

Asymmetric Security in Europe and the Tasks of the OSCE¹

International organizations represent the attempt to deal with problems, conflicts and challenges that cannot be met (or can no longer be met) by states and substate actors alone. As the character of these problems, which may be domestic, transnational or international, changes quickly, international organizations must be able to adapt flexibly to new demands. This is all the more true for a relatively small organization with little institutional autonomy such as the OSCE, which, moreover, carries out a broad range of tasks.

In this essay, I intend, *first*, to discuss certain current developments in European security that are shaping the environment in which the OSCE operates. *Second*, against this background, I will attempt to articulate some key challenges that the OSCE will have to meet. *Third*, I will consider two organizational questions that influence the OSCE's effectiveness. *Fourth*, I will outline some policy recommendations in these areas.

Some Current Developments in European Security

One of the OSCE's key objectives is the creation of equal and undivided security throughout its area of coverage. However, looking at actual developments, it is hard to deny that the trend lies in the opposite direction: The security situation in the OSCE area is characterized by highly polarized, even contradictory developments.

Western and Central Europe represents a growing region of stability based on the overlapping enlargement of the EU and NATO. With the European Union's expansion to 25 states, more than half of OSCE participating States will be EU members or associates; the other half have little or no chance of joining this zone of integration. The EU has, however, not yet demonstrated that it is capable of formulating joint positions in essential areas of its Common Foreign and Security Policy. Disharmony is evident on topics of the moment, such as the question of participation in the Iraq war, as well as on fundamental issues, such as differing preferences regarding unilateral and multilateral approaches.

In Central Asia and in the Caucasus, on the other hand, not even strategic stability, i.e. the absence of transnational and international violent conflict, can be seen as guaranteed. These countries contain a significant, in some cases growing, potential for conflict. A number of violent conflicts

¹ This article covers developments up to 31 December 2003.

have been at best “frozen” and, in the case of Chechnya, even this has not been achieved. Moreover, three Central Asian states (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan) border on Afghanistan (an OSCE partner for co-operation since April 2003) and are thus highly vulnerable to instability and risks imported from outside the OSCE area.

Between these domains of stability and potential instability, we find the Russian Federation, a strategic key player with significant interests of its own, without whose co-operation it will be difficult to resolve the conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia. However, in spite of its co-operation with the USA in the fight against terrorism, Russia has lost influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia, where states are vying over partnership and co-operation with the USA.

Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine currently have no prospects of EU membership, but this could change in the long term as a result of developments in their domestic situations.

All in all, the European security landscape is characterized by deep and growing asymmetry, quite the contrary of the equal and undivided security that must, nonetheless, remain a long-term objective of the OSCE. This basic asymmetry has direct consequences for all aspects of the Organization’s work, including its field missions.

A crucial aspect of the inequality characterizing European security concerns the process of democratization in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. There is general agreement that, as the Personal Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia, the former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, put it in August 2003, “the transition from the Soviet system to market economy and democracy in Central Asia has proved to be a longer and more difficult process than expected [...] Building democracy in the West also took centuries.”² It remains to establish, however, whether the democratization process in Central Asia, the Caucasus and, to some extent, in Eastern Europe, is progressing (if slowly), standing still or even regressing. It is hard to reach a definite answer to this question at this point, and the answer we do reach will differ from region to region. On the empirical level, we see the following: a fully fledged dictatorship in Turkmenistan that systematically infringes fundamental human rights, more or less authoritarian regimes in the other Central Asian and South Caucasian countries and in Belarus and democracies in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova to which attributes such as “guided” and “illiberal” are frequently applied. In Central Asia and the South Caucasus, moreover, one can see attempts to establish dynastic rule. The recent transfer of power in Azerbaijan from Haidar Aliev to his son Ilham is only one particularly striking example of this.

This slow or even regressive democratization process raises the question of what the OSCE should focus on more in the years ahead: democratization

2 President Martti Ahtisaari, Address at the Permanent Council of the OSCE, Vienna, 5 September 2003, PC.DEL/954/03, 29 August 2003, Draft, p. 1.

in the sense of electoral assistance or respect for basic human rights and establishing the rule of law? Ambassador Robert Barry, former Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, wrote in this regard: "Most weak ex-communist states would be better served by creating an independent judiciary than by holding early and frequent elections."³ One should also remember that elements of the rule of law emerged in Western states long before developed forms of democracy.

In the South Caucasus, Central Asia and, to a certain extent, Eastern Europe, we are confronted with weak, failing and failed states. Weak states are those that cannot perform basic state functions or create institutions that can guarantee minimum standards of internal and external, human, economic and social security. Weak states also leave an open door for corruption, organized crime and trafficking in human beings, weapons and drugs. In the worst cases, they are safe havens for terrorists, and, more generally, fertile ground for all kinds of political, ethnic and religious radicalism and extremism.

An important feature of weak states concerns the relationship between local, regional and international conflicts. Examples are provided by the cases of Abkhazia, South Ossetia or Nagorno-Karabakh, which have direct security implications for the Russian North Caucasus, including Chechnya. Weak state structures are the core problem for both internal and external stability in the entire region and represent the greatest challenge for the OSCE, whose mandate is to create security through co-operation.

Weak states are also a substantial reason why we are facing a new and more complex risk and threat environment. Under "new threats" we understand a broad spectrum of primarily non-military challenges, ranging from organized crime and corruption, trafficking in human beings, weapons and drugs to terrorism and the possible access of terrorists to weapons of mass destruction. As diverse as these threats may be, they have certain features in common. *First*, they are predominantly a result of weak state structures, i.e. of the inability of states to provide for internal stability and security in a comprehensive way. *Second*, the individual threats are closely interconnected and interdependent: People who engage in human trafficking also smuggle weapons and drugs; terrorists frequently finance their activities through drug trafficking. *Third*, the dividing line between the root causes of threats that are generated domestically and those imported from abroad has become increasingly blurred: They have become transnational. This is especially the case for the three Central Asian states bordering on Afghanistan. *Fourth*, while it is true that these new threats cannot be countered primarily by military means, the dividing lines between military, police and civilian

3 Robert L. Barry, *The Future of the OSCE*, BASIC Special Report 1/2003, London 2003, p. 45.

means used to combat them is also growing harder to define.⁴ Once more, Afghanistan provides the primary example.

Because of its comprehensive approach, the OSCE is uniquely suited to addressing these kinds of threats. As Ambassador Barry wrote: “In the decade ahead, the combination of organized crime, religious extremism, economic collapse and terrorism suggests that the OSCE will be called on to play a greater role in Europe and Eurasia. Because of its presence on the ground in 19 successor states of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the OSCE is uniquely positioned to implement regional initiatives that are required to deal with transnational issues.”⁵

Challenges for the OSCE

The political functions and tasks of the OSCE have changed substantially since 1990. In that year, the CSCE – as it then was – was expected to deal with pan-European security structures almost exclusively in terms of international, state-to-state relations. The first fundamental change came less than two years later under the shock of the bloody Yugoslav wars of secession and the realization that the international community possessed no adequate means of containing or resolving violent domestic conflicts. The CSCE adapted to these changes faster than other international organizations. As early as the 1992 Helsinki Document, it had already shifted its attention primarily to this new type of conflict. With the establishment of the first field missions and the creation of the post of High Commissioner on National Minorities, the CSCE also developed appropriate instruments.

The 1995 Dayton Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina marks another important turning point: From then on, the Organization focused mainly on post-conflict peace-building, starting to play the role of an on-site implementing agency. The Dayton Agreement, UN Security Council resolution 1244 on Kosovo (1999) and the Framework Agreement on Macedonia (2001) were all negotiated by other political actors, and the OSCE had to restrict itself to the task of implementing parts of these agreements. This reflects two basic developments: *First*, the OSCE has lost political relevance, as, of course, have other international organizations, such as NATO and the UN. Not only are major decisions concerning European security no longer taken at OSCE conferences, but the Organization also usually has to share responsibilities with other international actors in dealing with specific conflicts. *Second*, as a result, the Organization’s main focus today is on the work of its field missions and its institutions and – within this – mostly on the imple-

4 Cf. Gilles Adréani, Keynote Speech for Working Group C of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, 25/26 June 2003, CIO.GAL/53/03/Add.4, 23 June 2003, p. 2.

5 Barry, cited above (Note 3), p. 42.

mentation of projects. When we speak of the continuing importance of the OSCE and the fact that most of its work cannot be performed by other international actors, our evaluation remains within an area defined by two parameters: a political decision-making process that largely takes place outside the OSCE, and the OSCE's own focus on implementing these decisions. The Organization and its participating States have not yet fully adapted to these fundamental functional changes in either a political or an organizational sense.

In realistically assessing the OSCE's capacity for action, it is important to take into account the Russian Federation's diminishing interest in the Organization's activities. At the same time, an effort should be made to recapture Russia's interest for the work of the Organization. Until the late 1990s, it would have been correct to assume that the Russian Federation ascribed particular significance to the work of the OSCE. Today, we have to face the fact that Russia's interest is marginal. This sudden u-turn requires explanation. In order to understand it, I differentiate between the Russian Federation's positive – or constructive – and negative – or obstructive – interests in the OSCE.

Russia's most important positive interest in the OSCE was rooted in its desire to create a European security structure based on international law. However, developments in the last decade have shown that, despite support for this position by individual Western politicians, such as former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, this goal was unrealistic. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the enlargement of NATO and the EU combined to diminish Russia's role on the global political stage, leading Russia to use the OSCE and other international organizations to try to make up for lost influence. As is well known, this has met with very limited success. Finally, one concrete interest for Russia lies in the protection of the rights of Russian-speaking minorities, not only, but especially, in Estonia and Latvia. This aspiration was bitterly disappointed by the closure of the OSCE Missions to these countries at the end of 2001, against the wishes of Russia.

The most prominent negative Russian interest in the OSCE consisted in stopping or at least delaying NATO enlargement, an issue that no longer has any significance in view of recent improvements in US-Russian relations and the establishment of an enhanced NATO-Russia Council. In a narrower sense – and this is still valid – Russia has been trying to keep the OSCE, and OSCE field missions in particular, away from its territory, and to deal with conflicts on its peripheries on its own. Although Russia has clearly not been particularly successful in this endeavour, it is hesitant to involve the OSCE in conflict resolution, as the case of Chechnya makes clear.

Russia's positive and negative interests alike are largely obsolete today, and Russia's concrete interests in the OSCE have to be seen as very limited. It is thus all the more important that the dialogue with the Russian Federation be intensified in order to find potential new areas of Russian interest. In the long term, the OSCE cannot afford an indifferent Russian Federation.

A further political challenge, and one that is hardly less significant to the OSCE, is the enlargement of the EU, and, to a lesser extent, of NATO. While NATO enlargement will have important consequences for the European security structure in general, and relations with Russia in particular, there are three reasons why EU enlargement will have an impact on the OSCE and its freedom to manoeuvre that is far more direct.

First, whereas NATO will remain active primarily in the military domain, the EU is developing its own capabilities at the very heart of the OSCE's core competency: crisis management via civilian means. In addition, the EU has clearly stated that it will work both through international organizations, such as the UN and the OSCE, as well as autonomously. This means that it is up to the EU to decide on a case-by-case basis whether to engage the OSCE or not. Early examples, such as the successor mission to the IPTF mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, according to the former German OSCE Ambassador Reinhard Bettzuege "would actually have fit the OSCE like a glove"⁶, but which was carried out by the EU, show that the case-by-case method does not necessarily favour OSCE participation.

Second, the 25 EU member states, plus associates, will represent a majority of the OSCE's participating States and will provide up to three quarters of financial and human resources. Even if the consensus principle in the OSCE softens the impact, the increasing weight of the EU within the OSCE will be felt.

Third, and most important, an EU composed of 25 states will inevitably change the political geography of Europe and, thus, the EU's interest in neighbouring regions where the OSCE was, or still is, active. It is worth looking at these developments more closely. I would like to concentrate on five regions:

- Prospective new EU member states, especially Estonia and Latvia
- The countries in Eastern Europe which will become direct neighbours of the EU
- The Western Balkans
- The three states in the South Caucasus
- The five Central Asian states.

There is widespread, if quiet, agreement that OSCE field missions will be closed down in EU accession states, as occurred in Estonia and Latvia at the end of 2001. In both countries, the OSCE Missions and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) worked with great success to diffuse tensions between the large Russian-speaking minorities and the majority ethnic groups. This success became possible because their efforts were

6 Reinhard Bettzuege, *The OSCE of the 21st Century – A Departure for New Horizons?*, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2002, Baden-Baden 2003*, pp. 39-45, here: p. 43.

strongly supported by the European Commission and because the accession countries were eager to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria of 1993 – including “respect for and protection of minorities” – in order to gain entry to the European Union. To quote the current OSCE High Commissioner Rolf Ekéus: “It is clear that the Copenhagen criteria are important for clearing the bar to get into the EU, but what happens when you have passed that hurdle? Do the rules change?”⁷ Ekéus also stressed the fact that “we cannot assume that EU enlargement will magically solve all inter-ethnic issues. The EU must address this fact internally, both through its own means and through co-operation with relevant international organisations such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE.”⁸ The question, however, remains as to whether both new and old EU member states, as well as the Commission, will be ready to make use of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. If not, and if other means are not employed, the situation in some countries could worsen again.

Countries such as Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine will become direct neighbours of the EU after the rounds of enlargement in 2004 and 2007. The examples of Belarus and Moldova show that joint EU-OSCE efforts can be quite effective. However, this does not tell us how much the EU will be ready to involve the OSCE in the future and how much it will prefer to act on its own. The statement on this question given by Javier Solana, the High Representative for the CFSP of the EU, in an address to the OSCE Permanent Council on 25 September 2002, left matters quite open: “We regard the work of the OSCE in the region as very valuable, but will also seriously consider how the Union can take on greater responsibilities and better assist in achieving our joint objectives.”⁹

In the case of the Western Balkans, it can be assumed that the EU has taken the leadership role in efforts to stabilize the region and is, in the long term, working towards integrating it in the EU, or at least at enabling closer co-operation. All the countries in this region are either currently negotiating or are already implementing Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAAs) with the EU, which cover a much broader agenda than the OSCE ever could. This relegates the OSCE – like all other international organizations – to a supporting role in the Western Balkans. While it is clear that the OSCE role in this region, where most of its budget is still spent today, is gradually shrinking, the Organization should be careful not to rush out of

7 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, From the Copenhagen Criteria to the Copenhagen Summit: The Protection of National Minorities in an Enlarging Europe, Address by Rolf Ekéus, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, To the conference on National Minorities in the Enlarged European Union, Copenhagen, 5 November 2002, p. 3, at: <http://www.osce.org/hnm/documents/speeches>.

8 Ibid., p. 8.

9 Javier Solana, The European Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe: The Shape of Future Cooperation, Address by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union to the Permanent Council of the OSCE, Vienna, 25 September 2002, PC.DEL/719/02, 25 September 2002, p. 5.

things too hastily, leaving behind a variety of unfinished and half-finished tasks. An example of a long-term OSCE exit strategy is provided by Croatia, where the EU and OSCE are working closely together with a view to the country's becoming a member of the EU at some point in the future.

With offices in Baku and Yerevan, a large mission in Georgia and the Minsk Group on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the OSCE has comprehensive coverage of the South Caucasus. However, one cannot hide the fact that, up until now, the OSCE has not been particularly successful in solving the so-called frozen conflicts of this region. It might even be said that its main contribution has been in keeping them frozen. The EU provides Partnership and Co-operation Agreements with all three of the South Caucasian countries. A look at the EU's Country Strategy Papers for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia shows that the Union is pursuing increasingly ambitious policy goals in this region, which, in my opinion, reflects the growing proximity of the enlarged Union to the South Caucasus. It is apparent that there is potential for considerable synergy if co-operation between the EU and the OSCE is improved. It therefore comes as no surprise that Javier Solana told the OSCE Permanent Council in September 2002: "The EU is at present exploring enhancing co-operation with the OSCE in this region and considers that co-operation on specific cross-border issues, including border management and migration, and how to stem increased threats from crime, trafficking and illegal immigration, provide promising avenues of approach."¹⁰ However, Solana also said: "The Union will continue to back the efforts of the OSCE and UN [...] but ultimately we will look to the different parties to find viable solutions and act upon them."¹¹ The EU is thus pursuing both options, and therefore, to quote Monika Wohlfeld, "the question remains to what degree the EU will wish to link its efforts to those of the OSCE".¹² I believe the answer will depend on the EU's assessment of how much political added value the OSCE can contribute. In the region in question, this will also depend on successfully taking account of Turkish and Russian interests, or at the very least, on not violating them.

The OSCE has centres in each of the five Central Asian states. It has stepped up activities considerably in recent years, especially with regard to the first and second dimensions. The four million euro police project in Kyrgyzstan, the demining project in Tajikistan as well as the establishment of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) are encouraging signs. At the same time, the EU is expanding its activities in Central Asia. In October 2002, it adopted its "Strategy for Central Asia", which will double TACIS assistance in this region from 25 million to 50 million euros annually. As the representative of the EU Commission at the "OSCE Information Sharing Meeting of

10 Ibid., p. 9.

11 Ibid.

12 Monika Wohlfeld, EU enlargement and the future of the OSCE: The role of field missions, in: Helsinki Monitor 1/2003, pp. 52-64, here: p. 57.

the Central Asian States” stated on 11 June 2003, “[the] EU and OSCE have already reached a significant level of co-operation on and in this region”.¹³ This includes financial contributions made by the EU to OSCE projects, with around half of ODIHR’s projects in the region being funded by the EU, for example. In addition, the Commission will contribute one million euros to the Kyrgyz police project. Taking into account the solid OSCE presence in the field, the Organization’s upgraded activities in Central Asia and the EU’s growing interest in this region, the prospects for further co-operation look good.

In summary, there may still be a limited role for the OSCE in some of the new EU member states for a while, if this is desired by the states themselves and by the EU as a whole. In the countries of Eastern Europe directly bordering on the enlarged EU and in the Western Balkans, the OSCE will probably maintain a presence over the next few years, but in the long term its activities there will become increasingly less important. In the South Caucasus and in Central Asia, however, the Organization has significant opportunities both to upgrade its activities and to expand its co-operation with other international players, especially the EU. This assessment precisely mirrors the basic asymmetry of the overall European security situation as analysed above. At the same time, it highlights the key task of the Organization: dealing with conflicts resulting from asymmetric interdependencies in its area, relations of a type which are frequently related to the dynamic processes of globalization.

Organizational Issues

It is well known that OSCE’s field activities represent its most valuable instrument and its most significant comparative advantage over other international organizations. It is all the more important, therefore, that we take seriously the continuing and, in my view, still growing body of criticism by certain participating States of OSCE field activities and the way they operate. While the main proponent of this criticism is the Russian Federation, a recent non-paper jointly drafted by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia shows that other participating States share this point of view. There are three major criticisms of OSCE field missions:

- Criticism of the geographic asymmetry of OSCE field missions – all are active in the Balkans and on the territory of the former Soviet Union

13 Kurt Juul, The European Commission’s Approach to Central Asia, Statement at the OSCE Information Sharing Meeting of the Central Asian States with International Organizations and Institutions on Co-operation in Central Asia, Vienna, 11 June 2003, PC.DEL/563/03, 11 June 2003, p. 4.

- Criticism of their issue-oriented asymmetry which emphasizes the human dimension and neglects the other two dimensions
- Criticism that the field missions are overly intrusive or, as it is most often formulated: that they interfere in the internal affairs of participating States.

Because it is a clear reflection of the asymmetric security situation in Europe, there is little probability that the geographic asymmetry of field activities within the OSCE area will become more balanced. We do not need OSCE missions in the Netherlands or Norway. They are unwanted in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country. But we do need them in the Caucasus and Central Asia. One approach that might at least partially ameliorate this problem would be to establish “Thematic Missions”, for instance on trafficking in human beings and on the illicit trade in weapons and drugs, which would cover states of origin, transit and destination, thereby avoiding “singling out” individual states. A second approach – one which does not concern the missions themselves, but rather the OSCE agenda as a whole – would be to work more on issues of pan-European relevance, such as freedom of movement or education. A tendency in this direction is already evident in the activities of several OSCE institutions, such as the Representative on Freedom of the Media, who has dealt extensively with media issues in Western countries, or the High Commissioner on National Minorities, whose Hague, Oslo and Lund Recommendations have established norms that address concrete problems not related to specific countries.¹⁴

The problem of issue-oriented asymmetry, on the other hand, could easily be solved by simply increasing first and second dimension activities – but not by reducing human-dimension activities. This problem has been recognized, and the first steps have been made to improve the situation. Ambassador Daan Everts, Personal Representative of the Dutch Chairman-in-Office, admitted at the First Annual Security Review Conference in June 2003 that “our missions and institutions have not paid the attention to first dimension issues that they deserve”. And he added: “Giving more, and more visible, attention to military and other first dimension security issues, fits the Netherlands Chairmanship priority of better balancing the three OSCE dimensions.”¹⁵

The third problem, the fact that some OSCE participating States see field missions as too intrusive, could be handled by enhancing co-operation with host countries. A series of proposals have been made: for example, that a broader consultation process with the host country should be introduced be-

14 Cf. Hans-Joachim Heintze, Human Rights and Political Interests – Is there a Double Standard? in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2001, Baden-Baden 2002, pp. 219-235, here p. 227.

15 Daan Everts, Keynote Speech of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the Opening Session of the Annual Security Review Conference, 25/26 June 2003, CIO.GAL/53/03/Add. 5, 24 June 2003, pp. 3 and 2.

fore the appointment of Heads of Missions; that a more profound dialogue based on the partnership between the OSCE and the host country should be initiated before the adoption of mandates; and that closer dialogue and co-operation should take place before decisions are made on the implementation of projects.

The issues relating to OSCE field missions can and must be resolved. Given the sensitive nature of this question, it is hardly surprising that the Informal Group of Friends on Improving the Function and Effectiveness of the OSCE Field Missions did not succeed in conclusively resolving these issues in 2003. What is clear, however, is that strengthening co-operative relationships with host countries represents a major opportunity for making further progress.

Another major organizational problem within the OSCE is that the Chair frequently appears unable to provide sufficient political guidance and thematic focus to the field missions. Of course, this has much more to do with the hybrid character of the OSCE as an organization and its lack of management capacities than with the qualities of individual Chairmanships.

Two issues need to be considered here: A lack of political leadership vis-à-vis the larger OSCE missions, especially in the Balkans, can be attributed to two factors. First, some missions tend to reject what they see as interference by the Chair, and, second, the larger missions have significantly more manpower than the Chairman's team and the Secretariat combined, with the result that the Chairmanship simply does not have the capacities to provide effective leadership. In the case of the smaller field missions, the problem seems to be largely one of a failure to co-ordinate and support work on specific issues. In contrast to the large missions, which have whole departments on democratization, media development, etc., the smaller missions frequently lack the expertise they need to be able to implement rather broad mandates. Considered from the point of view of project implementation (which is growing ever more important), the Secretariat lacks above all planning and co-ordination capacities, while the smaller missions are short of implementation capacities. Finally, the annual rotation of the Chairmanship leads to a change in thematic focus and leadership style every twelve months.

Overall, these organizational shortcomings lead to high levels of discontinuity, short planning horizons, a short institutional memory span, an occasional tendency to adopt different approaches in different countries and a frequent need to "reinvent the wheel". Nevertheless, these problems are quite normal for an organization like the OSCE, which has grown very quickly and, due to its specific history, has a highly complex structure. While solutions may not be easy to come by, they are there for the finding.

Policy Recommendations

In the following, I differentiate between policy recommendations in a narrower sense and recommendations related to specific regions and issues. Among the former, I consider the following to be the most pressing.

First, as the OSCE urgently needs more continuity and would benefit from a major political success, it would be desirable for the Bulgarian Chairmanship to continue at the same level of intensity the activities started by the Dutch Chairmanship with regard to Moldova. Resolving one of the “frozen” conflicts would have a greater effect in terms of repoliticizing and raising the profile of the OSCE than would any amount of discussion of these issues.

Second, close dialogue with Russia and the joint search for topics that would encourage Russian involvement in the work of the OSCE remain of crucial importance. For this purpose it will be necessary to actively engage the United States. In addition, due to its language and culture, the Bulgarian Chairmanship seems well equipped to pursue this kind of dialogue.

Third, Turkey has multiple links to the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Central Asia based on language, ethnicity and culture; it also has political interests in those regions. It would, therefore, seem advisable to more closely involve Turkey in finding solutions to the crises in these areas.

Fourth, dialogue with OSCE partners for co-operation Japan, Korea and Afghanistan should be intensified, particularly as regards security issues in Central Asia and the transfer of OSCE expertise to Korea and Afghanistan.

Fifth, the OSCE should endeavour to further improve co-operation and the division of labour with other international organizations and especially with the EU. It is vital not simply to discuss these issues in general terms, but to address concrete opportunities for co-operation in specific regions and countries in the OSCE area.

My recommendations relating to specific topics and geographic regions are as follows:

Sixth, the OSCE should identify and focus on pan-European issues not dealt with by other international organizations. Although this will not solve the problem of geographic asymmetry in OSCE field missions, it will nonetheless underscore the existence of the political will to overcome it in the long term in the name of equal and undivided security.

Seventh, a debate on fundamentals is required to decide whether the *main focus* of the OSCE’s human dimension activities should remain on democratization (especially on election monitoring and assistance), or whether it should be shifted more to promoting fundamental human rights and building structures that underpin the rule of law. In this, the OSCE should follow the urging of the Organization’s former Secretary General, Wilhelm Höynck,

in strengthening its fight against torture, which remains “endemic”¹⁶ in Central Asia.

Eighth, the OSCE should provide a coherent offering to support comprehensive security-sector reforms, including police reform, border regimes and institution building in the executive and legislative spheres. This is an area where the Organization already possesses significant comparative advantages.

Ninth, The Organization should gradually direct more of its resources towards the South Caucasus and Central Asia without allowing it to be thought that one of these two regions is being favoured over the other.

Tenth, and finally, the OSCE should enter into dialogue with moderate representatives of political Islam. As the vast majority of people in Central Asia (and parts of the Caucasus) are Muslims, the question is not one of *whether* we will, in the not too distant future, be confronted with political Islam, but rather *what face* political Islam will assume – will it be radical or will it be moderate? As a consequence, the debate over the compatibility of OSCE values and Islamic values is, in the long run, a key issue for conflict prevention in the region.

Much has been written about the “crisis of the OSCE”, and, in a certain sense, crises have always accompanied the development of the CSCE and the OSCE. And yet the term “crisis” appears too strong to describe the problems and challenges the Organization faces today. In essence, these concern the need to constantly adapt to quickly changing conditions and tasks – something that must be accomplished by every international organization of any relevance.

16 Wilhelm Höynck, *The OSCE in Central Asia – On the right track?*, in: *Helsinki Monitor* 3/2003, pp. 300-312, here: p. 303.