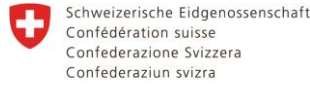




Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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Conference Framing Paper

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Introduction: The State of the OSCE in 2019

In 2019, the OSCE continued to navigate through turbulent waters. Great power competition between the United States, Russia and China has led to a decline in the appreciation of multilateralism and cooperative solutions. The effect of a rising China on such formats has yet to be seen. Multilateralism has also come under pressure from within states that were once their advocates, notably the US. The OSCE as an organization based on consensus and compromise is greatly affected by these dynamics. Equally, the tense relationship between Russia and the West continues to have a negative impact on the organization and its capacities.

The observation by Christian Nünlist in last year's OSCE Focus Conference Framing Paper is still relevant in 2019: "Four [now five] years after Russia's annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of war in Ukraine, one camp within the West strongly argues for punishing Russia as long as Russia's actions have not been rectified. According to this view, dialogue and cooperation would mean rewarding Moscow with a return to business as usual."² Another camp argues that engaging in dialogue with Russia and achieving progress on "islands of cooperation"³ - or small steps that help to build trust around areas of common interest - is essential to prevent a further escalation.

This East-West conundrum and great power politics affect the atmosphere at the OSCE in Vienna and tend to poison negotiations. The interactions between the 57 OSCE participating States are often dominated by adversarial rhetoric, acrimonious exchanges, and accusations that prevent real dialogue and common solutions. States increasingly link unrelated issues with one another, 'punish' one another, and take revenge in

¹ This framing paper was prepared for the 2019 OSCE Focus Conference. The views of the author do not necessarily represent the official position of the organizing and supporting institutions listed in the header. Many thanks to Christian Nünlist, Walter Kemp and Loic Simonet for their very helpful comments and input to a draft version of this paper.

² Christian Nünlist, *OSCE Focus 2018: The OSCE at a Crossroads: Recognizing and Seizing Opportunities* (Geneva, 12-13 October 2018), p. 1.

³ See more on this in Reinhard Krumm, "Small Steps: How to Start Improving Security in Europe", in: Samuel Charap, Alyssa Demus, Jeremy Shapiro (eds.), *Getting out from In-Between: Perspectives on the Regional Order in Post-Soviet Europe and Eurasia* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2018), pp. 21-4; Petri Hakkarainen and Christian Nünlist, "Trust and Realpolitik: The OSCE in 2016", *CSS Policy Perspectives* 4(1) (2016).

seemingly endless tit-for-tat actions. This dynamic in some instances leads to paralysis of the decision-making process, even when it comes to minor procedural issues. This threatens the functioning of the OSCE and, in the long run, may have very serious consequences for the effectiveness of the organization and the OSCE's image among the general public, as well as in some foreign ministries in OSCE capitals.

In a similar vein, budget negotiations and the discussions on the share of the budget covered by each participating State have been marred by the inability of states to compromise and to look at the bigger picture of providing the OSCE with adequate funding that the organization needs to carry out its most basic functions.

The 2019 Slovak OSCE Chairmanship - under the leadership of Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak, who personally invested a great deal of time and energy – has taken exceptional measures so far to overcome some of the negative trends. For example, the Chairperson-in-Office (CiO) called for an informal OSCE Ministerial Council meeting that took place in the Slovak High Tatras Mountains on 8-9 July in order to help create a more positive spirit. The Chairmanship tried to engage participants in an informal discussion about the future of European security and the role of the OSCE in conflict prevention.

The visibility of the OSCE on the international stage was enhanced due to this personal engagement of the CiO. Lajcak traveled to all OSCE field operations, and made great efforts to provide political impetus to established negotiation formats on the protracted conflicts. He stepped in after a two-year period during which CiOs were challenged by their own domestic political contexts, particularly elections in Austria (2017) and Italy (2018), and were not able to assume the political leadership that the OSCE needs.

Overall, developments in the OSCE region continue to be dominated by the protracted conflicts, threats to human rights and fundamental freedoms and emerging hybrid threats. While a challenge to the security of the OSCE region, they prove the continued relevance of the OSCE as an inclusive and comprehensive security organization. Focusing on six subject areas, this paper analyzes the situation and challenges the OSCE faces, and provides food for thought on future strategies of how to tackle them.

1) Great power politics: Implications for the OSCE

The international system is currently characterized by what is increasingly described as “a new era of great power competition”,⁴ involving actors such as the US, China, Russia, the EU, as well as emerging powers like Turkey, India, or Iran. The competition largely follows a realist doctrine focused on advancing narrow national interests, sometimes using aggressive military or economic means.

Washington now views China as its main competitor. President Xi Jinping consolidated his power domestically, and China's assertiveness on the international stage is characterized by its military actions in the South China Sea. Its economic policies are exemplified in the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ (BRI), which is aimed at supporting infrastructure development and large-scale investments, including in several countries in the OSCE region. China's overall BRI expenses could reach 1.2 to 1.3 trillion USD by 2027.⁵ Apart from geo-economic incentives, Beijing's motivations with regard to the BRI are clearly also geopolitical in nature: China now actively and forcefully seeks to shape international norms and institutions.⁶

Russia under President Vladimir Putin has equally continued to assert its power internationally, including in Ukraine, Syria and Venezuela, eager to show that it is a global power to be taken seriously. In recent years, Beijing and Moscow intensified their partnership – politically, economically and militarily – in an apparent attempt to push back against US influence.⁷

Even though US President Donald Trump has advocated for improved relations with Russia on numerous occasions, there has been no such policy shift in Washington. Many high-level officials in the State Department and White House instead insist that there will be no return to business as usual without Moscow addressing the Ukraine conflict, returning Crimea to Ukraine and ending its interference in democratic

⁴ Munich Security Conference, *Munich Security Report 2019: The Great Puzzle: Who Will Pick Up the Pieces* (February 2019), p. 6. Retrieved 15 July 2019, <https://www.securityconference.de/publikationen/munich-security-report/munich-security-report-2019/>.

⁵ See Andrew Chatzky and James McBride, *China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative* (21 May 2019). Retrieved 20 July 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>.

⁶ Elisabeth C. Economy, “China's New Revolution: The Reign of Xi Jinping”, *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2018).

⁷ Jeronim Perovic and Benno Zogg, “Russia and China: Potential of their ‘Strategic Partnership’”, *CSS Analyses in Security Policy* 250 (2019).

processes in the West.⁸ At the same time, after the Mueller report proved no collusion with Russia, a new and more constructive stage in US-Russia relations may be beginning. Yet, the influence of more recent appointees in the Trump administration remains to be seen in that regard.

As such, the tense relationship between the West and Russia in general, and the US and Russia more specifically, continues. The armed conflict in and around Ukraine remains unresolved despite recent improvements, and a militarization of international relations can be observed, coupled with a trend towards abandoning major arms control agreements. This is accompanied by a retreat from multilateralism by the US under President Donald Trump, including from major international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and the Iran Nuclear Deal. The US threat of use of trade tariffs against China and the EU is another example of this trend.

The dismissal of multilateral, cooperative solutions not only represents a departure from many of the main lines of US foreign policy since 1945, but has led to a leadership vacuum on the international stage. Despite French President Emmanuel Macron's recent attempts to take a more active stance internationally, the EU is still considered to be weakened and, therefore, not in a position to assume leadership either. Challenges include the unresolved Brexit, lack of internal solidarity on irregular migration, threats to the rule of law in Hungary and Poland, and populist movements gaining in strength.⁹ Given great power disputes, there is, however, a greater push towards strategic autonomy within Europe, notably the PESCO initiative to become more militarily independent from the US, as well as steps to prevent further alienation of Russia.

What does all this mean for the OSCE? Indeed, the implications for the OSCE are rather gloomy. The OSCE as an organization based on consensus, compromise and cooperation stands in stark contrast to the zero-sum mentality and focus on narrow national interests by the three main global powers. In such an age, the OSCE faces even greater difficulty in overcoming gridlock, and furthering trust and an understanding of cooperative security for all. Participating States are more willing to block decisions and take negotiation processes in the OSCE hostage. Indeed, it sometimes seems that states are abusing the cooperative environment of the OSCE to pursue non-cooperative policies, due to a climate of impunity.

How can this trend be reversed? How can states regain trust and refocus on cooperation? The core question is whether the OSCE is still an organization based on shared values and a common understanding of achieving progress and solutions collectively.

2) The crisis in and around Ukraine: What role for the OSCE?

The armed conflict in and around Ukraine remains unresolved in its fifth year. According to the UN, 13,000 people have been killed, and approximately 1.5 million people have been internally displaced in Ukraine since the beginning of hostilities in 2014.

In November 2018, the conflict escalated further when Russian coast guard boats rammed and fired on three Ukrainian navy vessels in the Kerch Strait, seized the boats, and detained the crew members. This incident underscored that the conflict has the potential to escalate quickly if not addressed.¹⁰ Moreover, the implementation of the Minsk Agreements is still stalled, with Kyiv demanding security and full control over the state border, and the Kremlin arguing that Ukraine is failing to implement the political aspects of the agreements (particularly constitutional reform, decentralization and a special status). It seems almost impossible to break this deadlock, particularly given the lack of political will.

The last time the Normandy Format (consisting of France, Germany, the Russian Federation and Ukraine) met on the level of heads of state or government was in October 2016 in Berlin. The negotiation format lost some of its influence since as it failed to provide the necessary political push to implement the Minsk Agreements. As

⁸ Stephanie Liechtenstein, "Russia Should Honour its Commitments", Interview with Christopher Robinson, *Security and Human Rights Monitor* (9 July 2019). Retrieved 21 July 2019, <https://www.shrmonitor.org/russia-should-honour-its-commitments/>.

⁹ For more background on the EU's role in the context of great power competition, see Carl Bildt, "Europe risks irrelevance in the age of great power competition", *Financial Times* (19 July 2019).

¹⁰ Stephanie Liechtenstein, "While Settlement Far Off, Russia-Ukraine Clash Highlight Need for Diplomatic Action", *International Peace Institute/Global Observatory* (4 December 2018). Retrieved 23 July 2019, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2018/12/settlement-far-off-russia-ukraine-clash-need-diplomatic-action/>.

Walter Kemp put it in 2017: “In the absence of political or diplomatic process, military dynamics filled the vacuum on the ground.”¹¹

That said, it seems that a more positive dynamic is slowly developing. Surprisingly, in 2019, Volodymyr Zelenskiy was elected President of Ukraine, and his ‘Servant of the People’ Party won a clear majority in parliament. The result of the election was a renewed political impetus that had positive effects on the negotiations within the Trilateral Contact Group, and led to successful disengagement of military forces around the area of the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, which is used by almost 11,000 civilians every day. **This was considered a breakthrough, given the 2016 framework decision of the Trilateral Contact Group had thus far never translated into successful disengagement on the ground.** In addition, a Normandy Summit has been proposed that could build on the positive momentum and provide fresh political impetus that could translate to tangible progress on the ground.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) played a key role in monitoring the successful disengagement process in Stanytsia Luhanska. The SMM continues to verify that the military positions remain vacant after the disengagement, and, through its presence, helps the parties retain confidence in the disengagement process, and enables crucial bridge repairs to be initiated. The aim now is to replicate the process in other areas, and to introduce further measures that improve the life of the people on the ground. As Zelenskiy’s election may open up new windows of opportunity, the OSCE SMM needs to react quickly to facilitate the translation of new political agreements into concrete actions. This includes ensuring continued presence on the ground in order to help sustain disengagement and monitoring of ceasefire commitments, and to facilitate the repair of critical infrastructure, including power lines, and to allow the operation of the Donetsk Filtration Station.

The positive momentum was continued when, on 17 July 2019, the Trilateral Contact Group issued a statement in which the parties reaffirmed their “full commitment to a comprehensive, sustainable and unlimited ceasefire”.¹² So far, even if the ceasefire was violated several times, the total number of ceasefire violations has gone down, resulting in a significant decrease in civilian casualties. Another major positive development included a prisoner exchange took place on 7 September, in which Russia and Ukraine each released 35 prisoners, among them the sailors who were taken captive by Russia after the incident in the Kerch Strait. This constitutes the biggest prisoner exchange since the start of the conflict.

A full-fledged resolution of the conflict, thus, still appears a distant goal. The parties involved still insist on their established positions, and there is no clear pathway how to ease the growing East-West tensions. In the meantime, the OSCE Trilateral Contact Group and the OSCE SMM should strive to help the parties improve confidence, enhance the humanitarian situation on the ground, especially by improving crossing points across the contact line, and facilitating demining activities.

3) Wither arms control, disarmament and CSBMs?

Past years were characterized by a gradual erosion of the arms control regimes. Russia suspended its participation in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty in 2007, after the West refused to let the Adapted CFE Treaty enter into force. In addition, nuclear arms control instruments are also falling apart. On 2 August 2019, the US formally withdrew from the INF Treaty, thereby putting an end to this landmark document. The US was supported in this decision by NATO allies.¹³ The New Strategic Arms Reduction (START) Treaty, which runs out in 2021, could become the next victim. Combined with the faltering of the conventional and nuclear arms control regimes, an increased amount of NATO and Russian military activities raise suspicion about intentions. OSCE participating States disagree whether there is a need for discussions on conventional arms control in this climate.

One camp consisting of states such as the US, the UK, Canada, Norway, Turkey, Poland, Sweden, and the Baltic states are very sceptical and some of them are outright opposed to a “business as usual” and a relaunch of talks on conventional arms control. They perceive engaging in arms control under the current conditions as

¹¹ Walter Kemp, “Civilians in a War Zone: The OSCE in Eastern Ukraine”, in: IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2017* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2018), p. 116.

¹² OSCE, *Statement of the Trilateral Contact Group as of 17 July 2019* (18 July 2019). Retrieved on 21 July 2019, <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/425921>.

¹³ NATO, *Relations with Russia* (5 August 2019). Retrieved 8 September 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50090.htm.

legitimizing Russian behavior.¹⁴ A second camp that includes states such as Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and Belgium believe that confidence- and trust-building is vitally important to prevent a further downward spiral, and that talks on arms control should take place now without political preconditions.

Russia, for its part, seeks a new, alternative European security order, as it perceives the security order as rigged in favour of NATO. In Moscow's view, discussions on relaunching conventional arms control would, thus, have to take into account "present realities". With this, Russia means that it is "against further accessions to NATO as well as against additional NATO military reinforcements on the territory of the alliance members in Russia's immediate neighborhood."¹⁵

Experts also differ in their opinions regarding how and whether to relaunch a discussion on conventional arms control. One recent study by the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions suggests introducing an arms control regime for the NATO-Russia contact zone in the Baltics containing the following elements: no permanent deployment of additional substantial combat forces in NATO member states and in Kaliningrad; a pledge by military powers to limit the levels of their armed forces; limiting the size of military activities/exercises.¹⁶ The authors also suggest that there should be increased transparency over rapid deployment and strike potentials beyond the contact zone, as well as a transparency and verification mechanism.

Another recent study by Wolfgang Richter similarly suggests establishing a sub-regional stability regime instead of a fully-fledged pan-European arms control regime to decrease tensions between NATO and Russia.¹⁷ Richter considers the Baltic region as particularly prone to tensions and conflict, as NATO states do not exclude anymore a potential surprise attack or hybrid war by Russia in this region. Russia, on the other hand, considers NATO's enhanced forward presence in the region as a security threat to Kaliningrad.¹⁸ The sub-regional arms control regime would need to be wider than just in the Baltic region per se, given the mobility of modern military forces and new weapons systems, such as ballistic missiles and drones. Similarly, to the study by the OSCE Network of Think Tanks, Richter also suggests transparency and verification measures.¹⁹

Yet, the states affected by sub-regional arms control regimes (Poland and the Baltic states, for example) are opposed to such regional measures as they view them as discriminatory. They prefer pan-European arms control measures instead. Other experts also argue against initiating negotiations on arms control as "preconditions are not in place at this particular point in time". They maintain that the US and Russia are notably still at the side lines, and that perceptions of the underlying security order are at odds.²⁰

One alternative to relaunching arms control discussions is to modernize the 2011 Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (2011 VD). The modernization would not only have to include a reduction of the threshold of personnel and material requiring prior notification to the OSCE, but would also have to include inspections of snap exercises. A modernization would also have to reflect new realities, including hybrid warfare and new weapons systems.²¹ Yet, Russia so far has not responded to calls for engaging in discussions to update the 2011 VD, insisting on political and military preconditions.²²

Given this paralysis, the question should be asked how the OSCE, and particularly the Structured Dialogue, could be used more effectively. The Structured Dialogue is currently the only multilateral platform for dialogue on military and political issues between East and West, though it is not discussing arms control measures (yet). Over the course of this year, the Informal Working Group on the Structured Dialogue was held twice in capitals format in Vienna, and discussed issues related to transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention, both on the level of diplomats and on expert (military) level. In addition, a joint PC-FSC meeting was held in

¹⁴ OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions, *Reducing the Risks of Conventional Deterrence in Europe: Arms Control in the NATO-Russia Contact Zones* (Vienna, December 2018), p. 8.

¹⁵ Gudrun Persson (ed.), *Conventional Arms Control: A Way Forward or Wishful Thinking?* (Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, April 2018), p. 33.

¹⁶ OSCE Network of Think Tanks, *Reducing the Risks of Conventional Deterrence*, pp. 21-2.

¹⁷ Wolfgang Richter, "Erneuerung der konventionellen Rüstungskontrolle in Europa: Vom Gleichgewicht der Blöcke zur regionalen Stabilität in der Krise", *SWP-Studie* (Juli 2019), p. 37.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-3.

²⁰ Gudrun Persson, *Conventional Arms Control*, p. 69.

²¹ Peter van Ham, "Modernizing Conventional Arms Control in the Euro-Atlantic Region", *Clingendael Report* (September 2018), p. 18.

²² OSCE, *Special Meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation: FSC.JOUR/840* (9 November 2016). Retrieved 16 August 2019, <https://www.osce.org/fsc/281341?download=true>.

May, and a special session on the Structured Dialogue took place on the margins of the Annual Security Review Conference in June. The idea is to collect best practices in the area of incident prevention and management, with the long-term view of developing a code of conduct in this area.

In this context, Philip Remler recently suggested initiating a process whereby major demands should be “compartmentalized” in the Structured Dialogue, and an agreement should be struck “to talk about specific, circumscribed topics that cannot be highly politicized, setting modest goals”.²³ He suggests that neutral states such as Austria, Finland or Switzerland should take active roles and help “broker a gentlemen’s agreement on compartmentalization”.²⁴

While some still believe that the Structured Dialogue is a trust-building exercise in itself, others hold that it must deliver results soon. They question how long dialogue for the sake of dialogue can continue. What could be the best possible outcome of the Structured Dialogue? Are there any concrete proposals that will be supported by participating States (for example on incident prevention) that could be taken up by OSCE decision-making bodies for formal drafting in the future? How can OSCE States move forward on arms control discussions despite this political situation?

4) How to make the OSCE Chairmanship more attractive?

In recent years, as the OSCE lacks clear mechanisms to determine its annual chairs, it has become increasingly difficult to identify and motivate countries to assume the Chairmanship. But, what are the origins of the OSCE Chairmanship? And, what is its exact mandate?

The OSCE Porto Ministerial Council adopted a decision in 2002 on “the role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office” further defining the mandate of the CiO, clearly outlining possibilities and limitations. While the CiO needs to take all opinions of participating States into account,²⁵ it has the authority to make appointments, coordinate OSCE business, represents the OSCE externally, appoints personal representatives, and plays a key role in brokering consensus among the participating States. Thus, within the OSCE, the CiO has a political role of great importance.²⁶

Putting forward a candidature for OSCE Chairmanship is voluntary but it has to be approved by the remaining OSCE participating States by consensus, “as a rule two years before the Chairmanship’s term of office starts”.²⁷ According to an informal understanding, OSCE participating States that are permanent members of the UN Security Council (the US, Russia, the UK and France) will not put forward candidatures – although France has considered chairing the OSCE in the past, and there is no reason why the UK could not be a chair, particularly if it leaves the EU but wants to demonstrate its continued commitment to promoting security and cooperation in a wider Europe. So-called micro-states (for example Andorra, Monaco, San Marino or Liechtenstein) have so far not expressed any interest in chairing the OSCE.

In more recent times, it has become increasingly difficult to identify countries that are willing to assume international responsibility, and chair the OSCE. A political leadership crisis was averted when Italy helped to bring Albania on board to assume the Chairmanship in 2020, after the sudden and unexpected withdrawal of the Norwegian candidacy. Thus far, there are no straightforward candidatures for the Chairmanships in 2021 and 2022, which will have to be decided by this year’s OSCE Ministerial Council in Bratislava in December.

What have been the motivations for chairing the OSCE in the past? After the fall of the Iron Curtain, the OSCE Chairmanship was a way for countries to “raise their credibility” to become NATO members. For other states, such as Slovenia in 2005, the Chairmanship was a way to enhance their leverage on the international scene, and to “gain important multilateral experience”. For new EU members, it was “a test run for a future EU presidency”. For neutral and non-aligned states, such as Switzerland or Austria, the OSCE Chairmanship was seen as a way to “compensate for their lack of involvement in EU and/or NATO security policy”.²⁸ When

²³ Philip Remler, *Russia and Cooperative Security in Europe: Times Change, Tactics Remain* (1 August 2019), p. 8. Retrieved 15 August 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/08/01/russia-and-cooperative-security-in-europe-times-change-tactics-remain-pub-79611>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ OSCE, *Role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office: MC(10).DEC/8* (Porto, December 2002). Retrieved 19 August 2019, <https://www.osce.org/de/mc/40523>.

²⁶ Christian Nünlist, “Successful Small States in the OSCE and the German Chairmanship of 2016”, *Security and Human Rights* 26(1) (2015), p. 50.

²⁷ OSCE, *Role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office*.

²⁸ Christian Nünlist, *Small States in the OSCE*, pp. 55-7.

Switzerland took over the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2014, a new motivation for the chairing the OSCE came about as the organization had assumed a major role in conflict in and around Ukraine.

Today, it seems that the overall political climate and zero-sum mentality casts a shadow on the OSCE, making the work of Chairmanships disproportionately cumbersome and, thus, less attractive. Florian Raunig and Julie Peer describe participating States' behavior as insisting on their own priorities instead of others', based on an assumption of security as a competition with winners and losers, rather than as a common responsibility.²⁹ In addition, the authors observe a tendency to import conflict-related disagreements into unrelated areas of OSCE work.³⁰ Hence, routine administrative issues have become very energy- and time-consuming for Chairmanships.

The question that needs to be asked is whether a reform of the current OSCE leadership model would help offset some of the current negative dynamics. Suggestions have been made in the past to introduce a rotating OSCE Chairmanship in alphabetical order (similar to the Council of Europe or the EU).³¹ Former OSCE Secretary General (SG), Lamberto Zannier, argued that such a system would make holding the Chairmanship less expensive, and would automatically strengthen the role of the OSCE institutional structures, such as the SG.³² A less political role for the CiO with more support from the Secretariat could also help to offset volatile domestic situations that weaken the CiO, such as the ones in Austria in 2017, and in Italy in 2018. However, a reduced political role for the CiO would also make it less attractive for countries (or foreign ministers) to put forward their candidatures.

Another much discussed issue is a possible adaptation of the consensus rule, given its frequent abuse. In this context, the Permanent Representative of Italy to the OSCE, Ambassador Alessandro Azzoni, who chaired the Permanent Council during Italy's 2018 Chairmanship, argued that the consensus rule should be reserved for political decisions.³³ For others, maintaining the consensus rule is essential, and softening it would violate the spirit of the OSCE and the principle of cooperative security.³⁴ Still, a discussion on how to avoid blockages of entire decision-making processes in the OSCE should be initiated.

Another way of making OSCE Chairmanships more appealing to countries would be to look into additional options for more burden-sharing. One idea worth considering would be to examine the model of consecutive 'tandem Chairmanships' that was implemented for the first time in 2014-2015, with Switzerland and Serbia developing a joint work-plan. Could this be replicated in the future? Could the Troika be used even more to help support the work of Chairmanships? Could a group of "Friends of the Chair" be created that supports the Chairmanship politically and financially? What could be the role of an enhanced Secretariat in Vienna?

5) Multilateral organizations and cooperative security

"We end up in the paradoxical situation that support for cooperation is shrinking just when it is needed most," OSCE SG Thomas Greminger said in September when he addressed the EU Ambassadors' Conference in Brussels.³⁵ Many common security challenges of our times cannot be tackled by one state and one organization alone. Fittingly, this year marks the 20th anniversary of the Platform for Cooperative Security, a key document that was adopted as an integral part of the Charter for European Security at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999. The Platform constitutes the flexible basis for the OSCE's cooperation with other international organization in the OSCE area.³⁶

²⁹ Florian Raunig and Julie Peer, "Chairing the OSCE: Conditions, Challenges, Conclusions. The Experience of the 2017 Austrian OSCE Chairmanship", in: IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2018* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2019), pp. 67-8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

³¹ See for example Cecile Vanderwoude, "The OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office's Election Procedure: Is There a Need For Formalized Criteria?", *Security and Human Rights* 22(1) (2011).

³² Stephanie Liechtenstein, "Interview with Lamberto Zannier", *Security and Human Rights Monitor* (4 July 2017). Retrieved 20 August 2019, <https://www.shrmonitor.org/interview-lamberto-zannier-former-osce-secretary-general/>.

³³ Stephanie Liechtenstein, "The Essence of the Spirit of Dialogue is to Involve Everybody", *Security and Human Rights Monitor* (14 February 2019). Retrieved 20 August 2019, <https://www.shrmonitor.org/2018-italian-osce-chairmanship-interview/>.

³⁴ Andrei Zagorski, "A Contested Consensus Rule", *Security and Human Rights* 25(2) (2014).

³⁵ Thomas Greminger, *Reality Check: The Bi-Lateralisation of Multilateralism and the Rules-Based Order* (2019 EU Ambassadors' Conference, Brussels, 2 September 2019).

³⁶ OSCE, *Istanbul Document 1999: Operational Document – the Platform for Co-operative Security* (Istanbul, November 1999). Retrieved 3 September 2019, <https://www.osce.org/de/mc/39571>.

The text of the Charter for European Security also makes clear that with the adoption of the Platform there is no intention to create a hierarchy of organizations or a permanent division of labour.³⁷ Furthermore, it identifies a set of principles to which other organizations should adhere, as a precondition for the OSCE to cooperate with them (i.a. the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, and the Vienna Document). Yet, OSCE participating States left unclear how criteria on who to engage with would be applied. Besides the Platform, the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century, adopted in Maastricht in 2003, offers a mandate for the OSCE to develop relations with international organizations outside the OSCE area, underlining the importance of threats emanating from neighboring regions.³⁸

On the basis of these two documents, and also on the basis of the SG's mandate, the OSCE has developed a well-established network of contacts with a broad array of international and regional organizations, among them the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe, NATO, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), as well as other specialized agencies such as the International Organization for Migration, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, Interpol, the League of Arab States, and the Union for the Mediterranean. Relations between the OSCE and the UN, for example, are formalized in the Framework for Cooperation and Coordination, signed in 1993 between the then Swedish OSCE Chairmanship and the UN secretary general. To deepen UN-OSCE cooperation, and in order to advance partnerships under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the UN established a Liaison Office in Vienna in 2016.

The OSCE is also supporting the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Areas of cooperation include mediation, peacebuilding, disarmament, transnational treats, tolerance and non-discrimination, as well as women, peace and security. Regular high-level meetings are held, as well as periodic staff talks. OSCE field operations cooperate closely with UN agencies and missions. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo is an integral part of the UN Mission in Kosovo, for example. Whether to open small liaison offices at the UN in New York and Geneva could be discussed, as well as reviewing and updating institutional agreements, such as the 1993 Framework Agreement with the UN.

An exchange of letters, signed on 22 June 2018, between the European Commission, the External Action Service and the OSCE formalized the relations with the EU. In addition, high-level talks, as well as informal staff meetings, have taken place on a regular basis, as well as joint project implementation in the field, for example, in the Balkans and Central Asia. Areas of mutual interest include conflict prevention and mediation, countering violent extremism and radicalization, countering trafficking in small arms and light weapons, cyber threats, rule of law, elections and women, and peace and security.

Cooperation with NATO has thus far not been formalized. The relationship between the OSCE and NATO, which has been described as “generally pragmatic and informal,”³⁹ is based on areas of mutual interest, for example arms control and CSBMs, anti-terrorism activities, border security, counter-narcotic activities, as well as cooperation on small arms and light weapons. Given the many overlapping areas, NATO SG Jens Stoltenberg appointed a personal representative to the OSCE in 2016, and, in 2018, a full-fledged Liaison Office was established with Knut Kirste as its head. There are also regular staff talks, NATO SGs have addressed the OSCE Permanent Council, and the OSCE CiO has addressed the North Atlantic Council. It is worth assessing whether to institutionalize and formalize relations between NATO and the OSCE.⁴⁰

It would also make sense to discuss how relationships with organizations, such as the CSTO, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization could be further developed. The OSCE has been cautious in formalizing relations with some of these organizations, given the current political climate. Cooperation with them has been restricted to cross-representation at meetings, as well as staff talks, and the possibility of addressing decision-making bodies (although CSTO experts have also lectured at the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe).

Hence, while there are a number of well-established working relationships between the OSCE and other international and regional organizations, it should be further explored how the full potential of the Platform for Co-operative Security can be harnessed. What has been achieved during the past 20 years? Has the Platform met expectations or is it merely “an abstract concept, the result of a diplomatic mind game far removed from

³⁷ OSCE, *Istanbul Document 1999: Charter for European Security* (Istanbul, November 1999). Retrieved 3 September 2019, <https://www.osce.org/mc/17502?download=true>.

³⁸ OSCE, *Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century* (Maastricht, 2 December 2003). Retrieved 3 September 2019, <https://www.osce.org/mc/17504>.

³⁹ Loic Simonet, “The OSCE and NATO: Side by Side in a Turbulent World”, in: IFSK (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2017* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2018), p. 307.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 311.

the operational requirements of international organizations”⁴¹ Should participating States define which organizations fit the criteria and principles of the Platform? Should the OSCE assume a more active role as a flexible coordinating framework and will this be accepted by other actors? In case inter-agency competition is an impediment to more cooperation, how could it be overcome?

6) The OSCE in 2025

Ultimately, it is necessary to look beyond the many immediate and burning challenges that the OSCE faces on a daily basis. This year, 2019, marks the 25th anniversary of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, a document unrivalled in international organizations that outlines the role of the armed forces in democracies. 2025 will be the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act – where will the OSCE be in 2025? Is it possible to develop a longer-term vision and strategy to help guide the overall work of the OSCE until the year 2025?

It can be assumed that in 2025, the OSCE will still be the largest regional security organization, bringing together 57 (or more?) states, including the US, Canada, European states, Russia, Mongolia, and Central Asia states. For the OSCE to still be a primary security organization by then, it will be necessary to adapt to the new geopolitical environment, particularly to the rise of China. How can relations between the OSCE and China be updated and strengthened? Should China, or India as another emerging regional power and the world's largest democracy, join the Asian Partnership? Or could another form of strategic cooperation be found with China? In fact, since Mongolia joined the OSCE as an OSCE participating State, China shares an even longer border with the OSCE area, which makes it even more relevant. Relations between the OSCE and China are therefore a question of strategic importance that needs to be addressed.

Apart from that, OSCE participating States should start thinking about future models of field operations. Will the OSCE be called on to deploy other peace operations? Will pressure grow to close more field operations – and will this reduce the OSCE's relevance? And will the mission model change or evolve?

In addition, as the OSCE mostly reacts to external developments and crises, it is useful to take a more strategic look into the future. One possible option would be to enlarge the OSCE's toolbox to deal with emerging and rapidly evolving threats. Creative answers have to be found. The OSCE's pioneering work on confidence- and security building measures for the cyber space is a primary example. The OSCE could similarly address the topic of Artificial Intelligence and lethal autonomous weapons systems. One major issue of concern are killer robots that attack targets without human intervention, which could be prone to manipulation and miscalculation, thus increasing the risk of accidental wars.

The economic and environmental dimension could also be revived by finally including the topic of climate change. The OSCE is the only organization with a comprehensive approach to security that enables it to develop an answer to the security-related questions of climate change. It could further projects and assessment in that regard, based on, for example, a study on climate change and security in the post-Soviet space within the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative, a joint initiative by the OSCE and UN agencies.⁴²

Taking a broader look away from newly emerging challenges and the changing geopolitical landscape, by 2025 the OSCE should think about launching a multilateral process - similar to the CSCE process during the Cold War - bringing together all states around the same table to negotiate a way out of the current zero-sum logic. Such a process could define common rules for peaceful coexistence. As argued by Christian Nünlist, such a “multilateral process [...] could in fact provide a way out of the negative spiral of wars of words over historical narratives and OSCE principles”.⁴³

The truth is that the current conflict in and around Ukraine is a symptom of a much deeper crisis of the European security architecture. Similarly, many of the OSCE's immediate challenges discussed in this paper, such as the renewed East-West confrontation, the lack of progress on arms control issues, as well as the slow progress regarding the protracted conflicts, are all symptoms of that same crisis. While Western states insist on maintaining the current Euro-Atlantic security order based on the 1975 Helsinki Principles and the 1990

⁴¹ Sandra Sacchetti, “The OSCE's Platform for Cooperative Security”, *Security and Human Rights* 25(1) (2014), p. 125.

⁴² OSCE, *Climate Change and Security in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus*. Retrieved 17 September 2019, <https://www.osce.org/projects/climate-change-and-security>.

⁴³ Christian Nünlist, “Diversity as a Strength: Historical Narratives and Principles of the OSCE”, in: IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2018* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2019), p. 25.

Charter of Paris, the divergent historical narratives and interpretations of principles, as identified in the 2015 report by the Panel of Eminent Persons, need to be addressed.

At some point, it will also be necessary, in cooperation with the secretary general, to provide the OSCE with clear and renewed political direction. The current security environment demands fresh thinking about the strategic direction of the OSCE. One of the main goals of all OSCE participating States could, therefore, be convening an OSCE Summit to provide this strategic political guidance, as well as to address the following key questions: What should the future security architecture of the Euro-Atlantic area look like? How can the 2010 Astana vision of undivided, pan-European security be translated into practice? Is this vision still shared by all states? Could the crisis be overcome by a relaunched multilateral Helsinki-style process? And, does this mean that new principles and new rules would have to be developed?

Apart from this broader political perspective, the OSCE remains the organization in which small steps can be taken, even if the broader questions remain unsolved. These should be continued, for example in the form of the Structured Dialogue, where hopefully by 2025 agreements on reducing military risks and incident prevention can be found. Still, it remains to be seen how long taking small steps will be sufficient in order to successfully deal with the many security challenges in the OSCE region. Will a new commitment to a common vision for a security order still be a distant dream in 2025?