

CSCE Council Meeting: Building Cooperative Security

The Council of Foreign Ministers of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) met in Rome on November 30 and December 1. Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet used the opportunity to send a strong message underlining Canada's commitment to the CSCE and to European security. In his opening remarks, he stated: "My government would like today to rededicate itself to the principles and commitments of the CSCE as our unique, transatlantic, pan-Eurasian forum for building cooperative security."

Canada's objectives at the Rome meeting were fourfold:

- 1) to underline our strong support for the CSCE as a vital, pan-European cooperative security institution and the only regional organization with the moral and political authority to deal with conflicts, build democracy and promote respect for human rights in the CSCE area;
- 2) to streamline the CSCE decision-making process, institutions and missions to make the CSCE more effective, particularly in its priority area of conflict prevention and resolution;
- 3) to stress the importance of integrating the "human dimension," which Canada considers to be at the heart of the CSCE concept and thus central to the CSCE's conflict management efforts, into the rest of the CSCE's activities; and

4) to stress the need for political will and realism in the CSCE.

Ministers at the Rome meeting faced a number of important questions. For example, how might the CSCE make better use of its existing offices, instruments, mechanisms and political dialogue for conflict management? How could the CSCE better integrate the human dimension into conflict management? Could the CSCE develop new practical forms of cooperation with NATO, the Western European Union (WEU) or other international and regional organizations?

Conflict Management

Ministers reviewed the situation in a number of regions of tension or conflict in Europe, and the CSCE role in managing conflicts. On the former Yugoslavia, they urged the early and unconditional return of the CSCE Missions of Long Duration to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina, which had been working in these three regions of Serbia to prevent the spillover of conflict, to promote dialogue and to monitor human rights. The Missions were forced to depart Serbia last summer when the Belgrade authorities refused to extend their mandate.

The Council strongly endorsed the recommendations of the CSCE Mission to Moldova, until mid-November headed by

