

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. (akg-images)

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.

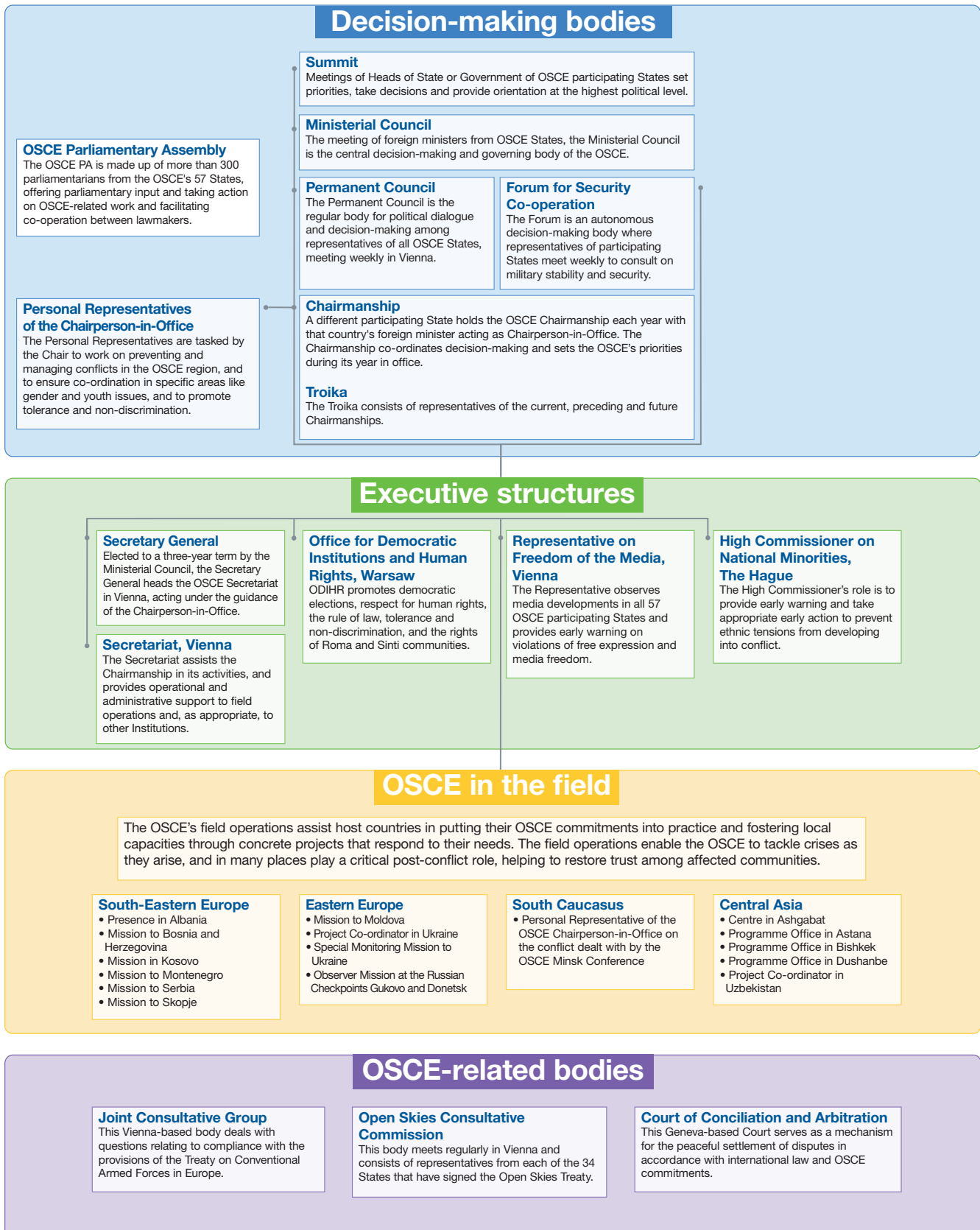


Promoting professional and effective policing is an integral part of the OSCE's efforts in conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation.



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

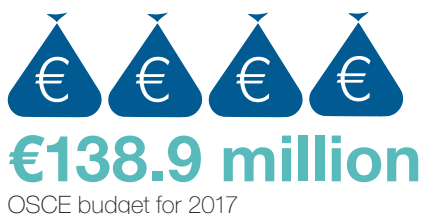
OSCE structure



Facts and figures (as of June 2017)

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

Budget:



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:



2,868 staff
engaged in its **16 field operations** in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

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

593 staff

Gender balance:



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

	Male	Female
General Service Staff	52%	48%
Other Professional	66%	34%
Senior Management	71%	29%
Total	59%	41%

OSCE participating States

Albania
Andorra
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Belgium
Bosnia & 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 of America
Uzbekistan

Partners for Co-operation

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

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

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