ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE) AS A REGIONAL SECURITY ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE) AS A REGIONAL SECURITY ORGANIZATION

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The European geopolitical situation has worsened; it is evident from Europe's straying away from the once plausible idea of a security community. In the last ten years, there has been a change in the quality of Euro Atlantic interstate relations, damaging the European security situation. This thesis aims to analyze the agency of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in European security as well as its effectiveness. However, there is scarce literature regarding the OSCE's problems within its internal structure and its agency. In an attempt to explore this gap, the research question and puzzle is, if the OSCE has a strengthening or dampening effect in regard to European security. This research question will be answered through a literature review and an analysis of security community theory, as well as through an exploration of the effects of the deterioration of relations in the region.

The thesis further explores whether there is a new unwillingness or rather willingness to use the OSCE as an arena for conflict. The analysis shows that OSCE does provide a strengthening effect on European security, however, it is heavily limited by the change of Euro Atlantic interstate relations. The OSCE's heavy dependence on its participating states, due to the lack of legal personality and use of the consensus principle, limits the effectiveness and potential of the organization. While the role of the OSCE as a platform for multilateral dialogue is crucial, the willingness of the participating states to use it as an arena for conflict has been demonstrated. This thesis alludes to necessary changes that have to be undertaken in order for the OSCE to regain its agency.

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Introduction

Since the turn of the millennium European security has undoubtably become worse. Hegemann and Schneckener argue that European security is undergoing significant change as it has "become intertwined with contemporary 'crises' that turned it into an arena for the negotiation of fundamental conflict, often revolving around questions of identity and sovereignty."[1] Threats ranging from the increase in acts of terrorism within the continent to multilateral issues between neighbors as well as internal issues within the structure of some of the deeply rooted European institutions such as the European Union. The worsening of the geopolitical situation in Europe can be showcased through an analysis of the three factors of pluralistic security communities.[2] Through the assessment of the three factors, namely, compatibility of major values, mutual responsiveness and mutual predictive behavior, the change of quality of interstate relations in the Euro Atlantic area can be established (see Chapter 1). By evaluating whether European security is moving towards or away from the three conditions, we can highlight the state in which it is. The main research question and puzzle which this thesis will tackle is if the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has a strengthening or dampening effect in regard to European security. The strengthening or dampening effect can be operationalized in terms of changes in the modus operandi of the OSCE. Similarly, to many international organizations, it is both an actor with some degree of autonomy from its participating states and an arena for state to enact their multilateral diplomacy. In the latter the OSCE has no autonomy, however it is important to highlight the autonomy it has in order to enact its conflict management mandate, and in turn affect European security positively. The

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[1] Hendrick Hegemann and Ulrich Schneckener, "Politicising European security: from technocratic to contentious politics?," *European Security* 28, no. 2 (2019): 133, https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2019.1624533.

[2] Emanuel Adler, "Imagined (security) communities: cognitive regions in international relations," *Millennium* 26, no. 2 (June 1997), https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298970260021101; Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, *Security communities*. (Cambridge University Press, 1998); Karl W. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area* (Princeton, N. J: Princeton University Press, 1957).

thesis will be looking at the effectiveness of the OSCE, and if in its current capabilities, it is a regional security organization which is assisting in strengthening European security.

While the main research question focuses on whether the OSCE has a strengthening or dampening effect on European security, this thesis will further be exploring three additional questions, which will help unpack the main research question, and offer a more nuanced answer. Firstly, the thesis explores whether there is a new unwillingness or rather willingness to use the OSCE as an arena for conflict. Through a look at international organizations (IOs) as arenas, actors and instruments, this question can be answered. While the OSCE is a platform for multilateral dialogue, one for raising awareness and increasing cooperation, are actors willing to use it as an arena for conflict? Through the exploration of internal indicators of whether member states are ready to use the OSCE as a forum for dampening conflict or for fighting out a conflict we can establish the change of circumstances (see Chapter 2). Looking at internal indicators, namely, the current leadership situation, the budget adoption process which is a thermometer for the intensity of conflicts among the participating states such that when relations are more conflictual the process can be expected to take longer, the number of decisions being adopted by the ministerial council, and statements by member states within ministerial and permanent council meetings which are conflictual to other members of the organization.

Secondly, the thesis will look into the internal issue structure of the organization, specifically looking at the recent leadership crisis, the burden of the consensus principle and the lack of legal personality. Looking at IO independence from member states directly shows IO actorness which highlights the capacity of IO leadership in action taking in support of the conflict management and resolution of the OSCE.

Thirdly, this thesis will look into the importance of the OSCE as an organization of governance, in which their missions in monitoring and peacekeeping have to be acknowledged.

Chapter 3 will look at the OSCE as a mediating body which provides positive change and assists in the security situation. The indicator is the ability of the OSCE to offer conflict dampening and conflict management services, such as, mediating and peace missions and negotiation formats. This thesis finally argues that, without the OSCE there would be no organization that would have provided an impartial presence on the ground, however, simultaneously the internal issues and indicators cannot be ignored when evaluating the effectiveness of the OSCE as a dampener or strengthener of European security. Through the usage of the security community theory, the thesis will look into the internal structure of the OSCE as well as its internal indications of whether there is a willingness from the participating states to use it as an arena for conflict.

This thesis aims at assessing the deterioration of the security situation in the OSCE area, and whether it has affected the capacity of the OSCE in carrying out its conflict facilitation and management mandate in the last 10 years. The independent variable, namely, the quality of Euro-Atlantic relations, will be tested by the dependent variables, namely, OSCE internal indictors, leadership and governance. Through this examination a conclusion will be reached on the extent to which the OSCE is still an actor which strengthens European security. The scarcity of literature on the OSCE problems within the internal structure allows for an attempt to explore the research gap and assess if the OSCE has a strengthening or dampening effect in regard to European security. Furthermore, the literature review introduces the issues of the consensus principle and the lack of legal personality.

Literature Review: The OSCE as an Actor in European Security

In contemporary Europe, recent transformations of the political and security context of the Euro Atlantic region have impaired the idea of a European security community which was forming after the Cold War. With the adoption of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe in 1990, the outlook on the future of Europe as a security community was optimistic. However,

throughout the previous decade, the OSCE "has unwillingly been returning to its origins as a Cold War–era *Conference* – a forum where states and blocs, often antagonistic to one another and espousing opposing ideals, can air their frictions and hostilities and look for ways to overcome them."[3] After the Cold War, there was a notable growth in the amount and level of assertiveness of regional organizations which are "active in the realm of peace and security."[4] The importance of regional organizations is underlined in the United Nations (UN) Charter, under Article 52 which supports the use of regional agencies for the settlement of local disputes. The endorsement of regional organizations by the UN is based in the premise that they can be used as forums for conflict resolution, ones which can be used to build trust between states through the frequency of interaction, and encourage a cooperative approach to cross-border security issues.[5] The OSCE was an organization formed with the idea that it would have the responsibility of both peacefully settling disputes among its members, and also handling conflict management, which would include early warning and post-conflict duties.[6]

Looking at the special features which the OSCE possesses, according to Kropatcheva the "OSCE's comprehensive understanding of security could make cooperation on different 'high politics' and 'low politics' issues possible."[7] As it is the most inclusive security organization in Europe, the reach within the continent is massive and a great number of issues can be discussed. Additionally, the OSCE is a consensus-based organization, which means of

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[3] Philip Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus: Mediation, Peace Operations, Human Rights," *IAI Papers* 21, no. 16 (April 2021): 2, https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaip2116.pdf.

[4] Michael Charles Pugh and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, *The United Nations & regional security: Europe and beyond* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003); Connie Peck, "The role of regional organizations in preventing and resolving conflict," *Turbulent peace: The challenges of managing international conflict* (2001); quoted in Laurie Nathan, "The peacemaking effectiveness of regional organisations," *Crisis States Research Centre* (October 2010): 1, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/123449/WP81.2.pdf.

[5] Nathan, "The peacemaking effectiveness of regional organizations."

[6] Nuray Ibryamova, "The OSCE as a regional security actor: A security governance perspective." In *The Security Governance of Regional Organizations*, ed. Emil J. Kirchner and Roberto Dominguez (London: Routledge, 2011), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805008.

[7] Elena Kropatcheva, "Russia and the role of the OSCE in European security: a 'Forum' for dialog or a 'Battlefield' of interests?," *European security* 21, no. 3 (2012): 373, https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2011.640323.

the participating states have a veto power. This could lead to ineffectiveness as self-interested states can block decisions, however the veto power is relativized as the states can also be blocked. The issue within the creation of the OSCE lied in the fact that it was "created without the legal personality other international organizations possessed and operated on the principle of consensus."[8] The lack of a legal personality "prevented the development of a strong executive and professional cadre along UN lines, and made such basic operational issues as diplomatic immunities and customs clearances dependent upon individual states."[9] While the consensus principle ensures unified action, it limits and renders the organizations very dependent on its own participating States.

Due to the severe change of major values, beliefs and interests, paired with the "extremely constrained executive action capabilities - among states and blocs, often hostile towards one another,"[10] the once hopeful vision of a European security has become less plausible. By using security community theory,[11] we can establish the changing quality of interstate relations in the Euro Atlantic area. Pluralistic security communities emerge due to three essential conditions, and through the examination of the extent to which the conditions are met, we can see the change of quality of the interstate relations in the region. After the Cold War, Europe was moving towards a structure which could resemble a security community, however over the last ten years, it has strayed far away from reaching the conditions. Examining the internal issue structure of organizations, especially leadership, shows the OSCE's role in European security being harmed by internal issues. The effectiveness of the organization strongly depends on the interstate relations in the Euro Atlantic area. MacFarlane

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[8] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 2.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Adler, "Imagined (security) communities"; Adler and Barnett, *Security communities*; Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*.

and Weiss showcase the necessity of "multilateral management of conflict,"[12] however do not address the issue of the OSCE's role in conflict management. OSCE crisis management and conflict prevention activities have had varying results in the previous decade.

The OSCE has been more successful in "operation crises management of different types"[13] such as the monitoring of the Georgian-Russian border and the establishing of the contact line in Nagorno-Karabakh. On the other hand, in the context of conflict resolution negotiations, such as the Transnistria, while it does not offer negative effects, it is "resulting mostly in their "freezing."[14] While, research on the OSCE has also been conducted which fits the central puzzle of this thesis well,[15] a research gap exists on how the effects of the change of Euro Atlantic interstate relations have affected the OSCE's agency and if the OSCE is dampening or strengthening European security. Through the exploration of internal indicators of the organization and by looking at whether the OSCE has become more of an arena and less of an actor in its own right, we can establish the OSCE's capacity to dampen the growing geopolitical conflict in Europe.

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[12] Neil S. MacFarlane and Thomas G. Weiss, "Regional organizations and regional security," *Security Studies* 2, no. 1 (1992): 6, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419209347498.

[13] Adam Kobriacki, "Beyond Donbas: What Role for the OSCE in Conflict Management," paper presented at OSCE Focus Conference Proceedings, Geneva, Switzerland, October 14-15, 2016. Geneva: DCAF, 57, https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/OSCE_Focus-2016.pdf.

[14] Ibid.

[15] David J. Galbreath, *The organization for security and co-operation in Europe* (Routledge, 2019); Victor-Yves Ghebali and Daniel Warner, *The operational role of the OSCE in South-Eastern Europe: contributing to regional stability in the Balkans* (Routledge, 2018); Stefan Lehne, "Reviving the OSCE: European security and the Ukraine Crisis," *Carnegie Europe,* September 22, 2015, https://carnegieeurope.eu/2015/09/22/reviving-osce-european-security-and-ukraine-crisis-pub-61362; Dennis J. D. Sandole, *Peace and security in the postmodern world: the OSCE and conflict resolution* (Routledge, 2007); Wolfgang Zellner, "Russia and the OSCE: From high hopes to disillusionment," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 18, no. 3 (2005), https://doi.org/10.1080/09557570500237995.

Chapter 1: The Worsening of the Geopolitical Situation in Europe: Security Communities

1.1 Security Communities: Essential Conditions

The concept of security communities[16] explains more broadly the current quality of European international relations. Adler previously applied the theory to the OSCE[17], however dissimilarly, it is important to use the concept in order to measure the quality of Euro Atlantic relations, which are independent of the OSCE. While Adler focused only on the OSCE as a security community, this thesis explores the OSCE as an agent in European security as a whole. In order to show the deterioration of European security in the last decade, this thesis will be exploring the conditions of pluralistic security communities. Deutsch and his colleagues explored the circumstances under which security communities form and developed three fundamental conditions which have to be met in order for them to be formed[18]. The fundamental conditions for the creation of pluralistic security communities are three-fold. According to Deutsch, the three conditions are, the *compatibility of major values*, *mutual responsiveness* (the process of social learning), and *mutual predictive behavior* (addressing the formation of long-term trust)[19]. Through the derivation of these three key conditions, we can establish the worsening of the geopolitical situation in Europe, and in turn the deterioration of the security situation. Contrary to the use of security community theory by Deutsch and his colleagues and Adler and Barnett, this thesis focuses on using the three conditions of pluralistic security communities, as indicators for the increase of insecurity in the OSCE area in recent years, which can be seen through the decline in the conditions. The work on security communities can be used in showcasing the changing quality of interstate relations in the Euro

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[16] Adler, "Imagined (security) communities"; Adler and Barnett, *Security communities*; Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*.
[17] Adler, "Imagined (security) communities."
[18] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area.*
[19] Ibid.

Atlantic region as well as establishing the internal conditions within the OSCE and its external activities, both of which influence the extent to which the OSCE can have a positive effect on the worsening security situation in Europe.

1.2 Compatibility of Major Values

The theory of security communities which was developed by Deutsch and his colleagues and expanded by Adler and Barnett offers insight into long-term prevention of violence in a region. It is based on the high level of integration, mutual trust, common identity, and a sense of community, dependent on the idea of *peaceful change* which was defined as "the resolution of social problems, normally by institutionalized procedures, without resort to large-scale physical force."[20] In their work the compatibility of major values came as essential as in all their cases they found a "compatibility of the main values held by the politically relevant strata of all participating units. Sometimes this was supplemented by a tacit agreement to deprive of political significance any incompatible values that might remain."[21] While the concept of major values is not very precise, it was narrowed down to ones which had a major importance in the domestic policies of the states in question. Deutsch and his colleagues looked at "democracy", "rule of law", "constitutionalism" and "basic political ideology" as major values[22]. Surprisingly, religion was excluded, which shows that some areas were not looked at to provide room for integration. Deutsch did however state that there is the danger of "the populations of different territories might easily profess verbal attachment to the same set of values without having a sense of community that leads to political integration."[23]

[20] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*, 5.
[21] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*, 46.
[22] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*, 124.
[23] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*, 36.

On the other hand, Adler rather than focusing on the political relevance of the major values, focused on a set of liberal values.[24] Adler and Barnett further developed that it is shaped by identities, values and meanings; multisided interactions; and reciprocal long-term interest.[25] This definition sets a much wider foundation when addressing the creation of security communities. Homogeneity and a set of common values seems as the bare minimum for a functional community. Deutsch further points out that the combability of major values leads to an "an increasing unattractiveness and improbability of war among the political units of the emerging pluralistic security community, as perceived by their governments, elites, and (eventually) populations."[26]

Connecting this to the European security situation and the OSCE, there is a clear divergence of major values between the East and the West, most notably by the Russia. A decade ago, there was a common area between the European Union (EU) and Russia however, this time is long gone, as seen by the Russian actions in Crimea, as well as in many other security issues. When looking at the economic and environmental dimension, Russia's presence in not acknowledging climate change as a security issue that needs to be a consistent part of the agenda, which has halted progress and created further tension with the West. The growing gap of values outside of the OSCE is one of the main factors of the deterioration of European security, and it has to be addressed.

1.3 Mutual Responsiveness

Mutual responsiveness is described as "the capacity of the participating political units or governments to respond to each other's needs, messages, and actions quickly, adequately and without resort to violence."[27] Deutsch and his colleagues state that "such capabilities for

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[24] Adler, "Imagined (security) communities."
[25] Adler and Barnett, *Security communities*, 31.
[26] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*, 26.
[27] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*, 66.

political responsiveness required in each participating state a great many established political habits, and of functioning political institutions, favoring mutual communication and consultation."[28] The link to integration from these definitions is apparent, it is important to stress the value of the process of social learning. As mutual responsiveness is a learning process, Deutsch and his colleagues established its core to involve three factors. These factors contain the need for the member states to have a level of understanding of each other's problems, they need to find a solution for these problems and reach a certain compromise for the members to be content, and lastly, there needs to be a feedback process which provides new demands are generated as a result of the initial implementation of the solutions.

Within the OSCE area, mutual responsiveness is at a high level, as all three of these factors are visible, however, this is only the case when looking at the West. The growing value divergence most glaringly between the West and Russia, however also Turkey and Belarus, shows very little responsiveness in European security as a whole. The concerns of different states are not acknowledged as legitimate or relevant and actions against the principles of European security are taken. The divergence between Russia and the West has only furthered since the annexation of Crimea. The conflict in Ukraine has shown that Russia's responsiveness has reached an almost inexistent level, not acknowledging the concerns of other nations in the region. Since the altercation in Crimea, Russia has showcased further deviation from mutual values, and a lack of responsiveness as seen in the interactions between the West and Russia on NATO. More recently, with the capturing of Alexei Navalny, the Russian opposition leader, Russia has continuously showcased this divergence, and despite disagreements and calls against the actions from the West, has shown not to acknowledge the concerns of different states as legitimate. In Belarus, during the presidential election of last year as well as the actions taken as a result of it, this lack of responsiveness is further shown. Russia again involved on

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[28] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*, 67.

the opposite side of the problem area. The limited responsiveness between the European Union and Turkey is another example of this issue. During the migrant crisis in 2015, there was a clear difference in major values, and no responsiveness in terms of action taking. The Turkish involvement in the Syrian civil war and further military interventions only further establish this point. More recently, Turkey's oil drilling off the coast of Cyprus has been another source of tension.

In all three country cases, it is clear that there is scarcely little mutual responsiveness in European security. The lack of mutual responsiveness and the lack of this learning process has heavily strained the interstate relations in the region. The divergence in the mutual values has been one of the leading catalysts in the worsening of the European security situation. The level of responsiveness in the region has influenced the extent to which the OSCE can have a positive effect on the worsening security situations.

1.4 Mutual Predictability of Behavior

Looking at the world through a realist lens, fear plays an important role in the international community as states innately do not trust each other's intentions, as they have national interest as a priority. Mutual predictability of behavior assists in lessening fear and uncertainty and in turn making it more likely for states to trust one another and begin to cooperate. Deutsch focuses less on this condition however views it as an expected consequence of the aforementioned conditions. Deutsch stresses the importance to "make joint decisions only about a more limited range of subject matters and retain each a far wider range of problems for autonomous decision-making within their own borders."[29] Furthermore, Deutsch and his colleagues state that what lies at the core of the condition is the concept of *peaceful change*, which cannot be achieved without a certain relationship which mutual predictability of

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[29] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*, 66.

behavior provides.[30] Deutsch et al. describe the relationship as one which requires, "mutual attention, communication, perception of needs, and responsiveness in the process of decision-making."[31] Mutual predictability of behavior is only attainable through the constant building and reconfirming of trust and confidence of member states. Through genuine assurances to peaceful change and constant demonstration of trust, expectations start to form. With expectation comes predictability, and through this whole process comes mutual predictability of behavior.

Currently, there is a lack of mutual predictability of behavior within Europe and the OSCE area. The growing trust gap and series of unpredictable actions have created instability in the region. The previously mentioned examples which defined the lack of mutual responsiveness are a foundation for the loss of trust between the West and Russia. The continuous actions in Ukraine and the imprisonment and alleged poisoning of critiques have tarnished the relations completely. The incessant breaking of promises and taking of actions which challenge European security and European values has gotten to the point of limiting diplomatic channels. Since March of 2021, due to the growing mistrust and lack of predictability of behavior, there has been a mutual expelling of diplomats. Russian diplomats have been expelled from several countries, as the uncertainty in the region has been on the rise. Russia has responded by expelling diplomats from the initiating countries. The mutual expulsion of diplomats showcases how fractured the quality of interstate relations are in the OSCE region. Currently, aggression is met with aggression, which has begun a downwards spiral and is strongly affecting European security. Predictability of behavior is controlled by the growing mistrust and inability to show responsiveness between the countries in the region.

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[30] Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*, 36.
[31] Ibid.

1.5 The change in quality of interstate relations in Euro Atlantic Area

The decline in the conditions facilitating the emergence of a security community have highlighted the increased insecurity in the OSCE region. The divergence of mutual values has led to the unpredictable behavior and nearly no responsiveness. The quality of interstate relations between the West and Russia is a key example of this divergence. "The Ukraine conflict has exposed the fragility of both Ukrainian sovereignty and, more broadly, of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture as a whole."[32] The previously mentioned actions from Turkey and Belarus show that this is an issue within the region, rather than merely pinning the blame on a single state. The worsening of the geopolitical situation in Europe can clearly be seen in the past decade. Cecire argues that due to "the absence of a system that effectively challenges violators, it can be argued that there is essentially no system at all."[33] However, the issue boils down to the lack of mutual values, and in turn the degrading of the "non-Western" values.

The change in the quality of interstate relations in the Euro Atlantic area can be observed through such actions by singular states, defying the consensus. Looking back to the end of the cold war, it seemed plausible that a security community was forming. The conditions for a security community were at one point nearly met, and within the OSCE region, a vision of something that could be considered a security community was forming. However, in the past decade there has been a worsening of these conditions, as well as a divergence between the East and the West in the compatibility of major values, most notable Russia. A decade ago, there was a common area between the EU and Russia, however, as seen by the Russian actions in Ukraine, as well as in many other security issues, they have strayed further away. In terms of mutual responsiveness, and the process of social learning, the Euro Atlantic area suffers the lack of responsiveness between the states. The concerns of different states are not

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[32] Michael Hikari Cecire, "Whither the Euro-Atlantic Space? Redefining Euro-Atlantic Security in a Post-Post-Cold War Era," abstract, *e-cadernos CES* 19 (2013), https://doi.org/10.4000/eces.1613.
[33] Cecire, "Whither the Euro-Atlantic Space," para. 4.

acknowledged as legitimate or relevant and actions against the principles of European security are taken. The need for an integration process of the major values of the area seems necessary however very unlikely and unobtainable. Lastly, the mutual predictability of action, which is strongly affected by the lack of similar values, has led to stray actions from states. The developing distrust and series of unpredictable actions from states within the region have led to further negative changes in interstate relations, to the point that it is damaging the diplomatic communication channel. The mutual expulsion of diplomats will only damage the relations further.

Having established the worsening of the geopolitical situation in Europe through the highlighting of the deteriorating conditions of security community theory, it is important to inaugurate the OSCE's role in the region. After the Cold war, according to Sammut on one hand Russia believed that the "OSCE would lead to the dissolution of NATO or at least ensure that its alliance would not expand its membership"[34] and on the other hand, Western countries saw it as an organization which would assist in managing relations with Russia. However, this was not the case in both cases, and the OSCE become last significant for both sides, eventually showing in the political commitment of its own participating states.[35] Despite the dysfunctionality, the OSCE is a key framework for dealing with European security, one which provides, not only a neutral platform for dialogue, however, assists in security affairs in terms of mediation, peace missions and human rights as well as throughout the economic and environmental sphere through extra budgetary projects and field missions.

This leads to the question of whether participating states have a new unwillingness or rather willingness to use the OSCE as an arena for conflict, one which can be answered through a look into the internal indicators of the organization. By looking at the leadership crisis, the

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[34] Dennis Sammut, "The OSCE is Dysfunctional – But Necessary," Security and Human Rights Monitor, (August 6, 2020): para. 8, https://www.shrmonitor.org/the-osce-is-dysfunctional-but-necessary/.
[35] Sammut, "The OSCE is Dysfunctional."

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budget adoption process which, as mentioned above, is a thermometer for the intensity of conflicts among the participating states such that when relations are more conflictual the process can be expected to take longer, the decrease in the amount of decisions made within the ministerial councils as well as increasingly conflictual statements from one participating state to the other, we can establish the state in which the organization is in.

Chapter 2: Exploration of Internal Indicators - is there a new unwillingness or rather willingness to use the OSCE as an arena for conflict

The OSCE is the largest and most inclusive organization on security in Europe, and one which was the "first to adopt a comprehensive understanding of security."[36] The participating states through the Charter of the OSCE have repeated their commitments to the principles of cooperation, dialogue and comprehensive and indivisible security.[37] According to Zellner and his colleagues, the OSCE situation is getting worse and it "can no longer be called an adaptation crisis arising from a changed political environment."[38] They argue that the change of environment in European security is permanent, as the Russian Federation has turned its values in another direction. According to Kropatcheva it is possible that the OSCE can function both "as a 'forum' for dialog as well as a 'battlefield' of interests."[39] This conclusion is highly interesting as OSCE has found most of its success in its identity as a forum, however in the recent years, the changes of the security climate in the Euro Atlantic region has hinted at a willingness to use the OSCE as an arena for conflict.

It is important to establish whether the OSCE has become more of an arena and less of an actor in its own right, as this would indicate that a decrease in the OSCE's capacity to dampen the growing geopolitical conflict potation in Europe. Kropatcheva highlights that even though the OSCE was created as a norm-based institutions and "it faces challenges since the Organization has turned out not to be autonomous, but rather, to a great extent, only a tool of foreign policies of realist-oriented participating States."[40] This assertiveness and disregard for

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[36] Kropatcheva, "Russia and the role of the OSCE in European security", 371.
[37] OSCE, *Charter for European Security* (Istanbul: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 1999), http://www.osce.org/mc/17502.
[38] Zellner et al., 2007, "Identifying the Cutting Edge: The Future Impact of the OSCE." Centre for OSCE Research. IFSH. https://ifsh.de/file-CORE/documents/Working_Papers/CORE_Working_Paper_17.pdf quoted in Kropatcheva, "Russia and the role of the OSCE in European security", 371.
[39] Kropatcheva, "Russia and the role of the OSCE in European security", 374.
[40] Kropatcheva, "Russia and the role of the OSCE in European security", 386.

the consensus can be seen in a number of the internal indicators. The deep-rooted problems between the West and Russia, have led to the failure of the OSCE to prevent and resolve conflicts in that region. However, as Galbreath states, the OSCE will continue to play a significant role in security and cooperation in Europe, as long as there are insiders and outsiders within the Euro Atlantic region.[41] Kropatcheva concludes that the OSCE's willingness of member states to participate in dialogue has improved, making the dialogue more significant, and "even though it does not solve the problems, it demonstrates nevertheless that the OSCE has the potential to change, and the demand of its expertise and format remains."[42]

The problems within the current installation of the OSCE can be observed through an examination of a number of internal indicators. The internal features and indicators of OSCE will help establish the OSCE's capacity in European security. While looking at these criteria of whether member states are ready to use the OSCE as a forum for dampening or fighting out conflict, it is important to look into four different indicators. Firstly, looking into leadership and the internal issues which left the Secretariat and three bodies essentially leaderless for six months. Strong leadership is vital for the organization to act in an effective and influential manner, and the lack thereof damages its capacity. The inability to reach agreement on significant decisions as such strongly affects the OSCE's ability in carrying out its conflict facilitation and management mandate. Secondly, budget adoption has been heavily impacted as a result of internal disagreements between the participating states, as well as an excess number of conflicts in the region. The necessity of a budget for functioning monitoring missions, organizing events and maintaining previous activities is apparent. The inability to adopt a budget in a timely manner has influenced the effectiveness of the organization in many aspects, including security issue resolution. Thirdly, looking at the amount of decisions adopted

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[41] Galbreath, *The organization for security and co-operation in Europe*.
[42] Kropatcheva, "Russia and the role of the OSCE in European security," 387.

by the ministerial council in the last ten years shows the internal struggle and drifting apart of the Euro Atlantic region in terms of shared values, interests and goals. The lack of decisions showcases the inability to reach consensus and further highlights the OSCE becoming more of an arena for conflict rather than an actor in its own right. Lastly, exploring if the environments in which interstate discussions are held, namely the ministerial councils and permanent council have been increasingly deadlocked through conflictual talk between participating states. An increase of conflictual statements would show the willingness of the participating states to turn the OSCE into more of an arena for their own conflict, while simultaneously giving it less space for agency to assist in the dampening of these conflicts. By exploring the four internal indicators, we can establish whether or not the OSCE member states are willing to use the OSCE as an arena for conflict.

2.1 Leadership

"In 2020 the OSCE underwent a leadership crisis."[43] In July of 2020, the terms of the leaders of the OSCE's three premier institutions, namely, the Director of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM), and the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), as well as the Secretary General, expired. This came as surprise as "they were appointed three year earlier in a package deal, and their renewal was expected by consensus."[44] This showcases a level of internal issues which nearly paralyzes the organization, especially due the fact that leadership is at the heart of effective organizations. The expectation for the renewal of the package deal of the four heads of the executive structures was warranted as it had been agreed upon under Austria's Chairmanship at Mauerbach in 2017.[45] However, as July approached internal opposition from

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[43] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 11.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Walter Kemp, "Executed Structures: Leadership Crisis and the OSCE," Security and Human Rights Monitor, (July 14, 2020), https://www.shrmonitor.org/executed-structures-leadership-crisis-in-the-osce/.

participating states began to unfold. Azerbaijan announced its reservations and opposition to renewing the RFoM, the French politician Harlem Désir, given previous criticism of the state of free speech within Azerbaijan.[46] As soon as any opposition was shown, Turkey and Tajikistan soon after expressed their reservations about the ODIHR Director, the Icelandic politician Ingibjörg Sólrún, as these states have been previously targeted by the ODIHR on human rights grounds. Walter Kemp, who was the head of the Strategic Policy Support Unit at the OSCE and previously the Senior Advisor of the OSCE HCNM laid it out perfectly, "Suddenly, instead of closing the package, participating States were opening Pandora's box."[47] As a result of the reservations shown from Azerbaijan, Turkey and Tajikistan, France and Iceland, with the support of Canada, Norway and Armenia, retaliated. The group vetoed the extensions of the Secretary General, the swiss diplomat Thomas Greminger, as well as the Italian diplomat Lamberto Zannier, the head of the HCNM. As a consequence, the OSCE participating States, rather than being able to tackle issues of European security, including the imminent threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, would spend the next six months attempting to find the new executive heads.

The OSCE's executive structures were leaderless for nearly six months, until the new package deal was formed and reached during the annual Ministerial Council at the beginning of December.[48] The leadership crisis rather than allowing for the celebration of the 30-year anniversary of the Charter of Paris, attempting to reestablish common values and purpose, would create an unsustainable environment. The Albanian Chairmanship, rather than being supported by the three institutions and the Secretary General, would have a much heavier workload, and the Swedish Chairmanship of 2021, would invest time in "intra-organizational

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[46] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 11.
[47] Kemp, "Executed Structures," para. 3.
[48] OSCE, "OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Rama announces appointments of senior OSCE officials, commends one of "most productive" Ministerial Councils in many years," (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: December 4, 2020), https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/472749.

peacebuilding" instead of running the OSCE's agenda.[49] The crisis highlights that there has been a decline in agency of the OSCE as measured in terms of the autonomy of its leadership. In order to understand the issue, the question of what lead to the intervention of Azerbaijan and the other participating states? The OSCE consensus principle has imposed a structural disadvantage,[50] one which is fueled by the furthering of incompatibility of major values in the Euro-Atlantic region. Integration of Russia into Europe has not been successful, other crises have created different pressure points, and Europe is straying further from the once realistic vision of a security community. The consensus principle requires unanimity from all participating states, in all decisions made, this also includes annual agreement on budgets, ministerial decisions, and mandates for all of the field presences. The leadership crisis only shows that it is inevitable that participating States will threaten to disrupt consensus in order to meet and promote their values and demands. The actions of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Tajikistan which in turn lead to the vacated leadership positions in the Secretariat, the ODIHR, the RFoM and the HCNM show participating states what is possible. The quickly emerging divide within the Euro Atlantic region and straying for one another in compatibility of major values poses a threat for the effectiveness of institutions.

Focusing on the leadership within the organization, the leadership crisis left the remaining staff in a situation of panic and left the upcoming Chairmanship and Secretary General with a heavy burden. Four key leaders of the OSCE had not been given an extension which was a result which the staff was not ready for. Due to the confidence of the organization in extending the mandates of the four leaders, there was little planning on actions beyond them. The staff was left in a situation of uncertainty and forced into adjustments. The Albanian Chairmanship was left in a difficult situation in which it would have less agency. The second

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[49] Kemp, "Executed Structures," para. 5.
[50] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 15.

half of their mandate was heavily affected by the leadership crisis, as it was an unprecedented change. The Swedish Chairmanship and newly appointed Secretary General, Helga Maria Schmid, were left with a burden of picking up an instable internal situation. With the internal problems caused by the leadership situation, the OSCE's agency in European security was heavily affected. It is important to note that such a crisis was bound to happen. With the change of quality of interstate relations in the OSCE region, and the package deal arrangement in which the leaders have been given their posts, the internal structure is flawed. Having the possibility of four major leaders being out at once is unacceptable in the current state of European security.

2.2 Unified Budget Adoption

Conflicting and mutually exclusive stances among the main participating states within the organization have resulted in a lack of consensus, one that has heavily influenced and nearly lead to the breakdown of the decision-making processes. This process has been guided by the severe undermining of mutual values and obligations. Engagement in norm violation and norm contestation has made the work with in all of the OSCE dimensions more difficult. The OSCE is funded by its 57 participating states through decisions, the most important being the annual unified budget. The unified budget process is made of five major steps, those being the establishment of Programme priorities; the preparation, submission and approval of the unified budget; the Programme implementation; the reviewing of the programmes, in addition to evaluations and performance reports; and lastly the budget revisions and financial closure.[51] The Unified Budget Process, which was agreed upon in the permanent council, states that the budget should be approved no later than 20th of December of each calendar year.[52] However, in the last decade, the unified budget has been delayed by months due the inability to reach

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[51] OSCE, *Permanent Council Decision No. 553,* (Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2003), https://www.osce.org/pc/42765.

[52] Ibid.

consensus. In 2019 the Unified Budget was approved on the 11th of April 2019.[53] Similarly, in 2020 the Unified Budget was only approved on the 28th of May of 2020,[54] nearly halfway through the year. As of June of 2021, the Unified budget has yet not been adopted, reaching the status of the latest non-approved budget. This is a concerning trend, as the budget is key for the effective management of the organization. Looking at the decade prior, the budget was approved either at the end of the previous year (2012, 2015, 2016) or at the beginning of February of the given year (2013, 2018), with the exceptions of 2014 and 2017 in which it was delayed due to unprecedented circumstances.[55]

The recent change in budget adoption is noticeable, and with the challenging actions of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Tajikistan in the leadership crisis, it could potentially become a worrying trend. The change of quality of interstate relations in the Euro Atlantic region has negatively affected the OSCE's effectiveness as an organization and a mediating body. The budget problems have a strong negative effect on the OSCE conflict management services as it limits the possible actions that can be taken. The inability to provide funding is halting new initiatives and hurting the completion of already existing ones. Field missions and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center (CPC) have to act in a more careful manner not to further negatively affect their missions. Furthermore, the ability for the new Swedish Chairmanship and the Secretary General to act and have a dampening impact on the geopolitical conflict in the region, as well as addressing existing issues is faltered. While the unified budget is one major internal factor which showcases the drastic change of the relations between the participating states, a look into the number of decisions being adopted by the ministerial council paints a much more complete picture.

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[53] OSCE, *Index of Permanent Council decisions (Nos. 1-1399)*, (Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2021), https://www.osce.org/permanent-council/70160.
[54] Ibid.
[55] OSCE, *Index of Permanent Council decisions (Nos. 1-1399).*

2.3 Number of decisions being adopted by Ministerial Council since 2005

At a time when strategic decisions have become more important due to the deterioration of the environment in which the OSCE operates, and whose stability and security it is mandated to uphold, the OSCE is less able to work as a conflict management actor. The internal indicator of number of decisions being adopted shows that the OSCE as an organization has little autonomy from the environment in which it operates, limiting its impact on conflict dampening in the OSCE area.

In order to fully grasp the exponential change of Euro Atlantic relations in the twenty first century within the OSCE we can look back at the number of ministerial council decisions made since 2005. Minister council decisions showcase a unified approach to conflict areas, as consensus is required in the passing of the decisions. There is a clear change in the amount of decisions made by the participating states, which clearly underlines the change of interstate relations in the region. Figure 1 (Decisions of the Ministerial Council in OSCE, 2005-2020) shows a table of the total decisions approved at the ministerial council every year, assorted into categories.[56]

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[56] Information used from the final documents of the meetings of the ministerial council from 2005 to 2020, all can be found in the bibliography.

DECISIONS OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL IN OSCE						
Year	Location	Position Appointments/ Extensions	Decisions on Chairmanships	Scheduling of the Meetings	Other	Strategic Decisions	Total
2005	Ljubljana	1	1	1	0	16	19
2006	Brussels	1	1	1	0	18	21
2007	Madrid	2	1	2	0	7	12
2008	Helsinki	3	0	2	0	8	13
2009	Athens	0	1	2	0	13	16
2010/11	Vilnius	4	1	3	1	10	19
2012	Dublin	0	1	1	0	3	5
2013	Kyiv	2		1	0	6	9
2014	Basel	2	2	1	0	5	10
2015	Belgrade	0	0	1	0	0	1
2016	Hamburg	1	2	1	0	4	8
2017	Vienna	4	0	1	0	5	10
2018	Milan	0	1	1	0	4	6
2019	Bratislava	0	1	1	1	0	3
2020	Tirana	4	1	1	0	2	8

Figure 1: Decisions of the Ministerial Council in OSCE 2005-2020

The different categories were added in order to differentiate in the level of importance of decisions, putting a greater emphasis on "strategic decisions". The term "strategic decisions" are used to represent decisions which combatted global issues of security, covering all OSCE dimensions. During the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council in 2020 in Tirana, there were only two strategic decisions, those being, "on preventing and combating corruption through digitalization and increase transparency" and "on the prevention and eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment."[57] By taking the two decisions from the Ministerial Council in 2020 as examples of "strategic decisions", an idea forms of what this term means. Looking into the other categories, "position appointments or extensions", regards decisions in which leadership positions are confirmed and extended, an example being the appointment of the package deal of the position of Director of the ODIHR,

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[57] OSCE, *Final Document of the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, (Tirana: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2021), https://www.osce.org/ministerial-councils/481447.

the RFoM, the HCNM, as well as the Secretary General in Tirana last year. The category, "decisions on chairmanships" refers to verdicts on the upcoming chairmanships, while the category, "scheduling of the meetings" refers to decisions on the time and venue of the following meeting. Looking at the table, there is a noticeable decrease in the number of decisions made by the participating states in the last ten years, and especially in the last six.

The Ministerial Council in Belgrade, in 2015 marked a turning point, it showed the immense change in the Euro Atlantic interstate relations. As the crisis in Ukraine was ongoing, during the council in 2015, only one decision was taken, that being the scheduling of the meeting for the upcoming year. Documents which would have permitted the OSCE to help the security situation on issues such as preventing torture, migration, sustainable development all failed, as the consensus which is required for all OSCE decisions was never met.[58] This was the point in which the idea of a European security community was unthinkable. The divide between the West and the East was showing more than before, and it has been the case ever since. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of all of the decisions made in the past fifteen years, highlighting in orange the number of "strategic decisions" taken. As evident by the table the number has significantly decreased, further confirming the change of quality of interstate relations in the region. Figure 2 (Number of strategic decisions made with a regression, 2005-2020)[59] has the data from Figure 1 in a diagram, showing the regression of the number of decisions adopted. It clearly shows a linear decrease of the number of decisions made, further establishing the main argument that interstate decisions have been heavily affecting the OSCE's effectiveness and effect on European security.

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[58] OSCE, "Ministerial Council in Belgrade: Talking Nevertheless," (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: February 25, 2016), https://www.osce.org/magazine/224401.

[59] Information used from the final documents of the meetings of the ministerial council from 2005 to 2020, all can be found in the bibliography.

Number of decisions adopted by the MC since 2005

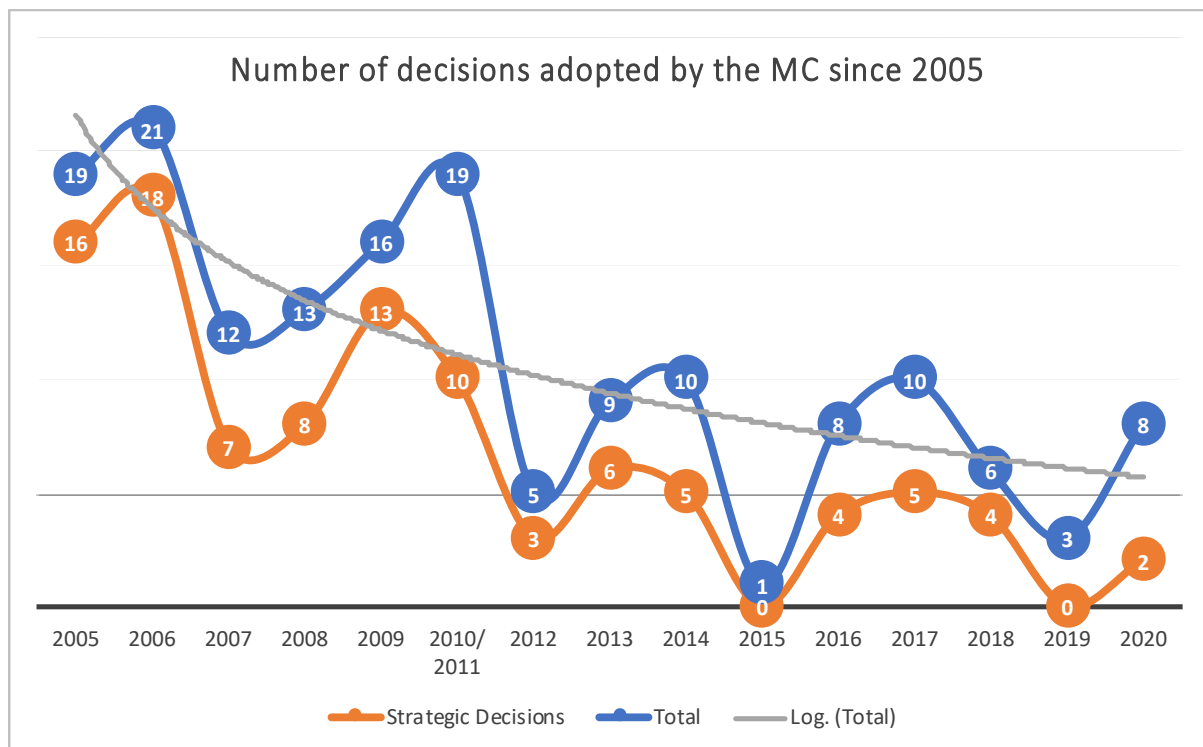Strategic Decisions — Total — Log. (Total)

Figure 2: Number of strategic decisions made with a regression, 2005-2020

The grey line in Figure 2 represents the regression, with the biggest drop being at the beginning of the decade. The dip in both the blue and orange lines, show the full picture of the ministerial council decisions, as a distinction between the decision in terms of significance needed to be conducted. The willingness to use the participating states to us the OSCE as an arena for conflict is very clear by looking at the leadership crises, the inability to effectively approve the Unified Budget as well as by the constant inability to reach consensus and with that the decrease of number of decisions adopted. The last point in order to further this conclusion is the constant conflictual statements between member states within OSCE meetings.

2.4 Conflictual statements by member states within ministerial and permanent council

The ministerial council and permanent council are two of the OSCE's premier places for dialogue between permanent states. These meetings have been used for the introduction, discussion and solution of security issues, through dialogue of the participating states'

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representatives. However, the neutral forum for discussion, has begun to steadily turn into an arena for conflict. Participating states are using the councils as a place to attack and confront other participating states. While bring up and discussing conflicts and issue points has always been one of the key features of the meetings, the level of conflictual statements has increased in correlations to the change of quality of the Euro Atlantic interstate relations.

Participating states are beginning to regularly give conflictual statements, despite the agenda point or current discussion. With this level of conflictual talk, the effectiveness of the meetings decreases, as the issues discussed are almost ignored by some participating states in order to use the opportunity to make a national interest guided statement. A recent example of such talk was during the 2020 Ministerial Council, in which as a response to a discussion on the current problems of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recap of the Albanian Chairmanship's year in the office, Azerbaijan and Armenia began a chain of statements between one another with the interjection of Turkey on the recent Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and signing of the trilateral statement of ending the conflict. The Armenian delegation stated that:

> "During the 44 days of war Azerbaijan and Turkey, in a clear defiance of their international obligations and in violations of their commitments towards the OSCE, despite numerous calls made by OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, despite three agreements to cease hostilities, despite persistent calls of international community, continued the offensive."[60]

This statement not only is conflictual towards Azerbaijan and Armenia however also focuses on the OSCE's inability to act in such a situation. The Azerbaijani delegation responded with "After three decades of failed OSCE-led negotiations, the trilateral statement signed on 10 November 2020 finally put an end to the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan."[61] In both cases the effectiveness of the OSCE as a monitoring body were questioned. The issue with such conflictual statements being in some cases the main contributions of participating

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[60] OSCE, *Final Document of the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 53.
[61] OSCE, *Final Document of the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 56.

states, is that the OSCE begins to be an arena for conflict, rather than an organization which is a forum for mediation, peace operations and cooperation between participating states. While the previous two examples are only one instance of many, the point established is that some of the participating states, which have been showing major changes in their relations to other states within the Euro Atlantic region, are showing a willingness to use the OSCE as an arena for conflict.

One of the OSCE's major strengths as a European organization lies in the forum for discussion it provides for the region. This forum, despite the change in interstate relations and a furthering of major values has delivered and established numerous solutions to security issues in the region. While as seen above, the number of decisions approved has been at a decline, and amount of conflictual statements has increased, the value of the OSCE as a platform for discussion cannot be understated. However, the increase of conflictual statements within the forum show the willingness of the participating states to turn the OSCE more into an arena for their own conflicts, giving it less space for agency to help dampen the European security situation. Finally, looking into the OSCE's success as a mediating body, will assist in answering the research questions of whether the OSCE is a dampener of European security.

Chapter 3: The OSCE as a Governing Body - ability of the OSCE to offer conflict dampening and conflict management services

While the OSCE serves as a forum for dialogue and resolution of conflict, an important part of the organizations' action taking is within the realm of mediating. Kropatcheva argues that the OSCE's role as the conflict mediator is necessary as the "EU's mediation and peacekeeping capacities are limited."[62] She further argues that OSCE has not been successful in solving or preventing conflicts in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region, using the Russian-Georgian war in 2008 as an example. Kropatcheva states that while the OSCE did warn about the "gradual escalation of violence"[63] and had taken mediation efforts before the start of the war, the OSCE recommendations were not accepted by either of the governments. While this is one example, by looking at the OSCE's wide range of actions in mediation, from election procedures to field missions, we can establish the agency it has in European security. The OSCE's activities span in a range of efforts within three different dimensions of its mandate, namely, "security and political-military affirms (with an emphasis on mediation), economics/environment and the "human dimension" including human rights and governance."[64] In order to evaluate the organizations' actions, a distinction has to be made between the security affairs, looking at mediation and peace operations, and economic and environmental affairs which focus on extra budgetary projects and reports from the field missions. The security affairs focus on the role of the OSCE as a security strengthener or dampener of European security. While the economic and environmental affairs stand as a body of comparison, focusing on the experience and insight gained through being a part of the organization.

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[62] Kropatcheva, "Russia and the role of the OSCE in European security," 381.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 2.

3.1 Security affairs

The internal indictors showcased weaknesses in the OSCE's functioning as an organization, however the added value of the OSCE as mediator and as a governing body within security affairs is significant, even though weakened by the internal indicators previously discussed. Looking at the importance of mediation for the OSCE's efforts and the peace operations in Ukraine showcases the significance of the OSCE in the European security situation.

3.1.1 Mediation

"Mediation become crucial to OSCE efforts in the 1990s with the outbreak of armed conflicts in the wake of the Soviet collapse."[65] Remler shows the OSCE's mediation in a number of "frozen conflicts" in the region, looking at Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.[66] Looking at the Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the mediation process revolved around attempting to bring the sides together into a conference, attempting to resolve the conflict. This was however not possible due to the mutually contradictory demands from both sides. As a result, the Italian Chair-in-Office created a "Minsk Group to steer negotiations,"[67] a group made up of the US, France and Russia. Over the time of the conflict, Russia began to overtake the mediation process, leaving the US and France in passive positions of assisting through the preparation of papers for negotiation. "After the failure of Medvedev's final attempt in Kazan in 2011, the Minsk Group ceased to play a significant role."[68] While there was no direct assistance from the OSCE in the eventual resolution of the conflict in 2020, the power of mediation during the nearly three decades of conflict, played a support role in preventing further eruption. However, the OSCE approach was too passive, allowing the

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[65] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 3.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 4.
[68] Ibid.

conflict to remain unresolved for decades, and failing to mediate during the 2020 eruption of war.

In the Abkhazia/South Ossetia conflicts, the OSCE in partnership with the UN lead mediation in the region. While the OSCE deployed monitors in the South Ossetia region, as the Russian-Georgian war of 2008 erupted despite OSCE recommendations and assistance, their role quickly faded. Furthermore, Russia blocked the renewal of the OSCE mandate in the region. Throughout the Transdniestria conflict with Moldova, with the assistance of the OSCE a pro-European government assumed power in the region, allowing the OSCE to focus on the renewing of official negotiations.[69]

As shown in the examples above, mediation and facilitation services from the OSCE produce mixed results. On one hand, we can clearly see the deterioration, as a consequence to the worsening of the geopolitical situation in Europe and the limited agency to dampen it due to the increasing willingness the participating states to use the OSCE as an arena for conflict for their own conflicts. However, the mediation and facilitation services which are still continuing play a limited, however, important role in European security. The mandates of many field missions have become more limited, in turn making them less powerful contributors to security and human rights, this however has not taken away from their significance. The projects in South Ossetia have shown the massive impact the OSCE can have through their confidence-building processes in the region.

Remler highlights that "mediators do not make peace, the sides in conflict do."[70] This statement is significant in understanding the role of the OSCE in European security. As the Euro Atlantic interstate relations have changed for the worse, the ability of the OSCE to strengthen European security has been hindered. The participating states have a strong say

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[69] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 5.
[70] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 6.

in the outcome of conflicts, and the change in mutual values has worsened security in the region. The further straying away from the idea of a security community and the worsening of the once almost establish conditions, create a difficult environment for the OSCE to act in an effective manner. Despite the inability from the mediators to make peace directly, the process of negotiation is valuable for the resolution of a conflict. Remler argues that the mediating activities have intrinsic value, the negotiations provide the sides with familiarity of the process which can be later reproduced, and most importantly provide a forum which can prevent or deferral further hostilities.[71] While the current situation of European security is difficult, OSCE mediation and facilitation services have provided important, however now more limited, contributions to security and human rights in Europe. The analysis of the internal conditions clearly shows that the OSCE's management services have been affected by the changing of the interstate relations in the region. The clearest link is the inability to adopt the unified budget as well as reach consensus in the adopting of key decisions.

3.1.2 Peace Operations

The peacekeeping operations in Ukraine since 2014 are possibly "the largest endeavor the OSCE has undertaken in the last decade, and perhaps the most consequential."[72] The Special Monitoring Mission (SMM), the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) and the Observer Mission (OM) which is at Gukovo and Donetsk have combined for a comprehensive answer to the crisis. The SMM was adopted before the armed conflict began, through a permanent council decision. The SMM was able to report back the progression of the conflict, giving insight of its developments. The TCG which was made up of the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine served as a means to dialogue between the two sides, providing a forum for negotiation. The TCG

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[71] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 6.
[72] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 7.

underwent diplomatic efforts and the SMM patrolled the region, reporting objectively on the events transpiring. It is important to note, that the monitors provide security on the ground as well. Through the facilitation of movements to the resolution of local stand-offs the monitors are very valuable for the security in the region. The SMM and OM were responsible for the monitoring and reporting to the international community, while the TCG held negotiation meetings every two weeks.[73] The SMM, the OM and TCG were able to show immense positive results in the maintaining of the international involvement in the conflict while providing reports through the monitoring missions. The OSCE showcased the level of support it can provide on a monitoring level, through governance of the situation.

While the OSCE monitoring efforts have some degrees of success as well as some shortcomings, the SMM in Ukraine can be considered as a complete success in terms of providing the international community with information and involvement. However, due to the heavy dependency the OSCE has on its participating states as a result of the consensus rule and its lack of legal personality, it is nearly impossible for the organization to act further. The bounds of the possible action are set by its participating states, and it is even more problematic in situations when these states are belligerents. Additionally, looking at the effects that the worsening geopolitical situation in the region has had on peace and monitoring operations, we can see changes. The change of interstate relations has created a more difficult environment to carry out of the missions, however it still continues to be important security work that makes a difference in the region. Using the OM as an example, by looking at its purpose and limits, we can establish the effects that the security situation has had on these missions.

Looking at the OM, it was stationed at the Russian Checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk at the request of the Russian government to the OSCE, with the purpose of reducing the tensions in the region. The mission was deployed after a consensus agreement by all of the

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[73] Remler, "The OSCE as Sisyphus," 8.

participating states. According to the permanent council decision on the deployment of the OM,[74] was tasked with monitoring and reporting on the situation as well as the movements around the border. The limitation of the mission is laid in the task itself, more specifically, the range which it covers and the information it receives which is controlled by both sides. Russia does not want OSCE involvement in the problem region and is moving for the closure of the mission they first requested.

This further shows that the worsening geopolitical situation is affecting the missions, however, they remain vital. The missions are necessary for reporting back crucial information and deescalating the problem area. While the worsening geopolitical situation has limited the abilities of the OSCE, the missions do strengthen the OSCE's agency in European security. Looking into the economic and environmental dimension, shows more homogeneity however still maintaining the same problems areas.

3.2 Economic and Environmental Affairs

Working within the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) has come with the benefit of understanding the internal structure of the organization. While security affairs within OSCE's activities as a monitoring body are extremely well known and focused on when discussing the organization, the economic and environmental side of action is quite under the radar. Through experience of working within the economic and environmental dimensions, it is clear that participating states are more willing to allow the OSCE to play the impartial role and allow for more cooperation within the field. While the previously established differences in values certainly play a massive role in the OSCE's limited abilities due to the conflictual behavior between the states, within the

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[74] OSCE, *Permanent Council Decision No. 1130*, (Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2014), https://www.osce.org/pc/121826.

economic and environmental sphere this pressure is somewhat loosened. The tension does exist, however the levels thereof are lower, as the participating states mostly share the goals, especially within the environmental sphere.

Looking at the field missions and extra budgetary projects we can see the OSCE's effects on the region through lesser actions. It is important to note that, the economic and environmental are directly correlated to the security affairs. Within the climate change projects of the OCEEA, it is highlighted that the effects of climate change are directly affecting security, they not only exacerbate existing conflicts, however also, directly and indirectly create new threats to European security. In terms of compatibility responsiveness within activities on the topic of climate change there is a near homogenous level of cooperation, with two exceptions. The Russian Federation has not accepted climate change as a topic which should be discussed under the security agenda, continuously disagreeing with the other participating states. Turkey has also not completely integrated into this discussion. Furthermore, by examining OSCE's work through extra budgetary projects and the reports from field missions, we can gain insight of how the OSCE is as a mediating body within the economic and environmental field. The level of cooperation, and extent to which the participating states act in harmony with one another in the environmental field, does showcase the OSCE's value as a forum for dialogue and cooperation. On the other hand, this section will also demonstrate some internal issues which harm the effectiveness of the OSCE within this dimension as well, again from the root of the change in quality of the interstate relations in the region.

3.2.1 Extrabudgetary Projects and Field Missions

Working on an extra budgetary project in the field of climate change, has offered insight of the internal processes of the organization. The process of planning and carrying out the project through the involvement of the delegations of participating states, partners and donors, shows the issues with the previously mentioned problem areas. In the field of climate change, the

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presence of non-binding agreements and decisions does not lead to action from the participating states which do not share the same set of values and interests. Projects allow for target action in certain areas of European security issues, which circumvent the issue of differing values. With the ability to focus on a certain region, and with the assistance of the representatives from the participating states, the field missions located in the area and the support from OSCE, action is conducted, and the results are apparent. Security affairs do limit the effectiveness of the projects as the interstate relations between the actors are the guiding factors.

Working on the climate change project has shown two different processes when dealing with two different regions. During the regional assessment of South-Eastern Europe,[75] the cooperation between Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia and the field operations within the region, allowed for an efficient process. The positive interstate relations in South-Eastern Europe provided OSCE with more agency, allowing for an effective process. Looking at the process in the South Caucasus, the consultation processes between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia are affected by the regional struggles in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Given the circumstances, each action is split into two distinct pathways, one incorporating interactions between Azerbaijan and Georgia and the other - interactions between Armenia and Georgia. This makes the process less efficient, due to the fact that the issues in interstate relations create an environment in which the region cannot reach homogenous agreements.

While the economic and environmental activities of the organization are not as affected from the change in Euro Atlantic relations and the OSCE internal structure, the effect is still visible. Overall, the heavy dependency the OSCE has on its participating states affects its

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[75] OSCE, *Regional Assessment for South-Eastern Europe: Security implications of climate change*, (Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2021), https://www.osce.org/secretariat/484148.

effectiveness, its agency and ability to carry out actions in the solving of European security

issues.

Conclusion: Does the OSCE have a strengthening or dampening effect in regard to European Conflict?

The European geopolitical situation has worsened, which can be seen by looking at the straying away from the once plausible idea of a security community. At the end of the Cold War, the region was showcasing signs of nearly approaching a structure which could resemble a security community. The three conditions of pluralistic security communities,[76] namely, compatibility of major values, mutual responsiveness, and mutual predictive behavior, were nearly met. The decline in these conditions have highlighted the increased insecurity in the OSCE region, fueled by the change of the quality of Euro Atlantic interstate relations, which has damaged the European security situation in the last ten years.

Looking at the main research question and puzzle of the thesis, and whether the OSCE has a strengthening or dampening effect on European security, it is clear that the answer is mixed. The OSCE does provide a strengthening effect on European security, however, it is heavily limited by the change of Euro Atlantic interstate relations. The OSCE's heavy dependence on its participating states, due to the lack of legal personality and use of the consensus principle, creates an environment in which the organization has to act within the bounds of its states, limiting its agency. While the role of the OSCE as a platform for multilateral dialogue is crucial, the willingness of the participating states to use it as an arena for their own conflict has been shown, limiting the OSCE's capacity as an actor in its own right. As seen in the leadership crisis of 2020, in which the terms of the leaders of the OSCE's three premier institutions, namely, the Director of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, as well as the Secretary General, expired, the change of relations between

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[76] Adler, "Imagined (security) communities"; Adler and Barnett, *Security communities*; Deutsch et al., *Political Community and The North Atlantic Area*.

the states in the region and their boldness to disagree with consensus has underlined this willingness. Additionally, at a time when strategic decisions have become more important due to the deteriorating of the environment in which the OSCE operates and whose stability and security it is mandated to uphold, the OSCE is less able to work as a conflict management actor. The amount of decisions made during Ministerial Councils since 2005 has gradually decreased, reaching an alarming rate in the last six years, fueled by the faultiness of the consensus principle when paired with the change of values, interests and relations of the participating states in the region. Furthermore, the amount of conflictual statements made by participating states during ministerial councils and permanent councils has further affected the effectiveness of those meetings, contributing to the lack of decisions made. The increase of conflictual statements within the forum shows the willingness of the participating states to turn the OSCE more into an arena for their own conflicts, giving it less space for agency to help dampen the European security situation. Lastly, the role of the OSCE as a governing body, in terms of mediation and peace operations, has shown varying types of results. As the Euro Atlantic interstate relations have changed for the worse, the ability of the OSCE to strengthen European security has been hindered. The internal conditions of the OSCE that facilitate or hamper its conflict management services have deteriorated the mediation and facilitation services, however, their effects remain important in European security. While the severity of the impact of the worsening geopolitical situation in Europe between the security dimension and the economic and environmental dimension is different, the effects are still visible.

To conclude, it is clear that the OSCE does play a strengthening role in European security, one which provides a platform for dialogue as well as governance of the region, however, in the last ten years the role of the OSCE in European security has weakened. Due to the change of the quality of interstate relations in the Euro Atlantic region as well as the internal structure of the organization, the agency of the OSCE in European security has deteriorated.

The question which remains is, whether the interstate relations in the Euro Atlantic region can be repaired and whether the OSCE effectiveness and agency can plausibly be improved through changes in its internal structure, especially regarding its heavy dependence on its participating states.

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