



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**The Secretariat**

**Conflict Prevention Centre**

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**To: All OSCE Delegations in Vienna  
Partners for Co-operation**

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**Re:** Introductory Statement by Mr. Pascal Heyman, Deputy Director for Policy Support Service, Conflict Prevention Centre, as delivered at the Review Conference OSA Session on “Enhancing the role and further strengthening the capabilities of the OSCE executive structures – Lessons learned from field activities”, Thursday 21 October 2010.

The above Statement is hereby distributed to all Delegations.

**Introductory Statement by Mr. Pascal Heyman  
Deputy Director for Policy Support Service, Conflict Prevention Centre**

**At the Review Conference OSA Session on  
“Enhancing the role and further strengthening the capabilities of the OSCE executive  
structures - Lessons learned from field activities”**

**Thursday, 21 October 2010**

I would like to welcome you to the second part of Session 2 on enhancing the role and further strengthening the capabilities of the OSCE executive structures, which will focus on lessons learned from field activities.

In this presentation I will focus on a number of “capita selecta”, which are by no means comprehensive or exhaustive but should be seen as a complement to the annotated agenda.

Let me set the stage for this discussion by first recalling the conclusions of two previous review efforts as to the role of field activities:

From the Final Report of the 1999 OSCE Review Conference, and I quote, “*There was broad agreement that OSCE field activities had proven that the OSCE had a comparative advantage in such operations as witnessed by the OSCE’s flexibility, availability of funds, ability to deploy quickly, and ability to adjust operations according to emerging tasks.*”

Six years later, in the Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons, “*Field Operations remain an innovative and operational aspect of the OSCE’s work, and deserve special attention. They are an asset and where possible should be even further improved.*”

*Field operations constitute the OSCE’s primary tool for conducting field activities*

The OSCE network of field operations is a distinctive feature and comparative advantage of the Organization in promoting regional security and stability; enhancing the capability of participating States to uphold OSCE commitments, norms and values.

They are the “eyes and ears” of the Organization on the ground, and distinguish the OSCE from other international organizations.

When the OSCE participating States are faced with challenges to security and stability, field operations can also serve as early warning instruments, which help the Organization to move into early action and to address the conflict cycle from early warning and conflict prevention to conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

This tool was codified by the 1999 Charter for European Security, adopted at the Istanbul Summit, when participating States agreed that *“The development of OSCE field operations represents a major transformation of the Organization that has enabled the OSCE to play a more prominent role in promoting peace, security and compliance with OSCE commitments.”*

Depending upon the needs of the participating State concerned, the mandate of a field operation may be focused primarily on addressing the conflict cycle, and/or assisting the country to uphold its commitments in one, two or all three security dimensions. Moreover, mandates may be adapted over time.

Why do field operations constitute the OSCE’s primary, and I dare say –most effective- tool for conducting field activities? I would like to highlight 3 elements supporting this case.

- The reality is that the vast majority of the OSCE’s resources, both financial and human, are devoted to field operations. When the field activities of thematic units of the Secretariat, and institutions, as well as extra-budgetary funds are factored in, this figure even increases further.
- Field operations serve as a global network, integrating and implementing activities of all thematic units and institutions. In this respect, they are able to support the implementation of OSCE decisions and ensure continuity in the Organization’s policies and activities. They also co-ordinate locally with their host countries and with other international and regional organizations.

Allow me in this context to offer one concrete example that I have experienced myself. With the closure of the OSCE Mission to Georgia it has become increasingly more challenging, and certainly less effective, to undertake activities in this country in

a coordinated and comprehensive fashion. One can do a lot from Vienna but nobody will doubt that such efforts are hampered by the lack of a more permanent presence on the ground.

- I should also recall that the mandates, as further defined by the budget documents, are the framework for OSCE action in a given country. Looking at it from the viewpoint of delegations, the field operations are the most “efficient” vehicle for field activities as the field operation under the guidance of its head, is responsible for implementation of the mandate.

### Challenges and Constraints

While field operations are the key tool in conducting field activities and supporting the OSCE’s multiple objectives, they face a number of challenges and constraints. These are of different nature:

- Some challenges, such as: “stigmas” related to hosting field operations and the interpretation of the implementation of mandates, are ultimately political in nature.
- Others, such as the limited tools available to address trans-national threats and challenges and to promote regional co-operation, are structural constraints.
- Another set of challenges faced by field operations has to do with co-ordination, whether it is to avoid duplication with other international organizations, or to effectively draw on the Organization’s internal resources.
- And, of course, challenges posed by financial and human resource constraints (zero nominal growth context, secondment system, etc).

I will focus primarily on the first two clusters, noting that the other two are also dealt with in other sessions of the Review Conference. As the purpose of today’s session is to enhance the role and to further strengthen the capabilities of the OSCE executive structures, the focus should be with this in mind.

### Ways forward and points for further consideration today

#### 1. “Political” challenges

Addressing the first cluster of issues depends first and foremost on the political will of participating States as they are political in nature. However, let me make a few observations:

- Mandates are country-specific. They are set up with the purpose of contributing positively to different processes within their host countries. Field operations should not be seen as a problem but as a useful contribution.
- Nobody will argue that field operations are set up for eternity. The building of capacities in their host countries is ultimately the aim of OSCE field operations. The transfer of tasks and responsibilities to host countries is a gradual process and should proceed in an orderly manner. Completion of the mandate of field operations should always be a success, both for the host country and for the OSCE.
- In this context, progressive downsizing and handing over to local ownership of specific field activities, where sufficient capacity has been built and where the host country is ready to take full responsibility, is preferable to more abrupt scenarios, which –regrettably- we have sometimes witnessed.

## 2. structural constraints

In addressing trans-national threats and challenges and promoting regional co-operation, some observations can be made.

a) OSCE field operations are well-placed to support host countries in addressing trans-national threats and for promoting regional co-operation based on local initiatives and local ownership.

The OSCE thematic units, institutions and field operations have developed creative responses in supporting host countries to address trans-national threats and to promote regional co-operation. Several field operations in South Eastern Europe support political co-operation processes of their host countries. The Sarajevo process and the Palic process are both driven by the host countries themselves, and the OSCE plays a supporting and coordinating role. When conditions are not yet ripe for supporting direct co-operation, the OSCE has developed other approaches. In the South Caucasus, the field operations in Armenia and Azerbaijan conduct parallel activities. The field operations in Central Asia co-operate among themselves in order to support region-wide initiatives such as the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the Border Management Staff College. Several field operations co-operate directly with each other, particularly when addressing trans-national threats. For example, several field operations in South Eastern Europe supported initiatives for border guards to meet.

These examples reflect developments since the 1999 Istanbul Summit. They provide the Organization with the tools necessary to take a flexible approach in addressing issues at the core of the OSCE's objectives and beyond the scope of the national-based mandates of field operations. As the security environment in the OSCE area continues to evolve these approaches can be further encouraged.

b) The OSCE has the flexibility to adapt to constraints and address its own challenges.

As the Organization continues to evolve in order to meet the needs of the XXIst century, the tools available for supporting field activities, in addition to the classic field operations, can be further expanded. At this point I would like to emphasize that these should be additional tools as they address specific issues and concerns, which do not replace the more comprehensive work of classic field operations.

Such tools include: thematic missions, regional missions and other types of support for field activities.

- issue-specific, short-term and ad hoc thematic missions can play a valuable role in the OSCE acquis and should be adapted to meet specific circumstances.

Since the 1999 Istanbul Summit, the Organization has explored the possibility of deploying thematic missions. Indeed, the 2005 report from the Panel of Eminent Persons made specific recommendations, which were pursued further in the context of the 2006 deliberations on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE.

The initial thinking was that thematic missions should be independent, stand-alone missions for mid- to long-term durations. Experience has shown, however, that thematic missions should be more flexible than initially envisioned, and that they cannot substitute the substantive and long-term work of field operations.

In this respect, the OSCE has had successful experience with what one could call "thematic missions", albeit different from what was originally envisioned. They tend to be issue-specific and of short-term duration and complement the work of the field operations. For example, in 2007, the Chairmanship deployed its Personal Representative on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference and a representative of the Office of the Co-

ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities to monitor fires affecting areas close to the Line of Contact. In 2010, the Permanent Council agreed to the deployment of the Police Advisory Group to Kyrgyzstan.

Not all thematic missions must take place in a mission area, however. Short-term, ad hoc thematic missions can also be deployed to countries not hosting field operations. The HCNM, for example, has deployed missions to EU countries to discuss language laws.

Issue-specific thematic missions should be further explored. An enhanced role for the Chairmanship or the Secretariat to deploy short-term thematic missions on an ad hoc basis would be needed. I would like to refer to the report on the implementation of the first operative paragraph of the Ljubljana Ministerial Council decision no. 17/05 (document CIO.GAL/172/06/Rev.1/Corr.1 of 30 October 2006), which contains further food-for-thought on the possibility of thematic missions.

- In addition to traditional field operations and to thematic missions, regional missions could be considered. The OSCE had a positive experience with the Central Asia Liaison Office, which was operational from 1995 to 2000, before being converted into country-specific field offices. Perhaps it is time to begin considering regional missions in other regions. However, it should be added that it may be easier to do so in certain regions than in others.
- Finally, in addition to thematic and regional missions, further consideration could be given to other types of support for field activities such as support teams, liaison offices and co-location.

Each of these types of field presence could give the Organization additional flexibility in working with a host country to address specific issues. Support teams and co-located staff officers could provide added support to existing field operations. Likewise, liaison offices and support teams could enable thematic units and Institutions to conduct activities in areas not hosting field operations. While they would not be as resource-intensive as a fully-fledged field operation, support teams and liaison offices would require a certain level of resources in terms of funds and staff.

I would like to close by highlighting some of the questions facing us here today in our efforts to identify ways of enhancing the effectiveness of field activities, of course in addition to those listed in the annotated agenda:

- Should the OSCE further consider the establishment of issue-specific, short-term and/or ad hoc thematic missions?
- Should we consider other types of support for field activities, like for example liaison offices, support teams, co-location?
- Should the participating States strengthen the capacities of the Secretariat and institutions to pursue field activities?
- How can we improve co-ordination and co-operation with regard to field activities, both internally and with other international organizations?
- How can we best address the high turnover rate experienced by some field operations?

I look forward to a fruitful discussion. Thank you for your attention.