

269th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 275, Agenda item 3

DECISION No. 6/99

The participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):

Recognizing that the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons manufactured for military use (hereinafter referred to as "small arms"), which have contributed to the intensity and duration of the majority of recent armed conflicts, are of great concern to the international community; pose a threat and a challenge to peace and security, in particular as an element in terrorist activity and armed conflicts; are closely related to high levels of violence and crime; reduce the prospect of sustainable development and undermine the efforts to ensure a truly indivisible and comprehensive security;

Supporting the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations to convene an international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held no later than the year 2001, and to encourage the Conference to take a broad and comprehensive approach while addressing this issue;

Convinced of the important contribution that appropriate measures with regard to small arms can make in the OSCE region; and taking note of the impetus given by the various initiatives in other fora, in particular the European Union "Joint Action" on small arms;

Recalling Chapter IV of the Lisbon Document 1996 on the "Development of the Agenda of the Forum for Security Co-operation", in which it was decided that the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) would consider further efforts to develop Norm- and Standard-Setting Measures (NSSMs), as well as the possibility of the adoption of the new NSSMs; and

Seeking to make their own specific contribution to managing this problem:

- Decide that the FSC:
 - includes the problem of the spread of small arms and light weapons as an item of priority on its agenda after the Istanbul Summit and launches a broad and comprehensive discussion on all its aspects;

- tasks its Working Group B, in accordance with the provisions set out in this Decision, with the further analysis of the issue and the examination of measures in the OSCE region stemming from the discussion within the FSC. This should be done without duplicating efforts already undertaken or under way in other fora;
- convenes a seminar with the participation of experts, to be held in Vienna no later than Spring 2000, devoted to the examination of concrete measures in accordance with the provisions of this Decision; and
- requests the FSC Chairman to submit, at the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, a report on the work undertaken and the achievements reached.

While addressing the study and the development of measures, the FSC will be guided, *inter alia*, by the following approaches:

- combating and thereby contributing to the reduction and the ending of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms, taking into account requirements for legitimate national and collective defence, participation in peacekeeping operations under the United Nations Charter, and internal security;
- exercising due restraint and ensuring that small arms are produced, transferred and held only in accordance with legitimate defence and security needs as outlined above, and in accordance with appropriate international and regional arms export criteria, in particular as provided for in the Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers;
- building confidence, security and transparency through appropriate measures on small arms;
- ensuring that, in line with its comprehensive concept of security, the OSCE addresses, in its appropriate fora, concerns related to the issue of small arms as part of an overall assessment of the security situation of a particular country, and takes practical measures which will assist in this respect;
- combating illicit trafficking through the adoption and implementation of national controls, such as effective border and customs mechanisms, and through enhanced co-operation and information exchange among law enforcement and customs agencies at international, regional and national levels; and
- developing appropriate measures on small arms such as their collection, safe storage and destruction linked to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants at the end of armed conflicts.