

Foreword

“Keeping the Organization together is in itself [...] an important objective to bear in mind.”¹ Although this statement may appear rather strange at first glance, it reflects a deadly serious state of affairs. OSCE Secretary-General, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, was alluding to an issue that remains one of the most discussed in the OSCE: the Organization’s crisis. Despite the proliferation of reform proposals that aim to take the wind out of the critics’ sails and address the key criticisms made, there is still no end in sight. It has so far not proved possible to adequately – let alone convincingly – implement any of the initiatives so far proposed. As Heinrich Schneider’s comparative study “Long on Promise – Short on Impact” in the current volume, which analyses and evaluates four of the most important reform initiatives, concludes: “The meagreness of an entire year’s reform efforts must be a cause for concern, above all because there has never been a time when so many leading experts from various participating States have so unambiguously declared that the OSCE would inevitably lose its significance without rapid and thoroughgoing efforts to relieve the crisis.”² Kurt P. Tudyka, who looks back on the activities of the Slovenian Chairmanship, reaches a slightly milder conclusion: “The situation has become calmer. Expressions of willingness to reform the Organization have ameliorated contradictions, a common platform has been found, reform is no longer taboo.”³ However, this still does not amount to real progress.

Nonetheless, criticism, self-criticism, and the need for reform should not draw our attention from the fact that the Organization – besides a certain amount of necessary introspection – also continues to perform numerous important tasks in the field of European security. This applies, in the first instance, to its traditional tasks of conflict prevention and crisis management, particularly in connection with the “frozen” conflicts, for which, despite every effort being made, no final – political – resolution can be foreseen, although it has often seemed that the end was in sight. It is, however, imperative that these conflicts be resolved as soon as possible. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut is not the only person to expressly warn of escalation as these conflicts heat up once again. “Not Frozen but Red Hot” is also the title of Marietta König’s contribution on the status of the conflicts in Georgia. With respect to Transdniestria, the long-serving Head of the OSCE Mission to

1 The OSCE: Still tested as a toolkit for troubled times, Interview with the Secretary General, in: *OSCE Magazine*, October 2006, pp. 5-7, here: p. 6.

2 Heinrich Schneider, Long on Promise – Short on Impact: The OSCE Reform Initiative 2004-2005 and Its Results, in this volume, pp. 35-57, here: p. 57.

3 Kurt P. Tudyka, The Slovenian Chairmanship Has Steered the OSCE into Calm Waters – Is Land now in Sight? In this volume, pp. 23-34, here: p. 34.

Moldova, William H. Hill, reaches the rather discouraging conclusion that considerable work is ahead in restoring dialogue and reducing mistrust and hostility before there can be any thought of real progress. Finally, Rexane Dehdashti-Rasmussen subjects the negotiating process in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh to detailed and critical analysis.

The current OSCE Yearbook takes a special look at the Black Sea region. Elena Kropatcheva describes recent developments in Ukraine following the March 2006 parliamentary elections, and Peter Poptchev, *Chargé d’Affaires* of the Bulgarian Permanent Mission to the OSCE, outlines Bulgarian attitudes towards the OSCE. Ersan Bocutoğlu and Gökhan Koçer from Karadeniz Technical University in Trabzon, Turkey, analyse the economic aspects of conflicts in the Black Sea region, and Vladimir Ryabtsev of Russia’s Rostov State University poses the interesting and original question of whether a regional security system in the form of a “mini-OSCE” could be an appropriate response to the geopolitical characteristics of the region.

That an enormous amount remains to be done is true not only of the OSCE’s conventional functions, but also with regard to the “new challenges and threats” to security and related tasks that fall to the OSCE as a result. In this context, Karl E. Wycoff, Head of the Action against Terrorism Unit in the OSCE Secretariat, provides an overview of the OSCE’s work in support of the global fight against terrorism, while Vincent de Graaf and Annelies Verstichel consider the specific issue of police modernization. They discuss the “Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies”, a “timely document relevant both East and West of Vienna” that was elaborated by internationally recognized independent experts under the auspices of the High Commissioner on National Minorities. The goal of this document is to help the police avoid generating negative reactions among national minority communities or even becoming a catalyst for conflict in situations of ethnic tension.

The OSCE’s success stories undoubtedly include its field operations: long-term missions, regional offices and centres, and other presences on the ground. Their frequently arduous close-quarter work is dedicated to building democratic institutions, consolidating the rule of law, encouraging respect for human rights, and many further valuable causes, and they are active, above all in transition countries and former war zones, in contributing to the creation of a sustainable peace. As always, a major portion of the Yearbook focuses on their work. This year, we consider the activities of the OSCE Spillover Mission to Skopje (Sebastian Dworack), the difficult relationship between Belarus and the OSCE and its impact on the work of the OSCE Office in Minsk (Eberhard Heyken), the role of the OSCE Mission to Moldova in the settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict, as mentioned above, and the work of the OSCE Office in Baku (Maurizio Pavesi). Completing this chapter, Tim Epkenhans, Director of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, discusses

the OSCE's challenging role in Central Asia following the dramatic recent events in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

The wide range of important, high-stakes, and often highly delicate issues dealt with in the OSCE's human dimension reflects the significance of this field of action. Anne-Marie Lizin, Special Representative of the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, has contributed a first-hand report on the situation in the Guantanamo Bay Detention Facility, thereby also demonstrating that the OSCE does address problems and situations "West of Vienna". As does ODIHR's Lydia Grigoreva, who provides a detailed survey of the death penalty in the OSCE area. Delia Rahmonova-Schwarz highlights the highly relevant issue of migration, while other contributions deal with Islam and Islamism in the Northern Caucasus and Central Asia (Emil Souleimanov/Slavomír Horák) and the interplay of OSCE standards and other systems of norms in the field of human rights protection (Hans-Joachim Heintze).

In the section on co-operative security, Helmut Kulitz from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE gives a detailed overview of the provisions of the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. Pointing out that the document continues the CSCE/OSCE's tradition of arms-control policy and therefore clearly contributes to revitalizing the Organization's politico-military dimension, the author also considers that pursuing this issue contains considerable potential to strengthen the Organization as a whole.

Several contributions in the current volume deal with organizational aspects of the OSCE. Andreas Nothelle, the Special Representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to the OSCE and Head of the PA Liaison Office, has written a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of the role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as a driving force for reform. Nicole Watson discusses the promotion of gender equality within the OSCE. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in 2000, analyses opportunities for co-operation between the OSCE and the EU. And Frank Evers considers recent developments in the ASEAN Regional Forum and potential fields of co-operation with the OSCE.

The brutal murder of the incorruptible and exceedingly brave Russian journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, made shockingly clear that freedom of the media – and thus the rights to freedom of opinion and expression – is constantly under threat, also in the OSCE participating States; critical journalists may even be in danger of their lives. As recently as February 2003, the Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's International Secretariat, R. Spencer Oliver, presented Anna Politkovskaya with the OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy. In October 2006, he was one of those who mourned at her funeral. Politkovskaya had been awarded the prize, which was established on the initiative of the first OSCE Representative on Free-

dom of the Media, Freimut Duve, and is awarded annually by the OSCE PA, for her courageous, unembellished reports from Chechnya. Her murder is further evidence of the importance of the work of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, which is discussed by Christian Möller in the current volume.

Like all its predecessors, the OSCE Yearbook 2006 seeks to maintain a balance between the perspectives of academics and those of practitioners. The contents reflect this mix of objective detachment, on the one hand, and detailed first-hand knowledge and practical relevance, on the other. Our goal is to contribute to the political and academic discussion of European security in national, regional, and international contexts and to create links between academic, diplomatic, and political circles and the public.

With their commitment, knowledge, and no shortage of expressive power, our authors have ensured that the Yearbook once more fulfils the many tasks it sets out to perform: as a record of events, a forum for discussion, and – hopefully – a source of original and valuable thoughts. For this, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude. We would also like to thank this year's OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht of Belgium, for his balanced preface, and to take this opportunity to thank the German Federal Foreign Office, which funds the printing of the Yearbook and some of the staff costs associated with its production, for its lasting support.

We end, as we started, with the words of the OSCE Secretary-General, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut: "The fascinating thing about the OSCE is that, in a way, it's a miracle that it continues to work."⁴

4 Interview with the Secretary General, cited above (Note 1), p. 7.