

CREATING INCLUSIVE, SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES: LOCAL APPROACHES TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Vienna, 30-31 March 2017

Concept Note

Rationale

Cities are frontline actors in addressing many of today's transnational security challenges, including terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime, climate change, disasters, and mass movements of people. Yet as the complexity, scale and interconnectedness of these challenges continue to grow, cities are seldom called upon to contribute to national, regional or global policymaking addressing these issues.

Today half the world's population lives in urban areas and the UN predicts that by 2050 this portion will rise to two-thirds. The 2030 Global Agenda recognizes the important role of cities, with Sustainable Development Goal 11 devoted to making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. In October 2016, the UN-led global cities summit, Habitat III, adopted the New Urban Agenda – an ambitious roadmap to guide urban development in the next two decades.

In view of the pace and scale of urbanization, cities should play a more prominent role in security policy discussions. Cities increasingly shape the social, political, economic and environmental conditions in their countries, and municipal authorities often spearhead innovative policies and approaches, including the use of new technologies, that could be adopted by national governments. The OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization, can play an important role in facilitating an inclusive dialogue among relevant local, national and international actors and in strengthening the resilience of cities in addressing global security challenges.



Objectives and expected outcomes

The aim of this OSCE Security Days event is to help bridge the gap between policymaking on key security-related issues like migration at the national, regional and global levels and the experience of cities in confronting these challenges. It will provide a platform for frank and open dialogue engaging mayors of major cities from the OSCE region and OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partner countries, representatives of civil society, international and non-governmental organizations with an urban agenda, the business community, academic experts and media, as well as delegations from the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation.

The event is intended to generate ideas and recommendations for enhancing interaction and co-operation among policymakers at the municipal, national and inter-governmental levels. It will provide a platform for exchanging best practices and developing new partnerships to address key challenges facing many cities today, including: fostering inclusive societies, promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, preventing violent extremism, and addressing economic and environmental challenges to sustainable development. It will also explore opportunities for a more active role of the OSCE in creating an enabling environment for city-based solutions to transnational security challenges.

About the OSCE

With 57 participating States in Europe, Central Asia and North America, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the world's largest regional security organization. Its mission is rooted in the principles and commitments contained in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, a pioneering document that contributed to the end of the Cold War. The OSCE has a comprehensive approach to security that encompasses politico-military, economic and environmental, and human aspects and that is reflected throughout the work of the Organization.

About OSCE Security Days

OSCE Security Days have served as a unique platform for enhancing the security dialogue since the initiative was launched in 2012. Security Days events aim to deepen understanding of common security challenges and generate possible solutions by stimulating informal, interactive and forward-looking debate among prominent experts from international organizations, governments, think tanks, academia, civil society, youth, and the media. Previous Security Days have focused on topics such as conventional arms control, water security, climate change, radicalization and violent extremism, the women, peace and security agenda, or migration.

