



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Secretary General
Section for External Co-operation



**2020 OSCE Asian Conference
on Multilateral Responses
to the Global Security Challenges**
12 - 13 October 2020
Via Zoom

**Co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea
and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**

Consolidated Summary

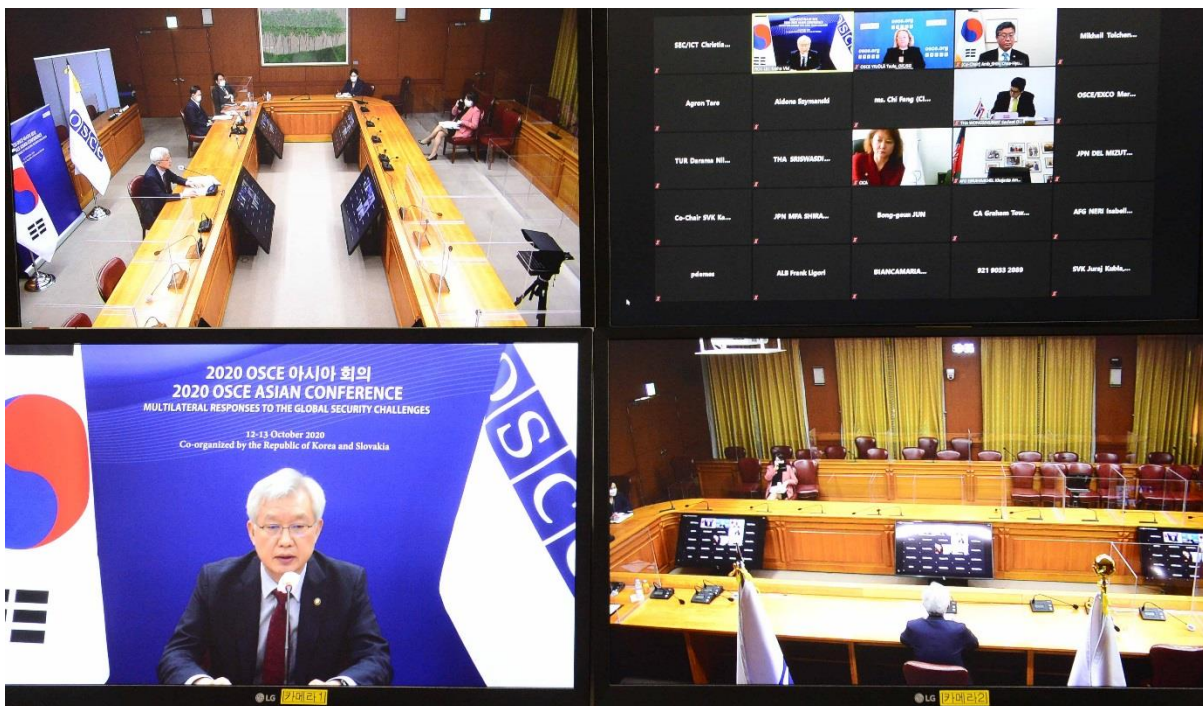


Table of contents

1	General information	
1.1	Venue	3
1.2	Participation	3
1.3	Timetable and organizational modalities	3
1.4	Agenda	4
2	Summary of the opening session	8
3	Reports by session rapporteurs	
3.1	Session 1: Regional confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) and exchanges of best practices between Europe and Asia	9
3.2	Session 2: Mitigating transborder environmental risks and challenges	13
3.3	Session 3: The nexus between security and access to information in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic	18
4	Summary of the closing session	25
5	List of participants	27

1 General information

1.1 Venue

The conference was hosted by the Republic of Korea in Seoul but was held fully online via Zoom owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2 Participation

1.2.1 Participation was in line with the modalities contained in Permanent Council Decision No. 1378 of 17 September 2020. For further details, see the list of participants.

1.3 Timetable and organizational modalities

1.3.1 The conference began with the opening session at 9.30 a.m. on 12 October 2020 and ended at 12.30 p.m. on 13 October 2020. The conference was conducted in three thematic sessions. The opening session was chaired by H.E. Mr. Chae-Hyun Shin, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the OSCE, and H.E. Ms. Katarína Žáková, Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the OSCE. During the opening session, keynote speeches were delivered by H.E. Mr. Taeho Lee, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, H.E. Ms. Ingrid Brocková, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (video message), H.E. Mr. Agron Tare, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Albania, and Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä, Officer-in-Charge/ Secretary General, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat. At the closing session, statements were delivered by H.E. Mr. Byung-ha Chung, Director-General for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, and Ms. Erida Dobrush, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna.

1.3.2 Each session had a moderator and a rapporteur.

1.3.3 The working language was English.

1.3.4 Arrangements were made for press coverage.

1.3.5 The rules of procedure and working methods of the OSCE were applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the conference.

1.4 Agenda

Monday 12 October 2020

9.30 – 10.30 **Opening remarks** (*live-streamed*)

- **H.E. Mr. Taeho LEE**, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea
- **H.E. Ms. Ingrid BROCKOVÁ**, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (*video message*)
- **H.E. Mr. Agron TARE**, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Albania
- **Ambassador Tuula YRJÖLÄ**, Officer-in-Charge/Secretary General, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat

Co-chairs:

- **H.E. Mr. Chae-Hyun SHIN**, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the OSCE
- **H.E. Ms. Katarína Žáková**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the OSCE

10.30 – 12.30

Session 1: Regional CSBMs and exchanges of best practices between Europe and Asia

This session will focus on:

- Transparency: sharing military information
- Building confidence: verification measures
- Risk reduction: more confidence-building measures
- Subregional agreements on CSBMs
- Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security: rules of inter- and intra-state relations for military and other security forces

Moderator: **Mr. (Col.) Robin MOSSINKOFF**, Senior FSC Support Officer, Forum for Security Co-operation Support Section, Conflict Prevention Centre, OSCE

Speakers:

- **Prof. Bong-Geun JUN**, Professor at the Department of Security and Unification Studies in the Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA) Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS)
- **Ms. Johanna WEAVER**, Senior Advisor to the Australian Ambassador for Cyber Affairs, Australia

- **Mr. Ahmad Shuja JAMAL**, Director-General for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation, Office of the National Security Council, Kabul
- **Mr. Thomas SCHMIDT**, FSC Chair's Co-ordinator on the Code of Conduct, Permanent Delegation to the OSCE of Switzerland

Discussion

Rapporteur: Mr. Andrew T. SHEPARD, Political Officer, United States Mission to the OSCE

12.30 – 14.30 Lunch break

14.30 – 16.30 **Session 2: Mitigating transborder environmental risks and challenges**

This session will focus on:

- Co-ordinated disaster risk reduction and preparedness response in the context of COVID-19, with implications for climate change and security
- Water and health: international co-operation and best practices in transboundary water management

Moderator: **H.E. Mr. Vuk ŽUGIĆ**, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Speakers:

- **Mr. Alisher MAMADZHANOV**, Environmental Affairs Officer, Water Convention secretariat, UNECE
- **Ms. Claudia KAMKE**, Environmental Affairs Officer, Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, UNECE
- **Dr. Martina KLIMES**, Advisor, Water and Peace, SIWI-Stockholm International Water Institute
- **Dr. Nadejda KOMENDANTOVA**, Group Leader, Cooperation and Transformative Governance, IIASA-International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis

Discussion

Rapporteur: Mr. Adam GREENE, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE

Tuesday 13 October 2020

10.00 – 12.00

Session 3: The nexus between security and access to information in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

This session will focus on:

- Balance between freedom of information and protection of public health
- Access to diverse information as a means to help the public in holding governments to account as well as a means for the public to judge on the efforts taken to protect public health
- Restriction of human rights including freedom of information during the pandemics

Moderator: **Ambassador Luca FRATINI**, Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General

Speakers:

- **Ms. Shinye LEE**, Deputy Director of Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, Republic of Korea
- **Mr. Shogo YOSHITAKE**, Director of European Policy Division, European Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
- **Ms. Tomoko NAGASAKO**, Research Fellow, International Peace and Security Department, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan
- **Mr. Natapanu NOPAKUN**, Deputy Director General of the Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand
- **H. E. Mr. Pavol DEMEŠ**, independent foreign policy analyst, former Slovak Minister of International Relations
- **Ms. Kristin OLSON**, Principal Adviser, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Discussion

Rapporteur: Ms. Miyeon LIM, Second Secretary, International Security Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

12.00 – 12.30

Closing remarks

- **H.E. Mr. Byung-ha CHUNG**, Director-General for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

- **Ms. Erida DOBRUSHI**, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna

12.30

End of the conference

2 Summary of the opening session

Report by Ms. Emily Pugin, Second Secretary, Australian Permanent Mission to the UN

The 2020 OSCE Asian Conference opened with remarks delivered by **H.E. Mr. Taeho LEE**, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea; **H.E. Ms. Ingrid BROCKOVÁ**, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic; **H.E. Mr. Agron TARE**, Deputy Foreign Minister of Albania; and **Ambassador Tuula YRJÖLÄ**, Officer-in Charge/Secretary General, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat.

Mr. Taeho Lee congratulated the OSCE on the 25th anniversary of the Asian Partnership for Co-operation. He noted that the long-standing partnership had served as an interregional platform to address common challenges by exchanging information, views, and best practices. The partnership was especially needed in a world where no country could address comprehensive security challenges alone – including, cybersecurity threats, violent extremism, environmental risks, infectious diseases and other transnational challenges and threats. Against this backdrop, the central theme for the present OSCE Asian Conference – Multilateral Responses to the Global Security Challenges – was timely and appropriate.

Reflecting on challenges in Northeast Asia, which lacked a common security architecture, the Republic of Korea had been inspired by the OSCE's success in developing confidence-building measures and trust-building dialogues in its area. Consequently, the Republic of Korea remained steadfast in nurturing trust-building dialogues and facilitating multilateral security co-operation in Northeast Asia and beyond, to establish permanent peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the region. He also emphasized that international co-operation was indispensable for the restoration of a better and greener earth, and the Republic of Korea pursued the Green New Deal policy as part of its recovery plan. Moreover, with the ongoing challenges presented by COVID-19, the principles of openness, transparency, and public trust were essential. As one of the beneficiaries and supporters of multilateral and international cooperation, the Republic of Korea believed health security should be at the center of collective efforts to revitalize global solidarity and co-operation. Bearing in mind that no one was safe until everyone was safe during a global health crisis, he emphasized that the international community had to work together on a global scale. The Partnership between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation shared views and explored ways to strengthen multilateral co-operation in the time of uncertainty and unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19.

Ms. Ingrid Brocková emphasized that the thematic focus of the conference was timely and relevant for all. In the current environment, multilateralism had been challenged more than ever and the world needed more international co-operation and not less. While some members of the international community claimed to support multilateralism, in some cases their actions told a different story. Strong and stable multilateral structures had allowed Slovakia and many other States to prosper and to be heard. The need to respond to challenges collectively in a multitude of areas including health, education, the environment and climate change, the digital agenda, technology and innovation had become even more urgent. The COVID-19 pandemic had presented unprecedented global security challenges, which required a collective and common response. Multilateral forums were perfectly fitted for such purposes, as global problems required global responses. The deployment of disinformation and conspiracy theories through influence operations was of concern, and damaged national and international interests worldwide. The OSCE had the tools, mechanisms and partners to respond. Two principles

underpinned the OSCE's relationship with the five Asian Partners for Co-operation: the first was the desire to share and learn from each other's experiences; the second was that there were mutual benefits to be gained from the Asian Partners' contributions to pursuing OSCE goals. Security in the OSCE area transcended borders and was inherently linked to the security and stability of other regions.

Mr. Agron Tare joined others in congratulating all concerned on the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Asian Partnership and noted that security in the OSCE area was inextricably linked to other parts of the world, including Asia. He recalled that at the 2019 Ministerial Council in Bratislava, Albania had put forward the initiative to change the name of the Asian Contact Group to the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group, with a view to underscoring the significance of the Partnership. The present OSCE Asian Conference provided an excellent opportunity to use the OSCE as a platform for discussions on common challenges. Multilateralism was under siege, global principles and values were being tested, and divergent security perceptions were eroding the common efforts of international organizations. There was too little trust, co-operation, and compromise and solidarity, and stability and security were suffering as a result. Mistrust could only be overcome through co-operation, and the international community had to draw on the tools available, including the OSCE executive structures and its field operations. Looking at the historical perspective, the OSCE's founding concept of security had been laid down in Helsinki in 1975 and then further developed in Paris in 1990 and Astana in 2010. The four fundamental tenets of the OSCE remained relevant today. Firstly, the view of security must be comprehensive: transnational threats, conflicts, arms control, economic and environmental security and human rights were interwoven and must be treated as a whole. Second, security could only be achieved through dialogue and co-operation. Thirdly, all OSCE principles and commitments, without exception, needed to apply equally to all participating States. Fourth and lastly, security should be indivisible: States faced common challenges in a globalized and interconnected world. The United Nations and the OSCE were major successes of multilateralism, and looking ahead, it was important to realize that multilateral challenges also presented opportunities, which however required a driving force to strengthen, reform and innovate multilateral co-operation.

Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä highlighted the important contribution the Asian Partners for Co-operation had made to the OSCE by, among other things, enriching dialogue and sharing unique experiences drawn from their respective security contexts. Asian Partners had also engaged in numerous joint activities including the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. In uncertain times, maintaining a co-operative spirit could not be taken for granted. Ms. Yrjölä noted how important it was to reinforce the principle that addressing global security challenges required teamwork, close co-operation and institutionalized links that could be relied on both in fair weather and in stormier times.

The variety of topics on the agenda of the 2020 OSCE Asian Conference clearly demonstrated the breadth the relationship had reached over the years. Highlighting the nexus between security and access to information in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including its impact on freedom of information, public health protection, government accountability and human rights, would provide for thought-provoking discussion. Active participation in the conference was indicative of the value of multilateralism.

After the opening statements, **H.E. Ms. Khojesta Fana Ebrahimkhel**, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the International and Regional Organizations in Vienna, was

the first to take the floor, underlining that Afghanistan had greatly benefited from co-operation with the OSCE. With security in the OSCE area linked to security in Asia and the Pacific, co-operation could only be strengthened through genuine partnerships and multilateral responses. A stronger partnership with Afghanistan and an approach with continuity and long-term strategies would help achieve sustainable development. Afghanistan held an important place in connectivity in the region and played an integral role in centrality and support for greater regional economic co-operation. Afghanistan was committed to developing and strengthening co-operation and responses to global security challenges.

H.E. Mr. Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna, recalled the OSCE's comprehensive and inclusive approach to security, as well as the Organization's broad and diverse membership, which offered distinct advantages in its promotion of dialogue and co-operation on security issues. The 2020 Asian Conference would bring States closer to a common understanding on how to find solutions to current security challenges, grounded in full implementation of all OSCE principles and commitments in good faith, starting from the Helsinki Final Act. The Asian Partners – Australia, Afghanistan, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand – could make a meaningful contribution to common efforts in achieving this goal, which would contribute to enhancing mutual trust and mitigating conflicts.

Ukraine shared common views with the Asian Partners on many international issues, including advocacy for international law and joint actions to combat global challenges. New forms of co-operation had been launched ranging from cybersecurity to food security and also including research and education, and there were many unexplored avenues for the further development of bilateral trade and joint projects in hi-tech fields and in infrastructure. Moreover, Ukraine aimed to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia, the main ASEAN document, and to be accorded observer status in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

Ambassador Nilvana Darama, Co-ordinator for the Asia Anew Initiative, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, noted the difficulties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. One year before, Turkey had introduced a new approach to co-operation with Asian countries aimed at increasing connectivity at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. The Asian Partners had a shared interest in co-operation with the OSCE. Ms. Darama emphasized the importance of strengthening the engagement of the OSCE in Afghanistan as it was a key country for peace and stability across the whole OSCE area. Turkey looked forward to strengthening its partnership with other regional and international organizations and hoped that discussions at the present Asian Conference would contribute to a strengthened dialogue with the Asian Partners for Co-operation.

3 Reports by session rapporteurs

3.1 Session 1: Regional confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) and exchanges of best practices between Europe and Asia

Report by Mr. Andrew T. Shepard, Political Officer, U.S. Mission to the OSCE

As session moderator, **Mr. Robin Mossinkoff**, Senior FSC Support Officer, Conflict Prevention Centre, OSCE, highlighted points raised in the opening session about the advantages and disadvantages of hosting the Asian Conference entirely virtually: most notably, while there were no opportunities for participants to engage in “pull-aside discussions”, the format permitted easier participation from all around the world. Mr. Mossinkoff highlighted the importance of OSCE co-operation on CSBMs, noting the benefit of subregional agreements and pointing out how the OSCE encouraged participating States to reflect on their responsibilities in their various military postures and in their defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The first speaker was **Professor Bong-Geun Jun** of the Department of Security and Unification Studies at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security. In his presentation on the issue of security landscape on the Korean Peninsula, professor Jun highlighted security threats to the region, most notably among others, the North Korean nuclear problem and the US-China strategic competition. In Northeast Asia, the end of Cold War brought a hope of regional security dialogue and co-operation. Following “the Rise of China” and the US pivot to Asia in the early 21st century, however, “the End of History” ended and the age of great power politics and geopolitics returned as ‘Grand Chessboard’ as predicted by the former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. Professor Jun said that the needs for regional security dialogue with the OSCE as well as among regional states and have increased now more than ever. With the progress of its nuclear programme, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) had recently become even greater threats to the peace and security in the region. In this context, he claimed that the 2018 South-North Panmunjom Joint Statement and South-North Comprehensive Military Agreement were important stepping stones for denuclearization and confidence-building on the Korean Peninsula. He proposed longer-term goals for the government of the Republic of Korea: a peaceful and prosperous peninsula that served as a “bridging state” in reducing tensions in the region and promoting multilateralism and the rule of law. Professor Jun repeated points raised in the opening session, highlighting that the Republic of Korea viewed the OSCE as a model for regional security co-operation in Northeast Asia and East Asia. This included the goal of normalizing all hostile relations in the region, including relations between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea, the DPRK and the United States, and the DPRK and Japan. This could be accomplished through mutual security assurances between States, which in their turn could be accomplished through trust-building exercises. The Korean government, Professor Jun added, proposed a vision of “Eurasian Peace and Prosperity Zone” that would connect all peace-loving, norm-abiding and open states and would serve as a bridging buffer zone towards geopolitical competition.

The second speaker, Mr. Ahmad Shuja Jamal, Director-General for International Affairs and Regional Co-operation in Afghanistan’s Office of the National Security Council, spoke about the continuing threat of Taliban terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. Mr. Jamal noted that the

inability to stop the movement of these fighters throughout Central Asia represented a collective action failure by the world, and one that had to be addressed co-operatively if some of the key security issues in South Asia were to be solved. As most of the explosive devices used in Afghanistan were made in Pakistan, the associated supply chain had to be disrupted before any sustainable peace could be expected in Afghanistan. Although Pakistan had brought the Taliban to the negotiating table, this had not ended the Taliban's ability to play the role of spoiler in peace negotiations. Trust and verification measures must be implemented to make real progress. While this might be partially possible through the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS), OSCE support and UN resolutions could play a part in strengthening measures to stop the movement of terrorists and weaponry. As the speaker repeatedly noted, many of the threats facing Afghanistan came from other countries, and Afghanistan itself was a country with a long tradition of moderation. No large-scale attack in another country had ever been committed by an Afghan-born terrorist, and most of the deadliest groups in Afghanistan based their ideology on foreign teachings.

The third speaker, Ms. Johanna Weaver, Senior Advisor to the Australian Ambassador for Cyber Affairs, spoke on the threats and challenges faced in the field of cybersecurity. Multilateral responses to global security challenges were of key importance for all diplomats working to make progress in these areas. Ms. Weaver noted that there was an opportunity within the UN context to develop a permanent, inclusive framework to advance responsible State behaviour. At the United Nations, countries had been discussing information and communication technologies (ICTs) for over twenty years through five Groups of Governmental Experts (GGEs). One key conclusion had been the applicability of international law in cyberspace; another the recommendation of 11 norms and principles and 16 confidence-building measures (CBMs). In 2018, a split developed between a new GGE and the Russian-led Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG). After developing with somewhat opposing methods and goals, these two groups had worked together relatively productively thus far. Ms. Weaver expressed surprise that Russia was seeking to extend the five-year term of the OEWG, and believed this was not the best way to make progress in cybersecurity co-operation, preferring instead to consider other options to advance shared goals. She believed that every country involved in the process wanted continued discussion and co-operation.

The session's final speaker was the FSC Co-ordinator for the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, **Mr. Thomas Schmidt**, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the OSCE. He spoke on the importance of the Code of Conduct (CoC), which was one of the OSCE's most essential documents because of the potential for lack of democratic ownership over a State security sector resulting in conflict and crisis. The OSCE had developed the CoC as a pan-European model in 1994, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Balkan Wars. A cross-dimensional document including human dimension principles as well as politico-military issues, the CoC was the first instance of the OSCE participating States developing a "soft law" document setting out guidelines for State security sectors, an area previously only ever discussed in strict terms of national sovereignty. Under the CoC, Mr. Schmidt said, States were committed to combating terrorism in their respective territories and providing for democratic control over their military and paramilitary forces. The CoC required States to exercise control over their armed forces, thus increasing levels of accountability under international humanitarian law with an emphasis on individual responsibility for action. Furthermore, the CoC called on States to allow the members of their armed forces to exercise and enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms. Each participating States was responsible for the proper implementation of the CoC guidelines, which future FSC Chairs should continue to encourage participating States to meet. Mr. Schmidt pointed out that there were specific

roles for the OSCE Partners for Co-operation to play in joining CoC efforts, highlighting previous co-operative ventures (seminars) with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, and noting the possibility of collaborating similarly with the Asian Partners. Mr. Schmidt referred to the CoC as an unparalleled norm-setting instrument – and one pivotal for the OSCE’s role in addressing security challenges in Asia.

In the discussion that followed, short interventions were made by participating States, Partners for Co-operation and regional organizations. A representative of **Thailand** noted that Thailand was the only participant in the OSCE Asian Conference that was also a member of ASEAN. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was a similar model for developing strategic trust and confidence in traditional and non-traditional security dimensions, with activities including an annual security outlook with contributions from members. Through the ARF, the United States, Thailand and Vietnam engaged in co-ordination on maritime security, with a focus on a holistic approach to enhancing the security infrastructure. Thailand was planning to host the 2021 OSCE Asian Conference and hoped to be able to invite all participants to be present in person in Bangkok on that occasion.

A representative of **Japan** reiterated themes on the Northeast Asian security situation highlighted earlier in the session, including the challenges of regional co-operation. Japan was actively co-operating on efforts to advance OSCE principles and commitments as a model for the region.

A representative of the **United States of America** reflected on the shared themes of the speakers thus far. Although they had addressed multiple regions and conflicts, all had focused on co-ordinated multilateral trust-building measures as a way of strengthening stability and security in Northeast Asia, South Asia and the Balkans, and in functional areas such as cybersecurity and security sector governance. He warned that agreements were premised on the good faith of participants, a supposition that had occasionally been put to the test at the OSCE.

A representative of the **European Union** highlighted the importance of the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership. She praised the beneficial role played by CSBMs within the OSCE’s comprehensive and co-operative concept of security, and highlighted the CoC as a milestone paving the way for new co-operative security ventures. With reference to the 2020 OSCE-wide Cyber/ICT Security Conference, cyber CBMs might permit a fruitful exchange of experience between OSCE participating States and Asian Partners for Co-operation.

A representative of **Turkey** spoke on security infrastructure co-operation between the OSCE and its neighbourhood, and highlighted the importance of continuing to strengthen partnerships between OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation.

A representative of the **Russian Federation** highlighted a series of bilateral CSBMs as possible examples for the Asian Partners in increasing transparency in connection with the armed forces.

A representative of the **Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)** noted that CICA had adopted efforts to advance goals in combating transnational organized crime and terrorism, with objectives being highlighted during the recent CICA conference. He noted that CICA intended to co-operate with other regional organizations, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), on some of these trust-building exercises.

As the moderator wrapped up the session, **Mr. Schmidt** reiterated the concept of OSCE security being “indivisible” – and of its only functioning properly when all participating States worked together to accomplish the goals. The CoC was a guideline on how to best organize democratic civilian control over the military. **Mr. Jamal** summed up the importance of Afghanistan’s policy of multi-alignment with many different States and international organizations in the context of the Afghan peace negotiations. It reduced the risk of spoilers, and minimized the chance that the 20+ terrorist groups in Afghanistan would be able to derail the peace process. **Ms. Weaver** said that Australia agreed on the importance of co-operation between the OSCE and the ARF in developing the framework for a safer and more stable environment. **Prof. Jun** reiterated the model of collective security for Northeast Asia and expressed the hope that participants would be able to travel to Korea at some point in the future for further discussion on this topic.

3.2 Session 2: Mitigating transborder environmental risks and challenges

Report by Mr. Adam Greene, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE

Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and session moderator, opened the discussion by noting OSCE activities in the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in co-ordination with other international partners, and in supporting participating States in implementing commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On account of accelerating climate change, extreme weather events were becoming increasingly common, often accompanied by natural disasters such as flooding or wildfires. Humanity's role in this acceleration had been clearly emphasized in recent times, as in the emergence and transmission of disease. The COVID-19 pandemic had shown that no individual, State or region was immune to the challenges it raised, including its environmental and security-related impacts. He stressed the need for States to address these issues in an integrated manner, raising awareness and identifying the potential security risks of climate change. A participatory approach, including the likes of government agencies, security actors and academia, was required to generate joint measures to strengthen climate resilience. One such example of co-operation was offered by the field of water resilience and transboundary water management, in which organizations such as the OSCE, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provided support and promoted the sustainable management of shared water resources.

The first speaker, Mr. Alisher Mamadzhonov, Environmental Affairs Officer, Water Convention secretariat, UNECE, offered a presentation on international co-operation and best practices in transboundary water management, noting the long history of co-operation between the UNECE and the OSCE in this field. The Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health were significant legal instruments for ensuring the sustainable use of transboundary water resources (SDG 6.5.2) and for protecting human health through better water management and the reduction of water-related diseases. Mr. Mamadzhonov highlighted the reasons why the promotion of transboundary water co-operation was so important at the global level, including: the critical need to achieve progress on SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), upon which so many other SDGs were reliant; the pressing challenge and threat to security created by water-related conflict; continued population growth and unsustainable practices, with 30 per cent of the global population set to be living in areas facing water scarcity in 2030. In view of this, both co-operative agreements and joint bodies had critical roles to play in enhancing transboundary water management.

Expanding on the international water law instruments, Mr. Mamadzhonov discussed the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), first negotiated as a pan-European regional framework, but open to accession to all UN Member States since 2016. The Convention aimed to contribute to sustainable development and international peace and security, requiring Parties to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, use transboundary waters in a reasonable and equitable way, and ensure their sustainable management. The Convention included provisions on monitoring, research and development, consultations, warning and alarm systems, mutual assistance, and exchange of information as well as public access to information. The UNECE's current programme of work on the Water Convention was taking place at the national, water basin, regional and global levels; at its core it targeted co-operation and agreements between

Parties and a focus on climate change, water allocation and other nexus issues, while supporting reductions in trade-offs for water users. The Water Convention also encompassed reporting on SDG 6.5.2, for which UNECE and UNESCO were custodian agencies; in 2017–2018, 110 out of 153 countries sharing transboundary waters had reported on the indicator, thereby allowing for the establishment of a baseline and comparison of gaps in the assessment. Noting UN-cooperation with the OSCE, he highlighted the UNDP/OSCE project on Enabling Transboundary Co-operation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Dniester River Basin in line with the 2017 Dniester River Basin Treaty between Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the support of the OSCE Programme Offices in Nur-Sultan and Bishkek for the Chu-Talas Water Commission. Regarding the UNECE-WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health, he stated that it was the first legally binding agreement for this important thematic nexus, addressing the whole water cycle with 27 pan-European Parties. The COVID-19 pandemic underlined the essential importance of water hygiene and of safe and sufficient access to clean water for all population groups to prevent infectious disease outbreaks, particularly in education and health facilities and facilities for the elderly. National and local targets on access to water and sanitation would have to be adapted in accordance with the population, ensuring that marginalized and vulnerable groups are not overlooked.

The second speaker, Ms. Claudia Kamke, Environmental Affairs Officer, Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, UNECE, outlined the activities of the Commission relating to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. The Convention had emerged in the aftermath of the Sandoz chemical spill in Switzerland in 1986, which had significant environmental impacts on the Rhine, notably in Germany, France and the Netherlands. The Convention applied to “Natech accidents”, meaning technological accidents triggered by any type of natural disaster, and was aimed at improving industrial safety and technological risk reduction across borders, thereby contributing to implementation of the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Obligations under the Convention included prevention, preparedness and response, through such measures as identification of hazardous facilities, regular inspections and notifying potentially affected countries, and the dissemination of public information and promotion of public participation. Ms. Kamke highlighted water pollution caused by failures at tailings management facilities (TMFs) as a central focus (tailings being the materials left over after the separation of the valuable fraction of an ore from the uneconomic part); such failures occurred all over the world and could have very severe impacts on people, communities, the environment and businesses. Given the often large scale of such accidents, including transboundary impacts, investment in prevention was much cheaper than post-failure aftercare management. The main causes of failures at TMFs were poor management or lack of continuity, lack of (usually financial) resources, and inadequate commitment to safety, all of which were avoidable. However, climate change and extreme weather events were also heavy contributors to Natech accidents.

Ms. Kamke recalled the UNECE Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, which assisted countries in drawing up and implementing measures aimed at strengthening the prevention of and preparedness for accidental water pollution, especially in a transboundary context. This was done through seminars and safety guidelines for technological DRR, as well as TMF ranking in a tailing hazard index, a TMF checklist and a catalogue of short-, medium- and long-term measures. Joint Expert Group knowledge had been applied in Central Asia in creating TMF inventories, mapping potential transboundary effects and performing on-site inspections; furthermore, workshops, seminars and national policy dialogues on Natech prevention and on industrial safety had strengthened environmental governance and disaster resilience.

The third speaker, Dr. Martina Klimes, Advisor, Water and Peace, SIWI-Stockholm International Water Institute, outlined the interlinkages between climate, security and COVID-19 issues, encouraging States and organizations to move away from isolated or “siloes” approaches. As the vulnerability of individuals made States more vulnerable, non-State actors could exploit the fact of the latter suffering from the dual crises of COVID-19 and climate change. As shared risks, such as water scarcity, could be compounded by poor governance, co-operation and dialogue was required if common enemies were to be tackled. Furthermore, the infrastructure of water basin commissions had proved useful for co-ordinating collective COVID-19 risk responses or fighting Boko Haram in the case of Chad. There was an urgent need to involve different actors and experts in communicating shared risks regarding climate and water security. In reacting to such risks, it was also important to confront unequal distribution of resources, lack of inclusivity and marginalization, as non-State actors might find support by adopting a governance role in service provision. COVID-19 had illustrated the need to co-ordinate DRR, sharing all available knowledge and information and also using the untapped potential of women, whose understanding of local problems and important role in prevention of radicalization was often overlooked. Iraq was an example for the climate-security nexus, with 70 per cent of the population employed in agriculture and 80 per cent of the sector reliant on transboundary water. The high level of youth unemployment and insufficient government capacity to address and respond to climate issues had contributed to instability and could exacerbate conflict and violence in the country if not quickly addressed. Dr. Klimes considered that in the short term, co-operation between the security sector and actors providing development and technical assistance was necessary to support reconstruction in areas affected by armed conflicts. As far as long-term security risks and challenges were concerned, such as how to support volatile regions affected by climate change and water scarcity, an inclusive approach was necessary if solutions were to be found.

The fourth speaker, Dr. Nadejda Komendantova, Group Leader, Cooperation and Transformative Governance, IIASA-International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, gave her presentation on the topic of multi-risk governance and coping with uncertainty from pandemics and natural hazards. She highlighted the role of the Cooperation and Transformative Governance (CAT) Group, which used an interdisciplinary approach on governance and decision-making processes under uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity and volatility, while incorporating systems-thinking into strategic policy planning and addressing social dilemmas and wicked policy issues. The goal of the CAT Group was to support feasible, science-based, participatory, compromise-oriented public policy planning, while addressing: multiple strategic goals and priority directions leading to multiple criteria to be satisfied; decision-making with multiple stakeholders and criteria; multiple viable factors affecting criteria directly or indirectly; strategic goals governing overall policies and priority directions deriving from a specific strategic goal; and multiple policies and actions. The CAT Group anticipated supporting public policy planning at the global and national levels by providing insights into understanding social dynamics, supporting decision-making processes on societal transformations and transitions, and bringing confronting parties into dialogue on contested and wicked policy issues.

Dr. Komendantova offered the example of Zagreb on 22 March 2020, when the simultaneous occurrence of a pandemic and a natural hazard (earthquake) led to conflicting advice on social distancing and going to gathering points and increased exposure of vulnerable groups. Therefore, preparedness, recovery and relief plans for short-term and long-term risks must be in place before the event, based on an understanding of weaknesses. In Japan, local authorities

prepared worst-case scenarios of natural disasters on top of the pandemic, increasing the number of schools and community centres to provide shelter, including shelter for those infected, and avoiding the “three Cs” of closed spaces, crowded places and close-contact settings. Dr. Komendantova emphasized the challenges of policy planning, which was characterized by deep uncertainty, data scarcity, incompleteness and ambiguity, requirements of policy feasibility and ownership by stakeholders, and urgency in providing solutions. The Methods of Systems Analysis Toolkit (SAT) developed by IIASA could help to structure the problem and assist in sense making, finding compromise among stakeholders, and providing social learning and exchange of best practices. The SAT offered multi-criteria decision analysis, systems mapping, morphological analysis, scenario planning and robust decision-making. One application of the SAT was related to strategic planning of water resources and infrastructure for EU Eastern Partnership countries, and another to industrial development for Kyrgyzstan, carried out in co-operation with the OECD and UNIDO respectively.

A representative of **Thailand** noted the impact, compounded by COVID-19, of large-scale disasters on economic growth and sustainable development efforts, and emphasized the resulting importance of implementing the Sendai Framework, Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In this vein, the Bangkok Principles were particularly relevant, as they called for an inter-operable, multisectoral approach to promoting systematic co-operation, integration and, ultimately, for coherence between disaster and health risk management in relation to biological hazards. Equally noteworthy was the success of the ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in building national capacities in the Asia-Pacific region for DRR and early warning. Also relevant was the work of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre), which aimed to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination among ASEAN Member States and with the UN and international organizations for disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN region. The Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 held on 14 April had contributed to a joint pandemic response, which allowed for timely exchange of information and sharing of best practices among member States and external partners to bolster national and regional efforts. From its national and regional experience with ASEAN, Thailand had drawn the following lessons: resilience should be built sustainably and in line with regional partners; co-operation between State and non-State actors is crucial; and international co-operation is central to DRR efforts.

A representative of the **United States of America** noted that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) pioneered DRR through a systematic response for assisting other countries. Furthermore, the Sendai Framework provided the highest standards for DRR by integrating preparedness, early warning, recovery and fostering resilience. Water scarcity was a globally significant risk, with two thirds of the world’s population possibly living under water-stressed conditions and 1.8 billion in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity by 2025, women and girls being especially vulnerable. Such scarcity also further exacerbated the issues of poverty, disease, food, and energy security, not to mention cross-border tensions. Transborder water management was therefore closely related to core democratic values, transparency, openness, accountability and women’s empowerment; States that co-operated on shared water resources were less likely to engage in conflict. With reference to the OSCE Ministerial Council commitments on DRR from Maastricht (2003) and Basel (2014), he emphasized that the United States remained committed to providing assistance and exchanging best practices for the improvement of good governance and cross-border co-operation, also with Partners for Co-operation.

A representative of the **European Union (EU)** noted the grave risks to collective security posed by natural and man-made hazards, the frequency and intensity of which were increasing significantly on account of global trends such as population growth, unsustainable urbanization, poor land management and climate change. Disasters and climate risks had a major impact on the economy and on the security and well-being of citizens, and the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework were relevant frameworks for the EU's humanitarian and development DRR-related efforts. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the EU "Team Europe" package to support partner countries in the fight against the pandemic amounted to more than 24 billion euros. In addition, emergency support packages had been developed for countries of the Eastern Partnership, the Western Balkans and Central Asia. Effective water management was a particularly relevant contribution to sustainable development as well as for maintaining peace, security and stability. Multilateral co-operation on water-related issues was a key element of good governance capable of serving not only as a confidence-building measure but also as an additional tool to promote good-neighbourly relations. The EU was contributing with a number of initiatives on water management and DRR in the OSCE area, including: the EU Water Initiative: Water Policy Reforms in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EUWI-EECCA), which supported the pursuit of water-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and SDGs in ten EECCA countries in partnership with national governments, donors, the water industry, NGOs and other stakeholders; the EU-Central Asia Water and Environment Cooperation Platform, a high-level mechanism aimed at promoting and supporting enhanced regional co-operation to protect environmental and water resources within Central Asia, in line with EU best practices; the Central Asia Water and Energy Program (CAWEP, in partnership with the World Bank and others), promoting energy and water security and focusing on the water-energy nexus through national and regional activities; the Central Asia Nexus Dialogue project, focusing on dialogues that promote the nexus agenda on food, water and energy on the national and regional levels; and the Climate Change and Resilience in Central Asia project, a new initiative to enhance early warning and prevention measures due to be launched in 2020, aimed at promoting good neighbourly relations and reducing tensions over limited natural resources in the Fergana Valley (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan).

A representative of the **Russian Federation** quoted words from the Helsinki Final Act concerning the conviction of the participating States "that their efforts to develop co-operation in the fields of trade, industry, science and technology, the environment and other areas of economic activity contribute to the reinforcement of peace and security in Europe and in the world as a whole". The real global challenge that COVID-19 had posed was creating a survival test for most civilizations and making co-operation and solidarity at the regional and global levels more needed than ever. The United Nations played the key role in emissions reduction, while the OSCE had no specific commitments in this field. The 2020 high-level meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the UN and consider the issue of joint efforts on environmental protection and climate change was therefore particularly relevant to all. At the same time, however, as there was no scientific justification for a link between climate change and security, it could not be considered a global risk to security for all States. On water management, by contrast, the importance of protecting water resources could not be overstated. In Russia, the work of a national project had improved water conditions for five million people. The Russian-Kazakh Intergovernmental Commission on Joint Use and Protection of Transboundary Water Courses was equally promising, and expanded co-operation among participating States on water management would significantly contribute to improved stability and security in the OSCE area.

3.3 Session 3: The nexus between security and access to information in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

Report by Ms. Miyeon Lim, Second Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea

At the outset, the moderator, **Ambassador Luca Fratini**, Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General, introduced the session and considered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had forced governments around the world to restrict a number of civic freedoms including freedom of expression and freedom of the media. From the beginning of the pandemic, human rights organizations in the OSCE area had flagged many instances of authorities introducing measures, special legislation, or decrees to limit journalists' rights and to restrict the media and free flow of information. On 19 March 2020, the mandate holders on freedom of expression of the OSCE, Harlem Désir, the United Nations, David Kaye, and the Organization of American States, Edison Lanza, issued a joint statement calling for governments to promote access to the free flow of information during the COVID-19 pandemic. The statement presented an early warning and anticipation of what the COVID-19 crisis could mean for journalists and media across the OSCE area and worldwide. Mr. Fratini highlighted the interest of the Asian Partners in this topic, as reflected in the remarkably high number of Asian speakers on the present virtual panel for exchanging best practices as experienced over the past months.

The first speaker, **Ms. Shinye Lee**, Deputy Director of the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA), shared the Republic of Korea's expertise and experience in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak alert system in Korea had four levels. Immediately upon detecting the novel virus earlier this year, the Republic of Korea imposed a Level 1 alert followed by the government preparing and engaging in monitoring. As coronavirus cases soared in late February, the KDCA raised its alert to Level 4, which was the highest level. Recently, the KDCA analysed the chain of transmission, which were most likely local clusters, contacts with previously confirmed cases, and hospitals or nursing homes.

After the Republic of Korea had experienced the outbreak of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2015, the authorities introduced several reforms to the health system for public health emergency response and preparedness. The Republic of Korea made major changes to its public health emergency response framework, including early identification and monitoring of all contacts, prompt information sharing with the public, and strengthening capacity of medical facilities; additionally, a series of measures was adopted, including measures for the systematic collection of information. With this information, the authorized public health staff performed the relevant investigation and interviews, followed by contact classification and case management. The Korean government kept the population up to date on the situation with daily media briefings. The Korean government has also maintained a concerted whole-of-government approach by holding the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure (CDSC) Headquarters Meeting chaired by the Prime Minister, where all relevant ministries as well as the seventeen provinces and major cities participated.

The second speaker, Mr. Shogo Yoshitake, Director, European Policy Division, European Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, talked about countermeasures to tackle disinformation and fake news. Japan had been the first Asian country to join the Summit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) held in Helsinki in 1992 and shared the comprehensive approach to security based on democracy, human rights and the rule

of law. The fight against COVID-19 had been creating an additional challenge in the fight against disinformation, as reflected also in the ASEM ministerial statement on COVID-19 by the Host Nation of the 13th ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Summit and the regional coordinators with its condemnation of the spreading of fake news and harmful, manipulated misinformation. The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) was also tackling this subject, and G7 members were sharing rapid response mechanism-related knowledge. Japan was co-operating with the European Union to assert the importance of access to information based on facts, and reaffirmed its determination to address human rights. The government of Japan had established a domestic expert group to work on a report on how to deal with fake news and disinformation. In the light of this problem, the OSCE could serve as a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices with stakeholders.

The third speaker, **Ms. Tomoko Nagasako**, Research Fellow at the International Peace and Security Department, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, delivered her presentation on “Global Disinformation Campaigns and Legal Challenges”, noting with reference to current global trends that some disinformation-related issues had been observed since the 2016 United States presidential election. According to several open resources such as European Union Communication papers, news articles and other publications, the number of disinformation cases worldwide had increased significantly in recent years. The international community had to put measures in place to fight disinformation and the spread of fake news and there were indeed already various types of countermeasures available. Many governments had proposed new laws targeting misinformation, disinformation or fake news. Other nations had launched media literacy campaigns and others still had chosen to establish task forces to monitor or investigate suspicious operations. Some nations were seeking to prevent disinformation by fact-checking, subsequently releasing their findings.

The fourth speaker, Mr. Natapanu Nopakun, Deputy Director-General, Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, presented Thailand’s response in the fight against COVID-19, which entailed a whole-of-society approach. The key to defeating the virus was to dispel misinformation and disinformation. The COVID-19 pandemic had catapulted the world into the age of disruption, which required joint local and global responses. Equally, measures in areas such as social development, countering human trafficking or the protection of human rights needed to be co-ordinated with COVID-19-related measures, also ensuring adequate levels of transparency and media freedom in risk communication. From the time perspective, striking a balance between freedom of information and public health protection was critical if a sense of social responsibility was to be nurtured. When sharing accurate and timely information, it was essential to raise public awareness during the pandemic. Health-related disinformation did public harm and created distrust of the health authorities trying to solve the problem and handle the situation. The government of Thailand had noted that the right to information was a fundamental human right even in times of crisis. The Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration in Thailand, which was chaired by the Prime Minister, had ensured that information reach all members of society. The authorities had worked on the situation being explained straight to the public without hindrances, and experts had been enabled to give presentations on their areas of expertise without any obstacles.

The government of Thailand had introduced an online contact-tracing platform to prevent deterioration of the situation. Although the pandemic had also raised new privacy issues, the government had given assurances that the information would be used only for a limited period. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic had led to information overload. In order to strike the right balance between security and access to information in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the information released must be complete, appropriate and timely.

The fifth speaker, H.E. Mr. Pavol Demeš, independent foreign policy analyst and former Slovak Minister of International Relations, considered three issues: first, shifts in general trust in international organizations; second, the spread of disinformation; and third, challenges for diplomats in the time of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic had been a test for global solidarity. Most notably, the World Health Organization had failed to respond appropriately at the beginning of the pandemic. Many national leaders had been criticized for not having released clear guidance on how to deal with the pandemic. By contrast, nations such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Thailand and Taiwan had tackled the disease more rigorously and comprehensively. Now, after half a year, Europe was being confronted with a second wave.

The spread of misinformation generated fear, social uncertainty and panic, which in a vicious circle created fertile soil for more misinformation. This made it vitally important that governments take measures to rebuild public belief in established systems, the international order, and democracy.

Regarding the challenges diplomats were facing, the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation could learn from each others' national strategies and share information on how to communicate with the broader public.

The last speaker, **Ms. Kristin Olson**, Principal Adviser, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, supported the idea of building trust when disseminating health information. She underlined that trust had to be established before crises came. In the context of COVID-19, journalists should be seen as allies in the fight against false news and not as targets. Public agencies had a key role to play in mitigating disinformation by providing timely, politically neutral and relevant information. Not only health care institutes, but also information could save lives. According to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), almost all participating States had adopted restrictive measures that had a bearing on freedom of expression. In order to address disinformation, some nations had adopted measures, while others had used existing legislation. Therefore, as the media had a significant role to play, a key approach within risk mitigation should be to create public structures for neutral, non-political and accessible public information. When freedom of expression was limited during a crisis, it had to be examined and regularly reviewed. Once again, journalists had an important role to play in presenting accurate information to the public and in disclosing fake and harmful content.

A representative of the European Union expressed her appreciation of the interventions made by the Republic of Korea, Japan and Thailand in the light of their national experience amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic affected every region in the world and the primary goal of governments was to protect people's lives and health in a manner compliant with human rights. Finally, in the important matter of providing the public with trustworthy information about the pandemic, free access was crucial. All human rights, she recalled, were universal, indivisible and interdependent.

A representative of the United States underlined the fruitfulness of the exchange on how the Republic of Korea, Japan and Thailand had managed the COVID-19 pandemic with respect to disinformation and misinformation and the preservation of freedom of expression. He underlined that nations and international organizations had to learn from national strategies and

best practices. The United States supported the work of independent media in providing accurate information about the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information, was enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Particularly during the pandemic, it was essential to uphold and strengthen OSCE commitments concerned with transparency and openness.

A representative of the Russian Federation noted that the Russian Federation was supporting the intention of the Albanian Chairmanship to draft a Ministerial Council decision on the subject of access to information in the OSCE area. The pandemic had proved that people depended on the dissemination of accurate information published on social media platforms and online media. Any attempts to restrict access should be based on laws in line with applicable international commitments. At the same time, the role of the journalist was an essential one in maintaining a responsible attitude toward the dissemination of information.

A representative of Thailand drew attention to exchange of best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thailand's Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration was already actively seeking ways to enhance co-operation.

4 Summary of the closing session

Report by Mr. Sun Thathong, First Secretary, Royal Thai Embassy in Vienna

The 2020 OSCE Asian Conference ended with closing remarks delivered by **H.E. Mr. Byung-ha Chung**, Director-General for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, and **Ms. Erida Dobrush**i, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna.

Mr. Chung, on behalf of the Republic of Korea as the co-host of the conference, highlighted the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that had affected the organization of the Conference and thanked the Slovak Chair of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group and the OSCE Secretariat for co-organizing the event. Reflecting on the overall discussion, he noted that the topics discussed had been diverse and pointed out that the pandemic had paradoxically proven that the international community was interdependent and interconnected, bringing participants together from different parts of the world to address transnational security challenges by sharing experiences and ideas and seeking ways to enhance interregional co-operation. Similarly, he reflected that regional and multilateral platforms, including the OSCE, should also address security threats together, as these threats did not stop at borders, and reaffirmed that the Republic of Korea maintained its commitment as a trusted partner and supporter of the OSCE in this regard. **Mr. Chung** thanked all present for their active participation and hoped he would meet them in person at the next OSCE Asian Conference.

On behalf of the 2020 Albanian OSCE Chairmanship, **Ms. Erida Dobrush**i expressed appreciation to the Republic of Korea and Slovakia for co-organizing the conference, and likewise thanked the OSCE Secretariat. She commended the speakers and moderators for their enriching presentations and engaging discussions. Albania would incorporate some of the important points in its future work, especially when occupying the Chair of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group in 2021.

She underscored the message in the opening speech of the Deputy Foreign Minister of Albania, Mr. Agron Tare, that security should be co-operative. Session 1 had drawn attention to regional CSBMs in Europe and Asia and had facilitated the exchange of best practices from Europe and Asia. The discussion had provided insights on numerous matters: the Republic of Korea's Northeast Asia Strategy, building peace in the Korean Peninsula, peace-building efforts in Afghanistan, challenges and opportunities regarding cyber co-operation, and the importance of the OSCE's Code of Conduct as a norm-setting instrument for the democratic control of armed forces.

Session 2 had underlined the interlinkages among transnational threats, conflicts, arms control, economic and environmental security, and human rights. It highlighted the fact of co-ordinated disaster risk reduction and preparedness being of key importance to the COVID-19 crisis efforts, and shed light on international co-operation and best practices in environmental challenges and transboundary water management. Reiterating the Albanian Chairmanship's objective of making a difference on the ground, Ms. Dobrush*i* expressed her pleasure at having listened to presentations of colleagues from international agencies, including the UNECE, on their co-operation with OSCE field operations.

Session 3 had focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. The OSCE field operations were the Organization's greatest asset and had been working closely with their host countries in addressing various challenges stemming from the pandemic. The dedication and commitment of officers working in field operations were to be commended greatly. **Ms. Dobrush** concluded by thanking all the participants and affirming Albania's pledge to build on the outstanding work of the Slovak Chair of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group when taking over the role in 2021. She looked forward very much to co-organizing the next OSCE Asian Conference in Thailand.

5 List of participants

The list of participants contains entries generated by the online registration.

State / Organization / Affiliation	Title	First Name	Last Name	Position
OSCE Participating States				
ALBANIA	Mr	Agron	Tare	Head of Unit
ALBANIA	Mr	Igli	Hasani	Ambassador
ALBANIA	Ms	Erida	Dobrushki	
ALBANIA	Mr	Etrit	Bekteshi	
ALBANIA	Mr	Frank	Ligori	
ALBANIA	Ms	Delia	Rahmonova-Schwarz	
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Mr	James	Gilmore	Permanent Representative
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Mr	Andrew	Shepard	Political Officer
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Mr	Gareth	Vaughan	
AUSTRIA	Mr	Riku	Rantanen	
BULGARIA	Mrs	Emilia	Kraleva	Ambassador, Permanent Representative
BULGARIA	Mrs	Kamelia	Dimitrova	
BULGARIA	Mr	Mihail	Kravaev	
BULGARIA	Mr	Petar	Nikolaev	
CANADA	Ms	Véronique	Pepin-Hallé	Deputy Permanent Representative, Counsellor
CANADA	Mr	Graham	Townsend	
CYPRUS	Ms	Demetra	Christodoulou	Deputy Permanent Representative
CROATIA	Ms	Marina	Kovacec	First Secretary
SPAIN	Mr	Agustin	Anguera	
SPAIN	Mr	Nicolas	Cimarra	
SPAIN	Mr	Salvador	Rojas	
UNITED KINGDOM	Mr	Justin	Addison	Second Secretary Political
GREECE	Mr	Georgios	Daskalopoulos	First Counsellor / Deputy Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE
IRELAND	Mr	Adam	Greene	Attaché
ICELAND	Mr	Gudni	Bragason	Ambassador, Permanent Representative
LATVIA	Mr	Gatis	Pelnens	Third Secretary
LITHUANIA	Ms	Dangira	West	DHoM
LUXEMBOURG	Ms	Diane	Alff	
LUXEMBOURG	Mr	Max	Lamesch	

State / Organization / Affiliation	Title	First Name	Last Name	Position
MONGOLIA	Ms	Battungalag	Gankhuurai	Ambassador, Permanent Representative
MONGOLIA	Ms	Enerel	Enkhtaivan	Third Secretary
MONTENEGRO	Ms	Helena	Vizi	First Secretary
NORWAY	Mr	Henning Hjortland	Johansen	
NORWAY	Mr	Magnar	Aaberg	
NORWAY	Mr	William	Saeter	First Secretary, Senior Adviser
POLAND	Mr	Adam	Hałaciński	Ambassador
POLAND	Mr	Marcin	Czapliński	
POLAND	Ms	Joanna	Klepacka	First Secretary
PORTUGAL	Ms	Sylvie	Lopes Dias	Detective Inspector
PORTUGAL	Ms	Alexandra	Rato	Inspector
PORTUGAL	Ms	Blenda	Ribeiro	
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Mr	Mikhail	Tolchenov	Counsellor
HOLY SEE	Msgr	Janusz	Urbanczyk	
HOLY SEE	Msgr	Joseph	Grech	Deputy Head of Mission
HOLY SEE	Ms	Biancamaria	Apreda	
SERBIA	Mr	Sasa	Ojdanic	First Counsellor
SLOVAKIA	Mr	Radomír	Boháč	Ambassador/Permanent Representative
SLOVAKIA	Ms	Katarína	Žáková	Ambassador/Deputy Permanent Representative
SLOVAKIA	Mrs	Ingrid	Brocková	Ambassador, State Secretary
SLOVAKIA	Mr	Pavol	Demeš	
SLOVAKIA	Mr	Juraj	Kubla	
SLOVAKIA	Mr	Roman	Oroszi	Desk Officer
SLOVAKIA	Mr	Daniel	Pavlík	Head Of Political Affairs
SLOVAKIA	Mr	Michal	Vanco	Second Secretary
SLOVAKIA	Mrs	Katarína	Zembjaková	
SLOVENIA	Ms	Natalija	Raišp	Assistant Adviser
SLOVENIA	Ms	Maja	Stanišič	
SWEDEN	Mr	Alexander	Ahlfont	Military Adviser
SWITZERLAND	Mr	Pierre	Della Bianca	Deputy Regional Coordinator
SWITZERLAND	Mr	Thomas	Schmidt	Counsellor
SWITZERLAND	Mr	Frédéric	Clément	Trainee
CZECH REPUBLIC	Mr	Ivo	Šrámek	Ambassador
CZECH REPUBLIC	Mr	Mikuláš	Novotný	

State / Organization / Affiliation	Title	First Name	Last Name	Position
CZECH REPUBLIC	Mr	Ondřej	Pavlík	First Secretary
TURKEY	Mr	Ersin	Erçin	Ambassador
TURKEY	Ms.	Nilvana	Darama	Ambassador
TURKEY	Mr	İsmail	Civelik	
TURKEY	Ms	Belgin	Ergunes	
TURKEY	Mr	Cemil	Tahralli	Counsellor
UKRAINE	Mr	Tsymbaliuk	Yevhenii	Ambassador
UKRAINE	Mr	Ihor	Lossovskyi	
UKRAINE	Mr	Oleksandr	Maznychenko	Counsellor
Asian Partners for Co-operation				
AFGHANISTAN	Ms	Khojesta Fana	Ebrahimkhel	Ambassador
AFGHANISTAN	Mr	Ahmad Shuja	Jamal	Director-General for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation of the Office of the National Security Council
AFGHANISTAN	Mr	Farhad	Ghiassi	Second Secretary for OSCE Affairs
AFGHANISTAN	Ms	Isabella	Neri	Political Specialist
AUSTRALIA	Mr	Emil	Stojanovski	Deputy Head of Mission, Australian Embassy and Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Vienna
AUSTRALIA	Ms	Johanna	Weaver	Special Adviser, Ambassador for Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
AUSTRALIA	Ms	Emily	Pugin	Second Secretary, Australian Embassy and Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Vienna
AUSTRALIA	Ms	Nicola	Love	Multilateral Policy Officer, Australian Embassy and Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Vienna
JAPAN	Mr	Akira		

State / Organization / Affiliation	Title	First Name	Last Name	Position
JAPAN	Mr	Shogo		
JAPAN	Ms	Ai		
JAPAN	Mr	Kazunori		
JAPAN	Ms	Reiko		
JAPAN	Mr	Hikaru		
JAPAN	Ms	Ramona		
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Mr	Taeho	Lee	Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Mr	Byung-ha	Chung	Director-General
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Mr	Chae-Hyun	Shin	Ambassador
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Mr	Yoo-sik	Kang	Director
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Mr	Donghyun	Kim	Second Secretary
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Mr	Donggyun	IM	Second Secretary
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Ms	Su-eun	KIM	Director
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Ms	Yena	KIM	Second Secretary
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Ms	Hyun-goo	LEE	Second Secretary
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Ms	Miyeon	Lim	Second Secretary
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Ms	Eun-ju	Park	Counsellor
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Ms	Min-jung	Park	Senior Researcher

State / Organization / Affiliation	Title	First Name	Last Name	Position
THAILAND	Mr	Sasiwat	Wongsinsawat	Director-General of the Department of European Affairs
THAILAND	Ms	Morakot	Sriswasdi	Ambassador and Permanent Representative
THAILAND	Mr	Natapanu	Nopakun	Deputy Director-General of the Department of Information
THAILAND	Ms	Pawaree	Xuto Chaipatiyut	Director of the European Union Division
THAILAND	Mr	Sun	Thathong	First Secretary, Royal Thai Embassy in Vienna
THAILAND	Ms	Panika	Pittayavestsoonthon	Third Secretary, European Union Division
THAILAND	Ms	Bhunyaporn	Yimserhthi	Attache, European Union Division
Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation				
EGYPT	Mr	Mohamed	Hanafy	Second Secretary
ISRAEL	Ms	Silvia	Berladski Baruch	Deputy Permanent Representative
ISRAEL	Mr	Christian	Schwarz	Political Advisor
OSCE				
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Tuula	Yrjölä	Officer-in-Charge/ Secretary General, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat
OSCE Secretariat	Mr	Luca	Fratini	Ambassador, Director of the Office of the Secretary General
OSCE Secretariat	Mr	Vuk	Zugic	Ambassador, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
OSCE Secretariat	Mr	Philippe	Tremblay	Head of External Co-operation
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Marietta	Koenig	Senior External Co-operation Officer
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Dania	Cossa	Senior External Cooperation Officer
OSCE Secretariat	Mr	Robin	Mossinkoff	Col., Senior FSC Support Officer, Head of the OSCE

State / Organization / Affiliation	Title	First Name	Last Name	Position
				Forum for Security Cooperation Support Unit
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Saule	Ospanova	Senior Environmental Affairs Adviser
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Sogol	Jafarzadeh	Environmental Affairs Adviser
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Zhongwei	Sun	Junior Professional Officer
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Funda	Demir	Junior Professional Officer
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Elizabeth	Garrett	Senior Policy Support Assistant
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Aldona	Szymanski	Senior External Co-operation Assistant
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Liliya	Buhela	External Co-operation Office Clerk
OSCE Secretariat	Ms	Letizia	Zuliani	Intern
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly	Ms	Aidyn	Kaiyrbekova	Research Assistant
International Organizations				
CICA	Mr	Kairat	Sarybay	Executive Director
CICA	Ms	Chi	Fang	
CICA	Ms	Yelkeyeva	Sholpan	
CICA	Mr	Dharmendra	Singh	
Commonwealth of Independent States	Mr	Alexander	Burov	Department Director
Commonwealth of Independent States	Mr	Sergei	Ignatovich	
Eurasian Economic Community (EEC)	Mr	Denis	Lobkov	
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Ms	Shreya	Bose	Associate
Organization of the Islamic Conference	Mrs	Ismat	Jahan	Ambassador, Permanent Observer
Organization of the Islamic Conference	Ms	Perihan	Cengiz	
United Nations (UN)	Mr	Mark	Harris	UN Liaison to ASEAN
United Nations (UN)	Ms	Klara	Wyrzykowska	

State / Organization / Affiliation	Title	First Name	Last Name	Position
UNECE	Ms	Claudia	Kamke	Environmental Affairs Officer at the Water, Convention Secretariat
UNECE	Mr	Alisher	Mamadzhanov	Environmental Affairs Officer at the Water, Convention Secretariat
Guests of the Host Country				
Cooperation Council Of Turkic Speaking States	Mr	Ersin	Aydoğan	
Cooperation Council Of Turkic Speaking States	Mr	Ömer	Kocaman	Dr, Project Director
Cooperation Council Of Turkic Speaking States	Mr	Jeyhun	Shahverdiyev	
NGOs/Academics				
Korea National Diplomatic Academy	Mr	Bong-geun	Jun	Professor, Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA)
The Sasakawa Peace Foundation	Ms	Tomoko	Nagasako	Program Officer
Stockholm International Water Institute	Ms	Martina	Klimes	Advisor, Water And Peace
IIASA-International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis	Ms	Nadejda	Komendantova	Group Leader, Cooperation and Transformative Governance
Kagawa University	Ms	Takako	Ueta	Ambassador, Professor Dr