

Since the establishment of the OSCE (originally the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE) through the signature of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the organisation pursues a comprehensive concept of security in a cross-dimensional approach. The three “dimensions” of the OSCE's work are: the politico-military; the economic and environmental; and the human dimension including the respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democracy and the rule of law. The OSCE's activities range from issues such as military transparency and arms control to fostering economic development, ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and promoting the full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The OSCE also deals with transnational threats, such as cyber security or fight against terrorism.

Three autonomous OSCE institutions assist the participating States in monitoring the implementation of their OSCE commitments and help them in improving their record in this respect. The autonomous institutions are the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) based in Warsaw, the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) based in the Hague, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) based in Vienna.

The OSCE also remains an important forum for conflict resolution and confidence building in its area and is directly involved in the negotiations to resolve the protracted conflicts in Georgia and Moldova, as well as the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Most recently, the OSCE has played a key role in efforts to address the crisis in and around Ukraine, including through the deployment of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM).

OSCE facts and figures

57 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, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America (USA), Uzbekistan.

The OSCE maintains special relations with a number of countries in the Mediterranean region, in Asia, and Australia, which are known as Partners for Co-operation and have observer status. The Partners are: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Afghanistan, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Australia.

OSCE Chairmanship in Office (CiO)

- 2013: Ukraine
- 2014: Switzerland
- 2015: Serbia
- 2016: Germany
- 2017: Austria
- 2018: Italy
- 2019: Slovakia
- 2020: Albania
- 2021: Sweden
- 2022: Poland

OSCE Permanent Council

- Meets in Vienna

OSCE Secretariat

- Secretary General: Helga Maria Schmid (Germany, December 2020)
- Headquarters: Vienna

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

- President (2020): George Tsereteli (Georgia)
- Secretary General: Roberto Montella
- Headquarters (Secretariat): Copenhagen
- [More information about OSCE Parliamentary Assembly](#)

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

- Director: Matteo Mecacci (Italy, appointed 2020)
- Headquarters: Warsaw
- [More information about Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights \(ODIHR\)](#)

Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

- High Commissioner on National Minorities: Kairat Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan, appointed 2020)
- Headquarters: The Hague
- [More information about Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities](#)

Office of the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media

- OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media: Teresa Ribeiro (Portugal, appointed 2020)
- Headquarters: Vienna
- [More information about Office of the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media](#)

15 OSCE Field Operations:

- OSCE Presence in Albania
- OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- OSCE Mission in Kosovo
- OSCE Mission to Montenegro
- OSCE Mission to Serbia
- OSCE Mission to Skopje
- OSCE Mission to Moldova
- OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine
- OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine
- Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference
- OSCE Centre in Ashgabat
- OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan
- OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek
- OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe
- OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

[More information about the OSCE](#)

EU co-operation with the OSCE

Article 21 (2.c) of the Lisbon Treaty states that "the Union shall define and pursue common policies and actions, and shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations, in order to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and with the aims of the Charter of Paris, including those relating to external borders."

The EU and the OSCE share a strong interest to co-operate on security-related discussions and conflict prevention in Europe and co-operate closely at all levels, including in the field. The EU and the OSCE pursue a permanent political dialogue among their members and coordinate efforts in pursuing common objectives and finding shared solutions. The agendas of the two organisations overlap to a considerable degree.

In 2018, the EU and the OSCE exchanged letters, at the level of Secretary General, agreeing to strategically strengthen their institutional interaction, as well as their operational co-operation in areas of common interest across the three dimensions.

The EU actively supports this comprehensive and co-operative approach to security. As the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU grows in importance and effectiveness, especially with the development of a European Security and Defence Policy and of a crisis prevention and civilian crisis management capacity, the co-operation between the EU and the OSCE increases. The EU also greatly values the role of OSCE field operations and the autonomous OSCE institutions.

EU Member States contribute more than two thirds of the OSCE's main budget and the EU and EU Member States also contribute to the funding of a number of OSCE implemented extra-budgetary projects. Examples of EU support for the OSCE include assistance for the ODIHR in developing national electoral and human rights institutions and crisis management, for instance in the Western Balkans.

The EU Delegation to the International Organisations in Vienna coordinates the EU policies in the OSCE on a day-to-day basis and represents the EU in the OSCE.

The role of the EU in the OSCE

The role of the EU in the OSCE has never been formally defined in a comprehensive manner. For a long time, the participation of the European Commission (before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009) in OSCE proceedings was simply based on established practices, most of which dated back to the preparatory negotiations of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, in which the Commission was already involved. This participation was formalised only in November 2006 when OSCE Ministers adopted the [Rules of procedure](#) of the organization.

The basic justification for EU participation in OSCE proceedings stems from the fact that the legal competence concerning some issues addressed by the OSCE has been transferred from EU Member States to the EU. Hence, already the [Helsinki Final Act](#) was signed by Prime Minister Aldo Moro "as Prime Minister of the Italy and in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Communities" (so-called [Moro Declaration](#)). The other two key OSCE basic documents, the [Charter of Paris](#) (1990) and the [Charter for European Security](#) (1999) were signed directly by the respective Presidents of the Commission Jacques Delors and Romano Prodi.