

The OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation

Reflections and Perspectives



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The OSCE Asian
Partnership for Co-operation

Afghanistan

Australia

Japan

Republic of Korea

Thailand

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Joint Foreword

The OSCE enjoys an excellent level of co-operation with the Asian Partners, who display a great interest in and commitment to the OSCE. Over the past decades, the Asian Partners have contributed substantially to the OSCE's dialogue on many different aspects of comprehensive security. The renaming of the "Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation" to "OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group" (APCG) at the Bratislava Ministerial Council meeting in 2019 was a good start towards increasing the recognition and visibility of the steady growth in relations. The Asian Partners actively engage in OSCE events and activities, including through high-level and expert representatives, as well as through generous contributions to OSCE extrabudgetary projects. This booklet, which marks the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation, is intended to pay tribute to the close and productive collaboration that the Organization has been enjoying with Afghanistan, Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand while at the same time providing ideas for future and even closer co-operation.

The Asian Partners for Co-operation started to foster a flexible dialogue with the CSCE and OSCE in the early 1990s, at the time when the Organization was taking on a more formal structure. From today's perspective that dialogue, which has since developed so well, was visionary for its time, not least because the geopolitical connectivity between Asia and the OSCE area is not necessarily visible at first glance. It was at the 1992 Helsinki Summit that the then-CSCE participating States explicitly acknowledged the link between European and global security by adopting two landmark provisions: the participating States declared their understanding that the CSCE was a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations; and Japan became the first Asian country to be invited to attend CSCE meetings. Shortly after that, in 1994, the participating States reaffirmed their intention to "develop a substantial relationship with non-participating States" by

inviting the Republic of Korea to attend the Budapest Summit.

The year 1995 marked another important milestone in the history of the OSCE Asian Partnership as it was immediately before the Ministerial Council meeting in Budapest on 5 December 1995 that the Permanent Council decided to apply the term "Partners for Co-operation" to Japan and the Republic of Korea. This allowed for the creation of a framework for more States to join the Partnership: in 2000, Association of Southeast Asian Nations member Thailand became an OSCE partner, followed by Afghanistan in 2003, Mongolia in 2004 (Mongolia became a participating State in 2012), and Australia in 2009.

Furthermore, in 2003, following a decision by the Permanent Council, the Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation was officially established. Now, under its new name, it remains the main forum for informal dialogue.

In 2007, the OSCE Partnership Fund was established as a means for supporting practical co-operation activities and promoting further engagement of the Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

2014 Basel Ministerial Council meeting

Ministerial Declaration on Co-operation with the Asian Partners (excerpt)

"[W]e note a growing interest among the Asian Partners for Co-operation in deepening their understanding of the OSCE's expertise in such areas as combating transnational threats, confidence- and security-building measures, empowerment and inclusion of women in the political and economic spheres as well as providing equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to peace processes, and we reaffirm our readiness to continue to share OSCE's best practices through the various existing formats."

2020 Tirana Ministerial Council meeting

Ministerial Declaration on Co-operation with the OSCE Asian Partners (excerpt)

“We are committed to advancing an open and frank exchange of information within the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group, which serves as the main forum for regular dialogue between OSCE participating States and Asian Partners for Co-operation. We welcome the Ministerial Council Decision No. 2/19 on renaming the Contact Group to OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group. We also welcome the decision by the 2020 OSCE Albanian Chairmanship to dedicate a Permanent Council meeting to reviewing our co-operation with the Asian Partners for Co-operation, and invite future Chairmanships to consider the possibility to continue this practice.”



Igli Hasani, Chairperson of the Permanent Council (Delegation of Albania to the OSCE)

At the Ministerial Council meetings in Madrid (2007) and Vilnius (2011), Ministerial Council Decisions 4/07 and 4/11 were passed to provide for direct support of Afghanistan through the development of extrabudgetary projects, paving the way for a set of projects covering all three dimensions of security.

Over the years, the OSCE Asian Partnership has become an integral part of the OSCE’s work. Two principles underlie the participating States’ relationship with the five Asian Partners: the desire to share and to learn from each other’s experiences; and the mutual benefits to be gained from the Asian Partners’ contributions to the OSCE’s goals. Most importantly, all five Asian Partners fully support OSCE values and commitments and have taken significant steps towards their voluntary implementation.

In accordance with established procedures, Slovakia, as the outgoing OSCE Chairmanship, is chairing the APCG in 2020. In 2019, Foreign Minister of Slovakia and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, personally attended the annual OSCE Asian Conference held in Tokyo, Japan, where he emphasized that the OSCE Asian Partnership platform should be used effectively and towards a more strategic partnership that could cope better with global challenges. The particular role and responsibility

of an APCG Chairperson is reflected in a separate introductory note by the Slovak 2020 Chairperson of the APCG.

In this context, the Ministerial Declaration on Co-operation with the Asian Partners adopted at the Ministerial Council meeting in Basel in 2014, which is the first OSCE declaration exclusively devoted to strengthening co-operation with the Asian Partners, carries particular significance. It signals a joint willingness to elevate the OSCE Asian Partnership to the next level, creating the basis for a substantive strengthening of co-operation in the coming period. Over the past five years, this has already been evidenced by a number of new initiatives, also presented in this updated version of the 2015 booklet. The OSCE participating States reaffirmed the OSCE’s commitment to the Partnership by adopting the new name, the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group, at the Ministerial Council meeting in Bratislava in 2019. The Ministerial Declaration on Co-operation with the OSCE Asian Partners adopted at the Ministerial Council meeting in Tirana in 2020 recognizes further steps towards more substantive engagement based on meaningful political dialogue and practical co-operation.

In the Forum for Security Co-operation, Germany, which holds the third Chairmanship



Radomír Boháč, Chairperson of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group
(OSCE/Micky Kroell)



Gesa Bräutigam, Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation
(Delegation of Germany to the OSCE)



Tuula Yrjölä, Officer-in-Charge/Secretary General, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Deputy Head of the Secretariat (Tuula Yrjölä)

of the FSC in 2020, aims to continue the work of preceding Chairpersonships Turkey and Ukraine by raising awareness and promoting dialogue on OSCE politico-military principles and commitments with the APCG. The 2020 OSCE Asian Conference on multilateral responses to global security challenges demonstrated excellent opportunities for exchanging regional experiences and exploring ways in which the OSCE and the Asian Partners can enhance shared security interests across the three dimensions of the OSCE. As 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership, we look forward to strengthening our future bonds with our Asian Partners.

In view of the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation, celebrated on 5 December 2020, this booklet represents our acknowledgement and appreciation of a partnership that has come a long way and has a bright future. The value attached to the OSCE Asian Partnership is also clearly reflected in the introductory statements by the ambassadors of the five Asian Partner countries set out in this booklet.

This publication is also intended to be a reference document for policymakers, officials and practitioners dealing with security co-operation between the OSCE and its Asian Partners by

providing a useful and comprehensive overview of the Partnership, including all the procedural texts and arrangements, as well as an overview of current projects and activities initiated or implemented with the active support of the Asian Partners.

Particular attention is also given to the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan by dedicating a separate chapter to relevant activities of the OSCE institutions and field operations. The publication concludes with a review of prospects for increased co-operation with regional organizations in Asia.

Igli Hasani
Chairperson of the Permanent Council

Radomír Boháč
Chairperson of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group

Gesa Bräutigam
Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation

Tuula Yrjölä
Tuula Yrjölä, Officer-in-Charge/Secretary General, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Deputy Head of the Secretariat

Twenty-five years of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation

Foreword by Ambassador Radomír Boháč,
2020 Chairperson of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group



(OSCE/Micky Kroell)

The OSCE was created to help participating States move towards a more secure, peaceful and prosperous future — for the benefit of all. The framework document of the OSCE, the Helsinki Final Act, recognizes that the security of each participating State and security in Europe as a whole are closely interrelated with those outside the OSCE area.

Engagement and co-operation with partners from outside the CSCE, later the OSCE, area grew steadily. Therefore, it was more than natural that in 1992 at the CSCE Helsinki Summit the participating States, with the intention of deepening their co-operation and developing stronger ties with non-participating States, welcomed the interest of Japan in closer co-operation and more active engagement.

In 1995, the Partner for Co-operation status was recognized by the Permanent Council and a framework was established to develop this co-operation further.

To emphasize and affirm the importance of the Partnership, the Ministerial Council in Bratislava in 2019 adopted a decision on renaming the forum for our interaction from “Asian Contact Group” to “Asian Partners for Co-operation Group”.

And it is up to us, the participating States and Partners, to make use of it for the benefit of all.

In 2020, we are celebrating 25 years of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation. It was my honour to chair the Asian Partners for Co-operation Group this year. We in Slovakia strongly believe in the importance of strengthening the co-operation with partners here in the OSCE through an open and frank exchange of information for the benefit of our region and beyond. However, we also believe that by intensifying co-operation in multilateral forums, we also enable the strengthening of bilateral ties, and with greater awareness of our approaches, needs and even fears, we can further strengthen multilateral co-operation. This would then produce a positive spiral.

The 2020 pandemic situation is changing the whole geopolitical system and also demonstrating the need to adapt the work and functioning of international organizations, including the OSCE. We all feel that the OSCE is not only relevant and in many ways still unique — in spite of all its shortcomings — but also needs a new vision and new ideas to be more effective and visible. This is something we also want to work on closely with our Partners.

In our deliberations in 2020, we focused on topics such as peacekeepers as early peace-builders, combating corruption, trade facilitation and the Lapis Lazuli Route with a view to regional connectivity, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, and challenges emerging from technologies and cybersecurity. However, these are not the only topics of mutual interest.

Ensuring security in the OSCE area goes beyond our borders. It is inherently linked to the security and stability of its neighbourhood. In the OSCE, we have our tools and mechanisms, and we have groups of partners. Two principles underlie the OSCE's relationship with the five Asian Partners: first, the desire to share and learn from each other's experiences; and second, the mutual benefits to be gained from the Asian Partners' contribution to OSCE goals. This year's 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation provides an opportunity for us to rethink and boost our mutual relationship with our Partners to build even closer co-operation, to understand each other better and establish an effective mechanism for multilateralism for a better and more secure future.

15 November 2020

Afghanistan | Creating a multi-year strategic perspective on the co-operation with the OSCE for sustainable and comprehensive global security



The year 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation, 17 years since Afghanistan became a Partner for Co-operation.

Afghanistan has appreciated its close relationship and partnership with the OSCE since being granted the status of Partner State in 2003. The Organization's engagement with Afghanistan is based on Madrid Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/07 and was reinforced by Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/11. The Commemorative Declaration adopted at the OSCE Summit in Astana in 2010 reaffirmed the Organization's willingness to take steps towards assisting Afghanistan and contributing to security and stability in Central Asia. This partnership has been continuously expanded and Afghanistan has greatly benefited from its engagement with the Organization, including from the earliest assistance projects for Afghanistan focused primarily on border management and border security. Later projects, meanwhile, gradually expanded to cover aspects of customs control, combating drug trafficking and terrorism, as well as education, gender sensitive capacity-building, and support for election processes since 2004. Afghanistan also greatly benefits from the OSCE field presences in Central Asia, the OSCE flagship institutions and the international and regional organizations active in the development of Afghanistan.

Since I took office as Ambassador for Afghanistan in Vienna in September 2017, my colleagues and I have been making the utmost efforts to strengthen the relationship with the OSCE as a partner and I have pledged to advance the Organization's principles, values and objectives.

The OSCE has been a useful co-operative mechanism for meaningful political dialogue on the comprehensive concept of security in all three dimensions, namely the politico-military (first) dimension, the economic and environmental (second) dimension and the human (third) dimension.

Afghanistan worked closely with the Organization to promote security discussions on addressing global challenges such as human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, corruption, terrorism and improving the security and safety of journalists.

At the same time, since regional co-operation is a major pillar of Afghanistan's foreign policy, Afghanistan has been a great advocate for economic connectivity, trade facilitation, shared water resources co-operation, economic empowerment of women and a general commitment to human rights, especially women's rights. Afghanistan's strategic position and geography provides an opportunity for integrating Central, West, East and South Asia into a network that supports security, stability and prosperity over a vast area of the world's surface.

The OSCE has also been an incredible platform for devoting resources to the education of young Afghans and reiterating the importance of the Afghan diaspora in the Organization's activities and co-operation. Several OSCE projects and programmatic activities for Afghanistan have been implemented and Afghan stakeholders have been invited to attend seminars, training courses and workshops at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, at the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, including the Border Management Staff College, as well as in Moscow, Vienna and other places.

Afghanistan co-hosted three OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group (APCG) meetings in co-operation with the Chairperson of the Group, reflecting the priorities of both the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the OSCE: the 2018 OSCE Asian Contact Group Meeting co-organized with Afghanistan was on the topics of regional co-operation and women's economic empowerment; the 2019 OSCE Asian Contact Group Meeting co-organized with Afghanistan was on the topic of democratic institutions and safety of journalists in Afghanistan, and the 2020 APCG Meeting co-organized with Afghanistan was on trade facilitation and the Lapis Lazuli Route.

Afghanistan participated in the 24th OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Vienna, the 25th OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Milan, and the 26th OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Bratislava, with high-level representation. We now look forward to a successful 27th Ministerial Council meeting in Tirana in 2020.

Afghanistan also actively participated in and contributed to discussions at the 2018 OSCE Asian Conference hosted by Australia in Canberra focused on addressing our common challenges and opportunities in the OSCE and Asia Pacific areas and in the 2020 OSCE Asian Conference hosted by the Republic of Korea on the topic of multilateral responses to global security challenges.

In 2019, Afghanistan's activities supported an event on the margins of the OSCE Asian Conference hosted by Japan on "Enhancing security, building partnerships: co-operation between OSCE Field Operations in Central Asia and Afghanistan on border management", showcasing a striking example of practical co-operation between the OSCE and the Asian Partners and the positive impact of such initiatives on the ground, especially in Central Asia, which is a strategically important region and also a key area for its stability.

Furthermore, in the framework of the OSCE Ambassadorial Trip to Central Asia, a Round Table on Afghanistan was held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, on 9 October 2019. This provided an excellent opportunity, among other things, to discuss opportunities for fostering the partnership and co-operation between Afghanistan and the OSCE.

Security in the OSCE area is inextricably linked to security in Asia and the Pacific and our co-operation already has contributed and will increasingly contribute to the security of the OSCE participating States. We do believe that this is a solid basis giving a new impetus to the partnership and co-operation between the OSCE and Afghanistan.

We stand ready to look further into a more strategic approach to our co-operation that reflects and harmonizes the interests of Afghanistan and its friends within the OSCE. Establishing more continuity and a more long-term strategic outlook in our relationship will help us achieve sustainable development and comprehensive security.

In this regard, Afghanistan would also welcome discussions on new ideas and the exploration of further opportunities to engage the Asian Partners in OSCE internal discussions and activities.

With its comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE possesses great potential to assist Afghanistan. With its expert staff in the field operations in all five countries of Central Asia, the OSCE is the largest civilian international presence in the region and the geographic location of its field presences constitutes one of the most significant areas of added value.

Afghanistan is committed to developing and strengthening long-term co-operation with the OSCE to continue contributing to the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community.



**H.E. Ms. Khojesta Fana Ebrahimkhel,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the OSCE**

Australia | Addressing common security challenges across Europe and the Indo-Pacific

Australia has been a proud Asian Partner for Co-operation since 2009. As 2020 marks 25 years since the establishment of the Asian Partners mechanism, we take this opportunity to reaffirm its value and our commitment to exchanging ideas and experiences on a broad range of issues that affect both the OSCE and Indo-Pacific areas.

Looking back over the past decade, this innovative partnership has been a valuable mechanism for sharing experiences, lessons learned and best practice in responding to the key security challenges shared by the OSCE area and the Indo-Pacific. In times of increasingly complex transnational and global threats and challenges, this Partnership will become increasingly important.

The OSCE and Indo-Pacific areas have many shared challenges including cybersecurity, cybercrime, terrorism, modern slavery, human trafficking, fully realizing and achieving the women, peace and security agenda, and the weakening of the international rules-based order underpinning our collective security and prosperity. These challenges also include health security, which is particularly acute as we face a common challenge in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two regions also share many opportunities. The OSCE should act as a bridge not just between the Euro-Atlantic and the Eurasian area but also between Europe and the Indo-Pacific. The Asian Partners mechanism has an important role to play in this regard.

Australia has supported the OSCE in a wide variety of initiatives, including a contribution to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, training and capacity-building activities, participation as keynote speakers and panellists at high-level conferences and sharing our knowledge and experiences in the Indo-Pacific region with the Asian Partners for Co-operation Group.

We were pleased to have supported the OSCE in promoting the Advance Passenger Information/Passenger Data Exchange as an effective tool for enhancing border and aviation security, facilitating cross-border movements and preventing the threat of returning foreign terrorist fighters. Australian experts contributed to capacity-building and technical assistance workshops across South-East Europe and Central Asia and the OSCE-wide Seminars on Passenger Data Exchange organized jointly with the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism as well as actively participating in the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.



Australia was proud to host the OSCE Asian Conference in Canberra in 2018. The conference highlighted the shared benefits of open and free trade, and looked at how cross-dimensional threats develop in ways that undermine our collective security.

Strengthening relationships between regions is a vital pillar of effective multilateralism in a globalized world. Looking ahead, Australia is committed to ensuring that the Asian Partners process continues to add value to the work of the OSCE and to all Partners.

While the world has changed significantly over the past 25 years, the need for States to work together on complex global security challenges, guided by the fundamental principles of human rights and the rule of law, remains the same. We firmly believe that sustained dialogue and international co-operation represent the most effective ways to meet the complex range of current global challenges, and we look forward to ongoing partnership with our Asian Partner colleagues and all OSCE participating States.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard Sadleir', written in a cursive style.

**H.E. Mr. Richard Sadleir,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the OSCE**

Japan | Time-tested partnership based on shared values with the OSCE

In 2020, we are commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Asian Partnership for Co-operation. This year marks other significant international milestones, such as the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, and the 75th anniversary of the end of the World War II, in the midst of the fight against COVID-19.

The inception of the relationship between Japan and the OSCE derives from a meeting of the then-CSCE, the Helsinki Summit in 1992, to which Japan was invited as the first Asian country. Since then, we have been endeavouring to promote the partnership between Asia and the CSCE or OSCE. Japan has made both financial and personnel contributions to the work of the OSCE, first related to reconstruction after the war in former Yugoslavia, later increasingly related to Central Asia and Afghanistan, as well as Ukraine. This process is exactly in tune with Japan's journey to becoming one of the leading countries in the field of peacekeeping and peace-building. For Japan, this is not only an accumulation chart of official development assistance contributions, but also an important opportunity to gain experience and expertise to be a proactive contributor to peace by working with and learning from the OSCE.

Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security is interlinked. These days, we witness various events in the OSCE area and Asia which pose serious challenges to our common values, such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Against these backdrops, it becomes indispensable for both the OSCE participating States and the Asian Partners for Co-operation to more actively share experiences and further strengthen the Partnership, as we have previously affirmed in the OSCE Asian Conference held in Tokyo in September 2019.

The security environment in Asia is very different from that in Europe where the OSCE constitutes a cohesive and holistic security platform. The collective experience of the OSCE is of special value for Asia where the cold war structure remains and multiple political systems exist. Learning from the spirit of the OSCE's comprehensive security that encompasses the three dimensions, namely, politico-military, economic and environmental, and human rights, is essential to address recent challenges for Asia. Japan shares the values of the OSCE, which attaches predominant importance to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It is consistent with the concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), under which Japan aims to promote peace, stability and prosperity across the region through ensuring a rules-based international order, including the rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as promotion of free trade.



The current global pandemic has brought renewed attention to the concept of human security, which aims at freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity, and requires a comprehensive approach to global security risks such as conflict, terrorism, infectious diseases and widening disparities. I believe that it results in an additional positive synergy with the OSCE's comprehensive approach to dealing with evolving transnational threats.

I believe that we will further expand and deepen our Partnership on the basis of shared values. Japan looks forward to closely co-operating with the OSCE and continues to contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Mizutani'.

**H.E. Mr. MIZUTANI Akira,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan to the OSCE**

Republic of Korea | 25 years of partnership and the future of co-operation

The OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation has been a successful model for interregional co-operation over the past 25 years. The dialogue and co-operation between Asian Partners and the OSCE have enhanced mutual understanding and facilitated the exchange of best practices to address various challenges. The scope of the Partnership has also expanded, ranging from implementing confidence and security-building measures to tackling emerging security issues. The 2020 OSCE Asian Conference co-hosted by the Republic of Korea and the OSCE provided a good opportunity to highlight the ever-developing partnership between the two regions under difficult circumstances caused by COVID-19.

Since becoming a Partner for Co-operation in 1994, the Republic of Korea has been a strong supporter of the OSCE. The OSCE's experiences and lessons learned from the process of building peace in Europe have provided the country with valuable insights to ease tensions and make peace on the Korean Peninsula and in North-East Asia. At the same time, the Republic of Korea's endeavours to bring an end to the decades-old armistice and achieve permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula have significant implications for the OSCE's principle of common security through dialogue and co-operation.

For the past three years, the Government has made every effort to transform the decades of division into lasting peace. As a result, a series of historic events took place — the DPRK's participation in the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, three Inter-Korean Summits, two US–DPRK Summits and a trilateral meeting in Panmunjeom, where the leaders articulated a vision for achieving complete denuclearization and permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Republic of Korea remains committed to maintaining the momentum for dialogue and advancing the Korean Peninsula Peace Process. In this regard, we look forward to the OSCE's continued support and co-operation in the process.

The Republic of Korea is also working to facilitate multilateral security co-operation in North-East Asia and beyond. It is the firm belief of the Republic of Korea that dialogue and co-operation bring stability and prosperity to the region by reducing tension and competition. With this in mind, the Korean Government launched the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform in 2017, at which stakeholders took part in discussions on peace and co-operation in the region. The Republic of Korea greatly values the active engagement of the OSCE Secretariat and participating States in the annual conferences of this Platform.



Today, in an increasingly complex and closely intertwined security environment, collective efforts to address global challenges are more important than ever. Furthermore, the global pandemic that has defined our way of life in 2020 posed a new kind of threat to the international community as a whole. To overcome such challenges and threats, multilateral co-operation based on solidarity and unity should be revitalized.

In this context, it is encouraging to note that the Asian Partners have made constructive contributions to the OSCE on emerging issues — that is, cybersecurity, empowerment of women, anti-corruption and peace operations — through the annual OSCE Asian Conferences as well as year-round Asian Partners for Co-operation Group (APCG) Meetings. The Republic of Korea has also closely co-operated with the OSCE to address emerging challenges, particularly in the area of cybersecurity and technological advances. Moreover, every year the Korean Government contributes to the OSCE Partnership Fund and hosts an inter-regional conference.

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation this year, I look forward to the OSCE and the Asian Partners deepening their long-standing and remarkable Partnership based on shared universal values and common aspirations towards peace and security. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the work of the OSCE and stands ready to work closely together with the OSCE and Partners for Co-operation.



H.E. Mr. SHIN Chae-Hyun,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the OSCE

Thailand | Forging strategic partnerships for sustainable security

The 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation comes at a critical juncture for global security. We are facing a plethora of challenges, be it violent extremism, disruptive technology, climate change, irregular migration, or the global COVID-19 pandemic. While these challenges have highlighted the value of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation as a useful platform for sharing our relevant experiences and best practices, they also call for a reflection on how to advance our Partnership in response to a rapidly changing regional and global environment.

This year also marks 20 years since Thailand became an OSCE Asian Partner for Co-operation. For Thailand, the OSCE is a unique and valuable platform that promotes regional security co-operation through its work on the three dimensions of security — politico-military, economic and environmental, and human. We value the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and endeavour to share our knowledge and experiences, including those gained in the context of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), on issues of our common interest such as peace and security, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, human security, migration, disaster management, and sustainable development.

Thailand has long advocated for a holistic and inclusive approach to security co-operation which recognizes the crucial nexus between development and security. This approach has provided a recurring theme for many of our engagements with the OSCE, including the 2010 workshop on “Combating illicit crop cultivation and enhancing border security and management”; the 2012 workshop on “Promoting security through a comprehensive approach to development in border areas”; the 2016 OSCE Asian Conference on “Strengthening comprehensive security”, focusing on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the 2019 Asian Contact Group meeting on “Advancing partnership for sustainable security”; and the 2020 Asian Partners for Co-operation Group meeting on “Peacekeepers as early peace-builders”.

For the past two decades, Thailand has always sought ways to engage more meaningfully with the OSCE. Since 2018, we have offered training courses under the Annual International Training Courses programme, with priority for applicants from OSCE participating States and Partners, on the topics of food security, climate change, public health, sustainable development, and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. At the same time, Thailand's representatives attended several training events and activities organized by the OSCE, including the OSCE Young Diplomat Placement Programme for Partners for Co-operation (2017–2018).



Thailand has also striven to play a meaningful role in facilitating exchanges of experience and sharing of knowledge through existing platforms, where appropriate, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum.

As the world is facing more complex security challenges, there is a greater need to forge strategic and results-oriented partnerships for tackling these. Thailand looks forward to discussing the options for practical future work under the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation, including the creation of a directory of contact points among OSCE participating States and Partners, the identification of key priority areas for co-operation in the short, medium and long terms, and the establishment of an annual planning process to discuss the Group's work programmes. We recognize that the OSCE Troika and the OSCE Secretariat could play a constructive role in advancing such discussions.

Thailand remains committed to contributing constructively towards our goal of sustainable security and we look forward to continuing our Partnership with the OSCE in the coming years, including in hosting the OSCE Asian Conference in 2021.



**H.E. Ms. Morakot SRISWASDI,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the OSCE**

I. The 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation

Vienna 1995

Permanent Council Decision No. 94

“The Permanent Council Decides that the term ‘partners for co-operation’ will henceforth be used to refer to Japan and the Republic of Korea [...]”

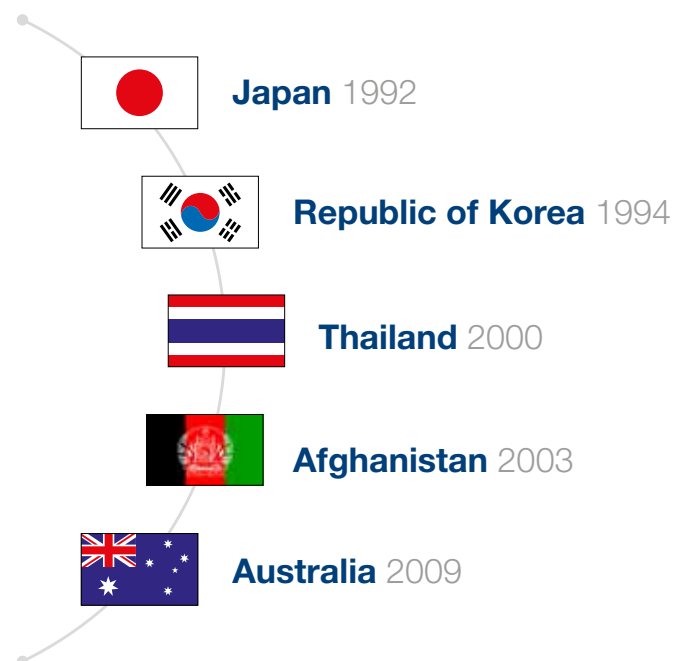
Expansion of the OSCE Asian Partnership

The year 2020 marks an important milestone — the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation. It is also the first year of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group following the name change at the Bratislava Ministerial Council meeting in 2019 (MC.DEC/2/19). However, even before that, the CSCE, later the OSCE, was already attracting interest in some Asian countries.

Japan was the first Asian country to be invited to attend a CSCE meeting, namely the CSCE Summit held in Helsinki on 9 and 10 July 1992, and the first to establish special relations with the then CSCE. In February 2018, then Foreign Minister Taro Kono met with then OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger to discuss Japan’s continuing engagement as an Asian Partner for Co-operation. It was the first-ever meeting by a Japanese foreign minister to the OSCE’s Secretariat in Vienna.



H.E. Tarō Kōno, Japan Minister of Foreign Affairs (left) with the OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger, Vienna, 15 February 2018. (OSCE/Ben Erasin)



In June 1994, the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials decided to invite the **Republic of Korea** to the Budapest Review Conference and the subsequent Budapest Summit in December 1994. With regard to its own history, as also highlighted by the Korean Ambassador to the OSCE in this booklet, the Republic of Korea was particularly interested in the CSCE or OSCE experience of developing and implementing confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). Consequently, the first OSCE–Korea Conference, held in 2001, was devoted to the “Applicability of OSCE CSBMs in Northeast Asia”, a topic that would be further discussed in different forums in subsequent years.

Thailand joined the group of Asian Partners on 9 November 2000. Earlier that year, Thailand had hosted a workshop entitled “Thailand and the OSCE: the way towards a future co-operation” in Bangkok on 28 September 2000. Since then, Thailand has proved to be an interested and engaged Partner which can also play a role in liaising between the OSCE and the South-East Asia. A member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Thailand is facilitating relevant interaction between the OSCE, ASEAN and the ARF.

In 2002, OSCE participating State Tajikistan suggested that **Afghanistan** become a partner to the OSCE. Several other participating States subsequently supported that proposal, particularly the United States of America and Turkey, noting that three OSCE participating States shared borders with Afghanistan. The decision on establishing formal links with Afghanistan as an Asian Partner for Co-operation was taken on 3 April 2003.

In 2004, **Mongolia** became the next Asian Partner for Co-operation, subsequently becoming the 57th OSCE participating State only eight years later, in November 2012.

Finally, in December 2009, **Australia** was welcomed as the most recent OSCE Asian Partner for Co-operation.

Creating a framework for co-operation: The Asian Contact Group

In December 1995, the Permanent Council decided to use the term **Partners for Co-operation** to refer to

2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council

OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty- First Century

“We will encourage [the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation] to voluntarily implement the principles and commitments of the OSCE and will co-operate with them in this as appropriate. As a first step towards increased dialogue, we will invite all our Partners for Co-operation to participate on a more frequent basis as observers in Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation meetings. The OSCE will also consider ways in which OSCE norms, principles, commitments and values could be shared with other regions, in particular neighbouring areas. Contacts with organizations in those areas will be further developed.”

Japan and the Republic of Korea, thereby laying the groundwork for a more institutionalized relationship with what would later become the group of Asian Partners.

In 2003, following a recommendation in the “Ladsous report” (named after Mr. Hervé Ladsous, a Permanent Representative of France to the OSCE), and following a decision by the Permanent Council (PC.DEC/430), a **Contact Group** with the Asian Partners for Co-operation was launched. Its first meeting was held in March 2003. It was established as an informal group, “which will enable the Asian partners to keep abreast of events and activities in the OSCE area and the participating States to find out about the main issues concerning their region”.

Today, the **OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group** serves as the main forum for an open and interactive dialogue with the Partners. It meets five



OSCE Asian Contact Group meeting, co-organized by Japan, Vienna, Austria, April 2019. (OSCE)

times per year at the ambassador level and is chaired by the preceding year's OSCE Chairpersonship (Italy in 2019 and Slovakia in 2020). Besides regular briefings by the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation Group Chairpersons, meetings often include presentations by senior representatives from the capitals of the Asian Partner States, who provide information about security-related developments and activities in their countries, and possible areas for co-operation. Representatives of OSCE executive structures report on OSCE activities, and representatives of partner organizations present relevant work with an Asian or South-East Asian dimension. Preparations for or follow-up on main events and activities are also on the agenda, while between OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group meetings, day-to-day dialogue is maintained through technical meetings at the level of contact points in Vienna, allowing for informal consultations on specific activities or on preparations for meetings.

The OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group takes a demand-driven approach to selecting topics for discussion as agreed by the Asian Partners and the Chairperson of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group. It also places a strong emphasis on sharing experiences and lessons learned. Topics such as information and communication technology

and cybersecurity and related confidence-building measures, preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, initiatives for empowering women and girls including the role of women in economic development, economic connectivity, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, demonstrate the range of issues of common interest. In addition, several of the Asian Partners continuously demonstrate a particular interest in the OSCE as a possible model for security co-operation in East and North-East Asia, and in the OSCE's experience in implementing CSBMs through multilateral co-operation.

The importance of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation has been underscored in a number of OSCE documents, such as the Charter for European Security adopted at the 1999 Istanbul Summit and the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-first Century adopted at the Maastricht Ministerial Council meeting in 2003. This last document in particular reiterated the interconnectedness between the security of the OSCE area and that of adjacent regions and reaffirmed the participating States' commitment to intensifying co-operation with the Asian and Mediterranean Partners.



OSCE Asian Contact Group Meeting, co-organized by Thailand, Vienna, Austria, November 2017. (OSCE)

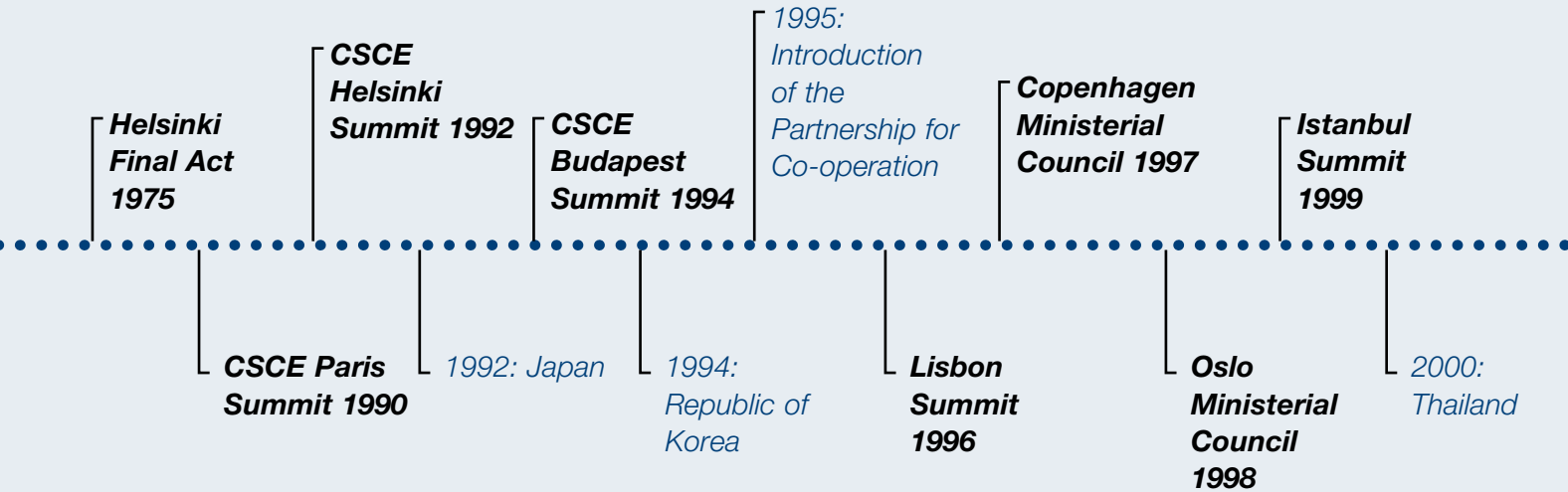
In implementation of the Strategy, the OSCE Permanent Council commissioned a report on how to further enhance dialogue and co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation, which was submitted to the OSCE Ministerial Council in 2004 (PC.DEC/571/Corr. I, 2 December 2003). The “Report of the Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on the implementation of Permanent Council Decision No. 571” (Mr. Aleksi Härkönen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the OSCE) included, among other things, the following suggestion: “Partner States are encouraged ... to consider benefiting from the OSCE’s experience, accumulated over three decades, of applying the concept of comprehensive security in practice, and using it as a source of inspiration.” The report was annexed to the 2004 Sofia Ministerial Council Document (see MC.DEC/17/04, 7 December 2004).

When the OSCE participating States adopted Rules of Procedure of the OSCE in 2006, the Partnership status was defined in its current form. Although the rules largely codified practices that already existed, they formalized the status of the Contact Groups (now the OSCE Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Groups) as informal subsidiary bodies of the Permanent Council, and confirmed the Partners’ right to take an active part in meetings of the decision-making bodies and other OSCE events.

At the Astana Summit in 2010, the participating States recommitted to enhancing their level of interaction with the Partners. In the 2014 Basel Ministerial Council Declaration on Co-operation with the Asian Partners, the first OSCE Declaration to focus exclusively on the OSCE Asian Partnership, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the OSCE participating States renewed their commitment “to deepen and expand the dialogue and co-operation with the Asian Partners.” It is in this spirit that the OSCE Asian Partnership has significantly developed over the past five years as reflected also in the 2020 Tirana Ministerial Council Declaration on Co-operation with the OSCE Asian Partners.

II. Founding Documents

Timeline of key events



Helsinki Final Act 1975

(...)

Motivated by the political will, in the interest of peoples, to improve and intensify their relations and to contribute in Europe to peace, security, justice and cooperation as well as to rapprochement among themselves and with the other States of the world,

The High Representatives of the participating States have solemnly adopted the following:

(...)The States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe,

Recognizing the close link between peace and security in Europe and in the world as a whole and conscious of the need for each of them to make its contribution to the strengthening of world peace and security and to the promotion of fundamental rights, economic and social progress and well-being for all peoples;

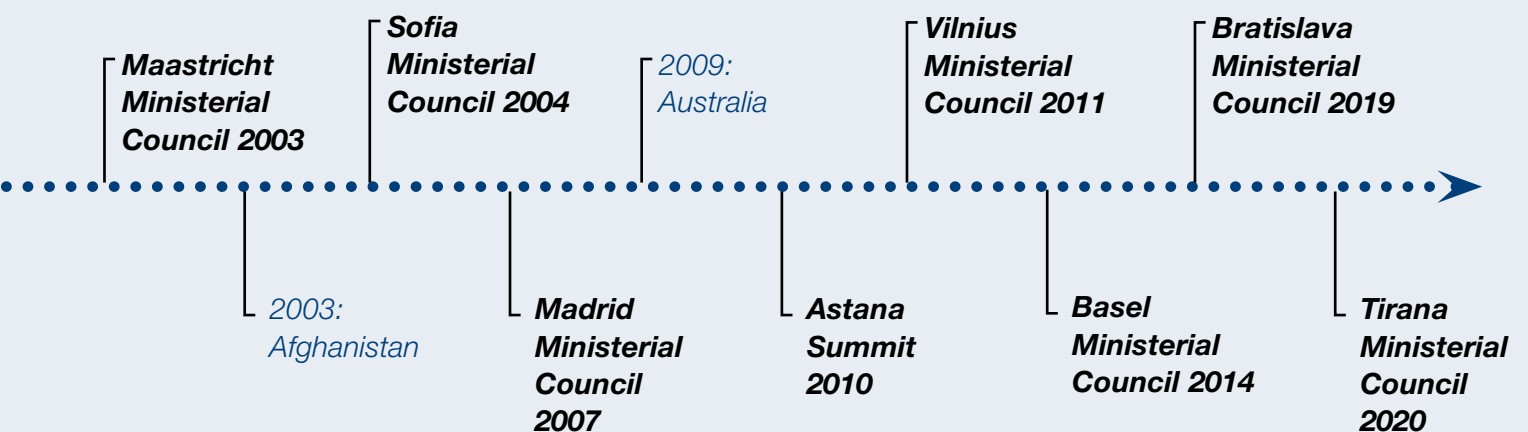
(...)

Charter of Paris for a New Europe 1990

(...)

The CSCE and the World

The destiny of our nations is linked to that of all other nations. We support fully the United Nations and the enhancement of its role in promoting international peace, security and justice. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles and



purposes of the United Nations as enshrined in the Charter and condemn all violations of these principles. We recognize with satisfaction the growing role of the United Nations in world affairs and its increasing effectiveness, fostered by the improvement in relations among our States.

Aware of the dire needs of a great part of the world, we commit ourselves to solidarity with all other countries. Therefore, we issue a call from Paris today to all the nations of the 7 world. We stand ready to join with any and all States in common efforts to protect and advance the community of fundamental human values.

(...)

Supplementary document to give effect to certain provisions contained in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe

Procedures and organizational modalities relating to certain provisions contained in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, signed in Paris on 21 November 1990, are set out below.

I.
Institutional arrangements

(...)

E. The CSCE Secretariat

1. The Secretariat will

(...)

- provide information in the public domain regarding the CSCE to individuals, NGOs, international organizations and non-participating States

(...)

Prague Document 1992

Second Meeting of the Council (Council of Ministers) (...)

X: Relations with non-participating States

45. The Council requests the Helsinki Follow-up Meeting to recommend practical ways to establish a flexible dialogue between the CSCE and interested non-participating States or groups of States, for example through contacts between the said States and the Chairman-in-Office of the Council or of the Committee of Senior Officials.

(...)

CSCE Helsinki Document 1992: The Challenges of Change

(...)

IV: [...] Relations with non-participating States

(...)

(9) In accordance with paragraph 45 of the Prague Document, the participating States intend to deepen their co-operation and develop a substantial relationship with non-participating States, such as Japan, which display an interest in the CSCE, share its principles and objectives, and are actively engaged in European co-operation through relevant organizations.

(10) To this end, Japan will be invited to attend CSCE meetings, including those of Heads of State and Government, the CSCE Council, the Committee of Senior Officials and other appropriate CSCE bodies which consider specific topics of expanded consultation and co-operation.

(11) Representatives of Japan may contribute to such meetings, without participating in the preparation and adoption of decisions, on subjects in which Japan has a direct interest and/or wishes to co-operate actively with the CSCE.

(...)

CSCE Budapest Document 1994

Towards a Genuine Partnership in a New Era

(...)

18. We note with satisfaction the development of our relationship with Japan. We welcome the interest of the Republic of Korea which has attended the CSCE Summit Meeting for the first time and of other States in the CSCE's experience and activities, and express our readiness to co-operate with them in areas of mutual interest.

(...)

27th Committee of Senior Officials 1994

The Committee of Senior Officials,

Noting with appreciation the letter of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea to the Chairman-in-Office expressing the interest of the Republic of Korea in the work and experience of the CSCE and its desire to contribute to the cause of the CSCE,

Took the following decision:

1. The Republic of Korea will be invited to the Budapest Review Conference to observe proceedings in the Plenary, as well as in those working groups where it has a special interest;
2. The Republic of Korea will be invited to attend, and make contributions to, the forthcoming CSCE Summit;
3. The Republic of Korea may be invited on a case-by-case basis to CSCE seminars and other ad hoc meetings on subjects in which it has a special interest;
4. The Secretary General of the CSCE is requested to make arrangements for a more regular exchange of information (including access to official CSCE documents) between the CSCE and the Republic of Korea.

(...)

49th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council 1995

PC.DEC/94, 5 December 1995

The Permanent Council,

Decides that the term “partners for co-operation” will henceforth be used to refer to Japan and the Republic of Korea, and the term “Mediterranean partners for co-operation” to Algeria, Egypt, Israel, [Jordan], Morocco and Tunisia. These changes in name do not alter the specific relationships between these States and the OSCE set out in previous OSCE decisions;

(...)

Lisbon Summit Declaration 1996

(...)

24. We are committed to further developing the dialogue with our Mediterranean partners for co-operation, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. In this context, strengthening security and co-operation in the Mediterranean is important for stability in the OSCE region. We welcome the continued interest displayed by the Mediterranean partners for co-operation, Japan, and the Republic of Korea in the OSCE, and the deepening of dialogue and cooperation with them. We invite them to participate in our activities, including meetings as appropriate.

(...)

Copenhagen Document 1997

I. Chairman's Summary

(...)

The Ministers noted with satisfaction efforts to further develop co-operation with the partners for co-operation, in particular the Mediterranean partners for co-operation.

(...)

MC.DEC/6/97

(...)

5. As a means of turning their vision into reality, Ministers agree that participating States, through a Document-Charter, will, inter alia, undertake the following:

(...)

(j) Recognizing the indivisibility of security, they affirm that strengthened security and co-operation in adjacent areas, in particular the Mediterranean, is an important factor for stability in the OSCE area. They will consider closer co-operation with all partners for co-operation in order to promote the norms and values shared by the OSCE participating States. They will also encourage partners to draw on OSCE expertise.

(...)

MC.DEC/8/97

The Ministerial Council,

Having considered, following the address of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to the Permanent Council on 17 April 1997, measures to bring OSCE financing mechanisms in line with political decisions and with the increased volume and scope of the Organization's tasks, Reaffirming the commitment of all participating States to fulfil their financial obligations, including the settlement of arrears and prompt future payments (...)

3. Notes that a system of voluntary funding will also be maintained in order to accept financial contributions to such missions/projects from participating States, OSCE partners for co-operation as well as other sources.

(...)

176th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council 1998

MC.DEC/241, 9 July 1998

(...)

III. General issues

2. Partners for co-operation, Mediterranean partners for co-operation, international organizations and institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations are invited to ensure appropriate participation in OSCE meetings devoted to Human Dimension issues.

(...)

Oslo Ministerial Council 1998

(...)

I. Oslo Ministerial Declaration

V. The OSCE welcomes support for its activities from its Partners for co-operation. We appreciate the contributions of Japan and the Republic of Korea to OSCE efforts. We thank Japan for its generous financial support for Bosnia and Herzegovina elections and in the context of Kosovo.

(...)

OSCE Charter for European Security 1999

(...)

IV. Co-operation with Partners for Co-operation

1. It has been suggested that strengthened co-operation with Japan and the Republic of Korea could, in particular, be related to the regional security dimension. Joint activities in connection with field missions in Central Asia are regarded as the most visible initial feature of the Euro-Asian co-operation.

2. Closer contacts, as called for by Japan, could be considered in connection with the Asia Regional Forum (ARF), which is regarded as the OSCE's closest counterpart in Asia. These ideas need further clarification and elaboration.

(...)

307th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council 2000

PC.DEC/378, 9 November 2000

Granting of the Status of Partner for Co-operation to Thailand

The Permanent Council,

Noting with appreciation the letter by the Foreign Minister for Thailand, dated 11 October 2000 (CIO.GAL/109/00), requesting that Thailand be granted the status of Partner for Co-operation,

Noting with satisfaction the reiteration of Thailand's intentions towards sharing the principles, values and goals of the OSCE, and wish to develop more structured contacts with the OSCE, as well as its intention to develop and actively promote the goals of the OSCE and to contribute as appropriate to OSCE activities,

Taking positive note of the workshop on "Thailand and OSCE: the way towards a future co-operation", held in Bangkok on 28 September 2000,

Decides:

- To welcome Thailand as a Partner for Co-operation;
- To invite Thailand to the meetings of Heads of State or Government, to Review Conferences, and to meetings of the Ministerial Council;
- To invite Thailand to Human Dimension Implementation Meetings and Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings in accordance with PC Decision No. 241;
- To invite Thailand to the meetings of the Economic Forum;
- To invite Thailand on a case-by-case basis to OSCE seminars and ad hoc meetings on subjects in which it has a special interest;
- To request the Secretary General to make arrangements for a more regular exchange of information between the OSCE and Thailand, including access to official OSCE documents.

The Permanent Council will review the above decision in the light of experience and any other procedures that may be developed concerning relations with Partners for Co-operation.

PC.DEC/379, 9 November 2000

Decision No. 379
Developing Recommendations regarding Applications for Future Partnership

The Permanent Council,

In view of the growing interest in partnership status with the OSCE, tasks an informal open-ended working group with developing recommendations by June of next year on the basis for considering future applications for partnership.

445th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council 2003

PC.DEC/537, 3 April 2003

Decision No. 537
Granting of the Status of Partner for Co-operation to Afghanistan

The Permanent Council,

Noting with appreciation the letter by the Foreign Minister of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, dated 18 February 2003 (CIO.GAL/13/03) requesting that Afghanistan be granted the status of a Partner for Co-operation,

Noting with satisfaction Afghanistan's intentions towards sharing the principles, values and goals of the OSCE and the interest of Afghanistan in establishing close relations with the OSCE based on exchanges of views and information on various issues of mutual interest and participation in OSCE meetings and activities,

Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan to the OSCE Chairmanship at the 2003 OSCE Ministerial Council, Maastricht

(CIO.GAL/13/03) *The Government of Afghanistan highly values the experience of the OSCE in peace-building activities and maintaining stability. In this context, I would like to request your assistance in your capacity of Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE in granting Afghanistan the status of Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE. The Government of Afghanistan would highly appreciate if such a decision were taken by the OSCE in the nearest future.*

Noting also that Afghanistan shares common borders with three OSCE participating States and has mutual security interests with them as well as with other OSCE States,

Recalling PC Decision No. 430, dated 19 July 2001 on taking note and welcoming the report on recommendations concerning future applications for partnership (PC.DEL/344/01/Rev.3),

Recalling the proposal of President Rakhmonov of Tajikistan on 19 February 2002 to invite Afghanistan to become a Partner for Co-operation,

Decides:

To welcome Afghanistan as a Partner for Co-operation;

To invite Afghanistan to the meetings of Heads of State or Government, to Review Conferences, and to meetings of the Ministerial Council;

To invite Afghanistan to Human Dimension Implementation Meetings and Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings in accordance with PC Decision No. 476 of 23 May 2002;

To invite Afghanistan to the meetings of the Economic Forum and the Annual Security Review Conference;

To invite Afghanistan on a case-by-case basis to OSCE seminars and ad hoc meetings on subjects which are of mutual interest;

To further invite Afghanistan to be involved in other OSCE events on the same terms as the existing partner States;

To request the Secretary General and the Chairmanship in Office to make arrangements for regular exchanges of views and information between the OSCE and Afghanistan, including access to official OSCE documents, on various matters of mutual interest and possibilities for co-operation.

The Permanent Council will review the above decision in light of experience and any other procedures that may be developed concerning relations with Partners for Co-operation.

484th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council 2003

Permanent Council Decision No. 571

Further Dialogue and Co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation and exploring the scope for wider sharing of OSCE Norms, Principles and Commitments with Others

PC.DEC/571, 2 December 2003

The Permanent Council,

(...)

Decides:

- To identify additional fields of co-operation and interaction with the OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation for the purpose of enhancing mutual security;
- To encourage Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles and commitments, including as a means to further interaction with the OSCE;
- To explore the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with adjacent areas;
- To pursue its work on procedures for future applications for partnership;
- To prepare a report on the outcome of this work to be submitted to the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in 2004.

The Permanent Council also requests the Forum for Security Co-operation to make its own contribution to this work, within its competencies and mandate.

Maastricht Ministerial Council 2003

OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century 2003

(...)

The OSCE response

23. As threats originating or evolving in adjacent regions are of increasing importance, the OSCE will intensify its co-operation with its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, by early identification of areas of common interest and concern and possibilities for further co-ordinated action. We will encourage them to voluntarily implement the principles and commitments of the OSCE and will co-operate with them in this as appropriate. As a first step towards increased dialogue, we will invite all our Partners for Co-operation to participate on a more frequent basis as observers in Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation meetings. The OSCE will also consider ways in which OSCE norms, principles, commitments and values could be shared with other regions, in particular neighbouring areas. Contacts with organizations in those areas will be further developed.

(...)

Sofia Ministerial Council 2004

Decision No. 17/04 OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation

MC.DEC/17/04

The Ministerial Council,

Recognizing the increasing importance of the well-established co-operation between the OSCE and its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation,

Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 571/Corr.1, by which the Permanent Council decided to submit a report to the Ministerial Council meeting in 2004 on further dialogue and co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation and exploring the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with others, and which requested the Forum for Security Co-operation to make its own contribution to this work,

Underlines the importance of the report PC.DEL/366/04/Rev. 4, which is based on an exchange of various views, including with the OSCE Partners for Co-operation;

Tasks the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation to remain seized of the matter.

Madrid Ministerial Council 2007

Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Co-operation

MC.DOC/1/07

1. We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the OSCE participating States, welcome the increased engagement by the Partners for Co-operation in the OSCE, noting that, over the years, a solid foundation has been laid for a strengthened partnership. We should build further on the Helsinki Final Act 1975, Helsinki Document 1992, the Budapest Document 1994, the Charter for European Security 1999, the 2003 OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/04 on the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation, and other relevant documents and decisions, which underlined the importance of dialogue and co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation, exploring the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with them.

2. We remain concerned about threats to security and stability within and around the OSCE area. We reiterate the interdependence between the security of the OSCE area and that of the Partners for Co-operation, and we encourage further efforts to strengthen the relationship between the Partners for Co-operation and the participating States in order to increase our ability to respond to new and traditional threats to security.

3. We support the efforts of the Partners for Co-operation to promote the OSCE's norms, principles and commitments in their regions, and encourage them to take further steps towards their voluntary implementation. We call on the Partners for Co-operation to report on their implementation in appropriate OSCE meetings. We advocate the development of the annual Mediterranean Seminars and Conferences with the Asian Partners for Co-operation into effective channels of communication between countries in different regions. We encourage the Partners to continue engaging on issues of common relevance to the OSCE and their regions. We also advocate increased sharing of the OSCE's experience in preventive diplomacy and confidence-building measures as well as further interaction with relevant regional organizations.

4. We encourage the OSCE Chairmanship to make full use of the possibility to invite Partners for Co-operation to attend meetings of the decision-making bodies, as well as of relevant informal subsidiary bodies on a case-by-case basis, and to make oral and/or written contributions, in accordance with the OSCE Rules of Procedure. In this respect, we commend the efforts undertaken by the Chairmanships of the Permanent Council and of the Forum for Security Co-operation to facilitate regular attendance by the Partners for Co-operation in the meetings of the two bodies.
5. We will, through the respective Contact Groups, keep the Partners for Co-operation regularly informed on discussions on relevant Ministerial Council decisions. We invite the Chairpersons of the Contact Groups to inform the Permanent Council about topical matters and to submit yearly reports to the Ministerial Council. In the spirit of paragraph 49 of the Charter for European Security, we also encourage the Permanent Council to examine the recommendations emerging from the Contact Groups and the Mediterranean Seminars and the OSCE Conferences with the Asian Partners for Co-operation.
6. We proceed from the understanding that further OSCE engagement with the Partners for Co-operation will be carried out within available resources and avoid duplication of efforts by other international organizations.
7. We take note with appreciation of the outcome of the 2007 OSCE-Mongolia Conference on Strengthening the Co-operative Security between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation. We call for examination of the wider applicability of the recommendations and suggestions stemming from this Conference. We look forward to the next OSCE conference with the Asian Partners for Co-operation.
8. We equally look forward to the 2007 Mediterranean Seminar on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding, to take place in Tel Aviv, Israel, on 18 and 19 December 2007.
9. We welcome the initiative taken by the Chairmanships of the Contact Groups in organizing the first Joint Meeting of the Contact Groups to assess the state of co-operation between the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation.
10. We encourage the Partners for Co-operation to increase their interaction with the participating States and the OSCE executive structures in all three dimensions. In this context, the exchange of information on best practices and lessons learned could be further enhanced, in particular, by creating opportunities to involve experts from the Partners for Co-operation in OSCE activities. We stand ready to examine requests from the Partners for Co-operation for assistance in areas where the OSCE has particular expertise.
11. We welcome the decision by the Permanent Council on the establishment of a Partnership Fund, which will facilitate further promotion of the engagement of the Partners for Co-operation. We encourage the participating States and the Partners for Co-operation to contribute to it.
12. Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 233 of 11 June 1998, we invite the Partners for Co-operation to send observers to participate in election observation missions, and call on the ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to make arrangements to include them in election monitoring organized by the OSCE.
13. We welcome the initiative by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to hold an annual Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean, and encourage it to consider holding Asian Forums as well. We also encourage the Partners for Co-operation to participate in these events.
14. We encourage the OSCE Chairmanship and the chairpersons of the Contact Groups, together with the Secretary General, to continue supporting the dialogue with the Partners for Co-operation and to facilitate their contacts with OSCE executive structures in order to address common threats to security and stability and to promote the voluntary implementation of OSCE norms, principles and commitments.
15. Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 430 of 19 July 2001, we remain open to considering future applications for partnership from interested countries.

Decision No. 4/07 on OSCE engagement with Afghanistan

MC.DEC/4/07

The Ministerial Council,

Taking note of the request by Afghanistan (PC.DEL/922/07 from 21 September 2007) that the OSCE provide assistance to the country in the fields of border security, police training and combating drug trafficking,

Seriously concerned that the situation in Afghanistan is having an impact on security in the OSCE area,

Recognizing the primary role of the United Nations Security Council in maintaining global security and stability, and with a view to supporting the goals set forth in the Afghanistan Compact, agreed to at the London Conference on Afghanistan in 2006,

Acknowledging the contribution of the United Nations as well as of regional arrangements under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter and of other international organizations, such as, inter alia, NATO, EU, CSTO and other relevant international actors as well as participating States actively engaged in Afghanistan and desirous of complementing their efforts also in order to avoid unnecessary duplication,

Recalling the 1975 Helsinki Final Act which states the close link between peace and security in Europe and in the world as a whole,

Also recalling the 1999 Charter for European Security, which states that “the OSCE is the inclusive and comprehensive organization for consultation, decision-making and co-operation in its region”,

Taking into consideration the status of Afghanistan as a Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE, and recalling the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, adopted in 2003 at the Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council, in Maastricht, which states that “the OSCE will intensify its co-operation with its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, by early identification of areas of common interest and concern and possibilities for further co-ordinated action”,

Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 571 of 2 December 2003 on further dialogue and co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation and exploring the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with others, and Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/04 of 7 December 2004,

Recalling Ministerial Council Decision No. 5/05, encouraging the Partners for Co-operation to implement voluntarily the OSCE commitments to combat the threat of illicit drugs,

Recalling the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept, adopted in 2005 at the Thirteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, in Ljubljana, which states that the provisions of the Concept will be shared by the Partners for Co-operation, on a voluntary basis,

Taking note of the OSCE project to train Afghanistan’s anti-drug police officers in Domodedovo, launched on 12 November 2007,

Convinced that long-term security and stability in Afghanistan is of the utmost importance for the OSCE region, in particular for Central Asia,

Stressing the particular responsibility of the Government of Afghanistan for security and stability in the country and the important role of the International Security Assistance Forces in assisting Afghan authorities on these matters,

Underscoring the importance of contributing to international efforts to combat terrorism and trafficking in small arms and light weapons, illegal drugs, and human beings,

1. Within available resources, tasks the Secretary General with examining the prospects for intensifying OSCE action to support measures for securing the borders between the Central Asian participating States and Afghanistan in line with the objectives and principles set forth in the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept;
2. Further tasks the Secretary General with exploring all possible co-operation options, in co-ordination with the United Nations and other relevant regional and international organizations and other actors, and making proposals, as appropriate, for further actions by the Permanent Council;
3. Encourages the OSCE field operations in Central Asia, in consultation with their host governments, to intensify the involvement of Afghan counterparts in their relevant activities;
4. Tasks the Secretary General with providing support for intensifying the involvement of Afghan counterparts in OSCE activities, such as those related to the fields of border security and management, policing and the fight against drug trafficking, and those at the educational and training facilities in Central Asia and in the rest of the OSCE area, and with developing specific projects and programmes for Afghan counterparts in the OSCE area, as necessary and without unnecessary duplication of existing efforts, including those of international actors such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime;
5. Encourages the Secretary General and OSCE field operations in Central Asia to co ordinate with relevant regional organizations with a view to avoiding unnecessary duplication and reinforce mutual efforts;
6. Endorses the Permanent Council Decision on combating the threat of illicit drugs, inter alia tasking the Secretary General with conducting in 2008 a follow-up training project for Afghanistan's anti-drug police officers in Domodedovo;
7. Encourages the participating States and Partners for Co-operation to contribute to activities in the above-mentioned fields;
8. Tasks the Permanent Council with remaining seized of the matter and with researching and evaluating options for future engagement with Afghanistan upon its request.

690th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council 2007

Permanent Council Decision No. 812 Establishment of a Partnership Fund 2007

PC.DEC/812, 30 November 2007

The Permanent Council,

Recognizing the increasing importance of the well-established co-operation between the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation,

Recognizing the increasing importance of the well-established co-operation between the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation,

Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 571/Corr.1, on further dialogue and co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation and exploring the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with others,

Recalling Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/04, of 7 December 2004, on the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation, underlining the importance of the report PC.DEL/366/04/Rev.4,

Wishing to promote the engagement of the Partners for Co-operation,

Decides to:

1. Establish a specific fund exclusively financed through extrabudgetary contributions, hereinafter referred to as the Partnership Fund, to foster deeper relations with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation and aimed at financing:

- After consultation with the Partners for Co-operation, participation by representatives from the Partners for Co-operation in such activities related to existing OSCE programmes as OSCE conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings, or OSCE-related conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings held by the Chairmanship, the FSC Chairmanship or an executive structure, as well as internships, visits, briefings and training courses, organized in accordance with the OSCE rules of procedure (MC.DOC/1/06);
- Such activities related to existing OSCE programmes as OSCE conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings or OSCE-related conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings held by the Chairmanship, the FSC Chairmanship or an executive structure in the territory of a participating State that are designed to encourage the Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles, commitments and best practices, as well as internships, visits, briefings and training courses, organized in accordance with the OSCE rules of procedure (MC.DOC/1/06);
- Contribution toward the costs of the OSCE Mediterranean seminar and the OSCE conference with the Asian Partners for Co-operation;

2. Further decides that this Fund shall be set up and managed in accordance with the OSCE's Financial Regulations and its Common Regulatory Management System (CRMS). In accordance with the principles of fund accounting applied by the OSCE, this Fund will be a multi-year fund, with balances carried forward from one year to the next, subject to agreement by the donor(s) and duration of the activity;

3. Requests the Secretary General:

- As Fund Manager, to administer the Fund in accordance with the Financial Regulations;
- To report to the Permanent Council on the operation of this Fund once a year or at the request of the Permanent Council;
- To establish the operational modalities of the Partnership Fund, and to inform the participating States and the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation of these modalities by means of a circular note;

4. The Partnership Fund will not be used to finance the organization of OSCE-related conferences, seminars, workshops, other meetings and activities outside of the OSCE region without an appropriate decision by an OSCE decision-making body;

5. Encourages the participating States and the Partners for Co-operation to contribute to the Partnership Fund.

Operational modalities of the Partnership Fund 2008

SEC.GAL/20/08, 31 January 2008

1. The Fund will be used exclusively for the purposes stipulated in PC.DEC/812 and be financed exclusively through extrabudgetary contributions. The Secretary General shall ensure that funds are utilized in strict compliance with the provisions of that decision.
2. A new Fund and a Master Project has been created and set-up in IRMA. All pledges should be made against the project number 1100689 "Master Project – Partnership Fund".
3. The Master Project Manager, designated by the Secretary General, is Mr. Fabrizio Scarpa, Senior External Co-operation Officer, who will be responsible for the Master Project and will communicate with the Donors in regard to fund raising and reporting. The Master Project Manager will be the main contact point for individual Project Managers who are responsible for specific projects under the Fund.
4. Specific projects will be proposed and submitted to the Master Project Manager by the Secretariat, Institutions and Field Operations. Upon approval of the specific project by the Master Project Manager, who will ensure compliance with PC.DEC/812, it will be uploaded in IRMA and will receive a unique project number. Information about such projects will also be made available to the Partners for Co-operation, once they are uploaded into the project database. The individual Project Managers will be fully responsible for the day-to-day management of their projects. The individual Project Managers will be responsible for preparing interim and final financial and narrative reports for distribution to the Donors by the Master Project Manager.
5. Donors
 - (a) can make contributions that are not restricted to any specific activities and are aimed at financing activities stipulated in PC.DEC/812; or
 - (b) can earmark contributions to a specific project(s) to be financed through the Fund.
6. As stipulated in PC.DEC/812, the Secretary General will report to the Permanent Council on the operation of this Fund once a year or at the request of the Permanent Council.

Athens Ministerial Council 2009

Decision No. 13/09 Granting of the Status of Partners for Co-operation to Australia

The Ministerial Council,

Noting with appreciation the letter by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia (CIO.GAL/182/09), requesting that Australia be granted the status of Partner for Co-operation,

Noting with satisfaction that Australia has supported the OSCE principles and objectives since its beginning as a Helsinki process in 1973 and shares its comprehensive and co-operative approach to security and related issues of economic and human development,

Address of the Australian Delegation to the 2009 OSCE Ministerial Council, Athens

(MC.DEL/87/09)

Australia is grateful to the OSCE Chairman, the Secretary-General, the participating states, and the Secretariat for their prompt consideration and approval of our formal application to become an Asian Partner for Cooperation. Australia will bring to its engagement with the OSCE considerable experience in the work of peace keeping, peace building and the strengthening of governance in our own neighbourhood. Closer engagement with the OSCE will complement our existing contribution in these fields and facilitate the sharing of expertise and experiences.

Noting also that Australia is interested in establishing close relations with the OSCE through the exchange of views and information on various issues of mutual interest and participation in OSCE meetings and activities,

Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 430, dated 19 July 2001,

Recalling the Madrid Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Co-operation (MC.DOC/1/07),

With reference to the OSCE Rules of Procedure (MC.DOC/1/06),

Decides:

- To welcome Australia as a Partner for Co-operation;
- To invite Australia to participate in the meetings of the Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation;
- All provisions of the OSCE Rules of Procedure and other OSCE documents related to States referred to in paragraph IV.1(D)4 shall be applicable for Australia.

2010 Astana Summit

Astana Commemorative Declaration: Towards a Security Community

(...)

10. We recognize that the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to that of adjacent areas, notably in the Mediterranean and in Asia. We must therefore enhance the level of our interaction with our Partners for Co-operation.

(...)

Athens Ministerial Council 2009

Decision on strengthening OSCE engagement with Afghanistan

MC.DEC/4/11

The Ministerial Council,

Sharing the common objective of promoting long term security and stability in Afghanistan, a Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE since 2003,

Convinced that long term security and stability in Afghanistan has a direct impact on security in the OSCE region,

Acknowledging the primary role of the UN in international efforts in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, as well as the valuable contribution of relevant regional and international organizations and institutions actively engaged in assisting Afghanistan, inter alia, NATO, EU, CSTO, CICA and SCO, and underscoring the importance of co ordination of these efforts and avoiding duplication, including through making best use of existing mechanisms for co-ordination,

Welcoming the Istanbul Process on regional security and co-operation for a secure and stable Afghanistan that was launched at the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan on 2 November 2011, as well as the results of the International Afghanistan Conference, held in Bonn on 5 December 2011,

Acknowledging the OSCE and its participating States' contributions as part of the UN led efforts of the international community towards assisting Afghanistan in areas where the OSCE has its expertise and experience,

Stressing the particular responsibility of the Government of Afghanistan for long term security and stability in the country, to be achieved through a process that is Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-driven,

Supporting the on-going process of transition of responsibility, including for providing comprehensive security, to the Afghan authorities in the framework of the Kabul Process, and remaining convinced that progress to be made between now and 2014, when transition will be completed, will make a decisive impact on the future course of efforts underway in Afghanistan, and being confident that the OSCE can make a tangible contribution to this end, drawing upon its expertise and experience,

Acknowledging the central role that has been played by Madrid Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/07 on OSCE engagement with Afghanistan in fostering co-operation between the OSCE and Afghanistan since 2007,

Referring to the Athens Ministerial Council Decision No. 2/09 on further OSCE efforts to address transnational threats and challenges to security and stability, which calls for intensified implementation of Madrid Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/07,

Recalling the Astana Commemorative Declaration, which acknowledges that security in the OSCE region is inextricably linked with the security of neighbouring regions, and underscores in particular the need to contribute effectively to collective international efforts to promote a stable, independent, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan,

Recognizing the threat posed by illicit production, trade, trafficking and consumption of drugs originating in Afghanistan to international peace and stability in the region and beyond, and emphasizing the importance of co-operation with Afghanistan to counter this threat and to enhance border management co-operation between Afghanistan and its neighbours in ensuring comprehensive measures for drug control,

Commending the efforts by OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation, the Secretariat and the field operations towards the implementation of Madrid Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/07 aimed at assisting Afghanistan in the fields of border security, police training, customs training, combating of drug trafficking, inter alia through the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe and other training facilities in the OSCE participating States,

Acknowledging with appreciation the election support that has been provided to Afghanistan by four OSCE/ODIHR election support teams, in accordance with the relevant Permanent Council decisions and upon the request of the Afghan Government, and stressing the importance that we attach to the transparent, inclusive, free and fair elections in Afghanistan, in line with its national legislation and international standards,

Noting the relevance of the participation of Afghan officials and civil society representatives in OSCE events, and reaffirming the OSCE's readiness, within its mandate and available resources, to assist Afghanistan in its voluntary implementation of OSCE norms, principles and commitments,

Welcoming the use of the Partnership Fund, in accordance with Permanent Council Decision No. 812, to foster closer relations with Afghanistan and to support increased participation by Afghan representatives in OSCE activities across the three dimensions of security,

Recognizing the important role of education for stability and development in Afghanistan, and in particular the contribution by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, which serves as a promoter of OSCE values,

Convinced of the importance of regional co-operation between Afghanistan and the OSCE participating States in Central Asia, and of the essential role of these participating States in helping to promote long-term security and stability in Afghanistan,

Welcoming bilateral and multilateral initiatives between Afghanistan and the regional countries that could contribute to the improved regional co-operation and enhanced trust and confidence,

Wishing to enhance the co-operation between the OSCE and Afghanistan,

1. Decides to further strengthen the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan across the three dimensions and on the basis of the OSCE concept of comprehensive, co operative and indivisible security, pursuant to the request of the Government of Afghanistan;
2. Invites OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation to contribute, on a voluntary basis, to the efforts of the OSCE and international community, to promote the long term security and stability of Afghanistan;
3. Tasks the Secretary General and executive structures, in accordance with their mandates and established procedures, with continuing ongoing projects and programmes of co-operation between the OSCE and Afghanistan and with developing a new package of activities across all three dimensions of security, in consultation with participating States and in co ordination with the UN and other relevant international and regional organizations;
4. Tasks the Secretary General to act as a focal point among all OSCE executive structures, aiming at co-ordination and coherence of implementation of Afghan related projects and programmes in the OSCE area;
5. Calls upon the OSCE executive structures, within their mandates, to facilitate a broader participation of Afghan officials and civil society representatives in relevant OSCE events, including through the use of the Partnership Fund, as appropriate;

6. Recommends to Afghanistan to establish a fixed national focal point mechanism to facilitate co-operation between the OSCE and Afghanistan aimed at enabling better implementation of, and follow-up on, OSCE projects and activities;
7. Expresses the readiness to provide election support, at the request of the Afghan Government, as appropriate, especially in the light of the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in Afghanistan;
8. Tasks the Permanent Council with remaining seized of the matter and with researching and evaluating options for further engagement with Afghanistan, upon its request;
9. Invites participating States to continue consultations in the framework of the Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation with a view to develop ongoing and new OSCE activities, across the three dimensions;
10. Tasks the Secretary General to regularly report to the participating States on the implementation of this decision.

Decision No. 5/11 Partners for Co-operation

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which recognizes the close link between peace and security in Europe and in the world as a whole,

Recalling the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, adopted in 2003 at the Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council in Maastricht, which states that the OSCE will intensify its co-operation with its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, by early identification of areas of common interest and concern and possibilities for further co-ordinated action,

Fully convinced that the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked with security in the regions of the Partners for Co-operation, and reaffirming our commitment to intensifying our dialogue and co-operation with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation and to strengthening our capacity to respond to the needs and priorities identified by the Partners and on the basis of OSCE norms, principles and commitments,

Recognizing the democratic transition processes, political, economic and social changes that have taken place in some Mediterranean Partners in 2011,

Commending the voluntary reform processes undertaken by some Mediterranean Partner countries,

Recognizing that each country is different and has the right to develop its own political model, with respect for the universal values of human rights and dignity,

Agreeing that the OSCE's experience in different areas can be of interest and potential benefit to the Partners, while taking into full account their prime responsibility for making national political choices as well as their specific political, social, cultural and religious heritage and in accordance with their needs, goals and national priorities,

Reaffirming the readiness of the OSCE, through its executive structures, within their respective mandates in accordance with established procedures and when requested, to assist the Partners for Co-operation, as appropriate, in their voluntary implementation of OSCE norms, principles and commitments,

Recognizing the important role played by civil society in Partners for Co-operation, in promoting democracy, the rule of law, and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Welcoming the progress achieved in recent years through dialogue and co-operation with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, including their enhanced participation in OSCE meetings and activities including the implementation of concrete mutual projects,

Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 571 on further dialogue and co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation and exploring the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with others, and Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/04 on the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation, as well as the Madrid Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Co-operation,

Recalling the Astana Commemorative Declaration of 2010, which underlined the importance of enhancing the level of interaction with the Partners for Co-operation,

Reiterating support for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's co-operation with the Partners including through the holding of its annual Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean, and taking note of the work done by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in this respect,

1. Decides to enhance further the Partnership for Co-operation by broadening dialogue, intensifying political consultations, strengthening practical co-operation and further sharing best practices and experience gained in the development of comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security, in the three OSCE dimensions, according to the needs and priorities identified by the Partners;"
2. Encourages the OSCE executive structures, in accordance with their mandates and established procedures, to engage in action oriented co-operation with the Partner countries in all three dimensions, taking also into account the annual conferences of Partners, by providing expert advice and exchange of information on best practices and experiences upon request of the Partners based on relevant OSCE decisions when required and invites the Partners to increase the level of their participation in the OSCE activities;
3. Decides, in the context of the Partnership, to increase the efforts to promote OSCE norms, principles and commitments through the contacts in co-ordination with other relevant regional and international organizations, particularly the United Nations notably through the sharing of best practices and experiences and through joint projects and activities in all three dimensions, as appropriate;
4. Calls upon the OSCE Chairmanship and the Contact Groups, together with the Secretary General, to strengthen and further develop regular high-level dialogue with the Partners for Co-operation, in order to enhance mutual understanding and ensure high-level political support and assistance for the Partners for Co-operation, taking into account their needs and priorities;
5. Calls upon the OSCE executive structures, within their mandates, to facilitate a broader participation of officials and civil society representatives of Partners for Co-operation in relevant OSCE events, as well as through the use of the Partnership Fund as appropriate;
6. Tasks the Secretary General, in consultation with the OSCE Chairmanship, with exploring possible options for action oriented and results based co-operation with Partners, in co-ordination with the United Nations and other relevant regional and international organizations and institutions, and with making proposals, as appropriate, for further action by the Permanent Council;
7. Requests the Permanent Council to remain seized of the matter and to consider options for future engagement with the Partners for Co-operation at their request;

8. Encourages the participating States and the Partners for Co-operation to share their experiences and contribute to the OSCE activities in all three dimensions, including through contributions to the Partnership Fund, as appropriate, in order to promote further engagement with the Partners for Co-operation;
9. Reconfirms its openness to considering future potential applications for partnership from interested countries, in line with Permanent Council Decision No. 430 of 19 July 2001.

Decision No. 12/11 Application of Mongolia to become a participating State

The Ministerial Council,

Welcoming the letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Mongolia (CIO.GAL/213/11 dated 28 October 2011), in which Mongolia applied to become a participating State and expressed acceptance of all OSCE commitments and responsibilities in their entirety,

Noting the views expressed to date on this matter, including at this Ministerial Council in Vilnius,

Tasks the incoming Chairmanship to take forward this request at the earliest opportunity.

929th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council 2012

PC.DEC/1051, 8 November 2012

Permanent Council Decision No. 1051 Recommendation on the accession of Mongolia to the OSCE

The Permanent Council,

1. Requests the Chairperson of the Permanent Council to transmit to the Chairperson-in-Office the draft decision of the Ministerial Council on the accession of Mongolia to the OSCE, as contained in document MC.DD/1/12/Rev.2 of 30 October 2012;
 2. Recommends that the Ministerial Council adopt that decision through a silence procedure with the period of silence expiring on 20 November 2012, at midnight CET.
-

Basel Ministerial Council 2014

Declaration on the Co-operation with the Asian Partners

MC.DOC/10/14

1. We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the OSCE participating States, welcome the engaged participation of the Asian Partners for Co-operation in the OSCE, noting that, over the years, the partnership has been steadily strengthened and its importance and efficiency demonstrated. We renew our commitment to deepen and expand the dialogue and co-operation with the Asian Partners, on the basis of Ministerial Council Decision No. 5/11, and call on the Partners to continue voluntarily implementing OSCE commitments.
2. We note with appreciation the generous contribution of Asian Partners to OSCE extrabudgetary projects and relevant OSCE activities, inter alia the support from Japan, Australia, the Republic of Korea and the Kingdom of Thailand for the establishment of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. We encourage the Asian Partners to continue to make use of existing OSCE mechanisms, including the Partnership Fund.
3. We remain committed to an open and frank exchange of information within the Contact Group with the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation, which serves as the main forum for regular dialogue between the OSCE participating States and Asian Partners for Co-operation within the work of the organization. We take note with appreciation of the practice of holding regular OSCE conferences in the Partners for Co-operation and call for a more proactive use by participating States and Partners for Co-operation of those events to intensify the dialogue. In that context, we note a growing interest among the Asian Partners for Co-operation in deepening their understanding of the OSCE's expertise in such areas as combating transnational threats, confidence and security-building measures, empowerment and inclusion of women in the political and economic spheres as well as providing equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to peace processes, and we reaffirm our readiness to continue to share OSCE's best practices through the various existing formats.
4. We reaffirm our long term commitment to further strengthen the OSCE's engagement across the three dimensions with Afghanistan pursuant to the request of the government of Afghanistan, as expressed in Ministerial Council Decisions Nos. 4/07 and 4/11. We commend the progress achieved so far and call for continued implementation of those decisions beyond 2014, inter alia on border co-operation between the OSCE participating States and Afghanistan on bilateral and multilateral levels. We welcome the holding of elections in Afghanistan in 2014 and the formation of the Government of National Unity. We note with satisfaction the deployment of ODIHR election support teams to the Afghan elections in recent years and encourage the Afghan Government to make good use of the recommendations made.
5. We reaffirm our condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and our firm rejection of the identification of terrorism with any race, ethnicity, nationality or religion. We reiterate our resolve to combat it, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and is incompatible with the fundamental values and principles shared by the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation alike. We welcome dialogue on the efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism, to suppress the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and develop and implement prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies, in full implementation of UNSCR 2170 and 2178, and in particular foreign terrorist fighters identified therein, to ensure that any person who participates in the financing, planning, preparation or perpetration of terrorist acts or in supporting terrorist acts is brought to justice, as well as to ensure that no funds, financial assets or economic resources are made directly or indirectly available to fund terrorist activities. We reiterate our commitment to prevent the movement of terrorist individuals or groups through effective border controls and controls of issuance identity papers and travel documents. We welcome the opportunity to address the topic of the fight against terrorism during the Twenty-First Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

6. The Helsinki+40 process provides an opportunity to strengthen the dialogue with the Asian Partners for Co-operation. We encourage the Asian Partners for Co-operation to contribute actively to the Helsinki+40 process on the issues which are relevant to the Partners, and especially to consider additional options for further enhancing the OSCE's relations with the Asian Partners for Co-operation.
7. We take note that initiatives by academia, non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society may provide additional channels to support and expand the existing dialogue and co-operation between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation.

Bratislava Ministerial Council 2019

Decision No. 2/19 Renaming the Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation and the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

The Ministerial Council,

Decides to rename the Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation and the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to "OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group" and "OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group" respectively.

Tirana Ministerial Council 2020

Declaration on Co-operation with the OSCE Asian Partners

MC.DOC/2/20

1. We, the ministers for foreign affairs of the OSCE participating States, welcome the engaged participation of the Asian Partners for Co-operation in the OSCE. Considering that security in the OSCE area is strongly interlinked with that of the Asian region, we welcome that the partnership has been steadily strengthened over the years and note its demonstrated importance and efficiency. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation, we renew our commitment to deepen and expand dialogue and co-operation, on the basis of the Ministerial Declaration on Co-operation with the Asian Partners (MC.DOC/10/14) and Ministerial Council Decision No. 5/11, having in mind the interests and concerns shared by the OSCE participating States and the Asian Partners.
2. We note with appreciation the active engagement of the Asian Partners in OSCE events and activities, including through high-level and expert representatives, as well as the generous contributions of Asian Partners to OSCE extrabudgetary projects. We encourage the Asian Partners to continue to make use of existing OSCE mechanisms, including the Partnership Fund. We take positive note of the continued high interest by the Asian Partners in the OSCE agenda, and we value the opportunity to strengthen our partnership through participation in the joint annual OSCE Asian Conferences, as well as other Asian Partner promoted initiatives, which address topics covering the politico-military, the economic and environmental and the human dimensions of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. We call for a more proactive use by participating States and Partners for Co-operation of these events to promote an outcome-oriented dialogue. We further welcome the adaptability of the Republic of Korea to host the 2020 OSCE Asian Conference online due to the unprecedented, extraordinary and unpredictable circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. We are committed to advancing an open and frank exchange of information within the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group, which serves as the main forum for regular dialogue between OSCE participating States and Asian Partners for Co-operation. We welcome the Ministerial Council Decision No. 2/19 on renaming the Contact Group to OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group. We also welcome the decision by the 2020 OSCE Albanian Chairmanship to dedicate a Permanent Council meeting to reviewing our co-operation with the Asian Partners for Co-operation, and invite future Chairmanships to consider the possibility to continue this practice.
4. We reaffirm our readiness to share OSCE experience and best practices through various existing formats, and thereby further promote OSCE principles and commitments among the Asian Partners for Co-operation in all three dimensions, and further enhance their partnership with the OSCE and its participating States. We take note that initiatives by academia, non governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society may provide additional channels to support and expand the existing dialogue and co-operation between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation.
5. We reaffirm our long-term commitment to further strengthen the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan across all three dimensions of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, as expressed in the Ministerial Declaration on Co-operation with the Asian Partners (MC.DOC/10/14) and Ministerial Council Decisions No. 4/07 and No. 4/11. We call for continued efforts in implementing those decisions. We highlight the role the OSCE has played in supporting Afghanistan in combating transnational threats through border and customs management training, with a particular focus on countering terrorism, trafficking in drugs and illicit trafficking in cultural property. We affirm the importance of supporting efforts to ease barriers to trade between Afghanistan and its neighbours, which will boost economic growth in Afghanistan and the broader region. We take positive note of the continued and constant admission of Afghan students to the graduate programmes offered by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. We encourage leveraging partnerships with other relevant international organisations which promote regional co-operation, security and peace building in Afghanistan.
6. We encourage the Asian Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily adopt and implement OSCE principles and commitments across the OSCE's politico-military, economic and environmental and human dimensions, and invite future collaboration with the Asian Partners on related challenges that transcend international borders in the three dimensions.

III. A selection of projects implemented under the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation

Over the years, co-operation at the operational level has been strengthened significantly. The Asian Partners for Co-operation have contributed actively to the OSCE's work, through the deployment of observers to electoral missions of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the secondment of their nationals to OSCE field operations, financial contributions to the activities of various OSCE units, institutions, and field operations, often those with a particular focus on Central Asia, as well as through financial support for the National Dialogue Project in Ukraine and for the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

Much of this was implemented through the Partnership Fund, which was established in 2007 to support practical co-operation activities and promote further engagement on the part of the Partners for Co-operation. Through the Partnership Fund, OSCE participating States and Partners deepen relations by co-financing seminars, workshops, internships, visits, briefings and training courses, as well as through the dissemination of OSCE guidelines and handbooks designed to encourage the implementation of OSCE norms, principles and commitments in the Partner States. The participation of Partners' representatives in OSCE activities, including training courses, is also financed through the Partnership Fund.

Both the OSCE participating States and the Partners for Co-operation contribute to the Partnership Fund and over the years, the OSCE has been able to share its experience with the Partners for Co-operation on a number of topics, including evolving transnational threats and their implications for security in Europe and Asia, conflict prevention in the new security circumstances and the applicability of OSCE confidence- and security-building measures in North-East Asia, best practices in developing confidence-building measures on cybersecurity, the human dimension of security, anti-trafficking, and global efforts to enhance disaster risk reduction.

Below, the OSCE's engagement with the Asian Partners for Co-operation is highlighted through a selection of

representative projects implemented with the support of and for the benefit of the Asian Partners, which in turn strongly promotes the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation overall.

Afghanistan: Facilitating broad participation in OSCE events and programmes



Adela Raz, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs of Afghanistan, speaking at the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, 10 November 2016. (OSCE/Jonathan Perfect)

The Partnership Fund is one of the main tools facilitating the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan. It serves as an administrative tool for receiving extrabudgetary contributions from interested donors with the objective of furthering the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan through greater Afghan participation in OSCE activities, also in collaboration with the OSCE institutions. It provides support for targeted projects and helps facilitate broad participation of Afghan officials and civil society representatives in OSCE events. It also allows the OSCE Secretariat to sponsor the participation of young Afghans in internship and junior professional programmes in OSCE units and institutions.

On one such occasion, a young female diplomat from Afghanistan was financially sponsored by the 2018



Participants of the 2018 OSCE Asian Conference, held in Canberra, Australia, November 2018.
(Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia/Nathan Fulton)

Austrian Chairperson of the Asian Contact Group to undertake a two-week deployment in the Strategic Police Matters Unit of the OSCE Transnational Threats Department, where among other activities, she supported preparations for the 2018 OSCE Annual Police Experts Meeting in Vienna. The Secretariat further facilitates the participation of representatives of Afghan government structures and non-governmental organizations at OSCE conferences and workshops, including high-level events such as annual Ministerial Council meetings. Hence, through the Partnership Fund framework, the OSCE uses every opportunity to create a platform for exchange and co-operation between Afghan representatives and its executive structures. For a comprehensive overview of the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan, see chapter V of this booklet.

A further activity worthy of note here, however, is the extrabudgetary project "Placement of experts from OSCE Partners for Co-operation", which has been running since 2011. While the last participant in the previous round was a young Thai diplomat in early 2018, the project also notably attracted young Afghan diplomats wishing to familiarize themselves in depth with the OSCE's practical work as well as with its commitments, values and standards. Thanks to a contribution from Germany, the third round of the project, which is managed by the OSCE External Co-operation Section, was due to be launched in 2020. It has been postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however. The revised project is planned for a five-year

period, providing five young diplomats per year from the Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation with the opportunity to spend one week observing the activities of an OSCE Secretariat department, section or unit and gain a thorough knowledge of the history, functioning, and current activities of the OSCE during a two-week summer academy.

Australia: Focus on initiatives looking into leveraging innovation and technology to address transnational threats

Australia fully supports the work of the OSCE and its comprehensive and co-operative approach to security, and makes a constructive and practical contribution to the work of the organization. As the most recent OSCE Asian Partner for Co-operation, Australia has been contributing to a variety of OSCE activities in all three dimensions. Over the past years, Australia particularly focused on supporting OSCE activities on leveraging innovation and technology in dealing with transnational threats and other challenges affecting both the OSCE area and the Asia-Pacific region. This was particularly well reflected in an OSCE round table in November 2020 dedicated to "Leveraging Innovation and technology to address twenty-first century challenges and crises across the OSCE and Asian Partners for Co-operation", organized by the Transnational Threats Department and



Speakers at the side-event of “Effective multilateralism in a globalized world – the case of Europe and Asia Pacific” conference, Vienna, Austria, May 2018.
(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria)



Stephen McGlynn, Minister Counsellor (Home Affairs), Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations Office at Geneva, speaking at the Asian Contact Group meeting in Vienna, 28 June 2019. (OSCE/Jonathan Perfect)

External Co-operation Section in close co-operation with the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, with the support of the Slovak Chairperson of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group, and the OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC).

The blended online event was attended by nearly 180 participants from across the entire OSCE area and from all five Asian Partners for Co-operation, several of which were also alumni of the BMSC (representatives of Australia have participated in BMSC courses since June 2016) and now contributed to the round table as panellists. Australia was represented by speakers in all four sessions, which is not surprising as the event focused on topics of particular relevance to Australia’s partnership with the OSCE in recent years. Looking into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on border agencies’ operations, the round table focused on a number of serious transnational security threats, from trafficking in human beings to terrorist activities. The event included a discussion on the innovative use of emerging technologies which included Biometrics and Advance Passenger Information/Passenger Name Record systems to help address the cross border movement of potential foreign terrorist fighters and criminals. In the 2018–2019 period, Australia financially supported the OSCE Advance Passenger Information project.

Equally, combating trafficking in human beings has been a focus topic of Australia’s engagement with the OSCE in recent years as reflected in a side event at the high-level Conference on “Effective multilateralism in a globalized world – the case of Europe and Asia Pacific” held in Vienna in May 2018 (see also chapter V), which looked into the global fight against trafficking in human beings and included the Australian Government Ambassador for People Smuggling and Human Trafficking, Geoffrey Shaw, as guest speaker. In 2019, Australia co-organized an Asian Contact Group meeting on the topic “Countering trafficking in human beings and modern slavery”, presenting on its National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery. At the meeting, the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime was stressed as the first major policy document dealing with the subject of modern slavery. The meeting was also the first in the OSCE context featuring a survivor of human trafficking who shared her traumatic experience with OSCE participating States and Partners.

Japan: Active participation in OSCE projects and missions

Since 1992, Japan has consistently been a very committed Partner for Co-operation and has contributed to various OSCE projects and activities.

Japan's contribution to the OSCE is based on two main pillars, active participation in OSCE meetings and financial support for projects. Initially, this was for post-war reconstruction in former Yugoslavia in particular; later, it was increasingly related to Central Asia and Afghanistan, and to Ukraine. In that context, Japan has made significant contributions to extrabudgetary projects, in recent years with a particular focus on OSCE activities with relevant Afghan components (see also chapter IV).

Field trip report from visits to the Border Management Staff College/ OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe and to the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat conducted in 2018 by Mr. NISHIDA Wataru, Second Secretary, Delegation of Japan to the OSCE.

“As the OSCE’s first Asian Partner for Co-operation starting in 1992, even before the formal establishment of the OSCE, Japan has consistently played a leading role in contributing to OSCE discussions, projects and activities.

The OSCE bears great significance and plays a crucial role in global peace and security through its comprehensive approach including confidence-building, protecting human rights, promoting democracy and establishing the rule of law, which is in line with Japan’s diplomatic policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” based on the principle of international co-operation. In particular, it is essential to strengthen border management capacity to prevent and counter transnational threats such as terrorism, trafficking in persons, and infectious diseases including COVID-19 in the context of the current pandemic. As a part of Japan’s support for Afghanistan and Central Asia, Japan has made substantial contributions of US\$ 4.2 million to the OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Tajikistan since 2012 and of US\$ 1.1 million to the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat since 2008 for developing the capacities of the border management authorities of the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan.

In 2018, I had an opportunity to visit the sites of the field operations in Dushanbe and Ashgabat whose projects are funded by Japan. I would like to share with you some of my thoughts and impressions from the trip field note as follows:



A representative of the State Border Service of Turkmenistan (left) greets NISHIDA Wataru of the Embassy of Japan in Vienna and a diplomat of the Embassy of Japan to Turkmenistan (right), to discuss elements of the project dedicated to “Strengthening Border Service Capacities in Turkmenistan”, Ashgabat, 31 January 2018.
(OSCE/Marietta Koenig)

During my visit to the BMSC, I had opportunities to have a comprehensive exchange of views with all the stakeholders involved in the BMSC project. Through the discussion, I confirmed that the BMSC project contributes to the capacity-building of the border management staff of the participating countries by improving participants’ knowledge and skills in the face of the increasingly unstable security situation near the Afghan border.

Throughout the training course, the participants from various countries learn and exchange views with each other. It surely fosters mutual understanding, brings about friendship with a personal network and contributes to confidence-building among the countries.

It is noteworthy that the BMSC is unique and significant in its role. It enhances the professionalism of border control officers in the complex task of balancing openness and security.

During my visit to the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, I also learned the importance of the co ordination process with the host country. I was impressed by the belief of the staff of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat that this project surely enhances the capacity of the Government of Turkmenistan, ensuring the stability of Turkmenistan and

the region. In this process, continuous co-ordination between the Centre and the host country seems to me a vital point.

The need for capacity development of the border management is essential and important for the countries sharing borders with Afghanistan, where instability remains. Some Tajikistan government officials expressed to me their concern about the growing tension along the Afghan borders.

The efforts of the relevant countries to reinforce their border management capacity contribute to the stability of Central Asia and Afghanistan, and ultimately that of Asia and Europe. Japan's continuous support for these efforts will be expected."

In addition to making financial contributions, Japan has also participated in a wide range of OSCE activities by providing its experts and officials to field operations and election monitoring missions. Since 1999, Japan has regularly seconded experts to OSCE field operations; particularly to the OSCE Mission to Kosovo, to the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and from 2015 to the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM).

Interview with Mr. YONEMITSU Masanobu, Reporting Officer from April 2017 to April 2019, about his experience as a Japanese national seconded to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

What is your professional background?

I have a background in conflict resolution and political affairs. I studied conflict analysis and resolution in the United States of America and started my career as a programme officer in charge of a peace-building project. Then I worked for the Japanese embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina before joining the OSCE Mission in Sarajevo as Political Advisor to the Senior Representative of the Head of the Mission. I also served in Timor-Leste prior to being seconded to the SMM by the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Why did you want to work for the OSCE SMM?

Back in spring 2014, when the situation was unpredictable in post-Maidan Ukraine, I was sent to Luhansk from Bosnia as one of the OSCE's first responders. I was given 48 hours to travel to Ukraine



YONEMITSU Masanobu (left), together with a colleague, David Williams during his time at the Donetsk Monitoring Team's patrol, Ukraine, January 2019.

(YONEMITSU Masanobu)

where I worked on the National Dialogue Project to identify entry points for OSCE dialogue facilitation. At that time, the situation in Luhansk was just like a scene in Danis Tanović's film Cirkus Columbia: everything appeared to be calm with few exceptions on the eve of the conflict. After the six-week project, I flew back to Bosnia and, as the situation in Ukraine deteriorated, I started receiving urgent requests from Luhansk for medical and other basic supplies. I managed to send a list of necessary supplies to a UN humanitarian team in Kyiv, but my feeling of helplessness lingered. Joining the SMM was a way of making my personal contribution (in an official capacity) to people affected by the conflict.

What were your responsibilities at the SMM?

At the SMM, I worked as Reporting Officer responsible for drafting the Mission's official reports, including daily and weekly reports. As SMM reports are thoroughly read by the public, participating States and other actors concerned, drafting them required extensive analysis and scrutiny of information gathered by SMM patrols.

What value did you gain from working at the SMM and how did you benefit from this experience?

What I learned most was the importance of establishing facts. Some people or organizations tend to make decisions based on indirect information, including hearsay evidence, but the SMM is different. The Mission has ears (patrols) and eyes (camera, unmanned aerial vehicle and satellite imagery) to gather first-hand

information. My experience at the SMM has positively affected the way I perceive the world.

What challenges did you face while working at the SMM?

The SMM Reporting Officer was one of the toughest jobs I have ever had in my career. You are basically tasked to write up a report overnight alone – or with little assistance – based on a pile of freshly prepared documents which sometimes exceed 100 pages and mostly contain unfamiliar information. The next day, you are tasked with getting clearance from your supervisor all the way to the OSCE Chairmanship to publish what you just wrote. What was also challenging was facing people’s emotions when handling sensitive cases such as civilian casualties due to the conflict.

Japan has already seconded delegates to several OSCE missions and field operations. Why do you think such co-operation is important for your country?

The OSCE and Japan share an approach to treating security comprehensively, from the viewpoints of fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, rule of law and human rights. Japan is interested in maintaining and protecting international order based on those values. This is the reason why Japan attaches great importance to its co-operation with the OSCE.

Republic of Korea: Promoting peace and security in North-East Asia with reference to aspects of the OSCE toolbox

Over the last few years, the Republic of Korea has made substantial contributions to the Partnership Fund as well as contributions to OSCE extrabudgetary projects. The country’s contributions focus mainly on transnational threats, particularly on cybersecurity and the security of information and communication technologies (ICT), combating violent extremism and terrorism, and the challenges and opportunities of new technologies for peace and security. A key project that recently benefited from the country’s support was the OSCE extrabudgetary project dedicated to “Preventing and countering the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes in Central Asia in 2019–2020”.

Co-operation within the OSCE, with partner countries and with other regions, is critical for advancing peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space. An excellent example is the series of interregional conferences on the subject of transnational threats, initiated and organized by the Republic of Korea since 2017 with the support of the OSCE Secretariat.

H.E. Ahn Chong, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, 2017

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”



Park Won-soon, Mayor of Seoul (Republic of Korea), speaking at the OSCE Security Days event: “Creating inclusive, safe and sustainable cities: Local approaches to global challenges”, Vienna, 31 March 2017. (OSCE/Micky Kroell)

Interregional Conference on Cyber/ICT Security, Seoul, 4 and 5 April 2017

The first interregional conference provided an opportunity to share the OSCE’s experience and good practices in promoting cyber/ICT stability. Held on 4 and 5 April 2017 in Seoul, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea in close co-operation with the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the External Co-operation Section, the conference aimed at exploring and enhancing co-operation between OSCE participating States and Asian

Partners for Co-operation and possibilities for joint efforts to reduce the likelihood of ICT-induced tensions or even conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic area and in Asia.

The two-day event gathered 210 participants from over 50 countries, 32 speakers as well as over 30 private organizations and academic institutions. The conference covered a wide range of topics, including:

- identifying synergies between regional organizations and exploring similarities and differences in regional approaches to cyber/ICT security;
- promoting better co-ordination between the public and private sectors;
- identifying innovative approaches to attributing significant cyberattacks that could impact relations between States from both regions; and
- how capacity-building can be effectively developed across both areas.

Apart from valuable conclusions related to the specific topics, participants generally encouraged the continuation of regular interregional dialogue on issues pertaining to promoting cyber stability between States. One of the concrete proposals was to turn this interregional conference on cyber/ICT security into a regular biennial event.

Preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism focus of OSCE-supported interregional conference in Seoul, 19 April 2018

The second interregional conference gathered more than 150 experts from across the OSCE area and the Asian region with the participation of 47 countries, several international organizations, civil society organizations, academia and business. Held in Seoul and organized by the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Korea in close co-operation with the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the External Co-operation Section, the conference focused on preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

During the two-day conference, the participants discussed the following topics:

- challenges and approaches in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism;

- priorities in developing national action plans to prevent violent extremism;
- ways to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making and to integrate gender perspectives;
- misuse of ICT by terrorist groups and ideas for countering terrorist ideology online, while upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats, Ms. Rasa Ostrauskaite said, "Violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism is a global threat that manifests locally and requires a comprehensive and nuanced response. The OSCE works on policy support as well as technical support to governments and civil society engagement."

The conference emphasized the importance of strengthening dialogue and co-operation in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

Second Interregional Conference on Cyber/ICT Security, Seoul, 1 and 2 May 2019

On 1 and 2 May 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, in close co-operation with the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the External Co-operation Section organized the Second Interregional Conference on Cyber/ICT Security in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The conference built upon previous discussions and provided OSCE participating States and Asian Partners for Co-operation with the opportunity to further enhance interregional co-operation on cyber/ICT security issues.

The two-day event gathered 120 participants from over 40 countries, 32 speakers and more than 15 companies, organizations and academic institutions. The conference covered a wide range of topics, including:

- the UN framework on promoting responsible behaviour of States in cyberspace;
- the role of regional organizations in translating capacity-building, norms development and confidence-building measures (CBMs) into practice;
- the role of government and public-private partnerships in critical infrastructure protection;
- interregional best practice exchange on national incident classification systems and;
- how technical advancements will shape the



Second Interregional Conference on Cyber/ICT Security, Seoul, Republic of Korea, May 2019.
(Ministry of the Republic of Korea)

international cyber/ICT security policy and legal landscape.

Conference participants agreed that the implementation of norms and CBMs is a joint effort and benefits from regional expertise. Discussions around international law highlighted that CBMs serve as a basis for observing international law in cyberspace and support avoiding misperception.

Interregional Conference on the Impact of Emerging Technologies on International Security and Terrorism, 14 October 2020

The fourth interregional conference organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea in close co-operation with the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the OSCE External Co-operation Section was held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event gathered over 150 participants from 53 countries and 11 international organizations, with discussions about the impact of emerging technology on international security and on terrorism.

Participants discussed the development and testing of autonomous weapons systems and the need to minimize the risk to civilians and compliance through adhering to international humanitarian and human rights law. The panellists highlighted the important role international and regional organizations play in addressing the threats posed by the use of emerging technologies for terrorist purposes, in particular through promoting the ratification of Universal Anti-Terrorism Instruments (UN Conventions, their Amendments and Protocols).

Experts also underlined that international and regional organizations such as the UN, the OSCE, the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, Interpol and others are well suited to promote dialogue and public-private partnerships, the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, as well as offering tailored, human-rights compliant capacity building programmes, in accordance with their mandates.

OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats, Ambassador Alena Kupchyna said, “While the technological development tends to outpace relevant global norms and regulations, the OSCE can provide a platform to help formulating needed policies and legal parameters. A multi-stakeholder approach involving participating States, pertinent industries, academia, and civil society seems critical.”

The series of interregional conferences is planned to continue in 2021 with yet another interregional conference on cyber/ICT security.

Moreover, the Republic of Korea is actively promoting opportunities to share experience and lessons learned between the OSCE and the Asian Partners. As a nation still divided, the Republic of Korea is continuously looking to learn from the rich experiences gained by the OSCE and OSCE over the past decades. It consistently promoted the usefulness of the OSCE experience as a potential inspiration for building multilateral and comprehensive security co-operation in North-East Asia, particularly with regard to the OSCE’s expertise in confidence- and security-building measures as reflected, for example, in the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform (see chapter V).

Thailand: Asian advocate for a comprehensive security approach highlighting the relevance of a Sustainable Development Goals-based approach to multilateralism

Thailand continuously makes valuable contributions to the dialogue and co-operation in the framework of the OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation. The 2016 OSCE Asian Conference hosted by Thailand significantly contributed to an inclusion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the OSCE’s overall agenda, stressing the important role of regional

organizations such as the OSCE and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the attainment of the new sustainable development goals (SDGs). This SDG-based approach is reflected throughout Thailand's engagement with the OSCE including at the OSCE-wide Youth Forum: Engaging Youth for a Safer Future, held in Bratislava in October 2019, in which Thai youth representatives participated, one female and one male.

Annual International Training Courses initiative

Recognizing the indispensability of human resources and constructive co-operation among developing countries in the field of development, Thailand has initiated platforms to share its expertise and experiences in human resources development. Led by the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency, Thailand has offered a wide range of training programmes under the Annual International Training Courses (AITC) initiative to facilitate the sharing of experiences and establish professional networks among participants from across the world. The initiative is part of Thailand's inclusive and holistic approach to addressing security challenges in the region and beyond.

Since 2018, Thailand has started offering AITC training courses in its areas of expertise with priority for applicants from OSCE participating States and Partners. Thus far, nearly 140 fellowships have been awarded to participants from around 20 OSCE countries to participate in various courses on food security, climate



Thai participants at the OSCE-wide Youth Forum in Bratislava, Slovakia, October 2019. (Thailand)

change, public health, sustainable development, and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. It is envisaged that this initiative would bring people of our regions closer and promote the mutual learning and exchange of best practices with the OSCE participating States and other Partners, making our Partnership more meaningful and mutually beneficial.

Like other Asian Partners, Thailand has made regular use of the possibility to nominate Thai nationals for the courses offered by the Border Management Staff College.



Participants of the 2019 Annual International Training Course held at Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand)

Interview with Ms. Upinya BOONRUANGNAM, Captain/Deputy Inspector of Nan Immigration, Royal Thai Police/Thai Immigration Bureau, and alumna of the 21st Border Management Staff Course for Women Leaders held in Dushanbe in 2018

What is your professional background?

I worked in the Immigration Bureau from 2005 to 2018. In my first four years, I worked in Bangkok/Donmuang Airport and Suvarnabhumi Airport. I was a supervisor at the Departure Subdivision responsible for observing passengers passing through passport control areas. I was then promoted to work at the Transit Subdivision, dealing with deportation and inadmissible passengers.

Later, I worked in the provincial offices located at the borders between Thailand, Myanmar and Laos.

In 2018, I joined the UN Mission in South Sudan to serve Thailand as an UN Police Advisor. I was deployed to the UN Police (UNPOL) Immigration Unit in July 2019 as an UNPOL immigration officer until the end of my mission in October 2020. I attended various international courses on border control and management, document detection, training the trainers and operational intelligence analysis. I have not only experiences but also connections with stakeholders both inbound and outbound, especially in Southeast Asia.

What was your motivation for applying to the OSCE Border Security and Management for Senior Leadership Course / Border Management Staff Course for Women Leaders?

I have participated in many courses about border control in Southeast Asia but not in Europe. I took a great interest in this course because it would provide me with a great opportunity to participate in an international course. It is not only a course for officers in charge of border security, but also a special course for senior women leaders from many countries such as Australia, Tunisia, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and the Netherlands. My colleague and I were the first from the Royal Thai Police/Thai Immigration Bureau attending this course.

What were the key takeaways from attending the course?

This course has given me knowledge, information, experience, new strategies, techniques, and methods



Upinya Boonruangnam attending the 21st Border Management Staff Course for Women Leaders, Dushanbe, Tajikistan 2018. (Upinya Boonruangnam)

for my work field, which I can share with my colleagues and subordinates. Furthermore, we have created another network among a variety of participants based in Europe and Asia.

How has the course benefited your current role at the Royal Thai Police/Thai Immigration Bureau?

After attending the course, I can become an immigration lecturer sharing my knowledge from this course with 30 officers in the Immigration Division 3 (East Central Division, Thai Immigration Bureau) under the project named "IMM.3 Liaison Officer". Also, I can be a role model to my colleagues who may wish to participate in this course in the future.

Do you have any recommendations or advice to future Asian Partnership for Co-operation participants?

My personal advice is to research and have a clear understanding of the course before applying. Familiarize yourself with the English language and upgrade your knowledge on cultural dynamics.

IV. Afghanistan: engagement and strategic co-operation

The OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan began with an acknowledgement that security in the OSCE area is inseparable from developments in its neighbouring countries. In 2003, Afghanistan became an OSCE Partner for Co-operation and in December 2007, at the Ministerial Council meeting in Madrid, the OSCE participating States adopted a decision on OSCE engagement with Afghanistan. With this landmark document, the Organization highlighted its strong commitment to intensifying its support to Afghanistan.

This chapter describes the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan, providing an overview of the most important initiatives and projects, giving details about the Organization's strengths and constraints in relation to its assistance to Afghanistan. It also highlights the need for continued close co-operation.

The OSCE began by focusing its activities on strengthening the security and management of borders between the Central Asian States and Afghanistan, subsequently expanding into projects related to combating terrorism and trafficking in small arms, light weapons, illicit drugs and human beings. Since 2009, the OSCE has contributed through a range of border management projects, most of which are financed through extrabudgetary contributions. In 2011, the OSCE participating States adopted Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/11 in Vilnius, reinforcing their commitment to Afghanistan. Going beyond the politico-

military dimension, projects have since taken into account aspects of security related to the economic and environmental and human dimensions, including education, empowerment of women and continued assistance with election processes. Since Afghanistan is not a participating State, the projects are implemented almost exclusively outside Afghanistan.

The majority of the projects are funded through extrabudgetary contributions. The OSCE's activities related to Afghanistan are mainly implemented by the OSCE's field operations in Central Asia in close co-ordination and co-operation with units in the OSCE Secretariat, notably the Transnational Threats Department and the Central Asia Desk in the Conflict Prevention Centre. The main focus of the projects is on border management and security, and so far over 1,000 Afghans have been among the border security officials trained mainly at the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, including the Border Management Staff College, and at the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat. At the heart of these projects is the concept of partnership — bringing Afghan officials together with their Tajik and Turkmen counterparts to strengthen security on their mutual borders, improve trade connections and build confidence.

Facilitated by the External Co-operation Section, Asian Partner Japan, has from the beginning been a significant donor to these projects. Consequently, at the 2019 OSCE Asian Conference hosted by Japan,



Panelists at the 2019 OSCE Asian Conference, Tokyo, Japan, September 2019. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)



Participants at the 2017 OSCE Asian Conference. Berlin, Germany, June 2017. (OSCE)

a side event was dedicated to “Enhancing security, building partnerships: Co-operation between OSCE field operations in Central Asia and Afghanistan on border management”, where the heads of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe and the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and beneficiaries highlighted the impact of the OSCE’s border management and security projects in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. This provided a relevant opportunity to explore the interaction and exchange between Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Similarly, at the 2017 OSCE Asian Conference hosted by Germany in Berlin as Asian Contact Group Chair, a side event was dedicated to “Engaging with Afghanistan and its neighbours - OSCE’s contribution to confidence building by empowering women”. The event particularly focused on the OSCE project “Women, water management and conflict resolution in Central Asia and Afghanistan”. The first phase of this project had been conducted from 2015 to 2016 by the OSCE Gender Section together with the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, with the aim of fostering the incorporation of gender perspectives in water governance and the participation of women in conflict resolution and water management at all levels in Central Asia and Afghanistan. The project looked into building a regional network of female water professionals to foster mutual understanding and make their voices heard in water management decisions.

Adela Raz, the Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Cooperation of Afghanistan, addressed the side event with opening remarks emphasizing that the Government of Afghanistan attached priority to ensuring women’s access to education, resources and employment,

and particularly focused on women’s economic empowerment. Her intervention recalled relevant aspects that had also featured in her presentations to the OSCE Permanent Council and to an Asian Contact Group meeting in November 2016.

Securing borders: OSCE border management activities

Border Management Staff College

Established in 2009, the Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, offers training and seminars for border and customs officers. The BMSC offers two courses: a month-long Border Management Staff course and a Border Security and Management for Senior Leadership course, which is a one-year blended learning course combining in-class lectures with online learning.



Students at the 2018 BMSC Staff Course for Women Leaders, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, May 2018. (OSCE)

A total of 922 officials from Afghanistan have been trained at the College as of October 2020. One of the areas in which the College adds the greatest value is through its efforts to promote closer co-operation and exchange of experience from across the OSCE region. The college uses the OSCE network to collect and disseminate best practices and lessons learned. BMSC core courses follow a comprehensive approach allowing BMSC students to gain a thorough understanding of various border-related issues such as border security models, national strategies, modern technologies, cross-border conflicts, anti corruption measures and protection of human rights in preventing and combating transnational threats and crime. The BMSC also hosts conferences and round table discussions where high-level decision makers, practitioners and representatives of academic institutions exchange views on current security issues.

Patrol Field Capacity-Building of the Tajik Border Troops through promotion of regional co-operation

The OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe carries out the Patrol Field Capacity Building (PFCB) to help strengthen border security primarily along the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Central to this project are four-week courses dedicated to field operational capacities and oriented towards Tajik Border Troops and Afghan Border Police. The training focuses on a variety of issues, including map reading, mountaineering, and

provision of first aid in the field. The participants receive advanced training on planning and conducting border patrols with the use of topographical maps and satellite imagery as well as developing patrol planning and management techniques and mountaineering. Sessions on gender mainstreaming and human rights are also integral parts of the course curriculum.

In addition, selected officers from the Tajik and Kyrgyz Border Troops and Afghan Border Police who have successfully completed Sustaining Field Operational Capacities (SFOC) training at the regional training centres have the possibility to attend three-week “training of trainers” courses at the BMSC in Dushanbe. This course is designed to target those students who have expressed an interest in or have an aptitude for training others.

Aside from the aforementioned training courses, exceptional SFOC graduates can attend Operational Planning Training, with a focus on developing planning and management skills, cross-border information sharing and inter-agency co-operation. Operational Planning Training covers such topics as problem solving, command and control, operational planning, briefing techniques, information and risk management, and understanding the military decision-making process.

The PFCB project, which started in 2018 and is financially supported by, for example, Asian Partner Japan, is expected to run until 2022 with 110 Afghan participants due to take part in the course.

Stabilization of Tajikistan’s southern border region with Afghanistan

This project, launched in September 2020 by the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, will offer a four-week training course to selected Afghan Border Force officials, Tajik Border Troops officers and staff members of the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence of Tajikistan. The project, funded by the European Union, has a two-fold purpose: to increase the professional capacities of the border troops in tackling illicit activities in border areas, and to increase the Committee’s ability to address the destabilizing effects of natural disasters and manage potential influxes of refugees from Afghanistan. While the project is primarily oriented towards Tajikistan, up to 70 Afghan Border Force officers are also expected to attend the course within a one-year period.



Practical course on Sustaining Field Operational Capacities, Tajikistan, September 2020. (OSCE)

Strengthening border service capacities in Turkmenistan

Since 2017, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat has been running a project on strengthening border service capacities in Turkmenistan, which promotes and contributes to the strengthening of regional co-operation in the field of regional border security and management matters in line with the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. Numerous factors, such as limited international connectivity, the lack of direct access to open sea, and rapid globalization of trade and supply chains, make regional integration a necessity, not an option. Based on this reality, the project consistently advocates for secure and open borders since active cross-border trade and transit significantly contribute to economic prosperity.

The project's Turkmen–Afghan co-operation component made a significant contribution to strengthening co-operation between the border agencies of the two countries. As part of the regional component of the project, 11 Turkmen-Afghan regional workshops were conducted with the participation of 91 representatives of Afghanistan. These joint activities covered a wide range of topics such as combating illicit trafficking in cultural property, fighting cross-border crimes, risk management and inter agency co-ordination, counter terrorism, and combating the financing of terrorism. With the next project phase currently being initiated, 215 Turkmen Border Agency officials, 40 Afghan Border Police officers, 9 Tajik border guards and 9 Uzbek border guards are expected to benefit from the proposed project activities in 2021 and 2022.

Training of trainers in the area of combating illicit drugs for Afghan law enforcement officers, held in Domodedovo, Russian Federation

When addressing border security and management, activities related to combating illicit drugs play an important role. Since 2007, the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department has been providing advanced "training of trainers" to a select group of Afghan law enforcement officers from operational departments of the Counter-Narcotics Police and Border Police. Up to 110 law enforcement officers from Afghanistan have been trained so far. The main purpose is to enhance participants' practical competencies and training skills in combating the production and trafficking of illicit drugs. The course schedule includes methods



Guy Vinet (left), Head of the OSCE's Strategic Police Matters Unit, presenting a certificate to a trainee from the Afghan National Police during a closing ceremony of an OSCE-organized training course focusing on combating illicit drug trafficking and drug-related crimes, Saint Petersburg, Russia, 5 April 2019. (OSCE/Eduard Lokotunin)

and tools for strengthening the participants' capacity to deliver training in Afghanistan on search operations in residential buildings, airports and vehicles. Training courses also focus on tactical search techniques, the effective use of sniffer dogs and special equipment, as well as on the documentation of search results and their processing during further stages of the investigations.

The OSCE offers these courses at the All-Russian Advanced Training Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation in Domodedovo, Moscow region. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 'improved' training for ten Afghan officers has had to be rescheduled. The next phase of the project is currently being developed.

Addressing economic and environmental challenges

Women, water management and conflict prevention

The involvement of women at all stages of the planning and decision-making processes in the area of environmental security allows for more effective and sustainable responses to the natural challenges. Gender mainstreaming, especially in water governance, contributes to stability and security as it can lead to more effective policies and work aiming to reduce

social imbalances and tension. When women and men have an equal chance to decide on how to use water, decisions are better targeted and more representative of the needs of the entire population.

With the OSCE comprehensive approach to security in mind, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, together with the OSCE Gender Section, is implementing a project on women, water management and conflict prevention. By empowering women, this project enables women to take responsibility for matters that directly affect them and their communities. Through their engagement, Afghan women have the potential to strengthen good governance and environmental security, and thus contribute to sustainable development, conflict prevention and a more secure future for all. Additionally, Afghanistan and its neighbours share a common interest in using their water resources both sustainably and equitably, which adds an important confidence-building element to the project.

Afghan representatives of the water sector from governmental bodies and academic institutions, as well as NGOs and technical agencies, benefit from this project. On the margins of the 2017 OSCE Asian Conference, a side event was dedicated to the first phase of the project (see above). The second phase of the project has been running since 2019, and in the same year in September, five Afghan participants had already attended the OSCE regional training course on water diplomacy in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Central Asian Leadership Programme on environment for sustainable development

Successfully addressing environmental issues would not be possible without the active participation of youth. Therefore, for the 11th consecutive year, the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan with the support of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia, the United Nations Environment Programme, the European Union, the US Agency for International Development, and the World Bank organized the Central Asian Leadership Programme for Environmental Leaders in September 2020. Due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the event took place online. The Programme is part of the Office's long-standing efforts to strengthen the network of young environmental leaders in the Central Asian region and beyond and to promote regional dialogue and co-operation in environmental



Ambassador György Szabó (centre-left), Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan during the plenary session at the 10th annual Central Asia Environmental Leadership Programme, Almaty, 16 September 2019. (CAREC)

security and sustainable development.

In the course of five days, 45 young environmental leaders and decision makers from the governments and academic and civil society organizations of the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan attended the event. The participants discussed trends to avert climate change and to address environmental challenges. They focused on a variety of relevant topics, such as integrated water resource management, the role of communities in addressing environmental challenges, regional co-operation, and disaster risk reduction in the context of sustainable development and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Human dimension and democratization efforts

Assistance with election processes

As mentioned above, the OSCE does not usually operate inside Afghanistan. However, in response to requests from the national electoral commission and as agreed by consensus through relevant OSCE Permanent Council decisions, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has regularly been involved in election support in Afghanistan since 2004. The last such deployment was however in 2014, when Afghanistan held presidential and provincial council elections. Following an invitation by the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan to support the 2014 election process, the Permanent Council then tasked the ODIHR with deploying an



ODIHR election observation in Kabul. Unloading of ballots, International Security Assistance Force.
(ODIHR/Alexander Shlyk)

election support team to Afghanistan. Back then, this was the fifth such team deployed to Afghanistan since 2004, demonstrating the ongoing interest of the Afghan authorities in ODIHR assistance. The ODIHR released the final election support team report in December 2014.¹ The report provides a number of recommendations for the Afghan and international electoral stakeholders and highlights key areas for electoral reform, based on international standards and other obligations on the part of Afghanistan. After 2014, the OSCE received further invitations for election support missions to Afghanistan; however, owing to time constraints and the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, none of them have been realized so far.

Education, research and capacity development

OSCE Academy in Bishkek

Founded in 2002, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek is a renowned educational and research institution in Central Asia, which runs two masters (MA) programmes, in politics and security and in economic governance and development. Students come from across Central Asia but also from other countries, including Afghanistan since 2006. Applications from Afghanistan to the Academy's masters programmes remain numerous. As of October 2020, a total of 64 students from Afghanistan graduated from the MA

programmes, 14 women and 50 men. For the academic year 2020–2021, the Academy has received 1,184 applications from Afghanistan, while 14 students were accepted for both MA programmes: five students for the MA in Politics and Security and nine students for MA in Economic Governance and Development — 26 per cent of the total student body of 53 students. Due to the pandemic and the closure of educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan, the Academy transitioned to e-learning starting in March 2020 to ensure that all students, including from Afghanistan, graduate on time. Teaching for the 2020–2021 academic year has therefore been conducted online since September.

Additionally, since 2010, the Academy has been running a Junior Public Officers Programme that provides students with an opportunity to gain experience in public service and define their future professional path. The Academy signed an Agreement with the Institute of Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2012. In 2018, Dr. Moheb Spinghar, Director of the Institute of Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, visited Bishkek to extend the Agreement with the OSCE Academy, allowing its graduates from Afghanistan to pursue internships at the Institute for three months. By 2020, ten OSCE Academy graduates from Afghanistan (four women and six men) had successfully participated in the programme. According to the latest alumni survey in 2020, 12 alumni (one woman and 11 men) from Afghanistan are employed at the national ministries, while eight alumni (one woman and seven men) hold positions at international organizations.

On 13 July 2018, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the UN and other international and regional organizations in Vienna, H.E. Ambassador Khojesta Fana Ebrahimkhel, paid a visit to the OSCE Academy. She held a meeting with Academy students and alumni from Afghanistan and discussed the Academy programmes and long-term goals with the Academy's Deputy Director.

In October 2018, the Academy hosted the Annual Regional Security Conference “Central Asian security: factors of fragility, sources of resilience”, where experts and researchers from Central Asia, Afghanistan, Europe, the United States of America and India discussed themes such as Central Asian regional integration, regional implications of peace and insecurity in Afghanistan, security among, across and by States, and

¹ <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/afghanistan/129761>.



H.E. Ambassador Khojesta Fana Ebrahimkhel, the Head of the Embassy and Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Permanent/Resident Representative to the United Nations and other International and Regional Organizations in Vienna visits the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, July 2018. (OSCE)



Dr. Moheb Spinghar, Director of the Institute of Diplomacy of Afghanistan, during his visit to the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, October 2018. (OSCE)

the Belt and Road Initiative between Kabul and Kiev. In addition, Dr. Moheb Spinghar, Director of the Institute of Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, delivered a public lecture on “Afghanistan and Central Asia at a glance: from policy to practice”.

Last but not least, the academy has continuously devoted its attention to issues related to Afghanistan in a series of policy briefs.

Looking ahead: what role for the OSCE?

Since Afghanistan’s Partnership began in 2003, the country has undergone important transitions. Following the turbulence that surrounded the Afghan presidential elections in 2019, the country is still in the midst of its “Transformation Decade” spanning the period from 2015 to 2024. It is widely acknowledged that uncertainty about the future of the country continues to present particular challenges for international donor support, the co-operation of international and regional organizations with Afghanistan, and the capability of the country to withstand current security threats. What is crucial, however, is that the Afghan leadership continued

to demonstrate willingness and commitment to continuing to co-operate with regional and international organizations.

As the security situation in Afghanistan will continue to affect the stability of Central Asia and the OSCE area at large, the Organization will continue to rely on its field presences in the five Central Asian participating States to provide targeted assistance in key areas and to promote regional security, stability and economic development. In so doing, the Organization is considering working with other international actors such as the European Union and the United Nations, as well as with the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The OSCE will further contribute to the implementation of the Heart of Asia Istanbul process, notably with regard to confidence-building measures in the areas of counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and education. Networking and co-operation efforts between these organizations are important to further consolidate the joint commitment and support of the international community to Afghanistan.

List of OSCE Academy policy briefs that focused on Afghanistan or were relevant to Afghanistan-Central Asia relations:

[Policy Brief No. 64](#)

THE RIGHT TIME FOR THE RIGHT CHANGE IN AFGHANISTAN

By Rajab Taieb

[Policy Brief No. 51](#)

DRIVERS OF URBAN TRANSITION IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE COUNTRY'S URBAN FUTURE

By Naqibullah Ahmadi

[Policy Brief No. 48](#)

THE ROLE OF RUSSIA IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

By Fabio Indeo

[Policy Brief No. 47](#)

LOCAL DRIVERS OF WAR IN AFGHANISTAN'S HELMAND PROVINCE

By Qayoom Suroush

[Policy Brief No. 44](#)

AFGHANISTAN'S MINERAL RESERVES CATASTROPHE/QUANDARY: HOPES AND FEARS CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MINERAL RESERVES

By Mahdi Frough

[Policy Brief No. 41](#)

RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN CENTRAL ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN

By Muhammad Idrees

[Policy Brief No. 30](#)

SOCIALIZATION IN VIOLENCE AND THE POST-2014 APPROACH IN AFGHANISTAN

By Svetlana Dzardanova

V. Prospects for increased co-operation with regional organizations in Asia

Successfully addressing today's increasingly complex security challenges will depend largely on the international community's ability to develop coordinated responses. In line with their mandates and comparative advantages, international and regional organizations will need to find ways to share the burden by pooling resources and creating new synergies.

In this context, the Austrian 2018 Chairpersonship of the Asian Contact Group was particularly committed to the promotion of multilateral co-operation with regional actors and international organizations. It organized a high-level conference on "Effective Multilateralism in a Globalized World – The Case of Europe and Asia Pacific" in Vienna in May 2018, in which a multilateral approach was reflected in the keynote speeches by Yury Fedotov, Director General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Thomas Greminger, then Secretary General of the OSCE, Li Yong, Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Natalia Gherman, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization. Other sessions focused on regional approaches to security in Europe and the Asia Pacific with valuable input from the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the European External Action Service as well as Indian and Indonesian representatives.

The OSCE is working on leveraging its relations with a number of regional security frameworks in Asia, among them the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Equally, prospects of establishing closer relations with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and other regional formats are constantly examined as additional options to actively promote multilateral co-operation in the context of peace and security. The OSCE has further regularly shared experiences and lessons learned on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) including in the

context of the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform, initiated by the Republic of Korea.

The above list of organizations is not exhaustive. Rather, it comprises organizations and mechanisms which are thematically centred on security issues and at least some of whose members are also OSCE participating States or Asian Partners for Co-operation.

Several Asian Partners have, on various occasions, called for closer co-operation between the OSCE, **ASEAN** and, where feasible, with the **ASEAN Regional Forum**. Thailand, which held the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2008, 2009 and most recently, in 2019, has strongly advocated for deepening relations, including on issues such as CSBMs, counter-terrorism, maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament. In recent years, the OSCE and ASEAN have participated in some of each other's events, with the address delivered by the Secretary General of ASEAN at the 2016 OSCE Asian Conference in Bangkok in June 2016 representing the most noteworthy ASEAN representation at an OSCE event. Shortly after the Conference, in July 2016, a meeting of the Asian Contact Group was held in Vienna, with a focus on potential synergies between the OSCE and ASEAN. Then Permanent Representative of Thailand, Ambassador Arthayudh Srisamoot, gave a presentation about enhancing co-operation between the OSCE and ASEAN, outlining recent developments in the ASEAN region and noting similarities in the priorities and visions of the ASEAN Regional Forum and the OSCE; he also highlighted the importance of an exchange of information and best practices between the OSCE and ASEAN. In June 2017 in Bangkok, the Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General addressed the session of the ASEAN workshop on "Strengthening and enhancing cybersecurity co-operation in the ASEAN region: towards an integrated approach in addressing transnational crime". In September 2018, the OSCE and ASEAN Secretaries General met in New York on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, where they discussed opportunities and possibilities for further co-operation, especially in the area of cybersecurity.

ASEM Seminar on Enhancing Human Capital for Sustainable Digital Connectivity

Bangkok, Thailand, Friday 25th October 2019



Participants of the ASEM Seminar of Enhancing Human Capital for Sustainable Digital Connectivity, Bangkok, Thailand, 25 October 2019. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand)

The OSCE particularly co operated with the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR). In December 2018, a representative from the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre gave a presentation at the workshop “ASEAN perspectives in conflict management and conflict resolution in the region” in Jakarta, Indonesia, organized jointly by the ASEAN-IPR and the United Nations. In May 2019, the chairperson of the Governing Council of the ASEAN-IPR made a comprehensive presentation on advancing the Asian Partnership for Co-operation at the Asian Contact Group meeting in Vienna. Again in Bangkok, in October 2019, OSCE Senior External Co-operation Officer in Charge of the OSCE Asian Partnership gave a presentation on OSCE perspectives with regard to sustainable digital connectivity at the Asia-Europe Meeting seminar on “Enhancing human capital for sustainable digital connectivity” organized by ASEAN Chairmanship Thailand.

Immediately following his election in 2017, President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea launched

the **Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform**, which is intended to be a regional network for multilateral co-operation. For this purpose, an annual intergovernmental meeting is hosted by the Republic of Korea to provide an institutionalized format for multilateral dialogue with the participation of government representatives from the United States of America, Japan, China, Russia, Mongolia, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as representatives of regional and international organizations including ASEAN, the European Union, the OSCE, and the United Nations. The OSCE is regularly invited to the meeting to present lessons learnt on CSBMs, and in 2018 it also participated in a panel discussion on that topic at the Northeast Asia Peace and Co-operation Forum, which is regularly organized as a private-public (track-1.5) meeting in parallel to the intergovernmental meeting.

Together with several other international organizations, the OSCE enjoys observer status at **CICA**. During the Chinese CICA Chairmanship (2014–2016, then extended until 2018), contacts between the OSCE and



From left to right: Ambassador Idibek Kalandar, Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) and Head of Tajikistan’s Delegation to the OSCE; Vladimir Norov, Secretary General of the Shanghai Co-operation Organization; and the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, Peter Burian, prepare to take the floor at the FSC meeting, Vienna, 11 July 2019. (OSCE/Micky Kroell)

CICA remained fairly limited to cross-representation at OSCE and CICA meetings and to bilateral meetings. As reflected in relevant organizational modalities, and also at the initiative of OSCE Chairpersonships, CICA was regularly invited to OSCE Ministerial Council meetings, as well as to the annual OSCE Asian conferences. CICA representatives participated in sessions on co-operation with other organizations during OSCE Regional Heads of Mission meetings in Central Asia, and contributed to a number of specialized OSCE workshops and conferences. In the past, CICA representatives had stated their interest in developing co-operation with the OSCE in the following specific areas: military and political aspects of security; the fight against terrorism; conflict prevention; activities in the spheres of economy and environment; and co-operation in the human dimension. The OSCE’s rich experience in implementing confidence-building measures is also of interest to CICA. In 2019, OSCE participating State Tajikistan assumed the role of the CICA Chair and the OSCE participated at the CICA Summit in June 2019 in Dushanbe.

The two organizations could enhance practical co-operation on regional security issues in Central Asia and confidence-building measures designed to promote peace, security and stability in the region. The OSCE also stands ready to co-operate further with CICA on preventing and countering terrorism. This could take

the form of joint OSCE-CICA workshops or joint training projects in areas of a more technical nature such as travel document security.

The OSCE has consistently stressed its readiness to deepen contacts and exchange information on issues of mutual interest and concern with the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**. The SCO was established in 2001 and replaced the Shanghai Group or Shanghai Five founded in 1996 and related to the Sino-Soviet border. The priorities of the SCO include co-operation to tackle terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Over the past years, SCO representatives have regularly participated in and contributed to OSCE regional workshops for police inter agency co-operation and law enforcement capacity building. SCO representatives have also made valuable contributions to meetings organized by the OSCE and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on combating organized crime and terrorism and on criminal justice issues in Central Asia. Given that the SCO serves as a platform for co-operation with Afghanistan and as a focal point for co-ordinating regional contributions to international efforts in support of Afghanistan, the SCO could become a key partner for the OSCE in its efforts to address the challenges stemming from transition in Afghanistan.

From the OSCE's point of view, co-operation with the SCO could generally benefit from joint efforts aimed at co-organizing regional and national conferences, seminars or workshops in countries that are both SCO members and OSCE participating States. Major topics of common interest are countering terrorism and violent extremism, border security and management, as well as different forms of transnational organized crime.

After assuming office in 2019, SCO Secretary General Vladimir Norov met with previous OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger three times. The last meeting was held shortly before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, when SCO Secretary General Norov visited the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna and discussed with the Secretary General several topics

of potential relevance, where both organizations could develop interaction. Potential spheres of co-operation between the OSCE and the SCO could be countering terrorism, fighting drug trafficking, or promoting cybersecurity. In addition, combating human trafficking emerged as a topic of mutual interest. SCO Deputy Secretary-General Aizada Subakozhoeva delivered opening remarks at the OSCE-wide conference on "The critical role of the judiciary in combating trafficking in human beings" in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in November 2019, while the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings delivered a presentation at the 15th Meeting of the Chief Justices of the Supreme Courts of the SCO Member States, hosted by SCO member Kazakhstan, held in an online format in October 2020.

■ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for **stability, prosperity and democracy** in 57 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

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