

# Perspectives 20-30

Roadshow

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Policy Paper



"UNITY IS  
STRENGTH"

A Project By:

**OSCE** Organization for Security and  
Co-operation in Europe

**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG**

FES Regionalbüro  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit

FES Regional Office  
for International  
Cooperation

The OSCE “Perspectives 20-30” Initiative is a project of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General, supported by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe (Vienna).

It aims to integrate youth perspectives into OSCE security debates in order to strengthen the Organization’s ability to promote peace, stability and comprehensive security.



## THE PERSPECTIVES 20-30 ROADSHOW

In 2019, the Perspectives 20-30 Core Group of Experts – 22 young professionals under 30 from across the OSCE region – produced a discussion paper titled “Engaging Youth for a Safer Future” in which they outlined their vision of security in 2030 and beyond.

In 2020 and 2021, the initiative continued the debate in a series of discussions with young people across the OSCE region. The goal of this roadshow was to critically assess the recommendations from the original discussion paper by the Core Group of Experts and apply it to the national context, deriving further recommendations for national decision-makers and the OSCE.

The Roadshow discussions focused on the situation of youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central Asia, Poland, Albania, Liechtenstein and Andorra. Most were held online due to the pandemic.

**This paper crystallises the main perspectives and recommendations contributed by young people during the discussions.**

Core Group of Experts formed

Youth Forum in Bratislava

Paper presented at the OSCE Ministerial Council

Roadshow Launch Online Event

Closing event in Andorra

# WHO ATTENDED THE ROADSHOWS?



200+ Youth Participants



National Policy Makers



Members of the Core Group of Experts



OSCE Representatives  
(OSCE Secretary General, Special Representatives on Youth and Security & OSCE Staff)

## PERSPECTIVES 2030 IN ACTION

It bears notice that discussions took place before Russia's invasion of Ukraine and were overshadowed by the pandemic. However, a sense of worry was tangible that things can get out of hand: many participants across countries expressed special concern about the lack of a common understanding of security, as well as of mutual respect in international relations, noting few positive results in the discussions among states and a worrisome political climate in Europe.

They expressed concern for the ongoing conflicts between super powers, and noted that because of their dominant role, such powers do not depend on equal rules and are enabled to take arbitrary decisions or violate internal law; whereas smaller powers are fully dependent on international rules and policies imposed by super powers.

Additionally, participants saw foreign policies as a possible internal challenge of democratic legitimation, claiming that foreign policy issues such as military expenditure are fully handled by the elite of the country without seeking for contribution by the majority of the population.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS



"What are the most pressing challenges and opportunities in the field of building peace for achieving comprehensive and lasting security?"



"What are your recommendations to promote comprehensive security and co-operation in 2030 and beyond? What role could youth play in this process?"



"Does the Perspectives 2030 Discussion Paper 'Engaging Youth for a Safer Future' reflect your vision for European security for the next 10 years?"

#PERSPECTIVES2030

# OVERARCHING THEMES



TECHNOLOGY



CLIMATE  
CRISIS



EDUCATION



PANDEMIC

## IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic created unforeseen profound changes and rearrangements across people, industries, economies and politics.

The effect of the pandemic on human rights and fundamental freedoms was significant. Across the OSCE region, the emergency situation was often used by governments to justify violations of human rights and curtailment of freedoms. It was noted that gender and domestic violence increased significantly in the course of the successive lockdowns.

Additionally, the pandemic highlighted the importance of data protection and to protect critical infrastructures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a bridge between people working in technology and those in policy so that they can share knowledge and approaches.

Improve the competencies of teachers and professors through the use of new technologies.

Strengthen the connection between **mental health centers and other actors in the community.**

Improve **youth-focused employment policies and informal programs** as well as identifying youth at risk.

Support the work of **youth centers and spaces.**

## EDUCATION AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Education was a topic that permeated most discussions, as it was agreed that **it contributes to more sustainable and peaceful societies** and is generally the main catalyst for driving change.

The intersection of education and new technologies drew much attention. There was an awareness of the need to address challenges arising from new technologies in school education, including cyber security, ethical issues and critical media skills.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduce more education on security matters and fake news.

Introduce coding, creative computing and design in high school.

Make education systems more **inclusive** and expand exchange programmes.

Promote **emotional intelligence in schools.**

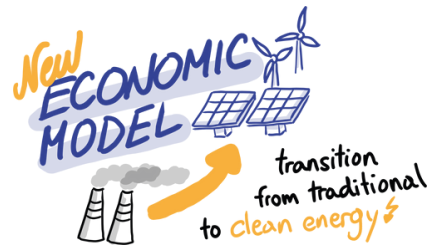
## CLIMATE CRISIS AS A GOLDEN THREAD

**The climate crisis intersected all discussions at the roadshow.**

Discussions revealed that some countries can better afford mitigation measures than others.

**Environmental security and energy security is a difficult nexus**, especially for less affluent countries.

Nevertheless, participants across countries highlighted that environmental education should be added to the school curriculum.



### RECOMMENDATION

**Youth activity at the local and national level** is crucial to push governments to adopt environmentally friendly practices and mitigation measures.

## TECHNOLOGY - BANE OR BOON?

**Technology received heightened attention, revealing different perceptions.** For instance, discussion in Central Asia and Liechtenstein focused on the perils of technology. In Poland, by contrast, discussion focused on the opportunities and enabling aspects of technologies.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Technologies can be used to mitigate disinformation** and aid bottom-up, citizen-led mobilization such as peaceful protests.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the **importance of both data protection and the security and uninterrupted performance of critical infrastructure.**



## CHALLENGES

**Governments might abuse new technologies** such as artificial intelligence or social media for oppression and intrusion into private life, especially of politically active people.

**Technologies might be imported from oppressive states** which do not have the same guidelines as democratic ones. Instead, national security agencies or police require a democratic oversight.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Establish an international legal framework to protect users**, for instance through access to encrypted channels that state actors cannot control.

Develop an **intra-state working group on technology** to bridge the gap between people working in technology and those in policy.

Involve technically-savvy **young people in drafting laws regarding new technologies.**

Young people can actively **promote data security and raise awareness** among older users about potential risks.

# ADDRESSING RISING SOCIAL INEQUALITY



**Rising social inequality was viewed as a worrisome source of instability and insecurity.** Disproportionate power of large corporations, decline of the middle class, rising wealth gap, eroding social and political structures and, crucially, unequal opportunities based on gender were the most discussed aspects.

It was noted that countries are not equally affected by gender-related challenges. In developing countries, women and sexual minorities tend to be affected by discrimination, abuse and violence stronger than in rich countries. The availability of proper legislation is not the only issue here, as the discussion in Albania revealed, the implementation of laws and policies is key.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Invest in **adequate digital infrastructure and extra training** as well as higher salaries for teachers.

**Provide high-quality, affordable housing.**

Create an **observatory for the situation of women.**

Promote **intergenerational dialogue.**

**Increase youth awareness** of gender issues, and enhance the political and economic rights of young women.

**Listen to the needs of underprivileged groups living in peripheral/rural areas,** with dialogues conducted in local languages.

## EMERGING CHALLENGES: A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE



Countries are unequally affected by security threats.



Urban/rural divide and access to affordable education and the internet is more salient in some countries than others.



Foreign policies viewed as a possible internal challenge of democratic legitimation.



Digital divide: new technologies might not bring benefit to lower classes.



Some low income families cannot purchase smart devices to be up to date with digital transformation.



During the pandemic there were problems with distant learning because necessary facilities were missing.

# THE WAY AHEAD

**Young people need to feel empowered and to be provided with spaces and opportunities** to show their interest, get involved and actively participate in decision-making processes, including on security issues.

There is lack of engagement in policymaking, lack of interest and awareness of youth. There is a need to raise awareness, conduct more meetings with stakeholders, transparency (forums, internships), more informal dialogues, student engagement (annual projects, "Youth in Politics" debate league), and simulations (model OSCE).

**"IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF STATES TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN AND TO DIRECTLY INVOLVE YOUTH IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES."**



## CONCRETE IDEAS TO BETTER INCLUDE YOUTH IN THE POLITICAL DEBATE ON SECURITY:



Youth ambassadors or Youth Advisory Group to the OSCE



Special representatives for Youth and Security, appointed by the Chair



Engage youth in regular opinion surveys



Grow network of the Perspectives 20-30 Academy participants, who can drive local solutions



Involve young participants in mixed forums with government representatives and experts.

**"Unity is strength. It is worth focusing on factors that bring us together, including common challenges and interests, as a foundation for further dialogue."**

