

Other forms of participation in the CSCE/OSCE

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Other forms of participation in the CSCE/OSCE

Observer States

Pursuant to Paragraph 54 of the Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations (FRHC), a European State may, if it so wishes, attend the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe as an observer. In that event, its representatives may attend all stages of the Conference and of its working bodies but may not participate in the taking of decisions.

This was what happened in the case of Albania (a country which, since the creation of the CSCE, had deliberately held itself aloof from the process), from June 1990 until it was admitted as a participating State in June 1991. Slovenia and Croatia also secured observer status, albeit briefly, from January 1992 until their admission in March of the same year. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia also enjoyed observer status from April 1993 to October 1995.

Unofficial guests

From June 1990 until August 1991, because the USSR was opposed to the Baltic States' attending CSCE meetings as observers, the representatives of those countries were invited in turn by a group of participating States, in particular Scandinavian States, to attend several meetings as unofficial guests of their own national delegations.

Partner 'non-participating' States

Pursuant to paragraph 56 of the FRHC, the Conference and its working bodies must take note of the opinions of **non-participating States** regarding the various items on the agenda.

This provision is aimed, in principle, at countries in the regions bordering Europe and, in particular, at the **Mediterranean States** which had expressed an interest in making their opinions known to the Conference. Originally this status had been granted, within the CSCE, to six States (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Israel), then to eight (the first six plus Lebanon and Libya), so that they could make oral or written 'contributions' at meetings concerning cooperation in the Mediterranean region, an aspect which forms part of the second basket. In March 1994, the list of non-participating Mediterranean States (NPMS) approved by the CSCE was reduced to five (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia) so as to exclude those States which were suspected of terrorism (Syria, Lebanon and Libya). In December 1994, an informal Contact Group for Mediterranean States was set up as part of the CSCE Permanent Committee. In late 1995, the OSCE changed the name of the NPMSs to 'Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation' (MPCs). There are now six of them, following the inclusion of Jordan.

On the basis of the same provision, the OSCE has maintained a special relationship with Japan since 1992. Unlike the Mediterranean States, which are invited to attend certain meetings on an ad hoc basis, Japan has a standing invitation to attend all meetings of the OSCE. South Korea subsequently showed an interest in being associated, like Japan, with the CSCE and, as a result, has been receiving, since 1994, ad hoc invitations to attend meetings concerned with areas in which it has a particular interest. Like the Mediterranean States, Japan and South Korea have enjoyed 'Partner for Cooperation' status since December 1995. More recently, the same status has also been granted to three other Asian partners: Thailand in 2000, Afghanistan in 2003 and Mongolia in 2004.

Partner international organisations

Paragraph 58 of the FRHC made provision for the Conference's working bodies to consult appropriate international organisations on the subject of the various agenda items. Moreover, under Paragraph 59 of the FRHC, the Secretary-General of the United Nations was invited to attend the inaugural session of the CSCE as guest of honour.

Initially, provision was made only for relations with United Nations organisations, but, when Stage II of the CSCE started, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) began to make contributions. Later, on the basis of the Helsinki Final Act, other UN bodies began to contribute as well, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

The UN Secretary-General was invited as guest of honour to attend both the inaugural meeting and the closing summit of the CSCE, and it has become standard practice for this official to be invited to subsequent follow-up meetings and future summits.

The links with the United Nations system preserve the UN's role as a universal organisation, emphasising the participating States' commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and avoiding duplication of effort. In addition, during the Cold War, they allowed Western countries to oppose Soviet attempts to institutionalise the CSCE. In 1992, at the Helsinki Summit, the CSCE declared itself to be a 'regional arrangement' within the meaning of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, thereby making the CSCE an important link between security in Europe and security in the world as a whole. This declaration also enabled the CSCE to develop its mechanisms for conflict prevention and crisis management and also, in the case of disputes and in exceptional circumstances, to envisage referring matters to the UN Security Council on the basis of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In 1993, a framework cooperation and coordination agreement was signed between the CSCE and the UN Secretariat. Since then, the OSCE and the UN have coordinated their activities in the three areas of *peacemaking* (providing 'good offices' between the parties in dispute), *peacekeeping* (ensuring that peace is maintained) and *peace-building* (consolidating democratic structures).

After the fall of Communism, the CSCE/OSCE also established links with European and transatlantic regional organisations, particularly the Council of Europe, the European Union (EU), Western European Union (WEU) and NATO, which had been opposed during the Cold War by the countries of Eastern Europe as being Western organisations, and also with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). During the Cold War, the European Communities and NATO acted as implicit negotiating poles within the CSCE, and their Member States coordinated their positions before the various meetings. In fact, it was actually against the background of their preparations for the Conference that the EC Member States established European Political Cooperation (EPC). The nine Member States had agreed to defend a single viewpoint at the CSCE in the event of problems arising which fell within the sphere of responsibility of the Communities. For this purpose, the Political Committee of the EC Member States created a subcommittee, to be responsible for studying the political aspects of preparations for the CSCE, as well as an ad hoc working party which included the Commission, which studied the economic aspects of the CSCE. Moreover, in order to ensure harmony in defining the viewpoints of the Communities and NATO, those EC Member States which were also Members of NATO (that is, all except Ireland) arranged to be represented at the meetings of the EC Political Committee by the members of their national delegations to the North Atlantic Council who were responsible for problems involving the CSCE. Ireland's point of view was taken into consideration in the 'Community caucus' before consultations with the 'Atlantic caucus'. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the European and transatlantic organisations have been invited to make contributions at any OSCE meeting in which they have an interest. Moreover, the EC/EU, finally recognised internationally by the countries of Eastern Europe, now has a separate delegation at meetings of the OSCE, which is allocated to the participating State which holds the six-monthly Council Presidency.

Cooperation has proved to be especially intense with the Council of Europe on issues involving the human dimension and with the European Union on issues concerning crisis management, particularly since the conflict in Yugoslavia. It is interesting to note that the OSCE is responsible for the assessment and monitoring of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which was adopted on the initiative of the EU by EU Member States and by Members of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.