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Multilateral Organisations in the Caucasus and Central Asia

**The OSCE as an external actor in
democratisation support in Central Asia
by Anna Kreikemeyer**

The Central Asian states have been participating in the OSCE since 1992. However, it was only in the beginning of 2000 that they advanced to centre stage. At that time, it also became clear that the participating States of that region had growing political and strategic difficulties with the OSCE. A broad disinterest on the side of the mostly authoritarian governments of Central Asia was met with an obvious lack of a concept on the side of the other OSCE states. Sometimes there were even rumours of possible withdrawals of single Central Asian participants from the security organization. One of the reasons for the crisis was that the concept of comprehensive security, characteristic of the OSCE, had been applied in Central Asia in an unbalanced way.

The human dimension had mostly been placed in the foreground. Many of the projects of support had been oriented toward keeping OSCE commitments, especially the protection of human rights and respective legislation. This sometimes lead the Central Asian side to perceive the OSCE as a pure human rights organization. Since the millennium, the OSCE step by step has begun to reverse this misunderstanding and since then is looking for more adequate ways of supporting the specific processes of transformation in the Central Asian region. This search is still in its very beginning and the question arises as to how the security organization can newly conceptualize, balance and more efficiently implement its human dimension policy with its goal to contribute to comprehensive security in this region of the OSCE area.

The presentation recapitulates the development of the relationship between the OSCE and its Central Asian participating States with special emphasis on the democratisation policy. Its structures, concepts and instruments are related to research results in the field of democratisation support by external actors on the one hand and to Central Asia regional studies on the other hand. This approach gives the opportunity to make suggestions for a further development of OSCE democratisation policy as well.

Bibliographical note

Dr. Anna Kreikemeyer is a researcher at the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) in Hamburg. Currently she is working in the research project "Security through democratization? Theoretical frames and comparative cases on problem adequacy, quality of execution and effectiveness of security-building-based democratic measures of the OSCE in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan und Uzbekistan. Before that she did research projects on the compatibility of Islam and security in the secular-Islamic dialogue in Tajikistan and on Russian foreign and security policy in conflicts in the CIS area.