

Article Summaries

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Intolerance and discrimination against Muslims (Islamophobia), Ömür Orhun

In this article, after a brief introduction related to the present environment, Ambassador Orhun discusses human rights, mutual respect and dialogue, leading to an evaluation of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. He finds that the environment in which Muslims live in Western countries has deteriorated considerably in the post September 11 period. He then provides an overview of his experience as OSCE's Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. After sharing his views on ways to promote tolerance and combat discrimination against Muslims, Ambassador Orhun concludes with his recommendations. He stresses the need to take account of the intellectual front in the fight against intolerance and discrimination and dwells especially on true integration to enable Muslim migrants to feel at home in a cohesive society. He says that the real threat to tolerance and to multi-cultural societies emanates from the extremes of host and migrant groups and cautions vigilance to achieve peaceful co-existence.

OSCE's police-related activities: Lessons-learned during the last decade, Thorsten Stodiek

Within the last ten years, police-related activities have become a key component of the OSCE's post-conflict rehabilitation operations and have gained increasing relevance in the organization's democratization and rule of law activities in states of transition as well as in the promotion of international co-operation in the fight against terrorism and organized crime. The article provides an overview of the wide scope of police-related activities the OSCE executive structures have undertaken, the achievements they have made, the challenges they have faced while developing and implementing their police assistance and reform programmes, and the strategies they have developed to address the challenges.

A human rights based approach to trafficking in human beings, Conny Rijken

A human rights based approach to trafficking in human beings (THB) is often fostered but not applied in practice. Based on the human rights legal framework the state obligations are identified. These obligations, to criminalise THB, to prosecute THB, to protect and assist victims and to address the root causes, are not addressed in an equal way since the main focus of counter trafficking measures focus on the criminalisation and the prosecution. To also address the assistance and protection of victims and the root causes of THB additional measures are required. It is proposed to make the needs of THB-victims leading instead of criminal law interests, and to develop a Victim Assistance and Protection Package (VAPP). The root causes of THB emerge both on the supply side and the demand side. Suggestions are made to improve the situation on both sides with the ultimate aim to prevent THB.

A dangerous precedent? The political implications of Kosovo's independence on ethnic conflicts in South-Eastern Europe and the CIS, Solveig Richter and Uwe Halbach

Kosovo's declaration of independence on 17 February 2008 has re-ignited debates about the interaction among the fundamental international legal principles of self-determination, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The question of conformity with international law was interrelated to scenarios on the political implications of secession. After more than one year the following article elaborates if the unilateral declaration

of independence of Kosovo had a precedent-setting impact for long-standing autonomist and secessionist conflicts in South-Eastern Europe and in CIS. The Kosovo-precedent formula had its biggest impact in the secessionist conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where a powerful external actor Russia, made effective use of the precedent-formula in its coercive diplomacy against Georgia. Generally speaking, in South-Eastern Europe, the independence of Kosovo had only minor destabilizing effects with the exception of Bosnia and Hercegovina and Macedonia where political entrepreneurs used the opportunity to play the nationalist card and to profit from worst case scenarios of a disintegration of their country.

The OSCE and transnational security challenges, Alice Ackermann

Although the engagement of the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) with Afghanistan, as an OSCE Asian Partner for Co-operation, is not a new effort, a more structured and focused approach was initiated by the participating States at the Madrid OSCE Ministerial Council in November 2007 and its Decision No. 4/07 (MC Decision No. 4/07). The Ministerial Council Decision identifies the need for OSCE support in three major areas: border security and management, and policing and combating trafficking, with such activities complementing already other national and international efforts. Since then, the implementation of MC Decision No. 4/07 has put OSCE efforts towards Afghanistan on a more systematic basis. With a programme of activities that includes 16 projects, and that aims at the strengthening of border security and management, the facilitation of cross-border co-operation and the enhancement of national law enforcement capacities, the OSCE is well-positioned to strengthen its engagement with Afghanistan. In particular, it can draw on substantial expertise within its existing channels, including its field operations in Central Asia. Although OSCE engagement with Afghanistan remains a challenging task, in particular given the financial constraints of the Organization, the OSCE can continue to build on the solid interaction already established within the Partnership for Co-operation framework.



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