



CHAIRMANSHIP'S CONFERENCE

Security Implications of Climate Change in the OSCE region

Bucharest, 5-6 October 2009

Background Note

Based on ever growing scientific evidence, the impact of climate change on security is increasingly being recognized by the international community. Climate change may trigger tensions between and within states, thus, increasing the risks to security. As a regional organization with a security focus, the OSCE has acknowledged that climate change represents a challenge. As follow-up, a more thorough analysis of the impact of climate change in the OSCE and the actions that the OSCE can undertake is needed. The OSCE actions are meant to be part of the global efforts in the area of climate change, as acknowledged by the Secretary General of the UN who asked the OSCE to contribute to the analysis about possible security implications of climate change as one of relevant regional organizations, in accordance with UNGA resolution *Climate change and its possible security implications*.

With this in mind, the Greek Chairmanship of the OSCE, the Romanian Government and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities are jointly organizing the Chairmanship Conference on Security Implications of Climate Change in the OSCE region.

The Conference aims at gathering experts and representatives of OSCE participating States, international organizations and institutions in order to discuss the ways climate change may impact security in the OSCE area. The conference aspires to foster dialogue, explore means of mutually beneficial action and thus contribute to intensify international co-operation.

The conference will explore how climate change and security are linked. Special attention will be given to the UN report on the possible security implications of climate change (to be presented at the 64th session of the General Assembly in September 2009).

Speakers and Panellists will provide an overview of potential threats to security in the OSCE region, and will discuss the relevance of the organization in dealing with the Security implications of Climate Change.

Representatives from international organizations will present the major threats and consequences of Climate Change, as well as the strategies that are devised to tackle them: On the basis of the analysis of phenomena such as water scarcity, desertification, food shortages, economic loss, or mass migration, it will be discussed how OSCE might address climate change by means of setting up scenarios and developing early warning mechanisms.

A session devoted to Energy and Climate Change will explore the benefits/risks around climate change policy and energy security such as increased energy security through diversification of types of energy, vulnerability of energy infrastructure to environmental change, etc.

The Conference will conclude by exploring the role for the OSCE in the UN dialogue on Climate Change and its security implications and ways to foster co-operation with other international organizations.

The OSCE and Climate Change

The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister Bakoyannis, stated during the OSCE's Greek Chairmanship Opening Speech on the 14th January 2009 that "Climate change constitutes the most serious long-term environmental threat to our region and beyond" and announced the start of a "multi-level dialogue on this issue, keeping in mind the need to avoid duplication of effort" and "underpin and empower the UN".

OSCE activities in the economic and environmental dimension are based on the 2003 Strategy Document (Maastricht Strategy) which calls for the Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCCEA) to contribute to OSCE early-warning and conflict-prevention activities by monitoring economic and environmental challenges and threats to security and stability in the OSCE region, in collaboration with relevant international organizations. The Maastricht strategy also encourages the OSCE participating States to ratify and implement existing international environmental legal instruments.

The 2007 Madrid Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Security recognizes that "climate change is a long-term challenge" and acknowledges that "the United Nations climate process is the appropriate forum for negotiating future global action on climate change, and the OSCE, as a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, has a complementary role to play within its mandate in addressing this challenge in its specific region".

Examples of OSCE activities dealing with Climate Change

At the request of the host country, field operations of the OSCE support different efforts to fulfil international commitments in regards to international conventions dealing with climate change. As an example, the OSCE Office in Minsk has trained Belarusian experts on carbon registries and is facilitating the elaboration of a methodology for the assessment of carbon emissions of key sectors. In Central Asia, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan supports a youth environmental movement that aims at increasing youth's knowledge on various environmental issues including climate change, and mobilizes young people to implement some environmentally friendly activities such as clean ups and tree planting.

Together with the OCCEA and the UNDP the OSCE centre in Astana organized a conference on "International carbon market: mechanisms and possibilities for participation" in October 2008. Participants discussed the mechanisms and opportunities to access carbon financing and overcome the barriers to developing dynamic carbon market and use of the Kyoto mechanisms in Kazakhstan.

One of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) assessments in Central Asia pays special attention to potential impacts of climate change. The assessment, focussed on the Amu-Darya

river basin, aims at developing a more efficient use of shared water resources that are increasingly under pressure by rising demands for electrical power generation and irrigation.

Climate Change and other international Organizations

Climate change and security are currently being addressed by the international community, notably the UN, which has adopted a resolution in May 2009 in the General Assembly requesting its UN Secretary General to submit a comprehensive report to the General Assembly at its 64th session on the possible security implications of climate change, based on the views of the Member States and relevant regional and international organizations. At the request of the UN, the OSCE has provided input to the report.

The European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy are currently preparing a roadmap for the implementation of the report on “Climate Change and International Security” presented in March 2008. The OSCE is one of the institutions to be consulted in the preparation of the report.