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Climate Change, Global Security, and the OSCE

Introduction

Climate change and its implications for security are increasingly under discussion at an international level. The UN Security Council has been addressing the links between climate change and security since 2007. At a national level, states are increasingly recognizing climate change as a security concern. The 2030 Agenda¹, with its focus on peace as one of its five pillars – people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships – and a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on Climate Action (Goal 13), demonstrates the interaction between sustainable development and climate change. In the OSCE, the discussion on climate change started at the same time as it did in the UN, and was referred to in a number of OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions and Declarations. Furthermore, the links between climate change and security were discussed in various OSCE forums and addressed through dedicated projects, led by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) and implemented together with its international partners and the OSCE field operations. This contribution provides an overview of the potential security implications of climate change, the international debate on this topic, and the OSCE response.

An Overview of the Links between Climate Change and Security

Climate change is recognized as a “threat multiplier”, exacerbating existing risks to security, and increasing environmental stress, adding to pressures that can push the responsive capacities of governments to their limits. The threat comes not from climate change itself, but rather, from the way it interacts with existing security conditions,² primarily in three ways. First, the increased frequency and intensity of climate-induced extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, heat waves, and wildfires exerts pressure on natural resources, particularly water and land, and pose a threat primarily to water and food security. Second, climate change creates risks to critical infrastructure,

Note: The views expressed in this article are those of the author and should not be attributed to the OSCE or any other organization.

1 United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, 70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, 21 October 2015, at: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf.

2 Cf. Is climate change a security risk? Climate Security 101, A Project of The Center for Climate and Security, at: <https://climatesecurity101.org/faqs/is-climate-change-a-security-risk/>.

such as energy or military installations, due to rising sea levels and extreme weather events. Third, climate change puts livelihoods at risk, especially for those who depend on natural resources, which could push them to migrate, turn to illegal sources of income, or to riot, which in turn heightens the risk of instability. On a positive note, co-operation and diplomatic activities in this field offer entry points and means for strengthening good neighbourly relations, building trust and confidence.

The Global Risks Reports of the World Economic Forum for the last seven years in a row have identified the “failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation” as among the top five global risks in terms of impact.³ In the Global Risks Report 2019, this failure is identified as the second highest risk, both in terms of likelihood and impact.⁴

Overall, climate change is a threat to many decades of sustainable development progress and is hindering the advancement of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. On the other hand, tackling climate change provides an opportunity to accelerate sustainable development gains through enhanced resilience, improved public health, decreased vulnerability, and greater security for nations and economies.

The International Debate on Climate Change and Security – How Did it Evolve?

Over the last decade, global leaders, policy-makers, and relevant stakeholders have been dedicating special attention to the link between climate change and security and have reflected their concerns in various political and academic documents. Below is a summary of how the climate change and security discussion has evolved since 2007, highlighting major international developments of relevance to the OSCE region.

The UN Security Council held its first formal debate on climate change and its potential security impacts on 17 April 2007. The debate mainly focused on the compatibility of the agenda item with the mandate of the Council under the UN Charter and there was no formal outcome.⁵ By the time of writing, there had not been much change in this situation.

The issue was brought onto the agenda of the UN General Assembly in June 2009 by the small-island developing states of the Pacific Ocean. The debate led to a General Assembly resolution, which, among other things, requested that the UN Secretary-General submit a comprehensive report on the

3 All Global Risks Reports published by the World Economic Forum from 2006 on are available at: <https://www.weforum.org/global-risks/archive>.

4 Cf. World Economic Forum, The Global Risks Report 2019, 14th Edition, Figure 1, p. 5, available at: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-risks-report-2019>.

5 Cf. Security Council Report, Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Impact of Climate Change, July 2011 Monthly Forecast, 30 June 2011, at: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2011-07/lookup_c_glkwlemtisg_b_7535735.php.

possible security implications of climate change. The UN Secretary-General presented his report “Climate change and its possible security implications” on 11 September 2009. Identifying climate change as a “threat multiplier” that exacerbates existing threats, the report emphasized that climate change could affect security through multiple channels that challenge the ability of states to maintain stability.⁶

The second formal debate of the UN Security Council was held on 20 July 2011, focussing on the impact of climate change on maintaining international peace and security. The outcome of the debate was a presidential statement, which reaffirms that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change “is the key instrument for addressing climate change” and at the same time, expressed concern that “possible adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security”.⁷

Furthermore, climate change was discussed in the context of broader topics that were addressed by the UN Security Council. Some examples of such occasions include the high level briefing on “new challenges to international peace and security and conflict prevention” on 23 November 2011, the open debate organized on 30 July 2015 on “peace and security challenges facing small island developing states”, and another open debate on 22 November 2016 around the theme of “water, peace and security”. The latter explored issues such as the relationship between climate change and water scarcity and the management of transboundary waters.

Another format that enabled the UN Security Council to address climate change is the so-called Arria-formula meetings⁸ – informal meetings of the members of the Security Council convened on the initiative of one or more of its. The discussion on “the security dimensions of climate change” held on 15 February 2013, as well as the discussion on “the role of climate change as a threat multiplier for global security” held on 30 June 2015, are some examples of meetings in this format.

A key milestone in climate change discussion globally was the Fifth Assessment Report issued in 2014 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. The report draws attention to climate-security links and states: “Climate change can indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts by amplifying

6 Cf. United Nations, General Assembly, Climate change and its possible security implications, Report of the Secretary-General, A/64/350, 11 September 2009, pp. 5-8, at: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/environment/543e73f69/climate-change-its-possible-security-implications-report-secretary-general.html>.

7 United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2011/15, 20 July 2011, at: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CC%20SPRST%202011%205.pdf>.

8 Cf. Security Council Report, Arria-Formula Meetings, UN Security Council Working Methods, 17 October 2019, at: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/arria-formula-meetings.php>.

well-documented drivers of these conflicts such as poverty and economic shocks [...].”⁹

2015 was an important year for climate change. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030¹⁰ that was adopted by all UN member states in March 2015 acknowledges the close link between climate change, disasters, and sustainable development, and points to the need for a collaborative governance approach on climate change adaptation and disaster risk mitigation for reducing disaster losses across institutions at all levels. This was followed by the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing of Development¹¹ in July 2015. From seven action areas, four make explicit reference to climate change, and mostly alongside disaster resilience. These are the action areas for domestic public resources, international development co-operation, addressing systemic issues, and science, technology, innovation, and capacity-building. In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by Heads of State and Government at a special UN summit. It defines climate change as one of the greatest challenges of our time and emphasizes that the adverse impacts of climate change undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development. Combatting climate change is at the core of the 2030 Agenda, cutting across all of its five pillars. Through the SDG 13, the UN member states expressed their determination to take urgent action on climate change. Finally, in December 2015 the landmark Paris Agreement¹² on climate change was adopted. It represents the first agreement that brought 197 parties together for a common cause, to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects. Its central aim is to keep the increase in the global average temperature in this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Additionally, it aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change, primarily through financial support, co-operation, technology transfer, and capacity building. The Paris Agreement, through its Article 4, paragraph 2, requires each party “to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that it intends to achieve” and “to pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions”.¹³

9 IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team/Rajendra K. Pachauri/Leo A. Meyer (eds.)], Geneva 2014, p. 16, at: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/05/SYR_AR5_FINAL_full_wcover.pdf.

10 United Nations, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, at: https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf.

11 United Nations, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, New York 2015, at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2051AAAA_Outcome.pdf.

12 United Nations, *Paris Agreement*, 12 December 2015, at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Since early 2017, there has been an increased momentum in the Security Council's consideration of climate change-related security issues. On 31 March 2017, the Security Council took a major step by adopting Resolution 2349 on the conflict in the Lake Chad basin region, which recognizes "the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of the Region, including through water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity [...]".¹⁴ Subsequently, the outcomes of discussions on several other African issues have incorporated language on climate change, largely drawn from resolution 2349, such as the UN Security Council Resolution 2408 on Somalia.¹⁵

In 2017, there were also two Arria-formula meetings, one on "Security implications of climate change: sea level rise" on 10 April 2017, and another on 15 December 2017 on "Preparing for security implications of rising temperatures", in which many countries underlined the need for a clear and strong role for the UN Security Council.

This was followed by the third formal UN Security Council debate that took place on 11 July 2018 on "Understanding and addressing climate-related security risks". The debate considered several concrete proposals, including the further recognition of the effects of climate change on global security, the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Climate and Security, and the establishment of an institutional home for climate security within the United Nations system as a hub for knowledge and practices. The need for improved climate-related security risk assessments and management strategies was emphasized, along with the need to facilitate increased regional, subregional, and cross-border co-operation on climate-related security risks.¹⁶

The efforts to elevate the climate security debate in the UN system continued to gain momentum in the rest of 2018.

In August 2018, Germany, together with Nauru, launched a Group of Friends of Climate and Security to co-operate in developing solutions for the impact of climate change on security policy, raise public awareness, and boost the involvement of the United Nations in this area.

In November 2018, the UN established the Climate Security Mechanism as a pilot co-ordination mechanism for climate and security. This interagency initiative of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is tasked to provide integrated climate risk assessments to the Security

14 United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 2349 (2017), Adopted by the Security Council at its 7911th meeting, on 31 March 2017, S/RES/2349 (2017), 31 March 2017, para. 26, available at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/863830>.

15 United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 2408 (2018), Adopted by the Security Council at its 8215th meeting, on 27 March 2018, S/RES/2408 (2018), 27 March 2018, available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1479010>.

16 Cf. United Nations, Security Council, Letter dated 30 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, S/2018/749, 31 July 2018, Annex, at: <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/S/2018/749>.

Council and other UN bodies.¹⁷ An independent Expert Working Group supports this mechanism. Hosted by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Expert Working Group on Climate-related Security Risks aims to reinforce climate risk informed decision-making and produce timely climate security assessments.¹⁸

The release of the special IPCC report on “Global Warming of 1.5°C” in October 2018 was a turning point, as it brought alarming evidence that climate change is happening much faster than predicted and that climate-related risks to human security, along with water supply, health, economic growth, livelihoods, and food, are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius and increase further with 2 degrees Celsius.¹⁹ Its call for “rapid and far-reaching” transitions was reflected in the international debate on climate change and security too.

Against this background, the UN Security Council held its fourth formal debate on 25 January 2019 around the theme of “addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security”. The debate revealed that most countries consider climate change a serious challenge to peace and security and would like the Security Council to address these security-related impacts, complementing the responsibility of other relevant UN bodies. The debate also featured some concrete policy recommendations, such as creating institutional mechanisms and tools for a better and more systematic understanding of how climate change and disasters impact peace and security; better early warning capabilities and early action enabled by integrated risk assessments and risk management strategies at the level of national governments, regional organizations and United Nations regional offices; better integration of climate-related factors into the mandates and capabilities of UN field missions; and the need for supporting developing countries in financing, capacity-building and technology transfers.²⁰

17 Dan Smith, Malin Mobjörk, Florian Krampe, Karolina Eklöw, *Climate Security: Making it #Doable*, Clingendael Report, February 2019, p.15, at: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/Climate_Security_Makingit%23doable_0.pdf.

18 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Expert Working Group on Climate-related Security Risks, available at: <https://www.sipri.org/research/peace-and-development/climate-change-and-risk/expert-working-group-climate-related-security-risks>.

19 Cf. IPCC, Summary for Policy Makers, *Global Warming of 1.5°C*. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [Valérie Masson-Delmotte/Panmao Zhai/Hans-Otto Pörtner/Debra C. Roberts/James Skea, Priyadarshi R. Shukla/Anna Pirani/Wilfran Moufouma-Okia/Clotilde Péan/Roz Pidcock/Sarah Connors/J.B. Robin Matthews/Yang Chen/Xiao Zhou/Melissa I. Gomis/Elisabeth Lonnoy/Tom Maycock/Melinda Tignor/Tim Waterfield (eds.)], Geneva 2018, at: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_SPM_version_report_LR.pdf.

20 Cf. United Nations, Security Council, Letter dated 4 February 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, S/2019/113, 7 February 2019, Annex, pp. 7-8, at:

Parallel to these global debates, there is also significant attention paid to the topic at regional level in a number of international organizations, including the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Since 2008, the EU has been at the forefront of the efforts to draw attention to the security implications of climate change. The conclusions on climate diplomacy issued by the Council of the European Union in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2018, and 2019 reiterate that climate change has serious implications for peace and security across the globe, and underline the importance of cross-border co-operation.

In the case of the AU, most recently on 6 August 2019, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the Union convened on the theme of “Natural and Other Disasters on the Continent: Beyond the Normative Frameworks”. In its press statement, the Council “stressed that natural disasters and climate change contribute to exacerbating the existing tensions among communities, threaten the availability and access to vital resources and, disproportionately, affected the most vulnerable” and “emphasized the need for Member States to reinforce measures to address effects of climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters, particularly in conflict-affected areas.”²¹

In the ASEAN, on the other hand, climate-related security risks are predominately framed using a human security approach, specifically stressing developmental and livelihood challenges.²²

There are also other initiatives, such as the Brussels Dialogue on Climate Diplomacy (BDGD), which is an informal network for the exchange of information and promotion of co-operation among European institutions, international organizations, think tanks and NGOs active in the nexus between climate change and security²³. The OSCE has been one of the members of this network since its establishment in 2016, along with other international and regional organizations, including the UN, EU, and NATO.

Climate Change in the OSCE Context

As the world’s largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE is paying ever more attention to the link between the

https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2019_113.pdf.

21 African Union, Peace and Security Council, 864th Meeting, Press Statement, PSC/PR/BR.(DCCCLXIV), Addis Ababa, 6 August 2019, pp. 1-2, at: <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-864-press-statement-natural-disasters-eng.pdf>.

22 Florian Krampe/Roberta Scassa/Giovanni Mitrotta, Responses to Climate-Related Security Risks: Regional Organizations in Asia and Africa, *SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security* 2/2018, August 2018, p. 3 available at: <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-insights-peace-and-security/responses-climate-related-security-risks-regional-organizations-asia-and-africa>.

23 Brussels Dialogue on Climate Diplomacy, at <https://www.brusselsdialogue.net/>

environment and security in its comprehensive approach to security. The Organization capitalizes on environmental co-operation as a tool for good neighbourly relations, strengthening trust and building confidence. It is also working towards tackling environmental challenges that could become potential sources of tension or conflict. Climate change is addressed by the OSCE primarily within the context of its environmental activities. The issue came onto the Organization's agenda in 2007, at the same time as the UN Security Council started debating the security implications of climate change, and has been addressed since then in various ways. The OSCE's different levels of engagement in this field can be clustered into three groups. The OSCE:

- facilitates and reinforces high-level political commitment on a wide range of issues that are influenced by climate change;
- provides a platform for raising awareness and enabling a dialogue on climate change and security at the political level;
- implements activities to assess and address potential security risks stemming from climate change.

The OSCE as a Catalyst for High-Level Political Commitment on Issues Related to Climate Change

The OSCE has the capacity and the tools to address issues related to climate change, particularly in a cross-border context. Although the climate change-security nexus is not yet a mainstream issue on the OSCE's security agenda, the Organization has covered a lot of ground in the field of climate change as part of its comprehensive approach to security.

Against this background, below is a summary of the OSCE's political commitments that are directly or indirectly related to climate change.

Already in 1975, the Helsinki Final Act, the founding document of the OSCE, identified climate change as a field of co-operation among the participating States within the framework of the *Fundamental research, monitoring, forecasting and assessment of environmental changes*.²⁴

The 1997 OSCE Permanent Council Decision No.194 established the position of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities who, among other things, should draw on the expertise of relevant international and regional organizations, institutions, and initiatives active in the economic and environmental fields "in working to assess potential security risks stemming, wholly or in part, from economic, social and environmental factors".²⁵

24 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) : Final Act of Helsinki, 1 August 1975, p.29, available at: <https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act>.

25 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Permanent Council, Decision No. 194, Mandate for a Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, PC.DEC/194, 5 November 1997, available at: <https://www.osce.org/pc/40173>.

Climate change, as a long-term global environmental challenge with severe social implications and high economic costs, constitutes one of these factors.

The 2003 OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension (Maastricht Strategy) calls for the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) to contribute to the OSCE activities in the field of early warning and conflict prevention by monitoring economic and environmental challenges, as well as threats to security and stability in the OSCE region. It also makes a specific reference to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the context of international environmental legal instruments and commits to supporting the full implementation of these instruments by states that are parties to them.²⁶

The 2007 Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security recognizes that “climate change is a long-term challenge” and acknowledges that “the United Nations climate process is the appropriate forum for negotiating future global action on climate change, and the OSCE, as a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, has a complementary role to play within its mandate in addressing this challenge in its specific region”.²⁷ Among its conclusions, it states: “Environmental degradation, including both natural and man-made disasters, and their possible impact on migratory pressures, could be a potential additional contributor to conflict. Climate change may magnify these environmental challenges.”²⁸ Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of the OSCE to “raise awareness on the potential impact on security of environmental challenges, by using its forum for dialogue and exchange of experiences and best practices and also by integrating these considerations into its activities”.²⁹

In 2009, the challenge of climate change was elaborated in the context of migration. The 2009 Athens Ministerial Council Decision on Migration Management tasks the OSCE with contributing “to international efforts to assess the possible impact of environmental degradation on migratory pressures, which climate change may magnify, in order to ensure better preparedness in this area”.³⁰

From the energy perspective, the 2009 Athens Ministerial Council Decision on Strengthening Dialogue and Co-operation on Energy Security in the

26 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, Maastricht 2003, OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, MC(11).JOUR/2, 2 December 2003, Annex 1, pp. 9-10, available at: <https://www.osce.org/eea/20705>.

27 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, Madrid 2007, Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security, MC.DC//4/07, 30 November 2007, p. 1, available at: <https://www.osce.org/mc/29550>.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

29 *Ibid.*

30 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, Athens 2009, Decision No. 5/09, Migration Management, MC.Dec/5/09, 2 December 2009, p. 3, available at: <https://www.osce.org/cio/40711>.

OSCE Area underlines that “the interrelated challenges of climate change, energy security and efficient use of energy resources are amongst the most important issues to be tackled in the strategic perspective of ensuring sustainable development” and “encourages the participating States, with a view to addressing energy challenges in the OSCE region, to promote awareness of the G8 St. Petersburg principles and objectives on strengthening global energy security”, including in “addressing climate change and sustainable development”.³¹ Furthermore, the 2013 Kyiv Ministerial Council Decision on Improving the Environmental Footprint of Energy-Related Activities in the OSCE Region recognizes that “a responsible and sustainable management of natural and energy resources can improve the environment, curb climate change, boost economic growth and contribute to security and stability”.³²

The 2014 Basel Ministerial Council Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction links disaster and climate change. Through this decision, the OSCE participating States take note of “the exacerbating effect climate change may have on the frequency and magnitude of disasters, and therefore the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation to effectively reducing disaster risk”. Furthermore, it encourages participating States “to develop, co-ordinate and implement, where appropriate, disaster risk reduction measures with climate change adaptation and mitigation plans at all appropriate levels”.³³

The OSCE as a Platform for Raising Awareness and Enabling a Dialogue at the Political Level on Climate Change and Security

To bring climate change and security issues to the attention of high-level policy-makers, the OSCE uses its platforms such as the Ministerial Council, Permanent Council, Economic and Environmental Committee, annual Economic and Environmental Forums, its co-operation mechanisms with its Mediterranean and Asian Partners, and the Parliamentary Assembly. The OSCE Security Days organized regularly by the OSCE Secretary General also provide an open and interactive platform for debate. They identify emerging trends and priorities for action for select security issues, including climate change. All these opportunities help national security authorities in the OSCE

31 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, Athens 2009, Decision No. 6/09, Strengthening Dialogue and Co-Operation on Energy Security in the OSCE Area, MC.Dec/6/09, 2 December 2009, p. 2, available at: <https://www.osce.org/cio/40708>.

32 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, Kyiv 2013, Decision No. 5/13, Improving the Environmental Footprint of Energy-Related Activities in the OSCE Region, MC.Dec/5/13, 6 December 2013, p. 1, available at: <https://www.osce.org/mc/109342>.

33 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, Basel 2014, Decision No. 6/14, Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction, MC.DEC/6/14, 5 December 2014, pp. 1, available at: <https://www.osce.org/mc/130406>.

participating States and Partners for Co-operation to focus on the security benefits of ambitious and co-operative climate action, as foreseen by the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2009, the OSCE contributed to the afore-mentioned UN Secretary General's report entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications". This was followed by the organization of an OSCE Chairmanship conference on the security implications of climate change in the OSCE region in Bucharest on 5-6 October 2009. The conference highlighted the potential threats and impact of climate change across the OSCE region and discussed ways to enhance dialogue and co-operation on the security-related aspects of climate change.

Climate change and its impact on security also constituted an important part of the deliberations within the OSCE's annual Economic and Environmental Forums. Since 2007, these Forums have addressed issues such as environment and security, migration, energy, disaster risk reduction, water governance, and green economy, and also incorporated extensive discussion on climate change.

Since 2014, the link between "climate change and security" has also been examined in the context of the OSCE Security Days³⁴ dedicated to water diplomacy (2014), climate change and security (2015), migration (2016), and sustainable cities (2017). The Security Days on "The OSCE and the Sustainable Development Goals" that took place on 4 June 2019 extensively discussed the interactions between climate change and sustainable development, particularly in relation to SDG 13 on Climate Action, and in a broader context within the peace pillar of the 2030 Agenda. The discussion demonstrated the need for a greater sense of urgency in the implementation of the SDGs, particularly in relation to climate change and security, and the OSCE's catalyst role in supporting the work of its participating States in assessing and addressing the repercussions of climate change on security.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, including through its Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, also pays particular attention to climate change.

The OSCE as a Facilitator for Assessing and Addressing Potential Security Risks Stemming from Climate Change

Between 2010 and 2013, the OSCE partnered with the European Environment Agency and Adelphi – a leading think tank on climate, environment, and de-

34 Launched in 2012, OSCE Security Days gather prominent experts from government, think tanks and academic institutions, civil society, youth, and the media, to engage with each other and with the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation in an informal and interactive discussion on 21st-century security threats and challenges.

velopment – and convened expert roundtables and scenario workshops to discuss how climate change will have an impact on security and stability in the OSCE region.

In 2013, the OSCE, together with its partners in the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC),³⁵ embarked on a multi-partner, multi-stakeholder and multi-year project to address climate change and security challenges in three regions, namely Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia.

Funded by the European Union, through its Instrument for Stability (replaced in 2014 by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, IcSP), and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the project's overarching goal was to support regional stability through transboundary co-operation on adaptation to the consequences of climate change. To achieve this goal, the project had two specific objectives: first, to enhance the understanding and awareness of climate change as a security challenge and the consequent need for regional and transboundary co-operation on adaptation in three regions; and second, to increase national and regional capacities to anticipate, prevent, and mitigate potential security risks resulting from climate change effectively and in a timely manner.

The OSCE led the implementation of this ambitious project between 2013 and 2017 in close collaboration with its partners in the ENVSEC Initiative, its Field Operations, and most importantly with its national counterparts, both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at all stages of the project implementation.

The project was implemented in eleven countries: Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine in Eastern Europe; Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in the South Caucasus; and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan in Central Asia. The project included four related but distinct components. The first component aimed for a participatory assessment of security impacts of climate change in each region. The second concerned training key stakeholders on the links between climate change and security and good practices in climate change adaptation, including in a cross-border context. The third dealt with raising the awareness of decision-makers and other stakeholders including via wide dissemination of information generated through the project. The fourth component aimed to demonstrate the benefits of transboundary co-operation on climate change adaptation through a pilot initiative in the Dniester River Basin shared by Moldova and Ukraine. A brief overview of main results under each component is provided below.

35 The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC), founded in 2003, is a partnership of the OSCE, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) to jointly provide an integrated response to environment and security challenges.

Component 1: Participatory Climate-Related Security Risk Assessments

Following a desk review of climate change/security issues for each region, national consultation workshops were organized in each of the eleven countries. These workshops brought together a wide spectrum of representatives from governmental agencies in charge of environment, water, energy, agriculture, tourism, health, industry, defence, and others along with civil society, academia, and business to discuss climate-security links from the perspective of different sectors and stakeholders, and map geographical hotspots where climate change and security converge.

The results of national consultations then fed into the regional consultations that convened governmental and non-governmental stakeholders from each of the countries in the respective regions. These regional consultations provided a platform to exchange views and information among the countries and to discuss climate security issues at a regional level. Most importantly, they identified and mapped transboundary hotspots and generated policy recommendations. The results of regional consultations were then compiled in the Regional Assessment Reports on Climate Change and Security.³⁶

Overall, more than 550 national stakeholders participated in this assessment process in eleven countries in three regions, and 35 geographical hotspots were identified and prioritized for which policy recommendations were developed.

Component 2: Training and Capacity Building

Seventy-five participants from eleven countries received in-depth training on how to make use of the outcomes of the assessment reports in decision-making and planning processes.

Component 3: Awareness-raising and Information Dissemination

Regional public hearings were organized in each of the three regions to share the results of the regional assessments, and share good practices and lessons learnt from other regions. Furthermore, the regional assessment reports in English and Russian were disseminated widely.

Component 4: Transboundary Adaptation Strategy for the Dniester River Basin

This component built on the longstanding engagement of the OSCE and its partners in the Dniester River Basin. Since 2004, at the request of Moldova and Ukraine, the OSCE and the UNECE have facilitated transboundary cooperation in the basin. This includes a series of successive projects in the areas of flood management and adaptation to climate change, protection of biodiversity, transboundary monitoring, information and data sharing, and public awareness raising. As a result of this continued support, Moldova and Ukraine

36 Regional assessment reports for each region are available at: <https://www.osce.org/projects/climate-change-and-security>.

signed the Dniester River Basin Treaty in November 2012. The Treaty significantly broadens the existing co-operation to cover the entire river basin and major sectors. Building on this strong basis of co-operation, this project supported the countries in the development of a transboundary adaptation strategy for the Dniester River Basin. This strategy was endorsed formally by the ministers of environment of both countries in 2015. It was then followed by the development of an Implementation Plan, which identified 25 groups of measures for implementing the adaptation strategy in the short, medium, and long term with a total budget of 235 million euros.

To date, the OSCE has continued its involvement in the Dniester River Basin through a project funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) that started in 2017 in partnership with the UNECE and the UNDP. This project supports Moldova and Ukraine in implementing the bilateral Dniester Treaty, with a particular focus on the climate-related challenges and measures as identified within the framework of the above project.

New OSCE Initiatives on the Ground

A new project entitled “Strengthening Responses to Security Risks from Climate Change in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia” has recently been initiated. Through this project, the OSCE will support the identification and mapping of hotspots through participatory assessments in South Eastern Europe using the same participatory assessment methodology for Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the South Caucasus. It will also replicate the Dniester example and support the development and implementation of climate change and security risk reduction measures in selected transboundary hotspots in all four regions. This project will have a greater focus on awareness-raising and capacity building through dedicated programmes for media, NGOs, and parliamentarians. Furthermore, in this new initiative, the OSCE intends to conduct a gendered analysis of climate change and security in the OSCE region.

The OSCE is also preparing for a new initiative for the Mediterranean region in partnership with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and in close collaboration with the OSCE’s Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, namely Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia. This joint OSCE-UfM initiative will enable the replication of the OSCE’s good practices to address climate-related security challenges in the Mediterranean region making best use of the political platforms offered by the UfM and the OSCE.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

Today, the world is witnessing severe climate-induced disasters including floods, droughts, hurricanes, wildfires and heat waves that echoed the worrisome findings of the IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius. On the other hand, climate change has been high on the global political agenda. The Climate Action Summit and the SDG Summit in September 2019 offered the avenues to pledge for more. In 2020, many countries are expected to renew their commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement through hopefully more ambitious nationally determined contributions.

It is a good moment for the OSCE, especially in its second dimension, to take a closer look at its past experience and draw conclusions and lessons for possible future action, which could be summarized as follows:

- Adapting and mitigating the risks associated with climate change requires multilateral co-operation.
- Climate change co-operation and climate diplomacy can be good entry points for facilitating good neighbourly relations, strengthening trust, and building confidence.
- Addressing climate change at a regional level is critical as it links the efforts undertaken at the global and national levels.
- The complexity of climate-security challenges requires whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, as well as new management arrangements to balance the needs and interests of different sectors, primarily water, energy and agriculture. Regarding the latter, a nexus approach offers opportunities both within and across countries.
- The OSCE, together with its partners, has gained valuable experience in carrying out climate-related security risk assessments and developing and supporting transboundary adaptation measures, which can be further utilized for strengthening national capacities and designing and implementing regional responses.

The fast pace of environmental degradation, growing resource scarcity and the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters pose a major risk to security and stability globally, and also in the OSCE region. These compound risks are further aggravated by climate change. The increasingly pressing challenges that we are already witnessing today will not wait for us to take appropriate action. On the contrary, action is needed more than ever. Preventing and mitigating these challenges and risks requires collective action at all levels, and the OSCE, as a consensus-based organization, can be instrumental in providing the platform and the means to make this happen.