

Peace and Stability in Europe

The Security Architecture of Europe

Europe's security needs have changed fundamentally since the end of the Cold War and continue to evolve. This has created a need to ensure that Europe's security-building institutions continue to enhance security throughout the continent, avoid duplication and overlap in doing so, and contribute to the resolution of security problems elsewhere.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are defining new roles for themselves within the "security architecture" of Europe. The common goals of these organizations are to broaden the area of stability, complement each other's efforts, and build a security framework for the entire region. To accomplish this, the three organizations must define their own mandates, determine the security-enhancing activities they are best suited for, and develop flexible mechanisms that can adapt to Europe's evolving security needs.

Role of the OSCE in the Former Yugoslavia

The 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement called on the OSCE to take action in the areas of elections, human rights, and regional stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specifically the OSCE is required to design and implement a program for carrying out elections; monitor the human rights situation and appoint a human rights ombudsman; and set up negotiations on arms control and confidence building, and monitor compliance with adopted measures.

Elections

The OSCE was successful in preparing and delivering the September 1996 elections, which marked the beginning of a transitional period and was an essential first step in establishing a central government for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Human Rights

The OSCE focuses on promoting civil society, including democratization; and promoting the rule of law, as well as fundamental rights and freedoms. Through more than 20 regional and local offices, the OSCE monitors the human rights