

What is the OSCE?



Who are we?



The OSCE's work on the ground enables the Organization to tackle crises as they arise. The OSCE has deployed hundreds of monitors to Ukraine with the aim of reducing tensions.

With 57 participating States in North America, Europe and Asia, the OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization. The OSCE works for stability, peace and democracy for more than a billion people, through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

The OSCE — the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe — is a forum for political dialogue on a wide range of security issues and a platform for joint action to improve the lives of individuals and communities. Through its comprehensive approach to security that encompasses the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions and its inclusive membership, the OSCE helps bridge differences and build trust between states

by co-operating on conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

With its Institutions, expert units and network of field operations, the OSCE addresses issues that have an impact on our common security, including arms control, terrorism, good governance, energy security, human trafficking, democratization, media freedom and national minorities.

What's our history?

The OSCE traces its origins to the early 1970s, to the Helsinki Final Act (1975) and the creation of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which during the Cold War served as an important multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation between East and West.



The Helsinki Final Act, signed on 1 August 1975, established ten fundamental principles (the 'Decalogue') governing the behaviour of States towards each other as well as towards their citizens. The document guides the OSCE's work to this day.

The Helsinki Final Act, which was signed on 1 August 1975, contained a number of key commitments on politico-military, economic and environmental and human rights issues. It also established ten fundamental principles (the 'Decalogue') governing the behaviour of States towards each other as well as towards their citizens.

From 1975 through to the 1980s, the CSCE, through a series of meetings and conferences built on and extended the participating States' commitments, while periodically reviewing their implementation.

With the end of the Cold War, the Paris Summit of November 1990 set the CSCE on a new course. In the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the CSCE was called upon to play its part in managing the historic change taking place in Europe and responding to the new challenges of the post-Cold War period. This led to its acquiring permanent structures, including a secretariat and institutions, and the establishment of the first field operations.

After the break-up of the former Yugoslavia and the ensuing conflicts, the CSCE was on the frontline,

helping to manage crises and re-establish peace. In 1994, the CSCE, having evolved well beyond its initial role, became the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Thanks to its inclusive membership and developing partnerships, its comprehensive approach and its flexibility, the OSCE has continued to provide its participating States with effective, efficient tools and means to address current security issues.

How we work

Inclusiveness underpins everything the OSCE does. OSCE participating States enjoy equal status and take decisions by consensus.



The OSCE is an intergovernmental organization in which the 57 participating States work as equals in all decision-making bodies.

Decision-making bodies

Each week ambassadors meet at the Permanent Council, the OSCE's regular decision-making body, and the Forum for Security Co-operation, where decisions are taken regarding military aspects of security. A Ministerial Council is held annually to review OSCE activities and provide overall direction. Summits of Heads of State or Government of OSCE participating States take place periodically to set priorities at the highest political level.

Chairmanship

A different participating State holds the OSCE Chairmanship each year with that country's foreign minister as Chairperson-in-Office, working alongside the previous and succeeding Chairmanships, who together

form the OSCE Troika.

Secretariat

The Secretary General heads the Secretariat based in Vienna, and directly supports the Chairmanship. The Secretariat comprises the Conflict Prevention Centre and departments and units focusing on economic and environmental activities, co-operation with Partner countries and organizations, gender equality, anti-trafficking, as well as transnational threats including anti-terrorism, border management and policing reform. They monitor trends, provide expert analysis and implement projects in the field.

Institutions

The OSCE also includes institutions such as the Warsaw-based **Office for**

Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR),

which promotes democratic development and human rights. Areas of its work include election observation, the rule of law, promoting tolerance and non-discrimination and improving the situation of Roma and Sinti. ODIHR hosts the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the largest annual human rights conference in the OSCE region.

The Vienna-based **Representative on Freedom of the Media** observes media developments and provides early warning on violations of freedom of expression and media freedom, promoting full compliance with OSCE media freedom commitments.

As a tool of conflict prevention,

the High Commissioner on National Minorities,

based in The Hague, uses quiet diplomacy and early action to seek resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, security and stability.

The **Parliamentary Assembly** brings together more than 300 lawmakers from the parliaments of OSCE participating States to facilitate dialogue and co-operation and to promote accountability. OSCE parliamentarians also play a leading role in the Organization's election observation activities, conduct field visits, and drive organizational reform.

What do we do?

The OSCE approaches security through three dimensions - the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human.

In **military matters**, it seeks to create greater openness, transparency and co-operation and has developed the world's most advanced regime of **arms control and confidence-building** measures. Areas of work include security sector reform and the safe storage and destruction of small arms, light weapons and conventional ammunition.

Economic and environmental issues are also key factors in building security. Promoting **good governance, tackling corruption, environmental awareness**, sharing natural resources and sound management of environmental waste are amongst the ways the OSCE helps.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the bedrock of stable societies. The OSCE helps its participating States build democratic institutions; hold genuine and transparent democratic **elections**; ensure respect for human rights, **media freedom**, the **rights of national minorities** and the **rule of law**, and promote **tolerance and non-discrimination**.

On a broader level, the OSCE addresses security challenges that pose a threat across borders, such as **climate change, terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism, organized crime, cybercrime and trafficking in drugs, arms**

and human beings. It promotes stronger ties and co-operation between states, creating partnerships between the private and public sectors, and engaging civil society.

In its cross-dimension activities, the OSCE works towards **gender equality** and engages with **youth** across its peace and security agenda, and promotes human rights-compliant, comprehensive and co-operative approaches to managing **migration** and refugee flows.

The OSCE works closely with other international and regional organizations and co-operates with its Mediterranean and Asian Partner countries.

The many branches of the OSCE



On the ground

Most of the OSCE's staff and resources are deployed in field operations in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Recognizing that schools are an excellent place to nurture mutual trust, break down stereotypes and broaden understanding of universal human rights, the OSCE engages actively with children, young people and educators.



Field operations are established at the invitation of the respective host countries and their mandates are agreed by consensus of the participating States. They support host countries in developing their capacities through projects that respond to their needs.

The OSCE also works to address protracted conflicts in its region through agreed formats. These include negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive political settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict; the OSCE Minsk Group, which seeks a peaceful negotiated

solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; and the Geneva International Discussions, launched after the August 2008 conflict in Georgia, which the Organization co-chairs along with the United Nations and the European Union.

Together, the different parts of the OSCE support the participating States in building trust and working toward a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community.



The OSCE observes elections, and advises governments on how to develop and sustain democratic institutions.



Independent and professional media are a cornerstone of democratic societies, and a key focus of the OSCE's work.



Promoting professional and effective policing is an integral part of the OSCE's efforts in conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation.



The OSCE, through its field operations, helps to stop the spread of surplus weapons and offers assistance with their destruction.

OSCE structure

Decision-making bodies

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The OSCE PA is made up of more than 300 parliamentarians from the OSCE's 57 States, offering parliamentary input and taking action on OSCE-related work and facilitating co-operation between lawmakers.

Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office

The Personal Representatives are tasked by the Chair to work on preventing and managing conflicts in the OSCE region, and to ensure co-ordination in specific areas like gender and youth issues, and to promote tolerance and non-discrimination.

Summit

Meetings of Heads of State or Government of OSCE participating States set priorities, take decisions and provide orientation at the highest political level.

Ministerial Council

The meeting of foreign ministers from OSCE States, the Ministerial Council is the central decision-making and governing body of the OSCE.

Permanent Council

The Permanent Council is the regular body for political dialogue and decision-making among representatives of all OSCE States, meeting weekly in Vienna.

Forum for Security Co-operation

The Forum is an autonomous decision-making body where representatives of participating States meet weekly to consult on military stability and security.

Chairmanship

A different participating State holds the OSCE Chairmanship each year with that country's foreign minister acting as Chairperson-in-Office. The Chairmanship co-ordinates decision-making and sets the OSCE's priorities during its year in office.

Troika

The Troika consists of representatives of the current, preceding and future Chairmanships.

Executive structures

Secretary General

Elected to a three-year term by the Ministerial Council, the Secretary General heads the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, acting under the guidance of the Chairperson-in-Office.

Secretariat, Vienna

The Secretariat assists the Chairmanship in its activities, and provides operational and administrative support to field operations and, as appropriate, to other Institutions.

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Warsaw

ODIHR promotes democratic elections, respect for human rights, the rule of law, tolerance and non-discrimination, and the rights of Roma and Sinti communities.

Representative on Freedom of the Media, Vienna

The Representative observes media developments in all 57 OSCE participating States and provides early warning on violations of free expression and media freedom.

High Commissioner on National Minorities, The Hague

The High Commissioner's role is to provide early warning and take appropriate early action to prevent ethnic tensions from developing into conflict.

OSCE in the field

The OSCE's field operations assist host countries in putting their OSCE commitments into practice and fostering local capacities through concrete projects that respond to their needs. The field operations enable the OSCE to tackle crises as they arise, and in many places play a critical post-conflict role, helping to restore trust among affected communities.

South-Eastern Europe

- Presence in Albania
- Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Mission in Kosovo
- Mission to Montenegro
- Mission to Serbia
- Mission to Skopje

Eastern Europe

- Mission to Moldova
- Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine
- Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine
- Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk

South Caucasus

- Office in Yerevan
- Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-on-Office on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference

Central Asia

- Centre in Ashgabat
- Programme Office in Astana
- Centre in Bishkek
- Office in Tajikistan
- Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

OSCE-related bodies

Joint Consultative Group

This Vienna-based body deals with questions relating to compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

Open Skies Consultative Commission

This body meets regularly in Vienna and consists of representatives from each of the 34 States that have signed the Open Skies Treaty.

Court of Conciliation and Arbitration

This Geneva-based Court serves as a mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law and OSCE commitments.

Facts and figures

(as of March 2016)

Up-to-date figures can be found at www.osce.org/whatistheosce/factsheet

Budget:



€141.1 million

OSCE budget for 2015



Both the **OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine** and the **OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Donetsk and Gukovo** are funded by extra-budgetary contributions.

Staffing:



3,462 staff

employed by the OSCE

2,949 staff

engaged in its **17 field operations** in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

The **Secretariat** and the **Institutions** together employ

513 staff

Gender balance:



Share of female and male staff in different posts across the OSCE

	Male	Female
General staff	54%	46%
Professional staff	51%	49%
Managerial staff	69%	31%
Total	54%	46%

OSCE participating States

Albania
Andorra
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Canada
Croatia

Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Holy See
Hungary
Iceland

Ireland
Italy
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Moldova
Monaco
Mongolia

Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
San Marino
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain

Sweden
Switzerland
Tajikistan
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States
Uzbekistan

Partners for Co-operation

Afghanistan
Australia
Japan
Republic of Korea
Thailand
Algeria
Egypt
Israel
Jordan
Morocco
Tunisia

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Vacancies and internship opportunities are posted regularly on the OSCE website: **osce.org/employment**

For more information about the OSCE, its work and structures, visit the website: **osce.org**

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