

An important Canadian innovation was, after heading the May-June mission to Kosovo, to propose that long-term missions be put into place in the Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina regions of the former Yugoslavia to promote dialogue and prevent the spillover of conflict. This marked the beginning of a new type of activity that has proved to be the CSCE's greatest contribution to security and stability in Europe: long-term conflict prevention missions. The same Canadian-led mission that led to this suggestion was also uniquely successful in the objectivity of its report, which was commented on by several delegations and caused many of them, particularly the Russian, to improve their estimation of the utility of CSCE missions.

In September 1992, the CSO launched a long-term mission to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina, as well as a monitoring mission to the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia to prevent the spillover of conflict from elsewhere, and sanctions assistance missions to countries neighbouring Serbia-Montenegro (initially Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary; later Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Albania and Ukraine) to advise customs officials on the best ways of monitoring the application of UN economic sanctions. In November, the CSO mandated a mission to Georgia to initiate discussions with all parties to the hostilities in Ossetia with the aim of promoting civil order and political reconciliation. In February 1993, the CSCE launched a mission to Estonia to promote stability, dialogue and understanding between Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities. March saw the establishment of a mission to Moldova to facilitate a comprehensive political settlement to the conflict between forces from the Republic of Moldova, forces of the self-proclaimed Trans-Dniestr Moldovan Republic and Russian soldiers stationed in the region. Canada contributed personnel to most of these missions, and headed the sanctions assistance mission in FYR Macedonia and the long-term mission in Moldova.

The missions were established relatively quickly with minimal infrastructure and modest costs. They were effective in establishing an international presence in potential hot spots and, in some cases, in initiating or supporting a framework for political dialogue. A CSCE presence in the form of a personal representative or mission contributed to establishing a practical relationship between the countries in question and the CSCE. In some cases, the mission was participating states' main means of finding out what was happening in the region. Missions also let the residents and governments of the areas to which they were sent know that they had not been forgotten by the international community. In addition, they provided an opportunity to educate hosts about the meaning of CSCE principles and how these might be applied. However, particularly in the early stages, mission mandates were often unclear or unrealistic, their reports seldom discussed in detail and their recommendations not pursued. Canada wanted to strengthen the CSCE's ability to deploy missions and to ensure more systematic follow-up to recommendations, many of which fell in the human dimension area.

Peaceful Settlement of Disputes

The CSCE experts meeting on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes held in Geneva from October 12 to 23, 1992, took the four proposals mooted at Helsinki and agreed to include them all as options in the CSCE's dispute settlement roster. The first improved the Valletta document by simplifying the mechanism for intercession of a third party. The