

The Effectiveness of OSCE Missions: The Cases of Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Martina Huber
David Lewis
Randolf Oberschmidt
Yannick du Pont

Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'
Conflict Research Unit
February 2003



Netherlands Institute of
International Relations 'Clingendael'
Clingendael 7
2597 VH The Hague
P.O. Box 93080
2509 AB The Hague
Phone number: # 31-70-3245384
Telefax: # 31-70-3282002
Email: research@clingendael.nl
Website: <http://www.clingendael.nl/cru>

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BaH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CALO	Central Asian Liaison Office
CiO	Chairman-in-Office
CiT	OSCE Centre in Tashkent
CoE	Council of Europe
CPC	Conflict Prevention Centre
CRPC	Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees
CSBMs	Confidence- and Security-building Measures
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CSO	Committee of Senior Officials
DSC	Department for Security Cooperation
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	Elections Commission
EC TAER	Technical Assistance to the Education Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina
ED	Economic Dimension
EIB	European Investment Bank
ESI	European Stability Initiative
EU	European Union
FO	Field Office
FOM	OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
GFAP	General Framework Agreement for Peace
GoU	Government of Uzbekistan
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities
HD	Human Dimension
HDZ	Bosnian Croat nationalist party
HoM	Head of Mission
IBHI	Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues
IC	International community
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IJC	Independent Judicial Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IO	International organisation
IOM	International organisation for Migration
JNA	Yugoslav national army
LFA	Logical Framework Approach

KM	Konvertibilnih Maraka (Convertible Mark)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIFI	Municipal Infrastructure Finance and Implementation Project
MODP	Municipal Outreach and Development Project
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDI	National Democratic Institute
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OHR	Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PC	Permanent Council of the OSCE
PCA	Partnership and Co-operation Agreement
PCM	Project cycle management
PEC	Provisional Elections Commission
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PIC	Peace Implementation Council
PLIP	Property Law Implementation Plan
PS	Participating States
RC	Regional centre
REACT	Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams
RRTF	Reconstruction and Return Task Force
RS	Republic of Srpska
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SCMM	Standing Committee on Military Matters
SDA	Bosnian Muslim nationalist party
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SDS	Bosnian Serb nationalist party
SFOR	Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
SG	Secretary General
SMEs	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
SMP	Staff Monitored Programme
TCF	Tuzla Citizens Forum
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIBH	United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNODCCP	United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

Long-term OSCE Missions have been a model example of the OSCE's commitment to and capacity for conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction. At the same time, Missions usually stay much longer than initially planned. Is the continuous prolongation of Missions a sign of success, failure or simply necessity? What exactly has been the impact of OSCE Missions? Which factors influence the effectiveness of OSCE Missions? And how can the Chairman-in-Office support Missions in maximising their potential in conflict prevention? The difficulty in finding general answers to these questions lies in the multitude of (external) factors affecting Missions and their environments, the variety of Missions in mandate, size, and time of intervention, and the continuous development and change of the organisation itself.

1. Impact of Missions

The effectiveness and impact of a Mission critically depend on its ability to manage the opportunities and limitations inherent in the organisation and in a particular conflict setting ('impact optimising'). Missions have been able to mitigate concrete problems, assist regions that were less targeted internationally, insist on the compliance with OSCE commitments, and facilitate a coordinated response from international actors. These achievements are in principle grounded in the field presence of Missions, the political pressure generated through peer review, and the expertise available in and to Missions concerning certain issues. Weaknesses, on the other hand, mainly result from the lack of sanctions and insufficient strategic focus of Missions: national policies regarding conflictive issues remain unchanged in practice, recommendations are not followed up, Mission capacities are not applied strategically. However, whether or not a long-term Mission manages to be effective depends on conditions that are not exclusively within the control of the Mission. Key determining factors in this regard relate to the cooperation of the host government, the reaction of the host society to the OSCE Mission, the role of external powers, and the timing and nature of OSCE involvement.

2. Mandates

Due to a constructive ambiguity, mandates of Missions generally accommodate conflict-relevant measures. This flexibility, however, has its price in terms of long-term strategy. Although the letter of the mandate does not prescribe concrete benchmarks to be achieved, the ambition of the mandate often exceeds the financial and analytical capacities of Missions. Clearer priorities need to be communicated in this regard.

3. Comparative Advantage

The comprehensive security concept, cooperative peer review mechanisms, politically binding (and thus farther-reaching) obligations, decentralised, lean and flexible structure, and extensive membership define a clear advantage of the OSCE *vis-à-vis* other organisations. Specific advantages of Missions, which are grounded mainly in their continuous presence in the field, relate to the ability

of Missions to monitor national reforms, exert persistent pressure in the fields of Human Rights and democratisation, build national capacity, react quickly to sensitive issues, build confidence, mediate, also on regional levels, gather reliable information, carry out civil society tasks, and administer post-conflict elections. Comparative advantage in these fields can only materialise if:

- Mission activities are conflict-relevant, -effective and well timed, i.e. reflect the key problems of the conflict setting as well as specific advantages of the OSCE;
- Strategic priorities are embedded in a coordinated OSCE-wide effort, leaving ample freedom to Missions regarding content, and less so regarding financial oversight;
- A performance-based exit process is considered as part of a Mission strategy;
- Institutional knowledge is continuously built up and accessible;
- Management and analytical capacities of Mission staff are strengthened without over bureaucratising existing structures.

Responsibility for such enabling conditions lies only partly with the Mission. It is up to the OSCE as a whole to make a joint effort in supporting its Missions financially, politically and expertise-wise.

4. Independence of Missions

The relatively high degree of independence of Missions is both a necessity and a risk. Missions are best informed of the situation on the ground and are therefore rightly the driving force in determining the course of the Mission. Strengthening the (financial) accountability of Missions, on the other hand, may be conducive to preventing (project) planning from going awry, be it of an ad hoc or finance-driven nature. This may help to prevent unconstructive imbalances resulting from the increasing dependence of Mission activities on the availability of voluntary contributions. The CPC should be strengthened to provide content-related support in the course of interpreting Mission mandates.

5. Recommendations to the CiO

On the basis of an extensive mission survey, four areas are identified that are crucial in optimising the impact of Missions in general and that should be addressed by the CiO:

- *Initiate the formulation and regular revision of Mission strategies by convening annual meetings with the Mission, CiO, SG and possibly other relevant OSCE actors.*

The strategies should outline concrete and realistic objectives for the medium (one year) and long (three years) terms on the basis of scenarios developed by the Missions. The host country should be involved closely in this process. On a case-by-case basis, the CiO may actively support a Mission *vis-à-vis* the host government, in particular regarding sensitive objectives and activities of Missions. The assets that a Mission can bring to a host country, for example politically or in dealing with international banks and aid agencies, need to be made tangible and well communicated.

- *Maintain political function within project work.*

The increasing amount of project work should prioritise those projects that:

- a. have a function that matches the *political* assignment of the Mission;
- b. are likely to have some impact on the key issues of concern;

c. correspond with the (management) capacities of the Mission.

The basis of mid- and long-term mission plans would best enable such a selection of projects.

- *Build-up institutional knowledge.*

The CiO should encourage greater analysis and focus on lessons learned to be reflected in Mission reports, thereby retaining expertise in certain thematic fields within the CPC. In this respect, the analytical capacity-building unit, currently being built up, should be supported in assessing the impact of Mission activities and collecting, evaluating and making available best practices in certain fields of expertise. Such a unit should also consolidate inputs from ODIHR, the Economic and Environmental Coordinator and the Representative on the Freedom of the Media.

- *Internal and external coordination.*

The CiO should try to catalyse diverging ‘messages’ forwarded to Missions in close cooperation with the HoMs. The tasks and activities of Missions should be communicated clearly to all participating States as well as OSCE internal structures. Constructive support and advice should however not be micromanaged. The facilitation of the CiO should also extend to relations between the Parliamentary Assembly and the governmental side (Permanent Council) of the OSCE. On the institutional level, the CiO should continue working towards more synergetic co-operation on the basis of regions (as, for example, with the EU in the Balkans) and themes (as, for example, with the CoE on the rule of law).

Introduction and Approach

The potential for conflict in the area of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) varies from ethnic and social disputes between communities to issues of human trafficking, rule of law and non-inclusive political systems - challenges that require long-term international presence and cooperation and that can be accommodated well by the comprehensive security concept of the OSCE. The OSCE's role in responding to such challenges is directly put to the test by the establishment and ambition of long-term Missions.

In view of the Netherlands' Chairmanship-in-Office of the OSCE, the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' initiated a research project that aims to identify strengths, weaknesses and ways of improving the effectiveness of OSCE Missions. The project tries to unravel the key issues concerning the functioning of OSCE Missions in the field, and focuses on the use of Missions as an instrument for conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

A comparative analysis has been conducted of the OSCE Missions located in Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These examples were chosen because they reflect differences in size, form (Mission, Project Coordinator, and Centre) and timing (stages of conflict development) of OSCE engagement, and therefore offer insights into how the OSCE (Missions) have been able to deal with different challenges. The analytical framework that guided the comparative assessment centred around five key questions:

1. What impact have the Missions had on the conflict potential? How does this compare to the envisaged impact with regard to conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation?
2. Do the mandates link up with the situation on the ground? Are the Missions well equipped for achieving the specific mandate as well as the OSCE's broader strategic objectives?
3. What (if any) has been the comparative advantage of OSCE Missions over other forms of OSCE intervention, e.g. special envoys, High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), personal representatives?
4. How has the level of central control affected the operation and tasks of Missions? Which degree of autonomy, leeway and strategy coordination is most effective?
5. Which measures can be taken by the Chairmanship-in-Office specifically in order to engage Missions more effectively?

Answers to these questions are reflected in the synthesis chapter as well as in the detailed analysis to be found in the following chapters of individual case studies, all of which have been completed on the basis of field visits, interviews with OSCE representatives, authorities of the host government, delegations of the participating States, and institutions in Vienna.

The first chapter of this study presents a synthesis of three in-depth Mission case studies, i.e. the former Mission and Project Coordinator in Ukraine, the Centre in Tashkent and the Mission to Bosnia

and Herzegovina. The synthesis also draws on experiences from other OSCE Missions and considers the effectiveness of OSCE procedures and cooperation in general. The synthesis *first* outlines the impact of Missions in terms of conflict prevention. It presents achievements and shortcomings as well as factors influencing the effectiveness of Missions. In a *second* step, the synthesis qualifies the findings made in relation to the three in-depth Mission case studies by drawing on an extensive Mission survey. Concrete suggestions and the practices of individual Missions are highlighted in boxes.

The second, third and fourth chapters of the study present the in-depth case studies of the Missions in Uzbekistan (David Lewis), Ukraine (Randolf Oberschmidt) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Yannick du Pont). Each case study issues concrete recommendations concerning the type, instruments, timing and potential partners for cooperation that are most appropriate for OSCE activities in the particular regions.

The Effectiveness of OSCE Missions: Synthesis Report

Martina Huber

Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'
Conflict Research Unit
December 2002



Netherlands Institute of
International Relations 'Clingendael'
Clingendael 7
2597 VH The Hague
P.O. Box 93080
2509 AB The Hague
Phone number: # 31-70-3245384
Telefax: # 31-70-3282002
Email: research@clingendael.nl
Website: <http://www.clingendael.nl/cru>

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Part I: Assessing the Effectiveness of OSCE Missions in Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina

The notion of *effectiveness* is usually linked to having achieved a determined objective envisaged for the short- to medium-term. The idea of *impact*, on the other hand, relates to long-term, broader influences on the overall situation, whether achieved on purpose or unintentionally. As opposed to effectiveness, the notion of impact may refer to both positive and negative effects. By definition and due to the generally comprehensive mandates of ‘long-term’ Missions, the objectives of OSCE Missions are long-term and aim at creating structural stability. Thus, in the case of evaluating OSCE Missions, effectiveness coincides with positive impact, and ineffectiveness with negative impact respectively.

What has made it difficult to establish the impact of a particular OSCE intervention has been the multitude of factors and actors influencing the particular settings. Due to this complex environment, the impact of the Missions studied has been weighed against not only their mandates - which are too broad to serve as a useful yardstick - but also the broader context in which they operate.¹

A: Mandates

The first and most obvious benchmark for evaluating Missions’ effectiveness is to assess the degree to which their mandates have been fulfilled. OSCE field activities in all three cases - Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BaH) - have been tasked to:

- Monitor and promote the compliance with OSCE commitments;
- Establish contacts with all parties concerned;
- Collect and analyse information and report on the situation on the ground;
- Support other OSCE actors (High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and the Representative on Freedom of the Media (FOM)).

In addition to these common tasks, the former Mission to Ukraine was specifically mandated to submit suggestions to the appropriate authorities for the solution of existing problems and to formulate proposals for economic programmes. After the closure of the Mission in 1999, the work of the Project Coordinator was defined in terms of implementing projects. The mandate of the Centre in Tashkent specifically highlights the function of the Centre to liaise with other OSCE presences in the region and to assist in arranging OSCE events and activities. The mandate of the Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina is also special, in the sense that it provides the Mission with strong authority in the areas that were internationally agreed as OSCE tasks within the General Framework Agreement and

¹ A more in-depth and contextualised analysis of impact follows in the case studies. The following selects the most salient *examples* from these studies.

subsequent OSCE (ministerial) documents. The mandate initially focused on elections, human rights and regional stabilisation, and has been broadly interpreted so as to extend to long-term concerns such as the educational system, sustainability of return and capacity-building of those elected. In general terms, one may differentiate three stages of mandate completion:²

1. Crisis response: The main aim is to achieve stability in terms of conflict prevention and resolution. The changing scenes require a great degree of flexibility on the part of the Mission and make it difficult to fix an agenda or strategy.
2. Work on specific objectives once stability is achieved: These objectives depend on the specific requirements of a conflict setting and commonly include work on legislation and institution-building. Developing a strategy is crucial and easier to agree at this point.
3. Implementation: This stage involves project work with the aim of making the objectives (legislation, institutions, etc.) work and ensuring full transfer of responsibilities. It is crucial that this stage builds on progress made in the second stage and is embedded in a strategy. Objectives and agendas need to be clear.

With regard to the Missions studied, the Office of the Project Coordinator in Ukraine is evidently in the third stage. With its functions *a priori* determined as limited to project work at the discretion of the Ukrainian government, it is difficult, however, to see them embedded within a political strategy. It is, on the contrary, an indicator for lacking strategy. The Centre in Tashkent may be stuck between stages one and two. While (political) stability has been in place, one may argue whether this is a desirable state. The Centre is working towards concrete objectives (e.g. in relation to civil society development) by way of small-scale projects. Neither objectives nor projects seem to be grounded in a medium- or long-term strategy. In BaH, one can say that the Mission is generally in stage two, working towards elemental objectives such as democratic institutions and practices, respect for human rights and internal security cooperation. Looking at its extensive range of tasks and programmes, stage two has been completed with regard to elections. The Mission took up a new objective only recently: education. Its project work accompanies the work towards specific objectives, but should give greater consideration to plans to leave the country.

Due to generally vague formulation, (the letter of) the mandate alone is not the most suitable yardstick for determining the effective functioning and impact of a Mission. Thus the degree of mandate completion cannot be answered without looking more closely at how Missions have performed in concrete terms in the field within the respective mandates. Although the mandates of the three Missions studied differ greatly in contents and strength, one can identify a number of positive and negative impacts that were achieved *across* the three Missions.

B: Positive Impacts

With regard to their general objective to impact constructively on conflict potential, the OSCE Missions have had a positive bearing in the following fields.

² Correspondence with Neil Brennan, Deputy Head of Mission to Moldova.

Mission Activities Helped to Alleviate Concrete Problems

At a time when communication between Ukraine and Crimea had broken down and tensions became critical (1994-95), the Mission, in a joint effort with the HCNM, managed to facilitate a compromise between Crimea and Ukraine regarding their constitutional relationship. While the integration of Crimean Tartars continues to carry certain conflict potential to date, all projects in Ukraine have responded to concrete shortcomings noticed by the international community and the needs expressed by Ukrainian counterparts, e.g. rule of law, freedom of the media, reform of the judicial sector. Despite the restrictions in mandate and finances, the Mission was able to support the intervention of other OSCE bodies, e.g. ODIHR democratisation programmes. Generally speaking, once the issues of constitutional relationship and Crimean Tartars lost importance, the Mission and the Permanent Council of the OSCE (PC), for whom project work is the *raison d'être*, managed to adapt projects in the course of their implementation and in accordance with changes in conflict potential. This was only possible because of the permanent presence on the ground and positive cooperation with Ukrainian counterparts. However, most of the project work could have been implemented by any organisation with a field presence structure.

Like in Ukraine, financial scope for projects has been limited for the Centre in Tashkent (CiT). As projects have mainly complemented or accompanied the reporting and monitoring functions, the work of the Centre, particularly in the human dimension (legal advice to human rights groups, trial monitoring, training of law enforcement, gender issues) and the security dimension (small arms and light weapons (SALW)), has been useful in filling a gap in international attention and capacity. Support to independent human rights groups has been essential and could only be fulfilled because of the OSCE's comprehensive *acquis* in this field and its operational capacity.

Overall, the Mission in BaH has been remarkably flexible in reacting to changes in the environment in which it operates, mainly due to its autonomy in day-to-day operations. The Mission went beyond its initial objectives of monitoring the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, and took on tasks related to state-building, in particular *central* state-building. Its democratisation programmes, for example, have addressed fundamental needs such as multi-ethnic opposition parties, NGOs, and governance support (municipalities, cantons, parliament). The focus on governance has been particularly crucial. With regard to human rights, the increase of returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) may confirm the impact of the Mission in this field, but the involvement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) makes it difficult to attribute this development clearly to OSCE efforts. Secondly, as the value of most programmes lies in their sustainability, achievements in these fields cannot yet be determined conclusively.

Regions Benefited from OSCE Activities that were Otherwise Less Targeted

Because of its original structure, encompassing a headquarters in Kiev and the branch office in Crimea, the Mission to Ukraine effectively targeted those areas that most needed OSCE attention. In the case of the Crimean Tartars, dedicating international attention to the grievances of this group may well have kept tensions from spiralling into violence.³ The Office of the Project Coordinator has also

³ In other cases, international attention may also be counterproductive, as parties to a conflict may feel confirmed in the appropriateness of violent means.

tended to extend its reach from Kiev to other regions of Ukraine that have not so far benefited from OSCE/international projects. This includes seminars, events, and projects promoting the rule of law, also at the level of regional government.

The OSCE network of more than 20 field offices in BaH is clearly one of the greatest strengths of the OSCE. Through these offices the Mission has been able to follow up on the implementation of policy decisions on the local level. The structure also creates direct contact points for civilians and helps to improve the responsiveness and visibility of the OSCE/Mission in the country.

Reminding National Authorities to Live Up to their Commitments

Mainly by its mere presence, the Mission to Ukraine helped to monitor implementation of the compromise reached on the constitutional relationship. The Centre in Uzbekistan has also been crucial in keeping up pressure regarding human dimension commitments, despite the only modest advances in political liberalisation. The extensive field presence in BaH has been a visible reminder in ongoing and future tasks. Recognition of the interrelationship of compliance with OSCE commitments and rapprochement with Europe (e.g. conditional membership of the Council of Europe (CoE)) politically reinforced the voice of the OSCE in BaH. At the same time, reducing OSCE tasks to prepare for access to other European structures runs the risk of meeting strong opposition from participating States that are not part of these, most prominently Russia. The OSCE would also likely be perceived as superseded, once relations with the EU, CoE, and NATO have taken off.

Missions Acted as Clearing Houses

The support of other OSCE institutions such as the HCNM and ODIHR provided the Mission in Ukraine with the political weight that enabled it to coordinate with other organisations on an equal level. Therefore the Mission found entry points into other organisations that could push for follow-up to OSCE recommendations. Its support to and coordination with the HCNM and information-sharing with other organisations (such as advising UNDP against ‘Crimean Tartar’ programmes) illustrate this point. Within the OSCE the Mission delivered reliable information and effectively ‘early warned’ the Chairman-in-Office (CiO) and Permanent Council (PC) about the escalation of the Crimean crisis in 1995 (set aside the unclear instructions it received in response at that time).

In Uzbekistan the Centre in Tashkent has organised monthly meetings with international actors involved in human rights and convened other events, but its role as a catalyst could improve especially in the political dimension and economic dimension (for example, agreements over water) where little information-sharing is generally taking place. In Ukraine and Uzbekistan the OSCE has served as the only reliable information channel.

Under the so-called ‘streamlining’ effort of international presence in BaH, the OSCE has taken the lead in several areas, such as return, institution-building and rule of law. Under these general themes, it coordinates the efforts of other international actors on seven sets of sub-issues.

Missions Generated a Sense of Ownership and Responsibility

Ownership of the process in Ukraine was largely ensured, because the Mission limited its functions to moderating rather than intervening, and because the Mission achieved good working relations with all the parties involved. Whether this is the case for BaH largely depends on the capacity of the OSCE to help build capable and qualified national institutions to which it can hand over responsibilities step-by-

step. The first such major responsibility was the holding of elections. Until 2004 the OSCE will continue to ‘hold hands’ with the national Election Commission, and only then can an answer to the question of sustainability be concluded. The number of electoral rules imposed will continue to be a challenge for their acceptance.

Setting Positive Examples for Other Missions

In some cases, the completion of tasks or organisational innovations could well serve as examples for other Missions. For example, the Mission in BaH was able to hand over ‘pioneer’ knowledge as well as well-trained personnel to other Balkan Missions, notably Croatia, Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Also the training sessions, document library and *Mission Manual* are model initiatives for similar future Missions. The Mission to Ukraine practised an effective division of tasks with other agencies: while the Mission’s branch office in Simferopol concentrated on the political work, other agencies such as the UNHCR focused on the project work. It is a matter of retaining and making accessible such lessons learned at Mission level that will decisively influence the effectiveness of other OSCE Missions.

What is striking in assessing the positive impacts of Missions is the fact that all seem to be grounded in the OSCE peer review mechanism, long-term presence in the field and/or strengths in specific areas of expertise. Whereas the peer review mechanism can hardly be replicated at this time in history by any other organisation, field presence and specific expertise are not by definition exclusively OSCE-specific, although the Organisation presently draws comparative advantage from them. In order to maintain and consolidate this comparative advantage, it is a logical requirement to strengthen Missions structurally and in their cooperation with other international organisations and, secondly, to retain institutional knowledge in such a way that it defines focused areas of OSCE expertise.

C: Negative Impacts

In some areas, the Missions studied have achieved little or no impact with regard to their envisaged objectives. Key observations on areas of low impact relate to the following issues.

Limited or No Change in Key Issues

The human dimension activities of the Mission in Ukraine had at best an impact on individuals (media, human rights and rule of law), and were unable to bring about an improvement of the situation in the country as a whole. In fact, the compromise reached on the Constitution of Crimea went at the expense of representing and integrating Crimean Tartars - a shortcoming that may even add to future conflict potential. Issues other than those directly relevant to security in Crimea could have been referred to the attention of other organisations. While the rule of law has been the main field of activity of the Project Coordinator, the Office only managed and facilitated, and did not implement, these activities due to its limited capacity. The more the outreach of the Office broadened geographically, the less impact it is likely to have had.

The Centre in Tashkent (CiT) has had little bearing on initiating solid reforms in the political and macroeconomic fields. This might change if other donors were to take into account OSCE assessments in considering and ‘conditioning’ technical assistance. For such assessments to be valid, however, the

analytical capacities of the Centre would first need to be upgraded. Due to its low profile with the Uzbek public, the CiT has failed to spread awareness and generate the dynamic momentum needed for reforms. In this sense, a regional branch office would make sense, as the small Centre faces obvious limits in trying to respond to the needs of a relatively large country. But the Uzbek government has remained firm in its objections to any suggested expansion in the geographic scope and structure of the Centre.

The results of previous and recent elections in BaH suggest the following: the strategy of holding frequent elections has been unable to change nationalist ethnic alliances significantly; a shift in favour of more moderate political parties was not achieved. Although minority return - both to the Federation as well as the Republic of Srpska - has increased steadily, the sustainability of these movements is not certain given the difficult social and economic conditions and the increasing violence that returnees encounter upon coming home. The technical implementation, for example of election legislation or property laws, is thus insufficient to create the *conditions* necessary for democratic elections and electoral process and sustainable return.

Recommendations were Not Followed Up

The Mission to Ukraine recognised the importance of the economic dimension in the conflict potential in Crimea, but was unable to insist on the follow-up of its recommendations in this field. The reasons for this were the limited financial capacities of the Mission and OSCE as well as insufficient cooperation with (financial) institutions.

As certain programs met with resistance within the country, for example those dealing with the return of BaH population, difficult decisions have depended on the authority of the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR). Unpopular decisions were mainly forced through with reference to actors other than the OSCE, such as the need to get closer to the EU or comply with CoE requirements.

Setting Negative Precedents for Future Missions with Weak Mandates

The Mission to Ukraine depended greatly on other OSCE institutions, participating States and national authorities in its initiatives. Its activities were instrumentalised in order to deal with issues beyond and other than its written mandate (for example Russia, alleviating fears of closing Baltic Missions and Western uncertainty about Russia's position *vis-à-vis* Ukraine). The experience of the Mission therefore presents a classic case of 'Mission creep'. The Project Coordinator lacked any political mandate in relation to monitoring or early warning. The Office fulfilled mainly liaison and facilitation work between ODIHR and the Ukrainian authorities. While strong Mission mandates do not necessarily translate into impact or leverage (the Mission in BaH, for example, continues to be perceived as a junior partner of the EU, CoE and NATO), weak Missions may become more acceptable as a result of such precedents, as they are also more easily accepted by national governments. The OSCE Centres in Central Asia - including the CiT (with its functions limited to reporting and monitoring) - may indicate such a trend. It is therefore ever more important to define or rediscover the purpose and strategy that OSCE offices pursue (see discussion on project work).

Patchwork without Strategy

The lack of long-term analysis and strategic approach has been recognised as a key shortcoming in all three Mission case studies. In its initial phase, the PCU touched upon the security dimension only marginally, and not at all on economic issues. While present activities do address various dimensions, they continue to lack medium-term planning and vision, and are not prepared on the basis of a proper needs assessment due to their dependence on governmental approval. The duplication with other organisations, particularly the CoE (during Mission times) and the EU (PC), not only caused competition but also inconsistency in policy, as Ukrainian counterparts managed to ‘shop for projects’ according to the most suitable conditionality available. Most projects dealt with technical assistance, which other organisations could also have provided. Expertise already gained in fields such as trafficking, migration and national minorities should be consolidated at the forefront of an OSCE strategy in Ukraine.

At the Centre in Tashkent, a lack of strategy was particularly felt in the economic dimension, where projects were useful, but were only tenuously linked to comprehensive security (e.g. training in marketing and accounting), which essentially distinguishes the OSCE from other organisations. Combining elements of different dimensions as part of an activity would underline this specific advantage that the OSCE can offer. For regional economic projects, the Centre has clearly lacked capacity and support from national authorities. Economic activities should be politically engaged in order to add value to activities by other organisations. Also the human dimension should not be one-sided in focusing exclusively on human rights.

The Mission in BaH addresses fundamental problems related to institution-building and reconciliation. However, new commitments to long-term goals (such as education) seem to contradict considerations to exit and shift funds to Central Asia, which are becoming increasingly specific. The learning process involved in policy-making in major OSCE fields must be retained and become more accessible to Missions, as they are building strategies.

As with the positive impacts, many shortcomings are in fact linked to weaknesses of the OSCE as a whole rather than to those of Missions specifically. Most problems result from the lack of sanctions and/or a lack of strategic and long-term focus. All OSCE commitments are only politically binding. If a participating state fails to live up to them, the greatest risk that it faces is suspension of membership. Close coordination with EU membership or assistance negotiations is mutually useful for the OSCE and EU, but is still under utilised as a way of compensating for missing carrots and sticks within the OSCE.

D: Elements Influencing Impact

The following are important elements that have influenced the impact that the OSCE Missions have achieved on the conflict potential in Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Willingness of Host Authorities to Cooperate and Address Key Problems

This was a rather positive factor in the case of Ukraine, where central authorities favoured the integration of Crimea for the sake of territorial integrity, and therefore in principle supported the OSCE Mission (also as a counterpart against Russia). In addition, Ukrainian counterparts, who would have preferred a complete departure or regional OSCE Centre, eventually tolerated the Office of the

Project Coordinator, which succeeded the Mission. The Project Coordinator was an acceptable compromise not least because the Office did not have a political mandate. All Mission activities depended on the consent and responded to the needs of the Ukrainian government. Increasing uneasiness, especially within the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the Office can be put down to psychological reasons - the perceived stigma - that could not be outweighed by the small (financial) benefits that the Mission had to offer.

While the government in Uzbekistan initially welcomed and encouraged the OSCE regional liaison office in Tashkent, it has been persistently critical of the activities and presence of the Centre in Tashkent, which emerged from the Liaison Office in Central Asia (CALO) in 1995, and it has showed little appreciation or awareness of what the Centre could offer to the country. With the help of the personal relations of the CiO's Personal Representative, Ambassador Höynck, with Uzbek leaders, national opinions about the OSCE have slightly improved. But the relatively weak mandate, small resources and the Centre's focus on the unpopular human dimension have made it difficult to win the commitment of authorities and different groups in society. In particular, the reluctance of authorities to cooperate regionally has kept the CiT from dealing with some key conflict issues such as trade, borders, water resources, and national minorities.

The BaH authorities were directly involved in negotiating the Dayton Peace Agreement and thus agreed to expand the tasks and capacity of the OSCE Mission accordingly, but had no significant influence on the mandate of the Mission. The Mission has been able to operate in a semi-protectorate, although a number of activities run counter to the main political forces in the country, mainly on local levels. Because of this, the Mission has had to face obstacles in several respects. This autonomy of the Mission will change, as authorities have now been elected into power for a first full parliamentary term and, secondly, as the handing over of OSCE tasks to national institutions accelerates.

The Reaction to and Perception of OSCE Presence by the Host Society

Overall, the Ukrainian population had a positive and rather indifferent opinion of the OSCE. Most noticed were ODIHR's election observations. Polls in BaH suggest a split in opinion on the OSCE among Serbs, Croats and Muslims. Between 1996 and 1998, the majority of Serbs and Croats did not have much confidence in the OSCE (tendencies falling with Serbs and rising with Croats) while more than two-thirds of Bosnian Muslims had great to fair confidence in the OSCE. Recent polls, however, do not exist.

The Interest and (Stabilising) Role of External Powers

During the course of the OSCE's presence in Ukraine, the position of the Russian Federation was probably the most decisive and obscure. In principle, Russia wanted to maintain influence in Ukraine as a whole (due to the Sevastopol naval base) and, because of this, probably hesitated to support the Crimeans' separatist tendencies. For Western powers, at the same time, even the slight prospect of such support was a key motivation to maintain the Mission as a useful safeguard. Whereas Ukraine has continuously worked towards closing the Office of the Project Coordinator, both Russia and especially the West have insisted on its maintenance in order to prevent a negative precedent for the Baltic Missions. Western powers have tended to perceive the potential closure of the Office as a failure of OSCE credibility and have thus supported its continuation so far.

The OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina has enjoyed strong US support (financially and through personnel), a key reason being that the OSCE was the only security organisation tasked with playing such a pivotal role in democracy- and civil society-building and implementing Dayton tasks, and to which the US belonged.

The Timing and Nature of OSCE Involvement

The Mission in Ukraine intervened at a point in time when the potential for conflict had not yet become violent. The parties to the conflict were willing to accept and address key problems. The branch office delegated to Crimea could somehow accommodate the need - mainly of the Crimean Tartars - for international attention and visibility. While the initial OSCE mediation by the HCNM in Ukraine was overall appreciated and thus served as the first door opener for the Mission, it also made the role and function (whether to moderate or mediate) of the Mission less clear. The Head of Mission (HoM) was a key player in determining the direction of the Mission.

Similarly in Uzbekistan, the OSCE started its field presence at a time of no open conflict and with the purpose of supporting OSCE efforts and events in the region (through the CALO). When the CALO became a national 'Centre', its activities were focused on the national level, but emphasis on cooperating with other OSCE Centres in the region remained explicit in its mandate. The economic and security dimensions were not an explicit part of the Centre's tasks (as opposed to other Centres in the region).

The Mission to BaH is very different. It was the first OSCE Mission to intervene after an open conflict scenario, when the resentment among traumatised conflict groups had already hardened during war. Initially, the Mission was already deployed in June 1994. The assignment of tasks and functions within the Dayton Agreement significantly expanded the scope of the Mission, including tasks and functions that normally belong to the state. Within an international division of labour, the OSCE focused on the fields of elections, human rights, and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). Following the revision of tasks with the OHR, the OSCE has now consolidated its lead role in human rights, security cooperation, and education. At the point in time of the Dayton Agreement, the OSCE was still learning - as an organisation and a Mission - how to deal with new challenges that arose from this setting. The (lack of) expertise and experiences has been confirmed as another factor that crucially affects the impact of other Missions.

Part II: Broadening the Scope: Findings from Other Missions

In order to qualify and consolidate the factors influencing the impact of Missions, one needs to take a broader look at the experiences of other Missions. In doing so one can differentiate factors that are Mission-specific from those that are generally valid and, secondly, factors that are beyond the influence of Missions or the Organisation from those that are. From this survey, four major areas for improvement have been identified that cut across most Mission experiences and are to some degree amenable to change through Missions and/or the CiO.

A: Need for a Strategic Approach

A recurrent shortcoming in various Missions has been the lack of (a preventive) strategy. Reasons for this have been insufficient focusing of individual project activities, the lack of human resource or financial capacities, lack of coordination, and weaknesses inherent in the mandate. OSCE institutions should make as unified an effort as practical in developing annual as well as mid- and long-term Mission strategies, consulting closely with and informing the host authorities. This requires quality content-related input from the CiO, the Secretary-General and the Conflict Prevention Centre. A strategy needs to be in line with the resources available to the Mission and the respective mandates. A joint effort in this endeavour facilitates not only coordination within the OSCE and the assessment of Missions, but also strengthens the morale of staff and the standing of the Mission *vis-à-vis* a possibly sceptical or uncooperative host government. Selecting programmes on the basis of both - annual and mid- and long-term - strategies will facilitate coherence between Mission mandates and activities. The regular review of strategies will allow for adaptations and thus not compromise the flexibility of Missions - a main asset of the OSCE.

Mandates

A first and most obvious condition for effective Missions is that their mandates provide functions and tasks that link up with the situation and offer sufficient latitude to address the key issues of concern. Mandates tend to be constructively ambiguous, a 'shifting idea' that provides an umbrella to accommodate all suitable measures. How well mandates are *made* relevant is thus more interesting a question than whether or not they are relevant in themselves. A general assessment of such practice is difficult, as it depends significantly on the Head of Mission's input and the staff s/he has to work with, and whether or not the host government agrees to include certain issues in the interpretation of the mandate. However, some tasks, such as dealing with individual complaints, have always been part of Mission practice and can hardly be argued away. The HoM may still decide to shift the focus of the mandate at different times for different reasons (political influence, shifting international concerns,

human resource strengths, etc.).⁴

Whereas in some cases stronger mandates would be useful, such as in Croatia regarding the Croatian property law, the letter of the mandate does not significantly restrict Mission activities.⁵ The Presence in Albania, for example, deals with economic and rule of law-related activities without an explicit mandate in these fields. On the other hand, objectives set by some mandates are simply not commensurate with the capacities (financial and human resources) of the Missions - Moldova being a good example.

Level of Independence

A corollary of this flexibility is the limited guidance and, in a sense, the high degree of independence of Missions, which is both a necessity and a risk. Inevitably, institutions in Vienna and Warsaw tend to be left 'behind the curve' with regard to the complex and fast-moving environments in which Missions - and especially the large Balkan Missions - operate.⁶ Missions are directly and continuously in tune with developments on the ground. Too much dependence on Vienna would therefore run the risk of micromanaging and slowly eroding the specific advantages of Missions. Too much independence, on the other hand, may weaken the original objectives of the Mission ('Mission creep'). This would also raise questions regarding the legitimacy of decisions taken on Mission level, as in the case of the BaH Mission, which eventually may lead to deteriorating relations between Missions and participating States. Communicating and defining the tasks of Missions in a clearer and more transparent way in the form of a Mission plan would best prevent these tensions.

Heads of Mission

The independence of a Mission depends on the HoM's ability to direct and consolidate different information and advice. In determining the priorities of the Mission, the HoM rightly enjoys great leeway. However, planning is often *ad hoc*, reactive and driven by finance rather than needs. More substantial input from the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) regarding the interpretation of the mandates, as well as improved communication of overall policy lines to HoMs, i.e. in the form of a contract between the HoMs and the Secretariat, as suggested in the current reform process, may be constructive ways of focusing Missions further on strategic objectives. Corrective advice should, however, only be given in obvious cases of mandate deviation.

Preparing for Exit

The strategy of a Mission - not its mandate - should indicate preparatory steps for an OSCE exit as of the earliest stage of OSCE involvement. An exit *process* should entail a step-by-step transfer of responsibilities to national or other international structures. The closure of Missions that have achieved their main objectives or that obviously stand no chance in ever achieving them should be accelerated. This would create financial breathing space and - in view of most host governments - put a welcome end to perceived stigmatisation.

⁴ See questionnaire of the Mission to Moldova.

⁵ Exceptions are the cases of Armenia and Azerbaijan where the Missions cannot deal with issues related to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

⁶ In fact, some Missions were requested to stop reporting to HQ during the summer recess.

In this respect, shifting resources from the Balkans to Central Asia may reinforce and capitalise on the OSCE's comparative advantage in this region, as it is the only organisation present in all five Central Asian republics and is able to apply relevant experiences gained previously, for example concerning border issues in Georgia. On the other hand, a rushed exit from the Balkans may put at risk the ground that was painfully gained over the past decade, as nationalist party bases remain strong and return issues are highly sensitive. Nationalisation needs to be planned, based entirely on the requirements of the situation and *performance*. It would not be logical, and in some cases would be an enormous disinvestment, to hurry an exit process. The closure of the Baltic Missions - debatable in itself - illustrates that the achievement of objectives cannot be planned in timeframes. In both cases, much more progress was achieved in the last two years of Mission presence than in the many years before.

Balancing Dimensions

With regard to the substance of Mission activities, the human dimension (HD) clearly represents the core strength of the OSCE and should not be compromised in the work of Missions. No other European organisation provides a similarly extensive *acquis* in this field. At the same time, one should be wary about raising false expectations for a stronger economic dimension (ED). The main risk here is that the OSCE loses focus on the *link* of economic issues with political and security issues. The connectedness of the dimensions rather than the dimensions on their own is the main value of the OSCE. This must not get lost in competing with organisations that are more appropriately mandated, equipped and experienced in economic assistance.

The three OSCE dimensions (political-military, economic and environmental, and human) should thus be conceived as part and parcel of the same concept of comprehensive security, which should be recognisable in its entirety in Mission activities. One way of achieving this is to combine the dimensions in the design and implementation of programmes. This is not to simply label programmes as 'cross-dimensional' in order to sell them more easily to host governments; sooner or later those programmes would fail to generate the desired results. It is the link in dimensions rather than the dimensions themselves that needs to be reflected and consolidated optimally in the activities of Missions.

The rule of law is a good example of a field that encompasses aspects related to the judiciary, the political system, human rights, law application and enforcement, and social and economic security. Various Mission programmes and activities already reflect this connectedness of issues and dimensions. For example in Albania, human trafficking projects are addressing policing, economics, human rights and gender aspects. Similarly in Uzbekistan, any project promoting economic growth will find judiciary reform ever more urgent.

Missions contributing to the survey generally supported a more systematic discussion with the Secretariat and CiO on new activities, e.g. specifically on border issues, SALW, trafficking and cross-border cooperation in the case of the Mission to Skopje. A further specialisation of the CPC in thematic fields that is internally closely coordinated would be helpful in this regard. Concerning the idea of a joint strategy development together with the CiO and SG, the action plan of the Mission to Croatia or the indicative calendar of the Office in Baku may be valuable points of reference. Regular review and evaluation mechanisms need to be linked to Mission strategies.

B: Trade-offs of Project Work: Maintain Political Function!

The value of projects lies in their potential to respond to immediate or urgent needs (such as at election times). Projects can be flexibly adapted and offer scope to accommodate the wishes of the host government. Therefore they are important incentives and door openers for cooperation. At the same time, Mission activities must follow mandates, and not vice versa. This is even more important as Missions depend increasingly on mobilising funds and voluntary contributions from participating States that are then able to 'buy into' national hobby horses. For small Missions this is a necessity, as their budget for projects is almost non-existent (for example in Yerevan and Baku projects are allocated only three per cent of the Mission budget). Thus activities that are funded through voluntary contributions from participating States also need to be considered and prioritised within a Mission strategy.

In some cases, it may be preferable to allocate scarce capacities to analysis or a more realistic number of projects. Leaving projects unfinished or raising false expectations will be detrimental to the image of the OSCE and in most cases counterproductive to the objective of conflict prevention. A practical consideration in this regard is the limited capacity of Missions in administration, finance and project management. Across the board, Missions require stronger expertise in these fields. Greater flexibility in contracting or seconding a position, as well as improved contract conditions, may be helpful.

Another risk of project work is that the presence of the OSCE loses political function if projects are conceived primarily in the light of potential funding (either through participating States or ODIHR) instead of their relevance to the mandate or conflict potential. As projects have to be accepted by host governments, the Missions often automatically anticipate the wishes of the authorities. In Ukraine, the Office of the Project Coordinator responds to the immediate requests of the government even by its mandate. A Mission strategy would help to keep Mission objectives focused and strengthened *vis-à-vis* the host government.

Finally, the impact of projects on policy change is only limited. In fact, their success frequently *depends* rather than *impacts* on macro-level change. Projects in the economic dimension illustrate this well. Even the most efficient project in support of small and medium-sized enterprises will not succeed for long if macroeconomic conditions remain unfavourable, the political system corrupt or the judiciary incapable of guaranteeing legal certainty of contracts.

Attention needs to be drawn to the limited financial capacities of Missions, some of which barely cover the maintenance costs of the office. As a consequence, the work of Missions increasingly depends on project-based financing through voluntary contributions. The travelling human rights show of the Office in Yerevan, which enabled the Office to reach out to rural areas, is an example of an innovative way of dealing with limited capacities. The Presence in Albania has helped to develop the capacity of the NGO sector by its Civil Society Development Network.

C: Building and Accessing Institutional Knowledge

Organisational learning is a key condition for creating comparative advantages, and the rotating leadership of the OSCE and high turnover of staff have been persistent obstacles to this. So far, lessons learned and best practices remain at Mission level or disappear completely once Mission staff

move on. An OSCE-wide database collecting and evaluating Mission experiences in certain fields of activity (for example on elections, border issues, education, etc.) does not exist, but is becoming ever more necessary, in particular as the amount of project work increases. Such a ‘lessons learned unit’ would best be linked to the CPC, which deals systematically with all Missions and dimensions of Mission activities.

Human resources, which are a major source of strength of OSCE Missions, are the basis for institutional learning. Improving training and contract conditions is thus crucial to attract and maintain capable staff. Small Missions covering large countries in particular build up valuable contacts using only a few people, which should be sustained by longer-term contracts for Mission staff. In order to keep track of the personal knowledge of former national and international staff, the REACT database could be expanded so as to indicate their experience, performance and contact information. From such a roster system, pre-approved experts could be selected at short notice.

An OSCE training programme was particularly felt to be useful in the fields of personnel and project management. Different departments in the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK), for example, have reacted to this shortcoming by tasking a support team to develop procedures for project design and implementation or by creating the position of an Institution-Building Coordinator for the same tasks. The Mission in Skopje created a Training Unit on subject areas such as conflict resolution and project management. Regional cooperation among Missions, for example through a regional training officer like in the Georgia Mission, may improve access to training by small Missions. Travelling training workshops by experts based in Vienna or experienced staff in other Missions would be a less costly way of increasing in-country training. Furthermore, a manual of instructions and procedures should be provided to all incoming HoM.

All Missions contributing to the survey welcomed the ideas of a roster of former OSCE personnel and a lessons learned unit that could deliver substantive input to developing Mission strategies. A systematic collection of best practices, for example in large Missions through a project cycle management system, would help Missions to operate effectively in their different fields of operation, and would sharpen the OSCE’s profile of expertise.

D: Cooperation within the OSCE and Other Actors

A key challenge for OSCE field activities applies to the Organisation as a whole: the leverage and repertoire of incentives are limited. The power of Missions is mainly moral, as the OSCE represents an entry point into European organisations that many OSCE participating States would like to join (Slovenia or BaH are good examples for the Balkans).

However, also *political* pressure can work if mounted through effective cooperation. The impact that a Mission is able to generate depends significantly on how it is *used* as an instrument for conflict prevention/management. This touches on the roles and interplay of different OSCE bodies. To which degree, for example, should the CiO be active in guiding Mission activities? How can the Secretariat be strengthened in such a way that Missions benefit from quality expertise and continuity of guidance, and that participating States find acceptable?

Cooperation with Participating States

Missions often receive constructive input or criticism from participating States, such as expertise in certain fields, political support, funding, facilitation of contacts with international organisations and NGOs or communicating the role of a Mission to the host government. This input is often crucial in correcting the direction of a Mission and maintaining mutual understanding. Such support is constructive as long as it remains for consideration only. Missions already respond to too many points of reference (the CiO, SG, CPC, ODIHR, IFC, PC, and sometimes the HCNM and FOM). Although the HoM usually directs and consolidates different (national) influences, it is critically important to reduce differences in advice and ‘pressure’, which essentially weaken the functioning of a Mission. An example is the sharply diverging views among participating States, the CiO and Secretariat as to whether or not the Presence in Albania should become involved in the economic dimension (property reforms). This disagreement further weakened the position of the Presence *vis-à-vis* the national government. Fostering internal coordination and facilitating clear-cut messages in this regard are key tasks of the CiO that can be addressed by joining OSCE efforts in the formulation of Mission strategies.

Cooperation with the Host Government⁷

In this effort it is indispensable to cooperate closely with the host government, which can crucially affect the functioning of a Mission (even in such physical ways as providing office space). Relations with the host governments depend greatly on the skills of HoMs,⁸ but participating States and in particular the CiO can also support the footing of a Mission. Inevitably, if Missions take their mandates seriously, host governments cannot be satisfied all the time. Although national opinion is often not clear-cut, the two most common sources of discontent are the stigma perceived in a Mission’s presence and, secondly, the absence of obvious benefits brought by a Mission. As a general rule, constructive cooperation becomes more difficult the closer an institution is to classical politics (for example, an Election Commission being less cooperative than Supreme Courts). Thus, taking the preferences of the host government into account within a wider approach may in some cases entice governments into cooperation. In other cases, a more confrontational approach on the part of the CiO may be appropriate (for example, as in some Central Asian states). Thus the cooperation with the host government is largely determined by the diplomatic and personal skills of the Mission staff, especially the HoMs, and the quality, depth of analysis and choice of appropriate follow-up of Mission reports.

Cooperation with International Actors

Linking OSCE activities to the pursuit of membership requirements of other organisations (as with Armenia for the CoE) may convince host governments of the benefit of an OSCE presence. Interinstitutional cooperation is vital in making this a constructive incentive. Another challenge is that if a Mission focuses exclusively on doing the legwork for other international organisations (IOs) it will soon be perceived as superfluous, for example once the host country has acquired membership with another IO. The purpose of a Mission must therefore be clear and tangible. At the same time, cooperation with other actors opens the possibility for the CiO to mobilise necessary political (and

⁷ See also Part I, section **D: Elements Influencing Impact**.

⁸ The Missions in Yerevan and Belgrade stand out as positive examples.

practical) support in other international fora, and to ensure coordinated policies and conditionalities. Only then will policies have greater coherence, impact and visibility.

The lack of EU-OSCE cooperation in the Balkans is both inexplicable and inefficient in this respect. Also in Central Asia, the EU would be able to build much better on OSCE assets whereas the OSCE would benefit from the political and financial weight of the EU. The question of cooperation hence seems to be one of desirability and will, rather than practicality.

In a number of cases, the CiO could assume a more proactive role in coordinating an international response, for example with the EU and NATO in FYROM. Coordination usually takes place on a national Mission-level, but support from the CiO would be helpful in cases of resistance to coordination. The formula of 'Friends of...' groups has proven to be a good means of generating political support for Mission activities (for example in Albania). In some cases, the Mission has even seconded an expert to the partner organisation, as in the Mission in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in order to assist the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Relations with OSCE Bodies

Politically, the CiO mainly represents the OSCE. In view of continuity and institutional memory, demands for (and resistances to) strengthening the Secretariat have long been part of OSCE reform efforts. But what exactly would make the Secretariat 'stronger', and how then would it affect Mission effectiveness? The country/regional desks in the CPC are the first points of contact in the Secretariat for Missions and provide generally good support in operational and administrative concerns. With respect to the limited capacity of Missions in project management and their great level of independence, it is in these fields - financial and administrative oversight - that the Secretariat/CPC should be strengthened in the first instance. Only once efficiency in spending is ensured may participating States make funds available more willingly. Secondly, the Secretariat/CPC needs to be strengthened analytically in order to support Missions in developing long-term strategies. Capacity-building in this respect needs to be closely coordinated with the expertise existing within ODIHR (human dimension) and the Economic and Environmental Coordinator (economic dimension).

A competent although generally under utilised resource is the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly (PA), which is able to provide specific expertise for Mission activities, access to national counterparts, credibility as well as visibility. Besides the formal visits and briefings, tri-parliamentary troika delegations of the EU, OSCE, and CoE assemblies are an effective way of building political weight and alliances in support of OSCE (Mission) objectives. The potential of such delegations, first experienced in Albania, should be further explored in other Mission environments as well.

Some cases of OSCE in-country cooperation have given rise to misunderstandings about who is doing what and by which mandate. In Armenia, for example, ODIHR arrangements with national counterparts resulted in circuiting the views expressed by the Office. On a general note, it may be worth considering whether integration of thematic experience and administrative tools for implementation under one roof would be more conducive to directing OSCE efforts more efficiently in a region.

Amendments in the reporting system could help to retain greater analysis and facilitate internal coordination. It was suggested that the CiO could make reporting more interactive by giving messages to host governments and participating States rather than accepting reports as solely informative. Connecting a follow-up plan to each Mission report, as already done for example by OMiK, could help to ensure that work in the field is adequately promoted (by the CiO) on an institutional level. Particularly communication between the CiO and large Missions could benefit from a Mission ‘policy coordinator’ who informs the CiO on issues of concern to the Mission on a regular basis. In the case of a historical connection with other OSCE instruments, for example the HCNM in FYROM (multiethnic south-east European university), Missions may consider creating a special liaison post, such as the inter-ethnic officer in the Mission to Skopje. More standardised and regular visits of the CiO to Missions and of Mission staff to Vienna were another recurrent request.

Regarding the information flow from Vienna to the Missions, the load of information sometimes overwhelms small Missions in particular. The CiO or Secretariat could formulate an approach to channel all information directed to Missions by participating States, ensuring that the correct parties have access to information.

Part III: Comparative Advantages of OSCE Missions and Conclusions

With regard to the five lead questions of the analysis, one can conclude the following:

1. The effectiveness and *impact of a Mission* on the ground is the result of how well it deals with limitations and opportunities as they occur within the particular conflict setting. On a positive note, Missions have been able to mitigate concrete problems, extend their assistance into regions that were less targeted internationally, insist on the compliance of governments with OSCE commitments, and facilitate a coordinated response from international actors. In principle these achievements are all grounded in the field structure and activities of Missions, the political pressure that the OSCE is able to mount through its peer review, and the expertise available in and to Missions concerning certain issues. Weaknesses, on the other hand, result from the lack of sanctions and insufficient strategic focus of Missions: national policies and practices regarding key issues remained unchanged, recommendations were not followed up, Mission capacities were not applied effectively because of a lack of strategy. However, whether or not a long-term Mission manages to be effective depends on conditions that are not exclusively within the control of the Mission. Key determining factors relate to the cooperation of the host government, the reaction of the host society to the OSCE Mission, the role of external powers, and the timing and nature of OSCE involvement.

2. Because of their constructive ambiguity and breadth, *mandates of Missions* generally accommodate conflict-relevant measures that target the main concerns on the ground. This flexibility, however, has its price in terms of long-term strategy. It is mainly the HoM who determines the exact interpretation and implementation of the mandate. Although the letter of the mandate does not prescribe concrete benchmarks to be achieved, the ambition of the mandate often exceeds the financial and analytical capacities of Missions. Clearer priorities need to be communicated in this regard.

3. The *comparative advantage* of OSCE Missions as a tool for conflict prevention and management has been characteristic of the comparative advantage of the Organisation as such, for example the comprehensive security concept, the cooperative peer review mechanisms, the decentralised, lean and flexible structure, and the extensive membership of the Organisation. Specific advantages of Missions relate to their continuous presence in the field - before as well as after conflict. Because of this, Missions have been able to react quickly, also to sensitive issues that were not touched by other (inter)national actors, and have had a unique advantage in building national capacities, networking and confidence-building, information-gathering, etc. Specifically, Missions are suited to perform tasks such as:

- The monitoring of national reforms, as Missions are able to accompany the implementation process;

- Civil society tasks, which often require a change in culture and thus long-term engagement;
- Human rights, due to the persistent pressure required to achieve improvements in this field;
- Administering post-conflict elections (for example in BaH);
- Democratisation tasks, which depend on continuous monitoring and a gradual handover of responsibilities to national structures;
- Facilitating dialogue and mediation (as in FYROM and Moldova) because of Missions' sensitivity to national issues and stakeholders, their generally accepted objectivity and at least certain degree of leverage through participating States;
- Mediating in regional issues because of previous experiences (as with border issues in Georgia and, less successfully, Kosovo) and cooperating across Missions regionally, as in Central Asia.

Comparative advantage in these fields can only materialise if a number of practical considerations apply:

- Mission activities are conflict-relevant and -effective and well timed, i.e. reflecting the key problems of the conflict setting as well as specific advantages of the OSCE;
- Strategic priorities are determined as a coordinated OSCE-wide effort, leaving ample freedom to Missions regarding content, and less so regarding financial oversight;
- An exit or handover process is considered as early as possible as part of such a Mission strategy;
- Institutional knowledge is accessible and continuously built up;
- Management and analytical capacities of Mission staff are strengthened without over bureaucratising existing structures.

Responsibility for enabling conditions in this regard lies only partly with the Mission. It is up to the OSCE as an organisation to make a joint effort in supporting Missions (by political, issue-based, networking and financial support) in setting and achieving their objectives.

4. The relatively high degree of *independence* of Missions is both a necessity and a risk. Missions are best informed of and connected to the situation on the ground and are therefore rightly the driving force in determining the course of the Mission. Strengthening the (financial) accountability of Missions, on the other hand, may be conducive to preventing (project) planning from going awry, be it of an *ad hoc* or finance-driven nature. This may help to prevent unconstructive imbalances resulting from the increasing dependence of Mission activities on the availability of voluntary contributions. The CPC should also be strengthened to provide content-related support in the course of interpreting the mandate.

5. In supporting the effectiveness of long-term Missions, measures of the *CiO* should address and start in four main fields:

- The *CiO* should initiate the formulation and revision of Mission *strategies* by convening annual meetings with the Mission, *CiO*, SG and possibly other relevant OSCE actors. The

strategies should outline concrete and realistic objectives for the medium (one year) and long (three years) terms on the basis of scenarios developed by the Missions. The host country should be involved closely in this process. On a case-by-case basis, the CiO may actively support a Mission *vis-à-vis* the host government, in particular regarding sensitive objectives and activities of Missions. The assets that a Mission can bring to a host country, for example politically or in dealing with international banks and aid agencies, need to be tangible and well communicated.

- *Projects* are helpful in responding to concrete or urgent problems and in making the OSCE's contribution to a country visible. But the OSCE will have to choose whether to transform itself into a project-implementing agency or to emphasise internal reforms. The current (increasing) amount of project work should prioritise those projects that: (i) have a function that matches the political assignment of the Mission; (ii) are likely to have some impact on the key issues of concern; (iii) correspond with the (management) capacities of the Mission. One way of grounding such a choice is to base the selection of projects upon both mid- and long-term plans.
- Regarding the build-up of *institutional knowledge*, the CiO should encourage greater analysis and focus on lessons learned to be reflected in Mission reports, and should suggest ways of building and retaining knowledge in certain fields of expertise. Strengthening the Secretariat is crucial in this respect. A concrete consideration may be to establish a lessons learned unit linked to the CPC that would assess the impact of Mission activities and collect, evaluate and make available best practices in certain fields of expertise. Such a unit should also consolidate inputs from ODIHR, the Economic and Environmental Coordinator and the Representative on the Freedom of the Media.
- With regard to internal *coordination*, the CiO needs to be aware of differing interests of participating States in certain Missions, and should try to catalyse diverging 'messages' forwarded to Missions in cooperation with the HoMs. The tasks and activities of Missions should be communicated clearly to all participating States. Constructive support and advice should however not be prevented or micromanaged. Already the formulation of Mission strategies should thus be as unified an 'OSCE effort' as possible. The facilitation of the CiO should also extend to relations between the Parliamentary Assembly and the governmental side (Permanent Council) of the OSCE. On the institutional level, the CiO should push forward cooperation with external actors in case of obvious complementarities and potential synergies (as, for example, with the EU in the Balkans).