



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Conflict Prevention Centre**

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Enhancing Co-operation between the OSCE and other International Organisations

**Euro-Atlantic Council
Ljubljana, Slovenia
10 September 2004**

I am very honoured to take part in this important discussion here in Ljubljana today. Very soon Slovenia will undertake the important and challenging task of holding the Chairmanship of our Organization, and in a year that marks the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. During the years of the CSCE, relations with other organizations were not really an issue. The most important question at the time was how a political process such as the one initiated in Helsinki could relate to other negotiations or bilateral efforts aimed at advancing dialogue in an East/West context. With the end of the Cold War and the development of a new agenda for the Organization based on the challenges stemming from the newly prevailing geo-strategic conditions, the question of the inter-relationships between various European institutions and organisations started to require increasing attention.

The first Euro Atlantic institution to actively engage the OSCE in this regard was NATO. At the Oslo Ministerial Conference in June 1992, even before the OSCE could proceed to codify its own possible role in mandating and conducting its peace-keeping operations, NATO identified the OSCE, along with the UN, as the Organization that could mandate operations which NATO could then consider carrying out. Numerous contacts took place between the two organizations in the early 1990s. The NATO Secretary General attended the OSCE Ministerial Council in Rome in December 1993. NATO representatives were invited to participate in OSCE seminars on peace-keeping (1993 Vienna), and early warning (1994

Warsaw); the then Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, Ambassador Kubis, was invited on several occasions to brief the ad hoc Group on Cooperation in Peace-keeping in Brussels. At the same time, the OSCE declared itself as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, thus solidifying its aspirations to develop a role in peace-keeping in the Euro Atlantic and Eurasian regions on behalf of the UN.

In parallel, close interaction developed between NATO and the OSCE on a number of key arms controls issues. The most important of these was the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (or CFE Treaty), signed in Paris on November 19, 1990, by the 22 members of NATO and the former Warsaw Pact, which established parity in major conventional forces/armaments between East and West. In order to prepare the ground for this landmark agreement, NATO activated a focussed process of consultations which provided the decisive impetus for the OSCE to resolve this very complex issue and allowed for the entry into force of the Treaty in 1992.

While NATO's role in peace-keeping developed with the engagement of IFOR and then SFOR in Bosnia, and later KFOR in Kosovo, the OSCE had to adjust its ambitions. A decisive turning point was the failure for the Organization to adopt a mandate for Operation Alba in 1997, after the Russian Federation insistence on an UNSecCo mandate. On the other hand, as a result of this, the OSCE concentrated on those issues which then became – for many years – the real added value for the Organization: the field operations.

Accordingly, the OSCE progressively specialized in early warning, conflict prevention, and post-conflict rehabilitation activities. As a result of its increasing presence in the field, the Organization developed new partnerships with organizations operating in the same areas. The modalities of this interaction reflected largely the structure of the presence of the international community in the field. In some cases (as in Kosovo), the structure was rather complex, with the OSCE becoming one of the three pillars of the international presence under the leadership of the UN. In others, such as in Bosnia or the FYRoM, the OSCE mission was more autonomous but still part of an integrated international presence.

In other areas, the interaction with partner organizations has been less structured, albeit not less effective. The increasing intensity of co-operation on the ground resulted in a debate within the Organization on the need to better formalize relations with other international

organisations. This complex discussion, where different visions were put forward by participating States, resulted in the adoption of the Platform for Cooperative Security at the 1999 Istanbul Summit. The Platform is now the basis on which the OSCE interacts with other international organisations, in particular the UN, the EU, the CoE, as well as NATO, and so far it has considerably contributed to the enhancement of relations, both at the headquarters level and in the field.

Since then, as a complement to the vitally important mechanisms for co-ordination and co-operation on the ground, more structured exchanges have been established at the headquarters level, aimed at encouraging exchanges of information and fine-tuning of strategies. These consultations between headquarters, both at high level and working level, have become a good example of information sharing, and we are presently discussing ways of making them even more systematic and operational.

With NATO we have established a set of four regular staff level meetings per year, to discuss operational issues of common interest, and to exchange views on political issues. Special expert level meetings on specific issues also supplement these forms of consultation.

Troika meetings are held separately with the EU and the CoE, and, in the case of the EU, are supplemented by regular video-conferences organised by the Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna. Relations with the EU have strikingly grown in intensity over the last few years. This is hardly surprising if one considers that the EU now comprises almost half of the participating States of the OSCE and that it is very successful in putting forward common positions within the Organization. Moreover, the EU, especially the European Commission, is in many cases an important partner for the implementation of joint projects with OSCE Institutions and missions in the field, and this increased interaction has led to a more operational set of contacts between Vienna and Brussels. Nevertheless, there is a perceived lack of strategy of the EU vis-à-vis the OSCE, especially at a time when a number of participating States have put formally on the table the question of the reform of the OSCE. It would be essential for the EU to formulate its vision on the future role of the OSCE with decisiveness. This would not only facilitate the further development of our relationship, but would also contribute to clarifying and enhancing our interaction, in particular with the European Council Secretariat.

Concerning the Council of Europe, relations have not always been smooth in the past, especially following the expansion of CoE membership and the ensuing perceived overlap of a substantial part of our respective agendas. This situation has improved markedly in recent times, through clarification of respective roles and placing a greater accent on exchanges aimed at fostering complementarity between both organisations. We are currently exploring ways to further strengthen the dialogue, in order to avoid duplication and exploit the added value that both organisations can contribute with their activities. In the case of election monitoring, for example, the OSCE/ODIHR typically shares information of its missions with CoE delegations while CoE experts contribute specialist support to OSCE activities. The co-operation of ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly with the CoE Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) in Kazakhstan is a concrete, most recent example.

Regular high-level staff meetings, as well as periodic visits of the OSCE Secretary General and the Chairman-in-Office to the UN Security Council, also ensure a close and efficient interaction between the OSCE and the UN. Relations between both organisations are now becoming more operational. To cite an example, under the "Environment and Security Initiative" agreement signed in 2003, the OSCE, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) will jointly address problems such as water scarcity, hazardous waste, and other destabilising factors in sensitive regions. As a regional Organization, the OSCE is now making its expertise available with the aim both to maintain a prominent role in regional crisis, and to promote within the UN (and regional groupings under its umbrella), OSCE best practices and security models, i.e. concerning Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Issues dealt with by partner international organisations are ever more intertwined. Therefore there is a clear need for developing "multilateral format" relations for co-operation. The "Ohrid Process on Border Management and Security in South-East Europe" is a very good example of successful quadri-partite co-operation between the OSCE, EU, NATO and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The OSCE has been a proactive participant in this process from the beginning in 2002 and will shortly conclude a series of seminars in the first of a two-phase programme. Also related to borders, another example of close co-operation is the Joint OSCE-UNODC Technical Experts Conference on Border Management and Security, held in Vienna on 7 and 8 September 2004, to which all major international organisations involved in border related issues were invited. The aim of the Conference was

primarily to share international organisations' experience in promoting more effective border management and security, and to develop a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to delivering international assistance. This Conference highlighted the capacities of the respective international organisations for providing assistance in capacity-building in the area of border control and management, and I believe we have achieved enormous progress in co-ordination, streamlining and avoiding duplication when providing assistance in this area.

When considering the present state of relations between the OSCE and other international organisations, one should acknowledge that we have come a long way in a short time. We have learnt a lot, both from the set-backs and from the successes. However, in a time when we have all to face the new challenges of this new century, many of which are of a global nature, our co-ordination should be further improved.

To this end, we have made another step forward when in 2003 the Maastricht Ministerial Council adopted the "OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century". This document is a new important tool for us, for it sets guidelines and strategic recommendations for injecting much more substance into the relations with our international partners, and adding practical value to our exchanges.

According to the Strategy document, this should be pursued, first of all, by enhancing the overall effort to jointly analyse and cope with the new threats. In this regard, we have been tasked to explore the need for a new ad-hoc consultative mechanism that could serve as a flexible framework for consultation with partner organisations when a specific threat arises or intensifies. Initial findings, however, seem to point in the direction of strengthening present mechanisms rather than developing new ones.

One useful way of further intensifying our co-operation would also be by enhancing the regular information-sharing meeting with interested organisations, including the sub-regional organisations active within the OSCE area, as well as through the establishment of contact points.

To build more efficiently on the initiatives already launched, we should strive to take more active advantage of each other's existing tools. For example, better use could be made of cross-conditionality: non-compliance with international obligations (ICTY or OSCE or

Dayton) could be better linked to progress in the relations with other Organisations (e.g. SAP or PfP co-operation). We must see where and how we can complement each other, using experience gained, resources and mechanisms available. And we should respect the principle of inclusiveness by involving all relevant players.

The OSCE also stands ready to continue developing practical measures aimed at sharing relevant OSCE experiences with other regional organisations, as well as to consider supporting initiatives and plans elaborated in other forums to improve co-operation in combating the new challenges ahead. This has been done so far, for example, by giving support to the implementation of UN commitments, i.e. the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, in OSCE participating States.

To be abreast with the times and the profound changes which occurred over the last quarter of century in Europe and beyond, we all had to undergo a long and continuous process of reform and improvement of our Institutions, our agendas, and our joint efforts. Occasional relations have been replaced by more structured forms of interaction, through which our original contributions have reinforced each other and allowed us to achieve considerable successes. However, this should not stop us from exploring further ways to enhance our common endeavours in addressing the new challenges ahead. The OSCE intends to continue operating in a flexible, pragmatic and transparent way towards advancing these common goals, firmly committed as ever to the strengthening of stability and security in its region, firmly convinced that complementarity, adaptability, and common political will remain the key elements for our success.