

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)

This Conference of thirty-four European States, the United States and Canada, currently in session, has as its objective the promotion of better relations among participating states and the fostering of conditions in which their people can live in peace free from threats against their security.

The origin of the present initiative goes back to a declaration of the members of the Warsaw Pact in 1969 reiterating an earlier (1966) call for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. This was followed by an invitation from the Finnish Government to the European States, the United States and Canada to hold such a Conference. The Western countries responded favourably and in late 1972, multilateral preparatory talks (MPT) were held in Helsinki. These meetings are now generally referred to as Stage I of the Conference. At Stage I a formal agenda was drawn up for Stage II of the Conference comprising four general categories for discussion. These four categories, or "baskets" as they are usually referred to, are as follows:

- (i) Political and military aspects of security;
- (ii) Economic, scientific and technical cooperation, including the environment;
- (iii) Human contacts, freer movement of ideas, culture and education;
- (iv) Follow-up arrangements to the CSCE.

The work of Stage II of the Conference, which opened in Geneva in September, 1973 and is still underway, is conducted by means of seventeen separate committees and subcommittees which correspond to the main sections of each point on the agenda. Substantive discussion of each agenda item is being carried on with a view to drafting final documents based on proposals submitted by participating states.