

**252nd Plenary Meeting**

FSC Journal No. 258, Agenda item 2

**DECISION No. 4/99**

The Forum for Security Co-operation,

Recognizing that the scope of the OSCE Communications Network, since its conception, has been broader than the implementation of the Vienna Document,

Recalling FSC Decision No. 15/97, to conduct a review of the Vienna Document 1994,

Decides that:

- Working Group A will conduct a review of the OSCE Communications Network with the aim of obtaining an FSC decision on all aspects of the Network prior to adoption of a revised Vienna Document;
- Such a revised Vienna Document will contain a reference to the importance of the use of the OSCE Communications Network;
- Until such an FSC decision is taken, the provisions set out in Chapter IX of the Vienna Document 1994, and annexed to this decision, will continue to apply.

## IX. COMMUNICATIONS

(138) The OSCE Communications Network

The participating States have established a network of direct communications between their capitals for the transmission of messages relating, *inter alia*, to agreed measures contained in this document. The network will complement the existing use of diplomatic channels. Participating States undertake to use the network flexibly, efficiently and in a cost-effective way in communications between States concerning agreed CSBMs and other OSCE-related matters.

(139) Financial Arrangements

The cost-sharing arrangements are set out in documents CSCE/WV/Dec.2 and CSCE/WV/Dec.4.

(140) Points of Contact

Each participating State will designate a point of contact capable of transmitting and receiving messages from other participating States on a 24-hour-a-day basis and will notify in advance any change in this designation.

(141) Six OSCE languages

Communications may be in any one of the six working languages of the OSCE. Without prejudicing the future continued use of all six working languages of the OSCE, according to established rules and practice as set out in the Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations, the participating States will:

- (141.1) - in order to facilitate an efficient use of the communications network, give due consideration to practical needs of rapid transmission of their messages and of immediate understandability. A translation into another OSCE working language will be added where needed to meet that principle;
- (141.2) - indicate at least two OSCE working languages in which they would prefer to receive the message or its translation.

(142) Use of the Network

Participating States will, whenever possible, use the Standard Operating Procedures (S.O.P.) and enforce user discipline to maximize the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the network.

- (142.1) Messages will always have headers as defined in the S.O.P.

(142.2) Messages will, whenever possible, be transmitted in formats with headings in all six OSCE working languages. Such formats, agreed among the participating States with a view to making transmitted messages immediately understandable by reducing the language element to a minimum, are annexed to document CSCE/WV/Dec.4. The formats may be subject to agreed modifications as required.

(142.3) Messages will be considered official communications of the sending State. If the content of a message is not related to an agreed measure, the receiving State has the right to reject it by so informing the other participating States.

(142.4) Any narrative text, to the extent it is required in such formats, and messages that do not lend themselves to formatting will be transmitted in the OSCE working languages chosen by the transmitting State, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (141).

(142.5) Each participating State has the right to ask for clarification of messages in case of doubt.

(143) Additional use of the Network

Participating States may agree among themselves to use the network for other purposes.

(144) The Communications Group

A Communications Group will be established, composed of representatives of the participating States and chaired, on behalf of the Chairman-in-Office, by a representative of the Secretary General of the OSCE.

(144.1) The group will address questions relating to rules of procedure, working methods, formats and any other measures to enhance the viability and effectiveness of the communications network, including issues relating to use of modern information technologies for data exchange.

(144.2) The group will meet two times per year for at least one day. Additional meetings may be convened as necessary.

(144.3) The Chairman of the Group will report to the appropriate OSCE committee about the proceedings of the Communications Group and, if appropriate, present drafts for decisions to be taken as prepared by the Group.