



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

WHAT IS THE OSCE?

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is a pan-European security organization whose **55 participating States** span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the OSCE has declared itself a **primary instrument in its region for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in Europe.**

The OSCE approach to security is **comprehensive and co-operative**. It addresses a wide range of security-related issues including arms control, preventive diplomacy, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, democratization and economic and environmental security.

All States participating in OSCE activities have equal status and decisions are made on the basis of consensus.

FROM CSCE TO OSCE

The OSCE has its origins in the early 1970s, when the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was created to serve as a **multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation** between East and West. Meeting in Helsinki and Geneva, the CSCE reached agreement on the **Helsinki Final Act**, signed in 1975. This document established the basic principles governing the **behaviour of States towards their citizens and each other.**

Until 1990, the CSCE functioned as a series of meetings and conferences, setting norms and commitments and periodically reviewing their implementation. However, the Paris Summit in 1990 set the CSCE on a new course. In the **Charter of Paris for a New Europe**, the CSCE was called upon to contribute to managing the historic change taking place in Europe and to responding to the new challenges of the post-Cold War period.

To facilitate the implementation of these tasks, several offices and institutions were created, meetings became more regular and the Conference's work became more structured.

In November 1990, an important arms control agreement, the **Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)**, was negotiated in the framework of the CSCE process. The Joint Consultative Group (responsible for promoting implementation of the Treaty) and the Open Skies

Consultative Commission (representing all States parties to the 1992 Treaty on Open Skies), although not OSCE bodies, meet regularly in the OSCE conference facilities in the Hofburg Congress Centre, Vienna.

In 1994, the Budapest Summit, recognizing that the CSCE was no longer simply a Conference, changed its name to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. This gave the Organization a new political impetus and was also a reflection of its institutional development since the end of the Cold War.

The Lisbon Summit of 1996 further elaborated the OSCE's key role in fostering security and stability in all their dimensions. It also stimulated the development of an OSCE **Charter for European Security**, adopted at the 1999 Istanbul Summit, which aims at improving the operational capabilities of the Organization. Istanbul also witnessed the signing by 30 OSCE participating States of a revised CFE Treaty.

Today, the OSCE occupies a unique place in the realm of European security institutions. This stems from its broad membership, its co-operative approach to security, its conflict prevention instruments, the deeply established tradition of open dialogue and consensus building, and well-developed patterns of co-operation with other international organizations.

HOW IS IT STRUCTURED?

The OSCE's regular body for political consultation and decision-making is the **Permanent Council**. Its members, Permanent Representatives of the OSCE participating States, meet weekly in the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna to discuss and take decisions on all issues pertinent to the OSCE. The Hofburg is also the site of meetings of the **Forum for Security Co-operation** (which deals with arms control and confidence- and security-building measures).

OSCE foreign ministers hold regular **Ministerial Council** meetings and every few years Heads of State or Government gather for a **Summit** (the most recent having been held in Istanbul, November 1999). In addition to these bodies, a **Senior Council** – attended by political directors or other high-level officials of the participating States – is convened for periodic political deliberations. It meets once a year in Prague as the **Economic Forum**.

The **Chairman-in-Office (CiO)** of the OSCE has overall responsibility for executive action. The Chairmanship rotates annually – in 2001 it is held by Romania and in 2002 it will pass to Portugal. The CiO, the Foreign Minister of the country holding the Chairmanship, is assisted in his work by the previous and succeeding Chairmen, who together constitute the **Troika**. The CiO may also appoint **Personal Representatives** to deal with specific issues or situations.

The **Secretary General** of the OSCE is Ambassador Ján Kubiš, of Slovakia, whose three-year term of office began in June 1999. Based in Vienna, the Secretary General acts as representative of the CiO and supports him/her in all activities aimed at attaining the goals of the OSCE. His tasks also include the management of OSCE structures and operations. The **Secretariat**, based in Vienna, provides administrative and operational support to the Organization. It includes the Office of the Secretary General, the Conflict Prevention Centre, the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Management and Finance, and the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. The **Prague Office** assists with documentation and information functions.

In addition the OSCE comprises several other Institutions. The **Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)** plays an active role in monitoring elections and developing national electoral and human rights institutions, providing technical assistance to national legal institutions, promoting the development of NGOs and civil society, training OSCE human rights and election monitors, training journalists, acting as the OSCE contact point for Roma and Sinti issues, and providing support for specialized OSCE seminars. The ODIHR is situated in Warsaw, Poland, and is directed by Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann of Switzerland.

Of particular importance in the field of early warning and conflict prevention is the **High Commissioner on National Minorities**, located in The Hague, the Netherlands. The High Commissioner, Rolf Ekeus of Sweden, assesses, and tries to defuse at the earliest possible stage, situations involving national minority issues. Through advice and recommendations, he encourages the parties to pursue non-confrontational policies.

The OSCE's **Representative on Freedom of the Media** was created in 1997 to observe relevant media developments and provide rapid response to serious non-compliance with OSCE principles and commitments by participating States in respect of freedom of expression and media. The Office of the Representative, Freimut Duve, of Germany, is located in Vienna.

The OSCE has **missions** in: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), Georgia, Latvia, Moldova, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Kosovo (FRY). Among other field activities the OSCE has an Assistance Group to Chechnya (Russian Federation), a Presence in Albania, an Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus, a Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, Centres in Almaty, Ashgabad, Bishkek, and Tashkent (respectively in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, as well as Offices in Yerevan, Armenia, and in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The OSCE also serves as a framework for conventional **arms control and confidence-building measures**. The Vienna Document 1994 (amended in 1999) obliges States to show transparency and predictability in their military activities. Participating States have also adopted a military Code of Conduct setting out principles to guide the role of armed forces in democratic societies. In addition, OSCE has developed several mechanisms for settling disputes.

The **OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly**, made up of more than 300 parliamentarians from all OSCE states, holds its annual session in July and conducts various other meetings and seminars throughout the year. The Assembly debates issues and passes resolutions and recommendations pertinent to the work of the OSCE. It also plays an important role in election monitoring. The Assembly's Secretariat is located in Copenhagen.

The Organization has established a **Court of Conciliation and Arbitration** in Geneva. Participating States that are signatories to the Convention on Conciliation and Arbitration may submit a dispute to the Court for settlement by the Arbitral Tribunal or the Conciliation Commission. In 1999, the Permanent Council decided to place the **Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe** under the auspices of the OSCE.

OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES

- Albania
- Andorra
- Armenia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Canada
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Holy See
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Malta
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russian Federation
- San Marino
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Tajikistan
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- Uzbekistan
- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION

- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Thailand

MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS

FOR CO-OPERATION

- Algeria
- Egypt
- Israel
- Jordan
- Morocco
- Tunisia

FIGURES AND CONTACTS

Revised unified OSCE Budget 2001: 209 million euros (including supplementaries)

OSCE Staff: close to 340 staff are employed in OSCE Institutions, while some 1,200 international staff, mostly seconded by OSCE participating States, and some 2,700 local staff work in OSCE field activities.

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STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS

