

formal diplomatic process, this might diminish the sensitivity of member states to their discussion. It deserves mention that the Canadian experience (i.e. the National Forum process) may have some utility in the design of such a broadened dialogue. The products of such meetings could then be fed back up to Working Group B and (potentially) to the FSC itself.

The obvious potential weaknesses of such an approach are:

1. the broadening of the agenda in this fashion risks loss of focus within the FSC and arguably the targeted focus of the Forum on a small range of specific issues has been one of its comparative advantages.
2. the broader agenda touches more directly on very sensitive and potentially controversial questions, which may prevent agreement among participants on expanding the agenda.
3. it may be that other major multilateral institutions with security roles may not desire that a unit of the OSCE become a forum for discussion of inter-institutional divisions of labour and broader questions of institutional architecture.

## **X. Conclusion**

The FSC has been a comparatively effective forum for the development of common OSCE perspectives on the inter-state and political/military dimensions of security. However, many of its original tasks have been essentially completed. Moreover, the security agenda has moved on, with non-traditional security issues gaining growing prominence.

This raises the question whether the forum can (or should) survive in its current form, and, by extension, whether its dialogue should be reoriented towards new tasks in areas more relevant to the central security concerns of OSCE states. It is worth recalling that the FSC was founded partly on the basis of the idea that dialogue in and of itself is a good thing, independently of its results. The FSC - as a universal, relatively uncontroversial and low profile unit within the Euro-Atlantic security - might be a good venue for a dialogue on these issues to develop. In this respect, the third option seems preferable, all other things being equal.

However, the obstacles to this development of the Forum are considerable. There seems to be little prospect that state members would embrace the notion of a wide-ranging dialogue on sensitive security issues in this venue. If this is so, then the case for closing the Forum down and transferring its core traditional functions elsewhere within the OSCE system appears compelling.