you on behalf of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre to this Seminar on Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Yugoslav Government for its active co-operation and support of this initiative, as well as for its warm hospitality here in Belgrade. As it has been pointed out by the Chairman it is particularly significant that this event takes place during the Yugoslav Chairmanship of the FSC. We are also very grateful to Mr. Davison and to the staff of the OSCE mission in Belgrade for their efficient assistance in preparing for this event.

Democratic and civilian control over armed forces and other security structures is an issue of particular relevance in the context of young democracies, where these

principles have to be kept in mind in the process of reforming of state structures and find adequate reflection in the relevant constitutional and legal frameworks

Indeed, for countries in transition towards democracy and for post-conflict societies the transformation and management of democratic civil-military relations remains a major challenge. It is a fact that the issue of control over armed forces, border guards, police and security-related structures is often considered to be politically sensitive. It is therefore even more important for us to stress the principle that the democratic and civilian control of these forces is a crucial means not only for promoting democracy but also for preventing conflict and strengthening peace and stability.

The last decade witnessed a marked reduction of the risk of inter-state conflict in Europe. The Geneva Centre on Democratic Control of Armed Forces has developed an interesting definition of “security as a public good guaranteed by the state” which in the present circumstances “has become an even more complex and complicated challenge”. Security can no longer be characterised only as the absence of war or of threat of war or conflict. Internal and regional conflicts, often ethnically motivated, have become dangerous challenges to security and stability in the OSCE area and beyond.

In view of these new risks and challenges, the democratic control of all armed and other security forces and their integration in the civil society has become an indispensable element of internal and external security and stability and indeed a priority in the process of strengthening democracy. Guidance in reforming States’ security sector is needed and is particularly necessary during a period of transition and reform. This is where the norm-setting capacity and function of the OSCE comes into place. However, these functions need to be operationalized and, as appropriate, integrated with concrete initiatives aiming at supporting the process of developing the necessary normative platforms and ensuring that proper fine tuning of procedures and relationships.

In this context, the specific provisions of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, which is part of the OSCE acquis to which all participating States fully subscribe, provide a fundamental point of departure. At the Bucharest OSCE Ministerial Council in 2001, as well as during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Follow-up Conference on the Code of Conduct last September, many delegations underlined the continuing relevance of this document as an innovative instrument for conflict prevention, confidence- and security-building.

The Code of Conduct has proven to be a living document with significant potential for responding to the new security risks and challenges. Its cross-dimensional nature links the politico-military dimension with the human, economic and environmental aspects of security. This stems mainly from the norms and principles that the Code establishes regarding the role of armed forces in democratic societies.

Obviously, as in the case of all OSCE norms, the Code of Conduct can make a contribution to the internal and external stability of States only if they seek constantly to comply with the commitments stemming from the Code. In this context I would like to draw your special attention to the broader involvement of parliamentarians in the Code implementation. This is of utmost importance in ensuring a proper legislative basis for democratic control of armed forces, police and security forces.

In this regard, I am extremely pleased that Mr. Bruce George, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly could join us for this event, to underline the importance of awareness of these issues from the point of view of Parliamentarism. In fact, it is crucial to entertain regular contacts with parliaments and the relevant parliamentary committees in order to ensure that awareness of the Code remains high at the political level. Without any doubt, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly should play a leading role in this process.

In order to improve the implementation of the Code we need to increase the degree of awareness about its principles and provisions at all levels within and outside the OSCE area. This should not be limited to providing information on national policies in this sphere and subjecting that information to assessment by other participating States. It should also be complemented by an ongoing dialogue and a continuous exchange of experience on its implementation.

Accordingly, we should also encourage a dialogue at the local level among those individuals who are responsible for implementing the Code. To our mind, there is an important role for OSCE missions and field operations to play in this regard. Their potential in providing assistance to host governments has not been used in full. More could be done through special projects involving seminars, workshops, and roundtables at a national or sub-regional level.

In this regard I would like to inform you that organising workshops and seminars aiming to assist participating States in the implementation of the Code has been a key task for the CPC. We organised and conducted seminars in Yugoslavia in March 2001, and in the Caucasus in June 2002, in which the Code of Conduct was the main theme. The CPC was also involved in a series of roundtables on “Military aspects of security in the OSCE region” including briefings on the Code of Conduct, which were held in Kyiv in 2001. In addition, we will hold two more Seminars on Code of Conduct in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan towards the end of this month. The OSCE missions and field operations also play an active role in organising these events.

I would like to conclude my statement by wishing you a productive discussion at the Seminar during coming two days. I am looking forward to the presentations by our very experienced guest speakers, and I am certain that they will serve as a good basis for a productive discussion throughout this Seminar.