

Democracy as a Creative Task - Challenging or Overburdening the OSCE?

"Human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and democratic institutions are the foundations of peace and security, representing a crucial contribution to conflict prevention, within a comprehensive concept of security."¹

The greatest value of this statement in the Budapest Document undoubtedly lies in the close connection it makes between stability in international relations and the peace-bringing effects of civil society structures within the states. One of the indisputable merits of the OSCE is that it emphasized this connection early on and introduced it into European policy. The norms it established gave formerly oppressed peoples an important political and moral justification for their resistance to every kind of arbitrary behavior on the part of states, thereby contributing in significant measure to overcoming the autocratic regimes.

The end of the East-West conflict brought a substantial improvement in the conditions for applying these norms but at the same time has confronted the OSCE and its participating States with new challenges which in many ways are even more formidable. For what is at issue is no longer just the widespread political acknowledgement of the norms by governments but implementing them as a real part of daily life for the people in the whole OSCE area.

The OSCE Faces New Tasks

The communist regimes of Eastern Europe left only very weakly developed civil societies in their wake. The citizens' movements of the "early hours" gave expression to a broad consensus within the population for eliminating undemocratic political conditions and helping fundamental civil freedoms to gain sway. But political parties, as a vehicle for realizing this social transformation, scarcely existed. Thus when the citizens' movements dissolved after a successful shift of power there was no reason to expect that the resulting political vacuum would necessarily be filled by democratic parties. Apart from the communists and their successor parties there were virtually no com-

¹ CSCE Budapest Document 1994, Towards a Genuine Partnership in a New Era, in: Helsinki Monitor 1/1995, pp. 79-106, here: p. 96.

parable political institutions that were capable of action; indeed, there was not even a stable social structure on the basis of which a democratic competition between political values and objectives might have been carried out. The elections which in the meantime had been held in the reform states received, with the help of the OSCE, a high level of democratic legitimation but their extremely erratic results reveal the continuing predominance of underlying populist convictions in the various electorates. Even six years after the historic change, the democratic vote in most Eastern and Central European countries rests on a very weak political differentiation within the societies. To be sure, it is not only institutional shortcomings which are responsible for this.

There is no example in history for the necessity, which arose after the change of power, of setting up a democratic political system while at the same time going through the complicated transition to a market economy under conditions of tough international competition. In addition, there were the political and psychological shocks to society from the dissolution of the collective economy, the disintegration of social security structures, the formation of Mafia-like interest groups in politics and in the economy, and the loss of confidence in ideological principles and political values which had been internalized. It was only after the "second elections" in most of the reform countries, in which some of the successors to the old regimes won landslide victories, that it became clear just how deep the effects of these shocks had been. Their successes, however, were due less to the predominance of nostalgic political objectives among the population than to a widespread retrospective value conservatism which led many to hope that the reform communists would be more inclined and better able to combine the desired turn toward democracy and market economies with less severe reductions of the social benefits they had once enjoyed. The latent and, to some extent, open ethnic struggles in Central and Eastern Europe are, in their essence, also a result of these shocks. In view of the painful experiences these peoples have had, the ability of reformers to present new democratic ideals as an acceptable alternative for societies living together on a basis of equality constitutes an important test of the political stability of these countries, both internally and externally.

Western societies are also confronted with new challenges, however. The contrast between their societies and the communist states is no longer available as a political corrective to explain certain internal participatory weaknesses of their societies. Moreover, even the established structures of Western democracy are now being tested by changing economic and social conditions and by political conflicts which in essence relate to the issue of dismantling or retaining the achievements of the social state. Western expectations with regard to social transformation in the reform states of Central and

Eastern Europe should be measured by the extent to which the Western countries have themselves met the requirements they have set for the establishment of civil societies. What is more, the same thing holds true for the political demand that the democratic experience of the West now be applied in the reform states.

The participating States of the OSCE have repeatedly and formally affirmed in recent years that violations of the agreed norms for democracy and human rights have, in severe cases, contributed to extremism, regional instability and conflict and that therefore the raising of problems related to the development of democracy and the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms "in the co-operative and result-oriented spirit" of the OSCE should be viewed as "a positive exercise".²

The most important forum for dealing with problems of this kind have been the regular Implementation Meetings, which are supposed to do a thorough survey of the situation existing in participating States and make recommendations for decisions. Their discussions are based, first, on the Reports of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Heads of the OSCE missions, and the Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office; second, on written materials supplied by various non-governmental organizations. The latest Implementation Meeting, from 2-19 October 1995 in Warsaw, stressed once again the importance of the human dimension of the OSCE in general and the creative task of democratizing societies more specifically, but at the same time it made clear that these things can only be accomplished if the OSCE institutions charged with them are given greater responsibility and strengthened in their ability to operate.

The existing institutional weaknesses of the OSCE are of particular consequence in this area. What is of importance in promoting democracy, after all, is to provide those states where civil society is poorly developed with effective *long-term* assistance and support, so as to ensure the establishment and consolidation of democratic social structures which will endure and stand up to conflict. At the same time there must be a very sensitive and confidence-inspiring approach on the part of the OSCE, considering that most of the conflicts in question involve, above all, existing contradictions between interests of the society and of the state, but that it is especially the latter which lead to decisions by the OSCE, which remains in the first instance an organization designed to work on relations between states. Only when the participating States accept the competence of the OSCE for prevention or settlement of conflicts within states will we finally have the assurance that the OSCE can really go beyond non-binding recommendations and make an active contribution to the solution of internal problems.

² Ibid.

Thus it must be seen as progress that reports of non-governmental organizations on violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as on existing weaknesses of democratic structure, with recommendations for eliminating them, are used in OSCE discussions - as expressly called for by the Budapest Summit. Approximately 100 reports were made available just to the October 1995 Implementation Meeting in Warsaw. Criticism was especially directed at perceived shortcomings in the granting of freedom of the press and speech, tendencies toward religious or ethnic intolerance, problems of migration, and the implementation of democracy on various levels of society.

But we can only achieve change with the assistance of the OSCE if the participating States do not refuse to engage themselves constructively and in a spirit of compromise, and - assuming that - if the political norms of the OSCE are consistently reflected in the legislation of the participating States. Particularly in connection with internal social problems, there is great variation in the willingness of governments to acknowledge critical interventions from outside and, beyond that, to make changes in their own relevant rules, if appropriate.

Problems of Democratization - Experiences and Approaches

At the Implementation Meeting mentioned above, for example, the draft Slovak media law was the focus of a number of criticisms from other states and non-governmental organizations, particularly with a view to its obviously disadvantageous rules affecting the Hungarian minority in Slovakia.³ Finally, however, this law was recently passed by the Slovakian parliament in a form which only partly conforms to the norms of the OSCE. Among other things, the law states that the media may only broadcast "truthful and authentic information" which, moreover, may not offend the Slovak state, thus providing the government - which has set up two new control boards expressly for this purpose - with a basis for proceeding legally, when it so desires, against unwelcome journalists.⁴ And the law on the official (state) language, which has been accepted by both government and parliament and in essence aims at an assimilation of the Hungarian population, is in principle contrary

³ See, *inter alia*, the Written Presentations to the OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues, 1995, of the National Committee of Hungarians from Slovakia, the National Federation of American Hungarians, and the World Federation of Hungarians, in: OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, REF.OD/29/95, 14 September 1995. no pages given (henceforth: REF.OD/29/95).

⁴ Cf. Anne Nivat, Media Developments from Around the Region, in: Transition 9/1996, p. 60.

to the humanitarian norms of the OSCE, which Slovakia has in fact undertaken to observe.

Violations of freedom of speech with a political and ethnic background are not unusual, however. Similar occurrences could be seen in recent years in Turkey, Romania, Tajikistan, and especially in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, whose rights as a participating State have in fact been suspended.

There are other manifestations deserving of criticism which exist in many countries: e.g. xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination, aggressive nationalism, racism and chauvinism, and open or latent anti-semitism. Experience has shown that even the legally based equality of all segments of a population cannot overnight eliminate prejudices that have grown up over years and decades. For example, the discriminatory laws affecting the Turkish minority in Bulgaria were abolished in the 1989-1991 period but emigration of people from the Kurdjali region, in particular, as well as apparent depopulation and growing poverty in these areas are continuing even years later. It is obvious that for those once oppressed, confidence in the dependability of political promises, frequently broken in the past, can only be gradually restored, with much persistence and over a long period of time.

Thus it was that at the Warsaw Implementation Meeting the participants unanimously called for more active promotion of forms of social integration and for the gradual development of a culture of tolerance and solidarity within societies, making use of OSCE assistance and with an enlightening and confidence-building approach. In addition to such sanctions as might be necessary - such as the prohibition of racist organizations and more severe punishment of violations of elementary human rights - a number of participating States argued for the establishment of an independent OSCE Commission on Human Rights which would be responsible for supporting the efforts of states to achieve a balance of interests within their societies. However, it only makes sense to stress universally binding legal norms if the provisions of international humanitarian law are translated into valid constitutional law in the individual states. In this area, too, there are still shortcomings in a number of countries.

In Turkey, for example, a government agency was assigned constitutional responsibility for matters of religion with the result that the state itself, standing in effect over the constitution, is in a position to take control of ethnic and religious matters. Moreover, according to this agency's charter it represents only the interests of Sunni Muslims but not, for example, those of the approximately 20 million Turkish Alevites. The 15 million Kurds who live within Turkey's borders do not even appear as an ethnic minority in national constitutional law. What is more, large parts of the territories mainly settled by Kurds have been under martial law for many years - an arrangement

which has given the state additional authority to impose individual sentences and, with the aid of coercive administrative measures, to carry out ethnically discriminatory resettlements of people. Thus, in the period from 1990 to 1995 alone, more than 2,500 Kurdish settlements in areas of Eastern Turkey under martial law were forcibly evacuated.⁵ The problem of the Kurdish people illustrates the special difficulty for the OSCE of putting a stop to violations of the fundamental rights of national minorities when these groups do not have a representation of their own to participate in negotiations and decision-making and when the states within whose borders they live refuse to accord them equal treatment before the law.

This also affects in particular the Sinti and Roma, who live in a number of different countries. The newly drafted citizenship laws of the Czech and Slovak Republics, for example, have in their practical effect deprived thousands of Sinti and Roma of their citizenship. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities entered a formal protest against this decision back in November 1994 but the corrections he called for have not materialized. Elsewhere as well - in the successor states of former Yugoslavia and in Romania, for example - discrimination against minorities, with the approval of the state, is still an everyday affair. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities passed by the Council of Europe in 1995 does offer, for the first time, a binding commitment for its members, but it expressly excludes any actionable rights for the members of the Roma minority in the countries where they live.⁶ At the Implementation Meeting in Warsaw a proposal was made to require the relevant countries to submit regular country reports specifically on the situation of the Roma and to integrate the protection of this minority in future into the framework of the Pact on Stability. In this connection it would also make sense to have closer coordination between the ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Consulting Group set up last year by the Council of Europe, but only if representatives of the Roma were directly involved and none of the affected parties refused to cooperate. The ODIHR has made a promising start with its newly created Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues and the "Roma Internship Programme", which gives non-governmental organizations an explicit opportunity to become involved, but their possibilities are far from having been fully exploited.

In addition to ethnic discrimination there are other forms of suppression of the personal rights of minorities for which no multi-state arrangements have so far been worked out in the OSCE. For example, the International Lesbian

⁵ Cf. İnsan Hakları Derneği, Written Presentation to the OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues, 1995, in: REF.OD/29/95, cited above (Note 3).

⁶ Cf. Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma [Central Council of German Sinti and Roma], Written Presentation to the OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues, 1995, in: REF.OD/29/95, cited above (Note 3).

and Gay Association noted in their report to the Implementation Meeting that despite discussions that have been carried on in the Organization since 1992 and despite progress in a number of areas during that time, there are still at least 14 OSCE States in which people are subject to criminal prosecution for their homosexual preferences, among them seven successor states of the former Soviet Union, Romania, several US states, Austria and Great Britain.⁷ Past experience has shown that the OSCE generally gets an opportunity to exercise direct influence on the social situation in participating States, influence going beyond mere non-binding recommendations, either when it is called upon by the affected countries to act as a neutral mediator between the parties to a conflict - through an invitation extended voluntarily to the High Commissioner on National Minorities, for example - or when the confidence it wins from the affected parties in the course of a long-term mission to settle a conflict leads them to grant it expanded authority for stabilizing the situation.

An example of the first case is the successful involvement of the HCNM in mediating between the conflicting parties in Latvia and Estonia in connection with the drafting of a new citizenship law.⁸ Moreover, the three Offices established by the OSCE in Estonia helped to improve the observance of humanitarian commitments, especially with regard to family reunification problems and freedom of travel.⁹ The fact that since last year the Russian minority has for the first time been represented, with seats and votes, in the Estonian parliament can also be regarded as a success for the persistent confidence-building work of the OSCE Mission. An illustration of the second case is provided by Georgia where, in a second step taken on 29 March 1994, the mandate of the OSCE Mission was, with the agreement of the parties to the

⁷ Cf. International Lesbian and Gay Association, Written Presentation to the OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues, 1995, in: REF.OD/29/95, cited above (Note 3).

⁸ Cf. Henn-Jüri Uibopuu, Die OSZE-Mission in Estland und ihre bisherige Tätigkeit [The OSCE Mission in Estonia and its Activity to Date], and Falk Lange, Die Beziehungen Lettlands und Litauens zur OSZE [The Relations of Latvia and Lithuania with the OSCE], in: Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg/IFSH [Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH] (Ed.), OSZE-Jahrbuch [OSCE Yearbook] 1995, Baden-Baden 1995, pp. 159-170 and 171-178.

⁹ The implementation of the agreed measures is proceeding slowly, however, and still depends greatly on the good will of the individual competent officials. The issuance of alien passports in Estonia was supposed to have been completed by summer 1996, but at the beginning of June only 1,000 of the 220,000 permanent residents of the country without Estonian citizenship had received such a passport. An additional point is that the success of the OSCE's mediation also depends of course on the unconditional acceptance of alien passports as normal travel documents by all OSCE participating States, which has not yet been forthcoming. Cf. Deutsche Welle, Monitor-Dienst Osteuropa [Monitoring Service for Eastern Europe] 110/12 June 1996, p. 2.

conflict, expanded expressly to include promotion of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and contributing to the drafting of a democratic constitution and a new citizenship law as well as to the creation of an independent judiciary.¹⁰ According to observers, it is highly unlikely that the Georgian parliament's adoption, in August 1995, of the first constitution since independence would have been achieved in such a short time without the support provided by OSCE advisers.¹¹ This example makes especially clear that the more concretely OSCE tasks are defined, the greater the success of its efforts are bound to be.

With regard to the general recognition of human rights, the differences between the views and interpretations of parties concerned appear to narrow the latitude for acceptance of the OSCE's role and for effective action by the Organization. By way of contrast, its chances of sharing responsibility in the establishment of democratic structures are obviously much better. What is involved here, now as in the past, is of course the assumption of monitoring functions. If the OSCE is to provide credible support for democratization, the mere collection of information on violations of rights and on weaknesses in democratic practice is not enough. There may even be a risk of the affected parties' losing confidence if its efforts do not go further.

Since it is highly probable that strong democratic institutions and mechanisms offer the best prospect for assuring the lasting observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, this would appear to offer an increasingly important field of activity for the OSCE - one whose importance for the future of European security can hardly be exaggerated - if the OSCE receives for this purpose the appropriate mandate, the necessary resources and qualified advisers. There is a proposal, which has not yet been formally accepted owing to continuing differences between the participating States over the competences to be given to the OSCE, to give the ODIHR greater financial resources and thereby to enlarge its rights of initiative, particularly in counseling governments and starting concrete support programs.

The experience of OSCE missions, gained in crisis prevention, shows, however, that the sooner prevention efforts are initiated and the more consistently and persistently they are led and carried out, the more successful they are likely to be. Thus conflict prevention as well as crisis settlement should not

¹⁰ Cf. Hans-Jörg Eiff, Die OSZE-Mission in Georgien [The OSCE Mission to Georgia] in: Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg/IFSH (Ed.), OSZE-Jahrbuch 1995, cited above (Note 8) pp. 179-188; Hans-Joachim Gießmann, Europäische Sicherheit am Scheideweg - Chancen und Perspektiven der OSZE [European Security at the Crossroads - Opportunities and Prospects for the OSCE], Hamburger Beiträge zur Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik [Hamburg Papers on Peace Research and Security Policy], Vol. 97/1996, pp. 38-43.

¹¹ Cf. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, Evaluation of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Georgia, Written Presentation to the OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues, 1995, in: REF.OD/29/95, cited above (Note 3).

be limited to forestalling or defusing armed altercations but must, if they are to have a long-term stabilizing effect, take into account the context of real or potential tensions and create conditions for a durably peaceful and democratic conflict settlement. For this purpose it is not only necessary to introduce new fields of responsibility for crisis therapy but to open up new possibilities for the use of highly flexible and, above all, conflict-specific strategies. Among these, taking into account the concrete conditions in a country or region and assuming the availability of the required financial and material resources for the missions, is the dispatch of qualified advisers who know the situation well, speak the local language whenever possible and are versed in the complexities of conflict mediation. The varied experience which non-governmental organizations and their experts have garnered over the years, especially in the specific field of conflict mediation, should prove especially useful in this connection.¹² Their active involvement, especially considering that the resources available for long-term missions have so far been quite limited, could give additional impetus to efforts to engage the whole international community.

The OSCE's in-the-field experience to date demonstrates that because of personnel shortages or the limited availability of OSCE advisers it is often only possible to provide isolated assistance, without establishing a stable foundation for long-term change in the way the affected parties view the conflicts or their partners. Thus the activity of the Chairman-in-Office's Assistance Group in Grozny (Chechnya) was only partially successful because the capacities of its members, of whom there were only six, were almost entirely absorbed by the difficult and, in the end, fruitless negotiations between the parties to the conflict. This left no room for future-oriented peacemaking measures by the OSCE apart from reporting on the massive violations of human rights seen in Chechnya, which was to be sure an important function.¹³ The same can be said of other long-term missions of the OSCE, whose delegations, with the exception of the most recent one in Bosnia and Herzegovina, never had more than twenty members. The success of a mission's assistance efforts cannot, of course, be measured simply by the number of experts participating. The work of the High Commissioner on National

¹² Good examples of the initiatives undertaken by NGOs are the establishment of so-called "round tables", joint reconstruction projects by the parties to the conflict, mediation training, the promotion of cooperation in trans-ethnic organized groups, seminars with police and security forces, use of the public media for educational purposes, and networking to facilitate the spread of information.

¹³ It would be wrong, however, to attribute the shortcomings of the mission exclusively to the OSCE. Despite all efforts, its work was from the very beginning tolerated only most reluctantly by the parties to the conflict. In June 1996, the Chechen authorities even threatened to expel the Assistance Group, or its Head, because they had tried to make contact with opposition groups in the country, contrary to the wishes of the Zavgayev government.

Minorities to date has clearly shown that successful prevention or settlement of conflicts by no means require unlimited expenditures of money or personnel if the work is done effectively, persistently and with sensitivity. Still, the challenges to the OSCE vary considerably from one country to another, depending on the mission as well as the dimensions and character of the conflict.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From what we have learned so far, two particularly important conclusions can be drawn for strengthening the role of the OSCE. First, those mechanisms which have proved to be especially effective should be continued and, if possible, expanded. Second, the political and institutional capacities the OSCE already has should be used more effectively, with the goal of making the general political guidelines more binding on the states.

This concerns, *in the first instance*, the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities. Closer coordination of his activity with the measures of the ODIHR and the Chairman-in-Office would lead to better integration of the OSCE's capacities for conflict prevention and for building the structures of civil societies. One proposal at the Implementation Meeting in Warsaw was that the HCNM and the ODIHR should *together* prepare a seminar at which constitutional problems relating to protection of national minorities in OSCE States would be discussed on the basis of practical experience and, further, that the Permanent Council should make sure that the implementation of the High Commissioner's recommendations by the governments concerned was suitably monitored. Assuming that the guidelines of the Council of Europe for the protection and observance of minority rights were reflected in the constitutional law of all participating States, we would need to consider for the future whether recommendations of the HCNM ought not to be binding, i.e. whether the parties to a conflict could not appeal to the OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. Until then, the Moscow Mechanism for the Human Dimension also gives the OSCE the option of seizing the initiative at an early stage, especially since its rules do not absolutely require a consensus of all participating States.¹⁴

Second, the ODIHR already has a key role in coordinating all OSCE measures directed toward promoting democratic thinking and the democratization of society in the participating States. The kinds of information exchange practiced hitherto, especially the regional seminars organized by the ODIHR, have worked well as a forum for helpful consultations and for qualifying

¹⁴ Cf. Hans-Joachim Gießmann, *Europäische Sicherheit am Scheideweg*, cited above (Note 10), p. 29ff.

specialists for the reform states. What is now needed is to diversify the services offered by the OSCE in accordance with the variety of challenges in the individual participating States. Particular attention should be paid to the promotion of human rights, the support of democratic elections, strengthening of elected legislatures, the empowerment of local administration in the spirit of the "European Charter of Local Self-Government" of the Council of Europe, the consolidation of an independent judiciary and the unlimited participation by the population in the political process. The ODIHR's successful cooperation with the government of Tajikistan on the "Human Rights Ombudsman Project" and the activities of the regional OSCE Office in Tashkent could serve as models. Concrete projects might be guided by the UNDP's regional program called "Democracy, Governance and Participation" in Belarus, Latvia, Moldova and Russia.¹⁵ As a part of the "Programme of Co-ordinated Support for Recently Admitted Participating States", special heed should be paid to the need of reform states for support in communications technology, broad social education on human rights and the rights of minorities, the creation of democratic institutions both within and outside of government, counseling in matters of constitutional and electoral law, training of police and security forces as well as immigration officials and lawyers, and the establishment and nurturing of non-governmental organizations. Enhancing the effectiveness of the program means not only giving the ODIHR additional financial resources but coordinating its work more closely with the appropriate authorities in the Council of Europe, the United Nations and other international organizations.¹⁶ There is also a proposal on the table to present a yearly report to the Chairman-in-Office and the Permanent Council of the OSCE on the activities of the ODIHR and their results, along with recommendations for further measures.¹⁷ The seminars organized by ODIHR, which have generally been held twice a year, could also be broadened as to their range of subject matter so as to deal with critical and, to some extent, new problems relating to democratization in the reform states - e.g. the role of the media in conflict situations, legal aspects of freedom of religion or the fight against Mafia structures - and also to deal specifically with trans-border questions, e.g. the use of alien laws or the fight against terrorism.

Third, since the Budapest Summit the OSCE has had, in the form of the Permanent Council, a leadership and control body capable of action at virtually

¹⁵ United Nations Development Programme. Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, Regional Programme on Democracy, Governance and Participation, OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues, Warsaw, October 1995.

¹⁶ Cf. Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues, Rapporteur's Reports, REF.OD/43/95, 27 October 1995, Subsidiary Working Body 2, p. 3f.

¹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

any time. If problems of democracy are acknowledged to be a central issue for lasting stability and social peace in Europe, then they should be permanently on the agenda of this body. This, moreover, would be in accordance with the recommendations given in the Budapest Document. Some initial steps have been taken which ought to be expanded upon, among them the discussion of results from the so-called fact-finding missions of the Chairman-in-Office, the holding of ad hoc meetings with representatives of non-governmental organizations and the reports of the ODIHR Director to the Permanent Council. Mechanisms should be considered which provide for effective, coordinated and monitorable engagement of the OSCE and its specialized organs, beginning with an investigation of the facts and proceeding to the selection and realization of concrete measures, followed by a review of their implementation. Exchange of information and cooperation with other international institutions should be included in these mechanisms in order to maximize the combined effect of assistance measures. Finally, consideration should be given to making information, documents, recommendations and other forms of assistance available, when necessary, not only in the official OSCE languages but in the languages of all concerned parties.

The most important conclusion, however, once again relates to the necessity of developing the political will of all States in the OSCE to accept the common norms as a binding foundation for all and to give the OSCE the means of monitoring and supporting their implementation.