

In addition, the illicit and licit movement of arms within the OSCE space has played a significant role in creating and sustaining security dilemmas for communities and states in conflict. It would be difficult to deny, for example, that the substantial transfers of surplus NATO weaponry to Greece and Turkey exacerbated the two country's relations in the early 1990s or that the massive Russian transfers of advanced weapons to Armenia in 1994-6 stiffened the resolve of Armenia (and Karabakh) in opposition to a settlement of the civil conflict in Azerbaijan.

The issue of non-proliferation is complex, not only as a result of the multiple technologies involved, but since the degree to which they are susceptible to control by states and their organizations is limited. States exercise considerable leverage over the transfer of nuclear and top-end conventional weapons. In contrast, the control over the proliferation of light weapons is highly problematic, given the existence of a substantial private market outside state control and the considerable supply of these weapons within such markets as a result of the end of the Cold War. In the chemical and biological spheres, state control is complicated by the dual-use problem noted above: technologies that have weapons applications are also essential aspects of civilian production in these areas.

In contrast to most of the issues treated above, the FSC has played a modest role in the discussion of non-proliferation issues since the forum's inception through the "Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers (1993), the provision of a mechanism for dialogue on these issues, and the effort to ensure the availability of reliable, up-to-date, and comprehensive information on weapons transfers. The issue is gaining profile in the post-Istanbul context with the discussion of small arms proliferation.

On the whole, despite the effort devoted to non-proliferation in the FSC, it is difficult to discern any substantial impact of the Forum in this area. This reflects several factors, not least the multiplicity of other multilateral and bilateral fora in which the issue is addressed (see below), the fact that the issue is closely related to key economic (e.g. weapons exports and the dilemmas of dual use technology), societal (e.g. gun control), and security (e.g. access to weapons perceived to be necessary to a state's defence posture) concerns of members, and the fact that the profile of the Forum is much less substantial than the profile of the issue in member state policy.

This said, there are advantages in discussing the issue of non-proliferation in an informal, reasonably low-key forum. This may be particularly true of the question of small arms proliferation. The issue is of central importance in the consideration of many of the challenges mentioned above (e.g. internal conflict, the consolidation of states in transition, terrorism). Yet it is one where, once one moves beyond generalities, the perspectives of member states on the feasibility and modalities of control vary widely. Success in the control of small arms depends importantly on the generation of common understanding of the issue and common perspectives on its regulation. This may require a **process** of extended discussion. The FSC is a potentially important mechanism in the effort to develop such a community of perspective. Although the concrete products from such a consensus-building effort are likely to emerge elsewhere, this does not mean that discussion of the question in the FSC would be irrelevant to the products that ultimately emerged.