



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The Secretariat

Conflict Prevention Centre

Vienna, 20 September 2011

Talking Points of Ambassador Adam Kobieracki
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At the Ambassadorial Workshop within the Framework of the Conflict
Cycle V to V Dialogue

“Early Response to Crises and Emerging Conflicts”
20 September 2011

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Introduction

I am delighted to be here today and am looking forward to today’s exchange of ideas.

Today’s Ambassadorial workshop on ‘early response to crises and conflict situations’ will probably prove to be the most challenging, as we will have to consider how early responses to crisis and conflict situations can be strengthened on the basis of existing mechanisms, mandates and procedures.

2. Developing a ‘Culture’ of Early Crisis Response in the OSCE

To address the issue for discussion today, allow me to propose that we think about how the OSCE can possibly develop a ‘culture’ of early crisis response in practice, not just on paper.

By this I mean that we might consider the following questions: What must happen, or rather, what is necessary, that we respond to emerging crises and conflict situations in a more timely, efficient and systematic manner?

Taking guidance from the sound discussion paper prepared for this workshop, I think there are three processes that are of relevance to the development of a ‘culture’ of early crisis response’. These relate to the *decision-making, the implementation, and the review process*, as integral parts of an early response strategy.

I will briefly elaborate on these three processes, and how I envision these to function specifically in the context of our response to emerging crisis and conflict situations.

(1) Decision-Making Process

- Responding to emerging crises and conflict situations requires a conscious shift toward a ‘fast-track’ mode of decision-making in the OSCE, including in the Permanent Council, rather than a ‘business as usual approach.’
- Therefore, decision-making in emerging crisis situations must have a *sense of urgency and purpose* that propels the Chairmanship and the participating States to come up with recommendations for swift action at the earliest time possible.
- It also means that OSCE decision-making processes for early response must include swift *co-ordination across the Secretariat, institutions, field operations* and other relevant actors. This can be accomplished by establishing Focal Points with relevant expertise.

(2) Implementation Process

- When I speak about implementation I am referring to how decisions taken can be operationalized in the fastest possible manner.

- For this to happen, financial resources must be made available without lengthy political discussions. A budget should be drawn up, and zero nominal growth can hardly apply to unforeseen crises.
- There should also be a ‘special’ system in place that allows for the speedy recruitment or secondment of relevant staff and the procurement of materiel in case participating States decide on a particular kind of ‘mission’ – be it a fact-finding, monitoring or any other type of early crisis response operation.
- Co-ordination on the ground - be it with the host country, other international organizations or non-governmental actors - is also crucial and needs to be part of an early crisis response strategy. We must know in advance that participating States do trust OSCE executive structures to do this co-ordination.
- I should also mention here that sustaining the political momentum in this phase is important, with all participating States fully in support of the particular response that has been agreed upon in the decision-making phase.

(3) Review Process

- In this phase, additional decisions may have to be made by the participating States as to adjusting any crisis response to changing circumstances, which could be a lessening of tensions or an escalation of the conflict.
- Also, the Review Process should reflect on avoiding any relapse into confrontation or armed violence, such as through considering reconciliation or post-conflict rehabilitation measures.

3. Concluding Remarks

In line with the above, finally I would like to share three personal thoughts.

My first is that there is a need to strike a balance at three levels:

- First, between flexibility and a prescriptive approach. On the one hand, any document we produce should not undermine flexibility. But on the other hand, flexibility should not be the overarching driver;
- Second, between early action and a political declaration. We cannot limit our response just to a political statement as practical, operational action must also happen;
- Third, between early response and early PC meetings. An early PC meeting should be regarded as just the starting point.

My second thought is that in order for the OSCE to function better when faced with a new crisis, the Organization must ensure it is more responsive and that its responses are more relevant.

My final thought is that the OSCE must combine a comprehensive approach with joint action.

Thank you.