

VIII. The Evolving Institutional Context of European and Euro-Atlantic Security

Institutional Asymmetries

At this point, it is appropriate to turn to several aspects of institutional "architecture" that bear upon the role of the OSCE and that of the FSC within it. First, and reflecting the point just made, if one looks at the OSCE space as a whole, it is striking how institutionally dense the West is and how institutionally deficient the East is. This is being addressed to some extent in Central Europe through processes of enlargement, and in south-eastern Europe through such instruments as the Stability Pact.

However, it is improbable that this process will proceed substantially into the former Soviet Union for the foreseeable future, with the possible exception of the Baltic states. The institutional deficit is both a product and producer of instability. This instability in turn may engender many of the more immediate challenges discussed above. The deficit may grow increasingly serious if and when Russia begins to recover in economic and security terms. One problem here is the lack of a widely accepted vision of institutional architecture, and the partly consequent problem of institutional rivalry. The result is an incrementalism that contributes to the alienation of Russia while doing little to address the security problems of the other newly independent states.

The OSCE is perhaps the only regional organization with direct security responsibilities that is well-placed to address this deficit, since it is the only universal organization in the Euro-Atlantic space and since, unlike the EAPC, the OSCE is not associated with Cold War Alliance structures viewed with suspicion by the Russians and some others. Its universality contributes to its perceived impartiality. However, for it to be able to fill this gap, two necessary conditions would have to be fulfilled:

1. the leading role of the organization in this area would have to be more explicitly recognized; and
2. the organization would have to be provided with resources sufficient to assume this role.

There is little indication that either of these conditions is likely to be fulfilled.

The issue of institutional empowerment brings us to a second broad question - the division of security responsibilities shared by regional and universal organizations in the OSCE space and how these are evolving. From the perspective of OSCE roles in the area of security broadly defined, three phenomena are significant. The first is the growing role of the United Nations in Europe. Prior to 1991, the UN security role in the European space was negligible. The 1990s witnessed a dramatic evolution, not least because of the unpreparedness of European institutions (and the UN) to cope with post-Cold War security problems. In the first place, the UN has taken on direct mediation responsibilities in a number of European conflicts (the former Yugoslavia, Georgia [Abkhazia], and Tajikistan). This has been combined with observation of cease-fires (e.g. UNOMIG in Georgia, UNMOT in Tajikistan), peace-keeping (e.g. UNPROFOR) and post-conflict administration