

## Foreword

During the period dealt with in this OSCE Yearbook the security situation in the OSCE region was characterized both by conflicts that continued to smoulder and by new ones that broke out unexpectedly. They required the OSCE to exercise exhausting vigilance while at the same time continuing its persistent mediation efforts, e.g. in Georgia, the Baltic states, Slovakia or Moldova. Continuing unrest called for an extension of the mandates of all long-term missions and extensive involvement of the High Commissioner on National Minorities as well as for Sisyphus-like efforts in training and verification on the part of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. In addition, the OSCE was called upon to act quickly and decisively, as in the confrontation between opposition and the government in Belgrade in December 1996 and in the anarchic situation in Albania at the beginning of March 1997. Amongst all the activities of the OSCE, the ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the long-term missions, however, the greatest significance was assigned to the deployment of the OSCE's Bosnia Mission which, in accordance with the Dayton Agreement, was entrusted with the preparation and carrying out of elections. The meeting of Heads of State or Government, along with the review and preparatory meetings that preceded it, called for the special attention of the OSCE during the reporting period as the Organization's own development and its position amongst other organizations working in the field of European security were at stake.

Despite many warnings and fears the elections of September 1996 in Bosnia and Herzegovina were for the most part carried out in a satisfactory manner. This operational achievement constituted a prestigious success for the OSCE despite some criticism, part of which turned out to be unjustified. It is true that the municipal elections had to be abandoned and postponed. The main problem, however, was the lack of any consistent policy for the reconstruction of the country although the elections have by now provided legitimation for such policy. Should the experiment of national reconstruction yet fail, all of the effort and expense would have been in vain and, beyond that, the reputation and self-confidence of the "international community" - and, hence, of the OSCE - would have suffered grievous damage. There was a reference to this - still latent - risk in the last Yearbook.

The OSCE was given a healthy boost by the course and the results of the two short-term missions to Serbia and Albania already mentioned which took place each under the direction of a Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, the former Heads of Government Felipe Gonzalez and Franz Vranitzky.

Common to both of these South-eastern European centres of conflict, apart from the region they are located in, is their domestic character and the involvement of the OSCE, which was aimed at getting elections carried out and ensuring that their results would be accepted. The deployment of those three different OSCE missions - at least for the moment and under the prevailing circumstances - has helped to avoid a violent resolution of the conflicts and to calm tensions by providing democratic legitimisation of political activity.

In this way the OSCE demonstrated both the importance of its own existence and the uniqueness of its methods. As a result of the spectacular circumstances, it suddenly came into the limelight. At no time since its institutionalization in Helsinki in 1992 has the CSCE/OSCE received as much public attention as in those months.

Finally, the Lisbon Summit of Heads of State or Government of December 1996 appeared to put the OSCE into a prominent position by virtue of the declaration on the Security Model for the 21st Century and the related decision to consider developing a Charter of European Security. The OSCE could be the appropriate forum for consultations on a European security constitution if this should finally emerge from the announcement stage.

To be sure, other events in the field of European security pointed towards tendencies that could obstruct and limit the OSCE's constructive potential. On 30 May 1997 the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) was established in Sintra, Portugal, to replace the existing North Atlantic Co-operation Council. Membership is open to all OSCE States.<sup>1</sup> This Council is to develop itself "through practice" and to offer its members "the overarching framework for consultations (...) on a broad range of political and security-related issues". The Council is intended to provide its members with the opportunity for varied and intensive consultations; the foreign and defence ministers alone are to meet twice a year. The basic document which was passed suggests, among others, the following concrete topics for consultations: crisis management, regional matters, arms control, nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) proliferation and defence issues, international terrorism, defence planning and budgets, defence policy and strategy and security impacts of economic developments. In addition, the following are listed as fields for possible co-operation and consultation: civil emergency and disaster preparedness, armaments co-operation, nuclear safety, defence related environmental issues, and questions related to peace support operations.<sup>2</sup> Through a number of organs the EAPC is tied not only to the Partnership for Peace program, in which 27 countries already participate, but directly to NATO with all of its operational capacities.

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1 Basic Document of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, in: NATO Press and Media Service, Press Communiqué M-NACC-EAPC-1(97)66, 30th May 1997, p. 1.

2 Ibid., p. 3.

There is no doubt that this new Council will arouse the interest of many OSCE States and probably have a great attraction for them. There are three points that have to be elaborated in this connection. Twelve OSCE States have applied for NATO membership, of which three (Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic) were initially invited, on 8/9 July 1997, to join. On 27 May 1997 in Paris, NATO concluded a voluminous Founding Act with the Russian Federation which provides, *inter alia*, for the establishment of a Permanent Joint Council "at various levels and in different forms according to the subject matter" for consultation and co-operation and likewise for an extensive catalogue of subjects.<sup>3</sup> Finally, on 9 July 1997 in Madrid NATO reached agreement with Ukraine on another extensive document called "Charter on a Distinctive Partnership" which contains a detailed description of objectives and consultation mechanisms.<sup>4</sup>

For the time being it remains an open question whether these councils and structures will amount to more than an echo chamber designed to legitimize decisions that in reality are made by the NATO Council. The open list of the new councils' areas of responsibility and the way in which they overlap with or at least touch upon the established or presumptive goals, responsibilities and fields of work of the OSCE, at any rate provide food for thought. Of the 55 OSCE participating States, the twelve NATO candidates and the two countries which have been given a privileged status by NATO - Russia and Ukraine - will thus enter into the "field of attraction" of the existing 16 NATO countries. The resulting numerical relationships make clear how the centre of gravity within the group of all OSCE participating States is likely to shift in the future, not least in a qualitative sense. It should be noted that this orientation of security and economic policy towards "Brussels" as the centre and the willingness of countries to integrate themselves into Euro-Atlantic structures have already impelled several states to undertake peace-making measures, as seems to be demonstrated by the ratification of the Hungarian-Romanian basic treaty and the signing of the Bulgarian-Greek border agreement.

One can only speculate on further consequences of these events for the OSCE - e.g. whether pan-European debates and decisions on security matters will henceforth take place in the new NATO organs, causing the NATO Councils in Brussels to develop into the hub of pan-European policy. It will depend to a large degree on the behaviour of Russia which, given its favoured position, can play a role in both Brussels and Vienna.

In all documents on the new NATO policy - most frequently in the Founding Act between NATO and Russia - the states involved stress the undiminished

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3 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the NATO and the Russian Federation, issued in Paris, France, on 27 May 1997, in: NATO review 4/1997, Documentation, pp. 7-10, p. 8.

4 Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine, Madrid, 9 July 1997, in: <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/ukrchrt.htm>, p.1-7.

importance of the OSCE for them and for European security policy. For example, the Madrid Declaration of the NATO Summit of 8-9 July 1997 contains, *inter alia*, the following statement on the OSCE: "We reaffirm our commitment to further strengthening the OSCE as a regional organisation according to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and as a primary instrument for preventing conflict, enhancing cooperative security and advancing democracy and human rights. The OSCE, as the most inclusive European-wide security organisation, plays an essential role in securing peace, stability and security in Europe. The principles and commitments adopted by the OSCE provide a foundation for the development of a comprehensive and cooperative European security architecture. Our goal is to create in Europe, through the widest possible cooperation among OSCE states, a common space of security and stability, without dividing lines or spheres of influence limiting the sovereignty of particular states.

We continue to support the OSCE's work on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe in the Twenty-First Century, in accordance with the decisions of the 1996 Lisbon Summit, including consideration of developing a Charter on European Security".<sup>5</sup>

It remains inconceivable that all of the responsibilities delegated by the participating States to the OSCE could one day be carried out by NATO - unless a time came when all 55 countries between Vancouver and Vladivostok belonged not only to the OSCE but to NATO and the latter, analogous to the EAPC, were called EATO. For the time being the OSCE's strength in dealing with the pan-European area lies in its unmatched multi-laterality and hence in the opportunities it provides for co-operative security policy. The extent to which this strength can be brought to bear will of course always depend on the insight and will of the 55 governments, especially those which as members of the European Union are striving for a Common Foreign and Security Policy, a policy which they should try to work out within the OSCE framework, not in competition with it.

During the reporting period the position of Chairman-in-Office was transferred from Switzerland to Denmark, which will be succeeded by Poland in 1998. A new Secretary General has assumed office and the direction of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has also changed hands. The Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, which in July 1997 met in Warsaw, is facing an interesting change - from an organ which calls for more and more new principles and norms to one which must examine whether commitments and agreements are actually being observed by the executive authorities of the participating States. The Lisbon Document of 1996, especially in its decisions on

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5 Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation. Issued by the Heads of State and Government, Madrid, 8th July 1997, in: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-081e.htm>, here Point 21.

the "Framework for Arms Control" and the "Development of the Agenda of the Forum for Security Co-operation", clearly established new emphases and perspectives for arms control policy.<sup>6</sup> The appointment of an Economic Co-ordinator and of a Representative on Freedom of the Media at the Copenhagen Ministerial in December 1997 can be expected to provide desirable new institutional arrangements as a means for verification of norms and a strengthening of the Secretariat. As the great European changes of 1989 fade into the past the responsibilities of the OSCE are not diminishing but are undergoing a change. The OSCE must come to terms with this and adapt itself. The participating States must be appropriately prepared.

Like its predecessor, the present Yearbook offers a multi-faceted portrayal of the struggle for security and co-operation in Europe under changing circumstances. As the responsible editor, I thank all who have contributed to this effort for their willing co-operation.

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6 1996 Lisbon Document, reprinted in this volume, pp. 419-446.