



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE OSCE

RC.DEL/314/10
26 October 2010

ENGLISH only

**The 2010 OSCE Review Conference:
Review of the Implementation of all OSCE Principles and Commitments in the
Economic and Environmental Dimension**

Session 6: Environmental Cluster (continued):

Promoting co-operation on security aspects of environment by, *inter alia*, sustainable use and management of natural resources and preventing pollution, land degradation, ecological risk, natural and man-made disasters;
The way forward

Vienna, 25 October 2010

**Introductory remarks by Ambassador Timo Kantola,
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OSCE**

Mr. Chairman,

I will briefly address the following three questions in my introductory remarks:

- 1) Environment and security: framework?
- 2) Where does the OSCE stand on environment and security?
- 3) What more the OSCE could do?

1) Environment and security: framework?

Firstly, it is increasingly understood that environmental issues relate to security and stability, and that environmental issues need also to be addressed in the security context. Security implications may relate to natural phenomena, such as natural or ecological disasters, or to environmental changes caused by manmade activity, such as use of natural resources, pollution, loss of biodiversity and climate change.



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Environmental degradation, inequitable access to critical natural resources, their unsustainable use, competition to extract and control valuable commodities, trans-boundary movement of hazardous materials and pollution - all these can be a **cause for tension** or a contributor to **conflicts**.

Although environmental factors are rarely the sole cause of conflict, environmental stress and the unsustainable use of natural resources play a role in today's conflicts. But **environmental cooperation** may also be a tool for preventing conflicts. Joint efforts to find solutions and improve the management of natural resources can contribute to confidence building and good neighbourly relations.

Secondly, the second basket or the second dimension of the OSCE has a broad scope that allows the participating States to address various types of environmental and economic questions. Thereby the OSCE has been able to adjust its agenda and priorities in the course of time, to focus on issues that are felt most burning at a given time. It is up to us to direct more attention to environmental concerns, and to look what is the suitable role of the OSCE and where the OSCE can provide added value.

Thirdly, there are a wide range of activities and efforts made in an economic and environmental field in various international organizations. The UN and its agencies have an important role, including the UNEP post conflict and disaster management branch, which Finland has supported financially already for several years. The EU has also an important role - it is active with a range of tools and front runner in many issues relating to environment and security. It is important that the efforts undertaken within the OSCE are consistent with wider international efforts, and that we build up the OSCE involvement taking into account the complementary nature of our efforts.

2) Where does the OSCE stand on environment and security?

The focus on environment/security is likely to further gain in importance. We should ask ourselves, what is the role of the OSCE in this context? Can we be content with what we have



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achieved by now? Are we pleased with the implementation of our commitments? And in particular, what sort of direction should the Astana Summit give for further work within the OSCE in this field?

There is a sound basis to build on. In the Istanbul Summit Declaration in 1999, the OSCE participating States tasked the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities to develop **regular reports** concerning economic and **environmental risks to security**, in close co-operation with the relevant OSCE field operations and under the authority of the Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary General. That included promoting public awareness of the relationship between economic and environmental problems and security.

Thereafter, the Maastricht Ministerial Council in 2003 concluded that **environmental threats**, including risks of natural and manmade disasters, **should be identified in a timely fashion** and tackled by the common efforts of the participating States. Specific tasks **relating to early warning and conflict prevention** were assigned to the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities:

- **Task to catalogue and monitor economic and environmental challenges and threats to security and stability**, in collaboration with relevant international organizations.
- **Task to prepare reports on economic and environmental issues** to the Permanent Council for further discussion, decisions and actions.
- **Task to promote regional and cross-border co-operation, such as regional seminars and conferences**, on these issues.

We have also mandated the EEA Coordinator (1997) to work with the OSCE missions - “to strengthen the economic, social and environmental components of the work of **OSCE missions** where appropriate as **an early-warning tool**”.



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The declaration on environment and security, adopted at the Madrid Ministerial Council in 2007, underlined that climate change may magnify environmental challenges resulting from environmental degradation, both natural and man-made disasters. The OSCE was also tasked to support participating States in strengthening co-operation on water management. Subsequent work by the OSCE has been done through the ENVSEC Initiative concerning the trans-boundary waterways co-operation. In co-ordination with its partners, the OSCE has:

- supported the establishment of the Chu and Talas Water Commission between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan;
- developed an action programme to improve the legal framework covering the Dniester water resources between Moldova and Ukraine;
- helped to build capacity of the Sava River Basin Commission;
- supported regional trans-boundary river monitoring in the Kura-Araks/Aras river basin.

The discussion on environmental security issues as well as on security implications of climate change continued during the Finnish and Greek Chairmanships, and within the Corfu process with the help of food-for-thought papers initiated by France and Poland as well as by Germany. These papers were co-sponsored by Finland and several other countries.

3) What more the OSCE could do?

At this point, we can conclude that more could be done to implement the commitments undertaken so far. We need more implementation, and more attention to environmental aspects.

The OSCE should continue to serve as a **platform for political dialogue** in the economic and environmental issues. The Organization should also provide **political support** for efforts undertaken elsewhere in specialized institutions and organizations. This is especially true about the ratification and full implementation of international legal instruments in this field.



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The OSCE should make better use of its role as a **catalyst** in the economic and environmental dimension. It should **bring forward new ideas** for discussion in relevant fora. It should also promote **better policies and best practices** in the OSCE region. In these tasks, we should also harness, when feasible, other organizations' know-how and implementation capacity.

One good example of such co-operation and pooling of resources is the **Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative**. As the previous speaker (UNEP, Director, Christophe Bouvier) has already spoken about this initiative, I shall only highlight two issues: 1) the OSCE will chair the ENVSEC Management Board next year; 2) Finland is the lead donor of the Initiative and in charge of the donor co-ordination. Other donors have included so far Austria, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada and Norway. We would welcome more donors. The next ENVSEC Donor's Forum will be held in Berlin the 19th of November and it is an occasion for all interested parties to attend the Forum. This will be a good opportunity to explore synergies and future cooperation possibilities on environment and security issues. Within the OSCE, we should continue to support the further development of the ENVSEC Initiative, as we did at the Maastricht Ministerial Council in 2003.

But we should also take a close look at the OSCE's **own activities and tools**. **How could they be utilized better in this field?**

- The proposal made during the Corfu discussions by France and Poland about capitalizing on the **already existing early warning function of the Office of the Coordinator** should be taken forward.
- It is important to enhance the Secretariat's **risk-analysis capacity and the Organization's response capacity** in emerging crisis situations also in this field.
- **Preventive action** is essential in environmental security. In this context, the OSCE Field Operations' role as an early-warning tool is often mentioned, and we should seek to enhance their role, taking into account the specific mandate and circumstances of each mission.



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- Moreover, we should take advantage of economic and environmental activities as a **confidence building measure**. There are already good experiences in trans-boundary co-operation in water resources and in using an economic activity to get two parties of a conflict together.
- The OSCE, including its Field Operations, should develop its capacity to **monitor and assess** security-related economic and environmental situation in the OSCE area. This task should be done in close cooperation with the UNECE, which plays a supportive role in this area.
- We should also strengthen the OSCE's capacity to provide **advice and assistance** to all the participating States on the implementation of commitments. This could be done by implementing appropriate programmes and projects in areas where the Organization can add value.

To sum up, the Astana Summit should give guidance for further developing the OSCE's comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and crisis management. Such a comprehensive approach should also include **an effective early warning tool and risk-analysis capacity on economic and environmental threats**. Increased co-operation in good governance, sustainable development and environmental protection should be an integral part of this preventive work. Renewed efforts in this field would contribute to a strengthened security community that is based on respect to Helsinki Principles and on a broad concept of security.

Thank you for your attention!