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The OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition¹

The CSCE is rightly considered to have played a historical role in reducing the levels of conventional armaments available to both the former Warsaw Pact nations and the NATO countries following the end of the Cold War in Europe. The key instrument by which this was achieved was the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). But what happened to the enormous volumes of ammunition that had been stockpiled for use with conventional weapons systems in the case of war, but was not covered by any disarmament agreement – shells, bullets, grenades, bombs, mines, rockets, rocket fuel, and other explosive materials intended for use with the categories of weapons whose numbers have been so successfully reduced throughout the area of the application of the CFE Treaty since it entered into force?

In the closing decade of the last century, both NATO's then 16 members and the future NATO candidate states took steps to reduce their national ammunition stockpiles in line with the reduced level of armaments, i.e. by limiting procurement and destroying stocks in excess of national requirements. By contrast, in the states of the former Soviet Union – already facing the major challenge of safeguarding and eliminating nuclear and chemical weapons on their territories – there was no such adjustment of stockpiles of conventional ammunition that had been assembled during the Cold War. While only limited information is available on the types and numbers of surplus stocks scattered in depots throughout the entire area of the former Soviet Union, we must assume, extrapolating from the cases we do know about, that a significant proportion of the ammunition in existence at the end of the Cold War has still not been properly eliminated or safeguarded. It must also be assumed that the conditions under which these explosives are stored frequently fail to or only barely comply with local standards, let alone Western norms. The levels of conventional *weapons* overarmament reached in the Cold War suggests just how much *ammunition* we are dealing with here.²

To what extent does this “forgotten legacy of the Cold War” represent a security risk – primarily for the states doing the storing themselves, but also for the states outside the former Soviet space, including the European Union? The answer to this question has three parts:

1 The opinions expressed in this contribution are solely the personal views of the author.

2 According to Ukrainian estimates, there are some two million tonnes of ammunition on Ukrainian soil that require safeguarding or elimination in the short or medium term. As ever more stores reach the end of their lifecycle, the volume is not steady but is constantly increasing.

- *Risk of civilian and military accidents* that can endanger civilian life and military personnel as well as the civil, military, and industrial infrastructure. Causes include spontaneous, uncontrolled detonations of improperly stored ammunition or ammunition that had been stored for too long or in unsuitable conditions (weather damage, chemical reactions, corrosion, etc.). The closeness of many storage facilities to civil infrastructure and built-up areas (residential and agricultural areas, factories, railway lines, power stations, etc.) entails the danger of disastrous consequences.
- *Environmental damage* caused by toxic chemical substances, such as explosives containing RDX³ or the liquid rocket fuel “*melange*”⁴ that was produced in the Soviet Union in large quantities. Toxic contamination of soil, water, and air may have a merely local impact, but the long-distance dispersal of pollutants by water and air may also lead to trans-regional effects (clouds of poison gas, poisoning of rivers, etc.).
- *The danger that military explosives fall into the hands of terrorists, organized crime, and other unauthorized channels*: There has been evidence of military explosives, which are often not only badly protected but also poorly inventoried, being used in terrorist attacks. Clearly, safeguarding military ammunition dumps and stockpiles of explosives against trafficking and diversion must be made a high priority as part of anti-terrorism efforts. Combating corruption also plays an important role in this.

None of these three types of threat is theoretical; all are concrete and supported by empirical evidence. Their multidimensional quality – the fact that they touch upon all three OSCE dimensions – makes them appear as a “natural” topic for the Organization. However, while other types of conventional weapons – above all anti-personnel landmines, small arms and light weapons (SALW), and man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS) – were already made objects of national and international arms-control policy during the 1990s and now rightly have a prominent place on the global arms-control and disarmament agenda, the risk potential of surplus stocks of conventional ammunition and explosives in the pan-European security area has so far been given relatively little attention. Apart from the small-scale support projects run by NATO and the European Union, and occasional bilateral projects in a

3 Cyclotrimethylenetrinitramine, known as RDX, and also as cyclonite, hexogen, and T4 has been manufactured since the Second World War and is still in use today. As a military explosive, RDX is highly brisant and poisonous, but particularly powerful, stable in storage, and highly versatile. It can be absorbed through the skin and acts on the central nervous system. Its manufacture and use has led to environmental and drinking water contamination.

4 “*Melange*” was the generic name given in the Warsaw Pact countries to a range of nitric acid-based oxidants that were a component of liquid fuels used in tactical guided missiles and air defence weapons. The substance is highly poisonous and corrosive, and requires particularly careful storage.

number of the Soviet successor states, it is largely thanks to the OSCE that this issue has been acknowledged as a matter for common security and subjected to systematic analysis.

A Comprehensive Framework for Action for the OSCE

In 2003, with the adoption by the foreign ministers of the OSCE's then 55 participating States of the "Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition" (DSCA),⁵ the OSCE was the first – and is so far the only – security organization to establish a comprehensive framework for action whose aim is to identify and react effectively to the risks posed by surplus stockpiles of conventional ammunition. After negotiations lasting about a year, the Document, based on a Franco-Dutch initiative, was adopted by the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) on 19 November 2003 and endorsed by the Eleventh OSCE Ministerial Council in Maastricht on 2 December 2003.⁶

In general, the Document gives affected participating States the opportunity to draw attention in the FSC to existing surplus stockpiles and the danger they pose and to ask for support from other participating States in safeguarding or eliminating these stockpiles, this being grounded in the OSCE's concept of co-operative security. The Document includes several indicators that can be used to determine the existence of surplus stocks and makes recommendations on how to deal with them. It also establishes an assistance procedure by means of which the participating States can co-operate in eliminating or safeguarding existing stockpiles.

In the Document, the participating States recognize "the security and safety risks posed by the presence of stockpiles of conventional ammunition, explosive material and detonating devices in surplus and/or awaiting destruction in some States in the OSCE area".⁷ They also acknowledge that "the risks posed by surplus stockpiles of conventional ammunition, explosive material and detonating devices are often created by precarious and unsatisfactory conditions of storage".⁸ They therefore agree "that the stockpile security should be taken into account and that proper national security and safety control over stockpiles of conventional ammunition, explosive mate-

5 OSCE, OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, 19 November 2003. FSC.DOC/1/03, endorsed by the OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2003, Decision on the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, MC.DEC/9/03, in: OSCE, *Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 1 and 2 December 2003, Maastricht 2003, MC.DOC/1/03, 2 December 2003, p. 87; available online at: http://www.osce.org/documents/fsc/2003/11/1379_en.pdf.

6 In accordance with Ministerial Council Decision MC.DEC/5/04 from 2004, the FSC presented the 13th Ministerial Council (2005) with a progress report on this topic. The report was endorsed by a decision of the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana that called upon the participating States to make a greater effort to safeguard and eliminate small arms and stockpiles of ammunition (MC.DEC/8/05).

7 Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, cited above (Note 5), para. 12.

8 *Ibid.*, para. 20.

rial and detonating devices is essential in order to prevent risks of explosion and pollution, as well as loss through theft, corruption and neglect”.⁹

To manage these risks, the participating States resolved “reflecting the OSCE concept of co-operative security and working in concert with other international fora [...] to establish a practical procedure, requiring minimal administrative burden, to address these risks by providing assistance for the destruction of these stockpiles and/or upgrading stockpile management and security practices”.¹⁰ Where opportune, this should be carried out in concert with other regional or international organizations. Where states seek the support of the OSCE, “the request for and the provision of assistance will take place on a voluntary basis [...] The substance and scope of assistance will be determined on a case-by-case basis for each concrete request by a participating State after appropriate consultations with assisting/donor and requesting States.”¹¹

The Document also states that “the participating States recognize their primary responsibility for their own stockpiles of conventional ammunition, explosive material and detonating devices, as well as identification and reduction of corresponding surpluses”.¹² One of the aims of the initiative is therefore “to strengthen national capacity in order to enable participating States, in the long run, to deal with such specific problems on their own”.¹³ The Document also seeks to increase transparency via the voluntary exchange of information on surplus stockpiles and to develop, within the FSC, “a ‘best practice’ guide of techniques and procedures for the destruction of conventional ammunition, explosive material and detonating devices, and the management and control of stockpiles”.¹⁴ Under Section VI of the Document, the chairmanships of the OSCE and the FSC may ask the Conflict Prevention Centre in the OSCE Secretariat for technical support during any phase of the procedure.

The Demand Situation and the OSCE's Response

How have the OSCE and the participating States reacted to the platform provided by the DSCA? And how successful have efforts been to operationalize the framework for activity, and to initiate concrete co-operation between states requesting assistance and those providing it?

On the “demand” side, the reaction was immediate: Only three weeks after the Document was approved, Ukraine became the first participating State to apply for support based on the DSCA; this was followed, in the

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., para. 13; cf. also paras 29-35.

11 Ibid., para. 15.

12 Ibid., para. 14.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., para. 38.

course of 2004, by applications from Belarus, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan. In addition, during 2004 and 2005, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan also applied for assistance in decommissioning *melange* liquid rocket fuel, following the successful completion of a – smaller – project for the disposal of rocket fuel in Georgia in 2003. In September 2004, Ukraine also made a supplementary application for support to destroy over 16,700 tonnes of this fuel.

In total, eight OSCE participating States, all members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), have so far applied for support on the basis of the DSCA.¹⁵ While the “first generation” of applications for assistance concerned “classical” conventional ammunition stockpiles (small to large calibre firearm rounds, grenades, rockets, bombs, and similar, including their detonating mechanisms), in 2005, the *melange* issue – which is, despite its great risk potential, more straightforward and less cost intensive – came more to the fore. This may have been “inspired” by the successes achieved in the OSCE project that began in 2004 to decommission 862 tonnes of liquid rocket fuel in Armenia (see below).

The technical and financial scale, the points of departure, and the problems that need to be resolved in the applications of these eight states¹⁶ diverge considerably, as do the related estimates of their costs.¹⁷ While some are local in character (such as the Russian application of 19 May 2004, which is exclusively concerned with Kaliningrad), others focus on national problems (e.g. Ukraine). What they all share is the goal of co-operation and support in building decommissioning capacity on an industrial scale. In addition, some applications also involve safeguarding stockpiles that are not earmarked for destruction (Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan). Ukraine also requested support in safeguarding and refurbishing the ammunition depot in Novobogdanivka (Zaporozhye Region), where there was an accident with serious consequences in May 2004 and another massive uncontrolled explosion in July 2005.

The nature of the response to these applications and the extent to which progress has been made are as varied as the range of problems themselves. The most substantive progress has been made in response to Armenia’s (May 2004) and Tajikistan’s (21 July 2004) applications: In Armenia, a plant was completed in mid-2006 to chemically convert some 862 tonnes of *melange* being stored in the earthquake-prone Kaltakhchi region. The implementation of this project, which has received 1.5 million euros from the USA, Finland, and Germany, and is supported by the OSCE Office in Yerevan, is to be

15 As well as applying for assistance, the Russian Federation has also distributed a broadly formulated offer of support to other participating States.

16 A detailed overview is contained in the report given by the FSC Chairman on implementing the DSCA to the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana, in: OSCE, *Thirteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, 5 and 6 December 2005, Ljubljana 2005*, MC13EW66, 6 December 2005, at: http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2005/12/18653_en.pdf.

17 Ukraine alone has applied for four sub-projects with a total cost of 132 million euros. However, estimates by independent experts are only available for a tiny part of this.

completed by 2007. An 18-month-long project in Tajikistan to destroy explosives stemming from the civil war in the 1990s and now stored in dangerous conditions in the capital Dushanbe was completed in late 2006. The main sponsors of this project, which will cost around one million euros, are Norway, France, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the USA. Germany is providing technical advice on all phases of the project. It has been announced that this pilot phase, which is initially limited to the capital and the surrounding region, will be rolled-out to other parts of the country in a second phase of the project.

As well as the ongoing *melange* decommissioning project in Armenia, a similar undertaking in Azerbaijan is also currently being considered, concerning the conversion of some 1,400 tonnes of liquid rocket fuel (application made on 26 July 2005). The cost of this project, which may be implemented in co-operation between the OSCE and the NATO Science for Peace programme, is likely to be between one and two million euros.¹⁸ In Kazakhstan (1,500 tonnes), an international tendering process is currently being prepared on the basis of a needs assessment survey presented in December 2005. Uzbekistan's application of 5 January 2005 for the decommissioning of over 1,000 tonnes of *melange* has been put on hold – probably not for technical or financial reasons, but on political grounds. In Ukraine, the fact that there are 16,747 tonnes of *melange* to be dealt with creates an enormous financial and technical challenge. The OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Kyiv is currently helping to seek a solution to this problem.

In the safeguarding and elimination of *ammunition*, which is more complex and costly than the disposal of liquid rocket fuel, the OSCE has not yet been able to start any project – with the exception of the small project in Tajikistan as mentioned above. Experts from a range of OSCE participating States have nonetheless visited all the applicant states with the exception of Belarus and Uzbekistan to perform fact-finding or technical evaluation, on which basis detailed problem descriptions and scoping studies have been drawn up. In two cases, where suitable (sub-)projects had already been identified (Kazakhstan and Ukraine), an international tendering process has already been carried out. In other states it remains necessary to identify and plan appropriate projects as well as to tender for offers. But here, too, the problem descriptions and figures gathered create a foundation that will enable suitable measures to be pursued either by the OSCE or by the international community.

Efforts to establish institutional contacts with other international organizations with the aim of co-operating or co-ordinating on eliminating or safeguarding stockpiles of ammunition have proven relatively successful: Besides holding ongoing co-ordination discussions with the NATO Partnership for Peace programme (PfP), on 2 June 2006, the Conflict Prevention Centre

18 This plan has become more urgent following the accident in the Mengichevir depot in March 2006 in which two *melange* containers collapsed.

sealed a co-operation framework agreement with the UNDP on the technical implementation of small arms and ammunition projects in the OSCE area. The first participating State to offer material support for the projects mentioned in the framework agreement was Sweden, which announced it would pay 2.7 million euros into the relevant UNDP trust fund. Initiated by France and Germany, the resolution on “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus”, which was adopted unanimously on 8 December 2005 at the plenary meeting of the 60th UN General Assembly, was a vital step towards raising awareness in the context of the UN.¹⁹

Interim Report 2006

The OSCE’s record of activity and success in the area of ammunition and *melange* thus certainly appears respectable some three years after the adoption of the DSCA. There can be no doubt that the issue of surplus stockpiles of ammunition now has a higher political profile – including in the affected states, where the attention paid to this topic within the OSCE framework has clearly raised awareness. On the other hand, *de facto* successes, such as those already achieved in Armenia and Tajikistan, have so far not materialized in the other applicant states, while large flows of money for establishing further decommissioning capacities or improving storage facilities have also remained unforthcoming. Were expectations on the part of these applicant countries for rapid “settlement” of their cases unrealistic? Has the OSCE failed in the implementation of the DSCA in these cases? Or, when it comes to major undertakings, should the OSCE restrict its role to awareness raising and early warning, recognizing that it does not meet the requirements to take a leading operational role in major ammunition projects?

In attempting to reach a verdict on the OSCE’s ability to implement the DSCA, many factors must be taken into consideration. First, the sudden demand for support services following the adoption of the Document has confronted the OSCE with a material and financial challenge of considerable proportions. Because the work of dealing with the various applications for assistance in the area of ammunitions is at different stages in each case, it is not yet possible to draw any conclusions regarding the eventual outcome of the Organization’s work.

Second, we must take into account that the OSCE *as an institution* (in contrast to the participating States) is poorly equipped to meet the demand it encouraged by adopting the DSCA. Institutionally, it possesses – aside from

19 Resolution A/RES/60/74. Among other things, the resolution calls upon all states in a position to do so to assist other states in eliminating or safeguarding stockpiles bilaterally or through international or regional organizations, and asks all member states to jointly identify measures capable of suppressing illicit trafficking associated with these stockpiles.

the normative framework provided by the Document itself and limited prior experience, especially in Moldova²⁰ – limited institutional expertise and resources that it can apply to solving the ammunition problem. This is in contrast to its “rival” in this area, NATO, which has long pursued projects for the safeguarding and elimination of small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel mines, and MANPADS with the states of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) via its PfP and Science for Peace programmes and has recently also been active in safeguarding (legacy) ammunition and *melange*. Furthermore, with the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA), NATO possesses an agency for the operational execution of these programmes. Nor does the OSCE as an institution – here analogous to NATO’s PfP programme – have its own budgetary resources for eliminating and safeguarding ammunition, but is rather dependent on the voluntary extra-budgetary contributions of its participating States.

Another problem in countries such as Belarus and Uzbekistan is that political conditions are not always conducive to close co-operation with Western donor states. However, in these countries in particular, the traditional confidence-building concept of co-operative arms control does offer itself as an area of potential co-operation.

Despite these limiting factors, the OSCE, with the normative basis provided by the DSCA, the inclusivity that allows it to span opposing blocs, its traditional strengths in co-operation on arms control policy, and its comprehensive concept of security, appears to be better qualified than virtually any other security organization to deal with the problem of surplus stockpiles of ammunition, including its operational aspects. There is no evidence that the willingness of potential donor states to make a financial contribution is the only factor that determines whether appropriate safeguarding steps are taken. The resource-rich, relatively affluent applicant states would certainly be capable, if they made the appropriate budgetary decisions (based on national prioritization), of self-financing at least the most urgent projects.²¹ Where a technological or organizational deficit exists, it can be addressed by means of technical assistance, knowledge transfer, and capacity-building. It has also become apparent that sometimes merely the provision of technical support in straightforward and inexpensive safeguarding projects can lead to considerable improvements in security.

20 “Voluntary” funds for the transportation of Russian ammunition out of Transdnistria.

21 The Russian Federation has estimated the costs of two sub-projects in Kaliningrad at 50 million US dollars. In the cases of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, the estimated cost of the disposal of *melange* stocks is between one and two million euros per country.

The OSCE's Options for Action

Successfully filling out the framework of norms set down in the DSCA requires, on the one hand, a clear understanding of opportunities and goals in the OSCE context, and, on the other, a shared desire on the part of applicant and donor countries to co-operate. In addition, the experience gathered should be evaluated in an ongoing lessons-learned process, and future activities optimized in its light. To support the participating States in this, the (German) then FSC Co-ordinator for Ammunition Projects presented, on 3 November 2004, a ten-point paper, based on the conclusions of a one-day special FSC meeting on 29 September 2004, with recommendations on how the identification of appropriate support projects, approaches, and measures could be facilitated and suitable project proposals set in motion, taking account of the framework conditions in the OSCE.

The ten-point paper has three addressees: applicant countries, participating States that envisage a role for themselves in the provision of support to other states, and OSCE structures, including the Secretariat and field operations. In Armenia and Tajikistan, we have already seen that the latter are capable of playing a decidedly helpful role in project execution.

The paper recommends to the *applicant states* that they begin by examining whether all *domestic* means of tackling the ammunition problem have been exhausted and how to take advantage of any that have not been employed. Should the applicant state not possess the necessary resources and capacities and thus have reason to call upon the OSCE participating States for support, the paper recommends that feasibility studies be carried out (with external help if necessary) to describe the specific problem situation, and that these should contain concrete suggestions of solutions and projects. Given the scale of the applications and the complexity and diversity of the problems described therein, the paper recommends that these proposals be divided into modular – and hence more manageable and useable – “packages”, which may be evaluated in more detail by states potentially providing support (with potentially different “donor interests”) acting either individually or collectively with other states. This results inevitably in a prioritization of the most urgent tasks, something that is necessary from the donors’ point of view.

For *states interested in providing (financial, technical, and personnel) support*, the paper recommends promoting broader inter-ministerial approaches to solution-finding within their own national administrations and the establishment of networks beyond the narrow foreign and security policy context (foreign and defence ministries and armed forces). The departments responsible for environmental affairs and economic co-operation and development as well as national and international programmes aimed at combating terrorism and organized crime are particularly relevant here. The paper also encourages them to co-operate with “likeminded” OSCE States in seeking and perhaps jointly pursuing identical or similar areas of interest. This con-

cerns not only the provision of major financial support, but also such things as making available existing national expertise, or providing support in the drafting of feasibility studies or project proposals.

Turning to *OSCE structures*, the paper recommends actively supporting the FSC as the primary information, discussion, and decision-making platform for the ammunition issue. This should follow a cross-dimensional approach that corresponds to the nature of the ammunition question. *Ideally*, this will entail the FSC co-operating closely with, in particular, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the Action Against Terrorism Unit, the Strategic Police Matters Unit, and the Press and Public Information Section of the OSCE Secretariat, as well as (via the OSCE Permanent Council) with the OSCE field operations in affected states. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly can also play an important role in mobilizing national and international awareness.

The ten-point paper recommends that all actors seek to co-operate or to expand co-operation with regional and/or international organizations (above all the United Nations, NATO, and the European Union) in order to generate synergies. This could entail joint projects, but also the creation of common agenda-building platforms designed to raise international awareness of the issue.

The results so far achieved in dealing with the various applications for support indicate increasing professionalism in the planning and identification of project activities. In the project development phase, there has been clear progress thanks to better co-operation between applicant states and experts from other participating States and OSCE field operations. However, the potential for further improvements is by no means exhausted. Additional gains in efficiency could be realized, for instance, by developing integrated project solutions that take a more “holistic” approach to the economic, technological, environmental, and security aspects of the issue in an affected state and combine these in project proposals that are capable of gaining approval. In doing this, more use could be made of the expertise of private contractors.

OSCE Best Practice Guide on Safeguarding and Eliminating Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition

Ultimately, the goal of the DSCA is to help affected states to reach, more or less rapidly, a position where they can manage their surplus ammunition acting independently and using their own resources. Proper storage in compliance with environmental and security standards, in particular, requires a sustainable, long-term policy that can, in the last instance, only be implemented under national ownership. Providing support that aims to help affected states to help themselves is the goal of the OSCE “best practice guide of techniques and procedures for the destruction of conventional ammunition, explosive

material and detonating devices”, currently being drafted by several participating States.

In the FSC, on 11 March 2005, the United States called upon the participating States to develop this best practice manual and announced the development of a first best practice guide on stockpile management. The US paper, which was co-proposed by Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom – here largely echoing the recommendations of the DSCA (para. 38) – called for the development of additional guidelines on the following topics: the physical security of stockpiles; marking, registering, and inventorying existing stockpiles; transport security; identifying surpluses; and methods of safely eliminating them.

The initiative aims at providing all participating States with concrete data gathered from experience, standards, and best practices gained in national projects. These should enable them to take responsibility for practical measures to safeguard and eliminate stockpiles of ammunition. This has no influence on the provision of additional, further-reaching support. The Best Practice Guide on Ammunition thus pursues a similar goal and has a similar format as the Best Practice Guide on Small Arms and Light Weapons that the OSCE published in 2003. Like the SALW Guide, the Ammunition Guide was not adopted as a document requiring consensus among the participating States but was rather the result of work on the part of various individual participating States at the national level. Consequently, it does not have politically binding force, and the Guide’s proposals and recommendations are not to be taken as absolute standards or benchmarks, but as general guidelines that can be adapted to local conditions from case to case.

At the US paper’s initial presentation, Germany already declared itself willing to contribute a guide on transport security. The drafting of this guide is currently being finalized in the Editorial Review Board for Best Practice Guides, which is open to all participating States. The consultation process within this informal editorial board aims to ensure that the approaches recommended are applicable to other participating States, despite the differences in the tasks that face them. At the same time, the Netherlands is developing guidelines on the safe elimination of ammunition; and Sweden is to contribute a chapter on the physical security of stockpiles. Further topics may emerge out of the OSCE’s ongoing work in the field. When the guides are complete, it is intended that they will be published as a handbook in all six OSCE official languages.

Because the (voluntary) implementation of its recommendations is a matter the participating States have to decide at the national level, the effectiveness of the handbook will be hard to measure. Nevertheless, with its practical procedures and standards, it is designed to provide lawmakers and planners with an effective and useable *vade mecum* for dealing with stockpiles of ammunition. As in the case of the Arabic language version of the OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons,

which was proposed and financed by Germany, the handbook on ammunition may also find application outside the OSCE region. The relevant bodies of the United Nations as well as other regional organizations (OAS, Arab League, African Union, ECOWAS, Collective Security Treaty Organisation, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, etc.) offer a wide range of platforms that could bring the handbook to a variety of interested parties.

Summary and Outlook

The enormous stockpiles of non-safeguarded conventional ammunition in the territory of the former Soviet Union represent an underestimated security risk that affects all three dimensions of the OSCE equally. By adopting the DSCA, the OSCE has been a pioneer in establishing not only an early warning system but also a normative framework for reducing this risk. This framework now needs to be given content. The challenge is to realize effective and targeted co-ordination of measures that establish clear priorities and place the welfare of citizens in the OSCE area at the top of the agenda.

As far as OSCE policy is concerned, the Document continues the CSCE/OSCE's tradition of arms control policy, contributing to revitalizing the Organization's politico-military dimension. By addressing this *gravamen* of the CIS states, it thereby also strengthens the Organization as a whole. The OSCE's field operations can also benefit from the operationalization of the DSCA: By offering themselves as local points of contact for the support of relevant activities, they will see their function as co-operative OSCE field instruments – as well as their acceptance – strengthened.

Finally, the Document links with and complements the OSCE SALW Document of 2000 as indeed it does the OSCE's entire SALW *acquis*. While the OSCE's SALW decisions from 2000 to 2003 aim at the regulation of national stocks of small arms and the cross-border trade, the area of small arms ammunition, though complementary, was left out. The DSCA addresses this, at least in part. Although there are regulatory gaps in the Ammunition Document – as there are in the Small Arms Document – e.g. with regard to the marking and traceability of new ammunition, some of its provisions, for instance, in the areas of storage and elimination, and in the definition of surplus indicators, are immediately applicable to small arms ammunition.

Alongside a greater effort on the part of the affected states themselves and better national and international co-ordination of effective assistance with other participating States, the most urgent need is for information exchange, co-ordination, and – where applicable – co-operation between the OSCE and other actors in the field of security. This is the only way to avoid duplication and unnecessary competition while providing assistance rapidly and effectively where it is needed most. The need for co-ordination is greatest with respect to the United Nations, NATO, and the European Union. In the case of

the EU – which is partly also motivated by acknowledged self-interest – the European Neighbourhood Policy provides a framework for it to become involved in the safeguarding and elimination of ammunition in its immediate vicinity. No less politically promising is the prospect of a similar engagement in Central Asia,

In terms of OSCE policy, the topic of ammunition contains the possibility of new approaches to co-operation across old and new divides – in an area in which the OSCE is a competitive player within the concert of the Euro-Atlantic security organizations. A security issue that does not divide the participating States into East and West and a cross-dimensional, co-operative approach in the best traditions of the OSCE: Given all the splits and confrontations in which the participating States are involved in other areas, is this not a promising opportunity?