

'OSCE seeks a security model for the 21st century that includes Russia' from El País (4 December 1996)

Caption: On 4 December 1996, following the Lisbon Summit of OSCE participating states, the Spanish daily newspaper El País considers the Summit's achievements, enshrined in the adoption, the previous day, of the Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century.

Source: El País. 04.12.1996. Madrid. "La OSCE busca un modelo de seguridad para el siglo XXI que incluya a Rusia", auteur:Larraya, José Miguel; García, Javier.

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OSCE seeks a security model for the 21st century that includes Russia

Summit succeeds on disarmament and coexistence with Moscow

José Miguel Larraya/Javier García — Lisbon

The Lisbon Summit of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was a victory for what a Western diplomat calls 'sensible realism'. The United States and the EU, the two powers in this Euro-Atlantic forum, came up with a declaration on a European security model for the 21st century that does not offend Russia, the power in decline. The meeting succeeded in producing a mandate to update the conventional forces limitation treaty and in organising coexistence with Russia.

The Declaration on a Security Model for Europe for the 21st Century, which will be known as the Lisbon Declaration, gives consideration to the idea of a Charter for the Security of Europe providing a suitable legal basis for involving all the countries of the continent. The proposal was made by France as moral compensation for Russia, which is unable to prevent NATO's enlargement to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. 'It is important that Russia should feel secure so that it can contribute to security in Europe,' said Spain's Foreign Minister, Abel Matutes, who was 'satisfied' with the summit's concluding document, which might have been blocked by the conflicts in the Caucasus on the fringe of the old Russian empire.

Updating the treaty on the limitation of conventional forces, which is the meeting's main success, will also help to bolster the military balance in Central and Eastern Europe following the disintegration of the Soviet Union into various independent states.

A new figure

The OSCE is the successor to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which provided a channel for political exchange between the two blocs in the Cold War era. In accordance with a German proposal likely to be approved at next year's meeting of foreign ministers in Copenhagen, it will soon have a new figure: the Representative on Freedom of the Media. His task will be to boost freedom of the media in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, an essential requirement for the defence of human rights embodied in the Helsinki Final Act, which is the cornerstone of the OSCE edifice. With a membership of 53 European states (that of the Republic of Yugoslavia having been suspended because of the conflict in Bosnia) plus the United States and Canada, the OSCE has turned in recent years to conflict resolution in territories within the former socialist bloc, mainly the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

The Lisbon Declaration provides specific support for the Dayton Accords, which put an end to the war in the former Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and confirms the mandate to monitor the local elections to be held there next year. It also looks forward to speedy renewal of the OSCE's mission in Kosovo, Sandzak and Vojvodina.

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