

The OSCE Approach to Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R)

Report by the Secretary General of the OSCE

Summary

In today's world of complex and interdependent security challenges within and across borders, national security sectors need to adapt to fast-changing and unpredictable environments. Experience shows that an accountable, effective and inclusive security sector with full respect for human rights, including gender equality and the rule of law can effectively provide security to a State and its people, while at the same time promoting stability, trust and confidence in the OSCE area and beyond. This is of particular relevance when the threats being dealt with are neither unique to any State nor confined to a particular region. This is the case, for instance, with violent extremism that leads to terrorism, organized crime, the return of foreign fighters, and trafficking in human beings. Therefore, participating States need to be properly equipped and prepared, and must work together and share national experiences. Additionally, this will significantly contribute to preventing the outbreak and recurrence of conflicts, as well as to sustaining peace and supporting sustainable development.

The OSCE has a long track record in supporting States in strengthening the governance of their security sectors and undertaking reforms in line with the Organization's commitments dating back twenty-five years to the 1994 Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Our work includes encouraging co-operation and the sharing of good practices between States, as well as supporting national efforts to reform security institutions and strengthen good governance. Moreover, particularly through its field operations and institutions, the OSCE provides expertise on many important areas, including police and justice reform, border management and security, democratic oversight, and many more. Thus, even if it has not always been branded as such, we have provided significant support over the years to security sector governance and reform (SSR/G) efforts, as underlined by the mapping study "The Role of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Security Sector Governance and Reform" (CIO.GAL/18/14).

The contemporary security environment obliges us to strengthen our resilience to threats that jeopardize national security and public safety. A more coherent and co-ordinated approach to SSG/R is essential to ensuring that our support to participating States takes full advantage of the OSCE acquis and is provided in an effective and sustainable manner. I therefore welcome the Slovak Chairmanship's priority of working towards the development of a common understanding of SSG/R in the context of the OSCE as a necessary step in this direction. In response to the request of Slovakia, this report provides an overview on efforts towards a more coherent and co-ordinated approach to SSG/R support, including the SSG/R Guidelines for OSCE Staff (2016). I have also made a number of recommendations for further strengthening the OSCE's support in this field.

A more coherent and co-ordinated approach to SSG/R support would mean taking full advantage of our available tools and expertise by placing greater emphasis on good governance, strengthening co-operation across all three dimensions of security, making more efficient use of limited available resources, and enabling increased co-ordination with other actors in this field. National ownership and leadership must be front and centre. The Organization would benefit from an increased recognition among participating States and Partners for Co-Operation that SSG/R is an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, and, ideally, from their providing the executive structures with guiding principles on how to best support nationally led SSG/R processes.

I. Introduction

New and emerging security threats are combining with the current international political climate to lead to a re-emergence of tensions in several regions of our area. Security challenges are becoming more complex and interconnected – from terrorism through cyber-threats to climate change. In order to contribute more effectively to long-term comprehensive security for all participating States and their people, and to plant the seeds for lasting and sustainable peace, the Organization for Security and Co operation in Europe (OSCE) should engage in frank discussions on how it can make the best use of existing tools.

Given that each State, in accordance with its sovereign right and responsibility, is the principal provider of comprehensive security for its citizens, it is important to establish how the Organization can best support participating States in their own nationally driven efforts to reform their security sectors. Although such reforms are national processes, many countries have in practice requested external support from multilateral organizations. While always fully respecting the principles of national sovereignty, the OSCE has supported nationally led reform processes ever since the early 1990s, in particular by facilitating the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, by facilitating regional approaches, by raising awareness on good governance issues, and by providing policy advice and technical expertise.

The field in which the OSCE has been providing long-term support to participating States to help them strengthen the governance of their national security sectors has come to be known as “security sector governance and reform” (SSG/R). Security sector governance (SSG) has to do with the principles of good governance and how they apply to security provision, security management and security oversight. The expression inherently implies that the security sector is subject to the same standards of good governance as any other public sector, and that the security sector is to provide security to States and their people in an accountable and effective way, within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law and respect for human rights, including gender equality. One of the characteristic features of SSG/R is the need for a holistic approach to reform that takes into account the interlinkages between a security sector’s various actors and components, and helps in overcoming structural barriers between the OSCE’s institutions and between the three dimensions (politico-military, economic and environmental, human) of its work. Accordingly, SSG/R is closely related to all three dimensions and is an integral part of the Organization’s comprehensive approach to security.

The concept of SSG/R is also embedded in core principles and commitments of the OSCE such as the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (1994), which is one of the key documents epitomizing the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security. SSG/R is a field of vital importance to all participating States because of its role in supporting the structural prevention of conflicts and in building resilient institutions capable of sustaining peace. Moreover, as recognized by United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution 2151 (2014), by the “Sustaining Peace” agenda and by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SSG/R plays an essential role throughout the conflict cycle – from early warning and conflict prevention through crisis management and resolution to post-conflict rehabilitation and peacebuilding.

In January 2014, at the beginning of its OSCE Chairmanship, Switzerland distributed a comprehensive mapping study entitled “The Role of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Security Sector Governance and Reform” (CIO.GAL/18/14), which had been prepared at Switzerland’s request by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). In a management response the then Secretary General embraced many of the recommendations presented in the study and embarked on a bottom-up process aimed at developing a more coherent, effective and sustainable approach to SSG/R that neither gave rise to new commitments nor revised existing ones. This process has involved the collaboration of all the OSCE executive

structures and has led to the creation of a dedicated SSG/R capacity at the Secretariat, the establishment of an SSG/R Focal Points Network across the Organization, and the development of a set of guidelines on SSG/R for OSCE staff; moreover, it has enhanced co-operation with other actors involved in this field, such as the UN and the European Union (EU).

While much has been achieved, we still face several challenges at the political and institutional levels that prevent the Organization from fully playing its role as an important actor in the field of SSG/R and from providing the most effective support to the national reform efforts of participating States. These challenges include the lack of a common understanding of and approach to SSG/R, shared by participating States and OSCE staff alike; the limited capacities available within the Organization; and the challenge of mainstreaming SSG/R into the programmatic work of the OSCE. Further strengthening our approach to SSG/R will contribute to the implementation of our comprehensive approach to security, by placing a greater emphasis on good governance, strengthening cross-dimensional co-operation and co-ordination, making more efficient use of the limited resources available, and promoting increased co-ordination with other actors in this field. Finally, in this more coherent approach to SSG/R, national ownership will be central to our support, because this will guarantee that our efforts are in line with the national priorities of participating States.

In the present document, which has been prepared at the request of Slovakia and is the first ever report by an OSCE Secretary General on this topic, I provide an overview of the efforts made to develop an OSCE approach to SSG/R. In so doing, I intend to contribute to the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship's stated objective of working towards the development of a common understanding of SSG/R in the context of the OSCE. I also include some recommendations on how the OSCE's support in this field could be strengthened further. The report covers the progress achieved in SSG/R in the period 2014–2018 and focuses on support provided by OSCE executive structures to participating States.¹

II. The relevance of SSG/R in a rapidly changing global environment

The rapidly changing global political landscape is characterized by new and emerging security threats, growing political tensions, and armed violence. Within this context, the OSCE has an important role to play as the largest regional arrangement operating under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The experience the OSCE has acquired in the area of SSG/R is of considerable relevance to global efforts to sustain peace. As emphasized by the UN Secretary-General in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (UN document A/72/707-S/2018/43), such efforts are necessary not only after conflict has broken out but long beforehand, because it is crucial to prevent violent conflict by addressing its root causes. SSG/R has much to offer in this regard, as it is not only a post-conflict tool, but also plays an essential role in early warning, conflict prevention, and crisis management and resolution, as well as in post-conflict rehabilitation and peacebuilding – in other words, in all phases of the conflict cycle.

By the time of the Vilnius Ministerial Council of December 2011, participating States had recognized the need for a comprehensive, cross-dimensional response designed to address the multi-faceted causes of crises and conflicts in an effective and efficient manner.² In situations where violations and human rights abuses are consti-

1 In the area of SSG/R, the OSCE has developed a strategic partnership with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), which has made a vital contribution to our progress in this field. I would also like to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by DCAF to the present report.

2 Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 (MC.DEC/3/11) on 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.

tuting early warning indicators of emerging conflict, a persistent lack of security and justice can become a driver of subsequent violence and instability. Hence, establishing and maintaining resilient security and justice systems is vital to effectively addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict and thereby contributing to sustainable peace and security.

At the global level, the key role of SSG/R in contributing to peace and security is reflected not only in UN Security Council resolution 2151 (2014) on security sector reform but also in the UN's broader Sustainable Development Agenda and "Sustaining Peace" agenda. In particular, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 addresses well-known drivers of conflict, injustice and insecurity, and commits States to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". It is therefore important to reflect on the extent to which multilateral organizations are equipped and empowered to support SSG/R in relation to the SDGs. SSG/R is also relevant to other international policy agendas, for instance to those addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in line with UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

Effective SSG/R also contributes to efforts to prevent and counter growing transnational threats such as terrorism, organized crime and cybercrime, which are exacerbated by economic asymmetries, social divisions, poor governance and weak institutions. These challenges are common to most States and are characterized by their complexity and interconnectedness. A comprehensive response that seeks to address their underlying causes can only benefit from well-functioning and well governed security sectors that are gender-responsive and demonstrate respect for human rights.³ Additionally, the transnational nature of the above-mentioned threats calls for holistic approaches and demands co-ordination and co-operation among participating States. Security threats must be tackled in a manner that takes into account the three dimensions of security – politico-military, economic and environmental, and human – and appreciates the links and interdependence among them. Global efforts to respond to such threats can be significantly strengthened by learning from the experience of individual States in building resilient and democratically legitimate institutions, by fostering regional co-operation, and by continuously identifying good practices in the field of SSG/R. In this context, further consideration should be devoted to the dual nature of the new technologies, both as a security challenge and as tools for addressing existing security risks.

Another important point is that, amidst widespread national economic uncertainty, security functions traditionally provided by States are increasingly being outsourced to the private sector. These developments are forcing the international community to take a step back and reconsider its understanding of security actors and their role in the security environment. A number of States are facing challenges related to the question of how the key principles of SSG (transparency, participation and accountability), which are enshrined in the OSCE's Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, should be applied to private military and security entities.

Finally, more than ever, the global financial climate calls for efficient responses that make the best use of limited resources and expertise. In view of the budgetary constraints faced by States, the OSCE's work on SSG/R is embedded in a long-term process of transformation focused on broader institution-building, with the aim of ensuring the good management and financial sustainability of reform efforts.

³ See, for instance, Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/05 (MC.DEC/14/05) on women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation; and Ministerial Council Decision No. 15/05 (MC.DEC/15/05) on preventing and combating violence against women.

III. SSG/R in the context of the OSCE

In recent years, the OSCE has increasingly improved its support, in response to requests for support from participating States in enhancing the good governance of their security sectors. To better understand how the OSCE responds and can further improve its support, it is important to first establish what is meant by SSG/R, the normative framework it operates within, and what capacities are available within the Organization.

What is SSG/R?

The OSCE, unlike other multilateral organizations, has not adopted a formal definition of SSG/R. However, the bottom-up approach through which SSG/R has been shaped within the Organization has led to the development of a working definition based on the premise that the security sector is subject to the same standards of good governance as any other public sector. Accordingly, good security sector governance (SSG) implies the provision of security to a State and its people in an effective and accountable manner, within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law and respect for human rights. Activities aimed at improving SSG are defined as “security sector reform” (SSR) even if they are not always explicitly referred to as such. Thus, SSG/R concerns all actors involved in security provision, management and oversight, and includes all their roles and responsibilities. Accordingly, SSG/R is a political and technical process through which a country seeks to enhance the good governance of its security sector.

A number of key principles of SSG/R largely overlap with existing OSCE commitments and guide the Organization’s engagement in this field:

- **Political will and national ownership** are critical to achieving progress in reform. In accordance with the principle of national sovereignty, support provided by the OSCE to the SSG/R process in a given participating State should be based on a request for assistance from that State and aligned with its national priorities for reform.
- A **holistic approach** to SSG/R is essential. When supporting reforms in one part of the security sector, it is imperative to reflect on how this may affect, or require changes in, other parts of the sector.
- SSG/R must be **responsive to the security needs of the entire population**, including youth. It should therefore entail, among other things, approaches that are **gender-responsive and human rights-based**.
- SSG/R support should be entirely context-specific. All support to reforms should be grounded in a thorough understanding of the local context and should be inclusive of all segments of society; ideally, furthermore, it should be based on a comprehensive needs assessment.

The normative framework and the SSG/R Guidelines for OSCE Staff

Both SSG and SSR are relatively recent concepts, but their aims and principles are not new to our Organization. On the contrary, they are deeply rooted in core OSCE norms and principles that underpin our support for participating States as they seek to strengthen the governance of their security sectors. However, although the OSCE’s normative framework already covers various aspects of SSG/R, the fragmentary character of the framework is an obstacle to the development of a truly coherent and co-ordinated approach.

In particular, Sections VII and VIII of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (1994) serve as the basis for the Organization’s engagement in SSG/R activities. These sections of the Code lay down a number of standards that have guided the OSCE in supporting nationally led SSG/R processes: democratic civilian control over armed and security forces, their subjection to international humanitarian law, respect for the hu-

man rights and fundamental freedoms of armed forces personnel, and the regulation of the use of armed forces for internal security purposes. The Code has become a key resource for developing an understanding of SSG/R within the OSCE context. Not only does the Code provide much of the normative foundation for reform processes, but its relevance is strengthened still further by the holistic nature and international appeal of SSG/R itself.

In 2016 the OSCE issued the publication **Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R): Guidelines for OSCE Staff**. The Guidelines, which are based on various normative commitments and reflect the OSCE's comprehensive vision for SSG/R support, provide operational and programmatic direction under four thematic areas. Developed with the help of the OSCE's internal SSG/R Focal Points Network, the Guidelines were the product of a collaborative effort that built on a wealth of knowledge and experience existing throughout the Organization. They convey the following key messages:

- **Cross-dimensional approaches to SSG/R** are required in order to take account of the holistic nature of the SSG/R process. Reform in one part of the security sector may not be successful if its potential effect on the rest of the sector is not taken into consideration. When support is being provided, relevant expertise may thus be sought from all three dimensions.
- **Needs assessments in the field of SSG/R** provide entry points for engaging with national stakeholders in discussions on reform needs based on national priorities, and facilitate the identification of challenges and opportunities.
- **Impact-oriented approaches to SSG/R** help to ensure the sustainability of reforms. Although quick-impact projects may sometimes be required to strengthen immediate confidence building, these should be conducted within the framework of a longer-term support strategy aligning international assistance to national needs and priorities.
- **Approaches to strengthening regional co-operation on SSG/R** contribute to broader OSCE objectives. Supporting regional initiatives may be useful in strengthening national approaches to SSG/R with regard to issues that require transnational collaboration. Regional co-operation can help build trust, facilitate the sharing of information and good practices, and strengthen networks.

The SSG/R Guidelines for OSCE Staff have helped the OSCE to deliver more effective, coherent, co-ordinated and impact oriented support to participating States in the field of SSG/R. In addition to developing an extensive internal manual and providing training on implementation of the Guidelines, the OSCE has been hosting a series of events at the national, international and regional levels to promote awareness of the Guidelines. Their implementation is reviewed annually in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and to allow for discussion of ways of improving them. In 2017, the OSCE also issued the Briefing Note for Senior Managers on the OSCE Guidelines on Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R), thereby contributing to raising overall awareness of SSG/R in the Organization.

Capacities within the OSCE for SSG/R support

In 2014 the **SSG/R Focal Points Network** was created in order to promote coherence within the Organization. The Network brings together representatives of the OSCE Secretariat, institutions, field operations and Parliamentary Assembly, and works constantly to raise awareness on the cross-dimensional nature of SSG/R and to strengthen in-house co-operation. In addition, each of the entities referred to has been actively involved, at the request of the participating States, in supporting the reform of national security institutions – by, for example, facilitating the exchange of good practices and lessons learned and/or supporting nationally led capacity-building

initiatives in their field of expertise.

The OSCE **Secretariat** supports participating States and field operations in national SSG/R efforts through a range of activities that include offering policy advice, sharing expertise, organizing regional capacity-building events and developing guidelines. Within the Secretariat, the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) Support Section of the **Conflict Prevention Centre** (CPC) assists in promoting and implementing the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Since 2014 there has been a dedicated post for SSG/R matters within the CPC. This post, which is at the Associate Project Officer level, was recently placed under the direct supervision of the Director of the CPC, reflecting the cross dimensional nature of SSG/R and its contribution to conflict prevention. The SSG/R officer at the CPC is responsible for co-ordinating the OSCE's approach in this field. These efforts are supported by an extrabudgetary project entitled "Support, capacity-building and awareness-raising for security sector governance and reform within the OSCE", which was launched in 2014 by the Swiss Chairmanship together with Slovakia and Serbia. In 2019 this project entered its second phase, which has a stronger focus on the provision of support to participating States and on strengthening partnerships.

The **Transnational Threats Department** (TNTD) is the OSCE mechanism tasked with addressing transnational threats by working on strengthening specific components of the security sector. Within the TNTD, the Strategic Police Matters Unit, the Border Security and Management Unit, and the Action Against Terrorism Unit all offer specialized support in the SSG/R field, ranging from the promotion of community policing to the provision of capacity-building support for border and customs officials. The TNTD also provides training and advice, and has developed many relevant guidance materials, such as the guidebook *Police Reform within the Framework of Criminal Justice System Reform* (2013) and, more recently, the guidebook *Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach* (2014), which was produced in co-operation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

The **Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings** (OSR/CTHB), in line with SSG/R principles, pursues a holistic approach to its work on combating human trafficking. For instance, as a result of the OSR/CTHB-led project "Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes" – which has so far gathered 400 practitioners from 53 participating States and five Partners for Co-operation in Europe, Asia, North America and North Africa – law enforcement agencies have learned how to operate alongside other governmental agencies and NGOs in consistently applying a victim-centred and human rights-based approach to anti-trafficking investigations and prosecutions. Furthermore, since 2016, the **Gender Section** within the **Office of the Secretary General** has supported governments and civil society actors in the development and enhancement of national action plans on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security. Multi-country and tailored single-country workshops attended by police officers and officials from Ministries of Defence and of Internal Affairs have, in line with SSG/R principles, explored such topics as the inclusivity of security sector institutions and gender mainstreaming.

Finally, the **Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities** (OCEEA) at the OSCE Secretariat also deals with good governance of the security sector, including the fight against corruption. In 2016, for example, the OCEEA published the *Handbook on Combating Corruption*, which provides participating States with a reference guide on the legal tools available, legislative and policy trends, and practices for preventing and suppressing corruption. The guidance contained in the Handbook is relevant to reform of the security sector.

Two further OSCE institutions are extensively engaged in the promotion of SSG/R issues, the **Office for Demo-**

cratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the **High Commissioner on National Minorities**. The ODIHR prioritizes the human dimension in SSG/R, which encompasses human rights and gender issues. Within the ODIHR, the Human Rights Department, Democratization Department and Tolerance and Non Discrimination Department work to support efforts in the fields of: police, defence, justice and penal reform; border security and management; and oversight of the security sector. The specialized programmes of the Human Rights Department involve particularly extensive interaction with security sector actors. For example, the mandate of the Human Rights, Gender and Security Unit incorporates a holistic approach to SSG/R support from the perspective of human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive approaches to security. Within the Democratization Department, the Rule of Law Unit, Democratic Governance and Gender Unit and Legislative Support Unit are all engaged in SSG/R-related work through activities that involve the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government and also relate to civil society.

Since 2014, the ODIHR has been developing relevant practical guidance – for instance, the *Guidance Document on the Nelson Mandela Rules: Implementing the United Nations Revised Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* (2018) and three guidance notes: *Integrating a Gender Perspective into Internal Oversight within Armed Forces* (2014), *Integrating Gender into Internal Police Oversight* (2014), and *Integrating Gender into Oversight of the Security Sector by Ombuds Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions* (2014). Two older publications, the *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (2008) and the *Handbook on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Armed Forces Personnel* (2008), are currently being revised and updated. The ODIHR also works together with national stakeholders. In 2018 for instance, in Armenia, with the assistance of the national authorities, the ODIHR and the CPC undertook a comprehensive needs assessment to determine the capacities of the country's civil and democratic oversight structures in exercising effective oversight and control over the security sector.

The **High Commissioner on National Minorities** (HCNM) also plays an important role in SSG/R, because its engagement with minorities requires SSG responses. For instance, the HCNM supports police reform through a non-discrimination and multi-ethnic lens. Specifically, the HCNM has been actively supporting a number of participating States such as Ukraine and Moldova in building national strategies for addressing ethnic minority issues. Furthermore, the HCNM has been providing policy guidance to participating States through, for example, the publication of the *Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies* (2006) and the so-called *Graz Recommendations on Access to Justice and National Minorities* (2017).

The OSCE's **field operations** in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia have, at the request of their host States, also been actively providing support to national reform processes. In some cases, specialized departments and/or dedicated capacities exist within these operations to co ordinate and conduct SSG/R-related activities. However, even field operations without specialized departments are engaged in SSG/R, directly or indirectly. For instance, SSG/R assistance may be provided within the framework of activities focused on policing, rule of law or democratization. While not always labelled as SSG/R, such support is often in line with SSG/R objectives and principles.

The fact that a growing number of cross-dimensional, impact-oriented and human rights-based approaches are reflected in OSCE Programme Outlines and Unified Budget proposals issued during the years 2014–2018 indicates that the Organization has been increasingly applying its holistic approach to SSG/R. Although there is still a tendency to situate SSG/R support within the politico-military dimension, some field operations have included SSG/R within their cross-dimensional objectives. For example, the strategic plan for 2018 of the **OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek** stated that “an SSG framework will strengthen cross-dimensional synergies and

enable it to link portfolios such as transnational threats, law enforcement co-operation, community policing, integrated border management, economic governance, human trafficking and justice reform” (SEC.GAL/0058/17/Rev.2). Similarly, the **OSCE Mission to Skopje** has singled out SSG/R as a “key area of engagement” and has included the implementation of the guidelines on SSG/R for OSCE staff in its strategic plan (SEC.GAL/0046/1).

Some participating States have requested support in specific areas of SSG/R such as developing strategic national security frameworks, managing democratic oversight of the security sector, or providing assistance to certain security and justice institutions such as their Ministry of Defence or law enforcement agencies. Thus, the **OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe**, within the broader national police reform process, has facilitated the sharing of experiences and good practices among participating States in order to promote community policing concepts and their implementation. The **OSCE Programme Office in Astana** has been supporting Kazakhstan’s justice sector reform in a holistic manner that involves bringing together parliamentarians, representatives of law enforcement agencies, NGOs, human rights activists, lawyers and judges. In Kyrgyzstan, again in 2018, the **OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek** co-operated with national authorities on strengthening the State Border Service (SBS), which was pursued through, inter alia, an SBS-led needs assessment process that helped to identify training gaps. Support has also been provided for penal system reform. For instance, in 2014 the **OSCE Centre in Ashgabat** made it possible for high-level law enforcement officials from Turkmenistan to visit the United Kingdom in order to learn about good practices and new developments in prison management. And in the area of defence, the **OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina** has a successful track record of facilitating, in partnership with other regional organizations, nationally led defence reforms, which have included the implementation of parliamentary and democratic oversight mechanisms, based on the sharing of experiences within the OSCE area.

Field operations have also developed considerable expertise in addressing cross-cutting security challenges. The **OSCE Mission to Serbia** has worked closely with national authorities on strengthening their approach to curbing organized crime by facilitating knowledge-sharing among experts in Serbia and other participating States on improving the efficacy of organized crime investigations, and by advocating inter-agency co-operation and regional information exchange mechanisms. Moreover, the Mission has supported the establishment of a regional network of organized crime prosecutors from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. When supporting participating States in the prevention and countering of violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, field operations have sought to draw attention to SSG/R-related principles such as inclusivity.

The OSCE has also been very active in its support for participating States in the area of good governance, particularly with regard to the implementation of anti-corruption measures. The **OSCE Presence in Albania**, for example, has supported the fight against corruption in a co-ordinated manner across the three security dimensions. In the first dimension, it has worked together with the Albanian police, in the second with national anti-corruption bodies, and in the third with prosecutors. Furthermore, the OSCE’s support is often directed at strengthening the role of parliamentarians and civil society. For instance, the **OSCE Mission to Montenegro** has worked with civil society organizations to develop a new national strategy for addressing challenges in the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. And in 2018, the OSCE **Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine** supported the carrying out of a baseline assessment and the development of a roadmap to strengthen democratic control of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, both projects being discussed with the military and with civil society at regional and central round tables before being submitted to the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine.

Moreover, OSCE field operations have also actively mainstreamed human rights and gender-based approaches

as an integral part of their provision of SSG/R support. At the request of the Association of Women in Kosovo⁴ Police, for example, the **OSCE Mission in Kosovo** has given women police officers advanced training on trafficking in human beings designed to enhance their knowledge of and practical skills in interviewing victims of different ages, ethnicities and languages.

Finally, the OSCE **Parliamentary Assembly** has been at the forefront of efforts to promote discussions relevant to SSG/R. For instance, the Baku and Minsk Declarations, adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in 2014 and 2017 respectively, acknowledged the need to effectively regulate private military and security companies and to establish effective parliamentary oversight. Moreover, in July 2018, during its 27th Annual Session in Berlin, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution on “Strengthening the OSCE’s Approach to Supporting Security Sector Governance and Reform in Participating and Partner States”, which called on the OSCE executive structures and participating States to increase their efforts towards the development of a common understanding of SSG/R and a corresponding OSCE-wide strategic approach to support nationally led SSG/R processes.

IV. The importance of mainstreaming SSG/R into the work of the OSCE

Given the widely acknowledged relevance of SSG/R to sustaining peace and supporting sustainable development – and the reality that the OSCE has been engaged for many years in supporting a wide range of SSG/R activities – participating States can only benefit from the OSCE becoming ever-better prepared to respond to their requests for support. With this in mind, and building on the progress achieved to date, increasing discussion has been devoted to the potential inherent in developing a common and coherent approach to SSG/R support that will further contribute to effective responses to the complex and interconnected challenges of our time.

Since June 2014, the **OSCE Group of Friends (GoF) of SSG/R** created by Slovakia, Switzerland and Serbia has provided an informal platform for participating States to discuss developments regarding SSG/R and to enhance coherence by sharing ideas, experiences and proposals related to ongoing activities. The GoF has seen its membership expand significantly over the last five years, reflecting the fact that **SSG/R has been a priority for several OSCE Chairmanships** from 2014 (Switzerland) to the current year (Slovakia). On account of the general growth of interest, SSG/R has been included on the agendas of several high-level meetings. For instance, the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) has often discussed issues at the heart of SSG/R at its meetings, including the role of independent oversight bodies, gender equality in the military, and the regulation of private military and security companies. 2018 saw the first-ever joint meeting of the FSC and Permanent Council (PC) on SSG/R, which was an important milestone in the promotion of discussion at the political level. Furthermore, the Security Committee of the PC has regularly addressed the topic of SSG/R in the light of various perspectives including its importance to anti-corruption programmes and policies. In all these meetings, emphasis has been laid upon **the added value of developing a more coherent and co-ordinated approach to SSG/R**, which has the capacity to generate a number of advantages, as follows.

Firstly, adopting a coherent and co-ordinated approach to SSG/R would provide the opportunity to make further progress in strengthening the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, most notably **by placing a greater emphasis on the governance aspects of security**. Many participating States have acknowledged the importance of effective and accountable security sectors in that they contribute significantly to early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and resolution, and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Secondly, a more strategic approach to SSG/R would also allow the Organization to **move beyond the often**

4 All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

dis-jointed responses of the past, by strengthening cross-dimensional co-operation and co-ordination and making more efficient use of limited resources. Such an approach would help integrate commitments and mandates that are currently siloed and would facilitate more effective support for national reform processes. Indeed, SSG/R is a perfect fit for making the most of synergies among the three dimensions of the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security (see fig. 1). Given that the security sector is all too often viewed mainly through a politico-military lens, it is important to underline that certain aspects of the human dimension and the economic and environmental dimension are also indispensable elements in the overall SSG/R scenario.

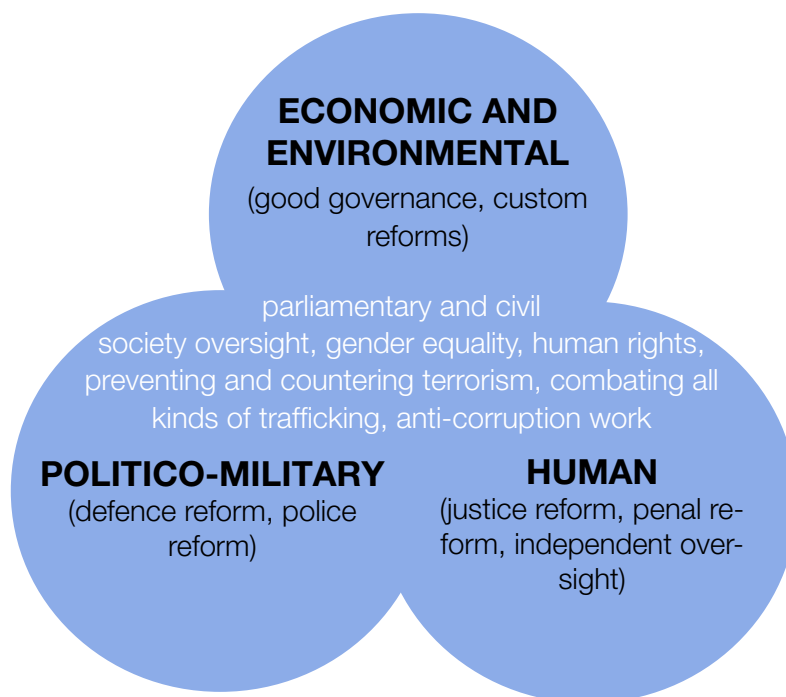


Figure 1. SSG/R-related activities within the OSCE framework

A more comprehensive approach to SSG/R also calls for links to be established between different reform processes that are mutually reinforcing (police, justice, intelligence, etc.), instead of these processes being dealt with individually. It is now recognized that successful security sector reform should transcend changes made in individual components of the sector, which often aim only to enhance the capacities, effectiveness and professionalism of individual security-providers. Linking various areas of engagement would substantially improve the effectiveness of the Organization’s efforts: for example, gathering together all actors in the criminal justice sector to work jointly, rather than holding separate activities for police, prosecutors, judges and prison officials.

Thirdly, mainstreaming SSG/R within the OSCE would make the best use of our comparative advantages and **enhance the effectiveness of OSCE co-ordination with other multilateral, regional and bilateral actors.** All actors engaged in support of national SSR processes should seek to co-ordinate and further align their support with national goals.

Finally, and most importantly, the concept of SSG/R acknowledges national ownership as a necessary element for success. Embracing SSG/R thus implies the recognition that **reform processes are fundamentally nationally led and demand-driven.** Thus, national ownership provides the basis for the Organization to work in full support of national processes and at the request of participating States. Additionally, support provided to SSG/R

must take into account specific regional contexts, as national security sector actors have an important role to play in regional security. To ensure national ownership, SSG/R calls for the provision of support in an inclusive manner. The security needs and experiences of men and women are very different and, in many cases, based on specific societal gender norms. National security sectors can only be effective in today's world on the condition of the active participation of women and of civil society organizations, who and which make a crucial contribution to enhancing a security sector's understanding of and response to the security needs of different segments of society.

V. The importance of leveraging partnerships

Given the OSCE's active involvement in SSG/R, and in the broader context of providing participating States with coherent and co-ordinated support, the Organization should aim to develop pragmatic and results-oriented partnerships with other actors working in this field. Regional expertise acquired over the years and the OSCE's extensive network of field operations put the Organization in a position to make valuable contributions to global efforts to sustain peace and security, and thus to strengthen its role as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. By leveraging partnerships, we can optimize these advantages.

While SSG/R is fundamentally a national process, many countries have benefited from the exchange of lessons learned in other reform contexts, with multilateral organizations offering platforms to facilitate these learning experiences, an area in which many organizations have developed policy and guidance and have significantly expanded their operational support – the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and others. In some cases, however, having such a great variety of actors engaging with similar or even the same institutions has resulted in a lack of co-ordination and co-operation, contributing to gaps in support or the duplication of efforts. Therefore, to guarantee the most efficient use of international community resources, all those involved should work towards a more coherent approach to supporting national actors, guided by existing national priorities.

Over the last few years, significant progress has been achieved in developing effective partnerships. The OSCE has developed substantial relations with relevant UN bodies, especially the former Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO, now the Department of Peace Operations) and its Security Sector Reform Unit, and with the UNODC. The co-operation with the UN has been mutually beneficial: for example, in 2014, the two organizations hosted the first ever joint UN-OSCE conference on SSG/R, which enabled the sharing of experiences on guidance development. Furthermore, the recently signed OSCE-UNODC Joint Action Plan 2018–2019 includes SSG/R as a specific area for co-operation and stipulates that the Parties will engage in regular exchanges, at all levels, in order to improve co-ordination and co-operation in this field.

The EU is another key partner for the OSCE. The European Commission (EC), the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the OSCE Secretariat, institutions and field operations have long engaged in close co-operation based on shared values and common objectives. The “promotion of civilian security sector reform (including borders and taking into account gender aspects) and law enforcement co-operation” was addressed in an exchange of letters between the OSCE and the Secretary-Generals of the EEAS and EC in June 2018.

Finally, a significant step towards further strengthening these partnerships was seen in the OSCE's participation in the mapping exercise initiated by the UN in co-operation with the African Union and the EU that led to the 2018 DCAF study Enhancing Multilateral Support for Security Sector Reform. This brought forth several concrete recommendations for enhancing co-operation and predictability in multilateral support, which we look forward to exploring with these partner organizations.

VI. Recommendations for the way ahead

Since 2014, the OSCE has had many successes; however, efforts must be made to address some of the persistent challenges and gaps identified in this and other reports which have prevented the Organization from developing a more coherent and co-ordinated approach in this field. These challenges include the absence of a common understanding of SSG/R and corresponding approach to SSG/R support shared by the participating States and OSCE staff. This has resulted, for instance, in SSG/R being persistently addressed as a first-dimension issue and in opportunities thus being missed of providing comprehensive support where it matters most. At times, limited capacities for SSG/R support within the OSCE have also made it difficult for the Organization to implement strategic objectives or engage with senior-level counterparts on reform issues.

Main achievements

- The creation of a dedicated SSG/R capacity at the Secretariat and the establishment of an internal SSG/R Focal Points Network representing all OSCE executive structures and the Parliamentary Assembly. Additionally, several field operations have developed sustainable support structures for SSG/R-related activities and programmes.
- The development of the SSG/R Guidelines for OSCE Staff and the Briefing Note for Senior Managers. The annual review of the implementation of the Guidelines has enabled the Organization to identify lessons learned and entry points for improvement.
- The establishment of the Group of Friends of SSG/R, the incorporation of SSG/R-related topics in many high-level events, and the selection of SSG/R as a priority by most Chairmanships since 2014 have confirmed the will of many States to advance political dialogue on the OSCE's role in SSG/R support.
- The strengthening of co-operation on SSG/R with other multilateral actors, including the UN (in particular, the DPKO Security Sector Reform Unit and the UNODC) and the EU.

To move forward, we need to work together and build on the comparative advantages of the OSCE in relation to other actors and to address persistent weaknesses in the current SSG/R framework, not least at those points where the Organization lacks capacities to deliver.

I encourage participating States:

- 1. To actively engage in constructive dialogue to build a common understanding of SSG/R, as part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security.** One of the key characteristics of SSG/R is the need for a holistic approach to reform which takes into account the inter-linkages between the various actors and components of the security sector. This fits well with the OSCE's comprehensive understanding of security based on the three dimensions. I encourage participating States to take advantage of the full potential of all three dimensions in forging a common understanding of SSG/R;
- 2. To develop guiding principles to support OSCE executive structures in enhancing the delivery of coherent support to nationally owned SSG/R processes.** These principles should be rooted in national leadership, ownership and political will as key elements of success. Political will and national ownership are essential for the success of SSG/R initiatives and processes. Indeed, any support to a national SSG/R process should be based on a national request and aligned with national priorities for reform. These key principles should also be in line with existing commitments and take the following factors into account: the national and regional contexts; the inclusion of human rights, including gender equality; the role of civil society; comprehensive and co-operative security; and civilian control of the security sector;
- 3. To further integrate SSG/R into the OSCE's conflict cycle toolbox in order to strengthen the OSCE's work in SSG/R in the context of global efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace.** SSG/R is increasingly recognized as a key element of conflict prevention. SSG/R also contributes to global efforts towards reaching Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and implementing the "Sustaining Peace" agenda and Women, Peace and Security Agenda. In this context I welcome the initiative of the current Chairmanship and the CPC to organize a conflict-cycle seminar on SSG/R as an important step in this direction;
- 4. To further strengthen the role of the OSCE as a platform for discussion on SSG/R and as a facilitator for sharing experiences, good practices and lessons learned across the entire OSCE area.** This should be based on an inclusive approach whereby all participating States can participate equally and learn from each other's national experiences. The exchange of good practices and lessons learned could be facilitated by the establishment of an OSCE-wide network of SSG/R professionals, with, ideally, the full support of all participating States;
- 5. To strengthen engagement in SSG/R on a regional basis.** The regional expertise acquired over the years by the OSCE and its extensive network of field operations are foremost among the Organization's comparative advantages. A regional approach contributes to co-operation and builds confidence and security across the region concerned. Strengthened regional engagement will better position the OSCE as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, thereby contributing to global efforts in peace and security.

I encourage all OSCE executive structures:

- 6. To apply a cross-dimensional approach to the security sector, ensuring the inclusion of second- and third-dimension principles and commitments.** It is important to raise awareness on the contributions to SSG/R made through work in the second and third dimensions. Two examples of important SSG/R elements that fall into the human dimension are supporting ombuds institutions and ensuring security sector compliance with the rule of law. Moreover, second-dimension efforts in combating corruption in the security sector are essential to enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of the security sector. It is important to reinforce a cross-dimensional approach in co-operation with all departments and across the executive structures. In this context, the contributions of our institutions, such as the ODIHR, are of particular importance. To better facilitate regular exchange of best practices and to encourage closer co-operation among executive structures, I propose the creation of an OSCE-internal online knowledge platform, to be managed by the Conflict Prevention Centre;
- 7. To enhance current SSG/R capacities across the Organization.** To be able to adequately match the demand of participating States to support national reform processes, it is necessary to strengthen SSG/R capacities in all executive structures, while bearing in mind current limitations in resource allocation and expertise. This also means stepping up capacities to integrate a gender perspective into programmatic activities. While in the long term the institutionalization of SSG/R through the creation of an appropriate SSG/R structure would be desirable, committed and focused work by SSG/R focal points can address this deficit in the meantime;
- 8. To further capitalize on already existing expertise across the OSCE institutions, the field operations and the Parliamentary Assembly.** The Conflict Prevention Centre should explore the possibility of creating a roster of OSCE internal SSG/R experts to provide a standing technical capacity across the Organization, in order to give better support to participating States. Moreover, I encourage senior managers to include SSG/R in job descriptions where relevant and, consequently, in performance assessments;
- 9. To establish a practice of regular monitor and reporting.** Regular reporting on the implementation of SSG/R support to participating States in the field will contribute to a better understanding of the scope of the OSCE's work in the SSG/R field. I encourage heads of field missions to make use of their regular reports to the Permanent Council to showcase the good and important work that they are already doing in support of national SSG/R processes. I will continue the practice of regularly reviewing the implementation on the SSG/R Guidelines through the SSG/R Focal Points Network and I will provide regular reports on the progress we make;
- 10. To strengthen co-operation with partner organizations and ensure complementarity with other SSG/R-related international and regional initiatives.** With respect to leveraging partnerships – one of the priority reform areas within the “Fit for Purpose” agenda – it is of paramount importance to build on existing mechanisms for co-operation and co-ordination with international and regional organizations, including joint agreements and action plans. I also encourage efforts aimed at strengthening our partnerships with civil society organizations, in order to facilitate inclusive and transparent reform processes;
- 11. To support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN's “Sustaining Peace” agenda** by recognizing and further exploring the contribution of SSG/R in these contexts. With its comprehensive approach to security and its regional perspective, the OSCE can make an effective contribution to these global initiatives.

Conclusion

With the aim of contributing to the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship's priority of working towards a common understanding of SSG/R in the context of the OSCE, this report has provided an overview of the Organization's efforts in this field. The report is intended to provide food for thought as we seek to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the assistance we provide to our participating States, and to support them to the best of our ability in confronting the complexities of new security challenges. I remain convinced that an OSCE-wide approach to SSG/R that is strategic and coherent will support the development of the capacities needed to effectively respond to requests for SSG/R assistance from participating States and thereby to increase security and stability in the OSCE area and beyond.

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