

Article Summaries

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Improving OSCE election observation, Peter Eicher

Although election observation has shown its value in enhancing public confidence and improving election practices, serious questions about the future of observation remain. Observer groups are under attack from some governments, while methods of manipulating elections have become increasingly sophisticated. A particular difficulty for observers is how to react when governments show a lack of political will to conduct fair elections. There are a number of steps that can be taken to meet these and other challenges, but ensuring that election observation remains relevant and effective will require continuing creativity, flexibility and innovations.

Measuring the security of persons belonging to national minorities: Indicators for assessing the impact of the FCNM in its State Parties, Tove Malloy, Roberta Medda-Windischer and Emma Lantschner

The security of persons belonging to minorities is intrinsically linked to the implementation of minority protection instruments. This paper addresses the security of persons belonging to minorities in terms of international standards enshrined in the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). The paper is divided in three parts. First, it presents indicators piloted to measure developments in the political discourse, including government actions and practices induced by the political discourse. Next, it introduces indicators to assess developments in the legislative branch, including public policies addressing issues protected by international standards. Finally, it presents indicators to assess awareness and acceptance in the judiciary branch of government, including not only court rulings but also matters of courts' structures and organization. A final concluding section relates each section to the overall issue of security of persons belonging to minorities through law and politics.

Missing the big picture? Retrospective on OSCE strategic thinking on Central Asia, Vladimir Shkolnikov

The article makes two intertwining arguments about OSCE's work in Central Asia. The first is that the organization failed to engage the leaders of the region in a political dialogue, opting instead for a quasi-developmental approach centered on technical assistance projects, many of questionable provenance and of limited if not negative impact. The second is that the OSCE has failed to promote in the region its own comprehensive vision of security with the human dimension at its core, instead accepting the security notions of the region's leaders. The article traces and discusses the key points in the OSCE's involvement in Central Asia, noting that the political influence of the organization has dissipated while the project portfolio has expanded. The article questions the wisdom of projects involving police support and assistance to other governmental power structures in the Central Asian states.

The Bolzano Recommendations on National Minorities in inter-state relations: Reconciling justice and security, Natalie Sabanadze

In October 2008, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities adopted Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations. The Recommendations demonstrate how, under what conditions and within which limits States can support minorities residing abroad. These are the HCNM's first recommendations that deal expressly with the international dimension of the minority question,

which is closely linked to both domestic and international security. This article contributes to the debate on the securitization of the minority question and on the example of the Bolzano Recommendations argues for both moral and practical validity of the HCNM's approach described as 'security through justice'.

The role of the OSCE in the conflict in Georgia, Van Rie

The OSCE mission was established on the invitation of the government of Georgia and with the consent of the leaders of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. One would therefore conclude that there would have been a sound basis for a political solution of the situation. The reality has proved otherwise. The JCC set up to serve as a forum for negotiations, became part of the problem and compromised rather than enabled the OSCE to fulfill its mediating role. The OSCE's security enhancing role in the break away regions was curtailed due to a lack of personnel. As a regional organization lacking political and economic leverage the OSCE was not up to the challenges of this complex situation. The article highlights the constraints of the OSCE in carrying out its mandate: no legal basis, consensus, increasing opposition from the part of CIS countries.

Deadlock and division in Moldova: the 2009 political crisis and the role of the OSCE, Bob Deen

Following the contested parliamentary elections in April 2009, the Republic of Moldova entered a period of political crisis and deadlock between the ruling Communist Party and a coalition of opposition parties. Street protests by the opposition over alleged electoral fraud and a heavy-handed government response were followed by repeat elections in July after parliament failed to find a compromise over a presidential candidate. This article explores the origins of the crisis and the ensuing uneasy transition of power. It specifically examines the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during Moldova's political crisis, making the case that although it did not manage to play a key role so far, it has a wide array of crisis management instruments at its disposal through its permanent Mission and its specialized Institutions that could be more actively used to promote stability and democratic pluralism in Moldova.

Fostering relations with a host country: A case study of the OSCE and Tajikistan, Kathleen Samuel

The OSCE's mandate for early warning, conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation based on its approach to comprehensive security through its network of field offices is implemented on a daily basis. Constructive relations with a host country are an important factor in their success, yet not always easy to achieve. This article provides a case study of one endeavour to strengthen these relations.



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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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