

Religion and Security-Building in the OSCE Context

Involving Religious Leaders and Congregations in Joint Efforts



OSCE Network

OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions

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Dedication

We dedicate this report to Dr. **Wolfgang Zellner**, who retired as Director of the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) of the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH) on 29 November 2018. Dr. Zellner served the OSCE for a quarter century with the weapons of imagination and fellowship; he was the first leader of our Academic Network, founded in 2013. Without his encouragement and involvement, the present project could not have happened.

Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank Dr. Michael O'Flaherty, Director, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and his colleagues for briefing us on the EU Fundamental Rights Forum 2018 and the work underway under the auspices of FRA to develop common ground between human rights activists and religious leaders and actors. We are grateful to the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) for arranging for a dialogue between participants of the project and the representatives of several religious traditions who met with us at KAICIID headquarters in Vienna on 16 October 2018. These were: Pastor Matthew Laferty (United Methodist Church, Vienna); Tarafa Baghajati and Amina Carla Baghajati (Islamic

Religious Authority in Austria / AMI Austrian Muslim Initiative); Rabbi Schlomo Elieser Hofmeister (Jewish Community in Austria / Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien).

We are most grateful that a distinguished group of academics and practitioners participated in the project and attended either one or both of the two workshops. A first project workshop was hosted and financially supported by the Edward M. Kennedy Institute, National University of Ireland Maynooth, and St. Patrick's College Maynooth, and took place on 13 April 2018. A second workshop took place on 15-16 October 2018 in Vienna. All institutes that were represented at the project workshops are listed in an annex, as well as the names of the individual contributors.

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The OSCE, which already engages with religion in a number of contexts, should promote greater '**religious literacy**' and regard religion as a potential resource for security-building. This means engaging with religion, and with religious leaders, institutions, congregations, and communities, to promote the key overarching conditions for societal stability and sustainable development, in accordance with the underlying vision of the OSCE. Especially in relation to Central Asia, **the most effective security strategies are multifaceted** and should not oversimplify the long-term factors of instability.

Recommendations

- 1) The OSCE should follow the example of other international organisations and establish an **Advisory Group of Religious Leaders, Institutions, Congregations, and Communities**.
- 2) An **information-sharing mechanism** among OSCE structures should support this initiative.
- 3) The Advisory Group should prepare a report on possible OSCE contributions to the next High-level Political Forum on the **Sustainable Development Goals** ('empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality').
- 4) The Advisory Group should work towards recommendations on **promoting religious literacy** in government service, business, the media, and higher education (tertiary and graduate level).
- 5) The Advisory Group should seek to deepen our understanding of **reconciliation and civility, respectively, as political values** and their relationship to the OSCE concept of CBMs.
- 6) The Advisory Group should contemplate **local or regional platforms**, to be convened with CPC/field mission support, to enable relevant religious leaders to contribute to conflict resolution. The present report includes a specific recommendation regarding Central Asia.
- 7) Over time, the Advisory Group could promote a dialogue on **the interaction of profit and non-profit actors within functioning market economies**.
- 8) The Advisory Group could engage in **consultations with other stakeholders over 'the contours of the international order'** and how to render the values-led approach to European security more fit-for-purpose. The Advisory Group should bear in mind the value of **expert advice** from the institutes participating in the present project and the wider OSCE network.

Introduction: Religion and Conflict – Religion and Peace-building

The importance of religion in society is not diminishing – whether measured in terms of the number of believers or the relevance of religion as a source of political motivation.¹ At the same time, societies around the world have been exposed to new challenges as a result of changing patterns of economic activity, cross-border migration, and in many cases a sharpening of political differences. The study of law, religion, and society, and the relevance of religion to questions of peace and conflict, remain important subjects of enquiry in the OSCE region.

It is widely acknowledged that there are potentially problematic aspects to the role of religion in the political sphere. This is especially the case in situations of political polarisation (or ‘radicalisation’ or ‘fusion’, to borrow terms used by contributors to our project). Religion, or a worldview with ‘religious’ characteristics, can serve as a marker of identity; as a means of removing a political issue from the realm of critical scrutiny; or as an obstacle to integration, whether of people or of ideas.

In 2014, in the report ‘Five Key Questions Answered on the Link between Peace and Religion,’ the Institute for Economic and Peace (IEP) in Sydney concludes that worldwide there is no ‘clear statistical relationship between either the presence or the absence of religious belief and conflict.’ IEP points out that low levels of peace are highly correlated with other factors such as ‘corruption, political

terror, gender and economic inequality, and political instability’²

One way to think about our topic, therefore, is to ask how religious traditions can help prevent or resolve conflict by focussing on ‘early warning signs’ and bringing greater clarity and consensus to the dialogue about justice.

As of 2018, the OSCE already has mandates to engage with religion in a number of areas:

- Freedom of Religion or Belief (including the ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief)
- Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (TND) (including the role of the three Special Representatives)
- Violent Radicalization and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT)
- Conflict management and post-conflict situations
- Inter-religious dialogue (at field mission level)

The question at the heart of the present project is whether the OSCE can add value to this work and open up new resources for security-building through a fuller understanding of the nature and social role of religion – and in particular, by including religious and faith-based leaders, and religious institutions and congregations, in broader civil society coalitions or frameworks of engagement.

1 Pew Research Centre, *The Global Religious Landscape* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2010). See also various studies from the Center for the Study of Law and Religion, Emory University.

2 Institute for Economic and Peace (IEP), *Five Key Questions Answered on the Link between Peace and Religion* (Sydney: IEP, 2014).

This report is based on a wide range of contributions that were presented and discussed at two workshops in April and October 2018 (see annex for participating entities). The report is structured into five chapters. A first chapter introduces new thinking on conflict intervention, peace-building and social cohesion, emphasizing a renewed interest in factors that encourage a ‘positive peace’. A second chapter advocates ‘religious literacy’, or a better understanding about religion or belief across policy makers, senior management in the public and private sectors, and in the media. Chapter 3 presents ten examples to demonstrate how religion can illuminate OSCE values and help restore their cultural resonance and practical impact under current conditions. Chapter 4 discusses two examples of new coalitions and frameworks of engagement: the UN Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors, and the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IDF). Chapter 5 concludes with eight recommendations including the creation of a new **Advisory Group of Religious Leaders, Institutions, Congregations, and Communities**, to be established within the OSCE framework.

New Thinking on Conflict Intervention, Peace-building and Social Cohesion

Since the mid-2000s, we have experienced a global surge in violent conflict, as a recent report prepared by the UN and World Bank underlines: ‘In 2016, more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. Reported battle-related deaths in 2016 increased tenfold from the post-Cold War low of 2005.’³

Apart from instances of open conflict, ‘there are fundamental trends afoot that, all things being equal, work against order’.⁴ In the words of Pope Francis, ‘We can see signs that things are now reaching a breaking point … the present world system is certainly unsustainable from a number of points of view...Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain...’⁵

The OSCE ‘is a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation’.⁶

However, conflict prevention in general and also, at least partially, conflict prevention by the OSCE, are plagued by a number of shortcomings that are aggravated by the changing character of conflicts:

- Conflict prevention usually comes (too) late.
- ‘Political actors tend to engage only when the

risk of violence is high or violence is already present’.⁷

- ‘Too often, preventive action is focused on the demands of actors that control the means of violence and positions of power’.⁸ While this is, at least to a degree, unavoidable in many situations, it is worthwhile raising awareness that this is a problem.
- Conflict prevention is frequently designed in a way that focuses on states or international organizations. This means that the prevention instruments are primarily those of a state or an international organization, and that civil society actors are taken less into consideration.

Against this background, the following statement by the 2018 UN / World Bank study is of key importance:

The more successful cases [of conflict prevention] mobilized a **coalition of domestic actors to influence incentives towards peace**, bringing in the comparative advantages of civil society, including women’s groups, **the faith community**, and the private sector to manage tensions.⁹

³ United Nations and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018), p. XVII.

⁴ Richard Haass, *A World in Disarray* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017).

⁵ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': Encyclical Letter on Care for Our Common Home* (Rome: Vatican Press, 2015), §§ 61 and 161.

⁶ OSCE, *Elements of the Conflict Cycle, Related to Enhancing the OSCE's Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation*, Vilnius, 7 December 2011, MC.DEC/3/11.

Under the sustainable development goals, OSCE participating States are already committed to ‘revitalizing the global partnership’ for sustainable

⁷ UN / World Bank, Pathways for Peace, p. XXI.

⁸ Ibid., p. XXV.

⁹ Ibid., p. XXIV.

development, in particular under target 17.17, which requires us to ‘encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.’¹⁰

At the global level, in sum, there is a renewal of interest in the factors that make for social cohesion or ‘positive peace.’ There is a demand for **perspective** – for greater attention to be given to the key overarching conditions for societal stability and sustainable development.

¹⁰ UN, *Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development,* <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships>.

2. Religious Literacy

Coexist House, a contributor to our project, advocates '**religious literacy**' – meaning a better quality of understanding about religion or belief across the widest possible spectrum but particularly among policy makers, senior management in the public and private sectors, and in the media.

The great advantage with 'religious literacy' as a concept is that its definition immediately separates itself from any sense of 'religiosity' or even putting a positive spin on religion. It simply deals with the bare facts that (i) religion really matters to a very large majority of the world's population, a figure set to rise; and (ii) to ignore religion, or treat it as something people only do in private, is to invite prejudice based on misinformation and to risk that the ensuing 'understanding vacuum' is filled with toxic rhetoric and even violence.¹¹

Religious literacy training focuses on **disposition towards religion** and can provide a framework for further discussion based on respect.

Traditional broadcast and print media play a major role in the dissemination of religious news. However, in many parts of Europe, because the media, government, education and society largely abandoned religion as a serious subject some thirty years ago, the media are often unable to handle the topic confidently.¹²

11 See, e.g., note 1 above and section 3.10 of this Report.

12 Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, *Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good* (Cambridge: The Woolf Institute, 2015); Jolyon P. Mitchell and Owen Gower (eds.), *Religion and the News* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012).

In the UK, the recently established Religion Media Centre (RMC) has a mission. The job of the RMC is not to promote religion in the media: it is to ensure that the media has access to good, accurate, information. It will have no editorial line other than that 'religion matters – it deserves to be covered fairly and accurately'.¹³ A similar centre operating in a pan-European arena could help eradicate the lazy use of terminology and images; supply media briefings and background notes; and provide media training to religious scholars and clergy – given that in a plural world, the religious traditions need to cooperate in the 'public square' with one another and with other stakeholders.

Remits in the sphere of higher education would seem especially appropriate to the OSCE Network which was established in order to place academic bodies at the service of OSCE values. One of our project contributors, the Centre for Strategic Studies in Defence and Security, University of National and World Economy, Sofia, suggests a line of approach complementary to that of Coexist House. Given that education can be an important factor in achieving greater religious literacy across the OSCE region, the Network could work with the OSCE and other actors to create modules on religious literacy destined for **tertiary education**. An illustration of what this could mean in practice is provided by the E4J modules developed under the auspices of UNODC. The modules would not be intended as courses taught during a whole semester or academic year; they would be more like elements in certain university

13 Religion Media Centre publicity material – quote from the Chair of Trustees Michael Wakelin. See <https://religionmediacentre.org.uk>.

courses, requiring 3-4 hours of the total course time. The content of such education might be determined in part by the different religious and ethnic challenges across the OSCE participating States. Introducing such modules could contribute over time to conflict prevention, the building of a culture of mutual acceptance, and societal development. It should lead to a decrease in social tensions within OSCE participating States and assist in the integration of migrants.

At the level of graduate education, the Kennedy Institute, which leads the present project, is developing a 48-hour module for graduate students examining the changing character of diplomacy and international relations, linking domestic to foreign policy. The module addresses the questions of the human right to freedom of religion or belief and religion and society from this perspective. The objective is to enable graduate students to assess developments in international diplomacy in the light of conscience-based arguments. There may be scope to develop this module in a collaborative manner under OSCE auspices.

Consonance with the Helsinki Principles and Commitments: 10 Examples

The goal of greater religious literacy is fully consonant with the affirmation of OSCE principles and commitments.

The OSCE was originally conceived as a gradual process of rapprochement between the CSCE participating States based on common principles, higher levels of cooperation, and dialogue. Important differences persisted; at the same time, there was commonality and a shared purpose.¹⁴ The three ‘baskets’ or ‘dimensions’ provided a basic logic or architecture that remains valid and corresponds to the three main work streams at the UN, namely security, development, and human rights. The read-across to the UN agenda is not accidental: the CSCE was conceived as a contribution to effective multilateralism and as an act of responsibility towards the global community. In recent years, the participating States have attempted to recover this connection to the ‘whole of reality’ through the Corfu process, the Astana Summit, Helsinki plus 40, and (arguably) the establishment of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks against the background of Helsinki plus 40.

It should be underlined that when other regions such as the Middle East or East Asia (Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue) study the OSCE as a peace-building model, it is with reference to the conceptual coherence and high level of political ambition that characterised the original CSCE.¹⁵

¹⁴ See also Section 3.2 below on unity in the presence of difference.

¹⁵ See e.g. Speech by Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the OSCE Mediterranean Conference in Jordan, 20 – 21 October 2015, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/193371>.

The 1975 CSCE Helsinki Final Act opens with a preamble and a ‘Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States.’ These principles form a matrix:

All the principles set forth above are of primary significance and, accordingly, they will be equally and unreservedly applied, each of them being interpreted taking into account the others.

The original institutional underpinning of the CSCE, namely review conferences, allowed for creativity and development - as did the sequence of OSCE Summit meetings up to 2010. A fundamental question is whether today, two generations after the Final Act and more than a generation after the Charter of Paris, the dialogue about values within the CSCE/OSCE has kept pace with changing European and global circumstances. To the extent that the original principles had some of their roots in religion, which of course was very much the case, any effort to interpret OSCE principles in the light of circumstances and make them performative in the 21st century needs to take into account the same traditions of thought and the *same depth of cultural sources* (religious or not, from the OSCE region or from other regions) on which we were able to draw in the post-war period.

Arguably the loss of contact with first principles is one of the main weaknesses of the ‘echo chambers’ created by the social media of today and one of the main risks faced by democracy in the OSCE region.

In the following sections of this report, we attempt to show through examples how religion can illuminate OSCE values and help restore their cultural resonance and practical impact under current conditions. A first example concerns the overall interpretation of the Helsinki Final Act. We then offer three examples under each of the traditional baskets or dimensions of the OSCE.

3.1 Cross-worldview Cooperation in the Interest of Mankind

The Helsinki Final Act speaks of the ‘universal scope’ of CSCE values and ‘cooperating in the interest of mankind.’ One of our participating institutions, looking at the factors of social disintegration from an anthropological perspective, argues that we need ‘social glue’ and ‘shared life-changing experiences’ to address our common problems (paper contributed by the University of Oxford’s Centre for Anthropology and Mind):

Some social movements in the twentieth century experimented with rituals aimed at binding together humanity at large to solve world problems. Those experiments had limited success... A [new] starting point might be to work towards a set of shared values and goals underwritten by a universal morality.¹⁶

The CSCE, based on principles, commitments, cooperation and confidence-building - and in the circumstances of the 1970s, bridging worldviews - can be understood as a step precisely in this direction. Dialogue and the development of personal trust was to be a ‘shared life-changing experience.’

¹⁶ Harvey Whitehouse, “Three Wishes for the World”, in: *Cliodynamics: The Journal of Theoretical and Mathematical History* 4, no. 2 (2013).

The CSCE, and now the OSCE, imply, ‘in their DNA,’ that we need to look at the place of values/morality/ethics/justice in multilateral diplomacy and in efforts to address the problems that face humanity as a whole. Societies work because their rule of law is internalised by men and women. In this connection, freedom can be understood as the condition of authentic human relationships based more on good will and a common apprehension of truth than on coercion.

A further point to be underlined, though it is often overlooked, is that co-operation among the participating States ‘in all fields’ has the status of a principle in the Helsinki Final Act and is seen as a source of confidence and trust and therefore of ‘international peace, security and justice.’

3.2 Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland through a Benign Process of Change

A number of case studies in peacebuilding have been taken forward within the framework of our project. We offer here brief summaries, beginning with a study by the Kennedy Institute of the Northern Ireland peace process.

What might be called the ‘anatomy of reconciliation’ has underpinned the peace process in Northern Ireland since the early 1970s. The discernment of a new path in Ireland was always much more than a technical question. **In this, there is an analogy with the origins of the European project during and after World War Two, the reconciliation of France and Germany, and other similar developments in European politics.**

In Ireland, the new ‘take’ on political reality involved what could be termed a methodology of benign

change corresponding with the detailed analysis of the ‘anatomy of reconciliation’ in Pope Francis’s *Evangelii Gaudium* (2014).

Time is more important than space in Northern Ireland: we are engaged in a process.

‘**The whole is greater than the sum of its parts**’ in that progress within Northern Ireland is part of a bigger European picture.

The Good Friday principle of parity of esteem reflects **unity in the presence of difference**.

The vision behind the Good Friday Agreement is that ‘spilling our sweat’ will take the place of ‘spilling our blood.’ In overlooking what divides us in order to pursue our common interest in a better life, **we close the gap between ideas and reality**.

3.3 The Swiss Experience of Daily Pragmatism for Religious and Secular Coexistence

Switzerland can offer experiences that may serve as a starting point for constructively addressing conflicts of religious and secular coexistence in other OSCE member-states too. The country has undergone religious conflicts since the 16th century, the last one from 1870-1885, with effects felt far into the 20th century. What makes the Swiss historical experience still relevant today, is that it has shaped norms for reconciling religious and non-religious communities’ needs in everyday life. These norms are based on a dialogic, pragmatic, participatory and consensus-oriented approach to handling religion-related differences for peaceful coexistence and can be summed up in **two guiding principles**.

The **first principle** is to address conflicts of religious coexistence at the local level first. Swiss experience shows that there is more flexibility and freedom to find tailored solutions in a participatory and consensual manner when only the directly concerned parties are involved. Imposing a certain behavior top-down mostly has a conflict-promoting effect, and finding generalized solutions at the national level which fit everyone’s needs can be impossible.

The **second principle** is to focus on the practical aspects of living together, not on doctrinal or dogmatic issues. Because values and dogmas define the communities’ identities, they cannot be compromised without compromising the communal identity. By focusing on practical actions of everyday life, religious communities have the opportunity to express the flexibility inherent to any tradition to adapt to new circumstances. This allows finding solutions that are compatible with different value systems and worldviews, be they of a religious or secular nature, without imposing a worldview. Applying both principles yields a creative process in which the solutions cannot be foreseen in advance.

The Swiss example shows that protecting the rights of minorities through legal frameworks, which the Swiss constitution does, is not always enough to create the will for peaceful coexistence between different religious and secular communities; other measures (e.g. education, awareness-raising, or community mediation) need to be in place as well.

3.4 Trust in the ‘Anatomy of Reconciliation’

The Irish OSCE Chairmanship in 2012 held a workshop on the theme, ‘Towards a Strategy for Reconciliation in the OSCE Area.’ In that context,

the OSCE Secretary General commented that ‘unless this deficit of trust [in the OSCE] is dealt with constructively, the OSCE as a genuine security community is likely to remain for the time being a vision rather than a reality’¹⁷

The contribution to our project from the Center for Reconciliation Studies at Jena (JCRS) asks two central questions:

- Can reconciliation be restored as an explicit value in the European public sphere?
- Is there scope for an examination in depth of the ‘anatomy of reconciliation,’ including the degree to which reconciliation can be understood as a preventive measure?

JCRS adopts **the Hölderlin Perspective** as a working definition of reconciliation and a hermeneutical key. In his novel ‘Hyperion’, the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) wrote: – ‘reconciliation is in the middle of strife, and all things separated find one another again.’¹⁸ The vision that reconciliation starts now, in the middle of conflict, leads to a focus on such elements as the will to reconcile, humanising the image of the other, fostering a vision of a common future, and trust as a factor in ‘reducing social complexity’.

Another contributor to our project, the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU), suggests an approach that has something in common with the Hölderlin Perspective, namely that of ‘conflict transformation’:

Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships¹⁹.

Our research project proposes associating the Hölderlin Perspective and the concept of ‘conflict transformation’ with the OSCE concept of confidence-building and ‘confidence-building measures’ (CBMs). The moral premise of CBMs is that seeds of reconciliation can be sown even in the midst of tension and confrontation. Peace and good relations rarely wholly vanish even in the midst of a crisis. Trust and reconciliation are values that can be studied, learned through practice, and encouraged by political authorities.

3.5 Market Stability and Social Cohesion

Economic cooperation is a core CSCE/OSCE aim. A number of key OSCE texts underline the importance of social cohesion. The OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension (Maastricht 2003) states that ‘good governance and sustainable development imply policies and systems that promote social partnership and cohesion’.

A number of recent studies point to an absence of social cohesion, including in the economic sphere, as a factor in the rise of populism.²⁰

17 OSCE, Workshop on ‘Towards a Strategy for Reconciliation in the OSCE Area: Key Issues and Recommendations, Vienna 18 December 2012, SEC.GAL/243.12/Corr.1, 16 January 2013, p. 1.

18 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion* (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel Verlag, 1797), ch. 68.

19 John P. Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003), p. 14.

20 Ed Luce, *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2017) is one among several recent studies. See also Jan-Werner Müller, *Was ist Populismus? Ein Essay* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2016) and Dambisa Moyo, *The Edge of Chaos* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2018).

In the wider sphere of international development cooperation, discussions are taking place on the **complementarity of political, economic, and social transformation**. The link between sustaining peace and sustainable development is especially clear in SDG 16.

Progress in combatting environmental degradation will have important impacts on life-style and social relations, for example in big cities. The '**greening**' of the **economy**, requiring market-based approaches, is not itself a market-led political development.

The **empowerment of women** impacts on the whole of society through a kind of multiplier effect.

In OSCE terms, social cohesion is ultimately a 'Third Dimension' as well as a 'Second Dimension' concern. According to the Bolzano Recommendations (2008), 'States should promote the integration of society and strengthen social cohesion. A well-integrated society in which all participate and interact is in the interest of both States and minorities...'

The World Values Survey, the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), and ODIHR have examined an apparent pattern of **declining trust in parliaments and political parties**. For example, according to IDEA, 'political representation is under increased pressure around the world.'²¹

The tenth anniversary of the financial crisis (Lehman Brothers) has brought forth a wave of relevant comment and analysis. A special editorial in the Financial Times on 14 September 2018 is

representative of a much wider discussion:

...The flight to extremism, moreover, threatens to undermine the market-based democracy that, while its pitfalls were brutally exposed in 2008, delivered peace and rising overall prosperity in the west... "Mainstream" parties need to take inequality seriously, and address the causes of disenchantment...the danger is that the next financial calamity may strike before that battle has even begun to be won.

As this report was being finalised, the Financial Times carried an opinion piece on 7 November 2018 by the former US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson under the headline, 'We are living in **an age of alarming risk**' Paulson argued that:

...regulatory chaos has already begun to constrict opportunities for cross-border transactions...government competition around security issues, not least between Washington and Beijing, threatens economic integration and has blurred the line between defence and commerce...The landscape is also changing for governments ...businesses play countries off against each other...chief executives are driving political and social change...

Can it become a point of agreement in the OSCE that **markets need a political context and a culture of trust** that they themselves are incapable of producing?

Our project was briefed on the initiative ***A Blueprint for Better Business***, which became an independent UK-based charitable trust in 2014. ***A Blueprint for Better Business*** recognises the widespread breakdown of trust between business – especially big

²¹ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, *The Global State of Democracy 2017: Exploring Democracy's Resilience* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2017), ch. 4. See also the ODIHR, *Promoting and Increasing Youth Political Participation and Civic Engagement in the OSCE Region* (Warsaw: ODIHR, 2015).

business – and society. The charity works mainly with leadership teams in large companies, to support and challenge them, fostering a change in behaviour and expectations.

3.6 Inequality

The participating States undertake in the Helsinki Final Act to ‘take into account the interest of all in the narrowing of differences in the levels of economic development, and in particular the interest of developing countries throughout the world.’ How is this principle to be interpreted under 21st century conditions? Especially given that under the sustainable development goals (SDG 10), OSCE governments (and all governments) are committed to ‘reducing inequality within and among countries’ by 2030?

There is a growing body of research that seeks to correlate ‘the fundamental concerns of the humanities with the economic reality of inequalities of income and wealth.’²² In this domain, religion has become a variable in the work of economists, sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, and the exponents of the life sciences (e.g. in relation to public health). To the extent that the world’s religions consider economic inequality, and poverty in the presence of wealth, as moral issues, religious representatives have a stake in the interpretation of the economic provisions of the Helsinki Final Act.

3.7 Economic Confidence-building Measures

Economic cooperation and economic confidence-building measures contain in embryo the normal and good relationships that reconciliation implies. Religion-based (or worldview-based) approaches can be relevant to economic confidence-building in two main ways.

First, in certain policy areas and situations, the religious communities and their adherents can make a significant positive contribution to cohesion by **working purposefully together through partnerships**, often partnerships with the civil authorities, aimed at advancing the common good. There are numerous examples of this throughout Europe, in such fields as education, healthcare, housing, and the reception of migrants.²³ It is an added benefit that when civil authorities and religious communities or charities ‘look together’ at a given problem, they learn to articulate common values.

Second, a **religious perspective can contribute to conceptual work** in situations in which laws and value-systems are silent or not up-to-date. Migration is a clear example. **Even in circumstances of great complexity, dialogue, deliberation, and discernment can, in the religious perspective, identify CBMs that anticipate the sustainable solutions of the future.**

22 Mission statement of the inquiry on global concerns, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton.

23 See, e.g., the speech of An Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Leo Varadkar on the occasion of the visit of Pope Francis to Ireland, August 2018; the speech of President Macron referred to in section 3.8; and the concept paper for the 2018 Fundamental Rights Forum, <https://www.fundamentalrightsforum.eu>.

3.8 The Foundation of Human Dignity, the Goal of Human Action

Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari argues in his new book '21 Lessons for the 21st Century' that our belief in human rights 'might become fatal in the twenty-first century, because biotechnology and artificial intelligence now seek to change the very meaning of humanity'.²⁴ This suggests that **religion can play a valuable role in underpinning our conception of human rights and human dignity.**

It was noted at our first workshop in Maynooth that President Emmanuel Macron, in his speech on 9 April at the Collège des Bernardins, asks the religious confessions to bring 'to the service of the republic' their wisdom, their commitment, and their freedom to speak out. In a passage that refers to artificial intelligence and its uses, the President states the following:

Nous ne pouvons plus, dans le monde tel qu'il va, nous satisfaire d'un progrès économique ou scientifique qui ne s'interroge pas sur son impact sur l'humanité et sur le monde.

3.9 Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) as the Enabler of Positive Transformation

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief is a key OSCE human right and value, acknowledged by the participating States as being integral to sustainable security within and between them. Helsinki 1975, Vienna 1989, Copenhagen 1990, Budapest 1994, Kyiv 2013 and other Ministerial-level agreements set out important commitments in these areas. Broadly speaking, the OSCE seeks to

ensure both individual freedom of religion or belief and the autonomous existence of religious or belief communities as essential aspects of human rights protection and European security. At our workshop in Maynooth in April, ODIHR briefed participants of our project on the forthcoming ODIHR document on FoRB and security.

The potentially 'performative' aspect of freedom of religion or belief – FoRB as an enabler of dialogue and of positive transformation - is widely acknowledged in the OSCE *acquis*. In Vienna in 1989, participating States agreed to 'favourably consider the interest of religious communities to participate in public dialogue.' In Kyiv in 2013, participating States agreed to 'encourage the inclusion of religious or belief communities, in a timely fashion, in public discussions of pertinent legislative initiatives;' and to 'promote and facilitate open and transparent interreligious dialogue and partnerships.'

The OSCE Network's report 'Reviving Cooperative Security in Europe through the OSCE' (2015) touches on a possible role for the OSCE in supporting interreligious dialogue.²⁵

The OSCE Network's report 'European Security: Challenges at the Societal Level' (2016), though not directly mentioning religion, recommends further work on 'norms at the societal level' across the OSCE region.²⁶ Public goods such as acceptance of the rule of law, social solidarity and the provision of services, entrepreneurship and mutual trust, and our will to reform the law as necessary are influenced over the long run by our character and our understanding of the world.

²⁴ Teija Tiilikainen (ed.), *Reviving Co-operative Security in Europe through the OSCE* (Hamburg: OSCE Network, 2015).

²⁶ Wolfgang Zellner et al., *European Security: Challenges at the Societal Level* (Hamburg: OSCE Network, 2016).

²⁴ Yuval Noah Harari, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2018), p. 211.

3.10 Religious Literacy and Radicalisation Prevention with Islamic Majority Populations in Central Asia

Thanks to Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) of the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH), our project can make available a completed case study on 'Central Asia: the case for broad preventive work beyond the context of terrorism.' Part of the argument in this detailed piece of research is that Central Asia was and is home to a school of Islam that contributes significantly to social cohesion and inter-religious understanding in Central Asia and Russia. In the 20th century, the Soviet State abolished religious education. Today, improved religious education and a respectful dialogue between secular thought and religion in Central Asia can help avoid a cultural space in which destabilising trends originating in neighbouring regions might find an opening.

CORE's report shows that radicalization in Central Asia takes place within a context (Islamic majority populations) significantly different from that in Western countries. Current narratives linking Islam's renaissance and transformation in Central Asia to radical thought (and in the last analysis, by implication, to terrorist attacks) oversimplify the underlying causal processes: Central Asian governments have a clear option to address these religious issues and cooperate with international partners, including the OSCE, without confining themselves to the overly narrow context of internal security. In seeking to explain the necessity of addressing religious radicalization with civilian means, the report analyses the indispensable role that the Hanafi Madhhab, as Central Asia's indigenous Islamic school of law, should play in this respect, together with governments and other societal players.

The opportunity for a fruitful interaction between universal secular values and religious norms and values already exists in the context of the dialogue initiated by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev with the leaders of world religions.

The study emphasizes the importance of positive societal goals. Civil-political preventive work can contribute to solving societal dissatisfaction in the face of perceived deficits in development or in social integration. Targeted cooperative action – by government in collaboration with Islamic actors and Islamic believers - can play an important role. Confidence-building between government officials, Islamic clerics and laypersons must be fostered. The guiding formula should be to cooperate wherever there is common ground, and coexist peacefully as and when contradictions run deep.

Questions of religious and religion-related educational work have emerged in the discussion in Central Asia as a central theme in radicalization prevention. What is needed are recognized Islamic academics and other discerning Islamic partners ready to discuss 'content' with extremist movements (such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Salafiyya, and perhaps the Tablighī Jamā'at, operating from the Arab world and Pakistan). Religion-related education and the development of educational concepts for schools, universities, Koranic schools and the media are central recommendations.

The OSCE should play a role in seeking a viable basis for non-violent cooperation, coexistence, and confidence-building between secular and religious players. There is a need for cooperation with Russia; Russia has, to varying degrees, an accepted status in the region. The possible relevance of the Eurasian Economic Union should also be assessed.

CORE's case study quotes in full a memorandum agreed by experts and scholars from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia and Germany assembled on 24 October 2017 in Almaty. In connection with the proposed 'up to-date framework regulating the relations between states and Islamic communities,' for the setting up of which governments have the prime responsibility, it is worth recalling that within the European Union, Article 17 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) calls for 'an open, transparent and regular dialogue with churches and religious associations or communities as well as philosophical and non-confessional organisations' and that analogous frameworks for dialogue already exist in several OSCE participating States. Under such arrangements, principles and guarantees of non-interference of governments in confessional matters are matched by recognition on the part of the religious confessions of State and government competences.

In support of CORE's thesis, one of our project contributors (Centre for Strategic Studies in Defence and Security, University of National and World Economy, Sofia) argues that 'the responsibility for ensuring the peaceful coexistence of different religious groups within a country does not lie entirely and solely with the respective state, but should be divided between state, society, religious institutions, public and private organizations, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the media.'

In October 2018, one of our participating institutes, the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich, has published five recommendations in the sphere of religion and the prevention of violent extremism (PVE)²⁷:

- The secular culture of Western policy makers must not prevent dialogue with religious viewpoints being part of PVE strategies.
- Context-specific social, economic, and political drivers often influence violent extremist groups more than religiously-inspired ideas, so locally grounded analyses are vital.
- Policies should not target groups based on their religious identity but should focus on their actions.
- Radical religious groups should not be excluded from social and political life as long as they avoid violence and respect the law.
- Credible experts, not governments, should lead efforts to challenge the religious bases of extremist narratives.

²⁷ Owen Frazer and Anaël Jambers, "Religion and the Prevention of Violent Extremism", in: *CSS Policy Perspectives* 6, no. 6 (2018).

New Coalitions and Frameworks of Engagement

4.1 The UN Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors

In 2015 and 2016, a broad international consensus was developed in relation to climate change and sustainable development. Against this background, in July 2017, UN Secretary-General Guterres launched a Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors which includes the following proposal:

[The United Nations should] establish a world forum of religions and beliefs that would bring together an equal representation of religious leaders and actors, policy makers, educators, and media personnel from all world regions. The forum would deliberate on the role of religions in enhancing peaceful, inclusive, and just societies. The forum would have regional hubs.

The Plan of Action includes three broad sets of recommendations. **The first set of recommendations** focuses on **prevention**. **The second set of recommendations** focuses on **strengthening societal resilience**. **The third set of recommendations** proposes ways to build **peaceful, inclusive and just societies** through respecting, protecting and promoting human rights and establishing networks of religious leaders. The proposal to establish a world forum of religions and beliefs belongs among this third set of recommendations.

The Plan of Action stresses the importance of including women and youth in all prevention initiatives. In addition to recommendations for religious leaders and actors, it includes recommendations for States and the international community.

Regarding priorities for the European region, participants at a meeting held in Vienna in February 2018 proposed capitalising on existing activities that align with the Plan of Action, including those focused on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is important to acknowledge that the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors was adopted, not by the General Assembly, but through an informal process of consultation. Its provisions have a different status to the provisions of the SDGs. Nevertheless, it would not be difficult in principle to integrate some of the ideas regarding ‘a forum of religions and beliefs’ with the methodology of the OSCE.

4.2 KAICIID engagement for the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IDF)

With the help of KAICIID²⁸, our research project began in April to examine a number of detailed

²⁸ KAICIID was founded in 2012 as an intergovernmental organization by the Republic of Austria, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Spain, together with the Holy See as Founding Observer. The Centre headquarters are located in Vienna, Austria with a mandate to promote the use of dialogue globally to prevent and resolve conflict, to enhance understanding and cooperation.

issues relating to the constructive engagement of policymakers, religious leaders, and other stakeholders in support of positive social transformation. It has specialized in serving as an international dialogue facilitator and interreligious dialogue catalyser, using dialogue methodologies to convey messages of peace. KAICIID establishes, or supports the establishment of, interreligious dialogue platforms, comprised of religious leaders, representatives of civil society and other relevant stakeholders. **Through the interreligious dialogue platforms, religious leaders work together to agree on common stances** - which allows them, in return, to work with policy-makers on issues such as development, youth engagement, and the media. Religious leaders receive capacity-building trainings. A significant example of such a platform is the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IDF), established between KAICIID and the African Union Commission in partnership.

Partnership between religious leaders and policy-makers provides a variety of opportunities to bring ‘added value.’ **Religious leaders can reach out to local communities** and positively shape the perception of the ‘other’; policymakers can support these initiatives and multiply their positive effects.

When creating partnerships between religious leaders and policymakers, it is important, in KAICIID’s experience, to take note of several factors:

- First, actors facilitating dialogue and cooperation between religious leaders and policymakers should work to safeguard the distinctiveness of their respective standpoints and responsibilities.
- Second, a structure should be put in place – it is always worth considering a

‘systematization’ of the partnership based on clear principles and values.

- Third, such ‘institutionalization’ is far more challenging than sporadic or ad hoc linkages established around certain temporary issues or crises. This process of institutionalization requires comprehensive strategic planning on the two sides.
- Fourth, the cooperation between religious leaders and policy makers can have long-lasting results only when facilitated in a fair and inclusive manner.

The first criterion above – to do with safeguarding the distinctive standpoints of the civil authorities and religious leaders, respectively – is of course strongly echoed in the analysis done by CORE of the situation in Central Asia.

Regarding the fourth criterion to do with inclusivity, some participants in the present project recommend that the engagement should go beyond religious representatives (in the sense of formal representatives of religious traditions) to include, where relevant, political actors whose discourse has an explicit religious reference. In the context of the OSCE region and the OSCE’s mandates in certain situations, the engagement of policy makers might need to include, e.g., the social and charitable branches of religious communities.

Recommendations

Our first and core recommendation concerns the creation of a new coalition or framework of engagement for religious leaders under OSCE auspices:

Recommendation 1: OSCE Advisory Group of Religious Leaders, Institutions, Congregations, and Communities

Following the example of other international organisations, we recommend that the CiO establish an **Advisory Group of Religious Leaders, Institutions, Congregations, and Communities**. The meetings of the Group would be open, in principle, to participation by OSCE delegations. The group would function in an advisory capacity, as an aid to the Permanent Council, CiO/Troika, the Secretary-General, the policy planning process, the work of the Conflict Prevention Centre, and OSCE institutions and structures.

Regarding the religious representatives to be invited initially to join the working group, the CiO would need to consider carefully what resources would be needed, or external advice, in order to make best use of the OSCE's very significant convening power. Criteria such as OSCE precedent, the OSCE religious landscape, and salience in the context of peace-building can help in determining representation in the Advisory Group – though of course there will also be a need for inclusivity and flexibility.

Invitations to religious representatives to participate in such a group would need to take account of questions such as the following:

- What are the organisational principles and values that allow the effective engagement of policymakers and other stakeholders with religious actors?
- Is the engagement with religious agencies framed around specific concerns or conflicts or is it a wider project, more a continuum than a series of events?
- Should inter-religious dialogue precede engagement with policymakers?
- How can an organisation facilitating dialogue and cooperation involving religious leaders and congregations safeguard the distinctiveness of an intergovernmental process as compared to the standpoints and responsibilities of religious dialogue partners?

Ground-rules to ensure 'mutual respect, cooperation and recognition' between States and religious communities (cf. the Central Asian memorandum quoted above) would be compatible with broadening participation in the working group to include other voices and stakeholders in particular circumstances ('multi-stakeholder dialogue').

Recommendation 2: Information-sharing mechanism between Advisory Group and OSCE structures

We recommend the establishment of an information-sharing mechanism including at least the Office of the Secretary-General, ODIHR, and the High Commissioner for National Minorities, to ensure coherence between the work of the OSCE structures and agenda of the proposed Advisory Group.

Recommendation 3: Cooperation with UNECE on sustainable development goals (SDGs) and transnational threats

As an initial task, and with advice from UNECE, the Advisory Group should present a report to the Permanent Council in advance of July's High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council. The theme of this year's HLPF - 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality' - will require a focus on SDG goals 16 and 17 (among others). These goals coincide to a considerable extent with our OSCE commitments. The same methodology could be followed going forward in relation to both the SDGs and transnational threats.

Recommendation 4: Promoting religious literacy in government service, business, the media, and higher education

The Advisory Group should consider initiatives to **promote religious literacy** in government service, business, the media, and higher education (tertiary and graduate level), as described in chapter 2 above.

Recommendation 5: Dialogue and 'friendly action' for societal reconciliation / 'civility' as a political value

We recommend that the Advisory Group explores the possible content and time-line of 'strategies of reconciliation' across the OSCE region, based on 'lessons learned.' We propose associating the Hölderlin Perspective and the concept of 'conflict transformation' with the OSCE concept of confidence-building and 'confidence-building measures' (CBMs).

In parallel with the exploration of reconciliation as an explicit political value, the Advisory Group should explore the concept of 'civility' as a political value - and strategies to promote civility in political discourse and in the media.

Recommendation 6: Local or regional platforms, to be convened with CPC/field mission support, to enable relevant religious leaders to contribute to conflict resolution

The proposed Advisory Group could institute sub-groups to discuss particular conflicts or issues. In contexts where religion plays a role, OSCE structures should be able to request support on the topic of religion – whether in terms of conflict analysis, process design, or critical reflection in the perspective of the wider socio-political and economic landscape. CSS/ETH (Zurich), CORE/IFSH (Hamburg), KAICIID and several others among our project participants have a clearly demonstrated expertise in this area.

In Central Asia, as argued in section 3.10 above, the OSCE can play a role in seeking a viable basis for non-violent cooperation, coexistence, and confidence-building between secular and religious players.

Recommendation 7: Dialogue of profit and non-profit actors for functioning markets and social cohesion

Our shared commitment to the market economy leaves open many different policy options, at home and internationally. A dialogue on the functioning of markets, inclusive of a religious or conscience-based perspective, can improve our understanding of the economic reality and broaden the consensus on values at the domestic and international levels. The Financial Times editorial and opinion piece quoted above give expression to a serious level of concern that is shared right across the OSCE region.

The Advisory Group should set parameters for a new project within the Network framed in terms of for-profit and not-for-profit criteria and how they can best interact with one another positively in well-functioning markets - given that public authorities, companies, and not-for-profit organisations share the same economic space.

Recommendation 8: A longer-term perspective

The OSCE has seen a number of political-level initiatives over the last decade aimed at opening up a more ambitious, and in the end, more realistic and effective, OSCE agenda.

A long-term, advisory multi-stakeholder dialogue including religious representatives would of course be without prejudice to the business of the Permanent Council and continuing negotiations on immediate issues in the OSCE and elsewhere; at the same time, the Permanent Council or Ministerial Council could take up later on some of the ideas emerging from the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

In suggesting this we have two premises:

- Tensions in Europe have multiple sources - cultural, religious, economic, and political, as well as the accidents of history - and can only ultimately be resolved through forms of dialogue that leave room for the full complexity of the situation to be acknowledged.
- Good conceptual work can help create an enabling environment for long-term change, and perhaps new formats for negotiation, without calling into question our ability to defend our immediate interests from day to day.

Richard Haass, for many years President of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, and already quoted above, argues that world order is becoming 'less a formal agreement than a process more advanced in some areas than in others.' Therefore, the role of diplomats needs to change, 'with more emphasis placed on consultations over the contours of the international order and less on negotiations that solve explicit problems.'²⁹ What we are proposing here would help to give shape within the wider European region (including the US) to what Haass is recommending.

²⁹ Richard N. Haass, "World Order 2.0: The Case for Sovereign Obligation", in: *Foreign Affairs*, 15 February 2017.

The intended ‘product’ of conceptual work on the ‘contours of the international order,’ would be at two levels.

First, the process would contribute to the aggiornamento of the values-led approach to European security – which would happen in the following ways:

- The gradual definition of criteria or points of agreement to revalidate the ten CSCE principles of 1975.
- The progressive adoption of a new generation of confidence-building measures.
- Perhaps a gradual paradigm change in our understanding of a number of contemporary issues especially in the sphere of the economy, the environment, and employment.

Second, the emergence of stronger elements of consensus at the ‘macro’ level of European society would create a more favourable atmosphere ‘on-site,’ that is, at the ‘micro’ level of particular conflicts or factors of instability.

Finally, in all the areas mentioned, the Advisory Group should bear in mind the value of **expert advice from the institutes participating in the present project and the wider OSCE network**. In addition to the areas covered in the present report, we continue to discuss innovative transdisciplinary approaches to such questions as European identity and anthropology’s contribution to reconciliation studies.

Annex

Disclaimer

In the preparation of this report, contributions were made by every participant. Most were members of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions. Some came from NGOs and international organisations. The conclusions set out in the report largely reflect a broad consensus. Respectively, they do not necessarily reflect in every case the views of every workshop participant or engage the responsibility of the institutions to which they belong.

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Two Workshops

Representatives of the following entities took part in the initial workshop at Maynooth on 13 April 2018:

- Edward M. Kennedy Institute, NUIM
- St. Patrick's College Maynooth
- UNGPRtoP (UN Office Genocide Prevention/Responsibility to Protect)
- ODIHR (OSCE Office on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights)
- Centre for OSCE Research (CORE), Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH) at the University of Hamburg
- Center for Security Studies (CSS), ETH Zurich
- Center for Reconciliation Studies, University of Jena
- KAICIID (King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue)
- Coexist House, UK
- Pontifical University of St. Thomas, Rome

The following entities joined the project subsequently and took part in meetings held in Vienna on 15 and 16 October 2018:

- International Federation of Catholic Universities
- Centre for Anthropology and Mind, University of Oxford
- Centre for Strategic Studies in Defence and Security, University of National and World Economy, Sofia

Workshop Participants

(in alphabetical order)

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This report is the final product of a project of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions. It is based on two workshops held in Maynooth (Ireland) and Vienna in 2018.

The OSCE Network is an autonomous OSCE-related Track 2 initiative. It is not an OSCE structure or affiliated with the OSCE or its participating States. The Network's 85 members are research institutions from 42 countries engaged in academic research and policy analysis on issues relevant to the OSCE's agenda. The Network is a flexible and informal format founded by more than a dozen research institutions on 18 June 2013 after discussions during the 2013 OSCE Security Days, inspired by a proposal made by OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier in his inaugural speech in July 2011. The Network is open to think tanks and academic institutions willing and able to contribute academic expertise and policy analysis of the OSCE, and shares expertise and coordinates joint projects and activities among its members. Neither the Network nor its members represent the OSCE, and the views expressed by Network members are their personal opinions and do not necessarily reflect the views of the OSCE.

Vienna

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