



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 27, 2022

Ambassador Yrjöla, welcome back to the Permanent Council.

The security situation in the OSCE area since your last report is dire and unprecedented. Russia’s brutal aggression against Ukraine, and its neo-imperialist attempted annexation of Ukraine’s sovereign territory, are in direct contravention of foundational OSCE principles and violate the UN Charter. They are also stark reminders of the security threats we collectively face today and that the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security – grounded in the Helsinki Final Act and *acquis* of commitments in all three dimensions – is more pertinent than ever. As the nerve center of this Organization, the CPC has an essential and indispensable role in our collective ability to uphold and implement these principles, whether it be through supporting mediators and negotiators, field operations, providing early warning on emerging crises, or the Forum for Security Cooperation, Security Dialogues, and Structured Dialogues.

We value and appreciate the CPC’s support for the 5+2 Settlement Process on the Transnistrian Conflict, as well as for the Geneva International Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia and the Minsk Group process. We encourage the CPC to explore more confidence-building measures in support of these processes. We share your grave concern regarding the incidents along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in September and support the activation of the OSCE’s confidence-building and conflict prevention instruments.

As the eyes and ears of the Organization, the OSCE’s field operations are unrivaled assets which provide timely and objective assessments of the situation on the ground. It is deeply regrettable, but not surprising given what we know now about Moscow’s ambitions and intentions for Ukraine, that several field operations have been closed down – including the Project Coordinator in Ukraine, the Special Monitoring Mission, and the Border Observation Mission. We applaud the CPC’s work to support the evacuation of international OSCE mission members from Ukraine as well as the relocation of national mission members to safer locations in the aftermath of Russia’s full-scale aggression. The establishment of the Joint Analysis and Operations Cell to provide timely information to the Organization, and the CPC’s support for the Repository Program for a Support Program for Ukraine, are necessary and welcome steps that reflect the CPC’s capacity to adapt to changing circumstances while continuing to fulfill its mandate.

The field operations in the Balkans continue to promote peace and security and perform a critical early warning function. In Central Asia, the field operations facilitate dialogue between host governments and civil society to foster implementation of OSCE commitments in all three dimensions of security. We applaud the work of the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe and the OSCE Academy in Bishkek to advance regional cooperation, and note the CPC's important role in monitoring unrest and border tensions in several instances during the past year. We continue to believe the OSCE should respond positively to requests for a field presence in places such as Mongolia and Georgia.

Ambassador Yrjöla, the 1992 Helsinki Document and 3/11 Conflict Cycle Ministerial decision mandate the Chair to deploy OSCE tools to respond to challenges to security in our region. In today's context, as we face the complex combination of unprecedented security threats and ongoing challenges, it is more crucial than ever that we strengthen and fully utilize the OSCE's toolbox. We agree with you, the current situation calls for innovative solutions and encourage you and your team to continue to work closely with the Chair to actively apply all the instruments at your disposal to meet the urgent tests of our time. We call on all participating States to find the political will to use the Organization's toolbox in a comprehensive manner.

The United States looks forward to a continuing dialogue with the CPC on advancing these shared priorities and welcomes your suggestions on these and other issues. I commend the efforts of the CPC, including on involving more women in all phases of the conflict cycle, and thank you and your professional team for your very valuable work. You have our full support which I assure you includes support related to approving a budget.

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