

Until now, the CSCE has functioned on an intermittent basis. It has lacked the institutional framework now required for effective and ongoing co-operation and confidence-building. If the CSCE is to become the preferred forum for comprehensive discussions in the political, economic, security and human dimensions, it must develop the tools to perform those tasks.

Canada believes that continuing political direction from the highest level is required on a regular and ongoing basis if the CSCE is to realize its full potential. Canada proposes that the CSCE should meet annually at the level of Foreign Ministers and bi-annually at the level of Heads of Government. This political body could serve as the beginnings of a Council for European Co-operation, a future, permanent forum for dialogue on pan-European issues.

The CSCE should develop a forum to reflect the increasingly democratic character of its membership. Therefore, we also propose the establishment of a CSCE Assembly where parliamentary delegations from member states would meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of common concern.

In the security area, the CSCE will have a role in mandating a further round of conventional forces reduction talks. These talks should be conducted among all 35 members of the CSCE, rather than solely the members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

The CSCE should also increase its role in verification and confidence-building. Here, I have in mind a CSCE Verification Agency which would facilitate and co-ordinate verification and confidence-building activities mandated by the negotiations on conventional force reductions and confidence- and security-building measures. In addition, there is a potentially valuable role to be played by the CSCE in crisis prevention and conflict resolution. This could involve the creation of a mechanism whereby panels could be established to facilitate dialogue if a crisis develops involving any participating state and to conduct fact-finding investigations if required. This mechanism could recommend a strategy to resolve the crises - whether it be mediation, arbitration or even peacekeeping. If the crisis develops into conflict, the CSCE could initiate mediation activities. These activities could be supported by a permanent Institute for the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes which would provide expertise for crisis prevention and conflict resolution activities.

Beyond the security field, the CSCE should build upon the other principles and undertakings contained in the Helsinki agreements. An early opportunity is provided by the Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension. The essential structures of democracy should become a common commitment of CSCE members, including the right to free elections and the rule of law. Pluralism should also be legitimized through the CSCE process, as should the rights of minorities, freedom of religion and a prohibition on hate propaganda.