

## The Activity of the OSCE from a Ukrainian Perspective

In 2002, Ukraine marked the tenth anniversary of its becoming an OSCE participating State. This article attempts to sum up the results of the first decade of Ukraine's participation within the largest (in terms of the number of participating States) and most comprehensive international organization in Europe and to formulate Ukraine's basic priorities for future co-operation within the scope of this organization.

Having become a participating State of the CSCE in 1992, Ukraine is now among the most active contributors to the Helsinki process. Ukraine's participation in OSCE field activities in the Balkans, Moldova, the Caucasus and Central Asia have enabled it to build up a reputation as an important player in European security and stability. About twenty representatives of Ukraine are currently active in the OSCE's long-term missions and offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro and Tajikistan as well as in the Minsk Group, which deals with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In accordance with the resolution of the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada), "The basic directions of Ukrainian foreign policy" (adopted on 2 June 1993), Ukraine's participation in the OSCE is a key regional priority within the state's foreign policy. As stated in the resolution, collaboration with the OSCE facilitates "a full-scaled entry of Ukraine into the European space", as well as the use of OSCE mechanisms in order to guarantee its national interests.

Active and comprehensive co-operation with the OSCE is one of the most important components in the process of Ukraine's integration in Europe – the main strategic goal of the country's national foreign policy. One of the main tasks facing Ukraine is to strengthen the mechanisms within the Organization which promote the building of an effective international system of regional security, the resolution of problems connected with maintaining military and political stability in Europe and the development of constructive and fruitful co-operation between states.

Membership of the OSCE enables Ukraine to participate equally in the process of discussing and resolving ongoing contemporary and urgent problems of international security and co-operation. It provides Ukraine with the right and the ability to place impending threats to international security upon the agenda of this pan-European forum, to demand the investigation and discussion of possible violations of OSCE principles and standards and to count on the Organization's support in restraining states that commit such transgressions.

## *The OSCE Presence in Ukraine and Potential Future Forms of Co-operation*

### *The OSCE Long-term Mission to Ukraine*

The activities of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the long-term OSCE Mission to Ukraine concerning the situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea provide an example of the successful implementation of the opportunities that OSCE membership brings. OSCE involvement has yielded positive results. The OSCE Mission to Ukraine was one of the first OSCE long-term missions to successfully complete its mandate as stipulated by the OSCE Permanent Council. The Mission was established in 1994 and closed on 30 April 1999.

### *OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine*

In the second half of 1999, Ukraine's relationship with the OSCE took a new and innovative turn with the establishment, on the initiative of Ukraine, of the office of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator. According to Permanent Council Decision No. 295 of 1 June 1999, "[p]roceeding from the respect for OSCE principles and commitments and with a view to developing further the operational capabilities of the various dimensions of the OSCE, a new form of co-operation between Ukraine and the OSCE [... has been] created [...] This co-operation will be based on the planning, implementation and monitoring of projects between relevant authorities of Ukraine and the OSCE and its institutions. Such projects may cover all aspects of OSCE activities and may involve governmental as well as non-governmental bodies of Ukraine."<sup>1</sup> This form of co-operation has functioned successfully for the past four years.

The Project Co-ordinator has been engaged in planning and implementing projects designed to assist relevant Ukrainian state bodies in adapting legislation, institutions and policies to the necessities of a modern democracy based on the rule of law in the age of globalization and the microelectronic revolution. The focus of this work was placed on strengthening the rule of law and good governance. The following ten projects have been successfully implemented:

1. Legal reform: providing assistance to Ukraine in adapting legislation related to the rule of law and human rights; disseminating relevant new legislation and facilitating its implementation; disseminating relevant international legal instruments
2. Reform of the registration system ("*propiska*"): assisting the Ukrainian authorities in developing a new system for registering citizens in accordance with international human rights standards

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1 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Permanent Council, Decision No. 295, PC.DEC/295, 1 June 1999.

3. Supporting the official human-rights representative (ombudsman) of the Ukrainian Parliament: strengthening the ability of the Ukrainian ombudsman institution to promote human rights; providing advice and technical assistance
4. Combating trafficking in human beings: contributing to the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities to combat trafficking in human beings from and within Ukraine; continuing the witness protection programme, with a focus on co-operation with regional authorities
5. Assisting the Constitutional Court in coping with challenges related to the transition process: strengthening the judiciary's ability to enforce the Constitution
6. Assisting the Supreme Court: strengthening the judiciary's ability to promote the rule of law
7. Supporting the rule of law in the military sphere: providing assistance in addressing issues related to reforms in the field of military judiciary and law enforcement
8. Freedom of the media: assisting in adapting legislation, regulations and procedures to comply with relevant international standards regarding freedom of the media
9. Fighting corruption: supporting state prosecutors in combating corruption and in implementing anti-corruption measures in accordance with democratic norms and standards
10. Transparency in regional governance: improving transparency in the system of regional and local government; improving the standard of public information on the activities of the executive branch at regional and local levels.

Analysis of the implementation of these projects demonstrates that the mandate of the office of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine is near completion. It is therefore time to develop a new form of co-operation between Ukraine and the OSCE.

#### *Ukrainian Proposal to Establish an OSCE Ethnic Research Centre*

The Ukrainian Delegation presented a rough sketch of this proposal prior to and during the OSCE Istanbul Summit (November 1999). The idea is to found an Ethnic Research Centre under the aegis of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities or the OSCE Secretary General. The proposal gained support among representatives of leading bodies of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and some participating States. It was also received positively by the then OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoep, and was mentioned in the joint communiqué of the Ukrainian-American intergovernmental commission on co-operation.

Following extensive consultation with OSCE institutions and participating States, Ukraine officially submitted the proposal for consideration by

the OSCE Permanent Council. Unfortunately, there has of yet been no positive decision on the issue. There are, however, good reasons to implement this initiative, which I go into below.

The proposal for establishing the OSCE Ethnic Research Centre was based on comprehensive analysis of current political developments in the OSCE region. The end of the two-bloc confrontation of the Cold War era, the collapse of the Soviet multinational empire and similar state formations has brought about an absolutely new geopolitical situation. Its characteristic features are the emergence of many new independent states, the sudden awakening of ethnic and national self-consciousness, the struggle of peoples to overcome the unequal status they were accorded during the totalitarian era and the growth of movements for gaining and securing rights and freedoms.

Because of its complexity, this process could not help but give rise to problems and increased tensions in international and interethnic relations. Moreover, these were heightened by negative manifestations such as aggressive nationalism, chauvinism, and bellicose separatism. Such tendencies have contributed to many long-lasting, intense and bloody conflicts, which have threatened security and stability in all OSCE regions. Their resolution requires the combined efforts of the international community and the OSCE, the improvement and renewal of the appropriate OSCE instruments and the mobilization of all available resources.

The Istanbul Summit designated certain priorities in the spheres of crisis prevention and conflict settlement and the consolidation of stability and security in Europe. These are the strengthening of democracy, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms – in particular the rights of national minorities – and efforts to counteract intolerance, aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. The Summit stressed that issues of national minorities could be solved positively only within democratic political frameworks on the basis of the rule of law.<sup>2</sup> This will require comprehensive work on the part of the OSCE, and the continual active search for ways and means to improve the Organization and its institutions to create the necessary conditions for their successful functioning.

In this context, the utmost importance should be placed on the institution of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Due to its past successes, it must play a major role in fulfilling this goal. This institution could gain considerably from the establishment within its structure of a research capability, which could provide vital academic assistance in developing new approaches based on thorough research to solving complicated and often delicate ethnopolitical issues. The Ethnic Research Centre is intended to fulfil this role.

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2 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Charter for European Security, Istanbul, November 1999, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2000, Baden-Baden 2001, pp. 425-443, here: pp. 431-432.

In order to meet the demands vested in it, the Centre will have the task of carefully studying the status of interethnic relations, existing practices used to ensure the rights of national minorities in the OSCE region and the experiences of those involved. It will also be charged with preparing informational materials, providing expert advice and recommendations and initiating projects for dealing with various issues. The Centre will lay the theoretical groundwork for the OSCE's political activities, thereby enhancing the Organization's efficiency. The establishment of the Ethnic Research Centre would create new opportunities for representatives of the non-governmental sector to participate in OSCE activities. It would be an innovative development among security organizations in the Euro-Atlantic area and would increase the Organization's authority and influence. The Centre's mandate could include the following tasks and functions:

- Studying the ethnopolitical situation in the OSCE region to uncover potential problems and crises with an interethnic character, making prognoses regarding possible further developments and formulating proposals for action based on academic research aimed at early prevention and removal of threats to stability and security
- Formulating effective approaches and projects aimed at the peaceful political settlement of existing problems and conflicts with ethnic origins.

The Centre would also

- Monitor development of the situation in the above-mentioned areas by processing information supplied by field missions and other OSCE structures, the public institutions of participating States, and responsible non-governmental organizations
- Facilitate contacts and co-operation with research institutes and other relevant bodies in both participating and non-participating States with a view to using their state-of-the-art knowledge in its work on ethnic relations and applying it to OSCE peace initiatives.

The centre should focus on the following research areas and activities:

- Trends in the changing ethnopolitical situation in the region and the investigation and monitoring of issues that raise tensions in interethnic relations
- Ethnic factors in modern political processes and interstate relations
- National ethnic policies and legislation (international standards and practices), comparative studies of the status of national minorities in the countries of the region
- The evolution of ethnic and national identities, ethnic integration processes, the significant contribution of national minorities to building and consolidating democratic nation states, the integration of ethnic groups new to the region (refugees, deportees)

- Analysis and forecasting of the development of national and ethnic movements and their influence on state authorities.

The Centre needs to pay particular attention to research carried out worldwide on ethnic problems, conflict prevention and the experience of their settlement. It should employ representatives of leading research institutions and well-known conflictologists. These will develop research proposals on resolving crucial ethnic problems and prognoses and models of specific conflict-transformation processes. This should result in the development of effective measures founded on thoroughgoing research designed to counter ethnic problems. It would be expedient to set up a voluntary contribution fund under the aegis of the Centre with a view to covering financial expenditure related to its research. The Centre's remit could extend to

- Monitoring and the provision of confidential consulting services to participating States on issues they face relating to their ethnic minorities policy
- Holding conferences, workshops, seminars, round-tables and other events to initiate discussion of the ethnic issues primarily with a view to preventing and resolving conflict and crisis situations
- Setting up a database on relevant international experiences, publishing a periodic bulletin and other materials analysing the situation in problem regions, delivering expert assessments and proposals to the OSCE Chairmanship and institutions.

The effectiveness of the Centre would depend on the reliability of its contacts and the intensity of its co-operation with appropriate institutions within participating States, its perceptiveness regarding ethnic situations and relevant processes in the region and its flexibility in reacting to troublesome developments. This requires that it be located "in the thick of things", i.e. in a participating State whose geopolitical position makes it ideal to meet the aforementioned requirements. Ukraine is such a state. It has a convenient geographical position in Central Eastern Europe, is a post-Soviet state, and is situated relatively close to the majority of the burning epicentres of the continent's current conflicts. Further, establishing the Centre in Ukraine has the following advantages:

- Ukraine's non-aligned status and its close relationships with its neighbours and other countries
- The multi-ethnic population of Ukraine (with more than 100 ethnic groups) and its extensive and positive experience in implementing ethnic policy, resolving ethnic issues and ensuring respect for the rights of national minorities
- The absence of conflicts on Ukrainian territory as a result of the sensible Ukrainian nationalities policy

- The active participation of Ukraine in conflict resolution within the OSCE region
- Ukraine's possession of the intellectual potential and modern infrastructure necessary to support ethnological research, enabling rapid development of the Centre and its activities.

Ukraine already has a framework for carrying out research on interethnic issues, namely the Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the premises of which could be modified for use by the Ethnic Research Centre. Several other institutions within the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine are of relevance to the area, such as the Institute of State and Law (ethnopolitics), the Institute of Philosophy (ethnoconfessional problems, natiology), the Institute of Sociology (ethnosocial issues), the Institute of Art, Folklore and Ethnology (ethnography, ethnology), the Institute of Peoples' Studies in Lviv (ethnography, ethnology), departments of sociology and ethnology within institutions of higher education (universities and academies). Ukraine's National Institute of Strategic Studies and several other institutions also research ethnopolitical issues. The aforementioned institutions are well known in academic circles, have yielded substantial achievements in research and could become a bulwark of the Centre's activities.

If implemented, the Ukrainian initiative would bolster security and stability and would promote the European integration of post-Soviet states. Establishing the Centre would be a major step towards fulfilling the commitment, envisaged in the Charter for European Security, of improving the existing means of co-operation and introducing new ones to enable more effective responses to participating States' requests for assistance in implementing the rules and principles of the OSCE.<sup>3</sup>

#### *The Ukrainian National Interest and the OSCE*

The participation of Ukraine in the OSCE serves its basic national interests, such as the affirmation and development of Ukraine as an independent sovereign state, the guarantee of its territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders, the stability of its international situation, the development of Ukraine as a democratic state based on the rule of law, the transformation of its national economy in accordance with market principles and the promotion of stable development in the interest of the general welfare of the population.

Ukraine's aims in participating in the OSCE are to increase the Organization's efficiency in preventing and resolving conflicts, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. It also seeks to encourage full and detailed compliance with principles, norms and commitments adopted and fixed in the

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Charter for European Security, cited above (Note 2), p. 430.

documents of the Organization, and at increasing the OSCE's contribution to the creation of a new and effective system of European security.

Ukraine is interested in broadening and deepening co-operation with the OSCE, its institutions and structures in order to make a concrete contribution to the Organization's peacemaking and peacekeeping activities. At the same time, it also desires to make use of the opportunities and assistance the OSCE can provide in accordance with Ukrainian national interests and requirements.

Ukraine's participation in the OSCE must promote acceleration of the country's strategic policy goal of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. It should be co-ordinated with the objectives and tasks of Ukraine's co-operation with NATO, the EU and the Council of Europe – the OSCE's partners in the new European security architecture.

The OSCE framework provides Ukraine with considerable opportunities to enhance co-operation with the EU, in particular on issues relating to the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Links between the OSCE and the European crisis response force, which is in the process of being established, will provide the possibility for participation of Ukrainian military units.

It is in the Ukrainian national interest to make maximum use of the OSCE's expert assistance in strengthening and further developing basic democratic principles, the rule of law, a market economy, and mechanisms for environmental protection within the country. This will require the promotion of a new form of co-operation between Ukraine and the OSCE, based on drafting and implementing projects in Ukraine that have a practical value for the state, and which leverage financial and expert assistance from the OSCE. Ukraine could work more closely with the institutions of the Organization, in particular with the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

The fundamental criteria detailed above determine Ukraine's position on specific issues relating to its participation in the OSCE. These have served as a starting point, in particular, in defining the country's priorities and opportunities for their realization in the process of elaborating the common and comprehensive security model for Europe in the 21st century, which was carried out within the OSCE framework from 1995 to 1999, during the preparation of the European Security Charter as adopted at the OSCE Istanbul Summit (November 1999) and in the last three Ministerial Council meetings (Vienna 2000, Bucharest 2001, and Porto 2002).

The Istanbul Summit has opened a new phase in reshaping the European security landscape. The decisions taken at the Summit provide an excellent opportunity to further Ukrainian national interests, to strengthen the country's international prestige and its role as an important source of stability and an active contributor to European security.

The OSCE's key priorities at present include containing and overcoming certain negative tendencies in the Organization as well as further intensifying efforts to resolve ongoing conflicts and prevent potential new crises, primarily in South-eastern Europe and in "hot spots" within the post-Soviet region. In this respect, Ukraine supports the OSCE programme on creating and, if necessary, engaging Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams (REACT) as well as measures related to international police activity.

#### *Ukraine and the OSCE's Preventive Activities*

By consistently increasing the level of its contribution to conflict prevention and peacemaking, Ukraine assists in creating stable, favourable conditions around its borders and in the OSCE region as a whole. In doing this it strengthens its role and authority within the OSCE.

Ukraine should assume an active role as a mediator and guarantor in resolving the Transdnistria problem. Its peacemaking potential should also be utilized in settling the conflicts in Abkhazia (Georgia), South Ossetia (Georgia) and Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan).

As one of the mediators and guarantors in the political process aimed at peacefully resolving the Transdnistria conflict, Ukraine supports the development of friendly and good-neighbourly relations with the Republic of Moldova and the rapid settlement of the Transdnistria problem. Ukraine is always ready to engage in constructive discussions with all parties involved. At the same time, it shares the concerns of the European Union and the OSCE regarding the stalemate in negotiations between the Republic of Moldova and the Transdnistria region. Since 1992, Ukraine has followed certain basic principles in acting as a mediator in the negotiation process on Transdnistria: the exclusive use of peaceful and political means; the maintenance of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms; the guarantee of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova; the implementation of agreements; the adoption of mutually accepted decisions; the fulfilment by all parties of their obligations and guarantees; and the continuity of the negotiation process.

It is important to strive to realize the Ukrainian proposal for improving OSCE strategy on preventing conflicts within the OSCE region. To this end, a high-level international seminar on "Preventive functions of the OSCE: experience, opportunities and tasks" was held in Kiev under the auspices of the OSCE on 8-9 October 2001. Around 150 senior officials, NGO representatives and academics from more than 50 OSCE participating States took an active part in the seminar along with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Anatoly Zlenko, and OSCE Secretary General, Ján Kubiš. During the seminar, careful analysis was undertaken of the most important elements of preventive activity being carried out in the OSCE region: the main stages

of conflict prevention within the basic dimensions of security and the effectiveness of the instruments used; the general role and specific activities of international organizations and structures active in prevention in the region; and the necessity of consolidating and co-ordinating approaches and activities in the area of prevention. As these issues were discussed, achievements were noted and positive experiences were exchanged. At the same time, a number of flaws and weaknesses were revealed, highlighting areas requiring improvement.

Of particular relevance were those speeches relating to strengthening preventive activity in the struggle against international terrorism. This problem has assumed priority status on the Organization's agenda in view of the tragic events of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington – just four weeks prior to the seminar.

The summary of the seminar's discussions confirmed that prevention is becoming the fundamental factor in maintaining and consolidating peace and security.

The discussions revealed once again the need for a comprehensive approach in researching the roots of and reasons for tensions and conflicts, in effectively preventing them and in elaborating and implementing measures to nip emerging crises in the bud.

Analysis of the situation in the OSCE region has demonstrated the need for a decisive strengthening of preventive activity in the later post-conflict stages in order to ensure that tensions do not flare up again and that no complications arise. This approach should accelerate the settlement of both so-called "frozen conflicts" in the post-Soviet area as well as the resolution of current problems in the Balkans. The discussions also demonstrated the need for the practical realization of the premise, set out in the Charter for European Security, that – taking into consideration the interdependency of every security dimension – each should be treated as a component of an integral whole. This requires the consolidation of preventive activity, first and foremost in the economic and environmental spheres.

The seminar's conclusions confirmed that the best way to provide for a comprehensive approach to preventive activity is the further co-ordination of preventive efforts both within the OSCE and, more importantly, between the OSCE and its partner organizations. In this context, the further development of practical co-operation and co-ordination of the OSCE's preventive activities with those of the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe and NATO and the consolidation of co-operation activities with subregional structures and institutions are of great importance.

The prevention strategy developed by the UN and the implementation of the "EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict" endorsed by the Gothenburg European Council in June 2001 provide the OSCE with ample opportunities for improving and expanding preventive activities. Ukraine believes that the OSCE must co-operate closely with the other organizations

mentioned here in the name of complementarity, reinforcement and mutual support and should actively take advantage of their assistance, particularly in areas where OSCE expertise and potential are limited as, for example, in the economic and environmental dimension of security. Consolidating co-operation between partner organizations in the field of prevention will accelerate the process of finding solutions to existing conflicts, increase the effectiveness of conflict prevention and provide an opportunity to take an important step forward in furthering the consolidation of security and stability in the OSCE region.

In examining ways of extending the OSCE's role in international peacemaking, it is necessary to take into account the limited ability of the Organization to confront contemporary challenges and threats unilaterally. This makes it vital to realize the Platform for Co-operative Security adopted within the Charter for European Security. This document stipulates the need to strengthen and develop OSCE co-operation with the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe and NATO on the basis of complementarity and equality. In this respect, the framing of concrete mechanisms for interaction among the various organizations, particularly in crises situations, becomes very relevant.

Given that the main causes of long-term crises and conflicts include the arbitrary and selective observance of the basic principles and norms of the OSCE, there is an urgent need to maintain and uphold the requirements of the Helsinki Final Act. Participating States reconfirmed their commitment to this document at the Istanbul Summit.

In this context, all member states and organizations that participate in the Platform for Co-operative Security should strictly adhere to the recognition of the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security and its crucial role on these issues in the OSCE region, which is confirmed in the European Security Charter<sup>4</sup> as well as their obligation to avoid the use of force or the threat of force and to resolve disputes in a peaceful manner.

#### *International Efforts to Reform the OSCE*

The session of the OSCE Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held on 3 and 4 December 2001 in Bucharest was the culminating moment for positive shifts that had significantly intensified during preparation for this session. Here, it became clear the Organization has managed to overcome certain negative tendencies that had become evident after the Vienna Ministerial Council.

The positive changes, which were accompanied by an atmosphere of stronger mutual understanding and partnership among participating States,

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4 Cf. Charter for European Security, cited above (Note 2), pp. 428-429.

provided an opportunity to agree upon and update important issues concerning OSCE activities.<sup>5</sup>

Following the adoption of key documents on the role and tasks of the OSCE in the fight against terrorism – which represents the inclusion of a new and extremely important area of activity in the Organization’s mandate and significantly increases its contribution to peace and security – the Ministerial Council in Bucharest made the first significant steps towards reforming the OSCE. During the meeting, a decision was made to give the OSCE a new role as a forum for political consultation on European security issues.

Continuing the course of removing imbalances in the activities of the OSCE, the Ministerial Council, while focusing the attention of the Organization on human aspects of security, has also defined steps for intensifying activities in the economic-environmental and politico-military dimensions. It was decided to create a sub-committee within the Permanent Council to deal with economic and environmental issues. The Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities was to provide this sub-committee with all necessary support in its work.

Another very important OSCE institution is the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). While it will maintain its autonomy and continue to fulfil its functions, it also needs to update its activities to take account of new challenges to security and to orient its work more closely to the Organization’s current priorities. Closer contacts between the Permanent Council and the FSC have been established to enable this. In response to the proposal that the police be provided with a greater role in confronting new challenges and threats, upholding the rule of law and protecting democratic institutions, and given participating States’ increasing requirements for assistance in this area, it was decided at the Ministerial Council meeting in Bucharest to intensify relevant OSCE activities. This includes providing participating States who request it with support in the area of police activity, performing expert analyses of conditions in interested countries, consulting, advising and making recommendations and providing courses on or establishing schools for police training on the basis of generally accepted international standards.

As regards the OSCE’s legal status, the Ministerial Council directed the working group on the OSCE’s legal capacity to continue its work and to prepare specific proposals for consideration.

Many important decisions, including those mentioned here, have only become possible thanks to agreements reached between leading OSCE participating States, especially the USA and the Russian Federation, and between NATO and the Russian Federation resulting from improved relations between the parties concerned.

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5 On the following, see Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ninth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Bucharest, 3 and 4 December 2001, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2002, Baden-Baden 2003, pp. 391-417.

The about-face in the US position, the desire to provide Russia with an important role within NATO activities, Russia's positive reaction to the proposals made by the USA and NATO – all of these have combined to change the Russian Federation's treatment of the Alliance and have reduced or eliminated some of the differences in the positions of the states in question with respect to the OSCE. It is now possible to bring closer the two principle approaches to the role of the OSCE – the course of reform, which focuses on strengthening the OSCE's position, both legally and in general, on enhancing its role with the aim of making it the leading and co-ordinating organization among all the security institutions in the region and the course of preserving the OSCE's distinctive features, i.e. its focus on the functions of preventive diplomacy, civil peaceful activity and the human dimension. Collective and constructive approaches will need to be defined. Evidence of the beginning of such a process is provided by the existence of a consensus on the necessity of the OSCE to reform in order to increase its effectiveness. It is obvious that this process will not be an easy one.

As the OSCE is the only security organization in the region in which Ukraine is a full-fledged member and can protect its national security interests, Ukraine is interested in strengthening the Organization and increasing its effectiveness. Ukraine is therefore fully supportive of OSCE reform. Together with other participating States, Ukraine committed itself to adhere to the Platform for Co-operative Security, just as to the principle decrees of the European Security Charter. According to these, the OSCE should play a key integrating role, acting as a flexible co-ordinating framework for the development of complementary and mutually supportive co-operative efforts among organizations, while avoiding hierarchies and ensuring effective distribution of labour and responsibility among them. Ukraine's policy on OSCE reform, as on the OSCE's activities in general, should take into account both Ukrainian national interests and the positions of leading participating States. The main negative tendencies must be overcome, and constructive compromises and concise decisions based on adherence to the principles, norms, commitments and decisions of the OSCE must be reached.

With regard to OSCE reform, Ukraine should focus on realizing in full the decisions adopted at the Bucharest and the Porto meetings of the Ministerial Council. The Organization needs to introduce specific measures to begin full-scale activities as a proper forum for political dialogue as defined at those meetings.

One important task is to strengthen the political and military dimensions of the OSCE. With this in mind, the FSC should work to increase security in the OSCE region by including the task of resolving the conflicts in Abkhazia (Georgia), South Ossetia (Georgia), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) and Transnistria (Moldova) on its agenda.

As is true of most states with transition economies, one of the Ukraine's priorities is strengthening the economic and environmental dimension of the

OSCE. One aspect of this is to promote the work of the relevant sub-committee already established within the Permanent Council. This sub-committee must become the key body charged with assisting countries with complicated economic problems. The sub-committee should work to broaden the mandate and increase the effectiveness of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. Both the role of the Co-ordinator and the OSCE Economic Forum, which is held each year in Prague, should more closely relate to the needs of participating States with transition economies.

Attention needs to be devoted to improving the OSCE's management. It is necessary to define strict parameters for its activities, removing any opportunities for voluntarism, unilateralism, the weakening of the OSCE's consensus character or the use of double standards in its work.

Appropriate procedures should be adopted to improve the Organization's efficiency. These should ensure that duties are executed properly, thereby increasing the effectiveness of institutions, missions and other forms of OSCE presence within participating States.

Ukraine should take more part in the OSCE's working-groups and field missions. This could also help resolve issues regarding the selection of specialists from participating States for work in OSCE structures and the Secretariat. The Organization should strive for a high degree of professionalism and the fair geographic distribution of staff.

The idea of giving limited legal authority to the OSCE and granting immunities and privileges to the Organization, its structures and its representatives should be supported.

The most important aspect of Ukraine's participation in the OSCE today involves using the OSCE framework to contribute to the country's integration in Europe and the Euro-Atlantic region. Ukraine's ambitions to eventually join the EU are particularly important in this respect. With this aim in mind, it is important that the Ukraine continue to develop its co-operation with the group of EU member states within the OSCE. The practice of regular consultations with the EU group to promote common initiatives and support EU proposals (where they are acceptable to Ukraine) should be extended.

It is also in Ukraine's interest to promote co-operation between the EU and the OSCE in the question of deploying EU peacekeeping forces within the scope of OSCE operations. Constructive co-operation between the EU and the OSCE could be furthered on the basis of the above-mentioned "EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict". The Programme puts forward important proposals for interaction with the OSCE on the basis of mutually reinforcing, effective partnership and the principle of comparative advantage.