

**Review Conference on the Economic and Environmental Dimension  
Session 6 on 25 October 2010,**

The security implications of climate change – a role to play for the OSCE  
*A reflection based on the Food-for-thought paper PC.DEL/169/10/Rev.1*

When the UN-Secretary General Ban Ki-moon he visited the Permanent Council of the OSCE earlier this year, he reconfirmed the importance of climate change within the framework of the global political agenda. While it is clear that the UN plays the lead role in conducting the negotiation process reaching from Kyoto via Copenhagen towards Cancun it is significant that the UN Secretary General sees also a specific role for the OSCE to play in this field. In his speech to the Permanent Council he reconfirmed the view already expressed by the UNGA in 2009, namely that the OSCE as a regional organisation has a responsibility of its own in dealing with the phenomena of climate change whose impact for the OSCE area on various levels is undeniable. In this context we refer to the UN General Assembly resolution 63/281 on “Climate change and its possible security implications”, adopted on 3 June 2009.

The Food-for-thought paper on the theme of “Security implications of climate change in the context of the OSCE Corfu process”, co-sponsored, as of today, by the delegations of Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom, is an attempt to steer our future discussion of this subject in a direction specifically relevant to the OSCE, that is the security implications of climate change.

Whereas the negotiating process on the UN level focuses mainly on the causes of climate change, the OSCE needs to understand how those impacts we are already committed to will affect the OSCE's activities. In addition, participating States of the OSCE have repeatedly stated their concern regarding major problems which can be interpreted as possible effects and consequences of climate change such as water scarcity and other changes in water supply induced by global warming, food security with regard to changing climatic conditions as well as effects of migration related to those questions.

The OSCE Chairmanship Conference in Bucharest in 2009 provided further examples of actual and potential consequences of climate change such as environmental and economic effects of global warming on permafrost regions or the effects of melting maritime iceshores for future political, economic and legal discussions and potential disputes.

It is stating the obvious that all these phenomena which are already concrete realities or will become such in the very near future have the potential to impact on our security, especially since most of them are clearly not confined to the territory of one state but have a sub-regional or even regional impact.

Facing this situation it would be idle to deny these facts or postpone our discussion and relevant actions while waiting for a scientifically exact definition of the causes of climate change. The negotiating process in the UN dealing with the causes of climate change and with how to remedy them may be hampered by this question. The OSCE is not in the position and does not have to deal with the causes of climate change, though as members of the UNFCCC, OSCE countries have committed to limiting global temperature rise to 2°Celsius above the pre-industrial average. However, the consequences of climate change remain all the more relevant to the security situation in the OSCE area.

Given the rather difficult process of finding consensus on the causes of climate change and how to remedy them on the global level, the Food-for-thought paper takes into account that the perception of the consequences related to climate change may vary in different participating States of the OSCE. It therefore proposes a bottom-up approach composed of two stages. As a first stage participating States are invited to indicate and describe relevant phenomena and problematic situations concerning their territory as well as the subregional or regional sphere. At a second stage, this information will be examined and compared in order to prepare decisions and actions in the areas which are most relevant for the security of the OSCE area. The two stages should be prepared and conducted by the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Affairs of the OSCE, with the assistance of participating States and competent external experts and institutions.

The overall goal of the proposal lined out in the FFT would be to practically incorporate the security implications of climate change into the general concept and the tool box of the OSCE security strategy.

On behalf of all co-sponsors of the Food-for-thought paper we call upon participating States to include the subject of Climate Change into the Astana Summit document as well as into the future work of the respective OSCE bodies.