



Highlights from the 2013 OSCE Security Days on
“OSCE in the 21st Century”
Vienna, 17-18 June 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The OSCE Security Days, held in Vienna on 17-18 June 2013, brought together more than 400 participants with the aim of strengthening OSCE’s interaction with relevant Track II initiatives.

The event was live streamed over the internet and it provided valuable input for the 2013 Annual Security Review Conference, which started on 19 June 2013. Moreover, the OSCE Security Days initiative proved to be an important hub for exchange of fresh views on the way forward, enabling Track II contributions to be mainstreamed into the Helsinki+40 dialogue.

During the eight-panel debate, prominent practitioners, academic experts, representatives from the media and think tanks, as well as OSCE delegates, discussed existing security challenges and looked at potential new tools for promoting dialogue and co-operation in the OSCE area. The debate highlighted that, in the existing multipolar context, threats and challenges to security are increasingly interconnected, often touching upon multiple areas of concern. They affect relations between governments and global actors and impact people in different ways, creating a need for new approaches, usually comprising a mix of “hard” and “soft” security. Moreover, it was recognized that the process of identifying security threats itself plays a role in building confidence and increasing co-operation.

Participants also agreed that transnational threats are among the key security challenges facing the OSCE and that no state or organization can deal with them alone. However, jointly assessing their individual impact at national, sub-regional and OSCE levels has proven difficult, as different states may face different sets of threats, or may be differently affected by them. Hence, threat perceptions often differ from state to state, making joint actions more difficult. Further, it was observed that some of the most serious threats stemming from outside the OSCE area also have security repercussions in the OSCE region. How to effectively deal with this type of threat remains a challenge for the OSCE.

Finally, the launching of the OSCE’s Academic Network was hailed by the participants, who also reaffirmed the Organization’s key role as a forum for inclusive dialogue and pragmatic co-operation.

DISCUSSION

Monday, 17 June 2013

The first session was moderated by **Edward Lucas**, International Editor of the Economist, with the participation of **Wolfgang Schüssel**, President of the Foreign Policy and United Nations Association of Austria and former Federal Chancellor of Austria, **Igor Ivanov**, President of the Russian International Affairs Council and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, **Dora Bakoyannis**, Member of the Greek Parliament and former OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, **John Kornblum**, former US Ambassador to Germany and to the OSCE, and **Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene**, Rapporteur of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Political Affairs and Security as well as Member of Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania. Laying out the conceptual framework for the event, the discussion focused on current security challenges and the value of co-operative security in addressing them. Some of the points that were raised in the subsequent debate include the following:

- *In order to assure long-term security and stability it would be important to build an inclusive Euro-Atlantic community in which all disputes are resolved peacefully, with a firm commitment to tackling both internal and external threats through co-operation.*
- *While some of the traditional challenges remain (i.e., perceptions of imbalances or asymmetries in the politico-military field), today the world faces new threats and challenges – from terrorism, energy security, migration, cyber-security, etc. – and co-operation is required to tackle them.*
- *Mistrust and mutual suspicion persist within the OSCE region, hindering countries' ability to co-operate in confronting shared challenges. There is still a legacy of Cold War thinking that needs to be overcome, and this might take another generation.*
- *Building a community of shared interests, if not shared values, would provide a strong foundation for rejuvenating the OSCE and responding to 21st-century threats and challenges.*
- *Rather than aiming for some grand new concept of community, the Organization should go back to its first principles. In the early years, there was no concept of common security; there was simply a shared desire to get East-West dialogue back on track to reduce tensions. The result was a pragmatic effort to find principles that would enable a large number of States with different values to reach agreement.*
- *The OSCE can be a useful tool, but ultimately the success of the Organization depends on the political will of the participating States. Some suggested that the OSCE needs a success story to demonstrate its continuing value and show that it can produce results.*
- *In this respect, it was suggested to start with issues where it would be easy to reach an agreement, which would help build mutual confidence and trust, and then build on these to tackle more complex challenges.*

The second session focused on the identification of existing security threats in the OSCE region and on corresponding perceptions by participating States and their societies. It was moderated by **Walter Kemp**, Director for Europe and Central Asia at the International Peace Institute, with the participation of **Wolfgang Ischinger**, Chairman of the Munich Security Conference, former German Deputy Foreign Minister, **Roza Otunbayeva**, Founder of the Roza Otunbayeva Initiative and former President of Kyrgyzstan, **Giancarlo Aragona**,

President of Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale and former Secretary General of the OSCE, **Thomas Greminger**, Head of the Swiss Delegation to the OSCE, as well as **Alexander Grushko**, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to NATO. The following points were raised in the subsequent debate:

- *In an increasingly complex and multipolar geopolitical environment, perceptions of security threats may vary significantly from one state to another. Hence, it is important to identify and understand these differences in order to foster mutual trust and define common goals. The mere process of identifying threats and their perceptions can be regarded as a confidence-building measure.*
- *Several speakers pointed to a widening “gap between East and West.” However, a degree of convergence exists when it comes to global threats, together with the understanding that transnational threats can only be tackled together.*
- *The most serious threats have been identified as stemming from outside the OSCE area, where the OSCE can play only a minor role. Sharing of experiences between participating States is critical to avoiding a spillover into the OSCE region.*
- *Regarding threats originating within the OSCE area, it was concluded that considerable progress has been achieved in some areas (e.g., the Balkans), whereas others remain problematic (e.g., protracted conflicts). Some argued that the existing mandates may limit the OSCE’s capacity to address these issues effectively.*
- *As a platform for co-operative security, the OSCE could play a vital role by bringing together organizations from the Euro-Atlantic space to ensure reliable security guarantees without hidden agendas. In this light, the creation of a contact group was proposed, which could strengthen the OSCE by opening up fresh models of transparency and a renewed commitment to building trust.*
- *The importance of the “old security agenda” and the need for progress in the politico-military dimension was highlighted. The panellists identified arms control as a hallmark of the OSCE – an acquis that needs to be defended, revitalized and modernized.*
- *Finally, some participants emphasized the importance of the socio-economic dimension, pointing to the radicalizing effect of poverty and indicating it as a root cause of modern security threats.*

The third session explored the challenges stemming from security developments in the OSCE neighbourhood in light of the prospect of ISAF withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, the on-going crisis in Syria and the Arab Spring at large. These are only a few examples of events unfolding in the OSCE neighbourhood which might have a direct or indirect impact on security within the OSCE region. The session was moderated by **Karin Kneissl**, journalist, lecturer and former Austrian diplomat. Speakers included **Mohamed Imhammed Abdul-Aziz**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Libya, **Tacan Ildem**, Head of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the OSCE, **Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy**, Head of Mission of the League of Arab States to the Federal Republic of Austria and to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Vienna, **Daan Everts**, former Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and former NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan, as well as **Lessya Karatayeva**, Deputy Director of the Kazakh Institute for Strategic Studies. In his presentation Minister Abdul-Aziz announced the formal submission of Libya’s application to become an OSCE Partner for Co-operation. The following points were raised in the subsequent debate:

- *The indivisibility of security requires addressing challenges in the OSCE neighbourhood that have a direct impact on the security in the OSCE area. The Arab-Israeli conflict, Iran, Syria, the Arab Spring and Afghanistan are all issues with wider*

security implications, including for the OSCE region. Addressing them requires complementary steps at the national, regional and international level.

- *The resolution of conflicts depends on the political will of the states concerned, which are the primary actors. Yet, international organizations can play an important role in supporting the implementation of agreements and providing a framework for negotiations.*
- *The on-going process of democratic transition that followed the Arab Spring is challenged by the increase of transnational threats across North Africa, including human trafficking, trafficking of illicit drugs, extremism and transnational organized crime. Combating these transnational threats requires co-operative solutions among the countries in the region, including in securing their borders. The OSCE could support the development of a viable and operational regional preventive strategy to address transnational threats. In particular, it was suggested that the OSCE could organize a regional security conference among policy makers from different ministries dealing with security (defence, interior, intelligence).*
- *The international community needs a strategic vision for Afghanistan post-2014. The OSCE can provide valuable assistance based on its comparative advantages, in particular in addressing transnational threats. In addition, the OSCE provides an interesting model for fostering regional trust, dialogue and co-operation, which has already provided a positive example for the confidence building measures devised as part of the Heart of Asia process. Some of the elements in the OSCE toolbox could also be further utilized, including the role of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in building trust among minorities and the role of the Organization in promoting religious tolerance. The OSCE could also initiate a dialogue with NATO, CSTO and SCO on combating terrorism and extremism stemming from Afghanistan.*
- *Stepping up research and analytical work within the OSCE is vital for developing a true indivisible security community. The OSCE academic network could help to enhance dialogue and mutual understanding among countries in North Africa as well as among countries from different OSCE regions.*

The Night Owl session was a panel discussion especially targeted at a youth audience. It was moderated by **Nikolai Atefie**, Project Manager at Council of Europe and Youth Journalist, with the participation of **Jonne Catshoek**, founder and Director of the ELVA online platform, **Lucas Nielsen**, founder of the musical activism NGO RAPOLITICS, **Marija Novkovic**, Open Government Partnership Specialist at UNDP Montenegro and **Tadas Langaitis**, founder of aukok.lt and Chairman of the board at the Civic Responsibility Foundation. The panel explored the role of social media as a tool for creating security. The following points were raised in the subsequent debate:

- *The world is increasingly interconnected and online, which presents opportunities for organizations like the OSCE to engage with a wider audience, for governments to engage with their citizens, and for communities to organize themselves more effectively.*
- *Social media help form community links (or associative links) and build communities, thereby increasing social capital. Social media enable people to discuss the same issues regardless of their location.*
- *New media should complement the work of local authorities, security providers and communities. Using new media can be fairly “low tech” (e.g., SMS text messages), and it should be targeted to the intended audience. However, constant validation of information channelled through new media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) is required to*

avoid misuse or deliberate attempts to elicit reactions by distorting facts or misrepresenting developments, especially in the context of crisis situation.

- *The target audience uses social media, which argues for online engagement by the OSCE. The OSCE should therefore target products to users, rather than vice versa.*
- *Social Media have changed the pace of politics and development, which offers the possibility of greater potential for change.*

Tuesday, 18 June 2013

The fourth session dealt with the topic of building a common future and the promotion of conflict prevention. It debated the need to progressively shift from a culture of “reaction” (post-conflict rehabilitation) towards one of “prevention” (early warning and early action) to address more immediate, as well as deeply rooted, causes of conflict. The panel was moderated by **Douglas Wake**, First Deputy Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The following speakers participated: **István Gyarmati**, President and CEO of the International Centre for Democratic Transition in Budapest, **James Collins**, Director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and former US Ambassador to the Russian Federation, **François Alabrune**, Permanent Representative of France to the OSCE and **David J. Galbreath**, Professor of International Security at the University of Bath and editor of *European Security*. Some of the points that were raised in the subsequent debate included:

- *Conflict prevention is not only a tool for stabilization, it is also about defending values. It is cheaper than conflict management or post-conflict rehabilitation, and it can succeed if it is done properly and in time, but it will ultimately fail if efforts are not made to sustain it.*
- *Conflict prevention is at the core of the OSCE role. For the OSCE, conflict prevention is not just a technical issue, it is a political issue. The OSCE helps create conditions that prevent the possible triggering of conflict, particularly by improving implementation of OSCE commitments in all three dimensions. The OSCE adds value through the “security-rights nexus.” It is also cost-effective, providing good value for very little money.*
- *Political leadership, especially the role of the Chairmanship, is critical to the OSCE’s effectiveness. The role of the Secretary General is also important. Operational preparedness is key to the efficiency of OSCE structures.*
- *The OSCE’s conflict prevention ability depends on political will and the viability of our security system. The 2008 war in Georgia demonstrated that this system needed to be strengthened. The Corfu process and Astana were important steps, but there is still much work to be done in the Helsinki +40 process.*

The fifth session was moderated by **Rick Thompson**, Director of T-Media, Visiting Professor of Broadcast Journalism at Birmingham City University and former BBC journalist, with the participation of **Des Browne**, Convener of the European Leadership Network for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament and non-Proliferation and former member of the Cabinet of the United Kingdom, **Sonja Stojanovic**, Director of the Belgrade Center for Security Policy, **Viktor Konstantynov**, Associate Professor at the Kiev National Taras Shevchenko University, and **Angela Me**, Chief of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The panel examined the global phenomenon of transnational threats from a regional perspective and debated the OSCE’s potential for addressing the major transnational threats. Some points that were raised included:

- *Transnational threats are easy to name, but hard to assess and even harder to fight. Since every state confronts a different set of threats, different views exist when it comes to prioritizing major transnational security threats. In dealing with transnational threats, the OSCE is developing a cohesive agenda, formulating policies that elicit broad elements of consensus with the Organization.*
- *In a multipolar world, the threats posed by the uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear weapons cannot be underestimated. Nuclear weapons may be used by accident or design. Reducing the number of weapons and building a sustainable non-proliferation regime are urgent priorities. The panellists called for the development of a new approach requiring guidance from visionary leaders and political capital. The OSCE could assist this process by stimulating political engagement.*
- *In terms of organized crime, Afghanistan post-2014 will present a serious security challenge to its OSCE neighbors, with an expected growth in drug trafficking and border insecurity. The Balkan region, as a transit point for the EU markets, is also witnessing a sharp increase in heroin and cocaine trafficking. Finally, the EU area seems particularly vulnerable to illicit financial flows.*
- *In a region that is increasingly interconnected, globalized and relying on an extensive information network, the threats stemming from cyber-crime are likely to become more prominent in the OSCE security agenda.*
- *Only an organization with a pan-European reach can foster an all-inclusive dialogue on transnational threats. In the Euro-Atlantic space, the OSCE can strengthen the dialogue on transnational threats against a set of achievable goals. Specifically, it should facilitate dialogue to identify threats and harmonize threat perceptions, pinpoint transnational threat policy needs and engage capitals in developing appropriate transnational threat counter-strategies. The OSCE should also try to unite the efforts of non-governmental actors to foster a common language on transnational threats.*

The sixth session looked into the future by discussing potential opportunities and challenges that the OSCE might face in 2020, especially in view of implementing the Astana vision of building a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community. The panel was moderated by **Tomáš Valášek**, Ambassador at the Permanent Representation of Slovakia to NATO, with the participation of **Alexandr Vondra**, former Foreign Minister and former Defence Minister of the Czech Republic, **Adam Rotfeld**, Co-chairman of the Polish-Russian Group on Difficult Matters, professor at Warsaw University and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, **Fyodor Lukyanov**, Chairman of the Presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy and Editor in Chief of the journal *Russia in Global Affairs*, as well as **Maximilian Stern**, Director of the think tank *foraus* – Swiss Forum on Foreign Policy. Among others, the following points were raised in the subsequent debate:

- *The security environment has greatly changed since the start of the Helsinki process. Today, the contours of the new world order are still being defined, with the center of power shifting away from Europe, and key players (e.g., Russia, EU, US) undergoing a process of redefining their identities. Until this process is completed and key stakeholders are ready to re-engage with the Organization, priority should be given to preserving the OSCE's assets, including its inclusiveness, its comprehensive approach to security, its flexibility, and its capacity to assist States in managing peaceful transitions.*
- *The OSCE body of principles and commitments (the *acquis*) remains the cornerstone of the Organization. Thus, there is no need to redraft existing instruments, but rather*

to complement them with new tools. It was suggested that in the run-up to 2015, the OSCE could draft a list of new threats and challenges and common approaches to tackle them.

- *It is necessary to accept that competition among international organizations, even when ready to co-operate, is unavoidable. Most security organizations are facing similar problems in trying to adjust themselves to the new realities.*

The seventh and last session was dedicated to the inauguration of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks. It was moderated by **Wolfgang Zellner**, Deputy Director of the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg and Head of its Centre on OSCE Research. The panelists, **Fred Tanner**, Director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, **Andrei Zagorski**, Head of the Department for Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences, **Marcin Terlikowski**, Co-ordinator of the Security Programme at the Polish Institute of International Affairs, **Paolo Raffone**, Co-founder of the Italian Center for International Perspective and online magazine Stat-EU on intelligence and geopolitics, as well as **Barend ter Haar**, Senior Research Fellow at the Clingendael Institute, discussed the added value of establishing an informal network of research institutes from across the OSCE region. Some of the ideas about the network that were proposed included:

- *The academic network should be autonomous, non-institutionalized and flexible, open to any research institute from any OSCE participating State.*
- *The network could have a threefold objective: to provide expertise to the OSCE; to stimulate discussion on issues of relevance to the OSCE; and to raise awareness in both capitals and among the broader public of the OSCE's contribution to building stability and security.*
- *The network should produce research that is relevant to the policy process, enriching the OSCE debate and helping the Organization to identify shared priorities. The Helsinki +40 process could give the network ample opportunity to contribute.*
- *The network could act as a test-bed for sensitive issues, prepare the ground for policy debate both within the OSCE and at the national level, and propose common ground.*
- *The network could also facilitate information sharing, possibly serving a clearinghouse function via a website. It could consolidate and disseminate research about the OSCE and bring attention to its achievements, thereby enhancing its political influence.*
- *The network could include issue-based, region-based or trans-regional subgroups or clusters. For example, initial steps were already taken to form a regional sub-network that would collaborate with research institutions in the OSCE Partner States of the southern Mediterranean. Activities within this regional sub-network would take a pragmatic approach, which could help to overcome the regional deficit of trust.*
- *The group agreed that the network should meet again sometime in the autumn for further brainstorming. It was proposed that one project could be completed by the end of 2013, possibly an assessment of threat perceptions across the OSCE area.*