



in co-operation with



Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the Czech Republic



## COUNTERING FRAGMENTATION AND POLARIZATION: RE-CREATING A CLIMATE FOR STABILITY IN EUROPE

Prague, 18-19 May 2017

### Summary Report

#### Overview

*The security environment in Europe and beyond is marked by growing divisions and uncertainty unprecedented for decades. The norms and principles underpinning the international order have been challenged. There are signs that the open global economic system might be unravelling and protectionism may return. Multilateralism seems to be in retreat, with its key institutions being questioned and at risk of being weakened. A result could be a more fragmented and polarized multipolar world.*

*Co-organized in co-operation with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic** and the **Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung**, this OSCE Security Days conference aimed to contribute to a dialogue on how to create a stable and resilient security environment in Europe at a time of growing global uncertainty and unpredictability. Building on the OSCE Security Days conference held in Berlin in June 2016, the event discussed key challenges and trends in the development of the security environment in the OSCE area and their implications for regional security and stability. It complemented ongoing discussions within the OSCE and provided further input into these processes, in particular the Structured Dialogue Process on the Current and Future Challenges and Risks to Security in the OSCE Area that was launched at the 2016 OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg.*

*The conference featured sessions devoted to assessing the current state of and future prospects for European security, overcoming divergent threat perceptions, countering fragmentation within and between societies, addressing security implications of post-truth politics, and re-creating a climate for stability in Europe. A dynamic and thought-provoking debate revealed a wide range of views on the current security situation and potential responses. While perspectives varied, virtually all participants agreed there is an urgent need to address the growing fragmentation and polarization of the European security*

*environment. The discussion demonstrated that although rebuilding trust and restoring co-operative security in the OSCE area appear extremely difficult in the current climate, there is no alternative but to reengage in constructive dialogue and pragmatic co-operation in order to preserve and safeguard the fundamental pillars of a stable and peaceful security environment in Europe.*

*In addition to more than 200 participants in attendance, the conference reached over 238,000 people through live-streaming, over 602,000 people via Twitter, almost 260,000 via Facebook and over 23,000 via LinkedIn. An annotated agenda of the event is in the annex to this report and a full video-recording of the proceedings is available on the OSCE website and YouTube.*

## The crisis of European security

The **security environment in the OSCE region** is marked by **growing divisions and uncertainty** unprecedented for decades. The norms and principles underpinning the European security order have been challenged and geopolitical confrontation has re-emerged on the continent. At the same time, the OSCE participating States are facing a plethora of security threats and challenges of increasing complexity and interconnectedness that cannot be solved without mutual co-operation and joint action, including terrorism and violent extremism, climate change, cyber-threats and large movements of people. However, in an atmosphere of mutual mistrust and confrontation, these are extremely difficult to achieve. There is a real danger that without addressing the current situation, security in Europe will deteriorate further resulting in a more unstable, less manageable and more dangerous environment with repercussions for peace and stability in both Europe and beyond.

**The current crisis of European security** is the result of several trends. Some of them have roots in wider systemic societal and economic changes that impact our societies and through them the international environment. These include, for instance, a growing atomization and multipolarity of the international system due to the rise of non-state actors as players in international politics, the rise of revisionism among some world powers dissatisfied with the current international order as well as uncertainty around the future of a key intra-European post-war institution, the European Union. In the OSCE context, the view was widely shared that **divergent security concerns and threat perceptions** as well as **opposing views and perspectives on developments and events since the end of the Cold War** were the main source of friction and mistrust among the OSCE participating States. This was demonstrated, for instance, during a discussion of the concept of indivisible security and the European security architecture, with some suggesting that, with the exception of the OSCE, there was no space for Russia as an equal partner in the existing structures and organizations and its role in the post-Cold War security environment had been marginalized. While the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the NATO-Russia Council were designed to narrow this gap, according to this view, they have failed to address Russia's concerns on particularly difficult topics such as further NATO enlargement or missile defence. Furthermore, there is no platform for equal dialogue between the EU and Russia, CSTO and NATO or the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union. This was seen by some as a systemic problem that undermines the European security order and contributes to mistrust and polarization. Others argued that Russia had been provided with ample opportunities for

engagement and dialogue but it had not used them and instead decided to intervene in internal affairs of neighbouring states and thus violated international norms and principles.

Based on this assessment, many agreed that the **erosion of co-operative security in recent years and armed conflicts in both Georgia and Ukraine are symptoms** rather than direct causes of the deterioration of European security. It was pointed out that different perspectives on some key questions of European security might be partially caused by different interpretations of the Helsinki principles, some of which seem to contradict each other: for instance, the sovereign right of each state to choose freely its own security arrangements, and the principle of indivisible security where security interests of all states are taken into account. The conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine have also demonstrated that negative repercussions and actions resulting from divergent security concerns and threat perceptions have dire consequences especially for countries that became independent with the dissolution of the Soviet Union but have not joined any integration model. They are left stranded in the middle of the renewed competition, with their security and economic status often contested, which creates long-term instability and political uncertainty.

While many compared the current climate to that of the Cold War era, it was pointed out that unlike in the past, the state of European security is no longer defined by two opposing blocs with contradicting ideologies. Today there are many more stakeholders and mutual relations are more complex, interconnected and interdependent than ever before. There are also multilateral institutions and structures for addressing these issues that did not exist earlier. It was suggested that the main problem of today's situation lay in the fact that there were very **few incentives for most actors to change their positions** as the costs for maintaining the status quo were seen as lower than the costs for any new initiatives.

## Re-creating a climate for stability

The current atmosphere in the OSCE area seems to indicate that managing the status quo is the most that can be achieved at the moment. There seem to be very few incentives for new initiatives or room for major policy shifts. However, the discussion in Prague clearly demonstrated that the current situation poses significant risks and can have grave consequences for the European security environment. Although views on how to respond best to this crisis varied, there was a clear consensus among most participants that it was necessary to address the deteriorating security situation in Europe and reengage in constructive dialogue and pragmatic co-operation in order to preserve and safeguard the fundamental pillars of a stable and peaceful security environment.

Many called for **full respect and implementation of fundamental OSCE norms and principles** as a first important step for stabilizing the situation and creating a climate conducive to dialogue and co-operation. In particular, full implementation of the existing agreements in the politico-military dimension, such as the Vienna Document and Open Skies Treaty, was considered important for restoring military confidence and reducing risks of unintended incidents and confrontations.

Given diametrically opposed security perceptions and concerns among some OSCE participating States, it was underlined that **significantly more effort should be made to understand each other's positions and strengthen "transparency of intentions"**. Particularly, relations between the Russian Federation and NATO were identified as a key

factor for the future of European security. Many stressed that Russian security concerns about NATO's enlargement, its superiority in conventional arms and U.S. anti-ballistic missile defence are legitimate and need to be taken seriously. **More honest dialogue on threat perceptions, military doctrines and force postures** was seen as crucial in this regard. The work within the Structured Dialogue Process on the Current and Future Challenges and Risks to Security in the OSCE Area, which was launched at the 2016 OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg, was considered extremely important in this regard. More initiatives in this direction could be helpful, including at the highest political levels. It was also suggested that **an attempt could be made to understand the reasons for divergent narratives of post-Cold War security developments** between the East and the West. Historical archive research and critical oral history projects on this subject could facilitate a more informed debate among governments as well as civil society.

The **peaceful settlement of the crisis in and around Ukraine** was seen by many as a necessary step for restoring a sustainable European security order. While there are other territorial conflicts in the OSCE area, it was underlined that this conflict was different because for the first time since the end of World War II it involved the annexation of territory from one European state by another one. Furthermore, it was noted that the multifaceted character of the conflict – which was in many ways an extension of geopolitical and geo-economical rivalry between the West and the East, a heritage of complex Russian-Ukrainian relations and a consequence of internal tensions within Ukraine – required a multilateral and comprehensive approach. The policy of “neither war nor peace” adopted by all sides so far was considered very fragile and undermined regional peace and stability. There were different views on **future prospects for the Minsk Process**, which was widely seen as failing at the moment. Some suggested it needed to be replaced with a completely new process while others called for urgent reconsideration of several key aspects, such as revision of deadlines, clarification of sequencing in the implementation, and deployment of peacekeeping forces. A **new multilateral platform**, be it a dedicated summit or a pan-European conference (e.g., under the auspices of the OSCE), was considered as one possible way forward for making progress in resolving the crisis in and around Ukraine.

Turning to **underlying divisions in the European security environment**, the discussion identified **two possible approaches**. On the one hand, there were calls for launching a **new political process** that would address key strategic issues on the European security agenda in a comprehensive manner. Parallels were drawn to the Helsinki Process and the détente period, with some arguing that if such a process was able to succeed in a time of bipolar confrontation, there was no reason to believe it was not feasible nowadays. The purpose of such a process would not be to rewrite existing norms and principles, but to find a common understanding of their interpretation and explore prospects for new agreements where deemed appropriate, including on a legal basis.

While the agenda for such negotiations could not be prejudged, it was suggested that discussions should address some key contradictions present in the current European security order, namely the principle of territorial integrity vs. the principle of self-determination, the principle of sovereignty vs. the principle of humanitarian intervention, and the right of a state to freely choose a security alliance vs. the concept of indivisible security where security concerns of all states are taken into account. The negotiations should also explore security arrangements for countries whose status is contested. While various options for different countries could be considered (neutrality, limited neutrality, security guarantees,

sub-regional security arrangements, etc.), any such agreement would need to be reached in close co-operation and consultation with the country concerned. Last but not least, the negotiations on a new treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe should be launched as a part of this process.

On the other hand, many expressed scepticism about such a comprehensive “grand design” approach in the current climate. Instead, they argued for **step-by-step practical measures** that would alleviate the negative impact of the current situation and slowly build up trust on a basic, granular level. It was argued that governments needed to move beyond the language of threats and respond to specific actions only, without demonizing each other. Disagreements in one area should not jeopardize efforts to pursue dialogue and co-operation in areas of common interest, where governments should actively seek pragmatic co-operation and avoid stigmatization. In this view, only when the overall international atmosphere improved would there be scope for major policy shifts.

In this context, a number of issues were identified as potential areas for common ground, or “**islands of co-operation**”, such as violent extremism and radicalization, terrorism, economic connectivity, migration, cyber-security and climate change. It was noted that the challenge is not to define the substance, but to narrow down the focus to a manageable portion and bring together three key elements, namely rules, instruments and concrete co-operation. In particular, new technologies such as those in the cyber domain, with their unclear economic, societal and security implications, offer an area for intensive inter-governmental collaboration and confidence-building. Discussing the development of relevant codes of conduct and confidence-building measures was suggested as one possible way forward. In addition to these new topics, many called for re-launching the dialogue on strengthening military confidence-building and risk reduction. Concrete progress in this area, such as modernization of relevant provisions of the Vienna Document, could be an important steppingstone in efforts to restore pragmatic co-operation among the OSCE participating States.

A **hybrid approach** to addressing all these security challenges was suggested. According to this view, states should apply different rules of engagement and co-operation when dealing with the “new agenda”, in which security is truly indivisible in the sense that threats to it impact all states equally (such as cyber-security, climate change, etc.), as compared to the “old agenda”, in which security threats affect states differently (e.g., weapons proliferation, armed conflicts, etc.). The “old agenda” is a legacy of the past and requires old instruments to stabilize and resolve the situation, which can still take some time. However, the “new agenda” is not going to wait and growing risks posed by new security challenges need to be urgently addressed. Given their complexity and interconnectedness, this will require new approaches and instruments and can only be solved through joint action and co-operation.

## Countering polarization between and within societies

In addition to growing polarization between states, the European political landscape is marked by increasing fragmentation within societies, which also contributes to a deteriorating security environment in the OSCE region. While many pointed out that this trend has its roots in the wider technological and socio-economic transformation that our societies are currently undergoing, there are also other significant factors at play. **Migration and large movements of people, unresolved armed conflicts**, as well as **social and**

**economic inequality and marginalization** were identified as some of the main sources fuelling divisions within and between societies. It was also noted that **political leaders themselves are at least partially responsible for this state of affairs**, either by failing to address the concerns of their citizens or by feeding existing divisions and mistrust for their own political gains.

The **phenomenon of “post-truth politics” and its impact on public discourse**, which is increasingly conducted online, especially on social media platforms, was also discussed. Political debates in many OSCE countries, including well-established democracies, are increasingly framed by appeals to emotions disconnected from real facts. Many populist leaders in Europe and beyond try to exploit grievances and insecurities of the electorate by twisting the facts or using outright lies. While this is not a new phenomenon in politics, several new elements have emerged in the digital era. First, the spread of disinformation and myths has reached an unprecedented pace and scale with the potential to significantly influence public opinion and political decision-making. Second, due to technological development, governments no longer have privileged access to their citizens and non-state actors play an increasingly important role. Third, there is a high level of deniability and non-attribution which makes it difficult to rapidly refute disinformation or myths based only on rumours. The time factor is crucial and often works against a thorough investigation of facts in accordance with journalistic best practices. Last but not least, the algorithms of social media and Internet search engines tend to create social bubbles where users mainly have access to information they like or already fits their pre-conceptions. This strengthens people’s biases and delegitimizes opposing opinions, which in turn undermines real dialogue and communication within society.

Although these challenges cannot be resolved solely by states or multilateral institutions, **governments and inter-governmental organizations have an important role to play in countering these negative tendencies**. Many stressed that governments and international bodies need to **more vigorously address the concerns of citizens** and come up with **realistic and sustainable policies**. It was noted that many challenges, for instance migration, are manageable but require leadership that puts long-term interests above short-term political gains and internal political struggles. It is also necessary to **avoid stigmatization** and distinguish between populism, radicalism, and fake news/disinformation. While myths and disinformation cannot be accepted as facts, people have the right to see the world differently and should not feel punished for it. Putting populism, radical views and fake news into one basket indiscriminately, as often happens, only feeds the frustration of those concerned and deepens divisions within societies.

Both **governance and diplomacy** need to adapt to contemporary circumstances and be **more flexible, innovative and inclusive** than in the past. **Multidimensional approaches** and more **multi-stakeholder initiatives**, involving actors from civil society and the private sector, are particularly needed in this regard. Many argued that state institutions, as well as international organizations, need **better strategic communication** to spread positive narratives to help counter divisive rhetoric and hate-speech. **Greater involvement of women and, in particular, youth** in policy discussions and decision-making was also seen as increasingly important. Both are often excluded from these processes and in many countries also suffer from economic and social marginalization. This structural discrimination can contribute to the frustration and radicalization of young people in particular. **Working at the community level** to address drivers of social fragmentation was seen as key. Local

communities face different challenges and any sustainable responses must be tailored to specific needs and concerns of those directly affected. Governments also need to **invest more in non-military aspects of security** (“soft security”), which are often underestimated and underfunded, although they usually prove to be more cost-effective and efficient than defense programs.

Turning to **countering disinformation and myths** in the public space, particularly online, many argued against any attempts at censorship. Such an approach was considered ineffective in the Internet age as well as counterproductive since it would weaken the very same democratic principles it was meant to protect in the first place. **Fact-checking**, which some media outlets as well as state and international institutions have begun conducting regularly, was highlighted as an effective response to this phenomenon at the tactical level. At the long-term strategic level, **education in media and information literacy**, particularly (but not only) among youth, was considered essential. While some initiatives in this area have been already launched, they are mostly driven by volunteers and have only limited impact. Media and information literacy should become a standard part of curriculums in all public schools. **Enhanced co-operation between state authorities and technology companies** in addressing the spread of fake news and disinformation online, especially on social media, was also suggested. Last but not least, many argued that sustaining a **free media environment** and **high-quality journalism** based on strict respect for key principles of journalism ethics and standards was the most important line of defense against disinformation and myths.

## Role of the OSCE

The OSCE, as the only pan-European inter-governmental security organization, was seen as well-suited to provide a **space for engagement in an increasingly polarized and confrontational security environment**. While recognizing past achievements of the Organization in preventing conflicts and promoting stability, it was suggested that the OSCE has great potential to do more and it should be used more actively by its participating States as a platform for both inclusive security dialogue and joint action.

Many pointed to the current work within the Structured Dialogue Process launched at the 2016 OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg as demonstrating that the OSCE can be a suitable platform for a **strategic dialogue on the future of European security**. At the same time, the Organization is well equipped for **facilitating practical co-operation in various areas**. Thanks to its comprehensive and cross-dimensional approach to security, geographical reach, inclusive nature as well as unique expertise in many thematic issues, the OSCE can play a crucial role in addressing many of today’s new security challenges. It also has numerous well-established mechanisms and instruments for dealing with “old” conventional challenges, particularly in the politico-military dimension.

There were calls for **reviving results-oriented dialogue and co-operation** and the OSCE was seen as one of key actors to contribute to re-creating a stable security environment in Europe. Many considered necessary to further strengthen the OSCE’s capabilities in conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict resolution as well as ensure sufficient resources for its work.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KEY FINDINGS

### The crisis of European security

- The security environment in the OSCE region is marked by growing divisions and uncertainty unprecedented for decades. Divergent security concerns and threat perceptions as well as opposing perspectives on developments since the end of the Cold War are the main source of friction and mistrust among the OSCE participating States.
- The erosion of co-operative security in recent years and armed conflicts in both Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014-) are symptoms rather than direct causes of the deterioration of European security.
- There are very few incentives for most actors to change their current positions as the cost of maintaining the status quo are seen as lower than the cost of any new initiatives. However, there is a real danger that without addressing the current situation, security in Europe will deteriorate further, resulting in a more unstable, less manageable and more dangerous environment with repercussions for peace and stability both in Europe and beyond.

### Re-creating a climate for stability

- Full respect for and implementation of fundamental OSCE norms and principles, particularly in the politico-military dimension of security, is necessary for stabilizing the situation and creating a climate conducive to dialogue and co-operation.
- Significantly more efforts need to be made to understand each other's positions and strengthen "transparency of intentions". More honest dialogue on threat perceptions, military doctrines and force postures is crucial, particularly between the Russian Federation and NATO member states. The Structured Dialogue Process launched at the 2016 OSCE Ministerial Council is an important step forward.
- Historical archive research and critical oral history projects on divergent narratives of post-Cold War security developments could facilitate a more informed debate among governments as well as civil society.
- Peaceful settlement of the crisis in and around Ukraine is a necessary step for restoring a sustainable security order in Europe. While views on prospects for the Minsk Process differ, at the moment it is generally considered to be failing. Either it needs to be replaced with a new process, or several key aspects need to be urgently re-considered (deadlines, sequencing in implementation, deployment of peacekeeping forces).
- A new multilateral platform, whether a dedicated summit or a pan-European conference (potentially under the auspices of the OSCE), is a possible way forward for making progress in resolving the crisis in and around Ukraine.
- Two possible approaches to addressing the underlying divisions in European security were identified:
  1. **A new political process** that would address key strategic issues of the European security order in a comprehensive manner and attempt to find a common understanding of existing norms and principles as well as explore prospects for new agreements, including on a legal basis. Negotiations should focus on key contradictions in the current European security order and their different interpretations, security arrangements for countries whose status is contested, as well as a new treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe.



2. **Step-by-step practical measures** (“islands of co-operation”) that would alleviate the negative impact of the current situation and slowly build up trust on a basic, granular level. Governments should move beyond the language of threats. Disagreements in one area should not jeopardize efforts for dialogue and co-operation in areas of common interest, where governments should actively seek pragmatic co-operation and avoid stigmatization.
- New technologies, particularly those in the cyber-domain with their unclear economic, societal and security implications, offer an area for intensive inter-governmental collaboration and confidence-building. Development of relevant codes of conduct and confidence-building measures is a possible way forward.
  - States could adopt a hybrid approach to addressing a growing number of security challenges, with different rules of engagement and co-operation applied to the “new agenda” (where security is truly indivisible) and the “old agenda” (in which security threats affect states differently).

### **Countering polarization between and within societies**

- Increasing polarization between and within societies is contributing to a deteriorating security environment in the OSCE region. Migration and large movements of people, unresolved armed conflicts, as well as social and economic inequality and marginalization are some of the main sources fuelling divisions between people. Political leaders are also partially responsible for this, either by failing to address the concerns of their citizens or by feeding existing divisions and mistrust for their own political gains.
- Governments and international bodies need to more vigorously address the concerns of citizens and come up with realistic and sustainable policies. Many global challenges are manageable but require leadership that puts long-term interests above short-term political gains and internal political struggles. Stigmatization of people with different opinions should be avoided.
- Governance and diplomacy need to adapt to new circumstances and be more flexible, innovative and inclusive than in the past. Multidimensional approaches and more multi-stakeholder initiatives involving actors from civil society and the private sector are particularly needed. The involvement of women and youth in policy discussions and decision-making is increasingly important.
- State institutions and international organizations need better strategic communication to spread positive narratives to help counter divisive rhetoric and hate-speech.
- Working at the community level is crucial in addressing drivers of fragmentation. Any sustainable responses must be tailored to the specific needs and concerns of local communities directly affected. Governments need to invest more in non-military aspects of security (“soft security”).
- Fragmentation is particularly evident in the public discourse, which is increasingly affected by the phenomenon of “post-truth politics”, i.e., efforts by politicians and other influential voices to exploit grievances and insecurities of the electorate by twisting the facts or using outright lies.
- Censorship is an ineffective and counterproductive approach to countering disinformation and myths in the public space. Fact-checking by media outlets and other relevant actors as well as education in media and information literacy, particularly (but not only) among youth, are essential. Enhanced co-operation between state authorities

and technology companies in addressing the spread of fake news and disinformation online could be also considered.

- Sustaining a free media environment and high-quality journalism based on strict respect for key principles of journalism ethics and standards is the most important line of defense against disinformation and myths.

### **Role of the OSCE**

- The OSCE, as the only pan-European inter-governmental security organization, is well-suited to provide a space for engagement in an increasingly polarized and confrontational security environment.
- The OSCE's platform for strategic dialogue on European security and for facilitating practical co-operation in various areas should be used more extensively. The OSCE participating States need to revive results-oriented dialogue and co-operation.
- Particularly because the OSCE is one of the key actors that can contribute to re-creating a stable security environment in Europe, it is necessary to further strengthen the Organization's capacities in conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict resolution and to ensure sufficient resources for its work.



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## COUNTERING FRAGMENTATION AND POLARIZATION: RE-CREATING A CLIMATE FOR STABILITY IN EUROPE

Prague, 18-19 May 2017

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (Czernin Palace)

### Annotated Agenda

THURSDAY, 18 MAY 2017

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18:30-19:15      Opening reception

19:15-19:30      Welcoming remarks

- **Lamberto Zannier**, OSCE Secretary General
- **Ivo Šrámek**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for Security and Multilateral Issues

19:30-21:00      **Night owl session - Distorted reality: Security implications of post-truth politics**

Political debates in many OSCE countries, including long-standing democracies, are nowadays increasingly framed by appeals to emotions disconnected from real facts. Many populists across Europe try to exploit grievances and insecurities of the electorate by twisting the facts or using outright lies. While this is not an entirely new phenomenon in politics, the spread of disinformation and myths in the digital era has reached an unprecedented pace and scale with the potential to significantly influence public opinion and political decision-making. This has substantial implications for politics in general and for security and stability in particular.



- What dangers does the phenomenon of “post-truth politics” pose for international security and stability?
  - How can the resilience of societies to resist and counter disinformation and myths be strengthened? What role should media play in these efforts?
  - How can governments and state institutions respond to this challenge without undermining fundamental democratic principles like the freedom of expression?
- **Ivan Krastev**, Chairman, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Bulgaria
  - **Mathilde Damgé**, Journalist, Le Monde
  - **Jakub Kalenský**, Member of East StratCom Task Force, European External Action Service (EEAS)
  - **Diana Rusu**, free-lance foreign affairs journalist, Romania
- Moderator: **Matthijs Berman**, Principal Adviser to the Head of Institution, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

FRIDAY, 19 MAY 2017

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#### 09:00-09:20 Welcoming remarks

- **Lamberto Zannier**, OSCE Secretary General
- **Clemens Koja**, Permanent Representative of Austria to the OSCE and Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council
- **Štefan Füle**, Special Envoy for the OSCE and the Western Balkans of the Czech Republic
- **Reinhard Krumm**, Head, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe

#### 09:20-09:30 Introductory remarks

- **Pavel Bělobrádek**, Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

#### 09:30-11:00 Opening session: The state of European security today and prospects for the future

The end of the Cold War was considered by many as the dawn of a new era of freedom, peace and unity in Europe. In the following years, however, it became clear that this was still an aspiration rather than reality. Today’s security environment in Europe is marked by uncertainty about the future and growing fragmentation and polarization. At the same time, both Europe and the world are facing security challenges of increasing complexity and interconnectedness that cannot be solved by any one country or organization alone.

- What are the main security challenges and risks Europe faces today?
- How can these risks be reduced? How can further deterioration of the security situation in Europe be prevented?
- What steps should be taken to put security and co-operation in Europe on a more stable basis?



- **Gernot Erler**, Special Representative for the OSCE, German Federal Foreign Office
- **Alexander Lukashovich**, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE
- **François Heisbourg**, Special Adviser, La Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique
- **William Hill**, Professor of National Security Strategy, National War College
- Moderator: **Marcel Peško**, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, OSCE Secretariat

11:00-11:30      **Coffee break**

11:30-13:00      **Parallel fears: Overcoming divergent threat perceptions**

The crisis in and around Ukraine has undermined fundamental principles of European security and renewed geopolitical confrontation on the continent. However, unlike in the past, the state of European security is no longer defined by two opposing blocs with contradicting ideologies. There are many more stakeholders and mutual relations are more complex, interconnected and interdependent than ever before. Current disagreements do not follow ideological lines and there is hardly any economic rationality behind them. Growing mistrust and confrontation in the OSCE region thus seem to be driven mainly by diametrically opposed security concerns and threat perceptions across the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimensions. This has negative repercussions for security and co-operation, particularly in countries that became independent with the dissolution of the Soviet Union but have not joined any integration model. They are left stranded in the middle of the renewed competition, with their security and economic status often contested.

- How can better mutual understanding of divergent security concerns and threat perceptions among the OSCE participating States be achieved?
- How can differences in security concerns and threat perceptions be reconciled? How can the perceived need of some actors to choose one side over the other be overcome?
- What steps should be taken to decrease mutual mistrust?
- What role can the Structured Dialogue Process launched at the 2016 OSCE Ministerial Council play in this regard?
- What economic and security arrangements represent a viable option for those OSCE participating States whose economic and security status is not clearly defined?

- **Maia Panjikidze**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
- **Oleksandr Chalyi**, President of Grand Thornton Ukraine and Former First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
- **Nadia Arbatova**, Head of the Department on European Political Studies, Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO)
- **Mark Galeotti**, Senior Researcher and Coordinator of the Centre for European Security, Institute of International Relations Prague
- Moderator: **Reinhard Krumm**, Head, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe



13:00-14:00 Buffet lunch

14:00-15:30 **Breaking a vicious circle: Countering fragmentation within and between societies**

Divisions are growing between countries and regions as well as within our societies. A growing sense of unpredictability and uncertainty feeds prejudices and fears of the future, which leads to a polarized and confrontational environment that undermines stability and co-operation. This in turn deepens the sense of insecurity, creating a vicious cycle. At the same time, the complexity and interconnectedness of current security challenges require more co-operation and collaboration than ever before. However, this is becoming increasingly difficult in today's polarized and fragmented security environment.

- How can these negative tendencies be countered?
- How can further fragmentation and polarization of politics be prevented?
- How can partnerships and coalitions be strengthened and deepened despite growing divisions?
- **Tomáš Zdechovský**, Member of the European Parliament
- **Claude Wild**, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE
- **Magdalena Grono**, Program Director for Europe and Central Asia, International Crisis Group
- **Dejan Bojanic**, Vice-President, European Youth Forum
- Moderator: **Jan Haukaas**, Special Adviser, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

15:30-16:00 Coffee break

16:00-17:30 **The future of European security: How to create a climate for stability?**

Rules and principles that have been pillars of European security for decades are now being contested. The legitimacy of the liberal international order is being challenged and the world seems to be turning from multilateralism to multipolarism. Mistrust and confrontation have replaced dialogue and co-operation, deepening divisions and undermining stability and security. Many actors are searching for ways to reduce risks, remedy confrontational relations and return to co-operation in Europe. This appears difficult, even as the need to preserve and safeguard a stable and peaceful security environment in Europe is becoming increasingly urgent.

- What are the main pillars of a stable security environment in the OSCE region?
- How can the current situation be prevented from deteriorating further?
- What steps should be taken to ensure a stable security environment, strengthen co-operative approaches and avoid zero-sum thinking with negative repercussions for the OSCE region?



- How can the Structured Dialogue Process launched at the 2016 OSCE Ministerial Council provide stepping stones for a more stable and co-operative security environment in Europe?
- **Christian Strohal**, Special Representative for the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship 2017
- **Hynek Kmoníček**, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States of America
- **Andrey Kortunov**, Director General, Russian International Affairs Council
- **Michael Kimmage**, Professor of History, Catholic University of America
  
- Moderator and closing remarks: **Lamberto Zannier**, OSCE Secretary General

