



## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

### POTENTIAL OF THE VIENNA DOCUMENT 1999 MECHANISMS TO INCREASE CONFIDENCE AND STABILITY IN THE OSCE REGION

#### **The evolution of military confidence- and security-building measures within the CSCE/OSCE**

All the efforts to conclude arms control and disarmament agreements within the CSCE process and to agree on politico-military confidence- and security-building measures within that context are based on the states' obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force in their relations. This principle from the United Nations Charter was taken up and incorporated into the CSCE Final Act in Helsinki in 1975. During the negotiations over "Basket I," the resolution to refrain from the use of force was adopted as one of the ten basic principles guiding international relations. To implement this principle, the participating states agreed to fulfil this duty in every way they would deem appropriate. Thus, the Final Act contains a "Document on confidence-building measures and certain aspects of security and disarmament", which includes a first limited compilation of military CSBMs. The document even contains an agreement to promote mutual visits of military delegations and exchanges of military personnel. In 1975, at a time of antagonistic alliances, this was certainly a trailblazing development. The document marked the beginning of the development and implementation of politico-military CSBMs with the aim of shaping European security. At first, 35 states were involved in this process. Later on, that number went up to 55.

The next step towards the development of CSBMs was taken in 1986 with the Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE). Limitations, prior notifications and observations of manoeuvres as well as first verification measures were the main elements of this agreement. Inspection of military activities was introduced as a measure. Of course, the focus was on the large-scale military manoeuvres that were being conducted by the alliances and might have been major causes of concern. Calls for further negotiations on CSBMs were made during the third follow-up meeting held in Vienna from 1986 to 1989. These negotiations took place at the same time as the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe and resulted in the 1990 Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. This document, which was amended as early as 1992, complemented the exchange of information, expanded verification opportunities through the instrument of evaluation, introduced obligatory visits to air bases as military contacts, created a mechanism for conflict prevention, included provisions with respect to an independent communications network as well as established an annual implementation assessment meeting.

Negotiations were continued by the Forum for Security Co-operation and resulted in the 1994 Vienna Document, which complemented the existing CSBMs with an exchange of information on defence planning, with additional threshold values for the notification and observation of military activities and with an intensified programme of military contacts and co-operation. The most recent step in the evolution towards VD 99 centred on the inclusion of a chapter on regional confidence- and security-building measures.

## Overview of VD 99 CSBMs

The current version of the Vienna Document contains a wide variety of different, tailor-made instruments aiming at confidence- and security-building in the military field. These instruments complement one another and comprise measures designed to ...

- ... create **transparency** with regard to the conventional **military potentials** of host and guest forces in the OSCE area;
- ... create **transparency** regarding **military activities** conducted by conventional armed forces of a specific minimum size or bigger in the area of application;
- ... impose **limitations** on large-scale military activities of conventional armed forces in the area of application;
- ... facilitate **verification** of the information which the participating states provide on their conventional armed forces and activities;
- ... establish obligatory, additionally agreed **contacts** between members of their armed forces as well as contacts for the purpose of implementing military **co-operation** between units;
- ... establish **mechanisms for consultation** in order to reduce risks that may arise from unusual military activities or hazardous military incidents;
- ... intensify confidence- and security-building in a **regional** context by facilitating the conclusion of additional bilateral or regional agreements;
- ... facilitate a regular revision of the implementation of the Vienna Document at annual meetings, where **the implementation** of the agreed measures is to be **assessed**.

I would now like to give a more detailed description of the areas of regulation.

## Transparency regarding conventional military potentials through annual exchange of information

As regards transparency measures for conventional military potentials, the following systems of information exchange and data compilation must be mentioned:

- information exchange on **armed forces**,
- **compilation of data** on major weapon and equipment systems as well as

- the provision of information on **plans for the deployment** of major weapon and equipment systems.

Another independent system of information exchange, where information must be provided on an annual basis, is the exchange of information on **defence planning**. This data compilation contains information on

- **defence policy and doctrine**,
- **force planning** as well as
- information on **defence expenditures** of the preceding fiscal year as well as
- **military budget plans** for the forthcoming fiscal years.

### **Exchange of Information on Armed Forces**

The exchange of information on armed forces relates to the conventional forces of the individual participating states. Information must be provided not later than 15 December of each year and will be valid as of 1 January of the following year. Using fixed tables, the participating states furnish detailed information on the command organization of their armed forces down to brigade or regiment level. This applies to the countries' land forces - including amphibious forces -, air forces, air defence aviation and naval aviation permanently based on land. As for units and formations (the latter term is used to describe the command level from a division upwards), the following details are submitted: normal peacetime location indicated by exact geographic terms and/or co-ordinates, personnel strength in terms of peacetime authorized strength, major weapon and equipment systems that form the organic equipment of a major unit in the categories of battle tanks, helicopters, armoured combat vehicles, armoured combat vehicle look-alikes, anti-tank guided missile launchers, artillery pieces of 100 mm calibre and above as well as armoured vehicle launched bridges. As for air forces, air defence aviation and of naval aviation permanently based on land, information is provided on the location of military air bases as well as on the stockpile of combat aircraft and helicopters of the formation concerned.

There are special information rules with regard to any **increase in personnel strength** which goes beyond the notified peacetime authorized strength and is planned for a period of more than 21 days as well as for more than 1,000 troops in active combat units or for more than 3,000 troops in formations in the current year. There are relevant obligations to furnish information on any non-active combat unit and any non-active formation if there are plans for a temporary **activation** of at least 2,000 personnel for military routine activities or other tasks for a period of more than 21 days.

### **Information on Plans for the Deployment of Major Weapon and Equipment Systems**

Using a special format, the participating states annually furnish all the other participating states with information on any plans to commission major weapon and equipment systems in the year to come. It is stated which type of a major weapon system will be commissioned by what name and in what quantity in what formation. The information provided should also explain what other weapon systems are to be replaced by the new systems.

## Data on Major Weapon and Equipment Systems

In a separate data compilation, the other participating States Specific are furnished with information (including special technical data) on all the types of major weapon and equipment systems that are mentioned in the exchange of information on armed forces. Besides, a set of photos of the weapon systems has to be provided. The most recent development in this area is the agreement on providing this data compilation in digital form.

Thanks to this information, it is possible to clearly identify all weapon systems which are subject to notification.

Whenever new major weapon systems are commissioned, additional technical parameters of the systems concerned have to be submitted.

## Exchange of Information on Defence Planning

The 1999 Vienna Document states the purpose of the exchange of information on defence planning in a concise and precise manner:

"The participating States will exchange annually information as specified below in paragraphs ... to provide transparency about each OSCE participating State's **intentions** in the medium to long term as regards size, structure, training and equipment of its armed forces, as well as **defence policy, doctrines** and **budgets** related thereto ..."

The submission date of this information is linked to the date the defence budget is adopted. The information has to be submitted to the other participating states within three months after this date.

The exchange of information is to contain an explanation of the **defence policy**, including military strategy/doctrine as well as potential changes occurring thereto. National procedures for defence planning, the stages of defence planning, the institutions involved in the decision-making process is to be portrayed. The current personnel policy is to be described as well.

As for force planning, the participating states are to furnish information on the size, structure, the training of the personnel, and on major weapon and equipment systems of their armed forces. The information provided must include the deployment of the individual formations and the envisaged changes thereto. On a voluntary basis, the participating states may add information on paramilitary forces. Any plans for the procurement of weapon systems as well as any planned improvements in military infrastructure are to be stated as well. An important area is the armed forces budget. Participating States report their defence expenditures of the preceding fiscal year on the basis of the categories as set out in the "Instrument for Standardized International Reporting of Military Expenditures". For the fiscal year to come, budget estimates, too, are provided on the basis of the categories set out in the aforementioned United Nations system. As for the four following fiscal years, the best estimates of defence expenditure, if available, are to be given according to the categories of the United Nations budget reporting system.

The document contains a procedure for clarifying ambiguities or questions relating to the information provided by a participating state. It is becoming more and more common for the participating states to have the available information explained by experts in the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation and to provide an opportunity for discussion and for answering questions. It is also common practice to officially

provide the other participating states with other relevant information such as "white papers" on defence and force planning in addition to the obligatory exchange of information and data compilation.

## **Transparency with Regard to Military Activities and Limitations of Military Activities**

### **Annual Calendars and Prior Notification of Military Activities**

The next set of transparency measures relates to military activities conducted by armed forces. Such activities can, of course, give cause for concern over a state's security. In this context, military activities mean exercises or manoeuvres, instances of troop deployment or concentration as well as landing operations. In order to largely rule out any surprises in this context, the document provides for prior notification of such activities. The provisions stipulate that so-called annual calendars, which contain information on the military activities planned for the subsequent calendar year, be transmitted by 15 November of each year. What is required is information on such military activities in which at least 9,000 troops or 250 battle tanks or 500 armoured combat vehicles or at least 250 artillery pieces will participate. The aforementioned annual calendars include data on the type of the military activity and its purpose, geographic information on the activity, information on the time schedule, including the start and the end dates of the measures, the total number of troops employed by the participating states involved, the types and number of the major weapon systems employed, the command level, the echelons of the troops employed as well as the names of the participating divisions. Timely information makes military measures predictable and calculable for other participating states, especially the neighbouring states. This enables the participating states to prepare themselves for these activities. If military activities are not published in the annual calendar because they were planned at short notice, they must be notified to the other participating states as soon as possible. However, the provisions do stipulate that detailed information on the planned military activity be given to all the other participating states via the OSCE communications network no later than 42 days before the measure starts. In exceptional cases, this deadline may be disregarded if the measure is conducted without prior notification to the participating troops. In such cases, notification has to be given at the moment the participating troops start their activity.

### **Constraining Provisions**

The execution of military activities is not only linked to notification deadlines but is also subject to certain constraints regarding the number of measures as well as the overall scale in terms of soldiers and main weapon systems employed. Given today's security-political situation in the OSCE area, these constraints are practically of secondary importance. Thus, it is not permissible, for instance, to conduct more than one military exercise with more than 40,000 troops within a period of three calendar years. As for a single calendar year, there is an upper limit of six military activities involving more than 13,000 troops. Besides, no more than three military activities with more than 13,000 troops may be conducted within a year. By 15 November of each year, the participating states state if any and how many military activities involving more than 40,000 troops are to be conducted during the year after next. In the OSCE area, it is not permissible to conduct an activity of that scale if it was not

notified within the period stipulated by the provisions of the document. With the exception of the outdated notification thresholds and scale specifications, these rules are certainly reasonable and effective instruments for documenting military activities with the intention of avoiding misunderstandings and concern among the participating states. In a regional context, application of the provisions may be expedient if the threshold values are lowered considerably in bilateral agreements.

## **Verification of Declared Data on Armed Forces and Military Activities and Observation of Specific Military Activities**

Verification is another central area of regulation in the VD 99 document.

### **Inspection**

According to the Madrid mandate, the confidence- and security-building measures that are to be agreed "will be provided with adequate forms of verification which correspond to their content," it says in the document. Thus, every participating state has the right to conduct inspections on the territory of any other participating state in the zone of application of CSBMs after prior notification, which is to be made no later than 36 hours before entry into the country. The inspecting state has the right to designate for inspection a specific area on the territory of the inspected state party in which notifiable military activities are being conducted or are presumed to be taking place (according to another participating state). The current practice is to conduct such inspections even if there is no concrete information about ongoing military activities. An inspection team comprising four inspectors and necessary auxiliary personnel has the right to access and survey the entire area designated for inspection – with the exception of restricted areas that may be declared by the inspected state. The inspectors are briefed by the commanders of the formations that are based in the inspected area. The inspection may last up to 48 hours and may be conducted on the ground using cross-country vehicles or from the air by means of helicopters or aircraft. Today, inspection teams are often multinational, i.e. they comprise inspectors from several participating states. Every participating state must accept up to three inspections per calendar year. The instrument of carrying out inspections is used frequently. In the current implementation year, as many as 85 inspections were conducted by the beginning of November. Another 11 inspections have been conducted on the basis of bilateral agreements. The inspection reports are provided to all participating States via the OSCE communications network.

### **Evaluation**

Another form of verification is constituted by the instrument of evaluation. It serves to verify the information on armed forces which comes from the annual exchange of information as well as any information on any plans to commission major weapon and equipment systems. Pursuant to these provisions, every participating state has to grant other parties opportunities to inspect its units/formations at their normal peacetime location so that inspectors are able to verify the information provided. The number of evaluation visits to be accepted is calculated according to the formula "one evaluation visit for every sixty units, or portion thereof." Unless otherwise agreed, the evaluation team is composed of three persons. The members may also be dispatched by different participating states. The evaluation team has the right to stay at the normal peacetime location or at the actual temporary location for up to 12

hours per working day and to observe the formation's personnel and main weapon systems. 48 evaluation visits and 18 visits on the basis of bilateral agreements were conducted by the beginning of November this year. The results of the evaluation visits are also made available to all participating states in the form of a formatted report.

Due to the co-operative way in which these measures are conducted, the large number of missions conducted does not only fulfil its primary verification objective but also makes a considerable and positive contribution towards intensifying the military contacts of the armed forces involved.

### **Observation of Specific Military Activities**

In addition to the aforementioned verification measures, there is the instrument of "observing exercises", which serves to further enhance transparency on certain occasions. Thus, specific military activities conducted by a participating state in the area of application require this state to invite observers from all the other participating states. Such military activities are

- the employment of land force formations in an **exercise activity** even if this activity is conducted jointly with air or naval components,
- the employment of military forces in an amphibious **landing**, heliborne landing or **parachute assault**,
- the employment of formations of land forces of the participating States in a **transfer** from outside the zone of application into the zone, or from inside the zone of application to participate in an exercise activity or to be concentrated if at least 13,000 troops, 300 battle tanks, 500 armoured combat vehicles or 250 artillery pieces are involved.

This obligation applies likewise if the deployed components are multinational. Any observation must be planned for the entire period during which threshold values will be exceeded. The purpose of observation is to provide the representatives of the participating states with an opportunity to allow the observers to confirm that the notified activity is non-threatening in character and that it is carried out in conformity with the appropriate provisions of the notification. To this end, the host State is obliged to give a briefing on the purpose and provide the observers with an observation programme.

It must be emphasized that in a regional context this measure can also be applied very effectively to the observation of exercises if the threshold values for the obligation to invite observers are reduced accordingly.

### **Military Contacts and Military Co-operation**

The programme of military contacts and co-operation comprises completely different confidence- and security-building measures to be applied by the participating states. It is a demanding programme that has been developed further and enriched in the process of updating the Vienna Document.

The programme consists of obligatory contacts involving representatives of all participating states. What needs to be mentioned here first of all is the opportunity to visit air bases of flying combat units once in a five-year period. During a 24-hour programme, the participants get a detailed insight into the activities that are carried out at an air base. The same applies to the demonstration of new types of major weapon and equipment systems, which is to be conducted within one year after the systems were commissioned.

All those measures are complemented by an extended programme of periodic contacts between all participating states, including visits to military facilities and formations as well as the observation of specific military activities whose scale is below the threshold for inviting observers to manoeuvres. The aforementioned five-year period applies to these measures as well.

In addition to the contacts which are offered to all OSCE countries, there are military contacts agreed between individual or several participating states as well as contacts resulting from bilaterally or multilaterally agreed military co-operation between participating states.

Thus, the entire programme contains far-reaching transparency measures with regard to military units, facilities and activities. The programme also deals with the intensification of contacts between military personnel of all ranks by means of mutual visits, with soldiers' participation in training courses, seminars and conferences involving high-ranking military personnel.

The farthest-reaching forms of military co-operation are, of course, joint military training, the exchange of units, participation in multinational exercises or manoeuvres and, finally, the establishment of multinational formations for missions of common interest.

## **Risk Reduction**

The mechanism for consultation and co-operation regarding unusual military activities, which is contained in the Vienna Document, is a special instrument of crisis prevention in the event of a threat posed by the employment of armed forces. For this purpose, a special chapter of the document stipulates that states whose armed forces are being employed in unusual and unscheduled activities outside their peacetime locations in the document's area of application agree to a consultation mechanism. This consultation mechanism is to be used in the event that the activity is of military significance and a participating state expresses its security concern. The mechanism is triggered by a participating State's request for an explanation of the activity. The reply to the request has to be given within 48 hours. Notifications are usually exchanged via the OSCE communications network, with all the other participating states being involved in this exchange. In the second phase of this mechanism, every state involved may request a meeting of the states which are directly involved and, if required, of other states as well. The meeting will be chaired by the OSCE's Chairman-in-Office or by his representative. If, even at this meeting, the matter cannot be clarified or settled, one of the states which are directly involved has the right (in the third and final phase) to request a meeting of all participating states. In this case, the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation jointly will serve as the forum for such a meeting. The task of these two OSCE bodies is to jointly assess the situation and to recommend appropriate measures for stabilizing the situation and halting activities that give rise to security concerns to the States involved. In practice, this mechanism, which seems to be clear and feasible, has been used very rarely. As far as I know, it was last used in connection with the Kosovo conflict in the year 1999.

## **Additional Regional Confidence- and Security- Building Measures**

Today, it is becoming more and more important to apply the VD 99 confidence- and security-building measures in a regional context. A special chapter of the document deals with this aspect, which aims to encourage the participating States to undertake



measures, for instance, on the basis of separate agreements to increase transparency and confidence in a bilateral, multilateral or regional context.

Since the bipolar situation in Europe and the Cold War came to an end, the focus has clearly been on this regional aspect of military confidence- and security-building. Therefore, we now have a variety of regional agreements which complement the OSCE-wide provisions with additional, politically and legally binding agreements tailored to concrete regional needs.

When agreeing on such complementary measures, the parties involved must ensure that the measures are in conformity with fundamental OSCE principles, that they help to improve security and stability in the OSCE area (including the concept of the indivisibility of security), that they increase existing transparency and confidence and that they do not prejudice the security of third parties in a specific region - to name but a few principles applying to complementary agreements laid down in the document.

VD 99 provides for a variety of possible additional measures, reaching from an increase in verification quotas via the strengthening of the consultation mechanism to the reduction of the threshold values for the notification and observation of specific military activities, to name but a few.

Such agreements are, of course, of immediate interest to all OSCE states. Those participating states that have concluded such agreements should therefore inform the Forum of Security Co-operation about any regional measures which have been initiated as well as about any CSBM initiatives and their implementation. In practice, this recommendation enjoys frequent implementation. Information on the implementation of measures from additional agreements is usually communicated to all the other participating states via the OSCE communications network.

Whenever necessary, the FSC offers assistance in negotiating and implementing regional agreements. The CPC is prepared to provide also technical support upon request, e.g. in the process of exchanging information or during the implementation of agreed verification measures.

## **Final Remarks**

Please allow me to give a final personal assessment. We live in a world where states still cannot do without armed forces. One of the security-political achievements of the past decades is the fact that the existence of armed forces in the OSCE area is accompanied by and integrated into politically and legally binding agreements which set standards for weapons technology as well as for the funding and employment of armed forces. These agreements are backed by co-operative arms control measures. The Vienna Document is one of those agreements in the OSCE area. As I tried to show, the document is an important element of the security architecture created by all the agreements concluded in this field of politics. We should aim at preserving the standard we have achieved in the entire OSCE area in Europe and in Central Asia. To do so, we must preserve the credibility of arms control by conscientiously implementing agreements. In addition, we must ensure the effectiveness of arms control by adapting the system in good time whenever new circumstances, especially new security risks facing the community of the participating states, require such adaptation.