

**PROGRAMME OF THE AUSTRIAN OSCE
CHAIRMANSHIP FOR PRESENTATION
TO PARTICIPATING STATES**

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The OSCE remains the central forum for developing a security community in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area. As the OSCE Chairmanship in 2017, Austria has an opportunity to contribute to restoring stability and confidence throughout this region. In particular, Austria would like to address three central challenges to security and stability in the OSCE area, which threaten our common values:

- the military confrontations that have caused thousands of victims, displacement and destruction;
- the increasing threat to internal security through growing radicalization, particularly of young persons, and terrorism in its wake; and
- the increasing loss of confidence between States and also by citizens towards State institutions and organizations that are meant to safeguard peace and our values.

It is obvious that these are significant challenges, which will not be resolved quickly or easily. Nevertheless, as OSCE Chairmanship 2017, Austria will undertake all efforts to enable the OSCE to fully implement its mandate to strengthen comprehensive and co-operative security as well as security within the organization's 57 participating States, and to begin rebuilding trust and confidence in the OSCE area.

The conflicts and challenges that we are currently facing are international; they require international responses. The OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization, is the best place in Europe to begin rebuilding trust and resolving conflict. The OSCE's 57 participating States meet as equals; the OSCE offers all participants a platform for dialogue and exchange, even in the most difficult situations and conflicts.

The OSCE with its policy-making bodies and executive structures, especially its institutions and field operations, has a unique, comprehensive array of instruments at its disposal. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM), together with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, make a crucial contribution to ensuring that the values of the OSCE are felt by the people on the ground. It is the goal of the Austrian Chairmanship to enable these instruments to reach their fullest potential.



Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

PRIORITIES

The Austrian Chairmanship will respond to the identified threats and challenges by addressing the following measures as priorities:

1. Defusing armed conflicts

The Chairmanship will focus on measures to reduce the intensity of existing conflicts, by building trust between the parties to conflict, as well as pursue efforts on strengthening instruments for conflict prevention and resolution. The Chairmanship will support the ongoing conflict resolution mechanisms and processes, including through its special representatives for each of the conflicts. The safety and security of the affected populations must once again be at the forefront of all political initiatives to resolve the conflicts. We must do whatever it takes to prevent a further escalation of armed

confrontations. This is only achievable if we all work together and take an inclusive approach.

Regarding *the crisis in and around Ukraine*, the Chairmanship will support the work of the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine and the Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk, and participate actively in the Trilateral Contact Group. The continued work in the Normandy Format is also essential for working towards a political solution to the conflict. The Chairmanship will emphasize the importance of close co-ordination of ongoing efforts in the various formats.



The Austrian Chairmanship will also prioritise steps to resolve the protracted conflicts in the OSCE region, strengthening the existing negotiation formats – the Geneva International Discussions relating to Georgia, the Minsk Process concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the Transdniestrian Settlement Process.

We will also encourage the participation of women in these discussions and initiatives. Women's

inclusion is essential for the sustainability of efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflict. Peace processes can only be successful long-term when the voices, perspectives and needs of the entire population are taken into account.

Therefore, the Austrian Chairmanship will support efforts to increase the participation of wider layers of societies, in particular women and youth, in peace and security-related activities.

The political-military dimension is a major part of strengthening comprehensive and co-operative security in the OSCE area. Dialogue regarding military co-operation and transparency will continue, as a significant contribution to confidence- and security-building. A key priority will be the modernisation of the Vienna Document and establishment of a comprehensive and structured dialogue on conventional arms control. The Austrian Chairmanship will encourage better implementation of the Code of Conduct and undertake broader security sector governance and reform. Together with other participating and Partner States, the Chairmanship will focus on establishing a political dialogue for reform and good governance in the security sector. Austria will also promote direct military contacts and the transfer of expertise between the participating States.

2. Fighting radicalisation and violent extremism

The primary focus of Austria's efforts in 2017 to promote security within the participating States will be on preventing and combatting radicalisation and extremism, with particular attention to youth. We must work together to identify and address root causes and triggers for radicalisation. The first step is to listen attentively to youth, who are an essential element in this effort. Four regional workshops will be held in Western Europe, the Black Sea region, Central Asia and the Western Balkans on the topic of youth radicalisation. Youth will participate and help develop innovative approaches to dealing with this problem. These ideas will give us a sound basis for further work within the organization. The Chairmanship also plans to implement a project in 2017 to empower youth representatives to address radicalisation in their societies.

The recent wave of migrants has brought new challenges for many OSCE participating States. It is clear that countries need assistance in reducing migratory flows and in managing the current situation. The OSCE, through its commitments and tangible assistance projects, plays a very positive, if indirect, role in addressing the root causes of migration in the participating States. The Chairmanship will support OSCE efforts to help States cope with migration-related challenges: facilitating dialogue on this subject, assisting in co-ordinating States' responses and helping them respond effectively to the situation. Through its field operations, particularly in the Western Balkans, the OSCE offers tangible assistance in co-ordinating border management and security and in protecting human rights. The OSCE's work on

tolerance and non-discrimination will also assist States in integrating those migrants who remain, so as to ensure they become contributing members of our societies.

We will build on the excellent work of previous chairmanships in order to strengthen our societies' confidence in a secure and stable future. In this regard, the Chairmanship will prioritize good governance, sustainable economic connectivity and a "green" economy. We will emphasize establishing business partnerships, encouraging economic inclusion (also as a measure to discourage radicalisation), fighting corruption, reducing environmental risks and fostering energy security through promotion of renewable energy sources.

In the human dimension, the effective implementation of the broad range of OSCE commitments for human rights, democracy and the rule of law is a key factor in fostering long-term stability and security. It is a fundamental part of the organization's focus and activities. The Austrian Chairmanship will emphasize topics of critical importance to the internal stability of States, including the rule of law, freedom of media and expression, freedom of religion or belief and tolerance and non-discrimination.

In addition, equal rights and opportunities for women and men are an important prerequisite for comprehensive security, stability and prosperity. Austria will therefore mainstream a gender perspective into all of its Chairmanship efforts. In order to take into account progress made thus far and to identify gaps in implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on gender equality, Austria plans to hold a Gender Equality Review Conference in July.



The Chairmanship's work in the political-military dimension will also support strengthening security within States, by focusing on the destruction or safer storage of surplus conventional ammunition. These measures will have a direct, positive impact on the security of local populations.

3. Building trust

Developments over the past few years have seriously damaged trust and confidence among States as well as within States. The Austrian Chairmanship will support all measures that can contribute positively to restoring this trust and confidence.

The economic and environmental dimension provides an excellent basis for mutually beneficial cooperation among the participating States. Although OSCE documents, including the Astana Declaration of 2010, have called for the creation of a common economic space between Vancouver and Vladivostok, we have recently seen the opposite development: increasing economic fragmentation and the use of trade as a political instrument.

The concept of economic connectivity has set us on the path to address these increasing divisions. New business partnerships can strengthen our civil societies, while economic connectivity can serve as a confidence-building measure to tangibly improve the lives of people living in conflict zones.

Economic and environmental dimension meetings, including a business forum in January 2017, will bring together experts from governments and the scientific and business communities across the OSCE area. Together, we want to discuss economic integration, removal of barriers to trade and investment, improvement of border and transport administration, women in entrepreneurship and most importantly job and business creation.

The potential of our organisation to mitigate environmental challenges, in particular climate change, can also be better used. "Greening the economy" will therefore be our motto to support the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals by all participating States and the OSCE executive structures. We will focus on environmental issues such as renewable energy, good governance and participation in environmental policy making and mitigating climate change.

In the field of cybersecurity, Austria intends to further develop confidence- and security-building measures to strengthen implementation of existing agreements. This includes organisation of a conference on critical infrastructure and a workshop of Cyber Security experts with a view to strengthening co-operation in case of cyber emergencies and attacks.

The organization's work in the human dimension is not only a critical element in ensuring security within the participating States, but also in rebuilding trust between them. The Chairmanship will nurture dialogue, focusing on specific areas of added value. We will not only facilitate constructive dialogue on a broad range of topics pertaining to human rights and democracy, with the aim of strengthening common interest in our region, but also work closely with the OSCE structures on practical steps toward enhancing the effectiveness of their existing activities in these areas. This will include crucial outreach to civil society, NGOs and the media.

In the fight against trafficking in human beings, Austria will support activities regarding a range of elements including migration, foreign terrorist fighters and radicalisation. A conference will be held in October in honour of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons.

An important element in addressing common threats and challenges lies in the partnerships the organization has developed with States in Asia and in the Mediterranean. Austria will build on these partnerships as they have evolved positively in recent years, and work towards their further development.

STRENGTHENING THE ORGANIZATION

Together with the Troika partners Germany and Italy and as reflected in the "Hamburg Declaration: A Strong OSCE for a Secure Europe", the Chairmanship firmly believes that the OSCE can play a key role in addressing and resolving security concerns in its area; it is, indeed, indispensable in this regard. The Chairmanship will therefore undertake all efforts to ensure the organization's capacity and strength to deal with all concerns put to it by the participating States:

1. Continue engagement to provide the OSCE with a legal personality

The organization's entities operate under a broad variety of legal statuses, resulting in a patchwork of responsibilities, privileges and immunities – and many gaps, which hamper the OSCE's ability to implement its mandate. The Austrian Chairmanship will continue the efforts of previous Chairs to achieve an overarching agreement granting the organization legal personality. It will also take practical steps to reinforce the OSCE's legal personality, to the extent possible.

2. Support the organisation's autonomous institutions and field operations

Austria believes that the OSCE's autonomous institutions and field operations make a crucial contribution to ensuring that the values of the OSCE are felt by the people on the ground. It is the goal of the Austrian Chairmanship to enable these instruments to reach their fullest potential. Austria will work to ensure stronger engagement by all participating States for the instruments created by them and their operational capacities, as well as to work towards longer planning horizons and stronger evaluation tools.

3. Strengthen the organization's resource base:

Austria will act as an honest broker, with the goal of maintaining a level of resources that allows the organization to be strong and competitive, capable of recruiting the best personnel available, and able to effectively implement its mandate.

OUTLOOK

Austria's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2017 will have to address key security challenges facing Europe, including violent conflicts, radicalisation and a crisis of confidence. We will make our contribution to enable the OSCE to fully implement its mandate to strengthen comprehensive and co-operative security as well as security within the organization's 57 participating States, and to begin rebuilding trust and confidence in the OSCE area.



A key element of the Austrian approach to the Chairmanship is the emphasis on dialogue. Throughout the Chairmanship, Austria will provide opportunities for experts and diplomats, activists and stakeholders to come together to discuss perceptions and develop common solutions.

The work of the Chairmanship is not to be seen in isolation, but is in continuity and co-operation with previous and subsequent Chairmanships. Overall, it is designed to preserve the enduring value of the organization. Austria will continue its traditional role as a bridge-builder during its Chairmanship and will act as an honest broker, open to and encouraging constructive dialogue. For this, we hope for the active support of all participating States.



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