



Second day of the Fourteenth Meeting
MC(14) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

**DECISION No. 19/06
STRENGTHENING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OSCE**

The Ministerial Council,

Taking into account the recommendations issued by the Panel of Eminent Persons (CIO.GAL/100/05 of 27 June 2005),

In fulfilment of Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/05 on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE,

Reaffirming its full adherence to OSCE norms, principles and commitments, as enshrined in particular in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 Charter of Paris for a new Europe, and which apply equally, and to all participating States,

Underlining the role of the Organization as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and as a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation,

Reaffirming OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and the importance of all three dimensions, the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimensions, while keeping in mind that many of its activities are of a cross dimensional nature,

Recognizing the common challenges of the participating States and the need to co-operate in a spirit of partnership and common purpose,

Calling on participating States to make full use of the Organization as a forum for political dialogue,

Encouraging the participating States to take advantage, as appropriate, of the assistance offered by the institutions and the field operations of the OSCE to implement their commitments,

Confirming its determination to strengthen the effectiveness of the OSCE and to keep the Organization and its working practices continuously in line with the requirements of the time and the evolving challenges, pursuing in particular the following objectives:

- Better focusing and prioritizing the work of the Organization in those areas where it has a comparative advantage,
- Ensuring the long-term coherence of priorities and action plans in accordance with OSCE commitments and decisions,
- Improving the transparency and the effectiveness of the decision-making process based on sovereign equality of States and the rule of consensus,
- Fostering among the participating States the sense of common purpose and of shared responsibilities,

Section 1: Report of the Permanent Council

1. Thanks the Permanent Council for the work carried out under Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/05 paragraph 1, and takes note of the report issued under the responsibility of the Chairmanship (MC.GAL/2/06);
2. Recalls the adoption by the Ministerial Council of:
 - The Rules of Procedure of the OSCE (MC.DOC/1/06);
 - The decision on the OSCE Senior Council (MC.DEC/4/06);
 - The decision on improvement of the consultative process;
 - The decision on the legal status and privileges and immunities of the OSCE;
 - The decision on strengthening the effectiveness of OSCE executive structures;
3. Welcomes the adoption by the Permanent Council of:
 - The decision on renaming the OSCE Economic Forum (PC.DEC/743/06);
 - The decision on guidelines for organizing OSCE meetings;
 - The decision on amending OSCE staff regulations and rules;
 - The decision on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of human resources of the OSCE;
4. Expresses the hope that the latter decisions by the Permanent Council will contribute to transparent, fair and consistent recruitment, improve the professionalism of OSCE personnel, enhance the management of its human resources as well as encourage the retention of qualified and talented staff through competitive and equitable procedures; recognizes the need to promote gender balance of personnel as well as wider diversity of national origin of OSCE staff at the various levels;

5. Takes note with appreciation of the positive modifications introduced to the management of the unified budget and of the extra-budgetary resources, which contribute to strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the Organization's activities, including their financing, their evaluation and their assessment;
6. Commends the Secretary General for his efforts to make further improvements to a system, which ensures that extra-budgetary contributions are accepted, budgeted, allocated, expended, monitored, accounted for and reported on under his/her authority and control;
7. Stresses the continuing need to improve the overall regulatory basis for the finances of the OSCE and, in this context, requests the Chairmanship to report to the Permanent Council on the progress made in the negotiations on the Financial Regulations before 31 March 2007; calls on the Permanent Council to adopt these amended Financial Regulations aiming at doing so by 1 July 2007;
8. Considers that further examination is needed as to whether thematic missions could prove a useful and effective tool to address newly emerging security threats, responding particularly to needs encompassing the whole OSCE area, on the understanding that if and when established, they will ultimately be shaped in relation to concrete issues, also taking into account financial implications;
9. Decides that the effort at strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE described in the provisions of this section and in the decisions referred to in this section shall be pursued and to this effect, tasks the Permanent Council to keep their implementation under review;

Section 2: Report of the ODIHR

1. Thanks the ODIHR for the work carried out under Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/05 paragraph 2 and takes note of its report issued on 10 November 2006;
2. Recognizes that the ODIHR, in implementing its mandate, has demonstrated its ability to assist participating States in fulfilling their human dimension commitments;
3. Reminds the participating States that they should keep their legislation and practices in line with OSCE commitments;
4. Takes note of the assessment regarding the present state of implementation of existing commitments by participating States and emphasizes, in particular, that participating States themselves are responsible for the effective implementation of their commitments undertaken in the OSCE. The ODIHR, in this respect, plays an important role in assisting them;
5. Tasks the Permanent Council, taking into account the recommendations by ODIHR and other relevant OSCE institutions, to address the implementation challenges in the areas outlined in the report, considering making better use of ODIHR assistance;
6. Takes note of the suggestions in the report relating to new commitments and requests the Permanent Council to advise on them, in time for the Ministerial Council meeting in Madrid in 2007;

7. Recognizes ODIHR's expertise in assisting the participating States through its election-related activities, including reviewing election legislation and carrying out election observations;
8. Commits to further develop OSCE's election related activities, and in this context, reaffirms the provisions of the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (1990) as the corner stone of the common OSCE commitments of the participating States to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those that are necessary for achieving democratic elections;
9. Notes that relevant provisions of the Budapest Summit Declaration (1994), the Lisbon Summit Declaration (1996), the Istanbul Summit Declaration (1999), the Charter for European Security (1999) and subsequent decisions of the Ministerial Councils of Porto (2002) and Maastricht (2003) have supplemented those commitments;
10. Reaffirms the commitments of the participating States to invite observers to elections from other participating States, the ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and appropriate institutions and organizations that wish to observe;
11. Emphasizes that the participating States can themselves effectively contribute to enhance the integrity of the electoral process by seconding observers;
12. Recognizes the ongoing need to ensure accountability, objectivity, transparency and professionalism of election observation;
13. Agrees that ODIHR should put into practice the improvements and recommendations concerning election related activities, including as contained in the report, and particularly as listed below, and will regularly submit reports on their implementation, through its Director, for review by the Permanent Council as appropriate:
 - To further strengthen the observation methodology and assistance programmes;
 - To ensure as wide as possible geographical coverage in ODIHR's election activities;
 - To further diversify the participation of short-term, long-term and "core team" observers based on increased support of a wider range of participating States, by encouraging the participating States to contribute to the diversification fund, by supporting national training efforts and by developing OSCE-wide networks of election observation practitioners;
 - While maintaining the highest professional standards, to further increase the transparency of recruitment of members of observation teams, including by active advertising, training, competitive procedures and open rosters for heads of election observation missions and "core team" members, which are regularly communicated to participating States and available through publicly accessible databases;
 - To give utmost attention to the independence, impartiality and professionalism of ODIHR's election observation;

— To enhance the linguistic inclusiveness and ensure that languages used would not affect in any way the effectiveness of the observation;

14. Stresses that election observation is a common endeavour involving the OSCE/ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and other parliamentary institutions;

15. Recognizes that close co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly considerably enhances the visibility of the OSCE's election observation efforts, and calls on the ODIHR to continue to work in partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly on election observation missions on the basis of the 1997 Co-operation Agreement;

16. Welcomes the suggestions of further efforts to increase the effectiveness of the ODIHR's assistance provided to the participating States at their request and including by making better use of the Human Dimension meetings.