

**THE NETHERLANDS AND THE ORGANISATION
FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN
EUROPE IN 2003: ROLE AND DIRECTION**

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Official advisors	F.A.M. Majoor (<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>) B.W. Bargerbos (<i>Ministry of Defence</i>)
Secretary	F. van Beuningen

P.O. Box 20061
2500 EB The Hague
The Netherlands

Telephone + 31 70 348 5108/6060
Fax + 31 70 348 6256
E-mail AIV@minbuza.nl
Internet www.AIV-Advice.nl

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Foreword

In mid-2001, the Dutch government asked the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) to produce an advisory report on the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in connection with the forthcoming Dutch Chairmanship of the organisation in 2003. The report was prepared by a special OSCE committee of the AIV, consisting of the following members of various permanent committees: Professor W.J.M. van Genugten (Chair; Human Rights Committee), Professor P.R. Baehr (Human Rights Committee), Dr A. Bloed (Peace and Security Committee), T. Etty (Human Rights Committee), Dr P.P. Everts (Peace and Security Committee), Lt Gen G.J. Folmer retd. (Peace and Security Committee), Professor J.Q.T. Rood (European Integration Committee) and Professor N.J. Schrijver (Development Cooperation Committee). Secretarial support was provided by F. van Beuningen, head of staff of the AIV, who was assisted by two trainees, A. Swakhoven and R.J. Scheffer.

In preparing the report, the members of the OSCE committee sought other people's opinions about the OSCE. First of all, on 28 September 2001, the OSCE Committee spoke to Mr M. van der Stoel, the OSCE's former High Commissioner on National Minorities. In addition, the Centre for International Conflict Analysis and Management at the University of Nijmegen was asked to conduct a background study. This resulted in the production of a background report entitled *Nieuwe thema's voor de OVSE – Inventarisatie en waardering* (New topics for the OSCE – a survey and analysis). A delegation from the AIV also visited the OSCE in Vienna from 19 to 21 November 2001 to ascertain views of the delegations of participating states and the Secretariat's views on the organisation's operation. The information obtained during meetings with representatives of countries that had previously held the Chairmanship of the OSCE proved particularly valuable, and permeates the entire report. On 11 March 2002, the OSCE Committee also spoke to the OSCE Task Force at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The AIV is grateful to both the people and the organisations it consulted for their willingness to share their views and information with the AIV, and would like to express its particular gratitude for the help it received from the Dutch Permanent Mission at the OSCE in Vienna in preparing the fact-finding mission.

Ever since it was founded, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (previously known as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) has continued to evolve in terms of the number of its members, its remit and its activities. The AIV believes that it is important to bear this in mind when formulating specific recommendations in relation to the Netherlands and the role and future development of the OSCE. It is for this reason that the report begins by examining the current state of the OSCE, discussing both the international aspects and the history of the OSCE (Chapter I). Chapter II goes on to discuss decision-making at the OSCE, the Chairmanship and a number of key issues. Finally, the AIV's main findings are recapitulated in Chapter III, which forms a contribution to the agenda for the Dutch Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2003. Policy recommendations are printed in italics.

The AIV adopted this report during its meeting on 3 May 2002.

I The position of the OSCE at the start of the 21st century

I.1 The international setting

In order to fully understand the way in which the OSCE operates, we must start by looking at the developments affecting international relationships among states and other international organisations involved in the OSCE. For this reason, we intend briefly to discuss the impact on the OSCE of the terrorist attacks that took place in the United States on 11 September 2001, and of United States-Russian relations. We will also be examining the way in which NATO, the European Union and the Council of Europe have all sought to take on new roles and expand their membership. The section concludes with a brief review of the effects the end of the Cold War has had on the OSCE.

As with many other organisations, the attacks in New York and Washington and the subsequent military campaign in Afghanistan have had the effect of placing the fight against terrorism at the top of the OSCE's agenda. Not surprisingly, therefore, the OSCE's action plan for combating terrorism was the most important outcome of the Ministerial Council meeting held in Bucharest on 3 and 4 December 2001. In January 2002, the OSCE's Portuguese Chairman-in-Office appointed Jan Trøjborg, a former Danish defence minister, as his Personal Representative for Terrorism.¹

Two striking developments in this respect that have affected the OSCE are the international coalition that the United States has formed to fight terrorism, and the search for a new balance in the relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation. The international coalition against terrorism includes countries with which the United States and its allies would scarcely have contemplated cooperating prior to 11 September. The events of 11 September have shaken up international politics, triggering rapid changes in loyalties and turning yesterday's political opponents into today's coalition partners. Whether these changes will last remains to be seen. The Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are all members of the coalition and have been closely involved in the military operations in and around Afghanistan, as well as in providing humanitarian relief to the Afghan population. The location of Turkmenistan means that it, too, cannot escape from the aftermath of 11 September. The terrorist attacks and the United States response to them have placed the Central Asian countries on the international political map. The question is: what does this imply for their position and standpoints in the OSCE?

Another major effect of the attacks of 11 September – and one that is also felt in the OSCE – is the current redefinition of the relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation. The fight against terrorism would appear to have brought the two great powers closer together: the Russian Federation lent its full cooperation to the military campaign in Afghanistan, for example by passing on intelligence, by providing the Northern Alliance with military support, and by coordinating the use of airfields with the Central Asian states mentioned above. The Russian Federation also pledged its

1 See the letter of 11 December from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jozias van Aartsen, to the House of Representatives of the States General about the Ministerial Council held in Bucharest on 3–4 December 2001, and also the OSCE's press release headed *Chairman-in-Office names former Danish Minister as Personal Representative for Terrorism* (29 January 2002).

support for search and rescue operations, opened up its airspace to humanitarian aid flights, and made no protest about the US presence in Georgia, despite opposition to this in Moscow. The fight against terrorism was given a fresh momentum by the events of 11 September, and this has also cast a new light on the armed struggle in Chechnya. The differences in the way this struggle has been interpreted, with some regarding it as a question of denial of human rights and others seeing it as a justified armed struggle against terrorism, would appear to have receded into the background.

The line that has traditionally separated US and Russian views on NATO would also appear to have been redrawn. Not only is NATO in the process of converting from a defence organisation into a European-Atlantic security organisation, it has also offered to work more closely with the Russian Federation through a new NATO-Russia Council, which should enable both joint decision-making and joint action. NATO will be submitting proposals for this to Russia in mid-2002. Another factor affecting US-Russian relations is the plan to expand NATO, particularly as the new members are likely to include one or more of the Baltic states. Finally, the unilateral American decision to denounce the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the measured Russian response that followed from this decision, and the outcome of talks on a further, bilateral reduction in the two countries' nuclear arsenals, have all had an impact on US-Russian relations.

Another important change in the OSCE's international setting is the planned expansion of the European Union with the accession of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey. Depending on the topic in question, the European Union candidate countries generally adhere to the standpoint adopted by the European Union in the OSCE. Given that the European Union not only is seeking to expand, but also wishes to strengthen international political and military cooperation between its member states, it is quite conceivable that the attainment of the latter objective will also affect the operation of the OSCE in the longer term. With a large and growing number of Central and Eastern European countries having joined the Council of Europe in the 1990s, the role played by the Council of Europe is bound to change. Alongside a legal dimension, the Council of Europe is now gradually evolving its own political dimension. As a result, the OSCE and the Council of Europe are regularly encroaching into each other's fishing grounds; at times, they have even managed to foul each other's nets.

The reform and enlargement of NATO and the European Union are casting an ever larger shadow before them. The OSCE is dividing into two camps: on the one hand their member states and those countries that seem likely to join them in the near future; on the other hand the other countries for which no such prospect beckons. It is also important for the United States and the Russian Federation to remain members of the OSCE on an equal footing. However, as US-Russian relations improve, as more countries join NATO and the European Union and as the two organisations become more actively involved in matters affecting European security, so the OSCE will gradually lose its political significance. The process has now been speeded up by the Council of Europe's encroachment into OSCE territory.

Some of these developments dictating the OSCE's international setting occurred some considerable time ago. In the early 1990s, for example, the OSCE was compelled to adjust to the end of the Cold War. Whilst the end of the Cold War put a halt to the division of Europe into two blocs, it also brought a number of older, historic conflicts back to the surface. The international political aftershocks caused by the great upheaval of

1989–1991 (the unification of Germany and the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union) were felt most strongly in the 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe, in the Balkans and in the territory of the former Soviet Union. These aftershocks inevitably caused a number of political and institutional changes. Some organisations have disappeared (such as the Warsaw Pact and Comecon; the WEU remains in existence, but has been pared down to the bone), whilst others have proved to offer a genuine platform for collaboration in the new European configuration even though their tasks, mission and membership have shifted in the course of time. As we have already mentioned, this applies not just to the OSCE, but also for example to NATO, the European Union and the Council of Europe. Two particularly significant events for the OSCE have been the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. These have had the effect of boosting the number of participating states, altering the OSCE's responsibilities, and significantly changing the political power relationships in and around it.

International political relations in and around Europe were given a second severe jolt (following the upheaval of 1989-1991) by the events of 11 September and the response to them. The question is: what is the international political configuration in and around Europe going to look like in the future, and what role can the OSCE play in the new structure? These two questions provide the starting points for the remainder of this report.

I.2 From the CSCE to the OSCE: a brief history

The 25th anniversary of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was celebrated in 2000. Although the talks leading up to the foundation of the CSCE began in 1973, it was not until 1975 that the Heads of State and Government of the 35 participating states (i.e. the European states apart from Albania, plus the United States and Canada) reached agreement on the Helsinki Final Act. The Final Act consisted of three parts, or sets of recommendations. These were initially referred to as the Helsinki baskets and are now more commonly described as *dimensions*:

- measures relating to security policy, aimed particularly at building mutual confidence. This basket is now commonly referred to as the *politico-military dimension*;
- measures aimed at encouraging cooperation in the fields of economics, science, technology and the environment. These are now referred to as the *economic and environmental dimension* (EED);
- measures to promote human contacts and, more particularly, respect for human rights. The term generally used to refer to these measures is the *human dimension*.

The Eastern and Western blocs had widely differing views of the process when talks started in 1973. For the then Soviet Union and the other states of the Eastern bloc, the CSCE was above all a European security conference which would formally recognise the existing borders in Europe and confirm the Soviet Union's sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. The United States and its allies, on the other hand, regarded the conference as a means of pursuing a dialogue on security and arms control, and viewed debate on human rights as a core issue. The ten principles enumerated in the Helsinki Decalogue formed a reasonable reflection of the wishes of the various parties, so that the Final Act could be signed in 1975.

The Helsinki principles included the inviolability of frontiers and respect for human rights; the latter were stated as being the concern of the states involved. The Final Act

also upheld the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States.² Because the Act was the result of a compromise and was self-contradictory in certain respects, views on its significance tended to diverge very widely. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, for example, said the West had betrayed Eastern Europe by accepting the international political status quo in Europe. Solzhenitsyn was alarmed that Helsinki appeared to legitimise the post-1945 Soviet expansion and hence the current political and geostrategic situation engendered by the Cold War.³ The *New York Times* was equally sceptical, fearing that the Helsinki process would not generate enough détente between East and West:

'The 35-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, now nearing its climax after 32 months of semantic quibbling, should not have happened. Never have so many struggled for so long over so little.'⁴

It was also agreed in 1975 that the diplomatic talks initiated by the Conference on the Helsinki Final Act would be continued. This became known as the Helsinki process. The first two follow-up meetings (held in Belgrade in 1977–1978, and Madrid in 1980–1983) failed to achieve much progress due to the East-West tension that still dominated the atmosphere. The only slight progress that was made was in relation to military confidence-building and security-building measures, with the states providing each other with information on their military build-up and installations. The aim of this measure was to inspire confidence and to reduce the possibility of attacks being triggered by misunderstandings. More progress, in other fields as well, was made at the follow-up meetings held in Vienna from 1986 to 1989.

In the meantime, the Helsinki principles were proving a formidable weapon in the hands of citizens of Communist countries campaigning for personal freedom and political rights. Helsinki groups were formed in many countries, and these sought to obtain the political rights to which their governments had committed themselves by international agreement. The Helsinki groups also reported instances in which such rights were violated, thus lending an unintended twist to the Helsinki process as more and more human rights campaigners invoked the principles of the Final Act. Although Henry Kissinger had been sceptical about the Final Act in 1975, when he was the US Secretary of State, his view of the process had evidently mellowed when he wrote about it almost twenty years on:

'[H]eroic reformers in Eastern Europe used Basket III [i.e. the dialogue on human rights] as a rallying point in their fights to free countries from Soviet domination. [...] The European Security Conference thus came to play an important dual role: in its

2 Bloed, A. ed. (1993), *The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe – Analysis and Basic Documents*, Dordrecht: Kluwer.

3 Everts, P.P. (1994), *De CVSE en de Raad van Europa (The CSCE and the Council of Europe)*, in: *Tussen orde en chaos* – A. van Staden (ed.) (University of Leiden, DSWO Press) p. 66.

4 'European 'Security' ... And Real Détente' (*New York Times*, 21 July 1975, p. 20). This passage is quoted in Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 760.

planning stages, it moderated Soviet conduct in Europe and, afterward, it accelerated the collapse of the Soviet empire.⁵

Thus, the CSCE contributed to the upheavals of 1989–1991, from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the collapse of the Eastern bloc and, ultimately, to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, in a process which also transformed the CSCE.

A document known as the Paris Charter for a New Europe was signed on 21 November 1990, at a special Summit Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the CSCE's participating states. Although the Charter heralded the end of the Cold War, it did little else, apart from underlining the primacy of democracy and a market economy. It did, however, identify conflict prevention as a priority issue and singled out the CSCE as a key actor in this respect. The Summit also made progress in relation to arms control by adopting the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and by agreeing on a number of new CSBMs.⁶ As a final point, the first, small step was taken on the road to institutionalising the CSCE, in the form of annual meetings of foreign ministers, the creation of a Committee of Senior Officials, a small secretariat, a parliamentary assembly, and so forth.

In 1994, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe was rechristened as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), reflecting its character as a permanent organisation with its own responsibilities.⁷ The new organisation was not based on any treaty or convention. As was the case with the CSCE, the OSCE remained a political organisation in which the agreements reached by members are not legally binding. In the mid-1990s, the OSCE did, however, acquire the status of a UN regional organisation under the terms of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

Even today, the operation of the OSCE is based on the political will of the participating states to subject their international relations and their domestic policies to common political agreements. These impose limitations on their political freedom, given that participating states are expected to observe certain agreed standards of behaviour, towards both each other and their own citizens. Whilst they do not always do so, the agreements remain the benchmarks by which their conduct is judged. If they fail to meet the standards (as in Chechnya and Yugoslavia, and as in the case of the frozen conflicts), they can be called upon to account for their conduct in the OSCE. Nonetheless, the OSCE cannot enforce a certain standard of behaviour. This tradition of consultation that has gradually come into being during the years of the OSCE's existence has helped to canalise political change, both in Europe as a whole and in individual countries, and has an inherent value for this reason.

The number of participating states rose to 55 in the 1990s, partly as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, it was primarily membership of NATO and the European Union in which these countries, and the central and

5 See *Diplomacy*, pp. 759 and 760.

6 Confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) are intended to provide information on the military build-up and installations in the participating states.

7 Based on data quoted in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' OSCE factsheet published (in Dutch) in June 2001.

Eastern European countries, were interested. During the first half of the 1990s, the term *interlocking institutions* was commonly used to emphasise the complementary nature of the various organisations. This is also the framework in which one should see the offer made by NATO and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to perform peacekeeping operations on behalf of the OSCE (or the United Nations). In the event, the OSCE has not actually taken up these offers to date. It was also during this period that the international community sought to find solutions to ethnic minority tensions and conflicts, for example in the former Yugoslavia and the Caucasus. The Dutch initiative that led to the appointment of a High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) dates back to these days. During the course of the 1990s, the High Commissioner evolved into the OSCE's flagship. Max van der Stoep, who held the post up to June 2001, succeeded in using a very small budget and limited political instruments to reduce ethnic tensions in all manner of countries. Rolf Ekéus, a Swedish diplomat, was recently appointed as the new HCNM. Apart from the question of how precisely he intends to carry out his mandate (it is still too early to comment on this), it is now clear that the office of the HCNM lies at the heart of the OSCE, and its increasingly streamlined work.

What was later to become known as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was created in the early 1990s, as a means of helping former Communist countries to convert peacefully to a democratic political system. The ODIHR helps countries to organise elections, for example by providing training, and encourages countries to invite observers to attend their elections to ensure that they are transparent to outsiders. The ODIHR's election observation work has changed both in scope and in nature in recent years, as the number of countries in which the integrity of elections needs to be monitored and measured has declined. At the same time, observation work is no longer simply a matter of attending the election day itself, but now extends to the way in which elections are organised and the whole run-up to them. Among the aspects covered by election observers are the registration of voters and candidates, the role of the media, the way in which information is distributed and campaigns are conducted, the organisation of voting and the installation of the election winner. In certain instances, such as in Bosnia and Kosovo, the OSCE has taken over responsibility for the entire election process, in which case observers are invited from other organisations.⁸

The OSCE's consultative mechanisms have also changed in the course of time. Today, the prime consultative body is the Permanent Council, in which the 55 participating states are represented by ambassadors. The Permanent Council is empowered to debate any issues affecting the OSCE, and is chaired by one of the participating states. The Chairmanship rotates on an annual basis, and the current Chairman-in-Office is assisted in his work by the previous and next Chairmen-in-Office, together constituting the troika. The other main consultative body is the Forum for Security Cooperation, which is principally concerned with issues relating to security policy and arms control. The talks on arms control are subject to their own chairmanship cycle and working patterns. The chief task of the Secretary General of the OSCE (currently the Slovak diplomat Ján Kubiš) is to assist the Chairman of the Permanent Council in his coordinating role; the Secretary General has only a modest role of his own.

8 See the letter from Jozijs van Aartsen, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the House of Representatives about the OSCE's Ministerial Council meeting in Vienna (House of Representatives, 2000–2001, 26 355, no. 4, 28 March 2001).

The OSCE has grown tremendously: the number of missions increased rapidly in the late 1990s and the budget skyrocketed in the same period. Both the mission leadership structure and the mechanisms for recruiting suitable personnel for the missions and for controlling expenditure have failed to keep pace with this growth. Although the OSCE is currently working all out to resolve its organisational deficiencies, they have often impeded the progress of discussions and have compelled the Permanent Council to spend a large part of its time discussing the implementation of previous decisions and budgetary control. And yet, despite the growth of its budget, the OSCE has remained a relatively cheap organisation for the participating states.⁹ Chapter II discusses decision-making, the Chairmanship and the missions in more detail.

1.3 The roles and dimensions of the OSCE

During the Cold War, the CSCE acted as a multilateral forum offering a platform for dialogue between East and West. Contacts at political and diplomatic levels were scarce, which meant that the CSCE had a valuable role to play for this reason alone. The dialogue covered the internationally accepted standards on human rights and arms control measures, with talks on the latter being intended to build confidence and minimise the risk of misunderstandings and surprise attacks. As described in Section I.1, the countries of the East and West have met at regular intervals since the upheavals of 1989 – 1991, in particular in and around NATO and the European Union.

The evaporation of the East-West conflict has put an end to the need for the OSCE (or CSCE) to act as a meeting place for the two blocs. It is no longer self-evident that the OSCE should be the principal platform for consultation and dialogue, particularly as there are plenty of other bodies in which the Eastern and Western countries now meet. Given that the role of a meeting place between East and West was the main reason for the CSCE's existence during the Cold War, it is hardly surprising that the future role and responsibilities of its successor, the OSCE, are now uncertain.

The OSCE's core role may be described in a nutshell as the promotion of security and the prevention of conflict. The notions of *comprehensive security* and *cooperative security* are key in this connection. Both were introduced in the course of the 1990s in an attempt, once the OSCE was no longer needed as a meeting place for the two blocs, to find a cap to fit all the activities ever performed by the OSCE. The term *comprehensive security* means that security is no longer defined solely in military terms. Given that there are all sorts of factors that are capable of engendering conflict – economic, ecological and social factors, as well as human rights violations, the repression of minorities, etc. – there are all sorts of security aspects on which the OSCE can focus in preventing conflicts or assisting with post-conflict rehabilitation. The notion of *cooperative security* is based on the principle that security is a joint responsibility of the countries or parties concerned, and should therefore be built in cooperation rather than in opposition with each other. The problem with these two notions is that they do not provide a focus for the activities performed by the OSCE. They cannot be used as a basis for formulating criteria by which to decide which activities fall under the OSCE's remit and which do not. By operating under the banner of comprehensive and cooperative security, the OSCE can and indeed does undertake a wide range of disparate activities, often for good reasons.

9 The OSCE's aggregate budget for 2001 was EUR 200.8 million, of which over 75% was spent on field activities. See *OSCE – Facts and figures*, <http://www.osce.org/general/budget>.

Despite the introduction of such catch-all terms as comprehensive security and cooperative security, there is still a lack of cohesion in the wide range of disparate activities performed by the OSCE. Indeed, the terms in question are so all-encompassing that they have not helped to harmonise the security interests of the various participating states. It is important to bear in mind, moreover, that the OSCE is not in itself a defence organisation. Collective defence has never been one of its objectives. After all, the OSCE has no weapons or forces with which to enforce security in and among its participating states.

Having been given an important role in conflict prevention in the early 1990s, the OSCE was subsequently also asked to perform duties relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes between states, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Its activities in relation to arms control and the human dimension continued unabated.¹⁰

No matter how the OSCE's role is defined, it is clear that the participating states have not managed to find a suitable alternative to fill the gap left at the OSCE by the ending of the East-West conflict.

We shall now briefly examine the activities performed by the OSCE under its three dimensions.

1.3.1 The politico-military dimension

The OSCE is the only pan-European security organisation. In fact, it is more than that, as its members also include the United States, Canada and the Central Asian countries along with all the European nations. Whilst the OSCE may not have attained the umbrella status that certain commentators hoped it would, the Forum for Security Cooperation in Vienna nevertheless provides a platform for weekly discussions of security policy issues among 55 countries. As was pointed out in Section 1.2, the very existence of this platform has an intrinsic value of its own.

To foster stability and contain crises, the OSCE's politico-military dimension includes a wide variety of instruments such as confidence-building and security-building measures on military matters (e.g. transparency in defence planning and the notification of troop movements), arms control (including the possibility of monitoring the observance of agreements), early warning and action based on permanent consultation, the dispatching of missions, the HCNM and the peaceful resolution of disputes by arbitration. Some of these instruments may also be used in connection with the OSCE's other dimensions. Arbitration has not been used in practice yet.

The OSCE Heads of State or Government signed the Charter for European Security at the 1999 Summit. It analyses the security risks for the OSCE region, such as international terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, the proliferation of small and light arms, economic upheaval, environmental pollution and instability in the Mediterranean area and Central Asia. The Charter reconfirms the OSCE's role in the field of security policy and redefines the organisation's fundamental principles. The accompanying platform for cooperative security contains a number of measures for promoting cooperation between the OSCE and other international organisations.

¹⁰ <http://www.osce.org/e/dimecon.htm>.

The Treaty on Open Skies, which came into effect in January 2002, was another important development. The Treaty allows signatories to inspect each other's military installations and configurations from the air. The Treaty also extends to the territory of the United States and Canada, which does not apply to other arms control conventions signed under the umbrella of the OSCE. The Treaty on Open Skies may be described as one big confidence-building measure of a military nature and represents a modest contribution to further military transparency among the OSCE's members.

Ideally, the OSCE should discuss every security threat that occurs within its territory. Unfortunately, some threats are not discussed at all, and others only once they have developed into actual conflict. After all, states are not under any compulsion to respond when a matter is raised in the Permanent Council. A further complicating factor for the OSCE is the presence of frozen conflicts, in respect of which it has not been able to bring a solution any closer despite deploying some of the instruments referred to above. These include the disputes over Nagorno-Karabakh (between Azerbaijan and Armenia), between Georgia and Ossetia (in which the Russian Federation is also involved) and over Moldova and Transdniestria. In some of these cases, an OSCE field mission has in fact managed to arrange a cease-fire or has helped to organise the collection of arms and the destruction of ammunition.

The question is whether the strategy used by the OSCE in relation to the politico-military dimension is still relevant to the security issues confronting the OSCE's members. For example, much of the progress made in relation to arms control dates back to the time of the Cold War or shortly afterwards. Not only the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, but also the confidence-building measures of a military nature and the Treaty on Open Skies have all been placed in a new perspective now that many states are undertaking various forms of military cooperation, primarily in and around NATO. The Forum for Security Cooperation has got bogged down in technical discussions of previous arms control agreements, and Vienna has not managed to agree on a new security agenda. The reason for this stagnation lies in the desire of many (though not all) participating states to put an end to the Forum's relatively independent status and turn it into a committee doing preparatory work for the Permanent Council. This, so the argument runs, would make it easier not only to place security issues in a political context, but also to streamline discussions in the OSCE. As long as this matter has not been resolved, the Forum for Security Cooperation cannot, as we have pointed out, agree on a new security agenda.

The OSCE tends to lean too heavily on past successes in the arena of arms control. The AIV advises the Dutch Chairmanship to consider, and to discuss in the OSCE, which of the existing agreements on arms control should be prioritised against the background of the current international security situation. It is also absolutely vital for the Forum for Security Cooperation to keep in touch with the debates and consultations at the OSCE in general, and within the Permanent Council in particular. Precisely how this is done (i.e. whether the Forum does the groundwork for the Permanent Council, or the two consultative bodies are fully merged, or another option is chosen) is of less importance than the fact that the OSCE's politico-military dimension continues in full force. If the Forum for Security Cooperation loses touch, it risks becoming a political irrelevance.

1.3.2 The economic and environmental dimension

The OSCE's economic and environmental dimension (EED) has traditionally played a less prominent role than the politico-military and human dimensions. This was true during the Cold War, and remains true today. There was a brief resurgence of interest

in the EED immediately after the end of the Cold War, i.e. from 1989 to 1991, when the former Communist nations hoped that they could put it to good use in their transition to market economies. However, these countries soon turned their attention to other international organisations, particularly the European Union.

When the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975, the 35 states that then made up the CSCE expressed the hope that 'efforts to develop cooperation in the fields of trade, industry, science and technology, the environment and other areas of economic activity [would] contribute to the reinforcement of peace and security in Europe, and in the world as a whole.'¹¹ Today, over 25 years later, the OSCE's guiding principle is still that comprehensive security (see Section I.3) is rooted partly in a healthy economy and the resultant trading relations. It was against this background that the Final Act contained a second set of recommendations (basket II) relating to economic cooperation. A number of meetings have been held since 1975, at which attempts have been made to flesh out the original agreements. In particular, the Conference on Economic Cooperation in Europe (Bonn, 1990) generated a series of resolutions that could be described as positive for the time (the Berlin Wall had fallen, but the Soviet Union still existed). These covered a wide range of areas such as acceptance of the principle of a free market, the relationship between a democratic system of decision-making and economic and social progress, the value of individual property, business partners who can take their own decisions (and are no longer regarded as merely a link in the chain of a command economy), the right of workers to form free trade unions, and so on.¹²

In 1992, the Prague meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council decided to set up an Economic Forum.¹³ The EED has evolved into what it is today by organising conferences and seminars, by formulating and promoting standards and codes of practice on economic and environmental issues, and by seeking to work together with relevant international organisations. For the time being, the culmination of all this activity has been the decision to appoint a coordinator for the OSCE's economic and environmental activities.¹⁴

All in all, we may conclude that the EED has gradually evolved in the course of time, even if it has only achieved modest results to date and generally plays a less prominent role than the politico-military and human dimensions. Although this lack of attention is often attributed to an absence of economic expertise among the delegations of

11 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Conferentie over Veiligheid en Samenwerking in Europa* (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), publication no. 115, The Hague, 1976, p. 269. The quotation is the opening sentence of basket II in the Final Act.

12 The document containing the recommendations made at the Bonn conference is reproduced in: Bloed (ed.), 1993, pp. 425 ff.

13 The objectives of the Economic Forum are to 'give a political stimulus to the dialogue on the transition to free-market economies, to suggest practical means of developing free-market systems and economic cooperation, and to encourage activities with relevant international organisations'. See <http://www.osce.org/e/dimecon.htm>.

14 The coordinator's job is 'strengthening the ability of the Permanent Council and the OSCE institutions to address economic, social and environmental aspects of security'. For a more detailed job description, see <http://www.osce.org/e/dimecon.htm>.

the OSCE's participating states in Vienna,¹⁵ the OSCE's lack of any resources of its own for stimulating economic growth is likely to be a more important factor. This is an area in which the OSCE is at a disadvantage compared with other international organisations, notably the European Union, many of which are capable of pursuing some form of stimulating policy. Whilst the OSCE does have certain sanctions at its disposal (albeit of only a very limited nature), it does not have any positive policy instruments.

Aware as he was of the OSCE's limitations, Thomas Price, the OSCE's economic coordinator until mid-2001, defined the OSCE's remit in terms of the *four Cs*. The OSCE's prime task in the framework of the EED should be that of a *catalyst*; *convening* the right people so as to help prevent or resolve the economic or environmental aspects of conflicts; *consciousness raising* to increase public awareness, particularly of the agreements made by the governments of the participating states. Finally, the OSCE should *not* attempt to *catalogue* the economic and environmental risks faced by the participating states, as other organisations are in a better position to do this thanks to their specific expertise and experience.¹⁶

The AIV believes that the OSCE's primary objective in the economic and environmental dimension should be to prevent and contain conflicts. The OSCE can seek to attain these goals by acting as a catalyst in conjunction with other international organisations active in the fields of economics and the environment. They are in a better position than the OSCE to take effective, targeted action in this area thanks to their mandates, expertise and experience. In this connection, the OSCE should operate basically as a platform for exchanging information on activities with other international organisations active in the fields of economics and the environment. The organisations involved here would include, for example, the European Union, the World Bank, the IMF, the OECD, the EBRD and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The OSCE should focus its efforts on those countries which are unlikely to qualify for membership of the European Union in the foreseeable future, as they will probably be most open to assistance and support offered by the OSCE in the framework of a conflict prevention strategy.

1.3.3 *The human dimension*

The human dimension has always been of paramount importance to the OSCE. We have already referred to the way in which the Helsinki groups in former Communist countries made use of human rights standards formulated by the OSCE. Whereas the focus during the Cold War lay on human contacts, information exchange and culture, the follow-up conference held in Vienna in 1986-1989 saw the talks on standards and institutionalisation really come on stream. This was also when the phrase *human dimension* came into vogue. Most of the current agreements in this respect were reached after 1989. The main expressions of these are the Paris Charter for a new Europe signed in 1990, the resolutions passed at the meetings on the human dimension held in Copenhagen in 1990 and in Moscow in 1991, the report of the OSCE meeting of experts on national minorities held in Geneva in 1991, and the decisions

15 See in this connection, for example, Price, T.L. (November 2001), The OSCE's economic dimension: Lessons learned, in: *Helsinki Monitor* (pp. 165-176), p. 167.

16 Price. 2001, pp. 169 – 171.

taken at the Helsinki Summit in 1992.¹⁷ The institutionalisation of the human dimension has been reflected, *inter alia*, by the foundation of an Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the appointment of a Representative on Freedom of the Media. Finally, whilst the chief role of the HCNM lies in the field of conflict prevention, his work is also relevant to the human dimension.

In the early 1990s, the Central and Eastern European countries were particularly active in seeking to formulate human rights standards. Strikingly just after an attempted coup in Moscow had been thwarted, the Soviet delegation tabled radical proposals on the protection of democratically elected governments against undemocratic forces, on the democratic control of the armed forces, and on legal guarantees during a state of emergency declared by the government. Today, the assumption that peace and security are served best by democracy, the rule of law and human rights has become part of the OSCE *acquis*.¹⁸ These are now also part of the concept of comprehensive security embraced by the organisation.

The enforcement of agreements on the human dimension is a key item on the agenda of the regular implementation meetings, that have been held in their current format since 1993. A think-tank chaired by the Norwegian Permanent Representative, Kai Eide, is currently looking at ways and means of making these meetings more effective by changing their format. A complaint that is frequently heard in certain quarters, for example among NGOs, is that these meetings address all agreements in their entirety and culminate in the publication of weighty reports but not in resolutions or decisions with any political clout. Another common complaint is that there is not enough dialogue, given that most of the issues discussed relate to eastern Europe, the Balkans or the territory of the former Soviet Union. This, in turn, leads to accusations of double standards. One suggestion for improving the effectiveness of the meetings is to restrict the number of topics on the agenda, thus allowing time for a proper dialogue. The think-tank is also assessing the frequency of implementation meetings, and trying to define the relationship between these meetings and the consultations in the Permanent Council. Another issue is how to involve NGOs more closely in the implementation meetings. At present, key NGOs such as Amnesty International often stay away because they feel that insufficient use is made of their expertise and that the meetings are not sufficiently productive.

The human dimension also plays a role in the OSCE's missions. Most mission mandates contain a reference to the human dimension; in some cases, for example in relation to Kosovo, Bosnia and Croatia, the human dimension actually lies at the heart of the mandate. In the recent past, issues relating to national minorities have formed part of the mandate for missions in Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine (now concluded). Virtually every mission includes a member who is responsible for the human dimension (these are known as human rights officers). The ODIHR signs Memorandums of Understanding with countries and keeps a close check on their enforcement. Human security and the human dimension are also firmly anchored in the OSCE's field activities. It is

17 Paragraph 8 of the Helsinki Summit Declaration reaffirms the principle already adopted in Moscow in 1991, i.e. that commitments and agreements relating to the human dimension 'are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not exclusively belong to the internal affairs of the States concerned.'

18 Istanbul Summit, *Charter for European Security*, 19 November 1999, paragraph 14.

against this background that in Vienna it has been suggested to invite the human rights officers to attend the human dimension implementation meetings. Their presence could also help to make these meetings more effective (see above).

The OSCE works in close cooperation with the Council of Europe on matters relating to the human dimension. There is considerable overlap in the work of the two organisations, with shared areas of concern including the protection of human rights, election observation, the strengthening of democracy and the legal system, and the protection of minorities. There is also a growing similarity in the membership of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, although the United States and Canada (and others) are not members of the Council of Europe. Although both organisations are doing their best to harmonise their work, things still go wrong from time to time. For example, the rivalry between them for access to Chechnya did nothing to improve the flow of information on the state of the armed struggle there. Although the OSCE and the Council of Europe allowed themselves to be played off against one another in the second half of 2001, considerable progress has undeniably been made on harmonising their activities in recent years. The two organisations are now good at exchanging information. The question is whether the time is now ripe for undertaking joint operations.¹⁹ With the Netherlands also holding the Chairmanship of the Council of Europe from November 2003, it is uniquely placed to look into the opportunities here.

1.3.4 The interdependence of the three dimensions

In view of the pivotal role played by comprehensive security in the work of the OSCE, it is hardly surprising that the OSCE's politico-military dimension, economic and environmental dimension, and human dimension are all closely connected. The three dimensions cannot be divorced from one another if stability and security are to be achieved and conflicts prevented. From the perspective of comprehensive security, all three aspects are equally indispensable. After all, most security-related problems and issues include economic or humanitarian aspects in addition to a politico-military aspect. Against this background, many OSCE meetings in recent years have emphasised the fundamental importance of the EED in the OSCE's activities.

In his capacity as HCNM, Max van der Stoel regularly highlighted the interdependence of the OSCE's three dimensions.²⁰ Not many people today would deny that economic factors play a role in conflict prevention, even when the position of minorities is at stake. As the state of a country's economy deteriorates, there is an increasing risk of social tension. If such tension erupts into violence, it is easy to make a scapegoat of

19 See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Alliance for Human Rights and Democracy* (The Hague, 5 June 1998) and the letter of 14 December 2001 from Jozijs van Aartsen, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the House of Representatives about the relationship between the OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe. The letter to the House of Representatives shows particularly clearly, with the aid of examples, just how closely the Council of Europe and the OSCE are working together to harmonise their operations and exchange information.

20 Max van der Stoel recently wrote in this connection: 'The Balkan countries urgently need economic incentives that hold out the prospect of future prosperity. This is also important in resolving the region's interethnic problems. In a depressed economy with mass unemployment, there is a threat of increasing tension between the various ethnic groups.' Van der Stoel, M. (October 1999), *Is ineenstorting van multi-etnische staten in Zuidoost-Europa onvermijdelijk?* (Is the collapse of multi-ethnic states in south-east Europe inevitable?), in: *Internationale Spectator*, pp. 517 and 518.

minorities. The other side of the coin is that an effective strategy for dealing with issues relating to national minorities often requires an investment in socially oriented projects, such as language teaching or the broadcasting of television programmes in a minority language. In other words, relatively modest resources can achieve results while aid would cost much more after the actual outbreak of a conflict.

The economic and environmental aspects of security-related issues and problems suggest that there is a whole set of interconnected issues that together are capable of forming a seed-bed for conflicts. It is for this reason, claims Thomas Price, that the EED should form an integral part of the OSCE's security agenda.²¹

A whole host of examples illustrate the way in which this interrelationship works. The Central Asian countries, for instance, depend on each other and on Russia for their water supplies, with all the attendant environmental problems. There are the problems with land and water in the Fergana valley, where the borders of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan meet. There is the catastrophic impact on Kazakhstan of the nuclear tests carried out in the Soviet era. There are the consequences of the disaster at the nuclear power station in Chernobyl. And, finally, there is the problem of the shrinking and polluted Aral Sea. The human dimension also becomes apparent if one recognises that economic deprivation is a key aspect of the position of national minorities. Many commentators, including the HCNM, have already pointed in this respect to the disadvantage suffered by the Roma and Sinti. The pattern is that an economic recession aggravates the problems, resulting in a further increase in intolerance towards minorities as the most vulnerable groups in society feel the brunt of the lack of jobs and the low level of prosperity.²² There is a vicious circle at work here, involving poor governance, endemic corruption, poverty, environmental degradation and human rights violations: a vicious circle that undermines security.²³

The AIV draws the following conclusions in the light of the information given in Chapter I:

- *On the basis of the description given in this chapter of the OSCE's current role, the AIV concludes that the OSCE – acting partly as a complement to and partly in conjunction with other international organisations – still has a valuable role to play in the relations between its participating states.*
- *The OSCE offers a genuine platform for permanent consultation between the participating states. This tradition of consultation is valuable in itself. Moreover, the OSCE is the only regional organisation for cooperation on security issues of which the United States and the Russian Federation are members on equal terms. Another important point is the membership of the Central Asian countries.*

21 Price is quoted as follows in the OSCE's *Fact Sheet on the Economic and Environmental Dimension* (January 2001): 'Growing income disparities within and between countries have also contributed to heightening the risk of conflict. While the tensions that develop are often expressed in ethnic or religious terms, the underlying causes are economic.'

22 These examples are taken from Price, 2001, and Report no. 23 published by the Advisory Committee on Human Rights and Foreign Policy, The Hague, November 1996.

23 Price, 2001, p. 169.

- *The concepts of comprehensive security and cooperative security are so wide-ranging as to scarcely define the limits of the OSCE's activities and responsibilities. Moreover, the OSCE operates in three different dimensions, each of which has its own particular characteristics and dynamics. In other words, the OSCE is a regional organisation with the mandate and expertise required to tackle security issues from a broad perspective. The other side of the coin, however, is that the OSCE encompasses a huge variety of tasks and activities. It has an important role to play, for example, in relation to policing, election observation, security policy and the human dimension, each of which has a bearing on the security situation in Europe. At the same time, these responsibilities are so diverse that it is not always clear what the OSCE's focus is or should be. As a result, the OSCE may be said to be an organisation that performs a large number of disparate activities the relationship between which is not always clear and in respect of which it is also not always clear why the OSCE takes them on.*
- *The AIV urges the Dutch government to prioritise, during its Chairmanship of the OSCE, the themes of conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, based on the OSCE's expertise in relation to the security dimension, the economic and environmental dimension, and the humanitarian dimension. Designating conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation as policy spearheads should also make it easier to set priorities for the OSCE's responsibilities and activities. The OSCE should undertake new activities only if they help to prevent conflicts or to further the cause of post-conflict rehabilitation.*

II The OSCE: decision-making, Chairmanship and issues

II.1 Decision-making at the OSCE

II.1.1 *The role of the participating states*

The OSCE is an organisation that takes all its decisions by consensus, apart from a small number of carefully defined exceptions (in which case decisions are taken by consensus minus one).²⁴ The latter option has been used on only one occasion, in 1992, when Yugoslavia was excluded from the talks in the OSCE on account of its responsibility for various serious human rights violations, particularly in Bosnia. The main decision-making body is the Permanent Council, which is based in Vienna and provides a permanent forum for debate on all issues pertinent to the OSCE. The Chairmanship of the OSCE rotates on an annual basis, and the Permanent Council is chaired by a representative of the country currently holding the Chairmanship.

Although the OSCE is nominally an organisation, it can hardly be said to merit its title on the strength of its decision-making procedures. In practice, the OSCE retains all the characteristic features of a conference. The institutionalisation of decision-making is weak, with all decisions being prepared by the Chairmanship delegation, as the OSCE's own Secretary General has neither the status nor the resources to perform such a role. The Permanent Council does not apply any hierarchy in its decisions, nor are there any procedures for classifying decisions into different categories. In short, there is very little structure to the OSCE's decision-making.²⁵ Furthermore, the consensus rule means that no decision can normally be made without the backing of all 55 participating states. This also implies that any decision can be blocked by any participating state. The states are entitled to have a say in all decisions, down to any level of detail they wish. And that is indeed what happens, although obviously not all states simultaneously take the same amount of interest in every single topic of debate. The level of interest tends to vary from topic to topic. When preparing decisions, the Chairmanship needs to consult a wide range of States in order to gauge the level of their interest and must also remain constantly alert to the danger of giving other States the impression that their own views are not being taken sufficiently seriously. As a result of this need to involve so many parties, the OSCE's decision-making process is not transparent to outsiders, is slow-moving, and is characterised by a constant search for compromise. Not surprisingly, not a single country is genuinely satisfied with the OSCE's decisions or

24 The OSCE's ministerial meeting in Prague in January 1992 agreed on an important exception to the consensus rule in relation to the human dimension. The meeting resolved that 'appropriate action may be taken [...] if necessary in the absence of the consent of the State concerned, in cases of clear, gross and uncorrected violations of relevant CSCE commitments'. The action may consist of the publication of a statement or other political measures taken outside the territory of the State concerned. Also, the Moscow mechanism adopted in October 1991 entitles ten States to dispatch a rapporteur in the event of very grave human rights violations. Such a decision may be taken against the will of the State in question. For full information on the exceptions to the consensus rule, see Bloed, 1993, pp. 20–22.

25 Characteristically, when the CSCE was transformed into an organisation, the rechristening decision was not accompanied by any institutional change (apart from the odd change of name) or any streamlining of the decision-making process. For the relevant resolution, see *CSCE 1994 Summit, Budapest Decisions, Strengthening the CSCE*, point 1, p. 7.

with the way in which or the speed at which they are made.²⁶

Although many decisions are prepared by smaller, more informal groups than the 55-member Permanent Council, it is the Permanent Council that, at the end of the day, is formally responsible for making all decisions. The member states of the European Union (see below) and of NATO are particularly closely involved in the informal business of preparing the OSCE's decisions. To use one of the OSCE's own stock phrases, decision-making has got to be flexible. In practice, however, the effect of the lack of procedures and rules is to make the OSCE highly susceptible to the views of the five major participating states, i.e. the United States, the Russian Federation, Germany, France and the UK.²⁷ These countries hold frequent talks of their own, particularly on operational matters. In addition, they also play a key role as individual members.

It is undeniable that the United States wields a great deal of influence in the OSCE. The United States consistently succeeds in cleverly maximising its influence whenever the OSCE takes decisions in which it has a particular interest. For the Chairman-in-Office, this means maintaining close contact with the US representatives in preparing decisions, as there is not much chance of any progress being made without US support. Similarly, if the United States disagrees with a proposal, it will not happen. The problem with American influence is that it is very much a stop-go matter. Either the Americans take an interest in a particular issue and do their utmost to secure the outcome that is most favourable to them, or they are not interested and adopt a passive stance. The stop-go nature of US conduct, that tends to vary over time and according to the issue at stake, makes decision-making opaque and hence unpredictable for other countries. Moreover, the United States has a finger in a number of pies, which means that it can decide which international organisation is the most appropriate forum for getting any issue dealt with as it wishes.

Despite being one of the big five, the Russian Federation has remained extremely critical in recent years towards both the OSCE and its own role in the organisation, even going so far as to regularly appear to question the very point of the OSCE's continued existence. Russia's displeasure springs in part from the way in which the OSCE operates, and in part from developments taking place outside the OSCE. Moscow still finds it difficult to stomach the reform and expansion of NATO and the way in which more and more countries previously in the Soviet or Russian sphere of influence have sought to join Western organisations. It is not only the OSCE that has been affected by the Russian Federation's attempts to reposition itself relative to international organisations. It is worth mentioning in this context that the Dutch Chairmanship is likely to be confronted in 2003 with the ramifications of the second enlargement of NATO. As its power and influence gradually fade, so the Russian Federation complains that it is being excluded from other bodies and that its views are not taken seriously at OSCE meetings, with the effect that more and more is done that is not to its liking. As recently as December 2001, the Russian Federation only grudgingly accepted the decision to close the OSCE missions in Latvia and Estonia. Whilst the Russians disagreed with the

26 Or, as the members of the AIV committee were told on their fact-finding mission to Vienna, 'everybody says [decision-making] goes very well, but nobody is satisfied.'

27 As recently as 21 June 2001, the US Representative at the OSCE said that 'we support efforts to strengthen the OSCE [...] but we have questions about proposals that would impose more rules, regulations, or bureaucratic procedures on our organisation.' (*OSCE document PC.DEL/382/01*).

conclusion drawn by the head of the missions that they had completed their work, they were unable to amass sufficient support for their opposition among the other participating states. In Russia's opinion, the closure of the missions signalled the OSCE's failure to discharge its duty of protecting the Russian minorities in the two countries.

For some time now, the Russian Federation has been calling for a debate on the role of the OSCE in Euro-Atlantic relations and on the associated reform of the OSCE (what it refers to as a *security model dialogue*).²⁸ The United States and many European nations (basically, the NATO member states, the members of the European Union and the prospective member states of both organisations) are not sympathetic to this idea, and have blocked all such debate to date, thereby fuelling the Russians' sense of frustration. The Russian Federation also felt excluded (and not without some justification, it must be said) from decision-making on the OSCE operations in Kosovo and Macedonia, especially as they formed part of a wider strategy, involving both the United States and NATO, which gave the Russians the feeling that they were being sidelined. As a further point, the Russian Federation has been criticised at the OSCE for its slowness in carrying out the undertaking given in November 1999 to withdraw military forces from Moldova, Georgia and elsewhere. In the meantime, the OSCE's ministerial meeting in Bucharest in December 2001 concluded that Russia had indeed fulfilled this obligation, although, interestingly, the meeting did note that action was still needed on a number of minor points.

In more general terms, Moscow has complained about what it sees as a geographic imbalance in the OSCE's work (see also Section I.1.3 in this respect). In other words, all the issues discussed at the OSCE relate to Eastern Europe, the Balkans or the territory of the former Soviet Union. In the eyes of the Russians, the same Eastern bias applies to the missions dispatched by the OSCE. If either the Russian Federation or another state raises an issue affecting Western Europe, they simply run into a wall of silence. As far as the Russians are concerned, this is simply a question of double standards. Similarly, the Russians feel that the OSCE overaccentuates the human dimension, and that the same amount of attention should be given to the two other dimensions (security policy and the economic and environmental dimension) in terms of both operations and discussions. Nonetheless, not only have the events of 11 September brought about a rapprochement between the United States and Russia on the issue of anti-terrorism activity (casting a fresh light on the Chechnya question, among other things), NATO has also announced plans for closer cooperation with Russia. These two factors have helped to create a climate that made it possible to actually reach agreement both on a ministerial declaration and on all sorts of other decisions in Bucharest in December 2001. This was achieved in the face of the same Russian hostility that had blocked any agreement on the same points a year before. One of the most striking achievements was the adoption of an anti-terrorism action plan.

The effect of the Russian Federation's list of complaints – and we have by no means covered them all – is that the Russian Federation is increasingly turning its back on the OSCE and its activities. This is despite the fact that adequate Russian involvement is

28 Igor Ivanov, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, put it as follows at the OSCE's ministerial meeting in Bucharest: 'Russia has been and continues to be in favour of an inclusive and comprehensive renovation of the entire scope of OSCE activities in order to secure a decent place for the organisation in the international architecture of cooperation and security' (speech at the OSCE's ministerial meeting in Bucharest on 3 December 2001).

one of the justifications for the OSCE's very existence as a pan-European security organisation. Russia seems less and less interested in the OSCE. Not only is Moscow not interested in being part of an organisation that applies double standards (i.e. whilst it is not prepared to protect Russian minorities, it is ready to keep a watchful eye on Russian activities in Chechnya), but as the contacts with NATO become more intense, so the OSCE gradually loses its relevance to the Russians.

Despite the agreement reached in Bucharest, the AIV therefore believes that failure to take Russian criticism of the OSCE seriously would send the wrong signal. It goes without saying that each individual complaint made by the Russians should be assessed on its own merits. The AIV further urges the Dutch Chairmanship to do its utmost to facilitate a proper discussion of issues, that play 'West of Vienna', despite the fact that certain partners may be reluctant to discuss them, and may perhaps even be opposed to any form of discussion. Such issues could include freedom of religion, the integration of minorities, the deplorable position of many Roma and Sinti groups in Western Europe and xenophobia.²⁹

Alongside the United States and the Russian Federation, the European Union also plays an important role in decision-making at the OSCE. We are not talking solely about the 15 current member states, but also about the candidate countries, which generally toe the EU line. As the other participating states in the OSCE have no say whatsoever in the EU's own decision-making, the result is the presence within the OSCE of a block of 28 countries (i.e. more than half the participating states, thus constituting a simple majority) that is a highly significant factor in the OSCE's decision-making process. Only very rarely do individual EU member states actually speak on their own behalf. The increased importance of the EU has come at a price, however. In most cases, the standpoints ultimately adopted by the EU member states are no better than lowest common denominators. In other words, the desire to speak with a single voice may result in the formulation of comparatively weak and vague standpoints. Countries like Germany, France and the UK also continue to operate nationally in the OSCE, for example in informal talks among the big five. This does not so much lessen the influence of the EU block as restrict the scope of the discussions conducted within the EU in order to arrive at common positions.

All in all, decision-making in the OSCE could be described as a conference with a minimum of rules and procedures, as well as a segmented set of decision-makers. Moreover, the enlargement of the European Union and NATO is having the effect of drawing a line in the OSCE between the member states and prospective member states of these two organisations on the one hand, and those countries that are unlikely to qualify for membership in the near future on the other. Given that most of the latter countries are located in regions in which OSCE missions have recently been undertaken (and in some cases have actually received missions on their territory), it would not be going too far to say that the OSCE is dividing into two camps.

29 The debate on freedom of religion may be viewed as a matter of two conflicting rights, i.e. freedom of speech versus freedom of religion. The AIV has already published a report on one particular aspect of religious freedom (*Registration of communities based on religion or belief*, report no. 21, June 2001). This report was published in the run-up to an OSCE seminar on this topic in The Hague in June 2001.

II.1.2 *Is there an alternative to consensual decision-making?*

As we have already explained, every decision taken by the OSCE requires the consent of all 55 participating states. This requirement is often cited within the OSCE community as a desirable be-all and end-all: that's the way things have always been, and that's the way they should remain. The supporters of consensus-based decision-making argue that such a system guarantees the involvement of all participating states, big and small, in decision-making. Inclusiveness and transparency are the watchwords here. The Chairman-in-Office tries to build a consensus gradually by means of ongoing consultation with the participating states. The key now is to find a way of speeding up and facilitating decision-making without changing the basic formula, for example by using open-ended working groups as a means of testing the response to proposals, or by using friends of the chair as a means of forming coalitions. After all, it is impossible for the Chairman-in-Office to get all 55 participating states to reach a consensus without using such methods. At the same time, it is clear from this that the notion of all 55 participating states having a genuine say in all OSCE decisions is illusory. It is already impracticable to consult all 55 states on every decision, let alone guarantee that each decision reflects the views of every single state. Against this background, it is hardly surprising that the request for advice refers to the problem of decisions being made in advance by a small group of insiders. Representatives of the smaller countries have argued in the Permanent Council that the lack of transparency in the OSCE's decision-making process has become a fundamental problem.³⁰

Proposals for tampering with the consensus system are often dismissed on the grounds that any inefficiency gained would be paid for in less open, democratic decision-making. We have already described the OSCE's decision-making procedures as an opaque, slow-moving and never-ending quest for consensus, by no means always involving all 55 participating states. With many countries simply regarding the OSCE's decisions as *faits accomplis*, the procedure is clearly far less open and democratic than its proponents like to claim. Moreover, the vast majority of the more than 120 decisions made by the Permanent Council since the ministerial meeting in Istanbul in November 1999 have been of an operational nature. Over half of them relate to the OSCE's field activities (i.e. mandate extensions and enlargements, budget allocations) and over one third of the remainder concern either the organisation's day-to-day activities or methods of enhancing their effectiveness (i.e. the agenda and other modalities relating to OSCE meetings, budgets and other financial aspects, staffing, appointments, reappointments).³¹ Given that these decisions are not highly political, it is worth wondering whether the current practice by which the Permanent Council, made up of 55 ambassadors sitting round a table, makes such decisions is really the best way.³²

30 Armenia and Estonia are among the countries concerned. See *Compilation on Strengthening the OSCE – Relating to the work, structures and institutions of the OSCE* (Office of the Secretary General, Vienna, 28 June 2001), p. 9.

31 See Annex 2: Decisions taken by the Permanent Council during the period from November 1999 to October 2001. Although the period chosen is somewhat arbitrary, the list does paint a good picture of the type of decisions taken by the Council.

32 Only a small number of decisions on new activities or themes were taken in the period from November 1999 (Istanbul Summit) to mid-October 2001. These related to:

- the opening of an office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan (PC.DEC/399);
- the establishment of an OSCE mission in Yugoslavia after its readmission as a full member of the OSCE (PC.DEC/401);

(cont. on page 27 ▶)

In the light of the above, the AIV urges the Dutch Chairmanship to ensure that the question of the efficiency of decision-making remains on the OSCE's agenda.³³ The AIV is aware that agreement has not been reached in the past on proposals made by delegations in this connection. Most countries are unwilling to abandon the principle of consensus. For this reason, a proposal will be made in Section II.4 for a procedure that could promote change by stimulating that outside views are taken in account.

II.2 The Chairmanship of the OSCE and the Dutch role

II.2.1 A rough outline of the Chairmanship of the OSCE

The Chairmanship of the OSCE rotates among the participating states, with a new country taking over the job each year. The main tasks of the Chairmanship may be described as follows:

- 1 proposing an agenda for, preparing and chairing meetings; this applies equally to summits with the Heads of State or Government, the Permanent Council and other meetings;
- 2 taking initiatives on and seeking to reach a consensus on issues and problems affecting the OSCE area. A Chairmanship is regarded as successful if it manages to settle issues and resolve problems;
- 3 securing continuity and consistency in policy and decision-making. One of the key instruments in this connection is the troika, consisting of the previous, current and next Chairmanships;
- 4 acting as the OSCE's public face, principally in contacts with other organisations, both international and otherwise.

We have already pointed out, in Section II.1, that the OSCE is more a conference than an organisation. The lack of decision-making procedures and rules means that a great deal depends in this respect on the Chairmanship, more so than in other organisations. The Chairmanship plays a pivotal role at the OSCE, acting primarily as an honest broker in the process of building a consensus.

(cont. from page 26 ▶)

- a regional strategy for southeastern Europe (PC.DEC/344);
- the supervision of the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (PC.DEC/350);
- an action plan for gender issues (PC.DEC/353);
- strengthening the operational capacities (REACT, Operations Centre, the restructuring of the Secretariat) (PC.DEC/364);
- the development of a multiethnic police element for Yugoslavia (PC.DEC/414);
- trafficking in human beings (PC.DEC/426);
- enhancing the effectiveness of Human Dimension Meetings (PC.DEC/428).

33 There are various ways in which an attempt could be made to streamline decision-making at the OSCE.

These include the following:

1. devising decision-making procedures that are not consensus-based. One commonly quoted option would be to define the nature of the majority required for decision-making, e.g. a decision is taken if it is supported by 90% of the participating states who together should contribute at least 90% of the OSCE's budget;
2. procedures and rules could be devised for distinguishing between operational and political decisions, with the latter remaining subject to the consensus rule;
3. small groups of states could be empowered to take decisions on behalf of the OSCE as a whole.

The Dutch Chairmanship of the OSCE is more likely to be successful if the Dutch government:

- 1 brings a high standard of expertise to bear on issues on the OSCE's agenda, in particular in relation to areas in which the OSCE has undertaken missions;*
- 2 takes appropriate political and diplomatic action in preparing a strategy for tackling these issues; it is vital in this respect that the Chairmanship is sufficiently aware of the concerns of all the members of the OSCE;*
- 3 makes available sufficient staff, both in Vienna and The Hague, with fast communication between the two locations;*
- 4 commits sufficient financial resources to fund new initiatives and projects;*
- 5 ensures that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is the political embodiment of the Chairmanship. This should be reflected in a high level of personal commitment and personal activity. After all, the Minister of Foreign Affairs represents the highest political authority in the organisation. He, rather than the Chair of the Permanent Council, is the OSCE's public face. In this connection, it is also important for the Dutch Chairmanship of the OSCE to be supported by the entire government, as other ministries apart from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may be called upon to assist with certain OSCE duties during the Netherlands' term of office.*

The AIV did not conduct a systematic study of how different countries conducted their Chairmanships of the OSCE in the recent past. It did, however, learn a great deal from various former Chairmen-in-Office whom we asked to tell us about their experiences. These experiences permeate the entire report. Whilst there has been a considerable disparity in the motives of the various countries for wishing to hold the Chairmanship, the agendas set by them have borne a close resemblance to each other. The general impression given by comparing the agendas set by recent Chairmanships (Poland in 1998, Norway in 1999, Austria in 2000, Romania in 2001 and Portugal in 2002), most of which were presented at the first meeting of the Permanent Council following the Christmas recess, is that, whilst each Chairmanship has tried to set certain priorities of its own, each one has been primarily concerned with streamlining the organisation's activities and making sure that its day-to-day business runs as smoothly as possible.³⁴

The experience gained by previous Chairmen-in-Office of the OSCE leads the AIV to conclude that developments in the international arena will be the main factors influencing the Netherlands' conduct of its Chairmanship. In other words, the work of the Chairman-in-Office revolves around the latest international developments. It is therefore crucial for the Dutch government to take steps to ensure it can respond swiftly and effectively to international developments.

The experience of the Norwegian Chairmanship demonstrates in particular the importance of ensuring that the OSCE unit in The Hague and the delegation in Vienna work in tandem.³⁵ This can only be done by making clear arrangements about the division of responsibilities. Also, the experience of previous Chairmanships underlines the value of ensuring that both the head of the OSCE unit in The Hague and the Permanent

³⁴ See Annexe 3 for a list of priorities set by recent Chairmen-in-Office.

³⁵ They have different responsibilities: the OSCE unit in The Hague supports the Minister of Foreign Affairs in his capacity as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, whereas the role of the OSCE delegation in Vienna is to chair the Permanent Council and hold consultations with other OSCE delegations.

Representative in Vienna (with due regard for their own individual powers and responsibilities) have direct access to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This is the only way of guaranteeing that the Minister of Foreign Affairs can be an effective and decisive Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. This is on condition, though, that communications between The Hague and Vienna are both open and fast.

It is worth bearing in mind that the Netherlands is in a good position to have a successful Chairmanship. The less the other participating states are inclined to believe that the country holding the Chairmanship has its own national agenda, the more credit it is given and the better able it is to act as an honest broker in reconciling different viewpoints. Given that the Netherlands has no desire to join any other international organisations apart from those of which it is already a member (such as NATO and the European Union), this is precisely the Dutch position.

II.2.2 The Dutch approach to the Chairmanship

By establishing an OSCE in The Hague unit in good time, appointing an OSCE coordinator to head it up, announcing its intention of strengthening the Dutch delegation at the OSCE, and earmarking a special budget for its Chairmanship of the OSCE, the Dutch government has shown that it is taking the task of preparing for its Chairmanship extremely seriously. There are certain things, however, that cannot be arranged in advance. As was the case with previous Chairmanships, the main factors determining the success of the Dutch Chairmanship are international events and the continuity of the OSCE's activities. If the Netherlands finds itself facing an international crisis (as happened, for example, during the Norwegian Chairmanship in 1999, when the Kosovo Verification Mission had to be withdrawn at very short notice) the success of the Dutch Chairmanship will depend on the way in which it deals with the crisis. In such an event, it is the international situation that dictates the priorities. Moreover, any attempts to come up with a list of Dutch priorities will be effective only if these are compatible with the OSCE's own agenda. If not, they will soon be abandoned by the next Chairmanship. This is what happened, for example, with the question of children's rights raised by the Austrian Chairmanship and the Romanian attempt to place the issue of moral and spiritual values on the OSCE's agenda.

In this light, the AIV advises the Dutch government to exercise caution in formulating its objectives for its Chairmanship of the OSCE, not so much because of any dearth of ideas or suggestions, but rather because practical experience shows that there are only very limited opportunities for individual countries to prioritise issues of their own. Moreover, the need to respond effectively to international developments and to guarantee the continuity of the OSCE's activities will in itself inevitably create a full agenda that is bound to demand a great deal of the Dutch Chairmanship. As regards ideas and suggestions for issues to be raised by the Dutch Chairmanship, the Dutch government should take its lead first of all from the OSCE's current agenda and from the German-Dutch proposals presented in spring 2001 (These are discussed in Section II.3).

We have already pointed out, in Section I.3.4, that the OSCE performs a wide range of disparate activities of which not many people are fully aware. Moreover, the OSCE does not always get the credit for what it does. What is missing, therefore, is political and public support. There is every reason to try and build support for the work of the OSCE. Any attempt to do so by the Dutch Chairmanship would clearly be a move in the right direction. In political terms, the Dutch Chairmanship should be prepared to be accountable and to set out its plans in advance. In addition, it could consider improving public information, and disseminating it more actively. It is worth remembering at the same

time that conflict prevention is hardly a high-profile activity. If the OSCE is successful in averting conflict, there will be very little media interest. If, however, the OSCE does not manage to avert conflict, it is equally possible that the public may not be interested in the OSCE's specific role in this connection. If it is, it may well take a negative view. Having said this, the OSCE still has a duty to constantly try and build political and public support for its activities.

As a first step on the road to boosting political support for the OSCE, the Dutch Chairmanship could propose that each Chairman should not only appear before the elected parliamentarians at the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly at the beginning of his term of office, to set out his strategy for the Chairmanship and the plans he wishes to implement, but should also report at the end of his term of office on the results achieved during the year. Until there is sufficient backing for this suggestion, the Dutch Chairmanship could put it into practice on a voluntary basis.

The AIV also recommends that the OSCE should strengthen its public information activities and should develop a comprehensive public information policy. The Dutch Chairmanship could take action to this end, for example by proposing to permanently earmark a higher proportion of the OSCE budget for public information purposes. Another possibility would be to examine ways and means of integrating public information into all aspects of the OSCE's work, including into its field activities.

The Dutch Chairmanship will find itself having to deal with issues that were placed on the OSCE's agenda under the current Portuguese Chairmanship, in the wake of the Bucharest ministerial meeting in December 2001. The most prominent of these is action against terrorism. Other topics include the question of how to strike a balance in the attention given to each of the three dimensions of the OSCE, the strengthening of the EED, cooperation between the OSCE and other international organisations, and increasing public involvement in the OSCE's work. At the Economic Forum, Portugal made clear that it wished to focus on water, particularly the issue of water scarcity in certain regions, the distribution problem, and the conflicts that could potentially be sparked off as a result. Alongside these issues there are also the recurring items on the OSCE's agenda, such as mission command and its ramifications for the Chairmanship (see also Section II.2.3) as well as the frozen conflicts referred to above (i.e. in Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgia). As a further point, the participating states seem to find it harder every year to reach agreement on the OSCE's budget, the main problem being the dissatisfaction felt by certain states with the contribution structure.

To ensure that the Dutch Chairmanship is both effective and efficient, the AIV recommends that the delegation in Vienna should make maximum use of groups of friends, open-ended working groups and special representatives of the Chairman-in-Office. This should help both to create broad support for decisions taken by the OSCE and to ensure that other participating states, apart from the Chairmanship, remain closely involved in the work of the OSCE.

Like every Chairmanship, the Netherlands will also be assisted by the OSCE's Secretary General and his Secretariat. It is important to bear in mind that the Secretary General is answerable to the Chairmanship and has no authority of his own. There is a team of Programme Officers at the Secretariat that supports the Chairmanship, particularly in the field of mission control. The OSCE has frequently discussed the question of the role of the Secretary General and his Secretariat. Although, whenever proposals are made for strengthening the position of the Secretary General and the Secretariat, it is

claimed that this is vital for the successful operation of the OSCE, only limited progress has been made to date and it is highly unlikely that the Dutch Chairmanship will be able to breathe new life into the debate.

For this reason, the AIV advises the Dutch Chairmanship, in strengthening the position of the Secretary General and the Secretariat, to restrict itself to small but concrete steps that the Chairmanship is capable of taking on its own. More specifically, the Netherlands has in the past supported the principle of strengthening the Secretariat. The AIV proposes in this connection that, for the benefit of future Chairmanships, the staff complement of the OSCE Secretariat should be supplemented by as many staff as are required to enhance its continuity.³⁶ In a similar manner to the role performed by Programme Officers in relation to missions, the prime duty of these additional members of staff should be to guarantee the continuity of OSCE policy under successive Chairmanships. They should not concern themselves with the OSCE's operational duties and should instead concentrate on supporting the Chairmanship in formulating policy and preparing decisions in Vienna. Until this suggestion is adopted, the Netherlands could consider strengthening the Secretariat by seconding Dutch officials to the Secretariat at its own expense.

II.2.3 The OSCE's missions

The situation today is that over twenty OSCE missions are active in areas affected by conflict.³⁷ Whereas most of the missions dispatched in the first half of the 1990s were sent to the territory of the former Soviet Union (e.g. the Baltic states, Nagorno-Karabakh, Moldova and Georgia), the focus later switched to the Balkans, and more particularly to the territory of the former Yugoslavia. This emphasis on the East has caused many a complaint from the countries and regions concerned and has had the effect of dividing the OSCE in two. As we have already explained, whilst there are good reasons for the emergence of this split based on the destination of the OSCE's missions, it nevertheless poses a risk to the organisation's future.

The work done by the OSCE in Bosnia under the Dayton Agreement and in Kosovo in the framework of the country's stabilisation and reconstruction requires a further professionalisation of the OSCE. An interesting feature of both these cases is that the OSCE did not originally take the initiative to launch the missions but was asked to do so without ever having been present at the negotiating table. Another point of interest is that, although the stabilisation and reconstruction of Bosnia and Kosovo suddenly attracted a great deal of interest from the international community and the media, the OSCE has scarcely been given any credit for the role it has played in this process. This applies to an even greater degree to other missions and the activities in general the OSCE has performed. Even where these are noticed by outsiders, it is seldom the case that the head office in Vienna is identified as the originator of the OSCE's missions or of the work it does in organising and observing elections. As a result, despite the considerable increase in the scope of its work in recent years, the OSCE still remains virtually invisible to the outside world. It is for this reason that the recommendation made in Section II.2.2 on the strengthening of public information activities makes a specific reference to the OSCE's field activities.

³⁶ This suggestion was made to the Committee by Max van der Stoep, the former HCNM, during a meeting on 28 September 2001. He suggested five or six staff.

³⁷ See Annexe 4 for a list of the OSCE's missions and other field activities.

The OSCE's missions have all sorts of different jobs to perform, ranging from emergency relief, combating and reporting human rights violations and facilitating the repatriation of refugees to helping to establish police forces, assisting with the organisation of elections and more generally promoting democracy and the rule of law. The largest mission in operation at present is the mission to Kosovo (see above), which has a staff of 1,700 people. As we have already mentioned, the aim of the mission is to assist in the stabilisation and reconstruction of Kosovo. Now that the elections on 17 November 2001 have passed off satisfactorily, the number of staff will be reduced in the course of 2002. In many cases (and not just in Kosovo), offering assistance means that the mission in question, because of its very presence in the area, is obliged to take the initiative in resolving conflicts and rebuilding the political and social fabric.

It is vitally important for the Chairmanship to have the expertise needed to assess the reports emanating from the missions. These reports need to be screened for any politically sensitive matter before being published. Low-profile small-scale missions form a recurring problem for the Chairman-in-Office, as these do not always receive the attention they deserve, partly because of a lack of time and partly because other missions inevitably tend to take up more of the political limelight.

OSCE missions may last for many years, even if the political and social conditions in the country in question undergo radical change. In practice, partly for budgetary reasons, missions are not granted a mandate of more than one year. However, mandates are automatically extended for further one-year periods, unless there are good reasons for not doing so (which also requires the consent of all 55 participating states). In practice, mission mandates are extended from year to year, which means that missions spend many years in the host country.³⁸ As a result, missions tend more and more to lead lives of their own, and no one asks why they are there in the first place. There are no exit strategies: the longer a mission spends in a country, the more difficult it becomes to call an end to it. There are also managerial reasons for imposing a time limit on missions.

For this reason, the AIV advises the Dutch government to advocate the idea of placing a time limit on future OSCE missions so as to set a deadline by which the objectives of their mandates must have been achieved. This will compel the parties involved and all other participating states, to a much greater extent than is currently the case, to pursue a political dialogue about the situation in the host country. In addition, setting a time limit will force the governments of the countries concerned and the heads of missions, to a greater extent than is currently the case, to achieve political and other objectives within the deadlines, thus giving Vienna a greater degree of control. Steps could also be taken to ascertain which of the missions currently in operation could be subjected to a time limit along comparable lines.

In this light, the AIV also advises the Dutch Chairmanship to standardise procedures for reporting on missions to the Permanent Council in Vienna, and to establish a fixed mechanism for discussing the reports.

Finally, with a view to exercising proper control over the missions, the AIV advises the Dutch Chairmanship to continue the practice of inviting the Programme Officers from the Secretariat to attend discussions of the missions. The Romanian Chairmanship

38 See Annexe 4 for information on the duration of OSCE missions.

instituted this practice in 2001. There is every reason for the Dutch Chairmanship to continue it, also as it can help to strengthen the Secretariat and improve cooperation between it and the Chairmanship.

II.3 The issues addressed by the OSCE: old and new themes

In considering the possibility and desirability of the Netherlands using its Chairmanship of the OSCE to promote certain issues that are close to its own heart, we should briefly like to raise five topics that are already on the OSCE's agenda: the German-Dutch proposals for strengthening the OSCE, gender and the OSCE, Central Asia, police cooperation, and the question of the OSCE's legal status.

In fact, the Netherlands put forward an agenda of its own when the joint German-Dutch proposals for strengthening the OSCE were presented in May 2001. The suggestions relate to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, arms control, strengthening the EED, the Parliamentary Assembly, further operationalising the Forum for Security Cooperation, and improving the OSCE's working methods. The proposals are intended to enhance the OSCE's operational effectiveness, indicate new areas of cooperation, and suggest procedural improvements.³⁹ The German-Dutch proposals revitalised the debate on the future of the OSCE, following the failed Vienna ministerial meeting of November 2000. In this sense, they have already achieved results. A number of the proposals were incorporated in the declaration issued at the Bucharest Ministerial Council in December 2001 (strengthening the political dialogue and strengthening the EED), and a number of other proposals would appear to have the support of the Portuguese Chairmanship (for operationalising the Platform for Cooperative Security). A number of proposals, however, have not attracted sufficient support, for example the suggestion for enhancing the OSCE's operating procedures by arriving at a division of responsibilities between the Secretary General and the Chairmanship. It would seem logical for the Dutch Chairmanship to concentrate its energy on those proposals that are likely to attract support.

Gender is another issue that the Netherlands is keen to see figuring prominently on the agenda. It was partly thanks to Dutch efforts that a gender coordinator was appointed

39 German-Dutch paper: Ambassador Reinhard Bettzuege and Ambassador Johannes Landman, *Reviewing OSCE: food for thought and some possible steps forward*, PC. Del/271/01, 3 May 2001. The actual proposals are:

- To develop integrated subregional strategies for actual or potential crisis zones.
- To strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities.
- A working group of the Permanent Council could look into peacekeeping roles for the OSCE.
- To explore the options for including paramilitary forces and additional regional CSBMs in the security dialogue.
- To consider the appointment of an OSCE Coordinator charged with politico-military matters, in particular small arms and light weapons issues.
- To further expand the OSCE's broad security concept by giving new impetus to the EED.
- To think about how to make best use of the political competence and influence of the Parliamentary Assembly.
- To elaborate on how to bring together the respective organisations participating in the Platform for Cooperative Security for coordinated action.
- To introduce occasional informal meetings on the level of Political Directors in the country of the Chairmanship or in the margin of ministerial meetings.
- To further expand the Office of the Secretary-General.

at the ODIHR. The Netherlands is also funding projects that are designed to strengthen the role of women and women's organisations in democratisation processes, and to promote the observance of women's rights. Together with countries including Canada, Germany, Norway and Denmark, the Netherlands is one of the leading donors supporting these gender projects. During the Austrian Chairmanship, an OSCE action plan on gender was adopted and discussed at the implementation meeting on the human dimension. The Netherlands intends to continue to prioritise the gender issue during its Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2003. It is important, however, to ensure that the focus remains on security and conflict prevention. In addition, the Dutch Chairmanship could seek to improve the OSCE's recruitment and selection procedures for jobs either in Vienna or in the field, given that these are areas lacking in gender awareness.

Smuggling and trafficking are also two issues that have been put forward in Vienna as topics of debate during the Economic Forum that the Netherlands will be organising. *Trafficking* is deemed to refer to the trade in women, and in human beings in general, and also to the illicit trade in and smuggling of arms, drugs and money. The appeal of topics such as gender and trafficking lies in their application to all the participating states. Thanks to their geographical neutrality, they form a counterweight to the division in the OSCE described earlier.

The attacks in the United States on 11 September and the armed struggle in Afghanistan have brought the attention of international politics back to the Central Asian countries, which had long been completely forgotten.⁴⁰ To the OSCE's credit, it had already taken an interest in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan, and Turkmenistan prior to 11 September, *inter alia* by appointing a personal representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the Central Asian countries.⁴¹ All these countries also have some form of OSCE presence in their territories. Although they have a common history as Soviet states, and share a number of problems and interests, the gap between them has widened considerably since they gained independence from the Soviet Union. With the exception of Turkmenistan, they are all members of the coalition against terrorism and have allowed a number of countries, notably the United States, to station military forces on their territory. They are ruled by autocratic governments and are the scene of serious and recurrent human rights violations. With the exception of Turkmenistan, the Central Asian countries have started to harmonise their political, economic and humanitarian policies and have announced plans for working together more closely, not only at the OSCE, but also in other international bodies. The issues in which the Central Asian countries are particularly interested are security (e.g. in relation to the Fergana valley, with its problems of terrorism, drug trafficking and disputed borders, and also to water scarcity), the economy (e.g. in relation to underdevelopment and large-scale energy supplies) and domestic political transformation (e.g. in relation

40 This information is based on Lara Griffith, *The Impact of September 11 on Human Rights Defenders in Central Asia*. Conference paper distributed during the Dublin Platform of Human Rights Defenders, Dublin, 17–19 January 2002. See also Does, R. (February 2002), Midden-Azië terug in de internationale belangstelling (Renewed international interest in Central Asia), in: *Internationale Spectator*, no. 2, pp. 76–80.

41 In the recent past, this post was filled by a former Secretary General of the OSCE, Wilhelm Höynck. As from 2002, Herbert Salber, a German diplomat, has been acting as the personal representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia.

to democratisation and the promotion of human rights). These correspond well to the OSCE's three dimensions.

Although the Russians are to some extent justified in complaining about the division in the OSCE, this should not tempt the OSCE to turn the spotlight away from the human rights situation in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the states of the former Soviet Union. There are major problems in the Central Asian countries with regard to the human dimension, such as the absence of free elections, suppression of the freedom of speech, suppression of press freedom, the repression of religious minorities and conscientious objectors, extra-judicial detention, unfair trials, the cruel and inhumane treatment of detainees, and the forced psychiatric treatment of people campaigning for the protection of human rights.

The AIV advises the Dutch government to ensure that these human rights violations remain on the OSCE's political agenda during the term of its Chairmanship. Governments in question should be warned that such violations are contrary to the values, standards, rules and arrangements agreed within the OSCE. The Chairmanship will need to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether quiet diplomacy or political pressure forms the most effective means of improving the human rights situation in these countries.

Another issue that is bound to land on the Dutch Chairmanship's desk is the matter of police cooperation in the OSCE. This topic is becoming increasingly relevant, particularly in the light of the importance of maintaining or restoring domestic order in preventing, containing or defusing international crises. The OSCE has now appointed a Senior Police Adviser, and has devoted considerable resources to the training of police officers, for example in Kosovo. One of the aspects covered during training is human rights, in respect of which use is made of the expertise of the Council of Europe. The OSCE also works together with the European Union in this context. The OSCE could decide to concentrate on supplying strategic support to countries that request it, for example by helping to set up or reform national police forces.

The final issue on which the Dutch Chairmanship could try and make progress is that of the OSCE's legal status. After all, the Netherlands has long been in favour of the OSCE acquiring legal personality. Many ultimately fruitless debates on the OSCE's legal status were held in the 1990s. The OSCE would be able to operate more effectively if it had legal personality, not only because it could then conclude agreements, but also in the interests of the legal protection and security of its staff (for example on mission) and because of the financial and fiscal benefits this would bring. Although the majority of the participating states are in favour of giving the OSCE a treaty basis, the United States has consistently blocked any such decision. Taken together with the American desire referred to above not to allow decision-making at the OSCE to be governed by rules and procedures, the American opposition to giving the OSCE legal personality suggests that the United States may deliberately be trying to ensure the OSCE remains organisationally weak in order to be able to influence it.

The AIV urges the Dutch government to use its Chairmanship in 2003 to give fresh impetus to the debate on legal personality for the OSCE.

As already indicated, the Dutch Chairmanship will (and indeed should) be dominated by the need for continuity and by the desire to make further progress on a number of items already on the OSCE's agenda. For this reason, just one topic is suggested for the Netherlands to introduce during its term of office: a systematic approach to lessons

learned. This is followed, in Section II.4, by a proposal to form a group of wise persons that would be tasked with examining the revitalisation and reform of the OSCE.

Although this has not actually been laid down anywhere in writing, it seems reasonable to assume that the OSCE takes account of past experiences in planning its future activities. Although occasional references are made to lessons learned when field activities are discussed at the OSCE, as far as we know this is not done in any systematic – let alone standardised – fashion. Even when the Operation Centre was established and the Secretariat reorganised, no explicit provision was made for evaluation and the need to make use of lessons learned. And yet not only would it be useful to conduct an evaluation of the OSCE's activities, particularly its field operations (alongside a form of scholarly self-assessment), it could also have a positive impact both on the organisation's effectiveness and on its legitimacy. The crucial issue here is to strengthen the OSCE's capacity for learning from its own experiences. Among the points that should form part of any assessment are an operation's success in achieving its objectives, and the financial aspects.

Almost every self-respecting organisation conducts an assessment of its own work. The UN, for example, assesses its operations; the European Union conducts policy evaluation; and the Netherlands conducts post-operations evaluation of its own role in UN operations. In many cases, the assessment is performed by the organisation itself; the UN, for example, has formed its own Lessons Learned Unit for this very purpose.

The AIV calls upon the Dutch Chairmanship to launch a debate within the OSCE on the desirability of independent evaluation of the organisation's activities, and in particular of missions. The aim would be to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the OSCE's operations and to draw conclusions for future operations. The precise nature of the assessment unit is not the most important aspect here; the key issue is that a debate should be started. The UN's Lessons Learned Unit could serve as a model in this respect.

II.4 The OSCE: the need for revitalisation and reform

All the above factors (uncertainty, the questionable loyalty of the participating states, the lack of clarity about the OSCE's role as a result of which it is entrusted with a large number of disparate responsibilities and activities, the fact that the organisation is actually still a conference, inadequate decision-making procedures, the lack of operational continuity and the political divide within its own ranks) raise the question of whether the OSCE is at risk of losing some of its ability to act. If so, the OSCE will lose its political relevance and face a crisis.

This is a danger of which many participating states are aware and is also the reason why the issue of internal reform has been raised at regular intervals. As different participating states have different ideas about the type of reform needed, it is almost impossible for the debate to get anywhere. After all, the participating states have disagreed for many years now about the reform and revitalisation of the OSCE, despite claims that the organisation cannot function effectively without it. Regrettably, the OSCE's participating states simply do not possess Baron von Münchhausen's magical ability to drag himself out of a swamp by his own hair. Views about the future of the OSCE differ too widely. However, perhaps external pressure can bring about the type of progress that internal discussion has thus far failed to produce.

Finally, the AIV proposes that the Dutch Chairmanship should press for the formation of a representative, international group of wise persons, whose task it would be to examine the reform and revitalisation of the OSCE. The group's mandate should in any event include defining the limits of the OSCE's responsibilities and duties, thereby making allowance for the possibility of shedding certain responsibilities and joining forces with other organisations. Other issues to be examined by the group would be the continuity of the OSCE's operations in the light of the annual rotation of the Chairmanship, and the organisation of the decision-making process.

Not only should the group of wise persons be representative of the wide range of participating states, it should also carry sufficient political clout to make it difficult for the participating states to ignore its recommendations. The group should submit regular progress reports to the Permanent Council in Vienna before presenting a final report to the OSCE's Ministerial Council meeting scheduled for December 2003, indicating how agreement could be reached on the organisation's revitalisation and reform.

III Contribution to the agenda for the Dutch Chairmanship of the OSCE: a recapitulation of findings

III.1 General

The evaporation of the East-West conflict has put an end to the need for the OSCE (or CSCE) to act as a meeting place for the two blocs. It is no longer self-evident that the OSCE should be the principal platform for consultation and dialogue, particularly as there are plenty of other bodies in which Eastern and Western countries can now meet. Given that the role of a meeting place between East and West was the main reason for the CSCE's existence during the Cold War, it is hardly surprising that the future role and responsibility of its successor, the OSCE, are now uncertain. The participating states have not managed to fill the gap left at the OSCE by the ending of the East-West conflict satisfactorily and unambiguously.

Despite the introduction of such catch-all terms as *comprehensive security* and *cooperative security*, there is still a lack of cohesion in the wide range of disparate activities performed by the OSCE. Indeed, the terms in question are so all-encompassing that they have not helped to harmonise the security interests of the various participating states. It is important to bear in mind, moreover, that the OSCE is not in itself a defence organisation. Collective defence has never been one of its objectives. After all, the OSCE has no weapons or forces with which to enforce security in and among its participating states.

The reform and enlargement of NATO and the European Union are casting an ever larger shadow before them. The OSCE is dividing into two camps: on the one hand their member states and those countries that seem likely to join them in the near future; on the other hand the other countries for which no such prospect beckons. It is important for the United States and the Russian Federation to remain members of the OSCE on an equal footing. However, as US-Russian relations improve, as more countries join NATO and the European Union and as the two organisations become more actively involved in matters affecting European security, so the OSCE will gradually lose its political significance. The process has now been speeded up by the Council of Europe's encroachment into OSCE territory.

The operation of the OSCE is based on the political will of the participating states to subject their international relations and their domestic policies to common political agreements. These impose limitations on their political freedom, given that participating states are expected to observe certain agreed standards of behaviour, towards both each other and their own citizens. Whilst they do not always do so, the agreements remain the benchmarks by which their conduct is judged. If they fail to meet the standards (as in Chechnya and Yugoslavia, and as in the case of the frozen conflicts), they can be called upon to account for their conduct in the OSCE. Nonetheless, the OSCE cannot enforce a certain standard of behaviour. This tradition of consultation that has gradually come into being during the years of the OSCE's existence has helped to canalise political change, both in Europe as a whole and in individual countries, and has an inherent value for this reason.

III.2 The dimensions of the OSCE

The AIV believes that the OSCE tends to lean too heavily on past successes in the arena of arms control. The AIV advises the Dutch Chairmanship to consider, and to discuss in the OSCE, which of the existing agreements on arms control should be prioritised. It is also absolutely vital for the Forum for Security Cooperation to keep in touch with the debates and consultations at the OSCE in general, and within the Permanent Council in particular. Precisely how this is done (i.e. whether the Forum does the groundwork for the Permanent Council or the two consultative bodies are fully merged) is of lesser importance than the fact that the OSCE's politico-military dimension continues in full force. If the Forum for Security Cooperation loses touch, it risks becoming a political irrelevance.

The AIV believes that the OSCE's primary objective in the economic and environmental dimension (EED) should be to prevent and contain conflicts. The OSCE can seek to attain these goals by acting as a catalyst in conjunction with other international organisations active in the fields of economics and the environment. They are in a better position than the OSCE to take effective, targeted action in this area thanks to their mandates, expertise and experience. In this connection, the OSCE should operate basically as a platform for exchanging information on activities with other international organisations active in the fields of economics and the environment. The organisations involved here would include, for example, the European Union, the World Bank, the IMF, the OECD, the EBRD and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The OSCE should focus its efforts on those countries which are unlikely to qualify for membership of the European Union in the foreseeable future, as they will probably be most open to assistance and support offered by the OSCE as part of a conflict prevention strategy.

The AIV would also draw the following conclusions in the light of the information given in Chapter I:

- *On the basis of the description given of the OSCE's current role, the AIV concludes that the OSCE – acting partly as a complement to and partly in conjunction with other international organisations – still has a valuable role to play in the relations between its participating states.*
- *The OSCE offers a genuine platform for permanent consultation between the participating states. This tradition of consultation is valuable in itself. Moreover, the OSCE is the only regional organisation for cooperation on security issues of which the United States and the Russian Federation are members on equal terms. Another important point is the membership of the Central Asian countries.*
- *The concepts of comprehensive security and cooperative security are so wide-ranging as to scarcely define the limits of the OSCE's activities and responsibilities. Moreover, the OSCE operates in three different dimensions, each of which has its own particular characteristics and dynamics. In other words, the OSCE is a regional organisation with the mandate and expertise required to tackle security issues from a broad perspective. The other side of the coin, however, is that the OSCE encompasses a huge variety of tasks and activities. It has an important role to play, for example, in relation to policing, election observation, security policy and the human dimension, each of which has a bearing on the security situation in Europe. At the same time, these responsibilities are so diverse that it is not always clear what the*

OSCE's focus is or should be. As a result, the OSCE may be said to be an organisation that performs a large number of disparate activities the relationship between which is not always clear and in respect of which it is also not always clear why the OSCE takes them on.

- *The AIV urges the Dutch government to prioritise, during its Chairmanship of the OSCE, the themes of conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, based on the OSCE's expertise in relation to the security dimension, the economic and environmental dimension, and the humanitarian dimension. Designating conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation as policy spearheads should also make it easier to set priorities for the OSCE's responsibilities and activities. The OSCE should undertake new activities only if they help to prevent conflicts or to further the cause of post-conflict rehabilitation.*

III.3 Decision-making

The AIV concludes that decision-making in the OSCE could be described as a conference with a minimum of rules and procedures as well as a segmented set of decision-makers, and that the enlargement of the European Union and NATO is having the effect of drawing a line in the OSCE between the member states and prospective member states of these two organisations on the one hand, and those countries that are unlikely to qualify for membership in the near future on the other. Given that most of the latter countries are located in regions in which OSCE missions have recently been undertaken (and in some cases have actually received missions on their own territory), it would not be going too far to say that the OSCE is dividing into two camps.

The AIV urges the Dutch Chairmanship to ensure that the question of the efficiency of decision-making remains on the OSCE's agenda. *The AIV is aware that agreement has not been reached in the past on proposals made by delegations in this connection. Most countries are unwilling to abandon the principle of consensual decision-making. For this reason, a proposal has been made for a procedure (i.e. the institution of a committee of wise persons) that could promote change by applying pressure from the outside.*

The AIV believes that the relationship with the Russian Federation needs investing in. Indeed, failure to take Russian criticism of the OSCE seriously would send the wrong signal. It goes without saying that each individual complaint made by the Russians should be assessed on its own merits. The AIV further urges the Dutch Chairmanship to do its utmost to facilitate a proper discussion of issues that play 'West of Vienna', despite the fact that certain partners may be reluctant to discuss them, and may perhaps even be opposed to any form of discussion. Such issues could include freedom of religion, the integration of minorities, the deplorable position of many Roma and Sinti groups in Western Europe and xenophobia.

III.4 Chairmanship

The Dutch Chairmanship of the OSCE is more likely to be successful if the Dutch government:

- 1 brings a high standard of expertise to bear on issues on the OSCE's agenda, in particular in relation to areas in which the OSCE has undertaken missions;*
- 2 takes appropriate political and diplomatic action in preparing a strategy for tackling*

these issues; it is vital in this respect that the Chairmanship is sufficiently aware of the concerns of all the members of the OSCE;

- 3 makes available sufficient staff, both in Vienna and The Hague, with fast, reliable communication between the two locations;*
- 4 commits sufficient financial resources to fund new initiatives and projects;*
- 5 ensures that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is the political embodiment of the Chairmanship. This should be reflected in a high level of personal commitment and personal activity. After all, the Minister of Foreign Affairs represents the highest political authority in the organisation. He, rather than the Chair of the Permanent Council, is the OSCE's public face. In this connection, it is also important for the Dutch Chairmanship of the OSCE to be supported by the entire government, as other ministries apart from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may be called upon to assist with certain OSCE duties during the Netherlands' term of office.*

The experience gained by previous Chairmen-in-Office of the OSCE leads the AIV to conclude that developments in the international arena will be the main factors influencing the Netherlands' conduct of its Chairmanship. In other words, the work of the Chairman-in-Office revolves around the latest international developments. It is therefore crucial for the Dutch government to take steps to ensure it can respond swiftly and effectively to international developments.

The experience of the Norwegian Chairmanship demonstrates in particular the importance of ensuring that the OSCE unit in The Hague and the delegation in Vienna work in tandem. This can only be done by making clear arrangements about the division of responsibilities. Also, the experience of previous Chairmanships underlines the value of ensuring that both the head of the OSCE unit in The Hague and the Permanent Representative in Vienna (having due regard for their own individual powers and responsibilities) have direct access to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This is the only way of guaranteeing that the Minister of Foreign Affairs can be an effective and decisive Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. This is on condition, though, that communications between The Hague and Vienna are both open and fast.

To ensure that the Dutch Chairmanship is both effective and efficient, the AIV recommends that the delegation in Vienna should make maximum use of groups of friends, open-ended working groups and special representatives of the Chairman-in-Office. This should help both to create broad support for decisions taken by the OSCE and to ensure that other participating states, apart from the Chairmanship, remain closely involved in the work of the OSCE.

The AIV advises the Dutch Chairmanship, in strengthening the position of the Secretary General and the Secretariat, to restrict itself to small but concrete steps that the Chairmanship is capable of taking on its own. More specifically, the Netherlands has in the past supported the principle of strengthening the Secretariat. The AIV proposes in this connection that, for the benefit of future Chairmanships, the staff complement of the OSCE Secretariat should be supplemented by as many staff as are required to enhance its continuity. In a similar manner to the role performed by Programme Officers in relation to missions, the prime duty of these additional members of staff should be to guarantee the continuity of OSCE policy under successive Chairmanships. They should not concern themselves with the OSCE's operational duties and should instead concentrate on supporting the Chairmanship in preparing decisions in Vienna. Until this suggestion is adopted, the Netherlands could consider strengthening the Secretariat by seconding Dutch officials to the Secretariat at its own expense.

III.5 Political and public support

As a first step on the road to boosting political support for the OSCE, the Dutch Chairmanship could propose that each Chairman should not only appear before the elected parliamentarians at the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly at the beginning of his term of office, to set out his strategy for the Chairmanship and the plans he wishes to implement, but should also report at the end of his term of office on the results achieved during the year. Until there is sufficient backing for this suggestion, the Dutch Chairmanship could put it into practice on a voluntary basis.

The AIV also recommends that the OSCE should strengthen its public information activities and should develop a public information policy. The Dutch Chairmanship could take action to this end, for example by proposing to permanently earmark a higher proportion of the OSCE budget for public information purposes. Another possibility would be to examine ways and means of integrating public information into all aspects of the OSCE's work, including its field activities, so that the OSCE would receive credit for its role.

III.6 Missions

The AIV advises the Dutch government to advocate the idea of placing a time limit on future OSCE missions so as to set a deadline by which the objectives of their mandates must have been achieved. This will compel the parties involved and all other participating states, to a much greater extent than is currently the case, to pursue a political dialogue about the situation in the host country. In addition, setting a time limit will force the governments of the countries concerned and the heads of missions, to a greater extent than is currently the case, to achieve political and other objectives within the deadlines, thus giving Vienna a greater degree of control. Steps could also be taken to ascertain which of the missions currently in operation could be subjected to a time limit along comparable lines.

The AIV also advises the Dutch Chairmanship to standardise procedures for reporting on missions to the Permanent Council in Vienna, and to establish a fixed mechanism for discussing the reports.

Finally, with a view to exercising proper control over the missions, the AIV advises the Dutch Chairmanship to continue the practice of inviting the Programme Officers from the Secretariat to attend discussions of the missions. The Romanian Chairmanship instituted this practice in 2001. There is every reason for the Dutch Chairmanship to continue it, also as it can help to strengthen the Secretariat and improve cooperation between it and the Chairmanship.

III.7 Issues and the strengthening of the OSCE

The AIV advises the Dutch government to exercise caution in formulating its objectives for its Chairmanship of the OSCE, not so much because of any dearth of ideas or suggestions, but rather because practical experience shows that there are only very limited opportunities for individual countries to prioritise issues of their own. Moreover, the need to respond effectively to international developments and to guarantee the continuity of the OSCE's activities will in itself inevitably create a full agenda that is bound to demand a great deal of the Dutch Chairmanship. As regards ideas and suggestions for issues to be raised by the Dutch Chairmanship, the Dutch government should take its lead from the OSCE's current agenda and from the German-Dutch proposals presented in spring 2001.

The AIV advises the Dutch government to ensure that human rights violations in Central Asian countries remain on the OSCE's political agenda during the term of its Chairmanship, as such violations are contrary to the values, standards, rules and arrangements agreed within the OSCE. The Chairmanship will need to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether quiet diplomacy or political pressure is the most effective means of improving the human rights situation in these countries.

The AIV urges the Dutch government to use its Chairmanship in 2003 to give fresh impetus to the debate on legal personality for the OSCE.

The AIV calls upon the Dutch Chairmanship to launch a debate within the OSCE on the desirability of independent evaluation of the organisation's activities, and in particular of missions. The aim would be to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the OSCE's operations and to draw conclusions for future operations. The precise nature of the assessment unit is not the most important aspect here; the key issue is that a debate should be started. The UN's Lessons Learned Unit could serve as a model in this respect.

The AIV has concluded that the OSCE's practical effectiveness is hampered by uncertainty about the organisation's position in the international arena, a lack of clarity about the OSCE's role (as a result of which it is entrusted with a large number of disparate responsibilities and activities), the questionable loyalty of the participating states, the fact that the organisation is actually still a conference, inadequate decision-making procedures, a lack of operational continuity and a political divide within its own ranks. This raises the question of whether the OSCE is at risk of losing some of its ability to act. If so, the OSCE will lose its political relevance and face a crisis. This is a danger of which many participating states are aware and is also the reason why the issue of internal reform has been raised at regular intervals. As different participating states have different ideas about the type of reform needed, it is almost impossible for the debate to get anywhere. After all, the participating states have disagreed for many years now about the reform and revitalisation of the OSCE, despite claims that the organisation cannot function effectively without it. Perhaps external pressure can bring about the type of progress that internal discussion has thus far failed to produce.

The AIV proposes that the Dutch Chairmanship should press for the formation of a representative, international group of wise persons, whose task it would be to examine the reform and revitalisation of the OSCE. The group's mandate should in any event include defining the limits of the OSCE's responsibilities and duties, thereby making allowance for the possibility of shedding certain responsibilities and joining forces with other organisations. Other issues to be examined by the group would be the continuity of the OSCE's operations in the light of the annual rotation of the Chairmanship, and the organisation of the decision-making process.

Not only should the group of wise persons be representative of the community constituting the organisation's participating states, it should also carry sufficient political clout to make it difficult for the participating states to ignore its recommendations. The group should submit regular progress reports to the Permanent Council in Vienna before presenting a final report to the OSCE's Ministerial Council meeting scheduled for December 2003, indicating how agreement could be reached on the organisation's revitalisation and reform.

Security Policy Department
Security and Defence Policy Division
Bezuidenhoutseweg 67
2594 AC Den Haag

Professor F.H.J.J. Andriessen
Acting Chair
Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV)
Postbus 20061
2500 EB Den Haag

Date	27 April 2001	Contact	Daphne Bergsma
Our ref.	DVB/VD-183/01	Tel.	(070) 348 5393
Page	1/4	Fax	(070) 348 5479
Encl.	Letter to House of Representatives of 28 March 2001	Email	daphne.bergsma@minbuza.nl
Re	OSCE Chairmanship: request for advice		

Dear Professor Andriessen,

The Netherlands, which has long been active in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its predecessor, the CSCE, has announced its candidacy for the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2003. Formal selection of the Netherlands cannot take place until the OSCE ministerial meeting in Bucharest this November or December. Given the high degree of support expressed informally and formally for the Netherlands' candidacy, we are almost certain to be selected for the Chairmanship. We will then become a member of the OSCE Troika on 1 January 2002, along with Romania and Portugal, who hold the Chairmanships for 2001 and 2002 respectively. The Netherlands will, however, have the weightiest task during its own Chairmanship in 2003.

The Chairmanship will represent a major commitment for both the Netherlands' permanent representation at the OSCE in Vienna and the Ministry in The Hague. Because the OSCE itself is a relatively small international organisation with a modest Secretariat, the Chairman-in-Office (i.e. the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the state holding the Chairmanship) is mainly responsible for providing political leadership. We are already taking steps to carry out this task successfully. So far, the emphasis has been on financing and staffing. Our primary model has been the Norwegian Chairmanship, the most recent to be generally seen as a success.

Comparing the Chairmanships

Recent Chairmanships have varied in quality. The Netherlands will try to make its Chairmanship an active and a successful one, that will be regarded as effective by most OSCE Participating States. I would ask the Advisory Council to draft a comparative report on the strengths and weaknesses of the Chairmanships since 1995 and, on the basis of your conclusions, to issue recommendations on how the Netherlands can best approach its own Chairmanship. The year 1995 has been chosen because it was then, during the Swiss Chairmanship, that the first major OSCE mission was established, in Bosnia. This and

subsequent events (particularly in Albania and Kosovo) have greatly altered the scope and nature of the organisation's activities. The Chairmanship is now considerably more onerous.

Decision-making procedures

In your report, I would ask you to go into detail about the procedures used in decision-making during each Chairmanship. Within the OSCE, decisions are always taken by consensus, which can lead to difficulties in an organisation with 55 member states. In recent years, complaints have frequently been voiced that decisions were made in advance by a small group of insiders. What can the Netherlands do to forestall such complaints? Would it be wise to set up "groups of friends" for particular subjects, and what conditions would have to be met? Considering the EU's role within the OSCE, and the ever larger degree of policy coordination within the EU (examples being the CFSP and the CESDP), what is the best approach to cooperation with non-EU countries? The Netherlands' approach should also take account of our own tradition of multilateral negotiation and its strengths and weaknesses.

Relationship between the Secretariat and the Chairmanship

Given the size of the OSCE Secretariat, its capacity to provide support is limited. Still, it serves as an important safeguard of continuity and quality, especially since the work of the Chairmanship has recently been growing in volume and complexity. The OSCE Secretary-General, Jan Kubiš, recently proposed creating firm guidelines for the relationship between the Chairmanship and the Secretary-General and Secretariat. What form should this relationship take, given the limitations of a small organisation that must remain flexible? How does the Secretary-General fit into this relationship? How should the Chairmanship and the Secretariat communicate and how can we most smoothly take over the activities of the previous Chairmanship?

Strengthening the OSCE

Please find enclosed a recent letter to the Dutch House of Representatives, giving an analysis of the current state of the OSCE, which is more or less one of stagnation. It also presents a number of proposals developed in cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany, which are intended to revitalise the OSCE by strengthening it, improving its working methods and opening new areas of cooperation. They are meant to serve as a basis for multilateral and bilateral talks among Participating States. Other countries, political parties,¹ NGOs and scholars are developing more new ideas. I would ask you to present proposals and thoughts on expanding the role of the OSCE in preventing and controlling crises and conflicts, taking into account the debate on this issue taking place in Vienna. The effectiveness of a number of OSCE instruments, such as missions and REACT (Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams), can also be considered. I would appreciate it if you would give special consideration to the position of the Russian Federation.

New themes for the OSCE

In the past few years, the OSCE has shown that it can take the initiative on new themes in debates on international security. For example, the organisation has become involved in police issues. One topic of discussion is the OSCE's potential role in fighting new threats: terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking. Please identify any new issues where the

1 See e.g. the October 2000 policy memorandum by the Dutch party Green Left, '*Met alle geweld voorkomen, beleidsvoorstellen voor conflictpreventie*'.

OSCE could be useful, arising from recent developments in the debate on international security. Are there any other issues you believe the OSCE should take up?

In closing, let me briefly tell you what studies by other organisations the Dutch Chairmanship wishes to address. The European Platform for Conflict Prevention is working on an analysis of the problems of Central Asia and the Caucasus. This will form the basis for a seminar on the role of the OSCE in Central Asia, to take place later this year in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands Helsinki Committee will focus on getting NGOs involved in the Chairmanship and on the theme of the human dimension. We are in discussion with Clingendael to examine ways of strengthening the OSCE's early warning and conflict prevention capabilities.

In view of the need to prepare for the Chairmanship, I hope to receive your recommendations as soon as possible, preferably by December of this year.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)
Jozias van Aartsen
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Decisions taken by the Permanent Council between November 1999 and October 2001

02-12-99	PC.DEC/319	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
02-12-99	PC.DEC/320	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia
02-12-99	PC.DEC/321	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Latvia
02-12-99	PC.DEC/322	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje
02-12-99	PC.DEC/323	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan
02-12-99	PC.DEC/324	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Yerevan
09-12-99	PC.DEC/325	Improvement of the OSCE employment conditions
09-12-99	PC.DEC/326	Task Force for the REACT Programme and the setting up of a Operation Centre within the CPC
09-12-99	PC.DEC/327	Mandate of the OSCE Mission to Croatia
09-12-99	PC.DEC/328	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Estonia
09-12-99	PC.DEC/329	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Moldova; expand the scope of the present mandate to 'ensuring transparency of the removal and destruction of Russian ammunition and armaments and co-ordination of financial and technical assistance offered to facilitate withdrawal and destruction'
09-12-99	PC.DEC/330	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator to Ukraine
15-12-99	PC.DEC/331	Adoption of the 2000 Unified Budget
15-12-99	PC.DEC/332	1999 Budget reductions
15-12-99	PC.DEC/333	Joint 'Registration Task Force' in Kosovo 'to participate in a joint 'Registration Task Force' within the framework of UNMIK with the task of planning and executing a civil registration in Kosovo, including registration outside Kosovo by the IOM'
15-12-99	PC.DEC/334	Expansion of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia - monitoring of the border between Georgia and the Chechnyan Republic of the Russian Federation - increase the size of the Mission by up to 20 personnel
20-01-00	PC.DEC/335	Budget for the border monitoring operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia Annexe: Proposed Budget
27-01-00	PC.DEC/336	The Human Dimension Seminar on 'Children and Armed Conflicts', 23-26 May 2000, Warsaw
27-01-00	PC.DEC/337	Formal ending of the mandate of the OSCE Representative to the Joint Committee on the Skrunnda Radar Station
03-02-00	PC.DEC/338	Communication account arrears
10-02-00	PC.DEC/339	Establishment of an OSCE Field Office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan Annexe: 2000 Budget proposal
10-02-00	PC.DEC/340	Main subjects and organizational modalities for the Eighth Meeting of the Economic Forum, 11-14 April 2000, Prague - Economic rehabilitation and the next steps in the transition: institution-building, rule of law and the role of civil society; - Environmental impact of conflicts; rehabilitation measures; - Experiences with post-conflict rehabilitation efforts.

10-02-00	PC.DEC/341	Spending authority of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo
24-02-00	PC.DEC/342	Spending authority of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo
09-03-00	PC.DEC/343	Supplementary budget for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo Annexe: Budget for the year 2000 including the budget proposal for the Registration Task Force
16-03-00	PC.DEC/344	Regional strategy for South Eastern Europe - To develop a comprehensive and interdimensional policy on region-wide and cross-border issues in South-Eastern Europe; - To extend individual OSCE field operations' expertise and resources to other existing OSCE Field operations in the region [...]; - To increase close co-operation with other international organizations [...]; - To assist countries in the region in implementing their OSCE commitments and obligations [...]; - To support ongoing regional efforts in arms control as well as in confidence and security building; - To support appropriate mechanisms, arrangements and initiatives of (sub)regional co-operation; - To develop carefully targeted OSCE regional projects [...]; - To reinforce its support to the Pact's goals and activities; - To undertake activities, including executing projects requested by the Stability Pact; and - To propose OSCE projects to contribute to the Stability Pact's objectives.
23-03-00	PC.DEC/345	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Croatia
13-04-00	PC.DEC/346	Expansion of the border monitoring operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia - [...] decides to increase the size of the present mission to up to 42 international personnel; Annexe: Budget for a period of 4.5 months
06-04-00	PC.DEC/347	Extension of the mandate of the Director of the ODIHR
18-04-00	PC.DEC/348	Agenda, timetable and other organizational modalities of the 2000 Human Dimension Seminar 'Children and armed conflict' (Warsaw, 23-26 May 2000) Working Groups: - Addressing the situation of children during active armed conflict and immediately post-conflict - Addressing the longer-term needs of war-affected children post-conflict and in frozen conflicts - and politico-military issues
18-04-00	PC.DEC/349	Extension of the appointment of the external auditor
18-05-00	PC.DEC/350	Supervision and dates of the General Election in Bosnia and Herzegovina
25-05-00	PC.DEC/351	Supplementary budget for OSCE tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina relating to the supervision of the general elections in the year 2000 Annexe: First Alternative Overview
01-06-00	PC.DEC/352	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Moldova
01-06-00	PC.DEC/353	OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues
08-06-00	PC.DEC/354	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo

08-06-00	PC.DEC/355	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia
15-06-00	PC.DEC/356	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine
15-06-00	PC.DEC/357	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Latvia
15-06-00	PC.DEC/358	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Estonia
15-06-00	PC.DEC/359	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje
15-06-00	PC.DEC/360	Progress Report on Classification Review Annexe: Adjustment of posts following classification review
22-06-00	PC.DEC/361	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan
22-06-00	PC.DEC/362	Revised OSCE budget process and budget format
22-06-00	PC.DEC/363	Place, date and overall theme for the Ninth Meeting of the Economic Forum 'Transparency and good governance in economic matters'
29-06-00	PC.DEC/364	Strengthening the OSCE Operational Capacities (REACT, Operations Centre, Restructuring of the OSCE Secretariat) 'decides to implement the REACT programme and make it fully operational in the shortest possible time; further decides to enhance the operational capacities of the Secretariat by implementing a Unified Human Resources Management System that will significantly improve the OSCE's rapid reaction capacity; the programme provides for rapid recruitment and deployment in crisis situations and an integrated staffing mechanism for all OSCE missions and field operations' Annexe: Proposals for Secretariat strengthening
20-07-00	PC.DEC/365	Audited financial statement for 1999
20-07-00	PC.DEC/366	Amendment of the OSCE Staff Regulations
24-08-00	PC.DEC/367	OSCE-Japan Conference 2000: 'Comprehensive Security in Central Asia - Sharing OSCE and Asian Experiences' (Tokyo, 11-12 December 2000) Sessions: - Comprehensive and political security (political security, including global issues, in Central Asia, including non-proliferation, OSCE confidence- and security-building measures, small arms and light weapons, terrorism, drugs, organized crime, religious extremism; co-operation in building comprehensive security, both institutional and topical) - Human dimension (democratic institutions and human rights: achievements in Central Asia; democratic institutions and human rights: the way ahead) - Economic and environmental security (market economy and development in Central Asia: experiences of Central Asian Countries, and support by other participating States and Partners for Co-operation; Natural resources and environmental issues in Central Asia)
24-08-00	PC.DEC/368	Supplementary budget for the border monitoring operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia
24-08-00	PC.DEC/369	Organizational modalities, indicative agenda and work programme of the Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues (Warsaw, 17 to 27 October 2000)

07-09-00	PC.DEC/370	Year 2000 Budget mid-year review and supplementary budgets
07-09-00	PC.DEC/371	2000 Mediterranean Seminar on 'Confidence-Building Measures and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures: the OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region' (Portoroz, 30 and 31 October 2000) - OSCE's comprehensive approach to security: confidence-building measures (CBMs) and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) - Mutually reinforcing institutions and their undertakings in the Mediterranean - The Mediterranean experience with CBMs and the possible relevance of OSCE tools, instruments and mechanisms for the Mediterranean region Annexe: Agenda and organizational modalities
21-09-00	PC.DEC/372	Extension of the mandate of the Border Monitoring Operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia Annexe: Supplementary budget for 1.5 month
21-09-00	PC.DEC/373	The Police Monitoring Group in Croatia
28-09-00	PC.DEC/374	Recommendations to strengthen the mechanism for internal oversight
12-10-00	PC.DEC/375	Supplementary budget for the 2000 Ministerial Council Meeting in Vienna
24-10-00	PC.DEC/376	Timetable and organizational modalities of the Eighth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council (Vienna, 27 and 28 November 2000)
09-11-00	PC.DEC/377	OSCE-Korea Conference 2001: 'Applicability of OSCE CSBMs in North-East Asia' (19–21 March 2001, Seoul) - OSCE confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) - Regional CSBMs - CSBMs in North-East Asia
09-11-00	PC.DEC/378	Granting of the status of Partner for Co-operation to Thailand
09-11-00	PC.DEC/379	Developing recommendations regarding applications for future partnership
10-11-00	PC.DEC/380	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
20-11-00	PC.DEC/381	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
20-11-00	PC.DEC/382	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo
26-11-00	PC.DEC/383	Report on OSCE legal capacity and on privileges and immunities to the Ministerial Council
26-11-00	PC.DEC/384	Forwarding a draft agenda to the Ministerial Council
28-11-00	PC.DEC/385	Forwarding of draft documents to the Ministerial Council - Draft Vienna Declaration on the role of the OSCE in South-Eastern Europe - Draft decision on enhancing the OSCE's efforts to combat trafficking in human beings - Draft decision on the appointment of Mr. Rolf Ekéus as OSCE HCNM - Draft decision on the appointment of the Representative on Freedom of the Media - Draft decision on the Chairmanship in the year 2002

		- Draft decision on the next OSCE Ministerial Council/ Summit
		- Draft decision on a scale for large OSCE missions
		- Draft decision on police-related activities
07-12-00	PC.DEC/386	Supplementary budget for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Annexe: Supplementary budget for the observation of elections in Serbia
07-12-00	PC.DEC/387	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Moldova
07-12-00	PC.DEC/388	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Yerevan
07-12-00	PC.DEC/389	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan
07-12-00	PC.DEC/390	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Estonia
07-12-00	PC.DEC/391	Extension of the OSCE Mission to Latvia
07-12-00	PC.DEC/392	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Baku
07-12-00	PC.DEC/393	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia
14-12-00	PC.DEC/394	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine
14-12-00	PC.DEC/395	Extension of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje
14-12-00	PC.DEC/396	Extension of the OSCE Mission to Croatia
14-12-00	PC.DEC/397	OSCE Centre in Tashkent 'to change the name of the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia to the OSCE Centre in Tashkent'
14-12-00	PC.DEC/398	Interim financing arrangement for the scale of contributions for large OSCE missions
14-12-00	PC.DEC/399	Year 2001 Unified Budget Annexe 1: Year 2001 budget Annexe 2: OSCE post table Annexe 3: Head of Mission and Field Operation Fund Annexe 4: List of Missions and Field Operations eligible to benefit from the Head of Mission Fund Annexe 5: Draft amendments to financial regulations Annexe 6: Internal oversight
14-12-00	PC.DEC/400	Year 2000 Budget Revision Annexe: Year 2000 OSCE Unified Budget
11-01-01	PC.DEC/401	Establishment of the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
11-01-01	PC.DEC/402	Budget for the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
18-01-01	PC.DEC/403	Human Dimension Seminar on 'Election Processes' (Warsaw, 29 to 31 May 2001)
01-03-01	PC.DEC/404	Main subjects and organizational modalities for the Ninth Meeting of the Economic Forum on 'Transparency and good governance in economic matters' (Prague, 15 to 18 May 2001) Themes: - issues related to promotion of transparency and good governance; - actors involved in the promotion of transparency and good governance; - instruments for promoting transparency and good governance

22-03-01	PC.DEC/405	Temporary Strengthening of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje
29-03-01	PC.DEC/406	Extension of the mandate of the Border Monitoring Operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia
29-03-01	PC.DEC/407	Agenda, timetable and other organizational modalities of the 2001 Human Dimension Seminar on 'Election Processes' (Warsaw, 29 to 31 May 2001) Working groups: - Looking back to move ahead - Democratic elections, rule of law and good governance - Election processes and stability - Elections and the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and assembly - ODIHR's observation methodology and technical assistance programme
30-03-01	PC.DEC/408	Scale for large OSCE Missions and projects
26-04-01	PC.DEC/409	Extension of the Appointment of the External Auditor
31-05-01	PC.DEC/410	Dates of the Ninth Meeting of the Ministerial Council
31-05-01	PC.DEC/411	Extension of the mandate of the Representative on Freedom of the Media
31-05-01	PC.DEC/412	Supplementary budget for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo
07-06-01	PC.DEC/413	Venue and dates of the Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension issues
07-06-01	PC.DEC/414	Development of a multi-ethnic police element in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)
07-06-01	PC.DEC/415	Further enhancement of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje
21-06-01	PC.DEC/416	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Latvia
21-06-01	PC.DEC/417	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine
21-06-01	PC.DEC/418	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje
21-06-01	PC.DEC/419	Classification system
21-06-01	PC.DEC/420	Agenda and organizational modalities of the OSCE Seminar on 'Preventive Functions of the OSCE: Experience, Possibilities, Tasks' (Kiev, 8 to 9 October 2001) Themes: - The nature of conflict prevention - Roles and specificities of international organizations - The need for a co-ordinated approach
28-06-01	PC.DEC/421	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Estonia
28-06-01	PC.DEC/422	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan
28-06-01	PC.DEC/423	Extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Moldova
28-06-01	PC.DEC/424	Size of the OSCE Mission to Croatia
05-07-01	PC.DEC/425	2001 Mediterranean Seminar on 'The Implementation of OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension Commitments: The OSCE Experience and Its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region' (Dubrovnik, 30 to 31 October 2001) Themes: - The economic and environmental dimension and its implications for security: The role of civil society, the rule of law and good governance

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of OSCE field activities: case studies - The relevance of the OSCE experience in the economic and environmental dimension for the Mediterranean region in developing regional co-operation and cross-border opportunities - Partnership opportunities in the Mediterranean region (stocktaking and recommendations)
12-07-01	PC.DEC/426	<p>Trafficking in human beings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform other international organizations about the position and the measures already taken by the OSCE, including dissemination by the OSCE Secretariat of the Code of Conduct for OSCE personnel and the OSCE Anti-Trafficking Guidelines; - Encourage those international organizations to adopt similar instruments for their personnel if they have not yet done so, to implement them, to investigate cases of wrongdoing, and to take the appropriate measures where necessary; - Invite the relevant international organizations to exchange information on their best practices and regulations already adopted in order to combat trafficking in human beings; - Encourage them to participate in a joint response to trafficking.
19-07-01	PC.DEC/427	Negotiations under Article V of Annexe 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina
19-07-01	PC.DEC/428	Enhancing the effectiveness of Human Dimension Meetings
19-07-01	PC.DEC/429	Place, date and overall theme for the Tenth Meeting of the Economic Forum on 'Co-operation for the Sustainable Use and the Protection of Quality of Water in the Context of the OSCE' (Prague, 28 to 31 May 2002)
19-07-01	PC.DEC/430	Recommendations concerning future applications for partnership
19-07-01	PC.DEC/431	Mid-year review of the year 2001 Unified OSCE Budget
19-07-01	PC.DEC/432	Audited financial statements for 2000
19-07-01	PC.DEC/433	Supplementary budget for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo
19-07-01	PC.DEC/434	Supplementary budget for the OSCE Mission in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
19-07-01	PC.DEC/435	Supplementary budget proposal for the OSCE Communications Network
19-07-01	PC.DEC/436	Supplementary budget for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
06-09-01	PC.DEC/437	Further enhancement of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje
13-09-01	PC.DEC/438	Acts of terrorism in New York City and Washington, DC Day of mourning
28-09-01	PC.DEC/439	Further enhancement of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and the deployment of police advisers and police trainers

Priorities set by recent OSCE Chairmen-in-Office (1998-2002)

Poland, 1998

'Challenges'

- Being ready to face unexpected crisis situations; early warning and preventative mechanisms should be at the heart of the OSCE endeavours.
- A more active role for the OSCE in Central Asia
- Contribution by the OSCE to a new subregional dimension of international policy aimed at grass-root level cooperation, integration and solidarity and based on freedom and democracy.

(Source: Gemerek's address to the Permanent Council, 15 January 1998)

Norway, 1999

'Main priorities'

- To ensure the OSCE responds in a timely cohesive and determined manner to the political challenges facing us by promoting consensus.
- Developing the conceptual framework for the OSCE's contribution to European security. Document-Charter on European security which identifies the tasks of the OSCE in a new century and which defines the relationship between the OSCE and other organizations.
- To enhance the moral authority of the OSCE as a community of values.
- To enhance the operational capabilities of the Organization.

(Source: Vollebaek's address to the Permanent Council, 14 January 1999)

Austria, 2000

'Priorities'

- Significant progress in the return of 7.5 million refugees and internally-displaced person in the OSCE area.
- A functioning Stability Pact for the Balkans.
- Political, rather than military solutions to the conflicts in the Caucasus.
- The organization of free and fair elections in Kosovo as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- The swift implementation of the REACT concept called for in the Charter for European Security which was adopted at the OSCE Istanbul Summit.

(Source: Schuessel's address to the Permanent Council, 13 January 2000)

Romania, 2001

'Priorities'

- Greater collective effort on behalf of the individual without neglecting the traditional OSCE priorities of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.
- New ideas for strengthening political dialogue between OSCE States.
- To speed up the OSCE's response to nascent conflict situations.
- To improve the efficiency of OSCE's crisis management capability and to ensure consistency in post-conflict rehabilitation.
- To strengthen the Organization's operational capacity.
- To strengthen cooperation with the OSCE's international partners and with NGOs.

(Source: Geoana's address to the Permanent Council, 11 January 2001)

Portugal, 2002

'Priorities'

- The fight against terrorism (Action Plan, Personal Representative, Charter).
- Greater articulation and complementarity between the three dimensions of the OSCE
- Strengthening the EED.
- Developing areas of cooperation and greater synergy between the Forum and the Permanent Council.
- Platform for Co-operative Security: reinforcing modalities of dialogue and collaboration between the OSCE and other international organizations.
- Involvement of our citizens in OSCE activities.

(Source: Gama's adress to the Permanent Council, 17 January 2002)

The duration of OSCE missions

Missions	Starting date / Closing date
Long-Term Missions	
• The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje	10/09/1992 -
• The OSCE Mission to Georgia	03/12/1992 -
• The OSCE Mission to Moldova	25/04/1993 -
• The OSCE Mission to Tajikistan	19/02/1994 -
• The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	29/12/1995 -
• The OSCE Mission to Croatia	04/07/1996 -
• The OSCE Mission in Kosovo	01/07/1999 -
• The OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	11/01/2001 -
Other OSCE Field Activities	
• The OSCE Centre in Tashkent (formerly The OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia)	12/07/1995 -
• The OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya	26/04/1995 -
• The OSCE Presence in Albania	03/04/1997 -
• The OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus	18/09/1997 -
• The OSCE Centre in Almaty	23/07/1998 -
• The OSCE Centre in Ashgabad	January 1999 -
• The OSCE Centre in Bishkek	January 1999 -
• OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	13/07/1999 -
• The OSCE Office in Yerevan	16/02/2000 -
• The OSCE Office in Baku	18/07/2000 -
OSCE Activities regarding the Conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference	
• Minsk Process	24/03/1992 -
• The Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference	10/08/1995 -
• High Level Planning Group	23/04/1995 -
OSCE Assistance in Implementation of Bilateral Agreements	
• The OSCE Representative to the Russian-Latvian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners	23/02/1995
• The OSCE Representative to the Estonian Government Commission	04/11/1994
Closed Missions	
• The OSCE Missions of Long Duration in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina	08/09/1992 - 28/06/1993
• The OSCE Representative to the Joint Committee on the Skrunda Radar Station	06/04/1995 - 31/10/1999
• The OSCE Mission to Ukraine	24/11/1994 - 30/04/1999
• The OSCE Mission to Estonia	15/02/1993 - 31/12/2001
• The OSCE Mission to Latvia	19/11/1993 - 31/12/2001

Where possible, the starting dates refer to the dates on which the missions commenced their work. If the date in question is not known, the date specified is the date on which the resolution was passed to undertake the mission.

List of abbreviations used

AIV	Advisory Council on International Affairs
CBM	Confidence-building measure
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPC	Conflict Prevention Centre
CSBM	Confidence and security-building measure
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EED	Economic and environmental dimension
EU	European Union
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities (of the OSCE)
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PC	Permanent Council
REACT	Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Team
sg	Secretary General
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
WEU	Western European Union

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