



**“Promoting lasting solutions –
Approaches to conflict resolution in the OSCE area”**

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Closing Remarks

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We have discussed conflict resolution concepts, the OSCE’s current toolbox in that regard and new instruments and mechanism that could be added to the toolbox in order to strengthen the Organization’s capacities in facilitating sustainable non-violent conflict resolution.

With this in mind, let me re-emphasize some of the key issues and recommendations that have come up in today’s discussions:

- Conflict management is insufficient if it does not create the space for conflict resolution. It is also connected to conflict prevention. Ideally we aim to resolve conflicts before they escalate into violence. If conflicts have already turned violent, we need to apply preventive strategies with the aim to avert any further escalation. The work of the OSCE High Commission on National Minorities is an excellent example of this nexus between conflict prevention and conflict resolution.
- Conflict resolution requires moments of ripeness which are based on the perception of conflicting parties that they are caught in a hurting stalemate. In addition, there needs to be the perception that there is an alternative solution, which can be achieved through cooperation with the other side and with the help of third party actors. In

order to do so, third party actors need to be equipped with conflict sensitivity and a deep and solid understanding of the conflicting issues.

- Protracted conflicts have severe consequences not only on the politico-security but also on the socio-economic level. As such, they prevent sustainable development, provide a fertile ground for violence and hamper the establishment of mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution. We need to significantly increase our joint efforts to resolve such conflicts by unfreezing dialogue processes and promoting cooperation on all levels, including Track 2 and civil society initiatives.
- Conflict resolution and peace processes require inclusiveness, which does not only refer to the conflicting parties and third party actors but also to civil society actors and peace constituents, in particular women and youth.
- Meditation and dialogue facilitation constantly developed the OSCE are important tools in helping conflicting parties to reframe the problem, to look to the future instead of to the past and to generate mutual trust. This will facilitate the political will and commitment required to cooperate. Based on what we have heard today, these tools are certainly in high demand, in particular taking into account the conclusions of the UN General Assembly on strengthening the role of regional organizations in the peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- Confidence-building measures can be highly beneficial in empowering local actors and creating space for their inclusion in peace processes and conflict resolution. Measures and guarantees aimed at building trust are important tools to enable interim agreements and peace accords. The OSCE has a solid track record in facilitating and monitoring confidence-building measures and guarantees and should continue to play a role in this area.
- Multilateral peacekeeping should not be mistaken for conflict resolution. It is an important step that stabilizes a conflict setting. The OSCE continues to engage in a wide variety of activities that could be referred to as wider peacekeeping, like for instance capacity-building efforts carried out by field operations. Equally important are preventive deployments of OSCE observers and monitors on the ground. There is a positive legacy of OSCE civilian contributions to peace operations, in particular in the Balkans in the 1990s.

- The OSCE is a relevant actor in conflict prevention and conflict resolution, and thus it has a role to play in civilian peace operations, focusing on the assets at its disposal. Cooperating with other international organizations and stakeholders is certainly of key importance. Before launching a mission, we need to agree on both short and long term objectives. Finally, we need to be prepared and ready to deploy to the field the right people with the right training, the right equipment and a clear mandate.
- Sustainable peacebuilding contributes to the process of conflict resolution. In that regard, national and international efforts have to focus on meeting the most immediate needs of people, building their confidence in, as well as, their commitment to peace. Sustainable peacebuilding is further aimed at restoring state legitimacy and effectiveness. The work carried out by OSCE field operations, for instance in the areas of the rule of law, good governance and security sector reform continue to play a crucial role in this area.
- Infrastructures for peace have been identified as a concept that certainly merits further attention in our future discussions on the conflict resolution and on the conflict cycle as a whole. While infrastructures for peace are not a *panacea* in terms of peacebuilding, they are useful in so far as they facilitate cooperation between the state and civil society. Furthermore, the concept is aimed at fulfilling the demand for institutions and mechanisms of peaceful conflict resolution. As we have heard today, reconciliation initiatives can be an important contribution to the creation of infrastructures for peace and we will continue paying attention to this.

Summing up: OSCE efforts aimed at conflict resolution will require political will and courage, a well-resourced toolbox, creativity to integrate new tools as well as the sustained and long-term engagement on the ground.

I would like to thank all participants of today's event. The challenge for us here in Vienna will now be to draw pragmatic and action-oriented conclusions from today's discussions.