

## Foreword

Where is the OSCE in the year 2000 - 25 years after the Helsinki Final Act and ten years after the Charter of Paris? It was a milestone in European post-war history that at the beginning of the seventies, 35 states of Europe and North America comprising not only the neutral and non-aligned states but also the members of seemingly non-reconcilable military blocs were then ready to start a dialogue on security and co-operation, on human rights and fundamental freedoms and on 1 August 1975 signed a common document directed towards the future. The Helsinki Final Act initiated a process that contributed substantially to the end of the European divide only 15 years later. This was recorded in the Charter of Paris, the second most significant CSCE document ever created.

The nineties began euphorically: Violence, war and conflict in Europe seemed to have come to an end; utopian times of peace and prosperity had been invoked. Many saw the CSCE as the future umbrella organization for all other organizations and alliances, which would guarantee its members security and define the European scenario decisively. However, what followed was much worse than pure disillusionment. Years of terrible war and human catastrophes struck the middle of Europe, which - as some argued - also demonstrated the failure of the CSCE/OSCE. It was said it had collapsed into insignificance, its "career was taking a downturn", or that it was just a "niche". High expectations were followed by malicious reproach.

Today the OSCE seems to have entered into a matter-of-fact, objective working phase. In an unspectacular but successful manner, it has been concentrating on the difficult tasks of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building, in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina with the largest long-term missions ever set up. In Istanbul, the OSCE adopted a Security Charter, which was once again "only" politically binding and disappointing to some. However, it also contained clear-cut goals. And finally, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe has been placed under the auspices of the OSCE. In Kosovo it works in close co-operation with the United Nations - not as an umbrella organization and not in a position above any other organization. On the contrary it is subordinated to the United Nations as "a distinct component within the overall framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission". Have disillusionment, modesty and "the dull routine of daily life" taken over once and for all?

Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building are not "niches". The promotion of human rights and democratization, and with this, the elimination of decisive conflict causes are not side issues. On the contrary, they are enormous and important tasks and are a part of the process of shaping peace,

security and stability in Europe. And moreover, they make the OSCE indispensable.

Furthermore co-operation and co-ordination with other organizations are by no means signs of insignificance or weakness. The question is not whether it is to be an "umbrella organization" or a "service agency". In view of the overwhelming tasks to be solved in the most varied areas and the diversity of conflict causes, co-operation and co-ordinations are signs of foresight and good sense.

And one cannot simply take for granted in this day and age that 55 states with the most multifarious interests and problems have been conducting a permanent dialogue, in which they hold discussions week after week in the OSCE Permanent Council, conferences and meetings, in seminars and workshops on security and co-operation, on human rights and violations of human rights, on war and conflicts, and also - this was unthinkable in the past - on so-called "internal affairs". This is another reason the OSCE is indispensable.

"Internal affairs" - human rights violations, the actual or alleged suppression of minorities, democracy deficits - proved to be the most frequent conflict causes in the last few years. Most wars have taken place within states or originated within states with the potential to escalate into inter-state conflict. This is when an organization with the explicit mandate to prevent conflicts and a right - although this is strictly limited - to intervene in the "internal affairs" of a country becomes important.

If the OSCE is indispensable on the one hand but apparently also awakens images of insignificance and signs of weakness on the other, the following conclusion must be drawn: The Organization must be strengthened. And that is true for all areas.

A great deal has been achieved in the area of setting norms, however even here there is still much to be done. There is still a lack of clear definitions on minority rights and they have not been adequately codified. There have been promising advances in the form of the Copenhagen Document and the Recommendations developed upon the request of the High Commissioner on National Minorities. Decisive points have yet to be clarified (forms of autonomy, individual or collective rights, citizenship issues). In this context, the unsolved (and perhaps never to be solved completely) issue of the relationship between two principles of the Helsinki Final Act, the territorial integrity of states and the people's right to self-determination, has to be mentioned. In addition, the debates on making OSCE commitments legally binding on a step-by-step or partial basis remain controversial. These discussions should be continued but not include ideals having no chance of being realized. Last but not least, participating States should finally be prepared to take advantage of the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration to be able to solve their disputes peacefully. These resources have not been completely exhausted.

Further progress has been made in strengthening operational capacities. In addition to increases in personnel and financial resources for the large mis-

sions, the concept of Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams (REACT) has been developed, the Secretariat in Vienna was restructured and an Operation Centre was created. However, even here there is room for improvement: There are by no means enough personnel and financial resources available to fulfil the numerous tasks the OSCE must perform. This does not mean creating more bureaucracy, but better equipping the areas and instruments that directly effect conflict prevention: the missions and other forms of field activities, the offices of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media or the Co-ordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities to name a few.

In this connection, an appeal should again be made to create the prerequisites as quickly as possible for the implementation of OSCE peacekeeping operations.

At the same time a further institutionalization should be considered, e.g. the instruments and methods for conflict prevention and management that have proven valuable should be made more independent of prolonged political decision-making processes. This could be achieved by transferring a series of facilities and capacities as well the right to start initiatives from the negotiating committees to the permanent institutions, e.g. the Conflict Prevention Centre and its Director. An analysis department for the systematic collection and evaluation of data relevant to conflicts would also be appropriate here.

One of the most important key words on the future of the OSCE was spoken by the former Chairman-in-Office, Federal Foreign Minister (ret.) Hans-Dietrich Genscher in a speech he held on the occasion of the ceremonies - which incidentally, were very modest to the detriment of the OSCE - on the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act: This key word was "repoliticization". The repoliticization of the Organization would be *the* task of the coming years. The OSCE is not a service agency, but a political actor and it has a political task: the shaping of peace, security and stability in Europe. The OSCE must again "recall its strengths as a predominantly political organization", as Wilhelm Höynck has written in this volume. This too certainly will require certain changes that will have to be discussed in future. Reflection should be made for example on the necessity of increased political continuity. In this context, the discussion on extended authority for the Secretary General should not be considered at an end. In addition, the role of the OSCE as a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations must be activated more fully. In the OSCE, political decisions will have to be made and met. In this context, the discussion on the consensus principle will have to be continued.

On balance, the conclusion is: Conflict prevention is not a "niche", but a basic prerequisite for peace and security in Europe. However, conflict prevention alone is not enough. It is only a part of the larger political task in creating peace, security and stability in Europe. This task demands as always that the OSCE be strengthened, but also primarily that it be repoliticized.

The claim for superiority or creating a hierarchy is no longer a topic for discussion. In view of the strengths and capabilities of other organizations, this would neither be feasible nor desirable. The exact text of this reads: co-operation and co-ordination.

Every organization is as strong as its members will it and allow it to be. This is surely a truism but an appropriate one. However, what exactly is necessary to strengthen the OSCE? It is necessary that there be confidence that the OSCE is the right arena to reach common political solutions to existing or future problems. It is necessary that the participating States have an interest in the OSCE and its reinforcement. Moreover public awareness of the OSCE is also necessary. Matter-of-fact, objective, persistent work does not make the headlines - neither do prevented conflicts.

Confidence has to be won, interest and awareness can be awoken. And as has been true every year, we would again like to contribute to this process through the OSCE Yearbook. If this has been successful then this is to the merit of our authors who have dedicated themselves to the numerous problems and tasks, achievements and perspectives of the OSCE as well as its capabilities and limits and have conducted the discussions addressed here in a lively and many-faceted manner. They are the ones we thank.