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## The Platform for Co-operative Security: Ten Years of Co-operation

At the last meeting of the Security Model Committee held in Vienna on 5 November 1999, when, after several years of deliberations the OSCE participating States agreed on the final touches to a draft *Charter for European Security*, including the *Platform for Co-operative Security*, the Finnish delegation made a statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) stressing that the EU considered the Platform to be “one of the most important elements of added value of the whole Charter process”.<sup>1</sup> Both documents were submitted for the approval of the Istanbul Summit on 18-19 November.

Despite this recognition of the Platform’s significance, until this year, which marks the document’s tenth anniversary, the Platform rarely received the attention it deserved. Yet its adoption has considerably boosted the OSCE’s co-operation with other international, regional, and sub-regional organizations and initiatives “concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security in the OSCE area”,<sup>2</sup> and has set in place a system and culture of interaction among organizations and institutions in the Euro-Atlantic space.

The recently renewed interest in the Platform has been prompted by Russian calls to employ it more actively to establish dialogue among organizations concerned with Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security. The Platform, and relations among security organizations in the OSCE area more generally, have thus become an element in the evolving debate on the future of European security.

### *The Origin and Adoption of the Platform*

The idea of a Platform for Co-operative Security was put forward by the EU. This initiative, however, was itself a response to a series of Russian proposals on “enhancing the effectiveness of the CSCE”, tabled at the end of 1993.<sup>3</sup> Among other things, Russia proposed to incorporate a “principled provision

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Note: The views presented here are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the OSCE or any of its structures.

- 1 *EU statement at the Security Model Committee on 5 November 1999*, PC.SMC/173/99.
- 2 Operational Document – the Platform for Co-operative Security, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Charter for European Security*, Istanbul, November 1999, pp. 17-19, here: p. 17, at: <http://www.unece.org/trans/osce/osceunece/istachart99e.pdf>.
- 3 CSCE Forum for Security Co-operation, *Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation regarding proposals to enhance CSCE effectiveness*, CSCE/FSC/SC.23, Vienna, 28 October 1993.

on the central role [author's note: also called 'the overriding responsibility'] of the CSCE in ensuring security and stability on the continent" in a political declaration to be adopted at the 1994 Budapest Summit; to have the CSCE co-ordinate the "efforts of the participating States and major regional institutions – the CIS, NACC, EU, CoE, NATO, and WEU"; to ensure "a genuine division of labour" between these organizations "on the basis of special agreements"; to transform the CSCE into a "fully fledged regional organization" and to elaborate its own Charter "as a legally binding document"; to create a "governing body of the CSCE with a limited membership similar to the UN Security Council" to be named "a CSCE Executive Committee" composed of no more than ten members (permanent and rotating), whose decisions would be taken unanimously and would have "the same binding nature as documents of the CSCE Council of Ministers"; and to represent the CIS in the CSCE structures and "develop a mechanism for coordination of the CIS and the CSCE practical activities".

These Russian proposals instigated protracted discussions in the CSCE/OSCE that ultimately led to the adoption of the *1999 Charter for European Security*, which includes the *Platform for Co-operative Security*.

As a first step, the 1994 CSCE/OSCE Summit in Budapest adopted a decision on *A Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century*,<sup>4</sup> in which participating States pledged to launch a discussion on a new security model based on CSCE principles and commitments. In accordance with this decision, the Security Model Committee (SMC) was established and started its work in Vienna in March 1995. Up to the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, 59 meetings of the SMC had been held.

In 1995-96, general agreement was reached among participating States that one of the objectives of the new security model should be to substantially increase co-operation with other international organizations in accordance with the principles of equality, transparency, and flexibility, while taking into account the comparative advantages of each organization, thereby allowing a mutually beneficial and mutually reinforcing security network to emerge.<sup>5</sup>

In this context, in October-November 1996, the Irish Presidency of the EU submitted three papers containing the EU proposals. The third, issued on 25 November, was dedicated specifically to an *OSCE Platform for Co-operative Security*. In response to Russian ideas of a "division of labour" among international organizations with the OSCE playing a "coordination"

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4 See *A Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century*, in: Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, 1994 Summit, Budapest, 5-6 December 1994, *Budapest Document 1994*, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1994/12/4050\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1994/12/4050_en.pdf).

5 See Swiss OSCE Chairmanship, Progress Report on the Security Model Discussion 1995-1996, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *The Security Model Discussion 1995-1996, Report of the Chairman-in-Office to the Lisbon Summit*, Lisbon, 30 November 1996, p. 4, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1996/11/4229\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1996/11/4229_en.pdf).

role, the EU papers advocated the concept of “mutually reinforcing security institutions” and “a cooperative relationship” among them. The OSCE was seen as “a forum for inter-institutional contact” that could provide an overall framework for dialogue. The EU proposal on an *OSCE Platform for Co-operative Security* outlined a set of principles that should be adhered to by all international organizations in order to “work cooperatively” with the OSCE.<sup>6</sup> Practically all of those principles were later incorporated in the 1999 Platform.

Consequently, the 1996 Lisbon Summit adopted the *Lisbon Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century*, which reaffirmed that “European security requires the widest co-operation and co-ordination among participating States and European and transatlantic organizations”. As an inclusive and comprehensive organization and a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE was recognized as “particularly well suited as a forum to enhance co-operation and complementarity among such organizations and institutions”. The Lisbon Declaration pledged to continue the work on the security model, including by “defining in a Platform for Co-operative Security modalities for co-operation between the OSCE and other security organizations”.<sup>7</sup> The SMC was thus formally tasked to work on a Platform for Co-operative Security.

Throughout 1997, formal and informal discussions took place in the SMC framework, with the EU and Russian positions on the Platform getting gradually closer.

The US position was outlined in two papers circulated in November 1997. Regarding the Platform, the papers stated the need to identify “practical steps that the OSCE could take to enhance cooperation with other European security organisations [...] provided they share the OSCE’s commitment to transparency and democracy”. The USA stressed that the Platform “should articulate modalities of cooperation, as well as the criteria for involvement with partner institutions”, but should not attempt “to set out a rigid division of labor or establish a steering group for European security organizations”. In the US view, these criteria should include individual and collective adherence to OSCE principles and commitments, including “commitment to transparency and democracy as set out in the Helsinki Final Act”.<sup>8</sup>

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6 Irish Presidency of the European Union, *Contribution made by Ireland on behalf of the European Union, at the Special Meeting of the Security Model Committee*, Vienna, 11 October 1996, REF.PC/656/96; Irish Presidency of the European Union, *Contribution to Lisbon Declaration on Security in Europe*, 15 November 1996, REF.PC/724/96; and Irish Presidency of the European Union, *OSCE Platform for Cooperative Security*, 25 November 1996, REF.S/34/96.

7 Lisbon Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Lisbon Summit 1996*, Lisbon, 3 December 1996, pp. 10-13, here: p. 12, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1996/12/4049\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1996/12/4049_en.pdf).

8 United States Delegation to the OSCE, *Non-Paper on Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration: Security Model Work for the Next Summit*, Vienna, 18 November 1997,

Other international organizations were also engaged in the OSCE discussions, in particular through an informal meeting of the SMC on 31 October 2007, in which they also participated. The meeting recognized the need to ensure complementarity between the principles and procedures of each organization, and broadly agreed to continue the work on the Platform, with the understanding that whatever type of co-operation framework is agreed, it should be non-hierarchical and on a voluntary basis.

Summarizing the year-long debates in the *Status Report by the Chairman of the Permanent Council on the Security Model discussion in 1997* to the Copenhagen Ministerial Council, the Danish Chairmanship emphasized that the work on a Platform had brought negotiations considerably forward, and stated that there was an emerging consensus on the major parts of the document. It was acknowledged that some delegations remained concerned that the Platform could directly or indirectly imply hierarchies between international organizations.<sup>9</sup>

The 1997 Copenhagen Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 5 *Guidelines on an OSCE Document-Charter on European Security*, which set to “develop a comprehensive and substantive OSCE Document-Charter on European Security” that should be “politically binding,” and decided to “further strengthen non-hierarchical co-operation between the OSCE and other organizations within a Platform for Co-operative Security to be elaborated as an essential element of the Document-Charter”.<sup>10</sup> Decision No. 5 contained Annex 1, *Common Concept for the Development of Co-operation between Mutually-Reinforcing Institutions*, which set out the parameters of the 1999 Platform.<sup>11</sup> Pending the elaboration of a Platform, the Ministerial Council tasked the Chairman-in-Office, in co-operation with the Secretary General, “to work actively to increase the OSCE’s co-operation with other international institutions and organizations [...] concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area.”<sup>12</sup>

During 1998, negotiations on a Platform continued and the drafting process in the SMC framework was begun. On 3 July, another informal meeting of the SMC was held with the participation of other international organizations. Similarly to the October 1997 meeting, participants (including representatives of the CoE, WEU, NATO, and the CIS Executive Committee)

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PC.DEL/103/97; and United States Delegation to the OSCE, *OSCE on the Eve of a New Century*, food-for-thought paper, Vienna, 26 November 1997, PC.SMC/39/97.

- 9 Status Report by the Chairman of the Permanent Council on the Security Model Discussion in 1997, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Copenhagen 1997, Sixth Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 18-19 December 1997, 16 March 1998, pp. 31-35, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1997/12/4167\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1997/12/4167_en.pdf).
- 10 *Decision on Guidelines on an OSCE Document-Charter on European Security*, MC(6).Dec/5, *ibid.*, pp. 18-23.
- 11 See *Common Concept for the Development of Co-operation between Mutually-Reinforcing Institutions*, Annex to MC(6).Dec/5, in: *ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
- 12 *Decision on Guidelines on an OSCE Document-Charter on European Security*, cited above (Note 10), p. 21, and *Common Concept for the Development of Co-operation between Mutually-Reinforcing Institutions*, cited above (Note 11), p. 22.

agreed that “co-operation should stem from the equality”, taking into account the particular identity of international organizations. The need to focus on pragmatic co-operation was stressed.

Given that policy and academic interest in subregional co-operation and the role it could play surged in 1996-99, the topic also attracted much attention within the OSCE. The EU non-paper circulated by the UK Presidency on 26 June 1998 argued that “the Platform should promote sub-regional co-operation, foster transparency and ensure that such co-operation is carried out in accordance with OSCE norms and principles”.<sup>13</sup> On 14 July 1998, the Russian mission to OSCE circulated a paper on *The Subregional Dimension of Security and Co-operation*. It recognized the potential of subregional efforts for strengthening stability and security, and suggested that the OSCE could be used as “a forum for practical interaction in subregional efforts within the Organization’s area”, including the establishment of a “Conference of Subregional Organizations and Associations” to meet once every two years at the OSCE’s headquarters.<sup>14</sup> In the end, the participating States opted for a compromise solution. Summing up the results of discussions, the Progress Report by the Polish Chairman-in-Office to the Seventh Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council recognized a valuable contribution of regional/subregional co-operation to the “overall security of the OSCE community” and the agreement among delegations that the OSCE should support and encourage regional/subregional efforts by participating States. At the same time, the report acknowledged that consensus had not been found on a proposal to let the OSCE “exercise the powers and functions of a guarantor for implementation of regional/subregional agreements and decisions”. The proposal to establish a conference of subregional organizations and associations “also requires further study”. Similarly, on the idea of a Platform for Co-operative Security, the Chairmanship’s report stated that “the idea of establishing formal framework agreements between the OSCE and other international organizations as a basis for co-operation at all levels has not found support”.<sup>15</sup>

The protracted drafting of a Charter and a Platform was carried out throughout 1999 and lasted right until the Istanbul Summit. Delegations proposed numerous changes and drafting suggestions. In the autumn, documents containing these changes were circulated by the Norwegian Chairmanship almost on a weekly basis. Participating States continued to disagree on certain formulations and structure of the Charter, in particular on whether the

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13 OSCE Document-Charter on European Security. Platform for Co-operative Security, PC.SMC/51/98, 26 June 1998.

14 Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, *The Subregional Dimension of Security and Co-operation*, PC.SMC/70/98, 14 July 1998.

15 Chairman-in-Office’s Progress Report on the Work in 1998 on a Document-Charter on European Security, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Seventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 2-3 December 1998, Oslo, 3 December 1998, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1998/12/4168\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1998/12/4168_en.pdf), pp. 37-95.

Platform should be included in the main text (as preferred by Russia) or attached as an Annex to the Charter (as favoured by the USA), which itself should be a “concise and accessible” document. The EU Finnish Presidency proposed a “third option” which was to have “substantive language in the text and an annex”.

Ultimately, differences between participating States were ironed out, and the OSCE Istanbul Summit on 18-19 November 1999 adopted the annex entitled *Operational Document – Platform for Co-operative Security* as “an essential element” of the *Charter for European Security*.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, participating States included a formula briefly mentioning “Co-operation with other organizations: the Platform for Co-operative Security” in the main text of the Charter.<sup>17</sup>

### *The Substance of the Platform*

Since its adoption in November 1999 as an inseparable part of the *Charter for European Security*, the Platform has constituted the basis for the OSCE’s interaction with other organizations operating in the OSCE area. The Platform’s goal was defined as “to strengthen the mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship between those organizations and institutions concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area”. Those were European security organizations, regional and sub-regional organizations and initiatives in the OSCE area, the UN and UN family institutions, and relevant specialized institutions. The Platform did not cover the OSCE’s relations with regional organizations outside the OSCE area or with the partner states; these relationships became the subjects of other OSCE documents.

The Platform acknowledged the extensive network of contacts already developed with other organizations and institutions and the growing co-operation among them. Proceeding from this, the OSCE participating States stressed their commitment to “even closer co-operation among international organizations” (paragraph 12 of the Charter) and pledged the OSCE “to further strengthen and develop co-operation with competent organizations on the basis of equality and in a spirit of partnership”.

The Platform plainly ruled out a hierarchy of organizations or a permanent division of labour among them. Instead, it promoted the concept of “mutually reinforcing security institutions”, through horizontal co-operation among equals, rather than a vertical interaction subordinating one organiza-

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16 Operational Document – the Platform for Co-operative Security, cited above (Note 2). For a first analysis of the Istanbul Decisions see Victor-Yves Ghebali, *The Contribution of the Istanbul Document 1999 to European Security and Co-operation*, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2000*, Baden-Baden 2001, pp. 289-305.

17 *Charter for European Security*, cited above (Note 2), pp. 5-6, paras 12 and 13.

tion to another. Organizations were meant to complement each other in order “to avoid duplication and ensure efficient use of available resources”.

The Platform was designed to serve four key functions. First, it identified a set of principles to which members of other organizations and institutions should adhere “individually and collectively” in order for the OSCE to “work co-operatively” with them. That set included the principles of the UN Charter and the OSCE principles and commitments; transparency and predictability of action in the spirit of the Vienna Document 1999; full implementation of the OSCE’s arms control obligations; transparency about the evolution of organizations and institutions; openness and free will of membership; support for the OSCE’s concept of common, comprehensive, and indivisible security and a common security space free of dividing lines. The Charter further emphasized that these principles “apply across all dimensions of security”. Pending the adherence to the above principles, the Platform maintained an inclusive and open approach to the OSCE’s co-operation with other organizations. It has however remained unclear who decides on which organizations fit the above criteria and which might not and the procedure for doing so.

Second, the Platform outlined general modalities of co-operation. Those listed were regular contacts, including meetings; a continuous framework for dialogue; increased transparency and practical co-operation, including the identification of liaison officers or points of contact; cross-representation at appropriate meetings; and other contacts. The Platform further stipulated that in addition, the OSCE “may engage in special meetings with other organizations, institutions and structures operating in the OSCE area. These meetings may be held at a political and/or executive level (to co-ordinate policies and determine areas of co-operation) and at a working level (to address the modalities of co-operation).” Aside from co-operation at headquarter level, the Platform also provided for co-operation between the OSCE and other organizations in field operations and co-operation in responding to specific crises. To that end, the participating States encouraged “the Chairman-in-Office, supported by the Secretary General, to work with other organizations and institutions to foster co-ordinated approaches that avoid duplication and ensure efficient use of available resources”. As Victor-Yves Ghebali summarized in his article, “the ultimate *raison d’être* of the Platform is the development in the OSCE area of a ‘culture’ of co-operation between international organizations pursuing analogous or complementary goals”.<sup>18</sup> This in itself was a worthwhile objective given the existence in the OSCE area of a number of security and security-related organizations, often with overlapping membership.

Third, “recognizing the key integrating role that the OSCE can play”, the participating States offered the OSCE, as appropriate, “as a flexible frame-

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18 Ghebali, cited above (Note 16), p. 304.

work for co-operation of the various mutually reinforcing efforts". This provision was reiterated both in the Platform and in the Charter.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, the participating States recognized that "subregional co-operation had become an important element in enhancing security across the OSCE area" and that subregional groupings "contribute to improved security not just in the subregion in question but throughout the OSCE area". The participating States supported "the growth in co-operation with these groups" based on the Platform and, in accordance with the Platform, offered the OSCE as "a forum for subregional co-operation" (paragraph 13 of the Charter). In this respect, the OSCE was expected to "facilitate the exchange of information and experience between subregional groups and may, if so requested, receive and keep their mutual accords and agreements".

So, while not as far-reaching as the original Russian proposals had anticipated, the 1999 Charter and the Platform have nevertheless defined a rather unique role for the OSCE vis-à-vis other international, regional, and subregional organizations and institutions operating in the OSCE area. The participating States did not agree to give the OSCE "the overriding responsibility" and to have it co-ordinate efforts of other organizations in the region, as proposed by Russia, but they entrusted the OSCE with being "a flexible coordinating framework to foster co-operation" and a "forum for subregional co-operation".

This role together with the principles and spirit of the 1999 Charter and Platform were further upheld and developed in the *OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century*, adopted at the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council. The Strategy reaffirmed that the 1999 Platform "remains fully valid" and that the OSCE's interaction with other organizations and institutions is based on the *Platform for Co-operative Security*. The Strategy contained a special section devoted to "Co-operation with other international organizations and institutions",<sup>20</sup> pledging that the OSCE "seeks to expand relations with all organizations and institutions that are concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area." The Maastricht Strategy also restated the OSCE's function as "a forum for co-operation with sub-regional organizations in its area" and pledged that the OSCE "will continue to organize information-sharing and co-ordination meetings on specific topics with these organizations and institutions". Compared to the 1999 Charter and Platform, the 2003 Strategy has gone a step further by recognizing the increased importance of threats "originating or evolving in adjacent regions" and consequently pledging the OSCE to "consider ways in which OSCE norms, principles, commitments and values could

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19 The text of the Charter (paragraph 12) defines the OSCE as a "flexible co-ordinating framework to foster co-operation, through which various organizations can reinforce each other drawing on their particular strengths".

20 *OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century*, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2003/12/17499\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2003/12/17499_en.pdf), pp. 9-10, paras 52-57.



be shared with other regions” and to develop further contacts with regional organizations beyond the OSCE area.

### *Operationalization and Implementation of the Platform*

Carrying out the Istanbul Summit decision on the Charter and the Platform required certain organizational adjustments within the OSCE. As a first step, on 29 June 2000, the Permanent Council adopted the decision on “Strengthening of OSCE Operational Capacities”, which placed the Section for External Co-operation (which was created in 1999) “under the direct supervision of the Secretary General” and gave it responsibility for the “implementation of the modalities of co-operation in accordance with part II of the Operational Document of the Charter for European Security”.<sup>21</sup> By taking such early action, the participating States made a clear demonstration of the importance and seriousness they attached to co-operation with other organizations and to the rapid operationalization of the Platform. In fulfilling the task assigned, the Section has started to serve as the first point of contact in the OSCE for other international, regional, and subregional organizations, maintaining contacts and developing co-operation with them, including through headquarters-level meetings. In 2002, the Porto Ministerial Council mandated the Chairmanship with clear responsibility “for the external representation of the OSCE”, and further clarified that “in order to ensure effective and continuous working contacts with other international organizations and institutions” the Chairmanship shall “be assisted by the Secretary General, to whom representational tasks are delegated as appropriate”.<sup>22</sup>

Of most significance, however, is the fact that the adoption and implementation of the Platform has significantly enhanced OSCE’s interaction with other international, regional, and sub-regional organizations, based on the modalities listed in the Platform.

Initial contacts between the CSCE/OSCE and other organizations were established as early as at the beginning of 1990s and have developed since then. Already in the *Summary of Conclusions of the Berlin Meeting of the CSCE Council* on 19-20 June 1991, the participating States encouraged “the exchange of information and relevant documents among CSCE and the main European and transatlantic institutions, such as the European Community,

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21 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Permanent Council, Decision No. 364, *Strengthening of OSCE Operational Capacities (REACT, Operation Centre, Restructuring of the OSCE Secretariat)*, PC.DEC/364, 29 June 2000, p. 3.

22 Decision No. 8, Role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, MC(10).DEC/8, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Tenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 6 and 7 December 2002, Porto, 7 December 2002, pp. 48-50, here: p. 49, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2002/12/4174\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2002/12/4174_en.pdf).

Council of Europe, [UN] ECE, NATO and WEU”.<sup>23</sup> The starting point for more regular contacts between the CSCE/OSCE and other international organizations was the 1992 Prague Meeting of the CSCE Council, which welcomed “as guests of honour”<sup>24</sup> the representatives of the UN, UNECE, CoE, WEU, NATO, OECD, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and included in the *Prague Document on Further Development of CSCE Institutions and Structures* a special section on CSCE relationship with international organizations.<sup>25</sup> Since then, references to co-operation with other international organizations have regularly been included in CSCE/OSCE Ministerial Council and Summit documents. In addition, in the mid-1990s the first regular frameworks for dialogue were established with the CoE and the UN: The first high-level Tripartite meeting of the OSCE, UN, and CoE was convened in 1993; the first OSCE-CoE high-level 2+2 meeting took place in 1995; and the OSCE-CoE annual meeting at the level of senior officials was launched in 1998. Thus, since the mid-1990s, OSCE co-operation with other international organizations has become a growing trend.

However, it was only with the adoption of the 1999 *Platform for Co-operative Security* that this co-operation came to rest on a solid political foundation, and it has since intensified immensely, including through regular political and working-level consultations at headquarters level and practical co-operation in the field.

As to the former, regular bilateral frameworks for consultations and the exchange of information and experiences were developed with (as well as the CoE) the UN, the EU, and NATO. In 1999, the practice of annual addresses by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and by the Secretary General to NATO’s North Atlantic Council (NAC) and/or Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) was established, and regular OSCE-NATO staff-level consultations were set up. The following year, the Secretaries General of the OSCE and the CoE signed the *Common Catalogue of Co-operation Modalities*, while the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office started a tradition of addressing annually the UN Security Council. In 2001, an annual OSCE-UN staff-level meeting was launched. In 2002, regular meetings (under each EU Presidency) of the OSCE-EU Ministerial and Ambassadorial Troikas were established, and in 2003 they were supplemented with the OSCE-EU annual staff-level meeting.

On the ground, practical co-operation and, where necessary, joint activities have become common practice. Some of the most recent and visible

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23 Berlin Meeting of the CSCE Council, 19-20 June 1991, Summary of Conclusions, in: *First Meeting of the Council*, pp. 2-8, here: p. 3, para. 13, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1991/06/4138\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1991/06/4138_en.pdf).

24 Prague Meeting of the CSCE Council, 30-31 January 1992, Summary of Conclusions, in: *Second Meeting of the Council*, Prague, 1992, pp. 1-12, here: p. 1, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1992/01/4142\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1992/01/4142_en.pdf).

25 See *Prague Document on Further Development of CSCE Institutions and Structures*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 13-21, here: p. 20, section IX.

examples of successful interaction include the close co-operation developed between the OSCE, the UN, and NATO in Kosovo, where the OSCE Mission (OMiK) has served as the institution-building pillar of the UN Mission (UNMiK), while the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) has provided a security environment for the international community, including OMiK; joint work with the CoE on local government development in South-eastern Europe; and until recently the work side by side in Georgia of the OSCE military monitors with the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM).<sup>26</sup>

Based on shared values and common interests, the OSCE has developed particularly close relationships with the UN, the EU, NATO, and the CoE. These four were named specifically in the 2003 Maastricht Strategy, where the participating States acknowledged that the OSCE “has established regular patterns of consultation at both the technical and the political levels” with a number of international organizations and institutions, “*inter alia*, the UN, EU, NATO and the Council of Europe”.<sup>27</sup> Of all the organizations invited to attend the OSCE Ministerial Council Meetings, only the UN, EU,<sup>28</sup> NATO, and the CoE are invited to attend the meetings and make contributions (i.e. are given a floor to address the Ministerial Council), while all other organizations are invited to attend the meeting and, if they so wish, make written contributions. Furthermore, it is only with the UN (and its family institutions) and the CoE that the OSCE relations have been formalized in Permanent Council decisions or through specific agreements, such as exchanges of letters or memoranda of understanding (MoU). With the CoE in particular, the participating States decided in 2004 to establish a Co-ordination Group consisting of permanent representatives from the OSCE Troika and the current and incoming Chair of the CoE to meet twice a year to examine co-operation between the two organizations and make recommendations on how to foster it, in particular in priority areas.<sup>29</sup>

With other international, regional, and sub-regional organizations and initiatives, the OSCE’s relations are more ad hoc in nature. These relations are, nevertheless, quite dynamic, comprising the OSCE’s participation, upon invitation, in summits and ministerial meetings of other organizations, the invitation of those organizations to OSCE Ministerial Councils and other relevant events, and the exchange information and experience. The list of such organizations is long and includes the Central European Initiative (CEI), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Organization for Democracy and Economic

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26 Although the OSCE Mission to Georgia was closed, the OSCE continues to co-chair the Geneva process, together with the EU and the UN.

27 *OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century*, cited above (Note 20), p. 9, para. 54.

28 The EU is invited to speak by virtue of the special arrangements for its representation within the EU Presidency Delegation to the OSCE.

29 Four areas were identified as such: the fight against terrorism, combating trafficking in human beings, the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination.

Development – GUAM,<sup>30</sup> the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), and others. Detailed information on all contacts and co-operation of this kind, including by OSCE institutions and field operations, is provided in the annual report on interaction between organizations and institutions in the OSCE area that the 1999 Platform tasked the Secretary General to prepare.<sup>31</sup>

In implementing the provisions of the 1999 Charter and the Platform, which described the OSCE as a “flexible co-ordinating framework to foster co-operation” and a “framework for sub-regional co-operation”, the OSCE Chairmanship and the Secretary General convened several co-ordination and information-sharing meetings with international, regional, and sub-regional organizations. For example, in 2000 and 2003, the OSCE Secretary General hosted two information-sharing meetings with international organizations and international financial institutions on Central Asia. These provided valuable opportunities to exchange views and share information on the priorities of OSCE participating States in Central Asia and the activities of international organizations in the region, and to seek ways to improve co-operation and co-ordination. In June 2002, the Portuguese OSCE Chairmanship organized a high-level meeting on the prevention and combat of terrorism in Lisbon, with the participation of the UN, EU, NATO, CoE, CIS, and the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF). The Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) launched in 2003 has since become a regular forum to review security issues in the OSCE area, to which a number of security-related organizations have been invited on a regular basis: the UN (and its family institutions, in particular UNODC), the EU, NATO, the CoE, the CIS, the CSTO, and GUAM. The OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings has convened the annual meeting of the Alliance against Trafficking since 2004, which serves as a platform for joint advocacy by international and regional organizations dealing with combating trafficking in human beings.

In the field, the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) has, since 2002, regularly organized sessions or whole-day meetings with locally-based representatives of the international organizations within the setting of the OSCE regional Heads of Mission meetings in Central Asia to share information about mutual activities and plans for the future. Since 2003, a similar practice has been followed in South Caucasus.

In accordance with the provisions of the 1999 Charter and the Platform, which promoted the OSCE as a “forum for subregional co-operation”, the OSCE Secretary General initiated the high-level meeting with (heads of) re-

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30 Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova.

31 For the latest issue see: Interaction with organizations and institutions in the OSCE area, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Annual Report 2008*, pp. 96-101, at: [http://www.osce.org/publications/sg/2009/04/37053\\_1269\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/publications/sg/2009/04/37053_1269_en.pdf).

gional and subregional organizations and initiatives on preventing and combating terrorism, which was convened in Vienna in September 2002. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information on ongoing and possible future activities and projects that regional and subregional groupings were carrying out or planned to undertake in the area of preventing and combating terrorism, and to discuss and identify areas and modalities for closer co-operation in the future. It was the first ever meeting by the OSCE in which regional and subregional organizations and initiatives from all across the OSCE area participated: the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII), BSEC, the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO), the Central Europe Initiative (CEI), the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), CSTO, GUAM, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), the SEECP, and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Following on from the agreements reached at this meeting, the OSCE's Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) organized two round-tables in 2006 and 2007, bringing together counter-terrorism practitioners from regional and sub-regional organizations to network, exchange information, and share experiences and best practices.

The fact that partner organizations have started to consult more regularly with the OSCE in recent years and to include language on the OSCE in their policy documents is yet another encouraging sign testifying to the improvements made in co-operation and co-ordination between these organizations and the OSCE, and to their recognition of the OSCE's contribution to strengthening security and stability in its area of responsibility. For example, the UN General Assembly has regularly adopted a resolution on UN co-operation with the OSCE, reflecting the state of co-operation between the two organizations.<sup>32</sup> NATO explicitly recognized that its relations with the OSCE are governed by the *Platform for Co-operative Security*,<sup>33</sup> and in 2003 NATO's senior political body, the NAC adopted a special document on enhancing the relationship with the OSCE. In the same year, the EU Council of Ministers adopted conclusions on EU-OSCE co-operation in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation, which outlined the guiding principles, specific areas, and modalities of EU-OSCE co-operation. In more recent years, some EU policy documents, such as the 2004 European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the 2007 Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia, contained specific references to co-operation with the OSCE, while in 2009, the OSCE was for the first time formally invited to join as a permanent participant in the work of the Platform on Democracy, Good Governance and Stability within the framework of the EU Eastern Partnership.

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32 No such resolution has, however, been adopted since 2002, which mirrors the consistent failure of the OSCE participating States to agree on the text of a joint political declaration as had traditionally been adopted at the year-end OSCE Ministerial Council. 2002 was a last year when such declaration was agreed by the OSCE.

33 Cf. *NATO's relations with the OSCE*, at: <http://www.nato.int/issues/nato-osce/index.html>.

### *Reinvigorating the Platform?*

2009 marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the 1999 *Charter for European Security and Platform for Co-operative Security*. From today's perspective, it would be safe to conclude that the Platform has passed the test of time. As highlighted above, the co-operation modalities articulated in the Platform have to a great extent been put into practice in the daily work of the OSCE and its co-operation with international, regional, and subregional organizations and initiatives "concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security in the OSCE area". Moreover, a decade after its adoption, the Platform maintains its value and continues to provide a solid foundation on which further efforts can be built in developing co-operation among organizations in the OSCE area.

The Platform's anniversary is an appropriate occasion to reaffirm the letter and spirit of the document, as well as the participating States' continuing commitment to maintaining and developing close co-operation and coordination with partner organizations, based on the principles and modalities enshrined in the Platform. Taking advantage of such an occasion, the participating States could also reiterate and refresh a role they gave to the OSCE back in 1999 as a "flexible co-ordinating framework" and a "forum for subregional co-operation". As to the latter, it might be timely to convene another OSCE meeting with heads of regional and subregional organizations and initiatives that operate in the OSCE area to summarize the experience and role of subregional co-operation over the past two decades and the contribution that subregional groupings have made to strengthening security and co-operation in the OSCE area.<sup>34</sup>

The past ten years have proved that when there was a pressing need, the OSCE's partner organizations have been very responsive to the Organization's initiatives to get together to share information, experiences, and plans and to co-ordinate relevant activities. It has proved problematic, however, to convene such co-ordination and information-sharing meetings on a regular basis, especially at a high level, partly due to existence of other "co-ordinating" frameworks, such as the annual high-level tripartite meeting (originally UN, OSCE and CoE, but which has expanded over the years to include many more than the three founding organizations) or the high-level meetings of the UN Secretary-General with regional and other intergovernmental organizations (which, however, has not been convened since 2007). The lesson here is pretty straightforward: The framework for co-operation and co-ordination among international organizations should indeed remain flexible and be driven by specific needs rather than someone's ambitions or

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34 On the early assessment of subregional co-operation in Europe see: Andrew Cottey (ed.), *Subregional Cooperation in the New Europe: Building Security, Prosperity and Solidarity from the Barents to the Black Sea*, New York 1999, and Renata Dwan/Oleksandr Pavliuk (eds), *Building Security in the New States of Eurasia*, New York 2000.

political prescriptions. When a given initiative (e.g. the proposal in the 2003 Maastricht Strategy “to establish a new ad-hoc consultative mechanism”) was perceived as untimely and/or offering no added value, the response from partner organizations was lukewarm. Here it would also be appropriate to mention the general reluctance of international organizations to be “co-ordinated” and a certain natural tendency for inter-institutional competition.

The tenth anniversary of the Platform could also be a moment to reflect in practical terms on certain current dilemmas and challenges regarding OSCE co-operation with other international, regional, and sub-regional organizations and institutions. How can increased demand for this co-operation be accommodated while participating States are unwilling, understandably in a time of financial constraints, to put more resources behind this co-operation? How can a balance be struck between the reluctance of some participating States to have “too many” regular meetings with other organizations and the growing need and importance to “foster co-ordinated approaches that avoid duplication and ensure efficient use of available resources”? How should co-operation with those organizations that actively seek institutionalization and/or formalization of their relationship with the OSCE be managed while the participating States give strong preference to practical and results-oriented co-operation and do not support signing MoUs and other co-operation agreements or launching new sets of regular meetings? And what should be done in the even more extreme case when there is no unanimity among participating States on the added value of OSCE co-operation with another organization? Would it be appropriate to establish which decisions in the area of external co-operation rest with the Chairmanship and the Secretary General and which are prerogatives of the OSCE “collective decision-making bodies”?

How can co-ordination with partner organizations in conflict prevention and in actual crisis situations be improved? It is often on the eve of and during crises that organizations tend to be less successful in co-ordinating their efforts. Although the Platform has encouraged relevant organizations and institutions “to keep each other informed of what actions they are undertaking or plan to undertake to deal with a particular situation”, the reality is often too complex and rapidly evolving to leave much time for consultations (especially since it often takes time to shape collective responses within organizations themselves given the diversity of views and interests of member states).

In the end, co-operation between organizations is very much dependent on the temperature of relations among their members. From this perspective, the Platform and co-operation among international organizations and institutions in general constitute an integral part of the overall notion of co-operative approach to security. The concept itself rests on the underlying premise that security of each state is inseparably linked to that of all others and therefore that co-operation is beneficial to all states.

The basic principle of co-operative security in Europe was proclaimed in general terms in the CSCE *Charter of Paris for a New Europe* (November 1990), which announced a “new era of democracy, peace and unity”. With the end of Cold War and – as it was viewed in those days – the end of the division of Europe, the CSCE participating States committed themselves to strive for “a new quality in our security relations” and to “co-operate in strengthening confidence and security”.<sup>35</sup> By adopting in 1999 the *Charter for European Security* and the *Platform for Co-operative Security*, the Istanbul Summit was the culmination of a decade-long effort to promote a co-operative approach to security threats and challenges on the continent. In that sense, the Charter and the Platform symbolized the high point of co-operative security in Europe.

Since then, the concept and practice of co-operative security in Greater Europe have been gradually eroding. As some states started to question the commitments they had made, as growing differences emerged on traditional security threats and threat perceptions, and as the notion of “common values” became more of a slogan from the past than current reality, co-operative security has proved to be too difficult a task to pursue. The shocking terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 seemed to convince all once again that “no single State or organization can, on its own, meet the challenges facing us today”.<sup>36</sup> That fresh co-operative spirit was reflected in the decisions made at the Bucharest, Porto, and Maastricht OSCE Ministerial Council Meetings, with the Maastricht Strategy representing, for the time being, the last major milestone document in co-operative security. But as this approach requires more than simply co-operation, that moment of solidarity turned out to be brief, revealing the practical limits of co-operative security. The latter is arguably meant to be based on the commonality of values and interests or, as some students of the subject put it: “Co-operative security can only take place when countries develop a sense of a common future”.<sup>37</sup>

The call by President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia in June 2008 to conclude a legally binding treaty on European security (whatever might be the outcome of this initiative) has given a new impetus to discussions of European security. The participating States have decided to anchor the debate in the OSCE by launching the informal “Corfu Process”, which is aimed at restoring trust and confidence among the 56.

The evolving discussion on European security has revitalized interest in the *Platform for Co-operative Security* and in interaction among organiza-

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35 *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*, Meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), Paris, 19-21 November 1990, pp. 3 and 5, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1990/11/4045\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1990/11/4045_en.pdf).

36 *OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty First Century*, cited above (Note 20), p. 9, para. 52.

37 Michael Michalka, *Cooperative Security: From Theory to Practice*, in: Richard Cohen/Michael Michalka, *Cooperative Security: new Horizons for International Order*, The Marshall Center Papers, No. 3, April 2001, pp. 29-67.



tions dealing with security in the OSCE area in general. The very fact that the OSCE is deemed to be an appropriate forum for debates on the future of European security can be also attributed to the role the Organization was given by the 1999 Platform and to the nature of relationships it has developed with other organizations over the past ten years on that basis. The relevance of the Platform was further reiterated by the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Athens on 1-2 December 2009.

The Ministers adopted a Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Corfu Process that welcomed “the valuable contributions of all relevant organizations and institutions dealing with security, on the basis of the Platform for Co-operative Security”.<sup>38</sup> They took a Decision on furthering the Corfu Process that identified “interaction with other organizations and institutions, on the basis of the 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security” as one of eight issues on which the future dialogue will focus. The decision also provided that international, regional, and sub-regional organizations and institutions will be invited to contribute on an ad hoc basis to the discussions in the framework of the Corfu Process.<sup>39</sup>

The Athens Declaration and Decision on the Corfu Process have opened the way to involving organizations “concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security in the OSCE area” in the Corfu Process, in the truly inclusive, equal, transparent, and comprehensive spirit that the Platform stands for. Such involvement and the continuation of the Corfu Process could become a good opportunity to take stock of the past ten years of co-operation among organizations in the OSCE area, to have them present their views on contemporary security threats and challenges, and to create a new political momentum to interaction among them.

Yet, whether the debate on European security could ultimately strengthen the OSCE as a pan-European and transatlantic forum for co-operative security, revive the very concept and establish a genuine practice of co-operative security, based on the commonality of values and interests and on “a sense of a common future”, remains to be seen. The task of creating “a common security space free of dividing lines in which all States are equal partners” is still on the agenda.

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38 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, Athens 2009, *Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Corfu Process*, MC.DOC/1/09, 2 December 2009, p. 2, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2009/12/41848\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2009/12/41848_en.pdf).

39 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, Athens 2009, *Decision No. 1/09, Furthering the Corfu Process*, MC.DEC/1/09, 2 December 2009, at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2009/12/41864\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2009/12/41864_en.pdf).