



From Helsinki to Helsinki

“Three decades
of positive
developments”

Finlandia Hall, designed by Alvar Aalto, was the scene of one of the most auspicious political events in post-World War II history.
APA-Images/Lehtikuva

Finland, a nation of just 5.3 million people, does not claim sole ownership of the momentous events in Helsinki 30 years ago, but neither does it take its historic legacy lightly. Under the leadership of its visionary and charismatic president, Urho Kekkonen, Finland helped make 1 August 1975 happen, enhancing its role as mediator and peacekeeper and strengthening its neutral status during the Cold War and beyond.

Thirty years later to the day, Finland once again played gracious host, this time to representatives of the 55 participating States of the OSCE — the organization born in 1995 out of the series of meetings known as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The current OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, and Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut led the list of illustrious guests, many of whom had contributed significantly to the transformation of the CSCE into the OSCE.

Designed to evoke the “spirit of Helsinki”, the two-day programme featured a visit to President Kekkonen’s former home, where Helsinki Final Act memorabilia were on display, and a panel discussion in Finlandia Hall, the famed setting of the unprecedented gathering of Heads of State and Government.

The following are excerpts from the remarks and statements delivered in Finlandia Hall on 1 August 2005, focusing on the future of European and global security.

The world leaders who signed the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe knew they were making history. Few people could have foreseen or predicted, however, that consequential events would lead to the end of the Cold War and to the end of the political division of Europe.

The Helsinki Final Act was the real Magna Carta of détente. Not only was it a charter governing relations between States, it was also a charter of freedom for nations and individuals.

Today, the world is in the midst of changes that have been going on since the end of the Cold War. There are both positive and negative trends in international relations.

We find ourselves, in the middle of this decade, still faced with tasks inherited from the 1990s. We also need to prevent new threats and risks, and to protect societies without infringing upon our basic values.

There has hardly ever been a greater need for effective multilateralism than today. People's hopes for a better future

are greater than ever. At the same time, problems have become more complex. Our resources are, however, limited. Multilateral institutions and organizations must engage in fair and frank co-operation in which they complement and strengthen each other's work.

We must aim for effective decision-making and institutional clarity in the midst of uncertainty and complexity. We must boldly evaluate institutions' specific tasks and their unique roles and relations with other actors. Co-operation between international organizations must be developed while ensuring that "forum-shopping" does not occur.

The OSCE remains vital to maintaining the broad concept of security. I hope that this historic meeting will stimulate all participants to reflect on issues from a historical perspective — not only evaluating the past but also reflecting on how our era and our work will be seen in the future.

Tarja Halonen
President of Finland



President Tarja Halonen and Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel at Finlandia Hall

It took 30 years to travel from Helsinki to Helsinki. But what a journey, what a time it was! Despite the conflicts and problems, even tragedies, overall the past three decades were marked by positive developments.

I remember Helsinki and the CSCE from the meetings of the Slovenian opposition on the eve of the first democratic election in the former Yugoslavia. What we knew about the CSCE sounded subversive and liberating. We whispered the letters "CSCE" with hope and enthusiasm.

That first meeting in 1972, in Dipoli, Finland, set in motion a process that surpassed the wildest dreams of its plan-

ners. Two years of negotiations came to fruition in the summer of 1975 when 35 Heads of State and Government met in Finlandia Hall.

Despite the grand occasion, there were plenty of sceptics who felt that the meeting was a de facto recognition of the Cold War status quo. The critics said that the West had sold out to the Communist bloc. But it did not turn out that way.

In 1990 and in 1991, the Iron Curtain fell and new democratic governments took over. The OSCE was at the centre of this great moment in history, working over a period of 30 years to pull the West and the East together.

In many ways, this moment of unification continues as the OSCE now spans a region from Vancouver to Vladivostok, with 55 nations under one roof. For that we have the Helsinki Process to thank — the series of meetings and commitments that followed up the Final Act and created momentum for dialogue, confidence-building and openness.

The process of creating a whole, free and prosperous Europe is not yet complete. Peace in the Balkans is still fragile, while in parts of Europe, the reform process is only a few years old. It is important that we remain vigilant and that the OSCE stay involved in south-eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

We need to show the same political courage shown by the founders of the OSCE as we plot a future course for this great Organization and the ideals it stands for.

Dimitrij Rupel
Foreign Minister of Slovenia
Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE

The CSCE/OSCE has offered a particularly workable opportunity for small States to pursue their interests while contributing to common goals. The OSCE, more than most other international organizations, has opened its doors for civil society actors, non-governmental organizations, researchers and activists to participate in field operations and other activities and to become involved in the practice of world politics.

Moreover, as an institution, the OSCE combines multilateralism with the concept of comprehensive security. This can be called an OSCE innovation from

the early 1990s, traceable back to the so-called three baskets of co-operation adopted by the CSCE in the 1970s.

The OSCE experience shows that it is possible to build a bridge between universal values and norms and their practical application. With the concept of follow-up, it teaches the international community to pursue an issue systematically and not to give in — even if progress may take time, even decades.

Although global solutions are indispensable when global problems are addressed, the history of the OSCE confirms the significance of regional

arrangements and innovations. We can all recall numerous examples of appeals for the launch of a CSCE/OSCE process to solve problems and conflicts in almost every region in the world.

From the perspective of the European Union, the wider Europe, or the OSCE area, is a strategic space. The EU has both specific and general reasons to upgrade its role within the OSCE.

Today, it is in the Union's special interest to see that its neighbouring regions are stable and firmly placed on the road towards peace and democracy.

Here, the EU can co-operate even more closely with the OSCE, the Council of Europe and other actors, including the United Nations. The EU is not there to duplicate what others do better.

Erkki Tuomioja
Foreign Minister of Finland



FINNISH FOREIGN MINISTRY/PANO HEINONEN

Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja and Georgian official Nino Burjanadze talk to the press.

I was about 11 years old then and still remember well what a significant event the signing of the Helsinki Final Act was. It gave us Soviet citizens hope that it would be possible to bring about a small measure of democracy and freedom. The fact that today 15 independent countries exist in the space of the former Soviet Union is testimony to the importance of the role played by the Helsinki Agreement.

I believe that the principles signed up to in Helsinki remain important.

However, we cannot speak about the OSCE's work in the human dimension as long as we continue to have unresolved conflicts, as long as we continue to face separatist and terrorist threats within OSCE countries. These threats are even more tangible and dangerous in countries where democracy is less well developed.

Just as democratic nations tend not to fight against one another, neither should international organizations compete with one another. On the contrary, they

should co-operate closely to ensure global peace and security, and work actively towards making the democratization process irreversible. This is precisely what we are trying to do in my country.

Sometimes, when we speak about frozen conflicts, we do not want to open our eyes to the problems. How can we speak about freedom and human rights when we have thousands and thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons on OSCE territory? And how can we speak about the future of the OSCE if we do not mention why these conflicts remain unresolved?

How long do we have to wait to implement decisions adopted by OSCE? How long should we wait to resolve frozen conflicts — 5, 10, 15 or 100 years? I am expressing the feelings of my people. We do not want to have to wait 100 years to build real democracy. It is our obligation to live up to the principles that we adopted 30 years ago. Please help us, the new democracies, to solve the problems that we are not able to on our own.

Nino Burjanadze
Speaker, Parliament of Georgia
Vice President,
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

For me and many of my generation, Helsinki was part of our personal history. I am half-Hungarian and for a large part of my childhood, my uncle was in prison in Hungary and my aunt and cousin were in a Stalinist labour camp. My mother was an anti-nuclear activist. She took me to my first demonstration in 1955 and, in 1957, she took my sisters up to London for the founding of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, with Canon Collins and Bertrand Russell.

In 1957, my Hungarian family were allowed to visit us in London for the first time and I still remember my uncle asking, "Why didn't the West save us in 1956, in the Hungarian Revolution? Why didn't you stop the Russian tanks?" My mother replied that this would have led to nuclear war and the whole family would have been killed on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

That exchange was profoundly important in shaping my political thinking.

Helsinki began the reconciliation of the two halves of Europe and also the reconciliation of the two sides of my family.

The Helsinki idea was to bring peace and human rights together. Peace was about the international arena and it was about relations between States. This was the Soviet preoccupation — to maintain the security of the borders of the Soviet empire. Human rights were about the rule of law and democracy, which were supposed to operate within a domestic setting. And this was the American preoccupation.

Helsinki was a bargain between these two viewpoints. It also included co-operation [in technology], something the Eastern bloc was also keen on. When it was signed, many people were sceptical about its significance. Milan Simecka, a spokesman for Charter 77, the Czech dissident movement, described it as a "party at the expense of the East Europeans". Any mention of Helsinki, he wrote, "would send police officers into fits of laughter".

But Helsinki spawned both the peace movement in the West and the human rights movement in the East. It is usually only the latter that is mentioned. I believe, however, that the Western movement was also an offspring of Helsinki. The NATO decision to deploy a new generation of nuclear weapons four years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act seemed completely unacceptable to a generation that had seen the thawing of the Cold War.

A huge peace movement sprang up all over Europe — I remember coming to a demonstration here in Helsinki in the early 1980s. Helsinki also spawned a new democracy movement in the East

which found that the Helsinki Agreement could be used as an instrument to defend human rights. The travel and co-operation element under the Agreement was also important.

I was part of the peace movement that saw itself as trying to end the Cold War, and took a stand against both nuclear weapons and oppression. We talked about "détente from below" and "Helsinki from below". The movements in both East and West shook the status quo and led to the 1989 revolutions. Afterwards we created the Helsinki Citizens Assembly, which aimed at being "an OSCE from below".

The main legacy of the Final Act is the Helsinki idea. Many had hoped that the CSCE, as it was called then, would eventually supplant both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. That did not happen and the OSCE is rather marginal nowadays. But I believe that the new roles of the family of international organizations owe a lot to the Helsinki idea.

Just as Helsinki spawned the peace and human rights movements, so could the OSCE also play a unique role in facilitating the involvement of civil society. Could not the OSCE host a civil society meeting in Nagorno Karabakh? Could it not act on behalf of the displaced persons and refugees and help them to organize and represent their interests?

I would like to end by remembering Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme. When the Helsinki Final Act was signed here in this very room, French President Giscard d'Estaing said: "Now we can all agree." "No," Olof Palme said, "now we can begin to disagree."



Professor Mary Kaldor
Director, Centre for the Study of Global Governance
London School of Economics and Political Science

Finland's year-round celebrations of 30 years of the Helsinki Final Act were, in the words of Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, "a sign of the permanent and special affinity of Finland and the Finns with the CSCE/OSCE". The Foreign Ministry and its partners were at the forefront of a wide range of initiatives.

The celebration in Finlandia Hall started on 31 July with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque, followed by a panel discussion and a dinner-reception.

The Culture of Dialogue: The OSCE Acquis 30 Years after Helsinki, published by the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE), University of Hamburg, was launched on 21 July. Focusing on partnerships, the booklet is a primer on the OSCE.

Managing Change in Europe — Evaluating the OSCE and its Future Role: Competencies, Capabilities and Missions, a CORE working paper, was also presented to participating States on 21 July.

CSCE 1975, a special exhibition at the Urho Kekkonen Museum in Tamminiemi, Helsinki, runs until 26 February 2006.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe: 30 Years, an exhibition, is making the rounds of European capitals.

STETE, the Finnish Committee for European Security, held an anniversary seminar in February; launched *For a*

More Humane Europe, a book in Finnish on the OSCE's human dimension, in early August; and is planning a symposium on 8 December.



Like any process that has gone on for the past 30 years, especially during a time of revolutionary change such as has taken place these past three decades, the Helsinki Process can be retooled and improved.

Some reforms have already been implemented. *The Panel of Eminent Persons on Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE*, on which I sat, examined the Organization to develop other ideas.

Today, the OSCE has an active work programme. But for the OSCE to go forward, more important than any particular work programme is the participating States' fidelity to the core principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

Today the Cold War is

over, but we are still engaged in a great struggle. In the war on terror, there are those blinded by hopelessness, fanaticism and hate who target innocent civilians to advance their extremist causes. And the struggle continues between the few who benefit from authoritarian rule and the many who long to live in freedom, with dignity and liberty, and under the rule of law.

The OSCE's core mission remains helping to foster democratic change. By helping strengthen democratic institutions and civil society, the OSCE helps to defeat the underlying causes of instability. That was the OSCE's novel idea, the concept of comprehensive security. While it is

far more widely understood and more broadly accepted today than 30 years ago when the Helsinki Final Act was signed, there still are millions of people who do not know freedom.

Some OSCE participating States now claim that political dialogue on human rights is an internal affair of the State concerned. That is factually inaccurate. All participating States have signed up to commitments that are clear and unequivocal.

We will build on the sterling legacy already brought into being by the Helsinki Final Act. Human rights and democracy *do* bring stability. Advancing these values will ensure that 30 years from today more

people will live in freedom, and the world will be safer and more secure.

In this way we will have kept our promise, the promise of the Helsinki Final Act.



Ambassador Richard S. Williamson
Former senior U.S. official and diplomat
Member, Panel of Eminent Persons



Ambassador Vladimir V. Shustov
Former Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE
Member, Panel of Eminent Persons

All of us remember Finland's hosting a similar international meeting 10 years ago to mark the twentieth anniversary of the foundation of what we once called the CSCE — proof of Finland's devotion to the cause of our Organization, now the OSCE.

Frankly speaking, though, the OSCE can be considered an organization only in a specific and rather limited sense of the word. As was recognized by the Panel of Eminent Persons, it still bears many "remnants" of the initial CSCE. That is why some colleagues from other organizations, for example, in the

European Union, confess from time to time that it is not so convenient for them to deal with the OSCE, which does not have a legal capacity.

To correct this situation and to help the OSCE become a full-scale regional organization was one of the tasks before the Panel. Its report notes with satisfaction that the OSCE has contributed to what has been achieved in Europe since Helsinki 1975 along the road to democratic institutions and market economies.

At the same time, the report makes another acknowledgement: "Although the OSCE's ability to adjust in a flexible manner to the changing security environment is generally appreciated, its relevance, effectiveness and strategic orientation have been questioned."

This critical remark is followed by a whole set of questions that are being asked at the highest level. One of them is: "Does a real political will exist to make use of the Organization to solve problems related to the region's security issues?" To my mind the report gives answers to all these pertinent questions.

The report lists 11 issues that the OSCE should give priority to. So far, the OSCE has been known to the public mostly for its activities in human rights, monitoring elections and, in part, in democracy-building. But if the OSCE starts implementing the priority agenda of 11 issues proposed by the Panel, the Organization will become better known and could greatly improve its image. This process could also be helped by the strengthening of the OSCE's identity and profile.

Speaking purely from a personal perspective, I would favour transferring all the permanent OSCE institutions to one centre — Vienna. This would prove useful both from the operational and financial point of view.



Professor P. Terrence Hopmann
Chair, Political Science Department,
Brown University, United States

Inspired by the results [of the Helsinki Final Act], the newly enlarged CSCE created new and more ambitious principles at Copenhagen and Paris in 1990, Moscow in

1991, Helsinki in 1992, and Budapest in 1994.

Participating States declared “categorically and irrevocably” in Moscow in 1991 that “commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.” This explicit limitation of absolute sovereignty represents a major innovation introduced in contemporary international relations by the OSCE.

No other international institution has embodied the eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s democratic peace theory as clearly as the OSCE. Just as Kant linked good governance,

economic interdependence and co-operative international institutions as the foundation of a peaceful world order, the CSCE/OSCE has linked, since 1975, human security, economic and environmental well-being, and institutional structures to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts co-operatively.

The wisdom of those who crafted the Helsinki Final Act and brought together normative principles of good governance as the most essential foundation of international peace and security, seems to have been clearly confirmed.

Indeed, with the end of the Cold War, the CSCE wisely seized the opportunity to strengthen this vital linkage by creating such institutions as the Office for Democratic Institutions

and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Conflict Prevention Centre. Collectively, these institutional structures, along with more recent innovations such as the Representative on Freedom of the Media, have established a new set of norms which, if fully realized, can usher in a new era of peace and security within the OSCE region.

The OSCE achieves its greatest successes bit by bit, with thousands of small efforts that seldom make it into the headlines or history books. But the cumulative efforts of thousands of OSCE people “on the ground” have contributed immeasurably to the security of this region in ways largely unrecognized.



Professor Raimo Väyrynen
President, Academy of Finland

Thirty years is not a long time for an international institution, but — in particular if international circumstances change in a major way — it may experience several phases of restructuring and adaptation in the course of such a period. The development of the OSCE provides ample

evidence of the pronounced consequences of such processes of adaptation.

The rise of political violence in the early 1990s called for new solutions by international actors. As a result, conflict prevention became a cottage industry both in politics and academia. The OSCE was a pioneer and a pace-setter in [conflict prevention] by virtue of the involvement of its special representatives and field missions. However, its role in crisis management and peacekeeping remained more limited.

A key reason for this failure has been the difficulty of coming to grips with the right and obligation to undertake external interventions. As we know, the issue of intervention has been high on the international agenda, especially in the United Nations, as a means to stop genocide and protect civilians.

Obviously the problem has by no means been solved, but one can detect a certain movement towards a more permissive interpretation of intervention on humanitarian grounds.

In the OSCE, on the other hand, there has been some backtracking from the conclusion reached in the early 1990s that human rights do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of States.

So far at least, the OSCE’s interventions have been of the soft kind, intended to secure human rights by diplomatic means and to promote democracy and good governance.

However, as the history of the OSCE shows, even such actions can become a source of controversy if human rights and democracy are defined differently by various key parties. The situation becomes even more complicated if human rights

and democracy are used as tools of politics instead of as references to commitments to fundamental values.

It is often pointed out that the OSCE is now going through its third major transformation due to the fact that its original Cold War function has ceased to exist and intra-national conflicts have been mostly frozen, though not extinguished.

Compared with the very State-centric origins of the OSCE, this trend creates entirely new institutional and political challenges to the Organization and its member states. The founding fathers of the CSCE/OSCE could hardly have imagined that high up on the Organization’s agenda would be such issues as election monitoring, human trafficking, police training, and counter-terrorism.



Austrian celebrations call for courageous contribution to a changing world

By holding a special event on 20 July to celebrate 30 years of the Helsinki Process — “one of the most noteworthy political and diplomatic success stories of the second half of the last century” — Austria was not merely paying lip service as the host country of the OSCE, said Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik.

“We have rather gathered here because Austria values the OSCE and its work highly,” the Foreign Minister told a packed hall at Vienna’s *Haus der Industrie*. Austria and other neutral and smaller countries had been among

Finland’s most important partners when it tried to forge East-West consensus during the initial phases of the CSCE.

In an address to the Permanent Council the following day, Minister Plassnik linked the 30 years of the Helsinki Final Act with other significant anniversaries that Austria was commemorating.

She noted that the Helsinki event in the summer of 1975 was “the result of détente in Europe, which had begun with the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955 — a visible signal that it had again become possible to achieve substantial and lasting results at the negotiating table.”

“Vienna and Austria represent the idea of a bridge in the best sense of the word,” said Armenian Ambassador Jivan Tabibian at the Permanent Council. “Even after the Cold War, that role has not disappeared; people still think of Austrian foreign policy as one that quite often tries to transcend obvious rifts and schisms, East and West, right and left.”

The following are selected highlights from the statements delivered at the anniversary panel discussion on 20 July:

Neutral and non-aligned States were well-represented in Helsinki by Austria’s Bruno Kreisky (right) and Yugoslavia’s Josip Broz Tito.
Photo: Finnish Foreign Ministry

We have witnessed first-hand the truly incredible transformation of Europe in the past decades. Without the Helsinki Process and the European policy of détente, these achievements would simply not have been possible. This détente has been much more long-lasting than those who witnessed the beginning of this development had imagined and had dreamed it could be.

Today, we all share a comprehensive concept of security, a concept which in its global dimension also underlies Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report on United Nations reform, *In Larger Freedom*.



The Foreign Ministers of Austria and Poland

One may ask if key objectives pursued by the OSCE for the past decade have lost their importance and value, whether the OSCE's mandate has lost its validity. In my view, some OSCE tasks are no longer valid and its mandate has, to a considerable extent, been implemented.

However, some questions remain:

Would we be better advised to reformulate the Organization's tasks to make it capable of meeting the expectations of participating States and of addressing new challenges?

Can the OSCE be a factor for change? How can one harness its strengths, and in which areas should one admit it can no longer deliver?

Therefore, we should be more courageous and use the synergies between the UN, the Council of Europe, the EU and the OSCE. I am stating this deliberately as foreign minister of a neutral country that belongs to all four organizations and as host country for two of them.

Our citizens demand concrete and tangible results. We have to meet this requirement by a clever combination of our experience and our expertise.

As for the competition between international actors — neither the EU nor other organizations, nor individual States can provide the answers to the many open questions pertaining to the OSCE participating States that are undergoing transformation. So let us use the institutional experience of the OSCE and the commitment of its staff towards this purpose.

Those who want to be strong tomorrow have to be capable of genuine partnership. Only those who are ready to be partners themselves will enjoy credibility by enlisting others as partners, too. Partnership means that nobody — big

or small — feels marginalized, and that each partner considers the legitimate interests and needs of the other in an open-minded and constructive way.

Thirty years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, we have no reason for self-doubt. My conviction that the Helsinki Process has an exciting and promising future is also based on my knowledge of how much commitment, professionalism and talent is available within the OSCE.

But I am also expressing this conviction as a representative of a country in the heart of a changing continent; of a country which is extremely well informed about the value of freedom, security, neighbourliness and regional co-operation; and of a country which is especially interested in a good and lasting trans-Atlantic partnership as well as in mutually trusting relations with the Russian Federation.

Ursula Plassnik
Foreign Minister of Austria

What, then, should we do to redefine a new mandate for the OSCE?

First, we must restore the sense of community and identity to the entire area between Vancouver and Vladivostok, including the sense of shared responsibility for the Organization.

Second, we must overhaul the OSCE's relations with the outside world and think seriously about opening up the Organization to all those who are ready to embrace its norms and standards.

Third, we must specify what kind of leadership we actually need. The present leadership formula will not help strengthen the OSCE. On the other hand, we are not sure whether the Secretary General's new mandate can inject new momentum into the Organization and stimulate its workings.

Fourth, we must set our priorities. In my view, we must soon focus on Central Asia. What is now going on in that part of the world highlights the fiasco of our policies. And, significantly, frustration is conspicuous on both sides.

Central Asian nations consider

themselves cheated because promised economic aid has never materialized. Europe, for its part, is surprised at the scale of the non-observance of human rights there, at the decline of the rule of law, and at a deficit of democracy in Central Asian States.

Fifth, we must stop thinking in terms of various OSCE "dimensions". This may sound too controversial, but I find current calls for rebalancing of the three OSCE dimensions quite pointless. Given the complexity and interdependence of present-day threats, all attempts at striking a balance between the dimensions look quite artificial.

Let us consider holding a series of high-level OSCE, NATO and EU meetings organized back-to-back and devoted to just one theme. And, after establishing a common purpose, let us set in train common action. Let us start by hammering out a joint strategy vis-à-vis the Central Asian States. Let us create a platform for action without rivalry, competition, or a bureaucratic allocation of tasks.

Adam Daniel Rotfeld
Foreign Minister of Poland



AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY/HOLZNER

My involvement in the CSCE/OSCE is related to a great number of places between Vancouver and Vladivostok. However, Vienna has a special place for me, as on 15 June 1993, I started the work of the CSCE Secretariat in the *Ballbüro* of the Hofburg.

With the end of East-West confrontation in the late 1980s — starting by the way in 1988-1989 during the last phase of the Vienna follow-up meeting — the CSCE began its transition from a conference to an international organization. Since then, an unending debate on CSCE/OSCE reform has unfolded.

All OSCE States are pleading for a more meaningful political dialogue. The question is: Why does it not happen? One reason seems to be that key players in OSCE prefer other forums, bilateral or multilateral. Of course, more restricted (in terms of participants or issues) and more like-minded forums promise easier discussions, perhaps also better results.

However, we all praise the comprehensive membership of OSCE as one of its clear comparative advantages. Whatever can be achieved in smaller, more restricted forums cannot have the same impact on really comprehensive security as the all-inclusive discussions and decisions in the OSCE.

That will become even clearer when we look at another reason for the OSCE's often somewhat sterile debates. It sounds simplistic: We have a lack of meaningful political dialogue because

OSCE States hesitate to start or engage in a debate about really hot issues. One of these, possibly the most relevant one, is the question of the OSCE's role in critical situations related to democratic change — for example, those in Kyiv, Tbilisi and Bishkek.

We all know that this is a very sensitive subject. However, it seems to me that the time is ripe to discuss this problem. To continue with a dialogue of the deaf, while providing advice that some understand as lecturing, is not a promising way to encourage policy changes.

By now the OSCE has had a lot of practical experience on which to build efforts to re-establish a broad consensus on procedure and substance for OSCE support in critical internal situations. If such a discussion is postponed, the OSCE risks further erosion of what was until the mid-1990s a broad consensus on the OSCE's basic orientations and tasks.

Whether we are discussing election-monitoring, OSCE activities in Kyrgyzstan, or the possibilities for a more substantial political debate, one thing is clear: There is no need to re-invent the OSCE. What is needed is increasing efficiency in the efforts to realize OSCE standards and commitments. That, of course, must be accompanied by a higher degree of readiness to co-operate with the OSCE. Andijan is a case in point.

Ambassador Wilhelm Höynck
First Secretary General of the OSCE
Member, Panel of Eminent Persons



AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY/HOLZNER

As far as Russia is concerned, its attitude towards the OSCE has gone through a “romantic” period of hopes for its transformation into a system-forming organization in the security sphere in the Euro-Atlantic space. In the meantime, though, during the past decade, the OSCE has ceased to be an exclusive mechanism of multilateral co-operation for Russia.

Presently, Russia is implementing its interests in the vast Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions through co-operation in a broad range of formats apart from the OSCE — the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Co-operation Organization, as well as the Russia-NATO Council and its strategic partnership with the EU.

In recent years, even though the OSCE has started to address urgent problems concerned with countering terrorism — illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and in shoulder-fired missiles (MANPADs), human trafficking, and the issue of tolerance — the disproportions in its activities have expanded so greatly that they have provoked a credibility crisis in the OSCE.

A number of State-shareholders have discovered that the enterprise in which they are co-owners is being run virtually behind their backs and sometimes to the detriment of their interests.

This has been compounded not only by an incompleteness in the OSCE's institution-building and its organizational looseness, but also by growing duplication — with elements of competition — with the Council of Europe, the EU and NATO, thus reducing the popularity of the Organization and its added value.

The OSCE's role and strategic objectives have been eroded. Doubts have been voiced in a number of countries, including Russia, concerning the usefulness of its further existence. There were indeed grounds for such doubts, in particular concerning the far less than impeccable use of OSCE instruments in the CIS area vis-à-vis one of the basic Helsinki principles — the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

However, we do not consider the OSCE to be doomed to an ignominious fate. I am convinced that, subject to serious reform of its political

agenda and structure and a return to its roots, the Organization is capable of continuing to play a meaningful and useful role in the sphere of European security.

There are several reasons in favour of trying to give a second wind to the OSCE by subjecting it to profound reform.

Firstly, the OSCE remains the custodian of the Helsinki Decalogue of basic principles of international relations, which is also applicable to other European and Euro-Atlantic organizations, and which is undoubtedly relevant even 30 years on.

Secondly, as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE should, increasingly, turn into a mechanism for the regional implementation of universal and global instruments of international law in all fields for the maintenance of peace, the prevention and settlement of conflicts, economic and environmental co-operation, and the protection of human rights.

Thirdly, though the term “comparative advantages” has become somewhat worn out as a result of frequent use, these advantages have not disappeared.

Fourthly, despite the serious inner tensions felt in recent years, the OSCE still manages to develop specific and viable agreements, including those focusing on new security threats and challenges. The list of priorities for the Organization drawn up by the Panel of Eminent Persons and widely supported by participating States has wide scope.

Fifthly, the OSCE is objectively better suited than any other organization to finding an answer to the problem of the increasing “overlapping” between European organizations. The Platform for Co-operative Security, adopted at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in 1999, sets the framework for combining their efforts and providing for complementarity.

We hope that the participating States will show political will — similar to the will that gave our continent the Helsinki Final Act 30 years ago. Otherwise, let’s face it, the Organization simply has no future.

Ambassador Vladimir A. Chizhov
Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation

The opportunity to be here today and to moderate this discussion is an emotional one for me. Thirty years ago we, the Czech dissidents, studied the “Ten Commandments of Helsinki” and the “Helsinki Holy Trinity”, as we jokingly called them, even though we took them dead seriously.

The OSCE Trinity meant sovereign States, and economic and humanitarian stability. We had been used to living only under the shadow of the first pillar, under the omnipotence of State security. The potency of production and of individuals was promising. Even if some of those who signed were only making empty promises, there were other signatories who felt bound by their obligations. We all had begun to live in a world that was moving together.

And was it pure coincidence that the OSCE’s political principles had ten points? This allusion to the Ten Commandments was irritating. Do you remember? The first one (“no other God”) has changed a little bit but it still sounds very monotheistic: The State is sovereign, no interference, please!

There were some other exciting similarities. For example, the famous “Thou shall not kill” was interpreted as non-intervention in internal affairs. The commandment not to commit adultery was represented as respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms of thought, conscience, religion and belief. This especially pleased not only me personally but all the other

dissidents as well.

Not that the other points were any less important. But the acceptance of this particular one really was a commandment. *And* they signed it! Even if it was not meant seriously, the signature had its effect. It was the wolf in the bag or, better said, in the basket. Basket number three! We decided to take it seriously.

The reaction of our Government did not lack a certain charm. Although it was one of the 35 signatories, it insulted us as slanderers and failures, and as usurpers and enemies of the working classes.

We had signed Charter 77, a declaration based on the human rights passages of the Helsinki Act. We pointed to its idea of freedom with its non-collectivist roots, to a freedom that belongs to man by virtue of his nature, and not only of his tribe or class. Many of us, including myself, were imprisoned, expelled or silenced. But sooner or later, we were released and became active again.

Regardless of all the chicanery of totalitarian regimes, the signatures had their effect. The world entered the era of global proximity. The Helsinki Act represented not only skilful diplomacy and the desire to implement it; it was also an expression of this new proximity, a symptom of an emerging and growing interdependence — and perhaps the first intelligent reaction to it.

Ambassador Jiří Gruša
Director, Diplomatic Academy of Vienna
Former Czech Ambassador to Germany and Austria





Helsinki Final Act: “Catalyst for German unification”

Reflecting on the historical significance of the Helsinki Final Act, Hans-Dietrich Genscher told some 250 guests at a 30-year anniversary event in Berlin on 1 August that “the underlying philosophy of the CSCE made possible what many had considered impossible — bringing a peaceful end to the division of Germany and Europe.”

The long-serving Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany (1974-1992) added: “That succeeded because responsibility and far-sightedness rather than timidity and thinking in terms of rivalry were the determining factors.”

Other speakers were Wolfgang Gerhardt, leader of Germany’s Free Democratic Party (FDP), and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel, who flew in directly from the celebrations in Helsinki held earlier that same day. The event was sponsored by the German Foreign Policy Society (DGAP) and the FDP’s parliamentary group.

Excerpts from the speeches of Mr. Genscher and Mr. Gerhardt follow.

What happened 30 years ago will be regarded, when the history of the twentieth century is written, as one of the outstanding events of that period.

At a time when our continent was most deeply divided, racked by deep-seated ideological conflicts and plagued by the prospect of a military confrontation unlike any other, the Heads of State or Government of 35 nations came together in order to reach an understanding on the rules that were to govern their future co-existence.

The multilateral structure of the policy of détente ensured that all European States in the West and in the East, and not only the major powers, would be able to make their influence felt more effectively. With the participation of the United States and Canada in the conference, the Soviet Union, too, finally recognized the responsibility of these States towards Europe.

Of particular importance for us Germans was the incorporation of a provision regarding the possibility of changing borders in Europe through

Helsinki, 1975: Foreign Minister Genscher is seated next to Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (right), who lights up along with Yugoslavia’s Marshall Tito. APA-IMAGES/Lehtikuva

peaceful means and the freedom to select an alliance — something that, in 1990, guaranteed the right of a unified Germany to remain a member of NATO.

The provision regarding the possibility of changing borders in Europe through peaceful means opened up an opportunity for German unity, as well as the forever greater integration of what was then the European Community and is now the European Union.

With these options for Germany and Europe — for which we succeeded in gaining recognition — the door was left wide open for the developments of 1989 and 1990.

It is also part of the history of the CSCE that the outcome of the Helsinki Conference was highly controversial. Some people saw in the outcome nothing more than a worthless document, which like many others would simply be filed away, while other observers saw in the Final Act the consolidation of the status quo in all areas.

Our interpretation was different.

The Federal Government of that time did not see in the Final Act a confirmation of the existing status quo — a static concept — but rather, the beginning of a dynamic process based on values, which was to lead to an overcoming of the division on the continent.

Even before the Final Act, men and women in the Warsaw Pact States had taken a stand on their fundamental rights. However, following the adoption of the Final Act and other CSCE documents, civil rights movements had a platform on which they could base their appeals and which the Communist leaders themselves had accepted.

The extent of the changes in the Eastern bloc as a result of the policy of détente became increasingly obvious in the 1980s. It was in Vienna that Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze declared, speaking at the CSCE conference in early 1989: “The Iron Curtain is rusting.”

The CSCE principle of linking together complex issues, as in the case of the “three baskets” of the Final Act, and the desire not to lose sight of mutual advantage, proved to be a successful formula.

However, this is no reason to rest on our laurels.

It is true of the OSCE, as of all other organizations, that it cannot be better than its members want it to be. This also means that all participating States should fulfil in their entirety all the obligations they have assumed. For this reason, the call for a stronger OSCE is primarily an appeal to participating States.

It is decisively important that the OSCE’s ability to act should be strengthened. In the final

analysis, participating States will have to face the question whether they are prepared to promote a strengthening of the OSCE. Otherwise, the Organization will degenerate into an empty shell.

This appeal includes the demand not to create new borders in Europe, but rather to establish a peaceful order throughout Europe — politically, economically, environmentally and in terms of security for the benefit of all — as envisaged as early as 1967 by NATO’s Harmel Report.

If the OSCE participating States wish to discharge their responsibility for stability in a new world order, then they must resolutely grasp the unique opportunity offered to them by the Organization itself. History is not in the habit of giving second chances and the opportunities it offers us do not last forever.

DGAP/EVA KNOLL



Berlin, 2005: Hans-Dietrich Genscher (right) and German FDP party leader Wolfgang Gerhardt listen to Dimitrij Rupel (left).

Hans-Dietrich Genscher
Former Foreign Minister
Federal Republic of Germany

The signing of the CSCE’s Final Act in Helsinki 30 years ago was, without a doubt, a result — indeed, represented the success — of the liberal German foreign policy ushered in by Foreign Minister Walter Scheel and later permanently linked to the name Hans-Dietrich Genscher.

With the conclusion of the Final Act, governments with completely different political systems pledged themselves to arms control, economic co-operation and the observance of minimum standards in human rights. The CSCE process also paved the way for the reunification of our country and the peaceful coming together of our continent.

We must remember this because the OSCE needs greater recognition.

This concerns the capitals. Ministerial Councils, unfortunately, draw attention at an increasingly lower political level. This is also true of the public in OSCE countries: The OSCE hardly features in the media’s political reporting, too many people are hardly aware of it, and the



Helsinki, 1975: Erich Honecker (left), leader of the German Democratic Republic, with Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau

opportunities it offers are ignored.

This can be traced, to some degree, to the expansion of NATO and the EU and to the enlargement of their sphere of co-operation activities. Most countries in the OSCE area are striving to join the EU or NATO or are already linked to these organizations through different forms of co-operation agreements.

But the OSCE, too, *could* and in my view *should* take on a much more active role in the shaping of peaceful and friendly co-existence on our continent. With its broad membership, the OSCE also encompasses States that, on the basis of their geographical position alone, have no likelihood of joining the EU or NATO.

Some believe that by putting an end to the

Cold War, the Helsinki Process served its purpose and has now successfully discharged its principal tasks. According to this reasoning, the OSCE is, as it were, a victim of the success of the CSCE. This is partly true, but it does not mean that there is nothing left for the OSCE to do. On the contrary, I believe that the present is speaking a different language altogether.

We still have unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area. Many countries are in the middle of — or on the verge of — transformation processes that are threatened not only by the resistance of current regimes but also by potential ethnic or even cross-border conflicts.

What is more, the OSCE links the trans-Atlantic and the Eurasian dimension of common security in an area extending from Vancouver to Vladivostok. I will mention only the key words here: terrorism, cross-border crime, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The OSCE has a decisive role to play in the efforts to ensure, after the successful surmounting of the East-West conflict, that no new dividing lines emerge in the trans-Atlantic-Eurasian area.

In my view, the CSCE process with its three-basket approach could definitely serve as an example for other conflict regions. The OSCE should strengthen the potential of its out-of-area activities. A recent example is the Organization's sending some 50 of its experienced election observers to support the parliamentary elections in Afghanistan on 18 September.

The CSCE and the Helsinki Process were a model for success. This success has not banished the process to the history books; on the contrary, the current situation on our continent and the new threats to security make the Helsinki approach as relevant today as it was 20 or 30 years ago.

Wolfgang Gerhardt
Chairman of Germany's
FDP parliamentary group

The Helsinki Decalogue

1. Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty
2. Refraining from the threat or use of force
3. Inviolability of frontiers
4. Territorial integrity of States
5. Peaceful settlement of disputes
6. Non-intervention in internal affairs
7. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief
8. Equal rights and self-determination of peoples
9. Co-operation among States
10. Fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law

The Three "Baskets" of the Helsinki Final Act

The Helsinki Final Act encompassed three main sets of recommendations, commonly referred to as "baskets".

- The first set ("Basket I") related to politico-military aspects of security: principles guiding relations between and among participating States (the "Decalogue"), and military confidence-building measures.
- The second set ("Basket II") concerned co-operation in a number of fields including economics, science and technology, and the environment.
- The third set ("Basket III") dealt with "co-operation in humanitarian and other fields" — a formula covering human rights issues under the headings of "human contacts", "information", "co-operation in the field of culture" and "co-operation in the field of education". It also included a specific set of recommendations related to Mediterranean issues.



Kissinger: Impact of Helsinki Accords “beyond what we could have imagined”

At the formal banquet hosted by Finnish President Kekkonen, Henry Kissinger is right in the middle of a discussion between Archbishop Makarios III of Cyprus and U.S. President Gerald Ford.
APA-IMAGES/Lehtikuva

Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, leading architect of American foreign policy during the run-up to the Helsinki Agreements, was the keynote speaker at a special event in Washington, D.C., to mark 30 years of the Helsinki Final Act. Guests included Ambassador Max Kampelman, head of the U.S. Delegation to the CSCE under various administrations, and the new U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE, Julie Finley.

The anniversary luncheon, held on Capitol Hill on 28 July, was organized by the U.S. Commission on Security and Co-

operation in Europe. Also known as the Helsinki Commission, the independent, bi-partisan U.S. Government agency was created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance with the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE commitments. It comprises nine members from the Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and three members of the executive branch.

“As both Secretary of State and National Security Adviser to President Gerald Ford, Dr. Kissinger had a unique vantage point from which to observe the process that culminated in the Helsinki Final Act,” said Commission Chairman, Senator Sam Brownback, in his introductory remarks. “I think he will probably say he was maybe a little bit more suspicious of it 30 years ago than he is today.”

Here are excerpts from Henry Kissinger’s remarks:



A representative of the Russian Pentecostals (fifth from left) presents a painting to the Helsinki Commission on the occasion of the Helsinki Final Act's 30th anniversary. With him are (left to right) Congressmen Robert Aderholt, Mike Pence, Joseph Pitts and Christopher Smith, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and Congressmen Benjamin Cardin and Mike McIntyre.

It's hard to remember what the atmosphere was like at the time of the Vietnam War, how divided our country was, and what the views were when the Soviet Union was believed to have huge arsenals of nuclear weapons.

That was a real dilemma we went through during that period. It explains many of our policies.

When the Soviet Union first proposed a conference for security — and I don't wish to pretend that we ever imagined we would wind up where we are now — we thought it was a Soviet manoeuvre following the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Soviet troops in order to make themselves acceptable or more legitimate again.

We also thought it was a manoeuvre to undermine NATO. And so our first attitude — the American one — toward the conference was essentially defensive. The German Government — and I see German Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger here — made a huge contribution to the evolution of this negotiation.

We all agreed that we would make our progress on the security conference dependent on Soviet conduct in other spheres. And so we doled out progress on the negotiations in very small doses.

Under the Nixon administration, we were very active in supporting Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union as our principal human rights effort, and we managed to increase it from less than a thousand to nearly 40,000. But we did not have it as a formal part of our diplomacy.

However, starting in 1972, we agreed with our European allies on two things. Firstly, we agreed that one could use the security conference to promote changes in the political and in the human rights situations.

In the political situation, you may remember that there was a debate [in the U.S.]. You might want to look some time at the editorial comments on the Helsinki Agreement, which described the conference as recognizing for all time the Soviet domination of [the Warsaw Pact] countries.

Exactly the opposite was the case. The purpose of the security conference, as we “evolved” it, was to establish the principle that borders in Europe could be changed. To be sure, we said it could be changed by negotiation, but no one was in any position to start a war. And there was really only one border that was an issue: the dividing line through the centre of Germany.

Secondly, we managed to include a statement that countries were free to join and leave alliances ... which meant that the Warsaw Pact was not sacrosanct. So the document signed by the Soviet Union certainly was inconsistent with the Brezhnev Doctrine, which held that once a country had been Communist, it could never change from the communist system without the Soviet Union interfering.

So, on the political side, this was an example of the kind of co-operation in the Atlantic alliance that has not been characteristic in recent years, and which is the ideal towards which we should strive.

There were many points over which we did not agree — on formulations or even on objectives — but we managed to achieve an Atlantic position on all the key issues.

But then came a really novel idea — the so-called Basket Three — to implement an acceptance of certain human rights principles as part of an international agreement. A lot of credit for this goes to our European allies who were very committed to it.

I'm not claiming that this was the first idea that came into our heads when this process started — for many reasons, including the fact that we had the Vietnam War, China, among many other things. But once we examined it, we became very active supporters of it.

Now, let me be frank: I did not expect these provisions would reach the scope and the impact that they now have. If you had given me some truth serum in 1975, I would have said that this was what we achieved: Firstly, we had made human rights a legitimate subject of international debate and, secondly, we had created a major obstacle to Soviet re-intervention in the Warsaw Pact treaties because that would have been incompatible with so many provisions of the Agreement.

Then, tremendous figures whom we did not know about at the time, like Walesa and Havel, cited these provisions in the name of their own national values.

Our successors in the American Government, under the Carter and Reagan administrations, gave Basket Three a scope and a vitality which went beyond what we could have imagined at the time.



APA-IMAGES/LEHTIKUVA

In a message read out to the audience at the anniversary event in Washington, D.C., former U.S. President Gerald R. Ford said the Helsinki Agreement would prove to be “a landmark in international relations, the first of its kind to link peace and security while upholding the fundamental principles of universal human rights”. Excerpts:

At the signing of the Helsinki Final Act 30 years ago, I said that history would judge the conference not by the promises we made that day, but by the promises we had kept.

Europe and the world have witnessed tremendous changes in the past 30 years. These original 35 signatories now number 55 and we have seen an expansion of liberty throughout the region and the globe that was unimaginable when we signed the Final Act.

As we move toward a new generation, we can look back and say that despite the difficulties and tensions, we have kept our word. But we must never cease to maintain our vigilance and our support for freedom, democracy and the inalienable rights that we have for so long struggled to protect.

The OSCE has a proud legacy 30 years later and it is one that we hope will endure for another 30 and beyond.

Gerald R. Ford
Former President
United States

The U.S. President and his Secretary of State take a breather from the marathon talks in Helsinki.

“To meet with them — two seminal figures of that period — was one of the truly moving experiences in my life,” said Henry Kissinger. He was referring to Soviet dissidents Andrei Sakharov and his wife, Elena Bonner, whose daughter Tatiana Yankelevich also addressed the anniversary event on Capitol Hill on 28 July. Excerpts:



AFP-IMAGES/BERNARD GERTZ

December 1988, Paris: Lech Walesa, then-leader of Poland's Solidarity trade union, Andrei Sakharov, Elena Bonner and another key Polish dissident, Bronislaw Geremek, were guests at the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In 1975, two historic events took place. One was the signing of the Final Act on Security and Co-operation in Europe; the other was the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Andrei Sakharov, the first time the Peace Prize was awarded for achievements in human rights.

Both events gave unprecedented recognition to the

place and role of human rights in the modern world. There was a meaningful connection between these two events, which contributed to the eventual collapse of Communism and the end of the Cold War.

It was gratifying for Sakharov to find the Helsinki Agreement's Principle 7 echoing his idea that human

rights are an essential factor in détente between nations:

“The participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. They will promote and encourage the effective exercise of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and other rights and freedoms all of which derive from the inherent dignity of the human person and are essential for his free and full development.”

These words were in turn echoed by the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize citation:

“Uncompromisingly and forcefully, Sakharov has fought not only against the abuse of power and violations of human dignity in all its forms, but he has with equal vigour fought for the ideal of a State founded on the principle of justice for all. In a convincing fashion, Sakharov has emphasized that the individual rights of man can serve as the only sure foundation for a genuine and long-lasting system of international co-operation.”

Sakharov and other Soviet dissidents contributed mightily to the globalization of human rights, breathing profound meaning into the Helsinki Agreement. It is not too late to hope that the twenty-first century, whose birth they facilitated, will come to embrace their agenda and thereby distinguish itself from its bloody predecessor.

Preserving their legacy in the form of the Sakharov Archive is a vital step in this direction; it will also keep alive the spirit of the Helsinki Agreement.

Tatiana Yankelevich, Director
Sakharov Programme on Human Rights
Harvard University

Prague Crossroads

Former dissidents reflect on their impact

BY WALTER KEMP

On 5 June this year, a group of former dissidents from the OSCE area came together in a newly restored gothic cloister in Prague to reminisce about their efforts to hold their leaders to account for the promises that they had signed up to in the summer of 1975.

Sponsored by the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, the Helsinki Final Act anniversary event was supported by the Prague Crossroads, which is part of the foundation established by former Czech President Vaclav Havel and his wife, Dagmar.

Ludmilla Alexeyeva, one of the founding members of the Moscow Helsinki Group, recalled that it was an era of determination, mixed with no small measure of trepidation: Andrei Sakharov, Yuri Orlov and other activists wrote and distributed pamphlets, and organized meetings to spread information on the CSCE's human dimension provisions. Working on well-worn typewriters, gathering clandestinely in private apartments, smuggling *samizdat* documents (underground publishing), and being arrested for their convictions — these were all part and parcel of the life of a dissident.

But their perseverance was to pay off. Their activities raised the awareness of

people at home and attracted support from abroad. As one participant put it, their work, with external assistance, helped to punch a hole in the Iron Curtain; by highlighting the persecution that was taking place, they forced Communist regimes to become more conscious of the respect due to human rights.

Vaclav Havel spoke about how the Helsinki Process had been an inspiration to Charter 77 and other civic movements. Principle 7 of the Final Act gave power to the powerless, helping small groups of committed people in their fight for human dignity by obliging rulers to turn words into deeds.

He told the audience that the struggle for human rights should never be considered passé. He noted examples of present-day human rights violations — both within and outside the OSCE area — and urged continued vigilance.

Mr. Havel said that during a recent visit to the United States, politicians he met expressed concern about “whether the democratic world was trying hard enough to protect human rights”. They were worried that “since the fall of Communism, human rights were in danger of being considered a closed chapter, and that priority was being given to economics, trade, and the like”.

The opening event was followed by a two-day academic conference at the Czech Foreign Ministry's Czernin Palace, where researchers from around the world exchanged information and opinions on the activities of Central European dissidents and their impact on the demise of Communism.

Walter Kemp is Senior Adviser, Office of the Secretary General.

Former Czech President Vaclav Havel and OSCE staff member Walter Kemp chat at the 30-year anniversary celebration in Prague. The event was held at the former Anensky Convent (right photo), now part of the Vize 97 Foundation.



OSCE/LUBOMIR KOTEK



OSCE/LUBOMIR KOTEK

Field missions: Helsinki principles live on

Anniversary celebrations in Albania, Armenia, Croatia and Tajikistan served as an opportunity for host Governments and the OSCE to reaffirm their constructive working ties and to continue drawing local and international partners into their activities. Government leaders stressed in their messages that the principles of the Helsinki Final Act had lost none of their relevance 30 years later, and that these continued to serve as guideposts for the behaviour of States towards each other and towards their citizens.



OSCE/TOMISLAV PAVLEK

Croatian President Stjepan Mesic (centre) is introduced by Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia (left), to the OSCE's Stefano Gnocchi (right) and other senior Mission members.

ZAGREB, October 6 — The 1975 Helsinki summit turned out to be more than the closing of the chapter on World War II, President Stjepan Mesic said today. The Helsinki Final Act, with its focus on comprehensive security and co-operation, was precisely what Europe needed: “a counterpoint to confrontation and conflict”.

The President was addressing about 200 people who had gathered at the headquarters of the OSCE Mission to Croatia to commemorate the Helsinki Accords' 30th anniversary.

He said that the OSCE's monitoring activities in Croatia had been necessary and thanked all those who had called attention to occurrences and trends in the country that were not in accordance with European principles and standards.

Croatia signed the Helsinki Final Act on 8 July 1992.

TIRANA, 5 August — President Alfred Moisiu of Albania said today that “after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the freeing of Europe from totalitarian political systems, our country, too, signed on to the democratic principles of the Helsinki Act”.

President Moisiu led about 200 guests in celebrating the anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act at an event hosted by the OSCE Presence in Albania and the Albanian Institute for International Studies.

Albania was the only country in Europe that did not take part in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

“Our country has profited a great deal from CSCE/OSCE assistance and experience,” he said. “In the past 15 years, Albania has achieved a great deal in meeting the Final Act's democratic standards. The recent parliamentary elections have also marked noticeable progress.”

Albania signed the Helsinki Final Act on 16 September 1991.



COURTESY OF ALBERT MOISIU

President Alfred Moisiu of Albania and Ambassador Pavel Vacek, Head of the OSCE Presence, share a light moment at the celebration in Tirana.

DUSHANBE, 30 September — Tajikistan's First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sirojiddin Aslov, stressed the significance of the OSCE's contribution to the development of the country's democratic institutions through wide-ranging activities carried out by the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe and its five field offices.

He was speaking to some 100 guests at an event marking 30 years of the Helsinki Final Act.

The Head of the OSCE Centre, Ambassador Alain Couanon, traced the history of the Organization's 14 years of involvement in the country — from the opening of the Mission to Tajikistan in February 1994 and the assistance rendered in forging the Tajik Peace Agreement in 1997, to its activities in fostering post-conflict security and stability.

Tajikistan signed the Helsinki Final Act on 26 February 1992.



OSCE CENTRE IN DUSHANBE

Kamol Abdurahimov, editor-in-chief of *Jumhuriyat*, a leading Tajik newspaper, examines OSCE publications on display as part of the anniversary celebrations.



OSCE OFFICE IN YEREVAN/GOHAR AMASYAN

YEREVAN, 2 September — The first Armenian translation of the Helsinki Final Act, a joint initiative of the OSCE Office in Yerevan and the Armenian Foreign Ministry, was presented to some 150 guests on the occasion of the document's 30-year anniversary.

“We hope that this translation will help the Armenian people gain a better understanding of OSCE principles, values and commitments,” said Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin, Head of the OSCE Office.

“The Helsinki Final Act created a platform for dialogue in which the voice of every participating State had a right to be heard and in which every opinion was taken into account and every interest was articulated, regardless of the State's military or economic weight,” Armenian Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanian said.

“Today, we are not the same participating States that joined at the beginning of the 1990s. We have learned, we have changed, we have matured, and we need the OSCE not in the same way we did then.”

Armenia signed the Helsinki Final Act on 8 July 1992.