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The OSCE as a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community: Theoretical Foundations, Preconditions, and Prospects

European Security and the Crisis of Multilateralism

Immediately after the end of the Cold War, expectations towards the OSCE, then still the CSCE, were high. For many, it appeared to be the nucleus of a pan-European security system that would subsume the Cold War alliances. As we now know, things transpired differently. Most – if not all – Central and Eastern European states saw the future of their security in NATO and the EU. Nonetheless, in the intervening years, the OSCE has time and again been taken as a model for a European security community. Most recently, the vision of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community was formulated at the 2010 OSCE Astana Summit. The OSCE, however, is further from realizing this vision than ever. Of Mikhail Gorbachev's "common European home", so far only the (enlarged) west wing has been built, at best. And yet it is no great comfort that the crisis of multilateralism has recently also caught up with NATO and the EU. The weakening of international institutions is not merely the result of renationalization and a renaissance of unilateral sovereignty politics, but is also an internal crisis, caused by slow-moving and opaque decision-making processes coupled with blockades and other barriers.

There is no shortage of security institutions in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security area. Nonetheless, the European security system shows signs of having problems in terms of legitimacy, participation, and effectiveness. This is not the fault of the OSCE, nor that of NATO and the EU, but is rather the result of a failure of political will on the part of governments. The European security architecture is currently a conglomerate of collective defence, co-operative security, security communities, collective security, and balance-of-power/concert-of-powers-style politics. International institutions have two functions here. On the one hand, they mirror the interests of the states involved in them: Membership of international organizations is in the interest of a state (in terms of power projection). When these interests change, so does the character of the international institution concerned. Thus, the evolution of NATO and the OSCE since 1989 illustrates the changing preferences of their members – above all those of the major states. On the other hand, international institutions colour and influence the behaviour of states. There is a certain sense in which states are "socialized" by them. International organizations such as NATO and the OSCE are therefore certainly in a position to influence the interests and preferences of states via institutionalized learning processes, perhaps even to change them. Here, the basic as-

sumption of the theory of democratic peace also applies, namely that the more democracies an institution has as members, the more powerful its socialization effect will be. Furthermore, democracies are more willing to form security communities than non-democracies. This is also why the North Atlantic Alliance is more than a conventional military alliance, but rather a pluralistic security community of Western countries based on a shared democratic identity.[1] In contrast, the OSCE is a co-operative security system, whose goal is defined as the creation of a pluralistic security community in the area stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. As such, the OSCE could be described as an emerging security community, or, in the words of Emanuel Adler, as a "security community-building model".[2] The OSCE, "rather than waiting for 'the other' to change its identity and interests before it can be admitted to the security community-building institution, […] has incorporated, from the outset, all states that express a political will to live up to the standards and norms of the security community, hoping to transform their identities and interests".[3]

Even if the wearisome abundance of communiqués with the same hackneyed avowals and declarations of intention invites equally hackneyed criticism, the European security system is better than its reputation. Other regions of the world look at the degree of co-operation and norm-setting that exists in Europe with envy. Despite the undeniable progress that has been made, however, the reality of European security in the OSCE area continues to consist of not only co-operation, but also zero-sum games, formal and informal "concerts of powers", and security dilemmas. This changes nothing about the necessity of the vision of a security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Karl W. Deutsch and the Concept of a Security Community – Theoretical Foundations

The concept of a "security community" was developed by Karl Wolfgang Deutsch in his much-cited 1957 work *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area. International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton 1957), which has since become a standard text. Initially, this concept was far from successful: The atmosphere of confrontation between the US and the USSR in the Cold War meant that the concept vanished from the debate, which was dominated at the time by US academics, as quickly as

1 For a thorough discussion of this, see Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy*, Princeton 1995.

2 Emanuel Adler, Seeds of peaceful change: the OSCE's security community-building model, in: Emanuel Adler/Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities*, Cambridge 1998, pp. 119-160.

3 Emanuel Adler, The OSCE as a security community, in: *OSCE Magazine* 1/2011, pp. 14-15, here: p. 15.

it had arisen. The only forms of "security community" that were acceptable at the time were collective defence organizations such as NATO, CENTO, and SEATO.

According to Deutsch, a "pluralistic security community" can be characterized as follows: 1. The use of violence for states to assert their interests against each other has been superseded (non-violent problem resolution). 2. Its members share a set of basic political values (compatibility of values). 3. Their behaviour towards each other is predictable (dependable expectations). The consequence is a civilizing of inter-state behaviour. Security communities can thus be said to consist of close, institutionalized relations between states that are not only based on mutual interests, but also on shared values and common sympathies. An intensive meshwork of interests, communication, and organizations holds their members together. Security is understood to be a collective good.

As well as the "pluralistic security community", Deutsch identifies the "amalgamated security community". The difference between them is that a pluralistic security community consists of several sovereign states, while amalgamated security communities consist of a single state or state-like area with a centralizing power. An amalgamated community is created via the integration of two previously independent units into a larger independent unity with a single government. Examples include the United States and the German Empire of 1871-1918. The counterpart of the amalgamated community is the pluralistic security community. Its main objective is the preservation of peace among its constituents. In a pluralistic security community, there is no pooling of sovereignty by states to form a single government. Furthermore, a pluralistic security community is far easier to create and maintain, requiring merely the three main conditions mentioned above (non-violent problem resolution, compatibility of values, and dependable expectations). An "amalgamated" security community, which can also be referred to as "integrated security", arises only when the member states transfer sovereignty to the regional level. The EU can thus be considered a pluralistic security community that is heading towards integrated security. Hence, it is more than "pluralistic", but not yet an "amalgamated security community".

Integrative processes amount to a historic transformation of societies. However, this runs both ways: Security communities of the amalgamated or the pluralistic variety are always in danger of relapsing. The same three indicators – here appended with minus signs – can thus also be used to analyse counter-trends, and the risk of backsliding can thus be determined in terms of the same factors that characterize the process of integration: "Integration is a matter of fact, not of time. If people on both sides do not fear war and do not prepare for it, it matters little how long it took them to reach this stage. But

once integration has been reached, the length of time over which it persists may contribute to its consolidation."[4]

Ultimately, all security communities can develop in three possible directions: evolution, stagnation, and devolution. Deutsch assumes that there are certain thresholds that, once crossed, guarantee the existence of a security community. This is only possible if a strong sense of community emerges and is maintained, helping the institutions of a security community to remain relevant. Only through a sense of community can the survival of the community be ensured; the use of force or the existence of a hegemonic power within the community cannot achieve this. Close ties between states increase the cost of the use of force, so that the states ultimately seek peaceful solutions to conflicts.

When considering the development of a regional security architecture in the OSCE framework, the question arises as to whether security communities can only be formed by democracies. Or, to ask a slightly different question: Is democracy a necessary or sufficient condition for the formation of a security community? According to Deutsch's criteria, refraining from the use of force, compatibility of values, and dependable expectations are sufficient for the development of a pluralistic security community. Given that Greece, Spain, and Portugal were members of NATO when all three were still military dictatorships, one could even argue that membership of a security community can accelerate the development of social participation. However, participation, social justice, and the rule of law may promote the process of regional integration. For, as noted above, institutions whose members include a higher proportion of democracies have a more powerful socialization effect. Furthermore, democracies are more willing to form security communities than are non-democracies.

The Development of Deutsch's Concept since the 1990s

After the end of the Cold War, the concept of the pluralistic security community was revived in international relations and revised in light of the new global political situation. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett's much-cited anthology *Security Communities* is particularly responsible for the renaissance that Deutsch's concept has experienced in recent years.[5] They take up Deutsch's ideas and seek to adapt them to the new security situation that has emerged since the end of the Cold War. Adler and Barnett basically make three modifications or additions.

4 Karl W. Deutsch et.al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area. International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Princeton 1957, p. 6.

5 Cf., in particular, Emanuel Adler/Michael Barnett, A framework for the study of security communities, in: Adler/Barnett (eds), cited above (Note 2), pp. 29-65, here: p. 30.

First, they define the concept of "security community" more rigorously than did Deutsch. They reject the idea of an amalgamated security community and speak instead of communities of sovereign entities who enjoy dependable expectations of peaceful change. Furthermore, Adler and Barnett have expanded and clarified Deutsch's concept by distinguishing between two types of (pluralistic) security communities: "loosely coupled" and "tightly coupled". A loosely coupled security community consists of sovereign states that maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change and no more. Tightly coupled security communities go beyond this basic requirement, pose a greater challenge and have higher ambitions. On the one hand, they demonstrate a degree of mutual aid. On the other, they provide their members with a system or rules at a level somewhere between an association of sovereign states and a centralized regional government. Adler and Barnett describe this system somewhat imprecisely as a post-sovereign system, equipped with common supranational, transnational, and national institutions, as well as a kind of collective security complex.

Pluralistic security communities thus consist of several sovereign states that retain their own governments and political systems. These states nonetheless share common core values based on similar political institutions, similar (historical) experiences, and a certain degree of communality and loyalty. There thus exists, at least in embryonic form, a "we-feeling". The member states of a pluralistic security community are so closely interdependent and/or integrated that they may trust that conflicts that (still) emerge will be resolved peacefully. Furthermore, security communities can also be categorized according to their degree of maturity as "mature", "ascendant", or "nascent". According to Adler and Barnett, mature security communities stand at the highest possible level of development. Examples of these are the United States and – somewhat less integrated – the EU.

Both types of security community described by Adler and Barnett go through three stages in their development process: birth, growth, and maturity. In nascent security communities, the states examine how they can co-ordinate their activities to enhance common security, to reduce transaction costs, and to create the potential for further interaction in the future. A precondition for this initial phase is usually the perception of a common threat, resulting in a desire to seek protection. The phase of growth is characterized by increasingly dense networks, new institutions and organizations that reflect closer military co-ordination and co-operation, and reduced fear that the various other members could represent a threat. This phase also sees the development of a deeper mutual trust and a collective identity. The institutions that emerge in this process lead, in turn, to greater social interaction and to the spread of shared identity and complementary interests. The phase of growth eventually gives way to the third stage: maturity. At this point, the regional actors share a common identity and establish dependable expectations of peaceful change, which allows the emergence of a genuine security com-

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munity.[6] A "pluralistic security community", by contrast, has more modest ambitions. It is limited to the necessary compatibility of core values, a certain sensitivity, and a sense of responsibility towards the socially disadvantaged and minorities, and the predictability of the behaviour of each actor within the community. Deutsch nonetheless emphasizes that both kinds of security community are always at risk of relapsing.

Creating a typology of the OSCE area based on Deutsch's paradigm proves to be difficult. While NATO is precisely the prototype of a pluralistic security community, the European Union is a hybrid that lies somewhere between a pluralistic and an amalgamated security community. Despite the dense network of institutions, transactions, and relationships, there has been no amalgamation yet, and whether there ever will be remains to be seen. So far, the immediate consequences of the European banking and debt crisis have been rather a kind of national parochialism and a trend towards re-nationalization. Dealing with the crisis, however, could well lead to a new push for integration. Common banking regulation and efforts to harmonize economic and social policies perhaps indicate the way forward. So far, the EU is still best be described as a tightly coupled security community, in Adler and Barnett's terms. The extent to which the OSCE has the attributes of a security community or the prerequisites to become one will be discussed below.

The Crisis of the OSCE and the Key Role of Russia

Criticism of the state of the OSCE is not new – for many, the Organization represents a "picture of misery". It has been described as a "powerless talking shop", a "paper tiger", "a fair-weather organization", and, in extremely politically incorrect terms, as a circus sideshow "half lady". It may be a platitude, but it cannot be repeated often enough: An institution is always only as strong as its members allow it to be. The OSCE is no more an independent power than the EU or NATO. Philip Zelikow has illustrated this strikingly with regard to NATO: "No one who walked past a neighbor's house and saw a visiting car parked in the drive would say, 'look dear, a Chevrolet is visiting the Bensons tonight'. NATO may be the vehicle […] but NATO is not the driver."[7]

For more than ten years, the OSCE has been fighting against a loss of importance. There are several reasons for this: competition from other actors, the paralysis stemming from the East-West divide, and the Organization's indistinct profile and low external visibility. Not least the excessive expectations that were placed on the CSCE in the early nineties, as well as the rather stubborn insistence by many of its political and academic friends and

6 Cf. ibid., pp. 50-57.
7 Philip Zelikow, The Masque of Institutions, in: *Survival* 1/1996, pp. 6-18, here: p. 8.

supporters on its key role in the emerging continental and transcontinental security landscape, allowed an aura of disappointment to develop around the OSCE.

In Berlin, too, the OSCE ekes out a living mainly in the political shadows. It is either effectively absent from policy debates and relevant papers produced by foreign-policy think tanks, or is only mentioned in passing. One of the few exceptions is the Central Asia strategy developed by Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and his then Minister of State Gernot Erler at the time of Germany's 2005-2009 Grand Coalition government – yet here, too, the key role was played by the EU. While the German commitment to the OSCE has not completely vanished, it has significantly weakened. This is partly – but not entirely – a consequence of the EU and NATO enlargement processes. It has also become evident that expectations that the OSCE could become the heart of a pan-European peace order were naive. For all the pro-OSCE rhetoric, therefore, the priorities of German foreign and security policy have shifted in recognition of the security-policy realities on the continent towards NATO, since 1992, and the EU/European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), since 1999. Thus, Germany, too, views the OSCE less and less as the overarching platform for pan-European security. Instead, it is increasingly seen as an optional instrument for the pursuit of limited foreign-policy objectives, primarily in regions in which neither the EU nor NATO are willing or able to play a role. In internal policy documents, the OSCE receives cursory mention at best.

The deficits of the OSCE also reflect the shortcomings of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture as a whole, which is still characterized by highly disparate zones of security. While NATO and the EU have created a high degree of integration, mutual trust, and collective security, beyond these organization's borders, such trust is still absent. The OSCE works with an integrative approach that is different from the conditionality-driven enlargement strategies of the EU and NATO. However, this integrative approach also means that the OSCE inevitably takes on board all the conflicts, problems, and contradictions of its participating States, which must then be managed within the Organization. Within and at the edges of the OSCE area, there are a number of countries that exhibit characteristics of fragile statehood, where internal conflicts, in particular, could erupt at any time. A look at the conflicts in the OSCE area shows that demand for the Organization's services persists. By defining its roles more precisely, distinguishing itself more clearly from other actors, and focusing on its core competencies, the OSCE could help to ensure that it once again gains in attractiveness as a forum on security issues for its participating States.

A Eurasian security community is a far-off and visionary goal. The realities of the contemporary European security landscape show this starkly. With the exception of the Transdniestrian conflict, where the parties involved at least revived the official 5+2 negotiating format in November 2011, there

is little sign of progress. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is likely to heat up as a result of bellicose rhetoric. In Georgia, too, the different parts of the country are growing ever further apart. In Belarus, not only is the political opposition subject to repression and imprisonment, the basic freedoms of the individual – which all OSCE States are committed to protect – are being trampled upon; a similar situation prevails in Ukraine and the Central Asian states.

This leads us to the key role of Russia. The crisis of the OSCE is also a crisis of the West's Russia policy, which urgently needs to be made more coherent.[8] Admittedly, this has not been made easier by Putin's return to office for a third term as president. The key issues – missile defence, Libya, and Syria – show the tensions and problems that need to be dealt with here. The continuing division of the continent, together with the consensus principle, also paralyses the Organization: The attempt to adopt a framework for action at the Astana Summit failed; it proved impossible to agree on common final declarations at several previous Ministerial Council meetings; and the budget has often been a source of dispute. This lack of accord has also led to key OSCE missions not being renewed or their mandates being diluted (e.g. Georgia, Belarus, Uzbekistan). Moreover, Moscow has tried to increase political control of the relatively independent OSCE institutions (the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, HCNM, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, RFOM). The division within the ranks of participating States is also responsible for blocking efforts to clarify the Organization's legal status and adopt an OSCE Charter. In Russia, the predominant view is that the co-operative strategy of the 1990s was a failure. Russian security interests were overlooked on issues including missile defence and the CFE Treaty, and Moscow's sphere of interest was not respected, as shown, for instance, in the West's support for the "colour revolutions". Russia raises three specific allegations: 1. The OSCE's human dimension is over-emphasized at the expense of the politico-military dimension. 2. In the conflict between state sovereignty (territorial integrity, inviolability of borders) and fundamental human rights, the OSCE chooses an interpretation that favours the latter in an unbalanced way (for example, in the recognition of Kosovo). 3. The OSCE only practices intervention "East of Vienna", although there are also relevant issues in the West (e.g., the Basque Country and Northern Ireland).

To make matters worse, Russia's original intention of creating a pan-European security system under the auspices or control of the OSCE was stillborn from the outset. The post-Cold War European security structure is and will continue to be an evolutionary process that does not allow the im-

8 See, for instance, Przemysław Grudzinski, Contract 2015: A Conceptual Framework for Regional Security, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2010*, Baden-Baden 2011, pp. 75-84, here pp. 77-78.

position of models. Nevertheless, the rekindled debate on new security structures (the Corfu Process and the results of the discussions at the Astana Summit) provides the OSCE with a great opportunity to strengthen its role as a key forum for pan-European security and co-operation. The improvement of relations between the United States and Russia, and the rapprochement between Russia and NATO following the war in Georgia have fostered a dynamic process of dialogue within the OSCE. Even if it is too early to speak of a reversal of the OSCE's decline, a revival of the Organization's significance cannot be ruled out.

Is the OSCE a Nascent Security Community? Preconditions and Obstacles

Reading the OCE's declarations and final documents and considering the shared principles recognized by all 57 participating States, the OSCE may already appear to be a security community. Yet once again, while there is no shortage of good intentions, there is a lack of both political will and practical application of these principles. Most recently, the war in Georgia has made all sides all too dramatically aware that no lasting democratic peace prevails in the OSCE area.

Emanuel Adler distinguishes the following seven community-building functions of the OSCE towards becoming a security community: "(1) It promotes political consultation and bilateral and multilateral agreements among its members. (2) It sets liberal standards – applicable both within each state and throughout the community – that are used to judge democratic and human rights performance, and monitors compliance with them. (3) It attempts to prevent violent conflict before it occurs. (4) It helps develop the practice of peaceful settlement of disputes within the OSCE space. (5) It builds mutual trust by promoting arms control agreements, military transparency, and cooperation. (6) It supports assistance to newly independent states and supports the building of democratic institutions and market-economic reforms. (7) It provides assistance to post-conflict reestablishment of institutions and the rule of law."[9]

In any event, Astana was the first time that an OSCE final document mentioned the goal of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. How this vision can be filled with ideas and content is completely open and a matter of disagreement among the participating States. The OSCE cannot simply deliver ready-made solutions to all Europe's security problems. But it can provide a framework within which the pressing questions can be defined, proposals examined, and practical solutions sought. The OSCE today is characterized by a high degree of flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and organizational structures that remain relatively lean. Since 1990, the Organization has

9 Adler, cited above (Note 2), p. 132.

developed into a kind of versatile ad hoc committee for the security problems and conflicts that the EU and NATO cannot or will not deal with. It therefore fills a critical gap in the European security architecture.

The OSCE connects the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. It is the only European security organization in which both the United States and Russia are full members. The broad membership, the consensus rule, the comprehensive understanding of security, and its experience as a platform for dialogue and action alike give the OSCE a potentially vital role in the European security architecture. The OSCE contributes more to the resolution of conflicts than is often visible. For instance, the Kazakh Chairmanship contributed to ensuring that the crisis in Kyrgyzstan did not escalate further. And while the Organization's successes in the Baltic and the effective work of the HCNM in conflict prevention in Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, and Crimea have not made headlines – because only "bad news" sells – this does not make them any less real.

Yet the Organization's paramount importance is in the field of standard-setting, i.e. the creation of norms that enable states to live together in peace. Here, the history of the CSCE shows that the spread of normative principles needs time before they can show substantive results. Furthermore, the problem – as already noted – lies less in setting standards than in *enforcing* them. Here, the OSCE remains dependent on the consent and co-operation of its 57 participating States, and, as an intergovernmental institution, it cannot force the implementation of its norms and goals. In this regard, it is a typical international organization in every respect. States make use of it to solve certain problems co-operatively, but disregard it as soon as they define their interests differently. To this extent, the OSCE – like most other organizations – only borrows its power. Ultimately, therefore, the participating States will themselves have to answer the question of whether they want the OSCE to play a more important role. In other words: It is less a question of making new rules for the OSCE, than ensuring compliance with the existing ones. In terms of its declarations, the OSCE is already a security community, in reality it is far from that.

Vision and Reality – A Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community

The pluralistic Euro-Atlantic security community, despite the crises of NATO and the EU, is a reality. It needs to be defended against emerging renationalization. The "West" is held together by a dense web of cultural and economic relations that are growing ever closer in a globalizing world. For all that, the "West" was never a static or even a geographically bounded entity – it is rather an ideal construct, in which the balance of power is being constantly redefined, conflicts of interest rebalanced, and values reassessed.

The OSCE, in contrast, is not and never was an embodiment of the Western community of values, but rather a conglomerate of Eurasian states and Eurasian values. Some of its participating States are home to traditional, patriarchal societies where Islam is the predominant religion and source of culture and values. There are deep differences with regard to socio-political issues and value systems, which ultimately lie behind key disputes, such as the question of whether democracy is "the only system of government" (Charter of Paris, 1990). Not only in Central Asia, but also in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, retrograde movement has been evident. The enlargement of the Euro-Atlantic security community to a Eurasian security community under the umbrella of the OSCE remains to be accomplished. So far it is only a vision.

There can be no common security without mutual trust. Trust has to grow. It grows most sustainably through concrete, practical co-operation. Even after four decades, the OSCE is still the only organization that unites the North American democracies, the countries of the EU, and the EU's eastern neighbours as far as Central Asia. The great opportunities that this offers need to be used more effectively. In many regards, the OSCE is better than its reputation, and, in historical terms, it has achieved an extraordinary amount. The work of creating a Euro-Atlantic-Eurasian security community is a process that demands an ongoing commitment and, above all, the political will to act and to change.

Even in Europe, where security communities exist (NATO, EU) or are emerging (OSCE), terms such as "balance of power", "hegemony", "alliances", and "concert of powers" have not disappeared from political discourse. The OSCE remains an important co-operation forum for those states that are not part of the EU and NATO security communities. It is a co-operative security system that has formulated the goal of creating a pluralistic security community from Vancouver to Vladivostok, or, in the words of Emanuel Adler, a "security community-building model".[10] However, we should beware of excessively high expectations that would ascribe the OSCE omnicompetence for pan-European security. The OSCE has the vital task of concerning itself with those states that are not – or better said, not yet – part of the security communities of "the West". It is a security community in the making, which would only be redundant if all 57 OSCE States were members of the EU and/or NATO.

To conclude: Despite notable successes, the OSCE has not yet succeeded in emerging from the shadows and continues to eke out a living, largely unremarked, in the "niche of co-operative security". However, in terms of evolutionary biology, niches are there to be occupied, and, what's more, they ensure survival. To this extent, the OSCE will continue to play an important role in the European security system. It certainly has the potential

10 Adler, cited above (Note 2).

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to broaden and expand this role. For this to occur, however, will require key participating States to change their thinking and their priorities. Frank Zappa's legendary quip, coined with reference to jazz, can therefore also apply very aptly to the OSCE: "The OSCE is not dead; it just smells funny."