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General

Over the last decade we have witnessed a continuous evolution of the global security environment. Developments of a very different nature – political, military, on human rights, economic, social, environmental - have led to the emergence of new risks and threats that pose new and additional challenges to all the international organisations responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Since the adoption of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, the OSCE participating States have recognised security as indivisible and comprehensive in character, encompassing politico-military, economic and environmental aspects, as well as a human dimension. Operating on the basis of this broad concept of comprehensive security, the OSCE has actively worked for security and stability across its region. However, with the evolution of the security environment of the first years of the new millennium, it appeared clear also to us, that the already existing tools and mechanisms were not sufficient to face the new challenges.

The need to develop new responses to the changing threats to security was firstly recognised by the OSCE States at the Bucharest Ministerial Council in 2001, and further discussed in 2002 at the Ministerial Council in Porto. The OSCE participating States decided at Porto to develop a Strategy Document to address threats to stability and security in the XXI century, and to review on an annual basis the security work undertaken by the Organisation within the framework of an Annual Security Review Conference. Adopted last year at the Maastricht Ministerial Council, the “OSCE Strategy to address threats to stability and security in the XXI century”¹ contributes to a more cohesive and effective international system for responding to global threats and challenges. By identifying new threats and by outlining guidelines and recommendations to address the new challenges to security, the Strategy reinforces existing commitments of the OSCE participating States and provides them with a more flexible tool to streamline and enhance their co-operation.

¹ See the “OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Stability and Security in the XXI Century”, available at <http://www.osce.org/documents>

Threats to security and stability are nowadays more likely to arise as negative, destabilising consequences of developments that cut across the politico-military, economic and environmental and human dimensions, than from any major armed conflict. Many of them are interconnected: a threat in one dimension of security usually affects the situation also in other domains. Naturally, not every threat to security is present in every region of the OSCE area to the same extent: different regions and sub-regions are faced with different, sometimes very specific problems. On the basis of the OSCE Strategy, together with **specific threats of a politico-military nature**, four key-clusters of threats can be identified:

- threats arising from **terrorism and other criminal activities**;
- **inter-state and intra-state conflicts**;
- threats related to **discrimination and intolerance**;
- threats related to the **economy and the environment**.

Terrorism is one of the most important causes of instability in the current security environment and will remain a key challenge to peace and stability and to State power, particularly through its ability to use asymmetric methods to bypass traditional security and defence systems. Experience has tragically shown that diverse situations have provided fertile ground for terrorism. While at times, situations of injustice and humiliation over time generate potential terrorism, it is also in situations of lawlessness and “failed states” that conditions are sometimes created for the establishment and the extension of international terrorist networks. Very often terrorism runs in parallel with **organised crime and other criminal activities**, such as smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings; illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, in small arms and light weapons, as well as in sensitive materials and technologies. Open borders and free movement of persons and goods are beneficial to international co-operation, but also present growing challenges, including illegal migration.

Threats emerging from **inter-State and intra-State conflicts** remain the broadest category of threat within the OSCE area. Such conflicts, wherever they take place, may also pose a risk to neighbouring areas and may give rise to instability and other types of threats, such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW), human rights violations, mass expulsion, deterioration of the socio-economic situation, and illegal migration. In recent times, intra-state conflicts have notably increased, leading in some cases, to protracted violence and complex humanitarian emergencies, that many international and regional organisations have not been able to cope with effectively.

Discrimination and intolerance also threaten the security of individuals and may give rise to wider-scale conflict and violence. They can have their root in issues such as ethnic and religious tensions, aggressive nationalism, chauvinism and xenophobia, and may also stem from racism, anti-Semitism and violent extremism, as well as lack of respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. The mobility of migrant populations and the emergence of societies with many co-existing cultures in all parts of the OSCE region present growing opportunities as well as challenges.

Deepening economic and social disparities, lack of rule of law, weak governance in public and corporate spheres, corruption, widespread poverty and high unemployment are some key **economic factors**, which threaten stability and security. They provide a breeding ground for other major threats. **Environmental degradation**, unsustainable use of natural resources, mismanagement of wastes and pollution affect ecological systems and have a substantial negative impact on the health, welfare, stability and security of States. Ecological disasters

may also have such effects. Problems of governance connected to these factors have a direct undermining effect and at the same time reduce the capacity to ensure sustainable economic and social development. OSCE's Office of Economic and Environmental Activities, in co-operation with OSCE field missions and other partners, supports small catalytic projects that aim to address potential destabilising issues on a national and regional level.

Many of the **threats of a politico-military nature**, including those addressed by existing OSCE documents, such as destabilising accumulations of conventional weaponry, illicit transfers of arms, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, remain of great concern to the OSCE participating States. Among the threats that have either changed in nature or impact, or are new altogether, armed threats posed by terrorists and other criminal groups require particular attention. Equally, attention should be given to potential challenges stemming from the changing character of armed conflicts.

Central Asia and Afghanistan

The response of the OSCE to all these new challenges to security and stability in Central Asia is characterised by a multi-dimensional approach. **The five OSCE Centres** in the region – in co-operation with various units in the OSCE Secretariat and other OSCE Institutions - implement activities in all three dimensions of security and they are the cornerstone of any successful initiatives. Some of these activities also include Afghanistan. Afghanistan was welcomed as an OSCE Partner for Co-operation in April 2003. It is a special OSCE Partner State, because it directly borders three OSCE participating States in Central Asia (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). However, the individual political mandates of the OSCE Centres in Central Asia focus specifically only on the respective host countries. The Centres do not have a mandate for Afghanistan. Therefore, including Afghanistan in project work in Central Asia is presently decided on a case by case basis.

Education is one of the most promising opportunities for strengthening security, combating terrorism, and improving the integration of Central Asian states in the international community. Thus, one of the priorities of the OSCE Chairmanship in 2004 is to target **education-related initiatives** in order to prevent the spread of terrorism and to foster stability, understanding, tolerance, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence,. These initiatives are obviously cross-dimensional in character, covering political, economic and human aspects of security. Stressing this topic contributes significantly to breathing life into the Bishkek Programme of Action. One of the measures identified for combating and preventing terrorism (laid down in Paragraph 12 of the Programme, which was adopted in December 2001) is: *“...to offer young people opportunities to learn and practice tolerance, to enable them to actively participate in civil society and to familiarise them with peaceful conflict resolution methods”*.²

Within the economic and environmental dimension, the OSCE is focusing on addressing specific gaps and needs related to training for public administration staff, training for academic staff and graduates, business related training, as well as training for youth. The overall goal is to contribute to the development of human capital and thus facilitate the

See the “Programme of Action” adopted at the “Bishkek International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism, available at http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2001/12/677_en.pdf

economic transition and policy-making processes, including the reform of the legal and structural frameworks and the strengthening of good governance at all levels. A preparatory seminar for the 12th OSCE Economic Forum on these topics was held in Bishkek in March 2004 and its conclusions and suggestions will now be brought to the attention of the 2004 OSCE Economic Forum in order to identify concrete follow-up measures.

The OSCE is well placed to assist its participating States in the Central Asian region to address challenges they face in their reform processes - one key aspect of this certainly being the education of future generations. The momentum that has been built up over the last few years should not be lost. Therefore, continuity and close co-ordination in the OSCE approach to Central Asia among the Central Asian participating States themselves and the OSCE partners in the international community are of utmost importance.

The declining state of education in all five Central Asian states to a different degree is therefore a major concern, not least because education can play such a key role in a state's stability. Education systems that ensure universal access to high quality education that serve the needs of changing economic, social and political conditions, provide states with the talent and skills needed to raise their economic base. This in turn can lead to a generally higher standard of living, which thus assists in preventing social discontent and a rise in criminality and terrorism.

In this context, the regional **OSCE Academy in Bishkek** was set up in December 2002. It is a regional initiative with the aim to get all five Central Asian participating States and also students and lecturers from other participating States involved. The Academy aims at becoming a unique regional centre for competence, education, research and regional dialogue. The first pilot semester started in February 2004 and it consists of an 18-week intensive course focusing on regional security, democratisation and sustainable development. A total of 25 students from four Central Asian states have been accepted to the programme, which is conducted in Russian and English. More than 300 applications were received for this first pilot semester and they are evidence of the interest of the younger generation in education. A full Masters programme is presently being drawn up.

In addition, an OSCE **Ministerial Conference on "Education as an Investment into the Future"**, took place on 5 April 2004 in Tashkent. The conference was hosted by the Uzbek government and brought together Central Asian governments and institutions, international organisations engaged in the region, including international financial institutions and development agencies, as well as research institutes from within and outside the region. The conference was opened by the current OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Minister Passy of Bulgaria. In addition, the Afghan Minister of Education attended the conference and actively contributed to the discussion. The main objectives were to offer a platform to the states of the region to illustrate their achievements; to foster increased co-operation and synergies with all actors, and to take stock of ongoing activities by international organisations. The conference produced a number of conclusions, focussing on the need to achieve quality education for all, to provide higher salaries to teachers, to strengthen vocational training, to train staff at the Ministries of Education, to improve governance and financial management, and to develop regional initiatives.

As a direct reaction to the terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, the participating States have adopted an Action Plan for Combating Terrorism, as well as a Programme of Action for Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism in Central Asia. In

2003 the participating States also adopted a Charter on Combating Terrorism. On the basis of the recommendations contained in these documents, the OSCE established a Counter-Terrorism Network to promote the strengthening of co-ordination of counter-terrorism measures and information sharing between the OSCE participating States and to support and complement the work of the UN CTC in implementing Security Council Resolution 1373.

Border-related activities are also aimed at facing the growing challenges presented by organised crime and other criminal activities. The OSCE's role in borders is firmly laid down in a number of official documents, and not least in the Helsinki Final Act itself. In particular, paragraph 35 of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century states that “*Cross-border movement of persons, resources and weapons as well as trafficking for the purpose of financing and providing logistic support play an increasing role for terrorist activities. The OSCE is committed to addressing these problems ... through the elaboration of an OSCE Border Security and Management Concept in order to enhance capacity building and mutually beneficial inter-State co-operation*”.³

To this end the OSCE Chairmanship has established a Working Group on Borders in Vienna in order to develop a Border Security and Management Concept for the organisation as a whole. In addition, a sub-unit has been created within the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna as part of the Conflict Prevention Centre's Operations Planning Unit. The aim of this sub-unit is to provide a focal point for all OSCE border-related issues.

One key challenge for us now is to establish a balance between secure borders on the one hand, and effective free movement of people and goods on the other. By ensuring secure borders, trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons as well as in drugs can be countered. To reduce the uncontrolled spread of weapons and drugs in the Central Asian region is of utmost importance, as this in turn can lead to the prevention of terrorism and other criminal activities. Given these multi-dimensional implications of border security in Central Asia, co-operation among the States concerned is crucial. Moreover, also co-operation and co-ordination efforts among international actors need in our view to be enhanced.

The OSCE has already conducted a number of small-scale border-related activities in Central Asia, such as a **workshop on regional co-operation on travel document security** (Bishkek, October 2003) where not only Central Asian experts from ministries took part but also Afghans participated. It provided a forum for participants to share in-country evaluations of their own priority issues related to travel documents security with counterpart governmental experts from regional and neighbouring states. It was pointed out that more co-operation at the regional level was necessary to address these issues of common concern. In addition, the OSCE has conducted training programmes for border guards and customs officials in Kazakhstan and recently also in Turkmenistan. One of the pilot projects dating back to November 2002 is the project at the **Termez-Hayraton border crossing** between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. In the framework of this project, the OSCE closely co-operated with the UNODC. The two organisations complemented each other in the different training courses (the OSCE part was mainly on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the one of UNODC on countering drugs smuggling). Also Afghan border control and customs agencies participated in the training programme. They added value to the training programme, since officials from

³ See “OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century”, available at http://www.osce.org/events/mc/netherlands2003/documents/files/mc_1070380498_e.pdf

both sides of the same border were brought together to the event to discuss the problems of trafficking in weapons and possible solutions to that issue.

Another important initiative related to policing is the OSCE's **Police Assistance Programme (PAP)** in Kyrgyzstan. The PAP is a timely impulse for the process of democratisation and institutional reform in Kyrgyzstan, thereby contributing to stability and the promotion of rule of law. Through for example the improvement of the quality of police investigation or the capacity for drug interdiction, the OSCE can contribute to crime prevention and the strengthening of security in general.

The PAP is carried out by the OSCE Strategic Police Matters Unit in Vienna together with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. It is divided into two phases. During phase one, a detailed and strategic in-depth needs assessment was carried out between October 2002 and March 2003. Phase two is based on the outcome of phase one and suggests projects aimed at improving the quality of police investigation, improving police capacity for drug interdiction, setting up a modern and efficient emergency call response centre, introducing community policing methods, strengthening the capacity for public disorder prevention and peaceful resolution improving the Police Academy. The planned duration of the PAP is 18 months.

In addition, the OSCE **de-mining project** in Tajikistan is another example of how the OSCE responds to new threats and challenges in Central Asia. Minefields in Tajikistan are a bitter legacy from the civil war and they represent a major source of instability. Clearing mines and unexploded ordnance can help people resume a normal life. In late 2002 the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe reacted to a request from the Tajik government to mobilise international support for mine action in Tajikistan. The ratification of the Ottawa Convention on 30 April 2003 by the Republic of Tajikistan gave a further impetus to events. After numerous mine action co-ordination meetings with possible contributors, an agreement was finally signed on 29 May 2003 between the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe and the *Fondation Suisse de Déminage* (FSD – Swiss Foundation for Mine Action) on the implementation of a project on “Mine Action in Tajikistan”. FSD is among the leading NGOs engaged in mine action. Throughout the project, the FSD will ensure that all project activities are conducted in a transparent and co-ordinated matter and will for this purpose co-operate with the Tajik Mine Action Centre (TMAC). The TMAC is supported by UNDP and it is responsible for the overall co-ordination of mine action in Tajikistan. It is a body established under the Tajik government.

In 2003, two mine surveys were carried out in the Tavildara and Sagirdasht areas as well as in the Karateghin (Rasht) Valley, where mines are left over from the civil war. Two survey teams were recruited and trained and have carried out surveys, marking and identifying infected areas.

Within the economic and environmental security dimension, one of the most important and current OSCE activities is the so-called “**Environmental and Security Initiative**”. In fall 2002 the OSCE joined forces with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to promote the use of environmental co-operation as an instrument for peace building. The initiative seeks to assess environment and security challenges in a participatory way involving governments, academia and civil society. Furthermore, it attempts to visualise, prioritise and draw the attention of politicians and people to situations where risks are high and environment and security linkages are important. The Initiative also aims at helping societies to deal with threats by building their

capacities, strengthening institutions, catalysing integration of environmental policy with conflict prevention and peace building, and supporting concrete action on the ground.

Guided by Ministerial Council Decisions and the New Strategy Document for the economic and environmental dimension adopted in Maastricht in December 2003, the Office of the Co-ordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) is pursuing its co-operation with UNODC to support OSCE participating States' efforts to strengthen their ability to prevent and suppress money laundering and terrorist financing.

With UNODC the OSCE has developed national workshops for participating States which constitute the first phase of a gradual and flexible approach with a view to enhancing capacities in combating money laundering and in suppressing the financing of terrorism. They are to be followed by legal framework development, implementation assistance ("Mentorship"-Programme) and capacity building (specific training elements). So far 6 workshops have been held in Kyrgystan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan as well as in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

As regards anti-trafficking activities within the human dimension the OSCE Centre in Tashkent conducted a workshop on "**Joint Efforts to Combat Trafficking of Human Beings**" in April 2004 as part of its "Anti-Trafficking Programme". The training brought together participants from state structures, civil society and mass media working in the area of preventing trafficking in human beings. Topics discussed during the workshop included: sharing experience on prevention activities; co-operation between media, official structures and public organisations; preventing trafficking in human beings through income generating programmes; effective awareness raising campaigns; and discussion on trafficking case studies. Of course anti-human trafficking initiatives have to go hand in hand with border-related projects. Victims of trafficking are placed in conditions controlled by their traffickers and often they are forced to earn illicit revenues. It is necessary to offer alternatives to these victims of trafficking and to crack down on organised criminal groups. In this respect, OSCE is implementing project activities that seek to address root causes of human trafficking.

The OSCE focuses also on a number of other human dimension initiatives, such as fostering free and independent **media**, building a vibrant **civil society** and preparing and monitoring **elections**. The OSCE has traditionally focused on these topics, which are of utmost importance in order to achieve stability, democratisation and security. All five OSCE Centres in Central Asia conduct projects on election-preparation, monthly NGO meetings, workshops for journalists and monitoring access to the media during the pre-election period.

Multi-dimensionality, flexibility and adaptability are the necessary ingredients of a successful strategy in responding to the new threats in Central Asia. The OSCE is committed to continuing identifying and analysing threats and challenges as they emerge, and adapting its response to them by regularly reviewing its Strategy. However, enhanced and co-ordinated action by all the international actors engaged in maintaining peace and security is also essential to respond effectively to the new challenges both throughout Central Asia and in Afghanistan and to improve human security.