

situation, and it uncovers and address abuses. The OSCE's mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina also includes supporting the work of the human rights ombudsman.

Stability

Negotiations on arms control and confidence building were conducted during the first half of 1996 and led to a series of measures. Compliance with these is crucial to establishing a stable and transparent balance of military forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The OSCE conducts on-site inspections to verify information about military equipment holdings, and it provides experts in arms-control verification to train various parties to carry out inspections on their own.

Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

In effect since November 1992, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) is one of the most far-reaching disarmament agreements ever concluded. It defines and sets limits on specified categories of military equipment and on the strength of conventional armed forces personnel in the territory of each of the 30 European signatory states, from the Atlantic coast to the Ural Mountains. Compliance is ensured through inspection and exchange of information.

Implementation of the treaty has resulted in dramatic reductions in the numbers of armed forces and armaments throughout the targeted region. Current overall holdings are substantially lower than the treaty limits. The increased transparency in military relations has brought greater predictability and confidence in security relations.

A treaty review conference held in Vienna in May 1996 reaffirmed the fundamental role of the treaty as a cornerstone of European security. The signatory states committed themselves to make the treaty more effective and resolved to continue the arms control process. A progress report will be considered at the Lisbon Summit.

The Human Dimension

From the onset of the Helsinki process in the early 1970s, Western democracies have considered that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are essential to long-term peace and stability, progress, and prosperity throughout Europe.