

Wolfgang Zellner

Old and New Challenges for the OSCE

The OSCE is the largest regional international organization in its area with a comprehensive agenda and an inclusive membership. In principle, there is no question it cannot address. In reality, however, in line with the political will of relevant participating States, it is largely limited to more peripheral, supporting, and assisting roles. These tasks can be significant, important, and in some cases, such as currently in Ukraine, the OSCE can even play an irreplaceable role. However, key political, economic, and military issues are dealt with elsewhere, at bilateral levels, in permanent or temporary informal formats (i.e. G7, G20, Normandy) or in international organizations such as the UN, the EU, or NATO. This basic limitation of the role of the OSCE should not be forgotten when dealing with this organization. However, this limitation also creates opportunities.

At first sight, the OSCE seems to be in relatively good shape; its political standing has significantly improved. While pronouncements of the Organization's death were commonplace before 2014, this is no longer the case. With its Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, the OSCE plays a key role in this country. The Organization has also been steered by consecutive strong Chairmanships; most journalists now know its acronym; and Secretary General Lamberto Zannier is finding it far easier to get meetings with the UN Secretary-General than earlier on.

In addition, the 23rd Ministerial Council (MC) Meeting in Hamburg in December 2016 performed better than expected and adopted ten decisions, including substantial ones on conventional arms control,¹ economic connectivity,² migration,³ and the Transdniestrian settlement.⁴ Paradoxically, the OSCE, which stands for co-operative security, seems rather to be profiting than suffering from the rising tensions and crises in Europe.

However, it remains to be seen just how sustainable this remarkable recovery is. To answer this question, it is necessary to analyse the OSCE's strengths and weaknesses. In that regard, this brief contribution will try to

1 Cf. OSCE, Ministerial Council, Hamburg 2016, *From Lisbon to Hamburg: Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the OSCE Framework for Arms Control*, MC.DOC/4/16, 9 December 2016, at: <http://www.osce.org/cio/289496>.

2 Cf. OSCE, Ministerial Council, Hamburg 2016, *Decision No. 4/16, Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity*, MC.DEC/4/16, 9 December 2016, at: <http://www.osce.org/cio/289316>.

3 Cf. OSCE, Ministerial Council, Hamburg 2016, *Decision No. 3/16, OSCE's Role in the Governance of Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees*, MC.DEC/3/16, 9 December 2016, at: <http://www.osce.org/cio/289491>.

4 Cf. OSCE, Ministerial Council, Hamburg 2016, *Ministerial Statement on the Negotiations on the Transdniestrian Settlement Process in the "5+2" Format*, MC.DOC/2/16, 9 December 2016, at: <http://www.osce.org/cio/288181>.

figure out the most pressing political, normative, and operational challenges the Organization is currently facing, and the options it has to address them.

The OSCE's Strengths and Weaknesses

The OSCE has to adapt to a constantly changing political environment and to redefine its role accordingly. On the basis of the Organization's actual performance, one can see what the OSCE can and cannot achieve, and what it could achieve if certain conditions were to change.

The OSCE's Strengths

As the most inclusive international organization with a comprehensive agenda in its geographical space, the OSCE has a number of key strengths.

The most fundamental is that it provides a *broad and differentiated value base*. The Organization has adopted a comprehensive set of values, norms, and commitments in all three dimensions. These enable it to develop comprehensive co-operative policies, with the Astana vision of a "security community" as the ultimate goal of this. However, because this ability depends on the degree to which these norms and commitments are implemented by all the participating States, or at least the vast majority of them, it is extremely limited at present. The strength of a shared value base becomes a weakness when these very values are so severely disputed as is currently the case. But even if the OSCE norms and commitments are not implemented in a number of countries, they remain the most fundamental strength of the OSCE, one that cannot be given up.

Second, the OSCE provides an enormous *convening power*, meaning the capacity to bring people – in this case primarily the representatives of states – together to discuss issues of any kind whatsoever. This capacity is a direct consequence of its inclusiveness and means that the obstacles for convening people are low and the probability of bringing them together is high. A good example is the informal Ministerial Council Meeting that was convened in Potsdam on 1 September 2016 by the German Chairmanship and brought together around 40 foreign ministers. The 2016 Ministerial Council meeting in Hamburg saw almost 50 foreign ministers assemble. Of course, this success was facilitated by the fact that it was Germany who issued the invitations. But it also shows the OSCE's strong convening power more generally, a power that can be further enhanced by strong leadership.

A third element of strength is the Organization's *agenda-setting capacity*. A good example is the introduction and broadening of the concept of "economic connectivity" since Switzerland's 2014 Chairmanship. This concept, invented by a young gifted scholar at the ETH Zurich (Federal Institute of Technology) in Switzerland, was introduced by Switzerland in 2014, and

continued and expanded by the 2015 Serbian and 2016 German Chairmanships. Finally, the 2016 MC Meeting adopted a decision on economic connectivity, thus turning it into a legitimate OSCE issue.

Another example concerns the introduction of the issue of migration by the 2016 German Chairmanship. The Swiss ambassador chaired the related working group, whose work was crowned by a decision at the Hamburg MC. A third example concerns the reintroduction of an established topic that had been damaged by negative developments: conventional arms control in Europe.

These examples show that in the case of the OSCE new concepts or, in broader terms, political innovation is mainly introduced by the participating States. This does not mean that innovation in the OSCE is exclusively generated by the participating States. The examples of the “Security Days”, the brainchild of Secretary General Lamberto Zannier, or the creative implementation of Decision No. 3/11 adopted at the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council Meeting on “The Conflict Cycle” by the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC)⁵ show that innovation in the OSCE can also be initiated by the Organization’s executive structures and institutions. This is probably more true of procedural, organizational, and operational issues than for agenda-setting in a narrower sense, i.e. the introduction of new subjects.

A fourth element of strength of the OSCE is (potential) *actorness*, the capability to act if consensus can be achieved. The crisis in and around Ukraine shows that this capacity is particularly important in cases where the OSCE is the best-suited or even the only international organization that can act in a given environment. The Ukraine crisis points again to the salient role of political leadership for the OSCE’s actorness. Without the strong leadership of the Swiss Chairmanship and the support of a number of other governments, the SMM mandate of 21 March 2014 would not have been adopted and the OSCE’s actorness would not have materialized in this case.

A fifth and final element is the OSCE’s multiple *ties to several strata of civil society*. Examples include the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the largest human rights meeting in Europe, that gives NGOs full access and speaking rights; or the relatively new (founded in 2013) OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions, which convenes 67 member institutes from 37 states for joint projects.

Together, these five dimensions of strength – the OSCE’s normative base, convening power, agenda-setting capacity, actorness, and ties to civil society – can be multiplied by strong political leadership. Under some conditions, political leadership is even the precondition that allows them to exist in the first place.

5 Cf. Claus Neukirch, *The Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine: Operational Challenges and New Horizons*, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2014*, Baden-Baden 2015, pp. 183-197.

The OSCE's Weaknesses

The OSCE's weaknesses are closely related to its strengths. In some cases, a potential strength becomes a weakness simply because of a lack of political will and leadership.

The most prominent and most frequently mentioned example is the *difficulty in achieving consensus decisions*, particularly in the current political environment of mounting disagreements and tensions. The 2010 Kyrgyzstan crisis, in which the OSCE could have taken on a relevant role if the states had achieved consensus, is a case in point. However, those instances where consensus was not achieved and the OSCE could not act should not cause us to forget the positive cases where the participating States achieved consensus and the OSCE was able to act. The OSCE's actorness is an either/or function: Either the Organization can act or not, and there is little in between. Political leadership can narrow or bridge this *hiatus*, as was successfully done in the case of the SMM mandate. However, there is no guarantee of success, particularly under the current political conditions.

A second and even further-reaching weakness is the *dissolution of the normative basis* shared by the participating States. This could be observed as a gradual process over the last fifteen years, but recently it has sped up substantially and is aggravated by the authoritarian turn in too many Western countries. For an organization as values-based as the OSCE, a situation where it can no longer base its concrete policies on these values represents a real dilemma.

A third weakness of the OSCE, one that has been particularly evident during periods when the OSCE has received little political attention, is *weak political leadership*. At least for the time being, this has improved with a series of subsequent strong Chairmanships, which are key for the functioning of the Organization.

A fourth and widely recognized weakness of the OSCE is its *weak operational capabilities*. This has various aspects, including financial resources, legal personality, planning capacity, specialized expertise, and operational leadership. However, as shown not only by the implementation of Decision No. 3/11, but also by the 2016 OSCE Unified Budget, which created a number of additional posts at the grossly understaffed CPC in the OSCE Secretariat, this problem can be addressed by interested participated States and by the Organization's executive structures, though only in a very gradual manner.

And finally, the *OSCE's ties to civil society* actors are mostly limited to the human dimension and thus represent an underused potential. While many NGOs participate in the OSCE process in relation to the human dimension, there is almost no involvement of civil society in the politico-military dimension. This has only recently started to change with the development of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions, which works on

security-related projects. The German Chairmanship's conference on "Connectivity for Commerce and Investment" in Berlin in May 2016, more than half of whose participants came from the private sector, impressively demonstrated the potential for civil society involvement.

The OSCE's various strengths and weaknesses produce a kind of variable geometry whose form depends on its input variables. Each dimension offers opportunities to strengthen the Organization – or to weaken it through neglect or underinvestment. In the following, I discuss the most pressing political, normative, and operational challenges facing the OSCE.

Addressing Key Issues

The political environment is becoming more complicated than ever before. Among the developments of direct relevance for the OSCE, the following four are particularly prominent.

First, relations between Western states and Russia are continuing to worsen, and there is no indication that a positive turn is imminent. There is even a danger that widely diverging views might significantly block the work of the OSCE. At the Hamburg MC Meeting, Russia was not prepared to adopt any human dimension decision tabled by the Chairmanship. As a possible response, a major Western delegation considered the option of adopting no decisions at all, as long as Russia was not prepared to accept decisions on human dimension issues. Should this logic prevail, it could result in a major blockage that would substantially degrade the functioning of the Organization as a whole.

Second, the situation is further worsened by the authoritarian turn in a number of Western states, most prominently in the USA. Authoritarian Western parties such as the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) are already starting to sign co-operation agreements with Putin's ruling United Russia party.⁶ Things mainly depend on the course taken by the administration of US President-elect Donald Trump, but a united authoritarian coalition between Western states and the Russian Federation can no longer be excluded as definitely as a year ago. This would not only lead to a completely different political constellation in Europe and in the world that would be so new that nobody has calculated its implications. *In extremis* it could even lead to the breakup or at least severe rupture of the West as a political coalition and concept and to the most severe undermining of its normative base, which is almost synonym with the OSCE *acquis*.

Third, this is aggravated by the more general tendency of a weakening of multilateralism as a win-win policy concept (even among former propon-

6 Cf. FPÖ schließt Abkommen mit "Einiges Russland" [FPÖ Makes Deal with "United Russia"], in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 December 2016, p. 2.

ents) and a growing tendency towards protectionism, isolationism, and other variants of unilateral approaches.

And *fourth and finally*, specifically with regard to Europe, one can add that the continent is increasingly influenced by external factors over which it has less and less control. Two completely different examples, which, however, show the broadness of this trend, are the wars in the Middle East and the influence of China.

In this complicated situation, the OSCE should address a number of issues it either cannot avoid or that would open up new opportunities for the Organization and its participating States. One group consists of areas where the OSCE has already adopted decisions – such as economic connectivity and migration – where a range of concrete focal points are possible.

A good example to consider here is *conventional arms control* (CAC), a subject that has long been under the umbrella of the OSCE, but which has been downgraded and undermined over the last fifteen years. CAC was placed back on the OSCE agenda by an initiative launched by the German foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The Ministerial Declaration “From Lisbon to Hamburg” states that “arms control, including disarmament and confidence- and security-building, is integral to the OSCE’s comprehensive and co-operative concept of security,” and “today, in Hamburg, we commit ourselves to exploring, *inter alia*, how the negative developments concerning the conventional arms control and CSBM architecture in Europe can be reversed”.⁷ For several reasons this will be a difficult task, but it is one that definitely has to be addressed. *First*, it will be difficult to achieve substantial arms control agreements as long as the key questions of a future European order are not answered. Yet CAC needs to be a central element of such a co-operative order, which means that both elements have to be developed in parallel. *Second*, due to the substantial technological progress achieved during the last 30 years, it will be more difficult now than it was during the CFE negotiations in 1989-1990 to define what items CAC should cover and what it should not. Among other things, this concerns drones, cruise missiles, missile defence, certain naval capabilities, and paramilitary forces. *Third*, while it should be clear that each OSCE participating State in the area of application of a future CAC agreement should be entitled to become a party to this agreement, the definition of the area of application is far from clear, as is the way in which developments in neighbouring regions are taken into account. And *fourth*, establishing an effective CAC process will be difficult, given how far we are from official consultations, never mind negotiations. Previously, the Steinmeier initiative had only been discussed by a “group of friends” and at bilateral levels, but with the declaration “From Lisbon to Hamburg”, it has also become a matter for the OSCE as a whole. It remains to be seen how these two elements will be combined.

7 OSCE, From Lisbon to Hamburg, cited above (Note 1), paras 2 and 3.

A second group of issues, which might be even more difficult to deal with, are new and disputed issues as well as areas where steps beyond the declaratory level would be useful. The three examples that shall be discussed here concern addressing the authoritarian turn, elaborating workable strategies for addressing violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT), and addressing the OSCE's neighbour China.

Addressing the authoritarian turn, which is affecting more and more Western countries, is likely to become unavoidable if the OSCE wants to maintain its moral and normative credibility. It is trivial, but OSCE commitments apply to all participating States. If the Polish government is considering steps to undermine the "right of peaceful assembly and demonstration" (1990 Copenhagen Document, para. 9.2), then this deserves the same criticism as comparable steps undertaken by any state "East of Vienna". For the OSCE institutions, raising such issues is a matter of credibility. In political and psychological terms, this will be difficult, because it might mean having to criticize EU member states or NATO allies. It might also be difficult for future Chairmanships who act under the pressure of strong authoritarian forces in their own countries. Overall, the authoritarian turn in the Western world represents a serious test of the normative integrity of the OSCE and its participating States.

Elaborating workable strategies for addressing VERLT can build on the OSCE's comprehensive *acquis* in this area, which includes the most recent decision adopted in Hamburg.⁸ With its comprehensive value base and its civilian character, the OSCE is perfectly suited to do more in this field. While current efforts are largely but not exclusively declaratory, the task would be to develop workable prevention strategies against violent extremism and radicalization. That would need different approaches for different regions and target groups. And it would necessitate a comprehensive inclusion of a range of civil society actors, without whom a workable prevention strategy cannot be achieved. In a broader sense, the OSCE could serve "as a laboratory of ideas in cross-dimensional security"⁹, as the former Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut once put it. Such a process could start gradually with projects in various countries, including in Western Europe.

Addressing China has become more important and more difficult in equal proportions. China has been becoming an active player not only in Central Asia, but also in Eastern and South-eastern Europe. China has policies on Europe and access to Europe, whereas the European international organizations such as the EU and the OSCE rarely have policies on China and

8 OSCE, Ministerial Council, Hamburg 2016, *Declaration on Strengthening OSCE Efforts to Prevent and Counter Terrorism*, MC.DOC/1/16, 9 December 2016, at: <http://www.osce.org/cio/288176>.

9 Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, *Six Years as OSCE Secretary General: An Analytical and Personal Retrospective*, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2011*, Baden-Baden 2012, pp. 25-48, here: p. 38.

only limited access. It is time for European international organizations (and states) to work to counter this emerging asymmetry. This includes the OSCE, which needs to begin to create policies on China at the very least. The invitation of a Chinese delegation to the economic connectivity conference of the German Chairmanship was a first step.

Addressing the Normative Dilemma

The OSCE is a deeply norm-based organization. Principles, norms, and commitments are the political DNA of the OSCE and cannot be cut out without destroying the Organization. The OSCE institutions function as the guardians of the OSCE's principles and commitments.

There has been a great deal of criticism over the years of the ineffective implementation of OSCE commitments, particularly in the human dimension. However, the call for better implementation implies that the commitments are shared in principle and only their implementation must be improved. This is also the underlying credo of the OSCE institutions and of those OSCE meetings where the implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments is reviewed – the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the Supplementary Human Dimension Implementation Meetings, and the Human Dimension Seminars.

However, considering the problem to be solely one of ineffective implementation contains an element of political self-deception. A number of OSCE commitments are not or are no longer or have perhaps never been shared by some participating States. This is a question of substance, not merely of implementation. It concerns two main areas: First, while it is true that the Helsinki Decalogue has not been revoked by any participating State, the interpretations of the principles and their mutual relationships they hold are so different – even mutually exclusive in parts – that it is impossible to base concrete policies on a shared understanding of them. *Second*, the norms concerning human rights, democracy, and the rule of law contained in the 1990 Copenhagen Document, the Charter of Paris, and many follow-up documents are no longer shared by a number of countries. Or they are shared in a way and by means of an interpretation that is perceived elsewhere as a distortion of these very norms. Perhaps it was naïve to assume that societies that have never experienced democracy and states that are essentially pre-modern could take on the OSCE normative *acquis* within a couple of decades.

The result of this divergence is a normative consensus among relevant participating States that is not strong enough to serve as a basis for political decision making. As a consequence, one of the OSCE's most significant defining features – the co-operative security policy that has been built up over decades, something that is by definition based on norms – has become almost

untenable. This creates a fundamental dilemma for the OSCE – one that has not yet been openly discussed: While the OSCE cannot give up its principles and commitments to serve merely as a forum for interest-guided negotiations, it would be equally pointless to simply insist on principles that are not observed by a significant portion of the participating States.

This is a true dilemma that offers no easy solution. Yet there is a way out, which is to combine practical interest-based policies in areas such as conflict management with an honest long-term dialogue on norms and principles. A dialogue of this kind, in which differences of opinion are discussed openly and not concealed as implementation deficits, does not yet exist in the OSCE, for two main reasons: Not only is it more comfortable to live on with the fiction that we still have a widely shared normative basis, there is also a widespread fear in the Western countries that starting a dialogue on norms would lead to negotiations in which OSCE principles and commitments would be watered down. It is thus vital to insist that OSCE principles and commitments are not renegotiated. Yet there do need to be discussions on their meaning and interpretation, and there is no reason to assume that this will necessarily lead to the principles being diluted. On the contrary, if OSCE commitments are not discussed, their relevance is likely to decrease further in a number of countries.

A dialogue on norms is a long-term effort with little or no visible short-term effects. It will only be fruitful if it is not limited to levelling accusations at certain countries but also addresses deficits in established Western democracies that the authoritarian turn has made increasingly visible. Track II and track 1.5 formats could play an important role here. The recent report “European Security – Challenges at the Societal Level” by the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions recommended “conducting a norms dialogue at the societal level” and “creating a dialogue format for reflection on a common normative basis, starting with the mapping of the status quo”.¹⁰

Strengthening the OSCE's Operational Capacities

The case of Ukraine shows in an exemplary manner the possibilities and limits of the OSCE. The political management of this conflict is not being carried out in the OSCE context, but under the Normandy Format (France, Germany, Russia, Ukraine) and at bilateral levels, while the OSCE SMM tries to implement the political decisions achieved in these formats on the ground. These two levels are synchronized by the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG; Russia, Ukraine, OSCE), which has communication and negotiation links to

¹⁰ Wolfgang Zellner (principal drafter)/Irina Chernykh/Alain Délétroz/Frank Evers/Barbara Kunz/Christian Nünlist/Philip Remler/Oleksiy Semenyi/Andrei Zagorski, *European Security – Challenges at the Societal Level*, OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions, Hamburg, December 2016, p. 32.

the de facto authorities in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions,¹¹ who have co-signed the Minsk Agreements together with the three members of the TCG.

The fact that the OSCE is not sitting in the political driving seat does not mean that the tasks it is performing are not important. Quite the contrary: What the SMM is currently doing on the ground in eastern Ukraine is essential for the conflict management process, and could not be done by any other international organization. The EU and NATO are part of the conflict constellation, and the UN is anything but eager to engage in view of the overload of tasks it faces elsewhere, particularly in Africa. In short: The OSCE is, at least in this case, irreplaceable in an implementation function.

Nobody would have guessed that the OSCE would be able to deploy and equip the 1,000-person SMM in a couple of months. Far stronger organizations such as the UN or the EU would have needed considerably more time for the same task. This is by no means a trivial statement, and it is worth exploring in more detail why the OSCE was able to deploy the SMM so swiftly. The following reasons seem to be relevant.

First, the CPC systematically and creatively translated Decision No. 3/11 on “Elements of the Conflict Cycle”,¹² taken at the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council into practice over two years. Two innovations were of key importance here: A *rapid deployment roster of first responders* drawn from other OSCE field operations made it possible to deploy some 30 individuals within days. A *virtual pool of equipment* based on pre-prepared window contracts facilitated the quick procurement of equipment items. “Thanks to the pre-arranged contracts, the Secretariat was able to buy up all the flak jackets in stock in Austria, get a range of new armoured vehicles on a truck to Kyiv within days, and purchase other important equipment. When the people arrived in the field, they had the equipment they needed.”¹³ Compared to the only other field operation of comparable size in OSCE history, the 1998/1999 Kosovo Verification Mission, this represented a significantly higher level of operational preparedness.

The *second* factor contributing to the success was the highly energetic Swiss Chairmanship, which not only initiated and led the political process, but also strongly supported operational efforts.

Third, many participating States supported the deployment and operation of the SMM by seconding staff and granting voluntary financial contri-

11 For an excellent account of the work of the TCG see: Heidi Tagliavini, Mediation in the Crisis in Eastern Ukraine up to 23 June 2015, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2015*, Baden-Baden 2016, pp. 217-227. Ambassador Tagliavini was the first Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

12 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, Vilnius 2011, *Decision No. 3/11, Elements of the Conflict Cycle, Related to Enhancing the OSCE's Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation*, MC.DEC/3/11, 7 December 2011, at: <http://www.osce.org/mc/86621>.

13 Neukirch, cited above (Note 5), p. 186.

butions that covered a substantial share of the SMM budget during the initial period. In autumn 2016, 44 participating States seconded almost 700 monitors.¹⁴ France and Germany assumed a particular political responsibility as mediators in the Normandy Format.

Overall, two things are interesting in the development of the SMM and its operational pre-conditions: *First*, while it is impossible to specifically weigh the three tightly interwoven factors mentioned above, one can say that the implementation of Decision No. 3/11 was carried out by the OSCE executive structures alone, whereas in the other two phases essential input from the Chairmanship and the participating States was added. It can be seen as a benign coincidence that all three factors were in place at the same time and interacted without friction. More generally, this can be said to show that the OSCE's peak performance requires co-operation between a strong Chairmanship, other relevant participating States, and the OSCE's executive structures.

Second, while Decision No. 3/11 was implemented gradually over two years, the SMM was established rapidly following the adoption of its mandate on 21 March 2014. This marked a major increase in the OSCE's level of operational activity.

Thus, one lesson learned from Ukraine is that a leap ahead in the OSCE's operational capabilities has to be prepared by a phase of gradual improvements. One can only hope that this experience remains valid if and when the OSCE has to face a situation where the creation of an even larger or technically more complicated field operation will become necessary – be it a police mission to Ukraine, as repeatedly requested by the Ukrainian government, or a peace operation in Nagorno-Karabakh after an agreement resolving the conflict there.¹⁵

Political Leadership

In the current situation, political leadership is key. In the last couple of years, the OSCE has been lucky to have strong Chairmanships, and this will probably remain so in the immediate future. However, in the longer term there are several options for co-leadership that could institutionalize stronger organizational governance. One means for this is a strong Troika, in which the leadership of the Chairmanship is strengthened by input from the previous and future Chairmanships. Beginning with the 2014 Swiss Chairmanship, the Troika has recently been strengthened significantly. In the same vein, the

14 Cf. OSCE, Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, *Status Report as of 26 October 2016*, at: <http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/277396>.

15 For details of which capacities the OSCE lacks to be able to conduct even a small peace-keeping operation, see: Wolfgang Zellner, *European Security: How to Strengthen OSCE Peace Operations*, in: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), *OSCE Focus Conference Proceedings*, 9-10 October 2015, Maison de la Paix, Geneva, Geneva 2016, pp. 92-112.

benefits have been recognized of not changing the Special Representatives of the Chairmanship every year, but letting them serve for several years. Another option is for interested states to assume the chair of one of the three committees of the Permanent Council or an informal working group dedicated to a specific issue. A good example is the informal working group on cyber issues, which reached agreement on a second package of cyber confidence-building measures under the leadership of US ambassador Daniel Baer in January 2016.

Similar initiatives are also conceivable in relation to more operational issues. Some time ago, a group of states including Finland, Switzerland, and Turkey made it their goal to work towards the creation of a mediation capacity within the CPC. This they achieved successfully. There are other examples, but the important thing is a change in mentality: States should feel responsible for the Organization all the time, and not only in their Chairmanship year.