



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

What is an OSCE Summit?

An OSCE Summit is the Organization's highest decision-making body, in which Heads of State or Government set the priorities and provide orientation for several years. There are no general rules determining how often Summits take place. Any participating State can propose a Summit. The decision to hold it, like all OSCE decisions, must then be taken by consensus.

ASTANA, 2010: Countering new global security threats

Since the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) first met in 1975, the Heads of State or Government of its participating States have gathered in six Summits at decisive turning points in European history to pave the way for a peaceful and secure future.

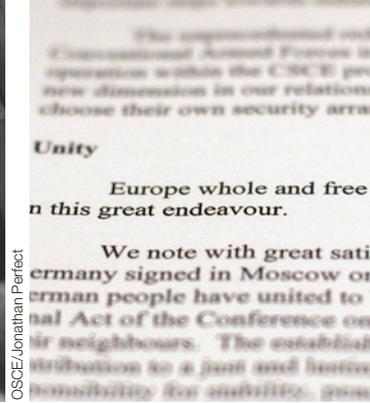
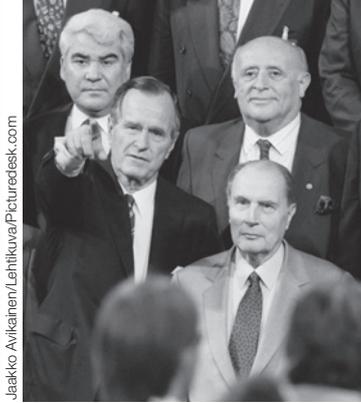
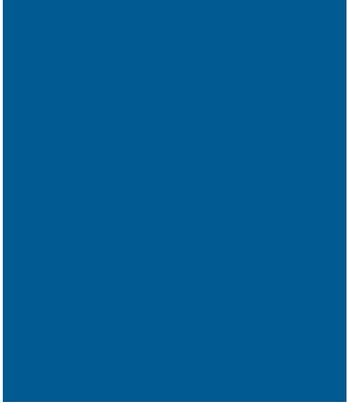
More than a decade has passed since the last OSCE Summit was held, and time is ripe for another highest-level meeting of the OSCE, which now includes 56 participating States from Europe, North America and the entire post-Soviet area. On 1 and 2 December 2010, the Heads of

State or Government will meet at the Astana Summit, to counter new global security threats that call for collective action and cannot be overcome by the efforts of individual actors alone.

HELSINKI, 1975: How it all began

Convened in the middle of the Cold War, the Helsinki Summit, from 30 July to 1 August 1975, marked an important step in the rapprochement between East and West. The Summit concluded two years of discussions at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and brought forth the *Helsinki Final Act*. In signing this politically binding document, the leaders of 35 States of both blocs decided to make the CSCE a permanent forum for political discourse and co-operation. Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, grasped the historic significance of this moment in his address: *"The aims of the CSCE are without precedent. For the first time the States of Europe and North America have sat down together at one table to discuss the whole range of their problems."*

At the Helsinki Summit, the participating States negotiated ten principles to guide their future relations, which became known as the Helsinki Decalogue. The great achievement of the *Helsinki Final Act* is that it was the result of concessions made by both East and West. This is reflected in the words of Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: *"There are neither victors nor vanquished, neither winners nor losers. It has been a victory of reason. Everyone has won: the countries of East and West, the peoples of socialist and capitalist States, whether parties to alliances or neutral, whether large or small. It has been a gain for all who cherish peace and security on our planet."*



The USSR accepted the inclusion of human rights and civil liberties into the *Helsinki Final Act*, and the Western countries agreed in turn to transfer technological know-how and to co-operate in economic matters.

In the *Helsinki Final Act*, the participating States agreed to a series of voluntary confidence- and security-building measures to restore trust between the two blocs, including prior notification and mutual observation of major military manoeuvres.

The *Helsinki Final Act* included commitments on an extremely wide range of topics, classified into three groups, thereby laying the groundwork for the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and its three dimensions: politico-military, economic and environmental, and human.

PARIS, 1990: The beginning of a new era

With the fall of the Iron Curtain, the political landscape in the CSCE area changed dramatically – the USSR was on the verge of dissolving; Germany was reunited.

In the *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*, adopted at the Paris Summit that took place from 19 to 21 November 1990, participating States proclaimed: “*The era of confrontation and division of Europe has ended. (...)The courage of men and women, the strength of the will of the peoples and the power of the ideas of the Helsinki Final Act have opened a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe.*” The end of the bipolar world also bore the potential for new conflicts, however. “*Europe is entering unknown waters. The CSCE is ideally suited to help its Member States navigate,*” President Bush noted in his address.

To steer towards a peaceful future, a series of new institutions was created, turning the CSCE into a body of a more permanent nature. The Conflict Prevention Centre was set up to deal with potential military disputes. To ensure democratic standards throughout the CSCE area, and especially in the young democracies that had just come into being, the Office for Free Elections (the predecessor of today's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) was founded.

The *Charter of Paris for a New Europe* also established the CSCE Council (the predecessor of today's Ministerial Council), the Committee of Senior Officials and the CSCE Secretariat. At the Paris Summit, the participating States called for a greater involvement of parliamentarians in the CSCE, leading to the creation of the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly the following year. Also, the landmark *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)*, which limited the amount of heavy weaponry parties were allowed to possess, was signed at the margins of the Summit by the 22 participating States that were members of NATO or the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

Helsinki Decalogue

1. Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty
2. Refraining from the threat or use of force
3. Inviolability of frontiers
4. Territorial integrity of States
5. Peaceful settlement of disputes
6. Non-intervention in internal affairs
7. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief
8. Equal rights and self-determination of peoples
9. Co-operation among States
10. Fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law



OSCE/Lubomir Kotek



OSCE/Zakhar Sviridenko



OSCE

HELSINKI, 1992: The challenges of change

With wars erupting in the CSCE area in the early 1990s, the optimism of the *Charter of Paris* was put to a severe test. In response to the civil wars raging on the territory of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the participating States suspended its CSCE membership in July 1992, two days prior to the second Helsinki Summit, on 9 and 10 July 1992. At that Summit, participating States created new mechanisms and institutions to prevent similar conflicts in the future. They established the post of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in The Hague. To this day, this institution seeks to use quiet diplomacy to identify and resolve ethnic tensions before they erupt. They also strengthened the politico-military dimension of security by founding the Forum for Security Co-operation, which meets regularly for negotiations on arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building measures.

Participating States decided at the Helsinki Summit that the Organization could establish missions for conflict prevention and crisis management, and the CSCE set up its first long-term field operation in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina later that year.

The final document of the Helsinki Summit, *The Challenges of Change*, defined the role of the annual Economic Forum (renamed the Economic and Environmental Forum in 2006), which had been established earlier in 1992 to acknowledge the important role of economics for maintaining peace.

At the Helsinki Summit, participating States officially declared the CSCE a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, turning it into an instrument of the UN Security Council for maintaining peace. They also welcomed the *Treaty on Open Skies*, which 26 of the participating States had concluded prior to the Summit, laying out rules for unarmed observation flights on their territories. As of today, 34 participating States are party to this treaty.

BUDAPEST, 1994: A conference becomes an organization

The Budapest Summit, held on 5 and 6 December 1994, is considered a milestone in the history of the OSCE, as it concluded the transformation of the CSCE into the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. *"We are determined to give a new political impetus to the CSCE, thus enabling it to play a cardinal role in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. To reflect this determination, the CSCE will henceforth be known as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE),"* participating States declared in the Final Document. Despite the new name, the OSCE remained a political forum in a legal sense, as it is not classified as an organization under international law. During the Budapest Summit, the participating States formally adopted the *Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security*. The code commits them to maintaining military capacities appropriate to their individual security needs, to ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law through democratic control of their armed and security forces, and to preventing and combating terrorism. It affirms the right of each participating State to freely determine its security interests and arrangements, including alliances and treaties.



LISBON, 1996: Strengthening security and stability

When the Heads of State or Government met for the Lisbon Summit on 2 and 3 December 1996, a ceasefire had just been negotiated in Chechnya in May. The OSCE was actively involved in post-conflict rehabilitation and the establishment of stability and democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the mandate it had been given by the *Dayton Peace Accords* of December 1995. But peace in South-Eastern Europe remained fragile. It was in this context that participating States adopted the *Lisbon Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century*, which sought to strengthen security and stability in the OSCE region, and initiated talks on a new European security charter. “We intend to realize our full potential for consolidating peace and prosperity in the entire OSCE region, as demonstrated by our combined efforts – through the OSCE and other relevant institutions – to forge a sustainable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

At the Lisbon Summit, participating States also acknowledged the importance of the freedom of the media and set the course for the creation of the mandate for the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

ISTANBUL, 1999: At the dawn of the twenty-first century

At the Istanbul Summit on 18 and 19 November 1999, participating States adopted the *Charter for European Security*, including the *Platform for Co-operative Security*, which defined the OSCE’s future co-operation with other international and regional organizations. The Charter also established mechanisms to improve the operational capabilities of the Organization in field missions.

Another important outcome of the Istanbul Summit was the inclusion of two OSCE-related agreements into the final document: the *Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)* and the *Final Act of the Conference of the States Parties to the CFE Treaty*. An updated version of the *Vienna Document*, first adopted in 1990, was agreed on the eve of the Summit. The *Vienna Document 1999* remains the most recent version of the OSCE’s confidence- and security-building measures in the politico-military dimension.

Press and Public Information Section
OSCE Secretariat
Wallnerstrasse 6
A-1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel.: +43 1 514 36 6180
info@osce.org

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) works for **stability, prosperity** and **democracy** in 56 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.