



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

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**Panel discussion at IPA Conference 14 November 2003
Session 1: European Security Organisations in UN Crisis Management: Recent
Developments.**

I would like today to take a look at our own interaction with the UN, and other organizations, with an eye to looking at lessons learned, not least with the view to improve our cooperation in relation to current and future activities. In this regard, it would be useful to review the development of our role in conflict prevention and crisis management, the state of our co-operation both on the ground and at a more strategic/headquarter level, and finally draw some conclusions in relation to possible new tasks that the international community is facing in conflict prevention and crisis management.

The OSCE approach to conflict prevention and crisis management is based on a comprehensive approach to security and on principles such as inclusiveness and ownership. Accordingly, a constant feature is the permanent dialogue that directly involves the countries in the region where we operate, empowering them and making them fully part of the decision-making process. This also allows our organisation to better take into account and factor into its activities the aspirations of the countries themselves and improves our knowledge of the local situation. A key role in this regard is played by our field missions, which *inter alia* are an excellent channel to develop a dialogue at the local level, both with representatives of the governments and local administration, and with the civil society. When needed, as it is often the case in post-war torn societies and in countries in transition, our field missions have also contributed to re-build and strengthen the civil society, engaging the citizenry in the transformation of their countries. This helps promote a better understanding and an acceptance of our activities at all levels.

This permanent dialogue and interaction, both in the field as well as at the HQ level, makes it possible to better modulate our efforts so as to duly take into account the specific characteristics of the respective region and allows us to better understand the way people perceive the activities we undertake. As we have seen, when engaging in a process of crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, that there is no “single size-that-fits-all”; rather, to the contrary –

we have learned to work and to patiently adjust and adapt our best practices to local realities.

Our efforts to improve security and stability and to strengthen democracy are greatly facilitated by the presence of regional co-operation or even integration processes. Conversely, the lack of regional co-operation complicates stabilisation efforts by the international community. For instance, we have witnessed in the Balkans how the EU Stabilisation and Association Process, by opening up a path for the countries of the region towards eventual accession to the EU, has set EU standards as an acceptable parameter applicable to our own activities in institution-building. We have also seen how much easier security and defence sector reforms become when they take place in a PfP context – especially if this comes from the perspective for the countries to perhaps join NATO some time in the future.

When these perspectives are absent, the sheer economic considerations and motivations will inevitably play a comparatively more important role. While clear political goals and objectives remain an essential condition for any successful international operation, a process of political stabilisation is in these circumstances even more heavily dependent on economic rehabilitation, which in turn should be closely linked to progress in the stabilisation effort. Therefore any international financial institutions (IFI) operating in a post-conflict environment need to be engaged at an early stage, ideally at the beginning of the debate on the development of strategy for the future. This debate should entail not only exchanging views and information, but should have the more ambitious aim to try and shape a coherent agenda for the International Community.

The point of departure for this agenda should be a common assessment of the new threats and risks. The OSCE is, as was mentioned by the SG Kubis pointed out earlier in his keynote speech, is finalising in these days a Strategy to address the threats and challenges to the 21st Century. Similar exercises are underway elsewhere (we recently contributed some thoughts for a EU strategy to be endorsed at a European Council meeting later this year), and I see the very timely initiative by the UN SG Kofi Annan, to establish a high level panel to study global security threats as an appropriate and relevant step towards promoting such common assessment.

This will be the first, necessary step, but we should then ensure that it is followed by a fine-tuning of the strategies in relation to the individual challenges, taking into account the specificities, the added value and the original contributions of each organization. Ideally, our objective should be to avoid any attempt of forum shopping and promote cross-conditionality in our policies. For instance, if we in the OSCE have developed a number of tools that allow us to assess the degree to which our countries comply with a range of commonly shared norms and commitments, this degree of compliance should also be taken

into account as much as possible by other international actors operating in the OSCE area in shaping and modulating their own initiatives. In an ideal world, non-compliance with international obligations (e.g., cooperation with ICTY or compliance with OSCE commitments) could be linked to progress in the relations with other organisations (e.g. SAP or PfP co-operation).

Looking at the present state of co-operation among international institutions, I would point out that we have come a long way since the time of our initial experiences, mainly in the Balkans, and we have also learned a lot on the way, both from the set-backs and from our successes.

As a result of these experiences, we have successfully activated a better structured dialogue among international actors, including at HQ level, aimed at encouraging exchanges of visions and fine-tuning of strategies. This dialogue, however, complements – but cannot in any way replace – the vitally important mechanisms for co-ordination and co-operation on the terrain both at the political and the operational level.

Among the principles governing this co-operation I will recall here the need for a clear division of labour based on the comparative strengths and advantages of each organisation, and the necessity to avoid duplication. To this end, co-ordination is crucial even before the deployment of any given Field Presence, in the phase of mandate drafting and logistical planning. From then on, the difference between an effective International Community, and an international crowd, is often the matter of tackling problems deriving from different reporting channels and chains of command, different rules of engagement or even personality clashes. Simple measures, such as the co-location in the same premises of different agencies may give a tremendous contribution to a coherent strategy.

Let me briefly turn to recent examples of the kind of co-operation between OSCE and the UN, as well as with EU and NATO.

The current BiH format, with a board of Principals revolving around the function of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and more empowered local authorities, and the Kosovo ‘pillar’ structure, are, albeit in my view to a different degree, successful models that one could draw upon in designing mechanisms for co-ordination on the ground in the future. The BiH model has proven challenging, especially with regard to the division of labour and, at times, due to the lack of a shared vision for the operation, but has improved over time. In Kosovo, the pillar structure has proven to be a probably more efficient platform which has functioned fairly well, not least due to the fact that this structure naturally leads to close co-operation, especially on the ground, and to a clear definition of roles and tasks. Still, more can and should be done in terms of sharing views on the overall IC strategy.

In the Western Balkans, we found our co-operation with NATO, and more recently with the EU, not only extremely useful, but in fact a *conditio sine qua non* for us to be able to discharge effectively our functions in a number of regions, due to the benign environment their armed forces secured. Yet, this cooperation is reciprocal and always very pragmatic. I could cite here a recent example of concrete interaction with the EU in FYROM, where OSCE extended EU logistical support related to its police activities, supporting the EU/Proxima planning team with office space, cars and equipment.

Further eastwards, we find other recent experiences of UN-OSCE co-operation in crisis management related operations, both in the Caucasus and in Central Asia. In Georgia, The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) continues to co-operate closely with the OSCE in matters of mutual concern, in particular the pursuit of a comprehensive settlement in the conflict of Abkhazia, focusing especially on human rights issues. In Tajikistan, the OSCE has also worked in close co-operation with key international organisations under the umbrella of the UN. This co-operation has proved an important contributing factor in restoring peace to this war-ridden country – this through the finalising of the Tajik General Agreement in 1997.

Looking ahead, I would like to put forward a few suggestions to further improve IC co-operation in conflict prevention and crisis management:

- to improve coordination mechanisms to exchange views on strategies;
- to improve information sharing, especially in early warning;
- to enhance co-operation in fact-finding and monitoring missions, including possible set-up of joint “country co-ordination teams”; and
- to develop joint training programs for field officers prior to their deployment in the field.

Let me briefly expand on these issues:

- On strategies, we could perhaps consider the possible need for new tools to improve coherence and effectiveness in the action of the IC as a whole. For instance, the BOAC proved to be a useful tool in relation to the West Balkans. One could consider drawing upon this experience to develop a flexible framework to be utilised on an “ad hoc” basis, and if necessary with a broad agenda, to support initiatives in this direction. More generally, partner organisations should be encouraged introduce new modalities and establish new mechanisms for co-operation. But we also need to build more efficiently on the initiatives already launched and take more active advantage of each other’s existing tools. 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 and involve all relevant players.

- Despite recent progress achieved, information sharing among partner organisations, especially in early warning, can be further improved. Early warning is one of the main functions of the OSCE Institutions and field offices. Regular reports and evaluations of the situation in a variety of locations and on a variety of issues are provided to the participating States, who themselves regularly share information in the Permanent Council. Better information-sharing among partner organisations can be achieved through joint working level meetings directly in the field and between headquarters. The current working level consultations between headquarters, especially with NATO and the EU, have become a good example of such information sharing, and we are presently discussing ways to make it even more systematic and operational. This might also serve as a model to further improve the OSCE-UN interaction and cooperation.
- There is room for improving co-operation in fact-finding and monitoring missions. One option might be to set up, when needed, joint “country co-ordination teams”, including personnel from OSCE field presences. Moreover, we should continue our exchanges on lessons learned and evaluation as an essential component of successful conflict prevention. It would be interesting to formulate truly inclusive common evaluations of joint operations with a view to developing common lessons learned.
- Finally, I would point out that very often a major obstacle to smooth co-operation between partners in the field is the lack of reciprocal knowledge of goals, mandates, procedures, etc. One way to tackle this issue would be to provide each other with training modules on respective organisations, or to develop joint training programs on relevant issues for field officers prior to their deployment in the field. Joint training should be a general aim, not least because common standards are already current practice in many areas. Joint exercises can also play a very important role in this process of getting to know each other’s procedures better – but only if partner organisations are treated as real partners, and can participate rather than observe, and have access to relevant information.

In conclusion, it is clear that the International Community will undoubtedly find itself facing complex situations in the 21st Century, most of which will be the consequences of the changes we have witnessed over recent years. It is therefore of crucial importance that we continue to take steps to improve our efforts including through closer liaison and the development of complementary roles. Successful post-conflict rehabilitation, which is increasingly demanding our attention, should be regarded first of all as an effective tool of conflict prevention. Coherent action by the International Community does certainly make a difference. This is perhaps the most important lesson we have learned so far.