

New European Security Forum

At a meeting in Helsinki on July 9 and 10, leaders of the 52 states participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) decided to establish a new Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC). The Forum's objectives include:

- to strengthen security and stability through the negotiation of concrete measures aimed at keeping, or achieving, levels of armed forces to a minimum commensurate with common or individual legitimate security needs within Europe and beyond;
- to address the question of harmonization of obligations agreed among participating states under the various existing instruments concerning arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building; and
- to negotiate new stabilizing measures in respect of military forces, and new confidence- and security-building measures designed to ensure greater transparency in the military field.

The Forum opened in Vienna on September 22. It replaces both the Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the CSCE Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-building Measures (CSBMs). Participating states have already begun discussions on cooperation in non-proliferation and arms transfers, a code of conduct in the field of security, extension of existing security obligations to all European states, a global exchange of military information, and a common review of defence planning.

As a priority, Canada is working within the FSC to encourage wider and more effective adherence to the objectives of existing multilateral non-proliferation regimes, and to achieve greater transparency in arms transfers.

The full potential of the CSCE process as an educational mechanism and forum for dialogue involving the newer CSCE states has not yet been met due to the inability of many such states to attend the FSC on a permanent basis.

CSCE: A Comprehensive Approach to Security

The following are excerpts from the address by Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) summit in Helsinki, Finland on July 9, 1992.

We all have preconceived notions about what we can and should do in the CSCE. There are traditions, positions and a diplomatic language that have their own mystique and philosophy — and rigidity. But publics everywhere are demanding more from multilateral institutions: more action, more decisiveness, more leadership. That is why we have a special responsibility to make sure the CSCE works.

In the past, we have dedicated ourselves to the promotion of what I would call certain basic propositions: the right of people to freedom of thought, conscience, travel, expression, religion, human contacts and things that we really believe in. Back in 1975, the mere fact that we, as so-called ideological adversaries, could sit at a common table and reach agreement on some issues was a security-giving exercise in itself.

Our world has become more complex and so have our security needs. We now have a CSCE community where, ostensibly, democratic pluralism, human rights and the rule of law are accepted as our common foundation. Our task now is to entrench our CSCE commitments and take steps to implement them, promote them and protect them. Then and only then will we have meaningful security. In other words, we have to mean what we say, and as members of this organization we are going to hold each other to it...

Ensuring the equal treatment of all citizens, whatever their ethnic or religious origin, must be the first task of all governments. The time for clever arguments in this forum has passed. The minority issue in Europe is not a question of definition; it is a question of basic human rights and, in many cases, basic human survival. Our CSCE commitments in this regard are clear. The time has come to hold governments to these commitments — in bilateral relations and multilateral programs. Otherwise, Canada's cooperation with any offending country will be affected...

There is some useful machinery in the CSCE — the Human Dimension Mechanism and the new High Commissioner on National Minorities. We can take action without consensus and we can send missions to fact-find and to expose violations. We have to continue to strengthen the machinery and to use it effectively. Countries that are concerned about their minorities outside their borders must seek recourse through these types of mechanisms.



Canadian inspectors carrying out a CFE baseline inspection in Zary, Poland in October. See article on next page.