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## **REPORT**

**FOR THE GENERAL COMMITTEE ON  
POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND SECURITY**

***Helsinki +40***

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## REPORT FOR THE GENERAL COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND SECURITY

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With Istanbul hosting this year's Annual Session, it is appropriate to reflect on the last time that this city hosted a high-level OSCE gathering, the 1999 OSCE Summit. With this in mind, I like to think of this Committee's Helsinki +40 discussion as what I call "*From Istanbul to Istanbul: Developing an OSCE Security Community.*"

The 1999 Istanbul Summit was an important milestone for the OSCE; 14 years ago the concentrated political will by the consent of the governments reached its highest point, which unfortunately has not been reached again since that time. It took 11 years for the next OSCE Summit to be held, in 2010 in Astana. In Istanbul the milestone documents of the OSCE, such as the Charter for European Security, were adopted.

In 1999, our Heads of State and Government came together and agreed on the Istanbul Summit Declaration. At this time, we made a number of important political commitments. However, implementation of those commitments has been scarce, and on some issues we have even seen deterioration. At the Istanbul summer session we will have the opportunity to analyze in more depth why the goals of the Organization have not been fully realized. This can be attributed to the lack of sufficient progress of democracy in some participating States, which means insufficient implementation of our commitments in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Istanbul Summit Declaration should be used as a starting point, which was based on the principles and values of the Helsinki Final Act, and which could help us to assess in real terms the added value of our Organization, as well as to stimulate its efficacy.

Three important common security issues in the OSCE region that are in need of our undivided attention are: 1) **arms control**, 2) **resolving protracted conflicts**, and the 3) **future challenges that the OSCE may face with the 2014 withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces from Afghanistan**. Many of these issues are also mentioned by the Ukrainian Chairmanship as priorities for action, and they are, in some ways, included in the Helsinki +40 commitments that States agreed to at the Dublin Ministerial. I hope that we can help move the process forward by adding our ideas to the table.

### **Arms Control**

At the Istanbul Summit, participating States agreed that arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) are important parts of the overall effort to enhance security by fostering stability, transparency and predictability in the military field. They also called for timely adaptation and, when required, further development of arms control agreements and CSBMs. At

the same time, leaders of participating States committed themselves to full implementation of arms control obligations, including disarmament and CSBMs.

The Monaco Declaration calls for a comprehensive and timely implementation of the Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision on “Elements of the Conflict Cycle, Related to Enhancing the OSCE’s Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation”. Within the politico-military dimension, we have raised important goals relevant to all our nations. We must confess though that not all of these goals have yet been realized. The OSCE should actively contribute to the process of substantial modernization of the Vienna Document to achieve more concrete results and tangible benefits, for example lowering the thresholds at which States are obliged to inform each other of their military exercises.

The recent OSCE event “Security Days: Developing a New Approach to Conventional Arms Control” facilitated debate among experts engaged with ideas on new approaches to conventional arms control and identifying areas of weakness. Experts expressed consensus on the existence of a political linkage between conventional arms control and territorial disputes in post-Soviet territories, as well as concern over the current arms race in the South Caucasus. The growing distrust and lack of transparency between participating States contribute to the CAC stalemate. Lack of knowledge, publicity and sense of urgency given by governments has also been identified as hampering progress on arms control.

On the other hand, we must admit that our Organization has reacted to many new security challenges and raised the Organization’s profile. At the same time, we remain concerned about the silence regarding resumption of negotiations on the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.

24 March 2013 marked the 21-year anniversary of the Open Skies Treaty. Drafted during the Cold War, the treaty has been a proven mechanism for confidence-building, collaboration and innovation. The achievements of the treaty include among others: the certification of 10 types of aircraft and multiple sensors, the conduction of over 836 observation flights and numerous training missions, and the accession of eight new States Parties and two Review Conferences. However, economic hardships challenge continued funding for Open Skies in some capitals. Thus, as pointed out in the Second Review Conference held in 2010, an increase in collaboration by all States on the future sharing of assets should be considered.

It is clearly time, again, to remind our Governments of these obligations and to call for action when it comes to reactivating the CFE Treaty, increasing awareness and asset sharing for the Open Skies instruments, updating the Vienna Document and also on the 1994 Document on Non-Proliferation.

### **The United Nations Arms Trade Treaty**

International regulation of conventional arms is crucial to the security of the OSCE region and beyond. As highlighted by the United Nations Office for Disarmament, “Irresponsible transfers of conventional weapons can destabilize security in a region, enable the violation of United Nations’

Security Council arms embargoes and contribute to human rights abuses. Importantly, investment is discouraged and development disrupted in countries experiencing conflict and high levels of violence”.<sup>1</sup>

On 2 April, the United Nations adopted the first treaty aimed to regulate the international arms trade, a USD 70 billion business. The OSCE PA fully supports the adoption of the treaty in accordance with the Monaco Declaration. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was adopted with 154 votes in favor, 23 abstentions, including Russia and China, and three votes against (North Korea, Iran and Syria). Under the new treaty, States that have ratified the treaty will be prohibited from exporting arms to countries under a UN arms embargo and regimes with known human rights violations.

Critics of the treaty such as Syrian UN Ambassador Bashar Ja’afari pointed out that it does not prevent the sale of arms to non-state actors or armed groups.<sup>2</sup> Others, such as India, complained that the treaty favored exporting states over importing states.

The treaty will be open for ratification on 3 June, and will enter into force 90 days following the 50<sup>th</sup> signature for ratification.

### **Protracted Conflicts**

Our States signed onto the Helsinki Final Act in full agreement that the security of each participating State is inseparably linked to that of all others. For the one billion people of our region to truly live in peace, we need to do better for the thousands of citizens who continue to suffer amid protracted conflicts.

The progress seen in the negotiations between Chisinau and Tiraspol is encouraging movement in the right direction. The Ukrainian Chairmanship has declared the Transdnestrian settlement process a top priority and has promoted the 5+2 talks throughout the year by focusing on areas where agreement seems within reach. It is very important to maintain the momentum and continue the direct contacts between leaders from Chisinau and Tiraspol.

Ongoing negotiations between Georgia and Russia, both within the framework of the Geneva Discussions and from their own initiatives, should be further encouraged. The Geneva Discussions, co-chaired by the OSCE, EU and UN have been very active in 2013. The Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism has been quite successful, and a positive development is that the number of security related incidents have decreased.

At the same time negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan continue with the support of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. Casualties on both sides of the line of contact continue to manifest despite a 20-year truce. The OSCE can support and develop proposals, but it is the

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Office for Disarmament <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/ArmsTrade/>

<sup>2</sup> *UN overwhelmingly approves global arms trade treaty*, Louis Charbonneau, 2 April 2013, Reuters. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/02/us-arms-treaty-un-idUSBRE9310MN20130402>

political responsibility of the leaders of the countries involved in the conflict to find a peaceful solution. This takes courage and a political will for compromise.

As parliamentarians, we have the ability to reach out and encourage peaceful solutions and dialogue and we should continue to do so. And even when two sides are at a stalemate, we know from our own experiences, they can probably reach common ground on other, perhaps lesser issues. Perhaps it is transportation or commerce, but these things have a real impact on the everyday lives of citizens and play their own role in preparing people for lasting, peaceful solutions to conflict, and we should encourage that engagement as well.

### **Challenges Facing the OSCE in the Wake of 2014 ISAF withdrawal**

Located in the “Heart of Asia” where South Asia, Central Asia, Eurasia and the Middle East meet, Afghanistan is a country in transition. As the responsibility for security shifts from NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the Afghan National Security Forces in the framework of the “Kabul Process”, we need to more actively engage with our partners in the region to encourage a positive outcome as directed in the Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision on Strengthening OSCE Engagement with Afghanistan. In this regard, Afghanistan remains among our Organization’s most critical Partners for Co-operation.

On 8 July 2012, a meeting was held in Tokyo resulting in the Tokyo Declaration: Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan; From Transition to Transformation. The Declaration highlights achievements and notable progress in the area of development, education, health, roads, electricity and telecommunication. In addition to acknowledging the need for further progress in security with a focus on terrorism and counter-narcotics with the support of the international community, the Declaration also stresses other humanitarian, economic and cultural elements contributing to human security. It is these areas in which the OSCE can give assistance and guidance.

For the OSCE PA, Afghanistan offers a unique opportunity for parliamentarians to engage with and share their expertise and knowledge with members of the Afghan Parliament. Through the Tokyo Declaration, **the Afghan Government has committed itself to conducting free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections in 2014 and 2015 in accordance with international standards.**

The work we do now to help stabilize democratic, legal and security institutions in the country will have real consequences for the challenges we will face in the near future along the country’s borders.

Related to the situation in Afghanistan, I would also like to mention the transnational threats, which by their nature, require a common response. I would like to emphasize the importance of fighting terrorism and of border security.

Terrorism presents a challenge for policy-makers to provide for a level of border security while facilitating legitimate cross-border travel and commerce. According to the United States National

Counterterrorism Center more people were killed in terrorist attacks inside Afghanistan in 2011 than in each of the previous years. As International Security Assistance Forces withdraw, measures should be taken to prevent this trend from increasing drastically.

Border security continues to be of great concern in the OSCE region. Clashes on the border of Tajikistan and Afghanistan as well as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan remind us of the vulnerability of our borders and the necessity for solidarity and partnership. In this respect, Central Asia is exposed, and they need our assistance to avoid any possible spill-over of threats from Afghanistan ranging from war, terrorism and religious extremism to drug trafficking and illegal migration.

Terrorism is not limited to any one OSCE region. The tragic terrorist attack in Boston in April, which cost the lives of several people and wounded many others, again reminded us of our vulnerability to terrorism. Democracies are open and transparent, and therefore vulnerable. It is even more devastating that terrorists used a sports event which sought to bring people together for a happy, peaceful moment. This can only be condemned. All OSCE participating States should stand united and respond to any such crime – we need to further develop international co-operation to be able to fight terrorism.

### **Conflicts and Security Concerns on the Fringes of the OSCE**

During the OSCE PA Winter Meeting in Vienna, special attention was directed towards the humanitarian crisis in Syria and its impact on Turkey and the OSCE region. The humanitarian crisis perpetuated by the ongoing two-year conflict in Syria has resulted in over 70,000 deaths and more than 1.2 million Syrian refugees. On 5 April, a UNICEF spokesperson reported that the organization will soon have to stop lifesaving aid to those fleeing the conflict due to lack of funding.<sup>3</sup>

Providers of relief aid and assistance on the ground have also become victims of the conflict. In April, volunteers for the Syrian Arab Red Crescent were shot while trying to retrieve bodies from Barzeh.<sup>4</sup> At this time strengthening co-operation with key actors in the field of migration and asylum, notably the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross and international and national non-governmental organizations, as called for in the Oslo Declaration 2010, is critical.

In the spring, North Korea made headlines with nuclear threats against the United States. As a precautionary measure, the US has plans to deploy ballistic Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System to Guam.<sup>5</sup> In an effort to de-escalate recent tensions, the Swiss foreign ministry recently

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<sup>3</sup> *U.N. Says its Running out of Money to Assist Wave of Refugees from Syria*, Nick Cumming-Bruce, 5 April 2013, New York Times, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/06/world/middleeast/un-says-aid-for-syria-refugees-is-running-out.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/06/world/middleeast/un-says-aid-for-syria-refugees-is-running-out.html?_r=0)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> *North Korea threats: US to move missile defences to Guam*, 4 April 2013, BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-22021832>

made contact with the North Korean authorities but there are no current plans for any talks. As reported by Reuters, “Switzerland is willing to contribute to a de-escalation on the Korean peninsula and is always willing to help find a solution, if this is the wish of the parties, such as hosting meetings between them,” said a Swiss spokesperson.<sup>6</sup>

There are of course many other outstanding challenges, both in the region and other parts of the world, which can hardly be faced with indifference from the OSCE. The lack of social cohesion, internal conflicts, or civil war not only prevents common people from enjoying their lives to the fullest. They all constitute security risks of spill-over. For example, hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria have flowed into neighbouring countries, notably Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In light of the ongoing conflicts, which tend to cluster geographically, the OSCE may serve as a bank of expertise, notably in the area of enhancing regional co-operation, dialogue and confidence-building.

It is clear that protracted conflicts and new flash points in the region urgently call for expansion of the OSCE’s activities in Eurasia.

Developing a security community requires building trust (or re-building it if need be) and having an open dialogue aiming to enhance security by increasing transparency and predictability in our region.

So as we look to Istanbul, a gateway between Asia and Europe, between East and West, we have a choice. We as the OSCE can co-operate and innovate and push open that gate for a future of peace and security we’ve all been working toward or we can let old conflicts fester and clutch to established multinational blocs and close that gateway. Through our work and that of our governments, let us choose to push it open and make Istanbul in 2013 as meaningful for us as it was for the OSCE 14 years ago.

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<sup>6</sup> *Swiss offer to mediate in North Korea crisis*, Emma Thomasson, 7 April 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/07/us-korea-north-swiss-idUSBRE93602G20130407>