

Foreword

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More than two decades after the end of the Cold War, the European security order faces what may be considered the greatest challenge of its recent history. Russia's actions towards its neighbor and the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine have called into question the OSCE's common fundamental principles and values established in the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, in the Charter of Paris and in other key OSCE documents. Much is at stake and the crisis is not over yet.


In the past, Germany has been a major beneficiary of the CSCE process. Without the agreement on the comprehensive vision of security in Helsinki, the vision of a Europe based on trust and co-operation, history might have taken a different turn. The end of confrontation between East and West and the reunification of Germany in 1990 owe much to the long process of dialogue and building trust, which started in Helsinki more than forty years ago.

With this in mind, Germany decided to assume responsibility for the OSCE in 2016 at a crucial point in the organization's recent history. Over the past two years we have witnessed a dangerous renaissance of long-forgotten reflexes, mutual distrust and violent conflicts on our continent. These difficult times are a testing ground for the strength of our commitment to peace in Europe, as well as for the OSCE as an organization. They remind us of the unambiguous relevance and validity of the OSCE acquis and the fundamental principles it enshrines. At the same time, the challenges we are facing have created a momentum of opportunity for the OSCE and its participating States.

It is my firm conviction that we need the OSCE, maybe now more than ever, as an indispensable forum for dialogue in order to rebuild trust and help renew the commitment to our shared norms and principles. Only then will we be able to restore the foundations of our common security in the long run. To this end, the German Chairmanship will make every effort to offer possibilities for dialogue between all OSCE participating States, to promote the implementation of the acquis across all three dimensions, and to strengthen the OSCE as an institution, including its crisis reaction and management capacities.

Restoring security in the OSCE area can only be achieved collectively and with the support of the entire OSCE family of nations. Therefore, I hope that all OSCE participating States can muster the political will to give our common principles the prominence they deserve and to engage constructively in dialogue on all questions of European security.

I am certain that the considerations and proposals offered in this volume will contribute to this discussion.



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Security and Human Rights (formerly Helsinki Monitor) is a journal devoted to issues inspired by the work and principles of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It looks at the challenge of building security through cooperation across the northern hemisphere, from Vancouver to Vladivostok, as well as how this experience can be applied to other parts of the world. It aims to stimulate thinking on the question of protecting and promoting human rights in a world faced with serious threats to security.

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