

OSCE: Developments and Prospects

Introduction

In 1997 Denmark held the chairmanship of the OSCE. It was by all standards an eventful year. Never before has the OSCE been engaged so actively in so many issues relevant to the common security of the participating States. The aims of the OSCE engagements have been to prevent conflicts, to manage crises, and to assist states in overcoming post-conflict situations and in complying with OSCE norms and principles. The point of departure has been a belief that the principles agreed upon within the OSCE form the very foundation for a secure and free Europe. The vision of this common enterprise has been and remains to make these principles a living reality in all participating States.

From the outset, the Danish chairmanship was confronted by a range of the problems and crises of a post-Cold War Europe united in political commitments but hampered by new risks and challenges. Developments in the OSCE area gave rise to new demands to be met both in 1997 and in the years to come.

In this article I shall highlight some of the main experiences gained during the Danish chairmanship of the Organization in 1997. My focus will be on areas where the OSCE merits further strengthening. Even before the Danish chairmanship, three main priorities for our efforts in that direction were identified: firstly, increased efforts to ensure compliance with OSCE norms and principles and to assist those participating States facing problems in this regard. Secondly, the OSCE itself should be strengthened both organizationally and operationally in order to remain a flexible and effective tool for such assistance. And thirdly, as a norm-based organization, the OSCE should make its contribution to the general European security environment, *inter alia* by offering closer co-operation with states and with other security organizations in addressing new risks and challenges to security.

Developments during the Danish chairmanship of the OSCE brought significant progress in all three of these priority areas.

Strengthening OSCE Assistance in Complying with Norms and Principles

Over the last decade, the OSCE has played an increasingly important role in European conflict prevention. Originally, the CSCE provided a main channel

for dialogue between East and West. Its main purpose was, one could say, to bring about change while maintaining peace. Today, the task is rather to ensure peace and stability in times of change. In this process, assistance to participating States facing problems in complying with the OSCE standards of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, and peaceful settlement of conflicts has become one of the main features of the OSCE, if not its *raison d'être*.

And the tasks within this field are growing. During 1997 the Danish chairmanship was confronted with more crises and problems than any former chairmanship.

It began in *Chechnya*. The OSCE through its Assistance Group in Grozny has been engaged in facilitating the dialogue that led to an end to the hostilities. Elections were planned for January 1997. These elections were an important element in the peace process and thereby in the efforts to stabilize the situation in the region. Engaging the OSCE was not an easy decision. The security situation and the general conditions were not anywhere near what you would normally expect as conditions for a democratic election. But the elections went through. The OSCE provided monitoring. And the elections were considered acceptable. The main point was that people were given a real opportunity to make a choice. Throughout the rest of the year the Assistance Group continued its efforts. The deterioration of the security situation, including the rise in hostage taking, has made it practically the only international presence there.

The OSCE also continued its efforts towards finding a solution to the conflict over *Nagorno-Karabakh*. The Danish chairmanship appointed France, Russia and the United States to co-chair the negotiations on a settlement within the so-called Minsk Group. Prospects for a political settlement generally improved during 1997, although no real breakthrough was achieved.

In *Moldova* the OSCE worked successfully with Russia and Ukraine on concluding an agreement that set out the principles for a comprehensive political settlement between the parties to the Trans-Dniestrian conflict. Although much remains to be done, the agreement marked an important step ahead. The OSCE stands ready to assist in the implementation of the agreement - in particular through the OSCE Mission to Moldova. The OSCE will also continue to follow the withdrawal of Russian military forces from Moldova.

In *Georgia* the OSCE promoted negotiations on a peaceful political settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia and supported UN efforts to mediate in the conflict in Abkhazia. While no substantial progress was achieved concerning the conflict in Abkhazia, tensions gradually decreased in South Ossetia. The OSCE will continue its efforts to promote a lasting settlement of the disputes and to assist in the development of legal and democratic institutions in Georgia.

In *Tajikistan* the OSCE participated in the UN-brokered inter-Tajik talks which resulted in a final peace agreement between the Tajik government and the united Tajik opposition in July 1997. Although adjourned several times after the signing of the agreement, the so-called Commission on National Reconciliation did commence its work on military, political, legal and refugee issues in 1997. This is an important step towards the implementation of the agreement which includes elections to be held in 1998. The OSCE and its Mission to Tajikistan continue to follow and assist in this implementation process.

In *Ukraine, Estonia and Latvia* OSCE missions, supported by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, provided assistance to further integration and better understanding between communities in the populations.

In *Bosnia and Herzegovina* the municipal elections in September and the parliamentary elections in the Republika Srpska in November 1997 were of vital importance for the efforts to pave the way for a viable democratic society - and for the peace process as a whole. The OSCE, in accordance with the Dayton Peace Accords, played a major role in preparing and conducting the municipal elections in September 1997. Following the wish of the international community the OSCE took upon itself to play a similar role in the Republika Srpska parliamentary elections in November. As to the municipal elections it is fair to say that the elections went better than expected - and clearly better than those in 1996. But the real test is in their implementation. Though this is a difficult process, the results have been encouraging and local governments have been installed and are beginning to work. The national elections to be held in September 1998 will mark another important step in the peace process.

The elections in the Republika Srpska were acceptable from a technical perspective although the political atmosphere in which the election campaign took place fell well short of international standards. It is worth noting, however, that the elections brought about a democratic and peaceful change of government in the Republika Srpska in January 1998.

The OSCE also played a leading role in the progress made on implementing the agreements on arms control and confidence-building measures under Article II and IV of the Dayton Peace Accords. At the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting in December 1997 we took an additional step by the appointment of Ambassador Henry Jacolin of France as Special Representative to help organize and conduct negotiations on arms control and regional stabilization in South-eastern Europe - the so-called Article V negotiations under the Dayton Agreement.

In the Former Yugoslav Republic of *Macedonia* the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje continued to monitor the situation with a view to regional stability, security and co-operation. Developments in neighbouring countries

during 1997 have maintained the focus on the continuing risk of "spillover", the reason for the Mission's inception in 1992. At the same time, significant efforts have been and will be devoted to promoting dialogue between the government and national minorities.

During the Danish chairmanship the OSCE also took on large tasks in *Croatia*. The OSCE Mission to Croatia was established in 1996 with a staff of 14 mission members in order to provide assistance in the field of protection of human rights and of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. In 1997, however, the Mission was markedly expanded following a decision to increase the number of members up to a ceiling of 250. The purpose of this expansion is to ensure an efficient international presence in Croatia as the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) ceases its activities. A particular focus of the activities of the enhanced OSCE Mission will be monitoring the implementation of agreements and commitments on the two-way return of all refugees and displaced persons and the protection of their rights.

These tasks all called for well organized and politically sensitive action from the OSCE. Still, what was needed was to use - although on a larger scale than ever before - already existing conflict prevention methods in the tool box of the OSCE.

The Danish chairmanship, however, also was confronted with crises and problems of a new kind which involved a need to develop new approaches. Among these were the developments in Albania and in Belarus.

The crisis in *Albania* was perhaps the greatest challenge during 1997. Anarchy and chaos emerged after the collapse of major pyramid schemes. The international community reacted with determination. As Chairman-in-Office I appointed the former Chancellor of Austria, Dr Franz Vranitzky, as my Personal Representative in Albania. Dr Vranitzky succeeded in bringing together the major players and institutions, including the European Union and the Council of Europe, in a comprehensive international Presence. A Multinational Protection Force provided a secure environment. And as a new feature, the OSCE constituted the overall co-ordinating framework.

The international efforts helped to stabilize the situation in the country. Elections were held which paved the way for new, legitimate democratic structures. Since then, the OSCE has carried on its involvement in Albania within the field of democratization and human rights. The OSCE continues to provide the co-ordinating framework for the international efforts.

The Albanian experience has taught us several lessons. It has underlined that immediate action in itself has an important effect. The mandate for the Multinational Protection Force showed how an effective regional organization can facilitate a necessary decision by the UN Security Council. This may be a

model worth pursuing in relations between the OSCE and the UN Security Council.

Finally, the international Presence in Albania is an example of how co-operation between relevant organizations and interested countries, each playing their respective roles, can be made to work and bring about substantial results. This is an important and valid contribution to the ongoing efforts to design a new security architecture for Europe.

1997 also witnessed worrying developments in *Belarus*. From an early point, the Danish chairmanship expressed its concern over the shortcomings in democratic standards and other OSCE commitments. And the Danish chairmanship offered OSCE assistance to improve the situation. In December 1997, during the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting, the Belarussian government finally accepted this offer of assistance and agreed to establish an OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group. After this final agreement with Belarus, Ambassador Hans-Georg Wieck (Germany) was appointed Head of the Advisory and Monitoring Group, and an office was opened in Minsk in early 1998. This is a first small step towards improving an increasingly dire situation. At present, the OSCE is alone in the forefront. We hope that other international organizations, notably the EU, will follow soon.

As was the case with the OSCE Presence in Albania, the creation of the Advisory and Monitoring Group was an operational novelty for the OSCE. It is the first of its kind with a mandate focused on compliance with OSCE commitments within the human dimension. It serves to underline the commitment of all OSCE participating States to democracy and fundamental freedoms - not only in principle but also in practice. Hopefully, the future efforts of the Belarussian authorities with the assistance of the OSCE and other international organizations will contribute to a fulfilment of these commitments.

These diverse and complicated regional developments give an indication of the tasks that we have faced and of the innovations that the Organization has had to provide. The experience of the OSCE in troubled areas of Europe highlights the practical and pragmatic dimension of conflict prevention within the Organization. Here, local OSCE missions have been pivotal for the mediation and democratization efforts that play a decisive role in conflict prevention. As things turned out, not least over the last year, the Organization has confirmed its ability as a ready, workable and reliable instrument to deal with crises, be these related to post-conflict situations or to deficiencies in meeting common norms and standards.

However, the operational activities of specific OSCE missions in individual participating States were not the only OSCE efforts in 1997 aimed at promoting compliance with OSCE norms and principles. A range of OSCE institutions and representatives stand ready to assist participating States in

complying with OSCE principles as well as to monitor the general adherence to the OSCE commitments.

Most notably, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights have been deeply engaged in promoting democratization and respect for the fundamental freedoms of all citizens of OSCE participating States.

During the Danish chairmanship the importance of complying with the norms and principles of the human dimension of the OSCE was further emphasized. The Ministerial Meeting decided to strengthen the efficiency of the biennial implementation meetings on human dimension issues. And following the decision at the Lisbon Summit, the Ministerial also appointed an OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. I was happy to be able to nominate Member of the *Bundestag*, Mr. Freimut Duve, to this position.

Similarly, the ability of the OSCE to promote adherence to OSCE principles in other areas than the human dimension was strengthened during the Danish chairmanship. In November 1997 a mandate for a Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities was adopted.

The activities of the OSCE missions have, so far, primarily focused on regions in conflict or on countries where conditions for national minorities called for an OSCE presence. However, it has been important to the Danish chairmanship to go further than that. It is not enough to point fingers at lack of compliance with commitments. Instead, all OSCE participating States must show solidarity with the states that face problems. They must be helped to find solutions. We must offer our assistance in elaborating the necessary legal framework, establishing democratic institutions, organizing elections, and in every way facilitate exchange of relevant information in order to help these states along.

The establishment of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus as well as the reinforced OSCE involvement in Central Asia, which was launched during the Danish chairmanship, are examples of how the OSCE can target its endeavours in the fields of democracy and human rights. The development of more OSCE instruments in these fields will be a major task for us in the years to come.

Strengthening the Operational Capacity of the OSCE

Recent years have witnessed a steep rise in the number of OSCE missions dispersed throughout the OSCE area. Also, we have seen the creation of very big missions staffed by over 200 members. In this process, the operational capacity of the OSCE Secretariat has not kept pace. This development and

the growing responsibility of the OSCE give rise to demands for internal adjustments.

In recent years there have been a number of proposals to this end. Some of them concern the administrative set-up, others address the very core elements of the Organization, including its decision-making procedures and relations between its major institutions.

It has been the Danish assumption that we *do* need to strengthen the OSCE. We *do* need to improve our ability to act quickly in crisis situations and to improve efficiency with regard to early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. At the same time we have been hesitant towards ideas that tend to introduce more bureaucracy or erode the fundamental political nature of the Organization. For it is precisely its political and non-bureaucratic nature that allows the OSCE to react rapidly and flexibly. We must safeguard these aspects. Consensual decision-making is and should remain the general rule, leaving no one out and committing all. The central position of the Chairman-in-Office as the political engine of the Organization should be preserved.

This does not rule out a more effective use of the Organization's resources. Contemporary management principles and full use of modern technology must be encouraged in OSCE institutions, in particular in the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna.

It was against this background that the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting decided to initiate a study of ways of further enhancing the Secretariat's operational capacities.

Another major requirement in order for the OSCE to retain its flexibility and capacity to respond adequately and timely to erupting crises has been to reform the procedures of funding OSCE activities. The financial mechanisms of the OSCE were created to fit the needs of the conference diplomacy of the seventies and the eighties. They were not designed to respond to the challenges to the new OSCE. In order to finance the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996 and 1997 we had to engage in fundraising exercises twice to collect the necessary voluntary contributions. This is not the proper way to proceed. Rather, participating States must match their political will to react rapidly in times of crisis with willingness to pay the costs of OSCE activities.

The necessary modernization of the financial structures of the OSCE was taken a significant step forward during the Danish chairmanship. In summer 1997, the OSCE decided to create a Contingency Fund with a view to covering expenses in the initial stage of an OSCE engagement. And at the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting in December 1997, the participating States agreed on a project financing mechanism which applies to the funding of larger OSCE engagements. The mechanism puts the heaviest burdens on the broad-

est shoulders - the richer countries contribute relatively more, the poorer states substantially less.

Thus, while safeguarding the political nature of the OSCE, endeavours during the Danish chairmanship were aimed at strengthening the operational capacities of the Organization and at ensuring the availability of the necessary financial means. The purpose of continued efforts in this direction should be to make the OSCE more effective in the implementation of its decisions.

Strengthening the OSCE Contribution to Overall European Security

The readiness of the OSCE - often with very short notice - to engage itself in mediating, solving, or preventing specific new conflicts is a valuable asset for Europe. But conflict prevention must also take on a more structural dimension. We must also seek to improve the all-European security environment in order to prevent potential future conflicts from breaking out.

Addressing this challenge has been and remains the main driving force for the processes of integration and enlargement that are set in motion in European and trans-Atlantic institutions. NATO, the primary security organization in Europe, has reached out and actively engaged its old foes in a constructive and forward-looking dialogue. The Partnership-for-Peace programme, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the agreements with Russia and with Ukraine are concrete manifestations of this co-operative approach.

The European Union has played a major role in addressing the needs of the new democracies. It has provided the modern age Marshall Plan for the half of Europe that missed out in 1947.

With the Madrid Summit and the Amsterdam Treaty both organizations have opened up to enlargement, thus offering a viable perspective for the changes taking place in countries undergoing reform.

From the outset, however, the OSCE - as the only regional organization including all European states and North America - took on its own special role. In the "Charter of Paris for a New Europe" of 1990 the Heads of State or Government of Europe, the United States and Canada set out the foundations upon which a Europe whole and free should be based.

As the new post-Cold War realities took shape, the need to develop and consolidate a new security architecture in Europe became evident. The answer of the OSCE was efforts to develop a comprehensive Security Model for the Twenty-first Century. Work on the Security Model was launched at the Budapest Summit in December 1994. The objective was to take stock of the new security environment in Europe, to address the new risks and challenges that ensued, and to focus on the role of the European security organizations in this context.

At the Summit in Lisbon two years later, Heads of State or Government analysed the progress made. They decided to strengthen the regime of consultations as well as actions to be taken in solidarity in order to defend common values and OSCE commitments. An operational agenda was set out for 1997. It called upon representatives to enhance instruments of joint co-operative action and to define modalities for co-operation between the OSCE and other security organizations. Based on this work, the OSCE should consider developing a Charter for European Security.

The Danish approach to bringing the elaboration of a Charter forward has very much been based on the concrete experience we have acquired during the Danish chairmanship. The priorities for a Charter have been threefold.

First of all, we must acknowledge that problems and conflicts are often the result of non-compliance with OSCE commitments and principles. The core issue is, therefore, not seeking adjustments to the existing norms and principles. Rather our efforts must be focused on ensuring compliance with the existing commitments. The Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris remain our points of departure. Central prerequisites for this are to improve co-operation and to increase solidarity among the participating States through joint co-operative action on enhancing compliance.

Secondly, our experience has demonstrated the need for close co-operation among international organizations when it comes to finding viable solutions to crises and conflicts. It is important to stress that co-operation must take place on an equal footing. What we are looking for is not a hierarchy of security organizations, but the establishment of mutually reinforcing co-operation, where every organization contributes according to its special responsibilities and abilities. With its broad membership and its normative approach the OSCE is uniquely placed to provide the platform for such co-operation. As an organization with its own specific profile, the OSCE can complement developments in other European and trans-Atlantic security organizations, in particular the reform processes within NATO and the EU.

Finally, the OSCE should not be allowed to stagnate. The OSCE should safeguard its normative basis and its flexibility while keeping an eye on developing innovative tools and mechanisms to deal with the new risks and challenges. Therefore, the Charter should be political in nature, rather than legally binding.

During the Danish chairmanship these general discussions were taken a substantial step further when the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting in December 1997 adopted a set of Guidelines for a Charter on European Security. The Guidelines set the agenda for further work.

They reaffirm the existing OSCE principles and their validity for continued peace and stability in Europe. They move forward by stressing the accountability of states to their citizens for respect of OSCE norms and principles by

making clear that these commitments are matters of immediate and legitimate concern to all participating States. On this basis, states will strengthen their commitment to act in solidarity and partnership to ensure the implementation of, and respect for, these principles. Accordingly, the OSCE will explore further ways to assist states facing problems in doing so.

The Guidelines underscore the right of every state to be free to choose or change its security arrangements. They establish that the OSCE will work with other security organizations to promote common security. To this end substantial progress was achieved through the adoption of a Common Concept for the development of co-operation between security organizations within a Platform for Co-operative Security. The Common Concept sets standards for those organizations with which the OSCE will co-operate. In addition, a set of practical steps were agreed upon, aimed at the development of co-operation between the OSCE and those institutions which subscribe to the Common Concept. This approach will also guide the OSCE in enhancing co-operation with sub-regional organizations.

The Guidelines also address the OSCE's own role as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and its attendant role as a primary instrument for peaceful settlement of disputes in the region. States agreed to examine the OSCE's role in addressing new risks and challenges to security and in connection with peacekeeping operations.

The Guidelines underline the importance of the OSCE's human and economic dimensions. They confirm the importance of implementing existing arms control and confidence- and security-building measures as well as their adaptation to the new security environment.

Finally, the importance for European security of relations with adjacent areas, including with the countries in the Mediterranean, is emphasized.

Prospects

At the end of 1989 Europe faced a new beginning. In Central and Eastern Europe communist dictatorships fell. The principles of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights spread to the whole of the European continent.

But the end of dictatorship and of bipolar military confrontation also opened a range of new risks and challenges to European security. These risks could not be dealt with solely within the existing institutional framework.

In dealing with these challenges, the OSCE came to play a central role. The year 1997 proved that the OSCE still has an important role. The OSCE has offered its participating States a flexible and practical instrument for conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation as well as a

useful vehicle for promoting core values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

What are the prospects for the future? What will be the future role of the OSCE?

I believe we have already seen the main features of the future role in what the OSCE is doing today. But the environment in which we act is not static. Important processes of integration and co-operation are taking place in Europe. The OSCE must adapt itself to find its place in light of these developments. There may be a redistribution of certain tasks concerning European security. States may choose to develop new co-operative structures, including sub-regional co-operative fora. Accordingly, the role of the OSCE may gradually evolve. Nevertheless, built on past experience I see the following major prospects for the year to come:

Firstly, I believe the OSCE will maintain its focus on the so-called human dimension. The newly independent states, in particular in the Caucasus and in Central Asia, need assistance in this field. The OSCE provides the only international forum with a dual offer to these states: full and equal participation in a European organization dealing comprehensively with security issues and assistance through the same forum in the implementation of commitments on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This is a new and important instrument in our preventive diplomacy tool box: offering assistance at an early stage in dealing with the democratic and social structure of these societies. It is a long-term engagement that we must take upon ourselves. In doing so the OSCE is uniquely placed as a facilitator of co-operation with other relevant international organizations, including the international financial institutions.

Secondly, 1997 has shown us the usefulness of a strong regional organization for dealing with specific crisis situations. The Albania crisis led to a remarkable example of interplay between the OSCE and United Nations Security Council. This experience gives us a good basis for further developing both the OSCE itself and its relations with the United Nations in taking responsibility for threats to security in Europe. The OSCE itself must remain strong, flexible and adaptable. It should be strengthened, not bogged down by unnecessary bureaucracy or procedure. We must avoid the pitfalls we have seen in other international fora. The United Nations should preserve the overall responsibility for threats to peace. But in practical terms, the OSCE can increasingly relieve the UN, allowing it to focus resources on other regions in need. Such a development is only possible if close co-operation between the OSCE and the UN is maintained. I believe the prospects for such a development are good.

Thirdly, the OSCE as the broadest of the European and trans-Atlantic fora for co-operation with a comprehensive normative basis provides a useful

meeting place to discuss the principles which should guide the overall security of Europe in the new century. To this end the work on a Charter on European Security is a major task for the OSCE. With the Guidelines for a Charter on European Security, adopted in Copenhagen, we have set the course.

I see the Platform for Co-operative Security as one of the major elements in a future Charter. Developing strong lines of co-operation between the OSCE and other organizations, including NATO/EAPC, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the WEU and others, is a prerequisite for finding solutions to the problems confronting us. Such a network of mutually reinforcing co-operation, founded on OSCE norms and principles, will be the very fabric of European security in the twenty-first century. In developing it we must keep a comprehensive and inclusive approach. All states must have their say, no matter their position in the integration processes taking place.

The OSCE offers the best platform for this undertaking. We must use it wisely.