

Regarding the broader issue of dialogue, the agenda is less clear. Although the Istanbul Summit Declaration reiterates the need for the FSC to address "in greater depth" the security concerns of participating states, no specific issues have been targeted. Furthermore, while Istanbul strengthens the capacities of the Permanent Council – providing it with a Preparatory Committee and tasking it with responsibility for instituting the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe – there were no such improvements identified for FSC.¹⁹

Switzerland, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands are seeking to enhance security dialogue within the FSC, and make the venue flexible enough to respond to emerging challenges. Furthermore, these states would like to see the OSCE's roles in security co-operation, conflict prevention and crisis management more integrated. Under this formulation, possible agenda items for continuing dialogue in the FSC might include: the evolution of roles and structures of armed forces; the implications of a changed threat assessment; the development of joint defence doctrines; and co-operation in times of crisis.

On the operational side, some OSCE delegations have suggested refocusing and restructuring the FSC's work. One idea is for the FSC to enhance its ties with the OSCE's political bodies, such as the PC or the Chairman-in-Office, as well as with the organisation's official partners, such as the adjacent states in the Mediterranean. Another proposal involves reshaping the FSC's agenda around sub-regional issues. But in all such suggestions, one challenge persists: how to ensure that the FSC does not become a "subcommittee" of the Permanent Council. It is this latter body which has been the driving force behind the OSCE's most dramatic development in the 1990s, namely the establishment of over 20 field operations across Europe.²⁰ As long as this high-profile Permanent Council activity continues, it may be difficult to focus the reform agenda of the OSCE on the more intangible issue of security dialogue in the FSC.

VII. The Changing Context of European Security

Consideration of the role of FSC presumes an understanding of the evolution of the context of European security since 1990. What are the most important challenges to European security at the beginning of the 21st Century? Perhaps most striking in this context is the gradually diminishing significance of the inter-state dimension of security and the rising salience of substate and transnational issues. From the perspective of the FSC, this is a matter of some concern, since, as is clear from the above, it has focused largely on inter-state **military** questions in its efforts to stimulate a constructive security dialogue and to build confidence among OSCE members. At best, it might be suggested that the decreasing salience of "traditional" security issues is a measure of the success of the FSC and associated OSCE efforts to resolve them. At worst, it might suggest the growing irrelevance of the traditional mandate of the FSC in dealing with the security challenges of Europe

¹⁹ More recently, the adjustments to the framework of working groups supporting the FSC suggests that some progress is being made here.

²⁰ These field operations have been established in the following countries and regions: Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Estonia, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Latvia, Macedonia, Croatia, Tajikistan, and Chechnya (Russia).