


# Origin and development of the CSCE/OSCE

**Source:** On the frontlines of peace - OSCE in action- Vienna: OSCE [Prod.], 2005. OSCE, Vienna. - VIDEO (00:04:59, Couleur, Son original).  
OSCE Press and Public Information Section, Kaerntner Ring 5-7, 1010 Vienna, Austria.

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**Last updated:** 04/07/2016



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[Commentator] This story begins more than 30 years ago, when the West and the Communist bloc, mindful that one mistake or misunderstanding could spark a war that all would lose, started talking.

[Suleyman Demirel] The both sides had seen that the world cannot go this way: one Communist bloc, one democratic bloc, ready for war, ready for to finish each other, ready for to finish the war.

[Commentator] Suleyman Demirel, then Turkish Prime Minister, took part in the talks and, in 1975, was one of 35 leaders to sign the Helsinki Accord.

[Suleyman Demirel] What we thought, I think, we are serving a great purpose — that was my feeling; the elimination of a third war between the Soviet Union and the Western countries. It was a genius.

[Commentator] Helsinki did not dispel the deep distrust. But, for 20 years, the rivals kept on talking in the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe — CSCE. To ease each other's fears, they took steps like inviting each other to witness their war games. But there was another section, about human rights. It meant that if regimes crack down on opponents and dissidents, other countries could no longer be told it was none of their business. Once a Hungarian dissident, Miklos Haraszti is now the OSCE's Media Freedom Representative.

[Miklos Haraszti] The Human rights 'basket' of it gave a sudden and unexpected legal basis for human rights oriented opposition movements.

[Commentator] Little could they know then how powerful that would be. In 1989, the seemingly eternal Communist empire collapsed, but the world would not live happily ever after, as bitter fighting marked the break up of Yugoslavia and even less unfortunate ex Communist countries found it hard to adjust. It was clear something more had to be done — and soon.

Thus, in 1995, the CSCE Conference became the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe — OSCE, with a comprehensive approach to security, recognising that peace is not just the absence of war.

[Jan Kubis] Indeed, we learned on own experience that you cannot simply take one part of one element — influence, insecurity — without taking account of other elements. You cannot speak about combating terrorism if you neglect human rights. And you cannot speak about human rights if you don't take into account economic development, social development.

[Commentator] Today, with 55 participating States, the OSCE has been focusing on hundreds of threats to peace, some of which you probably never heard of, precisely because the OSCE succeeded. At Vienna headquarters and elsewhere, talks are still important; forums and frameworks for avoiding and resolving conflicts, including vigorous debate about what the OSCE should be doing.

[Igor Ivanov] We must not allow our organisation to be turned into an instrument of certain individual states, or group of states. The OSCE can only be effective if account is taken of the interest of all the state belonging to the organisation.

[Commentator] But there's more to the OSCE than that.

[Colin Powell] Much more in sending teams out across the Euro Atlantic region to assist with elections, to assist with finding resolution to issues, to represent people with respect to their human rights and to help nations find their way to a better life for their people.