

SEC.GAL/243/12/Corr.1
16 January 2013

ENGLISH only

Workshop on “Towards a Strategy for Reconciliation in the OSCE Area”

Key Issues and Recommendations

Vienna, 18 December 2012

The OSCE logo is displayed on a stylized, light blue and grey geometric background that resembles a folded ribbon or a series of overlapping planes. The logo itself consists of the letters 'OSCE' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, each letter contained within a dark blue square. The squares are arranged horizontally and slightly offset from each other.

OSCE

INTRODUCTION

The Workshop on “Towards a Strategy for Reconciliation in the OSCE Area”, held on 18 December 2012 in Vienna, brought together some 150 representatives of OSCE participating States, international and non-governmental organizations and academic institutions to explore the idea and practice of reconciliation and its use as a building block for a security community. Best practices and challenges inherent to reconciliation processes were also explored, drawing from past and present experiences.

The Workshop’s theme was identified by many OSCE participating States as meriting further inquiry, including during the ‘OSCE Security Days’, an initiative held by the OSCE Secretary General in June 2012 to enhance interaction with non-governmental organizations. Two other initiatives, the ‘Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative’ (EASI), and the ‘Initiative for the Development of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community’ (IDEAS), also noted in their final reports that reconciliation is imperative for overcoming the deficits of trust that exist in the OSCE area. In his opening statement at the Workshop, the OSCE Secretary General commented on this issue by underlining that “unless this deficit of trust is dealt with constructively, the OSCE as a genuine security community is likely to remain for the time a vision rather than a reality.”

A lack of trust between States is one of the key challenges to building a genuine Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. It is also crucial that mutual misperceptions, divisive memories and the inability to overcome historical legacies are addressed, as they continue to feed into the spiral of distrust. In particular, unresolved protracted conflicts in the OSCE area prevent States and their societies from breaking patterns of animosity.

In that regard, the OSCE Secretary General stressed in the opening of the Workshop the importance of reconciliation processes as these can only be successful if there is an acknowledgement of the “the instrumental role of deep-rooted grievances, misperceptions and distrust, as well as the power that historical legacies and divisive memories have in fuelling and sustaining tensions and ‘protracted’ animosity, even over generations.” Thus, reconciliation according to the OSCE Secretary General “holds the prospect of breaking the cycle of enmity by creating or ‘re-creating’ constructive political and societal relationships and making it possible to move forward.”

The three keynote speakers elaborated on some of the conceptual issues and the challenges of reconciliation processes which were also touched upon in the OSCE Secretary General’s opening address. In his keynote speech, Adam Daniel Rotfeld, the Polish Co-Chair of the Polish-Russian Group on Difficult Matters, referred to reconciliation as a “multi-dimensional process” that is “political, social and spiritual” involving many different actors, including civil society, non-governmental and confessional organizations, the media and schools as well as scholars, writers and artists. Anatoly Torkunov, the Russian Co-Chair of the Polish-Russian Group on Difficult Matters, and Rector of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations noted that “political leadership is one of the decisive factors in the process of rapprochement and reconciliation”. As a first step toward developing a strategy of reconciliation, he recommended that the OSCE identify best practices and “codify the mosaic of reconciliation practices all over Europe”. Henri Menudier, Professor for Political Science and German Studies at the University of Paris III – Sorbonne spoke on the topic of historical

reconciliation, outlining the Franco-German case and demonstrating how “traditional enemies became real friends”.

Even though panellists and interventions from the audience pointed to the complexities and difficulties of reconciliation processes, the Workshop’s focus on case studies made evident that reconciliation is not beyond the human reach. However, it is crucial to realize that reconciliation is a voluntary and gradual process that in many cases requires small steps first before long strides can be taken.

This Report will summarize some of the key issues and recommendations advanced during the Workshop. In addition to the opening statement by the OSCE Secretary General, and the three keynote addresses, the Workshop was organized around three panels, with a concluding statement delivered by Adam Kobieracki, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre of the OSCE Secretariat. The three panels explored the conceptual basis of reconciliation as a foundation for a security community; lessons learned and best practices from cases of historical reconciliation; and reconciliation efforts in concrete conflict settings, particularly in the OSCE area.

Key issues and recommendations reflected in this Report are drawn from several sources: the OSCE Secretary General’s opening address and the three keynote addresses; the contributions made by panellists and moderators; comments from the audience; and the closing statement. This Report was prepared by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre/Operations Service, which was also responsible for organizing the Workshop.

KEY ISSUES

Reconciliation as Process

- Reconciliation was seen as an on-going, non-linear process involving the creation or restoration of relationships on political and societal levels. It was underlined that reconciliation can take place between and within states and is based on notions of trust, equality, acceptance of differences, partnership, mutual or joint interests and positive perceptions of the other. Reconciliation allows for building bridges, between or within states and their societies. The multi-dimensionality of reconciliation was highlighted. Thus reconciliation can have political, social, economic, institutional, scientific, regional and international dimensions.
- Reconciliation processes can be entirely driven by pragmatic reasons, but they may also entail a moral component. This moral dimension of reconciliation was evident in those case studies where countries shared a long history of warfare and conflict or where victimization and perpetuation of crimes had reached high levels. The social-psychological dimension of reconciliation should also not be underestimated as enmity nurtured over prolonged periods of time or even over generations must be broken and replaced with positive attitudes, perceptions and beliefs.
- There was general agreement that one could not take a ‘one-size-fits all’ approach to reconciliation. Although there are a number of cases of successful reconciliation, no one model is applicable to all situations. Reconciliation processes should be seen as case-

specific, depending also on the history, the longevity and the dynamics of the preceding conflict. It was emphasized that in the context of protracted conflicts, reconciliation processes have different dynamics unlike those evident in cases of historical reconciliation. Moreover, case-specificity is also governed by the degree to which political and social relationships will have to be reconstructed.

- As to particular initiatives or preliminary steps in the reconciliation process, the question was posed as to whether a declaration of non-use of force could serve as a first step. Also the link between reconciliation and confidence-building measures received attention, including whether they form part of a whole spectrum of measures. It was pointed out that confidence-building measures could create a connection between the sides, allowing them to get to know each other and build some form of trust. Also, confidence-building measures made it possible to address complex issues.

Dealing with the Past

- There was common ground on the issue that reconciliation required an acknowledgment of the past and wrong-doings. Facing history together was crucial, and there were sufficient examples of how to do this, such as through historical textbook reform or the opening of archives. Establishing the truth for purposes of justice was seen as a complex problem. However, in some cases, a scientific methodology was extremely useful, in particular with regard to determining the facts, as in cases of mass violence and crimes against humanity. The use of oral history was also regarded as a valuable tool in the process of reconciliation; it could serve as a means toward building understanding for each other's history. Different cultural traditions in conveying and working through history would have to be respected in that regard.
- Deeply contested interpretations of the past, which often mark protracted conflicts, also pose a challenge to reconciliation processes. In such conflict situations, the “past is not simply the past” but continues to exist in the ‘present’, either because of the loss of family members, homes and property or other types of victimization. In this regard the ‘psychological legacy’ of prolonged violent conflict also needs to be taken into account.
- Discussions on the normative dimension of reconciliation processes centred on the issue of justice, and in particular on the question how justice could be achieved. In this context, the various instruments for obtaining justice were mentioned, including restorative justice, reparations and the use of tribunals. Also, guarantees of non-recurrence of violent events of the past were accentuated.
- It was recognized that the challenge was not only in dealing with the past but also how to overcome it. Regional initiatives were seen as instrumental in this regard, such as those developed in South Eastern Europe. The example of the ‘Regional Academy for Democracy’ was mentioned which brings together young and politically active actors from the region (e.g., young Members of Parliament; young leading politicians) to address common issues (e.g., justice; security sector reform). It was stressed that such regional initiatives must be given the widest possible recognition by the respective societies of the region but also by the international community.

Multiplicity of Levels and Actors

- The importance of reconciliation as a multi-faceted process was emphasized, involving multiple actors, institutions and levels of activity; if possible, all sectors of society should be included in reconciliation processes. There should also be a spectrum of activities – from sports to education to professional exchanges on all levels. Involving youth was particularly noteworthy. The role of women in reconciliation processes was also seen as essential.
- Governmental and societal institutions are instrumental in advancing reconciliation. Media must play a key role in reconciliation processes as it can assist in creating positive images and perceptions and address stereotypes. In this context, the establishment of common television channels and programmes was stressed. Making films about the conflict that divides sides was also seen as a way to promote dialogue, and as a first step toward dealing jointly with the past and encouraging civic initiatives to promote reconciliation.
- Also, non-governmental organizations are vital, in particular if on the political level little progress toward rapprochement is possible. In some cases, non-governmental actors had taken the first step toward reconciliation. The role that religious leaders play in processes of reconciliation was also underlined. Moreover, the support of political parties was necessary. Institutions were also perceived as important for overcoming setbacks as they would continue to ensure continuity in communication. The institutional framework of reconciliation, however, required that such institutions worked efficiently and enjoyed public confidence and trust; besides effectiveness, institutions involved in reconciliation processes needed to reflect openness and transparency.
- Concern was voiced about moving forward when only a minority on both sides feels comfortable with pursuing reconciliation. The question of how a majority of the population can be convinced to support reconciliation efforts was posed. Within this context it was suggested to explore precedents and draw out best practices. Also, the use of symbolic acts and Track II efforts were mentioned as important elements of reconciliation. Therefore, it was essential to ensure that the larger public has a role in the reconciliation process. Dissemination of information, such as through the media or by organizing workshops, could assist in that regard.
- Vision, leadership, risk taking and a sense of personal responsibility and commitment on the part of political leaders are crucial for advancing reconciliation processes. Reconciliation cannot happen if leaders lack the political will and fear the consequences of taking risks. Fundamental to reconciliation were also personal relations between leaders. The need for frank communication between leaders was seen as essential. Symbolic gestures on the part of political leaders were also important. Common to leaders who actively engaged in reconciliation was that they often had to overcome strong resistance within their own populations. However, preparing populations for peace was regarded as crucial to reconciliation processes.

Institutionalization

- Not only bilateral reconciliation processes deserve attention, but also how reconciliation within a regional context can be fostered. Thus the link between reconciliation and

integration must be looked at, as the two processes can be mutually reinforcing. There are several ‘good-enough’ examples of linking regional integration to reconciliation, including that of the European Union and the Council of Europe. Regional integration, in particular through creating regional organizations, can reinforce bilateral reconciliation processes. Also, regional integration contributes to the institutionalization of reconciliation practices, and ensures continuity in communication. The facilitation of reconciliation through integration, in particular by means of a regional organization, can also address problems associated with asymmetrical relations; in that case, regional organizations can provide a guarantee for equality of membership.

- Institutionalization of reconciliation was also perceived as fundamental. Cases of historical reconciliation, such as the Franco-German case, demonstrate that reconciliation became a process accepted over many generations through the development of bilateral and multi-lateral instruments of co-operation in areas of foreign affairs, defence, and education and youth (e.g., the Franco-German Brigade; the Eurocorps; the television channel ‘Arte’; the Franco-German University in Saarbrücken; the German-French Youth Office). Institutionalization can also be achieved by means of facilitating co-operation between associations, regions, municipalities, and towns (e.g. twinning of towns and regions; co-operation between border regions).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhancing the Role of the OSCE in Reconciliation

- It was acknowledged that reconciliation was a key to durable peace and that fostering reconciliation processes was important to advance toward building a genuine security community. Therefore, reconciliation should be incorporated into conflict resolution processes.
- The OSCE is already engaged in many activities that promote reconciliation. The work of OSCE institutions, field operations and units of the Secretariat in facilitating reconciliation was commended, including activities on regional, national and local levels and across all three dimensions of security. They should remain at the forefront of promoting reconciliation. In this context, it was recommended that the OSCE could, and should, do more with respect to the facilitation of reconciliation processes, in particular with regard to protracted conflicts. Programmatic activities could be enhanced accordingly, including in those areas that were identified as important, such as education and youth interaction. A more strategic approach to prioritize these areas and to mainstream reconciliation in relevant programmatic activities was recommended.
- A few practical suggestions were offered, including, that reconciliation efforts need to proceed across the three dimensions; therefore, reconciliation activities should not only be given consideration in the third – that is the human dimension – but also in the second dimension, to see how economic and environmental activities can become part of a broader reconciliation process. As to the human dimension, the role of ODIHR was highlighted and its contributions to reconciliation processes. In addition, the OSCE should enhance its dialogue on reconciliation with non-governmental organizations. It was recommended that reconciliation activities be discussed in the margins of the Human

Dimension Implementation Meetings. Also, the open-ended informal working group to be established in line with the Dublin Ministerial Council Decision on the Helsinki + 40 Process could take up the issue of reconciliation. Future Security Days could also revert to this issue, as appropriate.

Building on Lessons Learned and Best Practices

- The need to build on lessons learned and best practices was recommended. These could be collected in a handbook for future reference. It was clear from the case studies presented that there is already a rich tradition of reconciliation practices. On-going cases of reconciliation also hold the promise of drawing out general patterns. The unique experiences of participating States can also serve as guidance in OSCE efforts to foster reconciliation processes. In this context, the role of the 2012 OSCE Irish Chairmanship and its experience with the Northern Ireland peace process was underlined, in particular as this case served as a means to address the Transdniestrian Settlement Process by bringing civil society representatives from Chisinau and Tiraspol to Dublin. The objective was to focus on the involvement of civil society in creating a space for dialogue and for building relationships of trust between both sides.
- Lessons learned and best practices also reveal the following insights to reconciliation processes: The importance of multiple channels for dialogue at the governmental and political levels, including the involvement of religious leaders, where relevant. Priority should be given to include more women in reconciliation processes. Emphasis should rest on involving young people in reconciliation as such processes rely on generational change. Young people could be motivated within the OSCE framework to engage in artistic projects that reflect their experience with reconciliation or their expectations as to what it would be like to have ‘enemies turn into friends.’ Education, and educational reform, is instrumental to reconciliation and thus text book commissions and historical institutes could be created for purposes of dealing with past narratives.

Creating Institutional Frameworks

- Rooting reconciliation processes in institutional frameworks on the national, bilateral, and regional levels is crucial for the purpose of maintaining continuity. On the national level, the strengthening of the rule of law and democratic institutions as well as respect for human rights is a fundamental component in promoting reconciliation. Rule of law programmes must be directed toward reforming the justice system, a prerequisite to dealing with the past, in particular regarding war crimes.
- Regional co-operation should also be a crucial component of a reconciliation strategy. There are various levels on which this can proceed, including regional integration through the establishment of a regional organization, as in the case of the European Union. But regional co-operation can also be supported on less formal levels, in particular with the assistance of non-governmental organizations. The OSCE has already ample experience of facilitating regional co-operation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: ‘FOOD-FOR-THOUGHT’

The Workshop provided many insights into various types of reconciliation processes. It also brought attention to the protracted conflicts and the difficulties that await the OSCE in terms

of facilitating reconciliation processes. Among the questions for consideration within this context are: whether there is a role for reconciliation in the absence of a conflict settlement; how deeply contested interpretations of the past can be managed to get to issues such as 'truth' and 'justice'; how societies within the context of protracted conflicts can assert themselves to have a role in the reconciliation process, in particular through practical civic initiatives; and how political leadership can muster the vision and courage it takes to move in the direction of reconciliation.

There is a continued need to recognize the importance that reconciliation holds for achieving sustainable peace. In this regard, the collection of best practices on international, national and local levels remains an important task that the OSCE, in partnership with other actors, can pursue in support of its conflict resolution mandate.