CIVIL SOCIETY ROLE IN ADDRESSING SECURITY CONCERNS: REFLECTING ON THE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE OSCE AND BEYOND IN THE EVOLVING SECURITY SITUATION

Report on the proceedings of the expert seminar in the framework of the Helsinki+50 project organised by the Civic Solidarity Platform

28 April 2025, Berlin

The seminar was held on 28 April 2025 in Berlin in the framework of the "Helsinki+50 initiative towards the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act: Reflection process on the future of the OSCE in the times of crises" project, implemented by the Civic Solidarity Platform with support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany and the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OSCE.

The seminar brought together 23 experts, including independent consultants and members from the following organisations, many of whom combine analytical and academic expertise in the field of human rights/security and activist background, as well strong knowledge of the work of the OSCE and other inter-governmental organisations: Austausch (Germany), Berghof Foundation (Germany), Centre for Civil Liberties (Ukraine), Center for European Policy Analysis (U.S.), Centre for Solidarity International (Lithuania), CRISP – Crisis Simulation for Peace e. V. (Germany), Freedom Files (Poland), Global Public Policy Institute (Germany), Human Rights Defence Centre "Memorial" (international/Russia), International Strategic Action Network for Security – iSANS (Poland), Libereco (The Netherlands), Netherlands Helsinki Committee (the Netherlands), New Eurasian Strategies Centre (the UK), Public Verdict Foundation (Russia), School of Civic Education (Lithuania/Latvia/Russia), Sicherheit Neu Denken –"Rethinking Security – from Military to Civil Security Policy" (Germany/international), Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (German Institute for International and Security Affairs) (Germany), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Germany).

The seminar programme included several sessions: introduction of the Helsinki+50 project, seminar goals, and introduction of the participants (opening session); inside the OSCE framework (session 1); outside of the OSCE framework (session 2); civil society advocacy on security matters (session 3); conclusions: brainstorming on recommendations (session 4). Sessions 1, 2, and 3 started with introductory remarks by experts, which were followed by a discussion.

The report applies Chatham House rules, meaning that neither the identity nor the affiliation of the experts who delivered introductory remarks and the participants in the discussions are revealed in referring to statements made at the seminar, except those speakers who agreed to have their names and affiliations indicated.

The first session of the seminar was dedicated to experience with taking on board civil society concerns in OSCE first dimension processes (Permanent Council, Forum for Security Cooperation, other entry points in the OSCE Secretariat, institutions and field operations).

The goal of the session was to look into interconnection between the three dimensions, what should be preserved in the OSCE and what can be discarded, and bigger questions of what is the future of the OSCE.

In her introductory remarks, Olga Zakharova (International Strategic Action Network for Security – iSANS) referred to hands-on experience of the organisations she has worked with. She stressed that although in the OSCE there has been an official underlying discourse of the comprehensive security approach, commitments of all participating States, and the perception of the OSCE as a platform for dialogue, the reality was formed by attempts to appease Russia and compartmentalise the three dimensions. On the other hand, in the past fifteen years, there has always been a "coalition of the willing" in the OSCE, including delegations of participating States and representatives of OSCE institutions that was "moving things forward". Both aspects are important to acknowledge if we want to revive and reinvent the OSCE and make it capable of effectively responding to the crisis.

Although the OSCE was established to have dialogue with the USSR and others on the basis of commonly agreed principles and later continued as a place for dialogue with Putin's Russia, it could be much bigger than that, Olga claimed. We should not limit ourselves to only talking to Russia. Indeed, there is a major war unleashed by Russia in the middle of Europe, in Ukraine. However, there is a country next to it, Belarus, where crimes against humanity are already a "new normal", and potentially it is a ground for further Russian aggression into Europe. We cannot forget that there is also Central Asia, which is still in the USSR times in many ways. There are other threats for the OSCE region that are coming from, for example, China or the Middle East. OSCE work should not be just about Putin's Russia, it should be about comprehensive security in the whole region and on its borders.

Civil society has tried to broaden its space in the OSCE ever since it was put into the third dimension due to the three compartmentalised tracks and efforts by many actors to please Russia. Civil society has repeatedly referred to the initial Helsinki approach to security, which is comprehensive, and according to which there is no hard security without soft security, but de facto, the OSCE has not lived up to this concept, trying to appease the systemic violator.

In Olga's experience, it is because of this compartmentalisation that we have so many think tanks specialising in security and political issues. In most cases, however, their discussions are highly theoretical. From what Olga has witnessed, they were "western school based" with a limited idea of what is happening on the ground and of how real politics are made in the Eastern part of the OSCE region. There were so many assumptions and presumptions of a kind "if we give Putin or another dictator this or that, or engage them within these programmes, the regime will probably become more civilised and less cannibalistic". It has proved wrong. So, if we want to reinvent OSCE both on its governmental and non-governmental side, we have to get closer to reality.

The logical conclusion from this is that we also have to rethink ourselves. We have to get back to building a stronger coalition of the willing. We also have to acknowledge that there should be

political will. When there is political will, you can achieve a lot. You can have the Moscow Mechanism launched in five days. Or you can discuss it for five years and then not have it anyway, simply because there is no real interest and no will.

The value of the OSCE, in Olga's opinion, is its size. The OSCE has 57 countries. So, even if we do not have the U.S. on board anymore, and we continue having aggressive Russia and dictators Belarus, Turkmenistan and other places, we still have aspiring countries that are interested to be part of a bigger process for democratic security in the region. Therefore, the OSCE can still do good and important things. Currently, it cannot be a negotiation platform, because the U.S. is doing exactly what Russia wants, but there is always a way to bring them back to earth with a enough political will.

Should there be a peace deal to end Russia's war against Ukraine of any kind of quality, there are many things to be done in the OSCE framework. It is, of course, monitoring missions, it is fact-finding missions, it is making Russia grant access to human rights monitoring on the occupied territories. It is monitoring and early warning not only on the territory of Russia, but also in Belarus. Belarus should be monitored 24/7 with the use of all kinds of inquiry mechanisms, including the Vienna Mechanism. The OSCE toolbox should be used to the maximum.

Returning to the question of political will, Olga underlined that its lack is something to be discussed by political leadership of OSCE participating States. In this regard, she noted that we may not like leadership of Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan, but they are trying to lean towards this part of the world, and they do not want to be left alone with Russia, Erdogan's Turkey and China. Turkey is a part of the OSCE, but countries of Central Asia are generally interested now to be closer to the EU than to China or Turkey. Their interests could be used to rethink the OSCE as a dialogue platform.

Answering the question about participation in the OSCE Security Days, Olga explained it was always a goodwill of the chair, never an automatic process. We always had to ask again and again. And then civil society organisations were most often told that "there are already too many people", or, as an exception, "you can sit in the background", and very rarely "maybe one of you could do very short remarks".

Presentation of the next speaker, Douglas Wake (independent consultant, OSCE expert) started with reflections on the question posed by the organisers about how civil society input is viewed by the OSCE. Doug noted that it depends which part of the OSCE you are talking to, who you are addressing, and which civil society groups are delivering messages. In his view, it is important to discuss what kind of messages are being delivered, how they are being delivered, what is the best way of communicating effectively in a particular context.

The next subject was prompted by an earlier comment by a participant on the problem of too private and informal nature of interaction of OSCE bodies with civil society organisations. It is justified by alleged sensitivity of issues discussed and could probably be explained by the unwillingness of some interlocutors to be publicly quoted in further communications. In the opinion of several participants, this leads to the lack of structured dialogue and the lack of public recognition of civil society input.

Doug's perspective on this was based on his involvement as a staff member in an OSCE field operation, deputy head of an OSCE institution, an expert in the Secretariat, as a silent participant in one of those meetings between civil society and a Secretary General, but also being out in the field doing election observation missions. The question of informal interaction versus formal, quiet versus public is not one that has a single answer, he noted. There can be value to different kinds of interactions. In terms of who is being addressed, there is a wide range of OSCE structures which are potentially interested. These are representatives of the Chair-in-Office who have their own reasons to be interested in what civil society has to say, because they have their own domestic constituencies and their own roles of civil society, or Special Representatives who may be very interested in what civil society or other experts have in terms of input on their issues. The Secretary General and specific units of the Secretariat are all a bit different in terms of receptiveness.

There is probably a general common element that less formal, more private, quiet discussion tends to be favoured. But this is different if you are talking to, for example, the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Affairs where things might not seem quite so sensitive and yet one can address issues that are quite important to security, like corruption, transparency of economic processes, or environmental protection issues. The same goes to some extent for the Office for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, which is very interested in getting input from the specialised communities that deal with those issues. The Transnational Threat Department, while it is very hard security related and very first dimension related, can be pushed at times to recognise that when you are talking about policing or border security, there is a role for civil society inputs.

The main interlocutors for civil society, such as the ODIHR and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, do welcome input from civil society. How they are able to use it depends a lot on what their mandates and their tasks are. Field operations, even when they have narrow mandates, are interested in what is going on in their countries of assignment and will listen, if civil society voices can somehow be channelled to them. It is absolutely true that it is easier in the Balkans, where they have broad mandates to engage with everyone, as opposed to Central Asia, where the mandates are very narrow and field operations are, by definition, implementing projects that relate to the work of the governments. Nevertheless, civil society still can have some input. The question is who you are talking to. This is very much on the informal side. It may matter not just what official assignment somebody has, but where they come from and whether they have a civil society background. It also depends on what civil society organisations are saying and how much you can demonstrate your credibility.

Doug endorsed the views about overcoming barriers between so called civil society and so called experts. It is really important to avoid this ghettoisation, that in the first dimension we only talk to think tanks because "they are experts", and in the third dimension we talk to civil society because they somehow are just activists who complain a lot. It is important to overcome this misconception that civil society deals with one set of issues and experts with another. Part of that is also the responsibility of civil society to go in and talk to people from OSCE institutions, give them something that shows you know your issues, you know OSCE commitments, and you've got facts that will help them because one of the secrets of this interaction is that everybody has a job to do. The job of staff at an OSCE institution is making sure their boss knows what is going on in Kazakhstan or Belgium, and they probably do not always have that information at their fingertips. If civil society can give it to them in a way that is credible and accepted, it helps them do their job.

To build that kind of rapport is always a good thing. It helps, if you can demonstrate that you represent more than just 30 participants of the seminar, that you represent an organisation that has some real roots on the ground in whatever country, region, or issue you are dealing with.

What kind of message is delivered by civil society groups? Facts are generally quite welcome if OSCE experts themselves or OSCE officials do not have them at their fingertips. Recommendations are useful, but how welcome they will be from the insider perspective will go through a kind of filter of "how realistic do I think this is". If a recommendation comes from a group that calls for a radical reform of the OSCE, people may say "it's very interesting", but then they will look at their contract and say, "but I am only going to be three years in the job and I know this is not going to happen in the next three years". This is just a reality to be aware of.

As far as the various documents and reports, the most useful reports are the ones that shy away from just calling for more political will, but make practical suggestions. The ones that say how to exploit the flexibilities and the creativity within the system rather than the ones that simply say "we need Russia and America to agree on everything".

Complaints can be justified, but be careful, because you want to build relationships and keep that dialogue with OSCE people going. If the complaint is based on the allegation that problems that were well beyond the mandate or the capacity of that institution were not solved, people may get irritated that they are getting blamed for something that is not their fault.

It is important to recognise that diplomats have a certain way of going about their business, and it may help to try to recognise their manner of speaking as well.

It does not hurt to say "thank you" if you meet with the ODIHR and they have done something you like, or you meet with a field operation and they have stretched their mandate a little bit to do something positive, Doug pointed out. It also does not hurt to show empathy with the other side and say, "I understand that as the head of mission here, you have certain limits." This could be done in a private conversation, in that informal dialogue with OSCE officials. You may be on the same side, but you have to recognise that they cannot do the same things in public that you do, because their jobs depend on it, their ability to stay there and fight for good things. The good fight may depend on also being discreet and doing things quietly sometimes.

Turning to the scenarios of the OSCE future, discussed in the Clingendael Institute study "Neither secure nor co-operative? The potential future of the OSCE"[1] that he had been asked by the organisers to comment on, Doug put it in the context of a whole series of papers that have been written over the past five years, looking towards the 50th anniversary of the OSCE and thinking about its weaknesses, limitations, and what might be done in the future. These studies have a lot of common elements. One of them is to look at these issues in terms of history, and there is a common line that history does not repeat itself but it may rhyme.

So how has the OSCE, or the CSCE in its past, worked in different periods, and what might this tell us about its potential for the future? Looking back, the Helsinki process was very important in its

[1] Marina Ohanjanyan, Bob Deen, Kaspar Pucek, Neither secure nor co-operative? The potential future of the OSCE. Report by the Clingendael Institute, 25 March 2025.
https://www.clingendael.org/publication/neither-secure-nor-co-operative-potential-future-osce

role as a platform for dialogue and a framework for common principles, including in the early 90s when it was possible to go much further and talk together about democracy, human rights, and elections from what seemed to be a common perspective. And then it changed to the world that we live in now, that was already starting in late 90s with increasing tensions over a wide range of issues from elections and colour revolutions to the wars – Georgia conflict, the takeover of Crimea, and the full scale invasion of Ukraine.

If we look at these different phases, this leads to the discussion, as the Clingendael authors put it, on what scenarios might be possible in the future. All scenarios in some way reflect on different experiences of what the OSCE did in the past and depend on geopolitical developments. Geopolitical development number one is, obviously, how the full-scale war is going to end. But more generally, these are the issues that relate to Russia's relations with its neighbours, the overall relations of the U.S. with Europe and Russia, conflicts within the region. There are three potential scenarios identified by the authors. Scenarios are fairly standard among those who think about the future of the OSCE, Doug noted.

A first scenario is "containment and confrontation". This is where we are now and where the role of the OSCE is quite limited by the divisions among its key actors. But it is still there as a dialogue platform among states. The best thing that the OSCE can do now is 1) to have a table where people sit and talk, and 2) prepare for better days. But the Clingendael authors mention, Doug stressed, that there are still opportunities to be seized. From a personal perspective, as someone who has led election observation missions in countries that welcome such missions and at least rhetorically tell us that they are interested in OSCE recommendations, he added that there are still things that the OSCE is doing in such areas as elections, trafficking in persons and corruption, even in this containment and confrontation phase.

A second scenario is what the Clingendael authors call a "detente 2.0", where greater engagement is possible because the war is, if not over, then at least brought to a cease fire of some kind and there is less intense confrontation between the East and the West. Their "detente 2.0" is the middle ground where you can do more and identify some new areas of common interest that the OSCE could work on. More scope for institutions to do things on the human dimension and conflict prevention and resolution issues.

Scenario number 3 is this glowing scenario, as authors admit, a very unlikely one, of greater geopolitical convergence, almost undoubtedly following leadership change in Russia. Probably this presupposes also leadership change in the United States, Doug added. The Clingendael authors would suggest that only in this kind of repeat of the early 1990s, with a much better feeling of collaborative convergence, that an OSCE reform could be seriously thought through on an institutional basis. Doug agreed with that, although he mentioned that modest kinds of improvements do not have to wait for that. At least from a civil society perspective, we should all continue to be proposing things that are pushing the envelope, but within the realm of the realistic, in something less than Charter of Paris 1990 terms.

Doug commented that is it is very ironic that in the United Nations, Western countries universally have always pushed for reform against the resistance of others, particularly of developing countries. Therefore, a reform was always interpreted as more efficiency, more targeted focus on key issues, and was resisted by those who like things as they are in the UN. In the OSCE, it is the

other way around: Russia and its friends talk about reforming the OSCE when they push for the position that the OSCE should not waste so much time on those "unimportant" human dimension issues. So Western countries have tended not to use the word "reform", but to talk about improving effectiveness and efficiency. Which demonstrates that your language very much depends on where you sit in a particular environment.

Concluding his presentation, Doug stated that there are still many roles that the OSCE could play. It is not the same as the Council of Europe or the European Union, either in membership or in mandates or in shared commitments. So, modest as it is, the OSCE has a role to play in the future, even in one of these wildcard scenarios. And, probably for different national reasons, both Russia and the United States for the moment are likely to stay within it.

The next speaker, Katia Glod (New Eurasian Strategies Centre and Centre for European Policy Analysis), presented her recent report on the OSCE toolbox[2] prepared as part of her work for the European Leadership Network, a group of over 400 security experts from different generations and professional backgrounds.

To contextualise the report, Katia explained that it was commissioned with a view to informing Foreign Ministries, in particular OSCE delegations in Vienna, experts and other stakeholders. The European Leadership Network was asked to produce a comprehensive overview of the OSCE's available tools, highlighting those that should be retained, updated, or discarded.

Katia noted that the concept of a "toolbox" is relatively new in the OSCE's vocabulary. Interestingly, many current and former OSCE officials and security experts interviewed during the research admitted that they were not fully aware of the breadth of available tools. This reflects a longstanding structural challenge in the organisation: while the OSCE undertakes considerable work, its departments often operate in silos, with limited awareness of one another's activities. This was one of the motivations behind the Finnish Chairpersonship's decision during the 2022–2023 Structured Dialogue to consolidate and systematise the OSCE toolbox.

The resulting overview of the toolbox is available both online and as an app (via Google and Apple stores). It is organised around the OSCE's conflict cycle: early warning, conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. While the toolbox excludes programmatic activities and specific projects, it encompasses institutions (such as ODIHR and the Secretary General), field operations, fact-finding missions, and a range of instruments, mechanisms, and handbooks.

The initiative had two primary objectives. First, to map the tools available, particularly as some landmark agreements—like the Vienna Document or the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe—have lost operational relevance in the face of direct military aggression, calling into question the OSCE's effectiveness. Second, to raise the OSCE's profile west of Vienna, where its role is often underappreciated. In contrast, countries to the east of Vienna value the OSCE's practical contributions on the ground.

[2] Katia Glod, Assessing the OSCE Toolbox: Opportunities for a Safer Europe. Report, European Leadership Network, March 2025. https://europeanleadershipnetwork.org/report/assessing-the-osce-toolbox-opportunities-for-a-safer-europe/

During the research on the project, a strong consensus emerged: the OSCE remains a vital platform encompassing Russia, the US, Canada, EU and NATO member states, and countries in Central Asia. All interviewed experts agreed that the OSCE remained crucial even now, during a diplomatic breakdown. At a later stage, when the war is over, if any agreements are reached, the OSCE would be a very important and useful platform to conduct negotiations, assist in implementing post-negotiations arrangements, monitor them, and have a peace dialogue. No other forum spans the entire region "from Vancouver to Vladivostok". Moreover, Russia still seems to value its continued participation.

Katia identified three key pillars of the OSCE's added value:

1. The politico-military dimension

   This includes frameworks for arms control. Although the Vienna Document and the Treaty on Open Skies are no longer fully operational, and several states have withdrawn from the CFE Treaty, any future European security settlement will necessarily involve revisiting arms control arrangements. The OSCE remains uniquely placed to facilitate such discussions and to update or create new norms.

2. Technical expertise

   The OSCE possesses wide-ranging technical expertise, for example in confidence-building measures, including those related to cybersecurity, which have been internationally recognised. Many of the OSCE's tools – such as those used during the Balkan wars, and in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan – have been effective in the past. While Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the erosion of Helsinki principles have diminished the OSCE's role and visibility, the Organization's role and its technical documentation (e.g. on small arms, ammunition stockpiles, and disarmament procedures) remains of high quality.

3. Field missions and silent diplomacy

   Katia highlighted the role of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, who engages in quiet diplomacy – a unique mechanism. Tools such as the Vienna and Moscow Mechanisms function not only as fact-finding missions, as seen in Ukraine in 2022 – when the OSCE was the first to document human rights violations – and in Belarus in 2020, following the crackdown on post-election protests. The latter helped pave the way for the establishment of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus. While the OSCE lacks binding enforcement powers and depends on consensus, Katia argued that fact-finding itself plays a vital role. It affirms victims' experiences and provides evidence for future action when political will exists.

Concluding her remarks with challenges and recommendations, Katia noted that the toolbox's effectiveness is constrained by three main issues:

a) it is non-binding,

b) implementation depends on participating States, while OSCE institutions lack autonomy and executive power,

c) there are no robust follow-up mechanisms.

Rather than assuming the absence of political will as a given, the report explores how the toolbox can be modernised within current constraints. Administrative reforms are also recommended to address institutional inefficiencies.

Funding constraints were highlighted as another key limitation. Yet, extra-budgetary financing has also allowed for faster deployment and broader expertise, including from non-participating States.

The report's central recommendation is to revitalise political will but it acknowledges the difficulty in prescribing how. Among the ideas floated were increasing youth engagement to deepen understanding of the Helsinki Final Act, updating instruments to reflect contemporary security threats (e.g. disinformation, cybersecurity), and expanding formats for engagement. Enhancing local capacity, strengthening inter-agency cooperation, and integrating environmental issues into security frameworks were also discussed. The OSCE's work in Ukraine on river degradation was cited as an example that was later adopted by the UN and applied in parts of Africa.

A final speaker of the session, Lukasz Mackiewicz (former member of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine), started from reminding the audience that the current crisis of the OSCE is not the first one. Back in 2010-2014, we faced the same question, "do we need the OSCE at all?", and the mission that was supposed to save the OSCE was precisely the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). Lukasz, together with a colleague, recently published a paper analysing lessons learned from the SMM.[3]

The mission started its work after the Crimea annexation but before the hostilities in Donbas began. It was supposed to contribute to the reduction of tensions, foster peace and stability, as well as to establish contacts with different authorities as well as civil society. Then the escalation came and came Minsk agreements, which shifted the focus of the mission towards the monitoring of the ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons. It was assumed that there will be a full ceasefire, and the SMM should be there "just in case". In reality, the OSCE reported 1,5 million cases of ceasefire violations in almost eight years' time, which means around 600 to 800 cases a day. Lukasz claimed this official number is a tip of the iceberg because the SMM could not monitor ceasefire violations at all time and in all locations.

The SMM was documenting cases of ceasefire violations. There were temporary ceasefires for Christmas or a new school year beginning, which showcased that progress was possible if the political will was there. Each time, however, the shooting would restart again. The SMM tried to compensate for the lack of political will, hoping that if there only be enough staff, enough technology, it could stop the hostile activities. At the end, the SMM was criticised by all the sides of the conflict and nobody was happy with it. Civil society actors also criticised it because it expected the SMM to stop the war. No one remembered that the task of the mission was not to stop the war, but to monitor if one of the conflict party was shooting or shelling.

In Lukasz' opinion, the biggest challenge of the SMM was an assumption that civil society could not actively contribute to its task, which was monitoring and reporting of the ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons, as it was not a neutral actor. There were at least two Ukrainian civil

[3] Julia Friedrich, Lukasz Mackiewicz, Presence without Power. Lessons from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) for Ceasefire Monitoring in Ukraine. Policy brief by the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi), 16 April 2025. https://gppi.net/2025/04/16/presence-without-power

society organisations that offered to do some kind of monitoring, and this help was not taken up by the SMM because of the perceived lack of neutrality. At the same time, we know from other contexts, like Colombia, that civil society organisations can play this role. They are biased, but it is not something that can be completely excluded.

The SMM had offices in Vinnytsia, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Lviv, and those colleagues who were not involved in areas of active hostilities, were interacting with civil society organisations. That was way easier for them than for those based in Donbas. The SMM conducted localised mediation efforts, Track-3 narratives for peace initiatives, which started in 2017. The aim was to collect different perspectives to see how people perceived the conflict.

At the local level, the SMM had only a limited understanding of civil society actors and their activities. The SMM staff was partly overburdened with tasks related to monitoring humanitarian situation and human rights violations. In the occupied areas, it was difficult to cooperate with anyone at all, as the questions were "are those actors legitimate", "can the SMM actually go and meet them or it is going to legitimise the occupation"? In their turn, civil society actors were afraid of being seen with the SMM staff. For instance, a proposal by the SMM to go to universities and explain what it was doing was rejected. Furthermore, the SMM never properly engaged in building trust with communities that have been along the front line.

At the same time, Lukasz stressed that the mission was doing an amazing job nobody knows about. He referred to the issue of enabling repair works of electricity and water lines that were cross-cutting the territory. The SMM was providing so-called mirror patrols from both sides of the front line so that the repair workers could come and repair the infrastructure. Lukasz assumed that around 4 million civilians benefited from this kind of activities.

One of the main lessons that could be learned from the activities of the SMM in Ukraine, in Lukasz' assessment, was that a political will was a key. A mission cannot compensate for a lack of it. If there is no will, there is no point of starting any kind of mission in the future.

Second lesson learned: you need a common understanding of what the priorities of the mission are and have a shared vision among the leadership.

Then there was an issue of the importance of balanced recruitment. A problem of ex-military staff being uncomfortable with civilians influenced the work of the mission considerably. For most of ex-military people, it was more interesting to observe military equipment than to talk to somebody who was living along the front line.

It is important to learn from other missions, from other contexts, from peacebuilding, and development cooperation. For example, the SMM in Ukraine never conducted a proper stakeholder analysis to see who are the different actors on different levels. Lukasz reiterated that the SMM could have involved civil society in a ceasefire monitoring despite the risk and potential biases.

Wrapping up his presentation, providing an outlook, Lukasz repeated that a ceasefire monitoring mission is not a replacement for security. It is also not a tool which can replace security guarantees

needed. But it could be used in a combination with different instruments/mechanisms/missions. Kosovo experience proved that this kind of cooperation can be effective.

At the same time, the OSCE might not be the best actor for implementing a possible new ceasefire agreement in the future. The SMM was the biggest mission the OSCE has ever had; it was controlling 500 kilometres. If there would be similar mission in the current situation, it would have to deal not with 500, but 2,500 kilometres of the frontline. Who could do it instead of the OSCE? The EU has experience, we can look at its mission in Georgia, so it is an option for Ukraine. However, in this case a mission would be limited only to the territories controlled by Ukraine and would be perceived as a Western mission against Russia. The UN has plenty of experience, but at the end it is a political decision to be taken.

The discussion that followed the presentations touched upon the question of what civil society is. Is it more organisations or people on the operational side? Do think-tanks belong to civil society as well? Is the distinction to be made between civil society representatives and experts? Participants agreed that civil society is a broad definition. Experts, human rights defenders, people from think tanks, journalists, everyone who is outside of the government should all be included in civil society. The view was expressed that societies are changing, and civil society is changing as well, trying to adapt to challenges of the current times. So, even if an organisation is supported by the government but is not part of the ministry or not controlled by the government, it should be included into this notion.

A local perspective was suggested, which demonstrated that apart from traditional representatives of civil society, such as civic activists, religious leaders, academia, and journalists, other actors should be considered, such as, in the case of industrialised Donbas, trade union representatives, or in the case of rural Luhansk – local farmers association. Or, in certain cases, people who have been directly affected by the conflict, including representatives of mothers of the fallen soldiers or the Afghan veterans organisation, which is not the first thing you would have on your mind when you think about civil society on a national level.

A considerable part of the discussion was focused on the problem of the OSCE rules which are not favourable to civil society. Only its participation in the human dimension activities is explicitly ensured on paper. In all other areas, there is no obligation for the OSCE to engage with civil society organisations. However, these events can be potentially open to the media and public by a joint decision of the states. Obviously, states are generally against such a decision. Alternatively, the Chairs of various bodies may invite media and public as experts on their own will, which became a tradition in some situations such as the Human Dimension Committee due to continuous efforts by the CSP, but there is an obvious need to push for the role of Chairs of other informal bodies and events more to be able to enter other rooms.

It was noted that the CSP is not even known to some of the OSCE people. This is in spite of all the work done by it and its achievements within the last 15 years. This is quite upsetting, given so much important work being done. Growing indifference of diplomats in Vienna, who shy away more and more, and the fact that they tend to give all the initiative to capitals, saying “the capital will decide”, adds to frustration. In this regard, it was noted that a push from civil society groups is necessary, ideally, in agreement with the academic community and all those who have something to say. Equally important is to identify friendly partners within delegations, OSCE staff and the chairs of

OSCE bodies and stress that civil society involvement is not hostile, but is aimed at making the organisation better fulfil its mandate, to do its job more effectively, to promote peace and security in the broadest sense across all three dimensions.

Participants fully supported the idea that civil society organisations have to be creative and try to explore flexibilities within the norms and procedures. We also have to make ourselves known to the ministries responsible for particular issues. That might be easier said than done, particularly with regard to countries which are currently completely closed to civil society participation. But even in those countries which are open on paper, but still do not have a tradition of relying on civil society, it is necessary to push our case and make ourselves known to the foreign ministries and explain that we are really there to help and not to be treated as hostile enemies. For countries where it would be impossible to go and talk to the governments, lobbying and pushing OSCE institutions directly would be a way to go. The opportunity of actively engaging with the Finnish Chairpersonship is good because they understand the need for that. Similar like-minded governments need to be informed as much as possible about civil society's position and views. The more you put it out there on the agenda, the more likely participating States will at least open their minds to considering it. Maybe one day they would be able to agree on that.

The need to have a formal position of civil society liaisons in OSCE bodies was noted by many. Presently, most of OSCE institutions do not have it and all the work is done ad hoc. The circle of their civil society contacts is limited to those with whom they are comfortable. The position of the Special Representative on Civil Society also should be strengthened and its mandate broadened and made multidimensional.

The second session was devoted to discussing prospects for civil society influencing peace and security processes, in particular with respect to human rights and accountability considerations.

The first speaker of the session, Volodymir Yavorsky (Centre for Civil Liberties, Ukraine), started his presentation with referring to persons imprisoned without due process by the Russian authorities. These people should be released immediately. Demands from the OSCE to the Russian authorities in this regard should be made at every meeting. He stressed that people usually are not seen during discussions about war. Diplomats and politicians see territories, arms, problematic issues, but not people which are affected by the war. There are more than 20,000 Ukrainian civilians who are kept in Russian prisons for no reason and without any kind of criminal investigation. They are kept in prisons already for two-three years, like slaves in the ancient world.

Volodymir also referred to criminals who had been in prisons on the occupied territories, and whom Russia transferred to Russian prisons and treated as Russian citizens without their consent. Another example was children or elderly persons from social institutions. They were also transferred to the Russian territory. Russia treats them as Russian citizens as well. In its recent judgment in the case of Crimea, the European Court of Human Rights clearly called forced acquisition of citizenship a violation of human rights. A month ago, the Council of Europe had a meeting on the implementation of this judgment. Still, there are no discussions on the international level on how to return these persons. There were a lot of disputes after the Second World War about the return of families to their homes. During this conflict, there was no proper reaction of the

international community to this problem. That is why the international campaign "People First"[4] was initiated.

Volodymir expressed his regret that the campaign started quite late. The obligation to release all civilians and prisoners of war should be a precursor to any negotiations. Nevertheless, it is not too late for action. We have to release them next month, because it looks like they could be kept in detention for years without a reason. Also, this refers not only to the Russian Federation but also to Belarus, because thousands of Ukrainians are kept in Belarusian prisons since 2022.

Another issue which the Centre for Civil Liberties has worked on is a tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine. An official declaration on creation of this tribunal by the agreement between the Council of Europe and Ukraine was planned for May 9. Volodymir expressed his hope that the other countries will join this tribunal and its establishment will start this year. It is, however, interesting how its creation will correlate to the peace agreement. What will be the future of thousands of international crimes committed during the war? In the framework of the initiative "Tribunal for Putin",[5] information about 70,000 cases which could be called international crimes was collected. Ukrainian Prosecutor's Office has collected information about 150,000 cases of international crimes. Will they be investigated? What if a peace agreement will demand from Ukraine to stop investigation of these crimes or to declare an amnesty? These are very hard questions, as there are no basic principles for peace agreements.

There are several parallel discourses concerning accountability and the war in Ukraine. There is an issue of including accountability in a peace agreement. There is a judgment of the European Court of Human Rights. There is a track of the International Criminal Court investigation, and a separate track of a Tribunal of Aggression. And yet, it is still not clear whether there will be justice for people. We should be mindful that the Russian slogan "we will repeat it again" may become a reality. Therefore, we should aim at a peace agreement that will guarantee peace that is going to be just and sustainable and not temporary, Volodymir concluded.

The next speaker, Inna Berezkina (School of Civic Education) presented a Manifesto "Sustainable Peace: Our View"[6] adopted by Platforma, an alliance of 80 Russian anti-war, human rights, humanitarian, research and other initiatives and organisations. It was inspired by the Ukrainian Sustainable Peace Manifesto,[7] written in the first year of the war. Since the context has not changed much, it should be repeated that the actions of Russia in respect of Ukraine cannot go unpunished and the return to a pre-war status quo in international politics is impossible even if this war is over. We need to create conditions for international security and peace and rebuild international order which is impossible without a greater role of civil society in it.

Platforma's Manifesto was an attempt to make sense of the vast and complex set of problems and its undoubtably a very tall task. But the authors felt responsible to formulate a vision of sustainable peace in the region and beyond, and to answer the question that people like Hanna Arendt were

[4] People First. International campaign for the release of captives held as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. https://people1st.online/

[5] "Tribunal for Putin" Initiative. https://t4pua.org/en/1202

[6] Sustainable Peace: Our View. Manifesto initiated by the Platform for Civic, Anti-War and Humanitarian Initiatives and prepared by a collective of authors, 20.02.2024
https://platforma.international/statements/sustainable-peace-our-view

[7] Sustainable Peace Manifesto. Never Again 2.0. https://sustainablepeacemanifesto.org/

asking in the previous century, “what is the solution to human condition”? The principal feature of this document is the way it was produced, which in itself reflects the mere idea behind it. That is because the authors claim the absolute and imperative necessity to move to a new political culture and a new social contract. The work was based on horizontal and inclusive principles, but there was also an effort to form a broader coalition with not only representatives of community and society working on the document, but also legal experts, professionals, representatives of academia, decolonial initiatives, feminist groups, as well as representatives of vulnerable and underrepresented groups.

The document has four main accents. First and the foremost, it is de-occupation of Ukraine, compensation, reparation and voluntary settlement of all the disputes and claims between Russia and not only Ukraine, but also all the countries that have been the targets of Russia’s aggression. Like it has been said, we need to talk about people first. There is a claim in the document that ceasefire is not enough. Return of the territories is not enough. We have to bring people first, but even the return of people will not be the guarantee of a lasting peace. Only if Russia takes moral, political, and legal responsibility for the crime of aggression and massive violation of human rights in the past and present, we will be able to talk about lasting peace in the region and beyond. A prerequisite for that is a transitional justice. We do not talk enough about it, unfortunately, and the School of Civic Education is trying to do all it can to push this agenda on all fronts.

The other important thing is civic education and the role of civil society. In this regard, Inna mentioned that the war of attrition that we are witnessing was predetermined. There was no recognition, let alone responsibility taken for the wars in Chechnya and Georgia. There was a zero understanding that the occupation of Crimea and parts of Luhansk and Donetsk regions was in violation of international law. And it means that people with higher education in Russia, the broader public did not understand how actually modern society works. Higher education does not make up for the absence of civic education. Few organisations that are working on this front are not enough for this huge country. We need to bring the question of understanding the modern norms of coexistence into the public domain. Experts attribute the failure of transition in Russia to propaganda, the sense of national humiliation, the collapse of people’s well-being, but actually, the question is in the absence of the norms and measures of transitional justice, Inna alleged.

The other thing that was already mentioned at the seminar is the creation of a Special Tribunal for aggression, and Inna reiterated that she and her network stand for it and promote this idea everywhere they go. A Tribunal will help to acknowledge moral and legal responsibility, but it will also accelerate the movement towards restoring the disrupted balance in the world community. It will require comprehensive constitutional reform in Russia, a thorough examination of its totalitarian past, and de-construction of the current unjust, immoral, and anti-human system of governance. But what is very important while rarely said is that we need the deconstruction of the historical and political Soviet and imperial militaristic narratives, practices and ideas that underline the contemporary mythology that justifies the crimes of the past and normalises the crimes of the present.

Inna mentioned that when she talks about transitional justice, she is often asked whether this question is even timely, because it requires the state to move to a democratic regime. But she believes that we cannot waste this time. The processes of transitional justice can be initiated and prepared by civil society even before the country goes through a transition. The state will inevitably

be involved in things like trials, reparations and lustration. But things like truth commission, memorialisation, and guarantees of non-repetition should be done by civil society. Thus, civil society will become the initiator, the implementer, and the auditor of the processes of transitional justice. This will justify the importance of the role of civil society altogether. Without civic education, these measures will be incomplete. We have to remember that incomplete and inconsistent measures of transitional justice lead to inevitable revenge of authoritarianism.

We need to transit to a new social contract and to legitimise new institutions. It is impossible without complete dismantling of stereotypes associated with the idea of an empire, military expansion, nationalism, racism, patriarchy, and the superiority of one nation over another. Without dismantling the ideas of "Ruski Mir" (Russian World), including through the emancipation of language, this transit will be impossible. So, when it comes to impunity, forgetfulness, inertia, re-written history, indoctrination, propaganda, and distorted understanding of how democratic institutions work, this can only be countered with civic education, because it will make people realise that they are not just the population, but they are active citizens and they are agents of change, and a lot depends on them.

Inna stressed that now when democracy is in decline, we need to build a new vision of how international security will look like. It is impossible without an active role of civil society. Needless to say, Russia needs a fundamentally new foreign policy doctrine, and all the aggressive elements of foreign policy should be clearly countered by international security mechanisms. International relations should be conducted in accordance with the rules of the international law. But also, what is rarely said, countries should adjust their criminal codes to be more open to the use of the universal jurisdiction principle and other instruments like the Convention against Torture or the Convention against Enforced Disappearance or the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. There is also a need to push for ecocide to become a part of the Rome Statute.

Speaking about how civil society can seat at the decision making table, Inna referred to her work with Democracy Without Borders, which in 2020 launched the campaign "We the Peoples".[8] It calls for the creation of the instrument "World Citizens' Initiative" which would enable people to put proposals that will reach a certain threshold of public support to the agenda of the Secretary General, the Security Council, and UN Parliamentary Assembly of Elected Representatives in order to make the link between citizens and the UN. The UN Civil Society Envoy is responsible for a more inclusive strategy for engagement between civil society and the UN. If this initiative is implemented, the UN would become not just a void in the international relations, but a real instrument that would be able to respond more effectively to global challenges.

To conclude, Inna stated she believes that strong and enlightened civil society that demands accountability from states creates conditions for sustainable peace and stronger institutions. If we get there, then we will probably be able to more confidently say "never again".

The next speaker, Ralf Becker (Sicherheit Neu Denken – "Rethinking Security – from Military to Civil Security Policy"), talked about the Rethinking Security Initiative. The blueprint for the initiative was the Jubilee Campaign which was realised from 1996 to 1999, before a G8 Summit in Cologne. It

[8] For strong public participation at the UN. Supporting inclusive and accountable global governance. https://www.wethepeoples.org/

was focused on the theme of indebtedness of many countries in the Global South. The campaign in Germany included 2,000 organisations, from local level up to the federal level. It was conducted in 50 countries of the world. It was public work on a country level and a focused lobby work aimed at the Chair of the G8 Summit, which was German Chancellor then. The campaign's aims and its design were widely called naïve, but through presenting a clear positive future vision and specific realistic steps to solve the situation, the campaign became a big success – the G8 decided to cancel a big debt for over 20 countries.

Thirty years ago, the first people who built up windmills in Germany were even called naïve. It seemed obvious that you need fossil and atomic energy, nuclear energy. But engaged people produced their small projects, and nowadays nobody in Germany doubts that the paradigm shift from fossil and nuclear to renewable energy is totally possible and sensible for the country. So Rethinking Security Initiative decided to take this "transition vision scenario" as a basis for the paradigm shift scenario from military to civil security in Germany and Europe. The fundament of the initiative was an action plan of the federal government in Germany on civilian crisis prevention, conflict resolution, and peace building in the year 2004, which resulted in a big success reported in 2014. This paper as outcome of all these projects in ten years shows clearly, that if we support all these positive examples, like the small windmills and so on in the earlier decade, the future will be different. The scenario of rethinking security from military to civil security policy for Germany was published in 2018, for Europe in 2025.

A five-pillar civil security policy was developed. The first pillar was foreign relations. This is more or less in the field of the human dimension. The second pillar was sustainable development in the EU neighbourhood. It was proposed to focus expenditures not on the German military, but on the welfare of Africa and the Middle East as well as in a future partnership with Russia. The third pillar was a civil international security architecture. It was claimed that although the UN and other international organisations are important, they get much less money from Germany and all the states than NATO. It was claimed that it is necessary to change this. Germany can give €27,000,000,000 per year to the UN system and €6,000,000,000 per year to the OSCE. Presently, Germany is giving only about 500 million per year to the UN system. If we all invest in our common civil security architecture, then nobody will be our enemy, and we feel much more safer than when we invest €80,000,000,000 per year in our German military. The fourth pillar, resilient democracy, aims at building the culture of nonviolent communication and mediation both inside of our countries and on the international level. And then, finally, if all this works with a mutually agreed disarmament with Russia, beginning in 2030, in a very positive scenario it could be possible to totally convert the military sphere in Germany in the year 2040 and to build up more international police (this is the OSCE idea) than national armies.

Thus, the campaign was focusing on the first dimension of the OSCE, the political military dimension. The focus was based on the analysis of the crisis in Europe in the spirit of 1990 when the Summit of Heads of States and Governments was held in Paris.

The scenario was translated into six languages including Polish and Russian. It was created for Germany to inspire our society, our vision, and invite other countries to develop such scenarios for their countries as well. The Austrian civil society created an Austrian peace strategy and published it in 2023. In the Netherlands, church organisations published in 2024 their own scenario. Both are quite close to the German Rethinking Security Initiative scenario. The

Netherlands' one focused on the international courts they have. The Austrians focused on the neutrality they have in their constitution . In the UK, there is a big campaign of Rethinking Security as well. They are focusing on human security as a key word. And just a few weeks ago, an association for Rethinking Security was founded in France. Since 2022, there is as well a growing Rethinking African Security campaign. In two pilot regions, Great Lakes and West Africa, a Steering Committee of about 10 people is planning scenarios for West and Central Africa, because they said, "we need such a positive scenario to focus our energies on the future" to reach the Agenda 2063 vision of the African Union "The Africa We Want".

The Rethinking Security Initiative campaign includes currently around 150 supporting organisations, mainly in Germany, as well 40 organisations in Austria and 15 in the Netherlands and other countries. Three biggest trade unions of Germany joined the campaign this year. There are also seven federal protestant churches as participants of our campaign. It thus has a big representative profile for talking to the politicians. There have been some 500 public events on these positive scenarios, 20,000 people have been reached only in Germany. There were some public talks, but mostly background talks with main political leaders of the former government in Germany, and as well from the Christian Democrats. This work continues.

Arguments of the German academy-based actors were collected. For instance, long-time leader of the German Association for Peace and Conflict Studies alleged that Europe's biggest mistake was that after 1990, we did not push much more for the establishment of a common inclusive security system. The study group on European security architecture of the association of German scientists before 2022 published a paper "The Moose of Russia Has Destroyed the European Peace Order" and claimed that we did not elaborate a real European peace order. This remains a challenge for the future. Above all, they claimed as well that there was a lack of willingness for mutual recognition and inclusive community building. The West had the main responsibility for this failure, according to this paper: "It neither wanted to involve Moscow on an equal footing, nor did it want to provide the OSCE with the necessary instruments for successful crisis management."

In this context, Ralf stated there are many failures on the Russian side, but noted that Europe is not willing to look at its own failures and mistakes. Ralf referred to a change in the U.S. strategy regarding disarmament treaties which is not widely discussed. There nearly was an agreement with Russia on a new treaty to lower the conventional arms in Europe in 2004. Putin and the Duma accepted it. But the United States said they did not want this new treaty, but wanted to expand NATO and build up the military. In 2004, NATO was expanded by seven members, including the Baltic states. And after that, in Ralf's opinion, the question of Ukraine's potential NATO membership appeared and became a reason for the Russian aggression. Ralf referred to Wolfgang Ischinger, experienced diplomat and chair of the German Munich Security Conference for 15 years, who stated publicly in 2022 that the West has good reasons to reflect on its own mistakes: "Why in 2007 they did not take more seriously what was said by Vladimir Putin at the time? Why in 2008, the American government's initiative was not rejected much more vehemently, as the crossing of a red line from the Russian point of view?" Wolfgang Ischinger said that in his experience as a diplomat, if one side accepts it made a mistake, then the other side also could give in that it made mistakes as well.

In the new European Rethinking Security scenario, it is claimed that in 2028, the OSCE could adopt a new European peace and conflict order that takes into account different security interests. It

includes a proposal of an UN secured neutrality zone in Ukraine. This would be a possible new map, where you have NATO members with their security architecture, you have Russia combined with Belarus and other states, and you have the states in between, which get UN security guarantees.

For Russia, preventing Ukraine from joining NATO is the central goal of the war, Ralf reiterated. For Ukraine, its sovereignty with viable security guarantees is a decisive goal of its defensive war. A solution that leads out of the war and is, at the same time, sustainable, could be a UN security guarantee. This could be ensured by the UN security force with participation of, for example, Indian, South African, Brazilian, Swiss, or other international armed forces, and not only NATO or EU countries forces. An international UN security force in Ukraine would draw its strengths in particular from the fact that all participants would agree on its purpose, its task, its function, and the rules of its deployment. Thus, Russia has to agree with this as well.

Ralf mentioned that there was already a chance to present this new scenario to political leaders. It was, among other, offered to Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, the chair of the European Parliament's Defence and Security Committee, and she was on the German television with it. René Repasi, educated in international law, a member of the Presidium of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and the coordinator of members of German Social Democrats in European Parliament, got the idea at once and said, "Yes, I will go for this". Through the participation in the Munich Security Conference, the Initiative received attention of German newspapers like Handelsblatt. There were longer talks with the leading German public media and also with the New York Times because the scenario focuses not only on Europe, but on the Middle East and West Asia as well.

Ralf's presentation provided a ground for a discussion on the negative consequences of assuming the Russian position and its interests in ending the war. Reacting to remarks about this, Ralf commented that against the background of former western dominance in international developments where Europe was in the position to give advice, we now need a new international culture where we all assist each other. He expressed hope and trust that even Putin will worship that the Europeans are asking for support of the Global South in solving their conflicts. Also, the UN security guarantees have to be within the frame of the UN Security Council, and if the members have a consensus about it, then Russia will have to be part of it and give in.

Ralf repeated that the solution should be based not only on Western military forces guarantees of security for Ukraine, but on the request from Europe to all the world to give security guarantees. Not the West trying to solve this conflict with the old thinking of West against Russia, but a new international frame. Then the instruments do not have to be hard as in the case if the Western military would go to Ukraine. It could be more or less a police mission, because nobody would fear that Russia will again attack Ukraine, as its main concern of NATO expansion will disappear. Ralf agreed that the peace mission to Ukraine should be combined with payment of compensation by Russia and other things that have been already mentioned earlier today. At the same time, it is necessary to accept mutual interests, he insisted. Ralf suggested we have to tell Putin, "yes, we made a mistake", as we did not take his words seriously enough like we do it now.

Another part of the discussion was devoted to transitional justice and, in particular, its possible timeframe. It was noted that it took 20 years for the German church to ask Poland for forgiveness. It took 74 years for the German president to do the same. In Russia, where major societal change

is necessary, it might take decades. It was also noted by some participants that Germany is the ideal example of transitional justice. However, we do not have a Marshall Plan now, we are dealing with a different framework, and our situation is much more gloomier than in Germany after WWII, because we will have to deal not only with this particular war of aggression by Russia, but also with previous aggressions and with tens of years and massive violations of human rights inside Russia. The framework for the processes to gain momentum will be therefore 20 to 25 years, at best.

In this context, an example of Argentina was mentioned. Before it became a democracy, civil society did an incredible work aimed at transforming the educational system and actively engaged in informal education to make a shift in society's consciousness.

It was also stressed that although it is incredibly dark and gloomy now, there is resistance inside Russia. If these people take an active role and start preparing, there will be a chance that people will lean to the more active side rather than to the discredited people in power.

The third session was aimed at covering issues related to civil society advocacy on security matters, and, in particular, the scope for civil society engagement on security matters in Helsinki and Vienna in 2025, public outreach, publications and online actions tied to the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act

The first speaker of the session, Heidi Meinzolt (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), referred to her long-term experience of exchanges with women directly affected by conflict, war, and violence, but united by the idea that we need to formulate our idea of security, which is currently dominated by military narratives. The language of security in policy debates is primarily framed in the context of armament and (militarised) defence. These narratives are a part of a dualistic system of "friend" and "enemy", the good and the evil, the victim and the perpetrator. A starting point to discuss it is the triggers, the question of where the feeling of insecurity comes from, and how this understanding can be applied to engage people against this machinery which does not allow them to take a step back from the militaristic narratives.

We know that security has many facets in the everyday life, and, in a different dimension, in war. These spheres have, however, common features which are the questions of health, sexual and reproductive rights, education, access to resources, political relevance of decision making, social and human security, care for life without violence and oppression. Only this complex understanding of security can trace pathways to peace.

Even in many European countries we are experiencing the growth of the feeling of insecurity due to the situation when the rise in military expenditures has had extremely negative consequences for the budget. Social services are dramatically reduced, which leads to the growth of insecurity and helplessness. Even the Munich Security Conference two years ago was titled "How to Overcome Helplessness". It is critical now to understand that common security is the way of a decent living together. A threat may come not only from outside, but also from inside. This approach is called "a caring perspective". It is about taking up security as a challenge for all our lives.

In the OSCE context, we have to analyse what kind of strategies we can put on the table to survive not only as civil society, but also as human beings. One such strategy is confidence building,

solidarity and cross-border cooperation. It is a long-term process. And this is what we have to fight for: we need long-term safe spaces and adequate financing of such work.

Heidi also suggested that we need to work on different approaches to civilian defence. She referred to a proposal made by Olexandra Romantsova to start discussion on how culture, education, theatre, and other ways of defending our lives can make a difference. It is vital to build and spread feminist counter-narratives.

We need very context-specific confidence-building measures. Diaspora experiences play an enormous role in rebuilding images of what life should be, and what the rights of people, and especially women, could be. This is a long-term cooperative work; therefore, our argument for the common security debate on the OSCE level is that if we lose this idea of common security on a structural level, we lose a lot of chances to build a future.

Wrapping up, Heidi reported that there are discussions going around a new Gender Action plan in the OSCE. A gender equality conference next week in Vienna will not only discuss a number of women in institutions, but consider arguments of civilian, nonviolent ways of resisting war and violence. It is suggested that this will help to build the future of the organisation, but also our future. Of course, training programs, workshop, informal dialogue spaces, all this is needed to give it more strength and to create a new image of peace-building, which is not about demonstrating who is "the good one", but about a pathway to peace and the way of working together.

Answering the question about her experience of advocacy, Heidi commented that it is important to continuously build networks of people who understand that only together we can make a difference. She pointed out that the long work with the ODIHR and the Gender Unit of the OSCE finally brings results; they slowly understand that what women need is not a nice brochure on mediation, but people who have the experience of working on the ground. People from ODIHR and the Gender Unit were very much interested in the survey done by the Working Group member Luisa del Turco in the framework of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda of the UN on how critical the implementation of 1325 (UNSCR 1325, the landmark resolution of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda) is for the OSCE region. Such work cannot be done by an institution, of course, but it would be good if the institution would finance civil society initiatives, Heidi noted.

The next speaker, Harry Hummel (Libereco), made a disclaimer that what he was saying was his personal opinion, based on his decades-long experience in different human rights NGOs rather than on his current membership of Libereco. He suggested that for the events in Helsinki this summer, our task is to stimulate a strong and credible representation of civil society. Harry said this cannot be done by the CSP on its own because it represents a too limited subsector of civil society. We need to try to get on board other sectors of society. Churches and trade unions would be among the groups that he would look at, as well as academia, universities, student movements, some professional organisations that care for human security, medical doctors, journalists, organisations of minorities of different types, including NGOs working on ethnic minorities issues, which the HCNM office works with a lot but which almost completely are outside the CSP network. Sectors of civil society that represent youth and women are important. Human security is or should be an issue for the climate movement. So, we should also try to look at that part of civil society too.

Next point by Harry was that it is very difficult to disconnect security in Europe from global security. Europe in the 1970s was the centre of the world being the main focal point of a conflict between the two opposing blocs. This has quite radically changed now as is being made clear by the current U.S. government. Europe is in a way like Africa has been for a very long time, difficult part of the world where people, tribes start fighting each other. The international community does not know how to deal with it and is only moderately interested in it.

Harry mentioned the outcome document of the European Union – South Africa Summit which included a conflict resolution part with specific mention of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, but also the Israel-Palestine conflict and several conflicts in Africa. There was also mention there of the need and the importance of reform of the UN system, its decision making which should be more democratic, and the need for abolishing of the veto rights of the countries that were victors in the Second World War. It also looked at further ways to improve international justice. Much of this can be done through multilateral organisations, either the UN or UN linked organisations. Harry noted that this document envisaged a much more radical reform agenda than is usually taken on board by us, middle of the road human rights groups in Europe.

It is necessary to find support in big non-aligned parts of the world to be able to put pressure on Russia. We cannot do it without a wider support. We need to reorient the European human rights movement and do away with the idea that we are the most important continent in the world and that everybody will have to help us in achieving peace in our part of the world.

Harry suggested that we also should start thinking in a longer term, beyond Helsinki+50. It can be Helsinki 50+5 or 50+10. Talks about the original Helsinki conference had started in 1972, and a process of several years will again be needed to find out how comprehensive security in Europe can best be achieved. We should be ready by August 2025 to announce which steps civil society intends to take to maximise a just peace and sustainable cooperation in our region.

On the Helsinki 2025 event, Harry noted that if the CSP will only get the 25 seats that have been offered till now but no speaking possibility during the conference, we would need to create our own speaking possibility, possibly including using a megaphone outside the door of the Finlandia Hall. Our point should not necessarily be a reaffirmation of the importance that we attach to the OSCE. A lot of the things that are needed to promote comprehensive security within the three dimensions can also be worked on outside the OSCE. By governments, but also by committed citizens. Our efforts maybe should not be aimed at trying to revive a dysfunctional OSCE, but to launch a COSCE, the Citizens' Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

A final speaker of the session, Yuri Dzhibladze (Freedom Files and iSANS) tried to reconcile the different dimensions of comprehensive security with practical action in the next months and years, focusing on how we could combine our advocacy for defending Ukraine and other parts of Europe from further military and hybrid aggression with non-military approaches to ensuring human security in the OSCE region.

Yuri mentioned that he believes in civilian security as a principle but he would want it to have a more concrete form and shape going beyond the idea, particularly in terms of what do we demand from governments in terms of concrete actions. The information about the changes in the German budget that Ralf referred to in his presentation, in Yuri's opinion, are absolutely incomparable to

the expenses needed for the revival of the military industry and rebuilding the hard security protection. Much less is needed for building stronger resilience of societies and human security programmes than for building one fighter jet. That is a task for ourselves, to see how these two sides of security could be combined.

A lot depends on what kind of peace agreement will be reached to stop hostilities in Ukraine. What we see now in Trump's approach to reach a "deal" is essentially an invitation for a new military buildup by Putin to prepare for the next steps of expansion. We should not try to incorporate Russia's interests under the current leadership, Yuri underlined. One thing is to analyse the West's mistakes of the 1990s and what could have been done differently to engage a democratising Russia more and take its concerns into consideration, and another is to incorporate now interests of the dictator and the aggressor who is waging a genocidal war in Ukraine.

In the outcome documents of the Reflection Process that the project will come up with, this important combination of the military security, including response to hybrid threats, and human security should have its place. This is one challenge.

The second challenge is about timeframe. On the one hand, we should be forward-looking and understand that major changes in the security architecture and the readiness of governments to come up with a new type of rules-based order will happen not in the course of months, but years. So, it would be indeed a good idea to have a positive vision for five or ten years from now. But, importantly, we also have immediate tasks right away. It is not about Helsinki 50+10, but really this seminar in Berlin plus a few weeks, because the outcome of negotiations on the peace settlement will determine a lot for the years to come in terms of both the fate of Ukraine and the Putin regime's future. If Europe tolerates the "business deal" approach advanced by the Trump administration together with Putin, which neglects the international law and the whole system of principles that was developed after World War II, that would mean that Europe is trailing behind and will not emerge out of this crisis as a serious independent actor.

Four days ago, the Council of Russian Human Rights Defenders issued a statement[9] calling for strong efforts by concerned governments, civil society, and intergovernmental organisations to bring back law into international politics. The statement was a reaction to the developments of the last three months with attempts by the Trump administration to reach a deal, neglecting principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty, the agency of independent nations, and respect for the UN Charter norms and the Helsinki Final Act principles. Importantly, if this happens, not only will it encourage the imperialistic approach shared now by Putin's Russia and Trump's U.S., but will replace the international norms by the right of the strong which in turn will encourage further aggression by the Putin regime as well as other states. It will also encourage impunity for the past crimes, undermine the notion of international humanitarian law and individual criminal and international state responsibility for international crimes, and encourage other aspiring dictators to engage in repression in their own countries with impunity. The statement directly refers to the attempts to reach the business-type deal between the two regimes at the expense of Ukraine, because Trump puts the interest of the aggressor state above the interest of the country that became the object of the aggression.

[9] Return respect for the rule of law and human rights to international politics! Appeal by Russian human rights defenders, 24.04.2025. https://memorialcenter.org/en/news/appeal-by-russian-human-rights-defenders

Interestingly enough, the statement says that what the Trump administration now pursues both at home and at the international level is reminiscent of the policies of the Putin regime for the last 25 years that are very familiar to the authors of the statement through the wars in Chechnya, invasion of Ukraine in 2014, large-scale aggression of 2022, and many years of internal repression in Russia.

The statement of Russian human rights defenders has a rather limited impact due to their constrained institutional capacity these days. That is why we need to look at what could be said in this respect in the framework of the Helsinki+50 process by the CSP and its partners. It would be very important to try to reach politicians and encourage Europeans to have a stronger stance on preserving the international law and send a signal to others.

The final observation by Yuri was on advocacy targets and interlocutors. At this point, it is not clear what will the agenda of the Helsinki conference look like. It is, however clear that the Finnish government takes it very seriously and wants to have a high political level there, foreign ministers and possibly heads of states. The CSP can do a side event during a lunch break. Yuri suggested, however, that ministers will be talking to each other during the break and will not come to side events. The next day, on August 1, there will be two parallel sessions, one for civil society and the other for think tanks, with participation of policy directors of ministries of foreign affairs, where the CSP can present its position in more details. In the current design of the conference, possibilities of substantive input from civil society appear to be very limited compared to the extent that it merits to be heard by the ministers. This is just a hard reality that we need to understand and try to overcome. We need to do something rather extraordinary, not only a demonstration in front of the Finlandia Hall, which Yuri was not against, but it will be too late. It will make it to the media, but will have no impact on the ministers.

Recommendations *per se* are not really working well. Maybe, indeed, a civil society manifesto, a shorter paper than the outcome document of the Reflection Process, with a lot of publicity around it could be a good idea. It would contain key programmatic recommendations and demands on what has to be changed in European and global security arrangements from the civil society perspective. That would be two pages maximum or even less to be heard and accepted well by the media. And we would need to do a quick campaign around that. Then maybe we will shift the balance of attention a little bit.

During the discussion, participants of the seminar referred to a whole variety of advocacy approaches, including street actions with catchy slogans, staging a theatre play, art projects (an example was brought up of a tank made of blocks which would be later dismantled into blocks going to education, health sector, etc.), online campaigning, spreading the messages on the social media, and linking one campaign to another with the aim to do cross-reference.

A suggestion to make a joint action with other organisations, including the anti-war community in Helsinki, was taken positively. There was, however, a consideration voiced, that we need to advocate for serious deterrence and military preparedness of the European states and societies because they have essentially dismantled their arms in the last 30 years, while among the anti-war initiatives there is a lot of people who would strongly oppose this part.

It was noted that advocacy strategy inevitably depends on the end goal. Is it about participation, about having a voice at the conference, about having something in outcome document of the

conference? We should avoid losing ourselves in theoretical discussions. For the last 25 years, civil society has been running after the OSCE saying "please listen to us" with no visible result. That strategy is not working and should be avoided. To influence the outcome document, it should be taken into a consideration that Finland and possibly other participating States are already working on their outcome document. We need to try to actively engage with those few civil society-friendly states to bring civil society perspective into the document drafted by them. In this context, a group called Diplomats Without Borders was mentioned. They are former ambassadors who spent their careers in the MFAs in different countries and have all the contacts. We could potentially use them to deliver our positions.

The importance of working with parliamentarians as an influence group and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was also stressed. The President of the Parliamentary Assembly is Pia Kauma from Finland. She will obviously have a role in the commemoration of the 50th anniversary in Helsinki.

Among potential partners, Finland was repeatedly mentioned, who organised a special event the other day on Ukraine and emphasised in its statement the importance of preserving territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Also, the importance of cooperating with and supporting the U.S. civil society was underlined. It would be important to show how many things that have happened in the last hundred days in the U.S. violate OSCE commitments actively promoted by many past U.S. administrations. Some participants suggested that the U.S. Helsinki Commission should be challenged on their state's adherence to Helsinki principles.

An intensive series of preparatory activities and campaigning activities between now and the middle of summer and then potentially also beyond would require a considerable effort and time. The question was raised whether this is within the CSP capacity.

Another question that caused an exchange of opinions among the participants was a question of how to make the Helsinki Final Act principles more relevant to young people. The idea of a forum for a younger generation where some seasoned diplomats who worked with the OSCE could share their views was voiced. Another idea was to involve young people in our work more actively.

It was noted that the role of youth is foreseen in the Finnish Chairpersonship program. There is a special youth conference in July. It is, however, unclear what will be discussed and how the outcome of that event will be used at the main conference. There is a tradition in the OSCE of trying to get young people to discuss comprehensive security challenges from a youth perspective. However, the tradition is also to do nothing with the outcome with these exercises. This concern was supported by other participants who commented that youth initiatives in different intergovernmental organisations or by the governments are very much an imitation. Regarding the OSCE Youth Forum in Helsinki, planned for 29-30 July, it was promised that its participants will have a chance to advise OSCE teams and participate in high level meetings to share youth perspective. So far, there have been only events or workshops where the OSCE has been telling young people what the organisation is doing. Youth organisations face the same struggle that other civil society organisations are dealing with. Channels of communications are unclear. And though there is a liaison of the Youth and Security Department, its activities are of a more reactive nature.

Nevertheless, if there is an opportunity to share our points in the Youth Forum's events, it should be used.

Finally, a notion of security was discussed again. A comment regarding a lack of a theoretical foundation of the civilian security concept was a starting point of the discussion. It was pointed out that there is a notion of human security and a notion of civilian security, and they not the same. Human security in the UNDP context is the freedom from war and the freedom from fear. It is a very physical understanding of security. There is also civic defence in terms of preparedness for wars and emergency situations. It is a whole broad sphere of civic defence measures that are being undertaken. In Germany, this debate is just about to start. In Finland, they are much more advanced, as well as in the Baltics and Poland. So, what do we understand by civilian security? It is important to fill these terms with meaning based on practitioners' experience, as many of these notions even in academic context are confusing, because everything is evolving so much.

Participants agreed that there is, indeed, this bewildering series of concepts – civilian security, human security, comprehensive security, democratic security in the Council of Europe terminology. Civilian security is somewhat new, if it is not mixed up with civilian defence, which is understood as the way in which populations can resist in a nonviolent way to military occupation. We should probably refrain as much as possible from this cloud of terms describing certain types of security. Comprehensive security is good for us because it is the OSCE concept and has the best theoretical underpinning. And human security is something that we understand and care about. At the same time, civil society's job is more to explain in the simplest, most concise possible way, what that means, how human rights, democracy, struggle against violence, economic prosperity relate to peace and security. We also have to be clear in our documents. However, we will not have big space to give theoretical underpinnings for concepts and theories in our manifesto. We have to use clear and simple language to get heard.

In terms of conflict prevention, the World Bank study was mentioned which showed that if you spend 1 Euro on conflict prevention, you save 16 Euro on addressing the effects of conflict. It is always useful, when talking about civilian-related security institutions like the OSCE to break it down and say how much does it cost. The World Bank study resonates very well with the whole idea of investment in conflict prevention. We could recommend to governments to invest not only in drones and other means of military security, but in actions by members of the public, specialists, as well as affected communities, aimed at dialogue, monitoring and accountability.

The final session was aimed at reflecting at what was discussed during the previous sessions and brainstorming on recommendations to OSCE bodies, participating States and civil society.

During the concluding session participants, in an open brainstorming fashion, tried to formulate the main takeaways and reflect on what has been discussed in the three sessions, with an attempt at generating additional recommendations to different target groups, including OSCE bodies and institutions, participating States and civil society, and planning the next steps.

Certain ideas were voiced in continuation of the advocacy efforts discussion from session three. Among the urgent tasks were named messaging friendly delegations and reaching out to the

Centre for Civil Liberties to see whether we could get some of the key results of our work here into the remarks that will be delivered at the Helsinki conference by Olexandra Matviichuk.

In the context of the remark about OSCE staffers who do not know the CSP, it was suggested to strengthen ourselves by the way of elaborating a more grippy concept of what is essential to us when it comes to comprehensive security. We also need a clearer formula of how we see the OSCE's role in the future. It could make sense to think about reviving the CSP advocacy group, so that folks from the OSCE know "whom to call".

A necessity of a cross-dimensional approach in the OSCE work supported by all the participants of the seminar was linked to the question of whether we can propose institutionalising this approach in our recommendations.

Apart from the immediate calls, a longer-term perspective was discussed. The future of security is impossible without civil society as an actor, as a partner, as an agent in it. People from different networks should be invited to the CSP editorial group to make a possible manifesto more representative and inclusive, as several participants agreed. There are such networks like the Anti-War Global Movement, Feminist Anti-War Resistance, Association of Schools of Political Studies, and Democracy Without Borders. Bringing these people together, just one representative as an editorial group member, adds more dimensions. For this particular document, they will just contributors to the drafting process, but for the future, because it does not end with this particular document, you need to have as many allies from different groups as possible.

For our advocacy with OSCE actors as well as with the MFAs, we need to understand that there is a whole range of OSCE actors, different institutions and programmes, and even within them there are different people. We need to adapt, to choose parts of our recommendations and package them in a way that have better chances to be taken seriously by different bodies. This should be done in the near future so that during the Human Dimension Conference, for which a meeting with ODIHR is planned already, we would have these individualised documents for different institutions and programmes.

The idea of a manifesto and an editorial group for it was supported by all the participants. Two "manifestos" were discussed. One would be about civil society's position on security principles. The Helsinki conference will be very much focused on security arrangements. This manifesto would address that security should be comprehensive but focus on the immediate challenges to the security architecture and principles of ending the Russian war against Ukraine and preventing possible other wars. This manifesto should also include the feminist perspective.

Another manifesto discussed would be a strong voice saying that civil society wants, can, and is able to play an important role in the Helsinki process in general. It would acknowledge the evolving environment and necessity to work on new ways and models of functioning and include plans or commitments to building a stronger public movement to promote and develop implementation of the Helsinki principles.

Everyone agreed that the manifestos should not resemble CSP parallel conference declarations that are 30-40 pages long, but should be two pages maximum. A longer explanatory note as an annex to a short manifesto could be added. Its substance also should differ from other CSP

documents. As discussed at the first workshop of the Reflection Project in Warsaw, it should be a manifesto of the movement, which should go beyond the CSP, as the CSP is just a fraction of civil society that is supportive of the idea of comprehensive security. It should be not our recommendations to OSCE participating States – instead, we should rather proclaim that we support the Helsinki principles despite of all the hardships that the official OSCE is facing at the moment, despite of all their indecisiveness or our scepticism. In this sense, a manifesto will be different from the outcome document of the Reflection Process, which will include practical recommendations. The manifesto is more about principles similar to the Helsinki Decalogue.

The idea to include representatives from different groups of civil society into the editorial group to make it more inclusive was repeated several times. On the other hand, it was said that producing a short 10-12 point manifesto that would involve representatives of several networks will be a challenge. Expectations of different networks with their specific agendas may be overlapping but still are rather particular in terms of the interest in pushing for their perspective to be well represented in the text. It will be quite a balancing act, and we need to play expectations down. Another concern was that logistics of the collective development of a manifesto might take a long time which we do not have.

Another document which we are already drafting is CSP recommendations on the future of the OSCE that the Finnish Chairpersonship requested the CSP to provide them with by 12 May. The Chairpersonship is apparently trying to have a joint outcome document of the Helsinki conference and invited the CSP and other actors to make input in their preparatory process.

Finally, an idea of a separate statement presenting a civil society position with regard to principles that need to be included in peace negotiations to end the Russian aggression against Ukraine was discussed. Although it may not directly influence negotiations, it still makes sense to state a joint position because there will be an issue of implementation of a peace agreement. Earlier statements by Ukrainian, Russian, and international NGOs[10] might be used as a basis.

Recommendations

To OSCE bodies, institutions and participating States:

- strongly reaffirm your commitment to the Helsinki principles and the fundamental Helsinki approach to security, which is based on the concept that security is comprehensive and according to which there is no “hard” security without “soft” security;
- institutionalise a cross-dimensional approach in OSCE activities to ensure practical implementation of the comprehensive security concept, make consistent efforts to overcome the existing compartmentalisation of the three dimensions;

[10] See, for example, There will be no peace without justice: Statement of civil society organisations on the US-Russia negotiations, 19 February 2025. https://zmina.ua/en/statements-en/there-will-be-no-peace-without-justice-statement-of-ukrainian-civil-society-on-the-us-russia-negotiations/; On forthcoming negotiations between Russia and Ukraine: Prioritising the human dimension. Statement by civil society representatives from Ukraine, Russia and the international community, December 2024. https://docs.google.com/document/d/173W2vllAY2DozzFdbmZxSLQ2qm2NXZCm/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114059585608694912565&rtpof=true&sd=true

- get rid of the notion that interests of a dictator and an aggressor who systematically and openly violates the Helsinki principles should be considered in the same equal way as the interests of participating States striving to respect and adhere to OSCE commitments and of the illusion that "if we give a dictator this or that, or engage a dictatorial regime within these OSCE programmes, it probably will become more civilised";
- consider different scenarios of the OSCE future, reflecting on experiences of what the OSCE was able to achieve in different periods in the past and depending on geopolitical developments, first and foremost on how the full-scale invasion of Ukraine will end and on how relations between Russia and the West will develop; acknowledge that the OSCE has a role to play in the future even in the worst case scenario; be prepared to different scenarios and have concrete plans for their implementation;
- in discussions and decisions on ending the Russian aggression against Ukraine:
    - put people first; demand the immediate release of all persons imprisoned without due process by the Russian authorities;
    - support the establishment and the work of the tribunal on aggression against Ukraine, created by the agreement between the Council of Europe and Ukraine;
    - acknowledge that ceasefire is not enough; support a peace agreement that will guarantee just and sustainable peace by ensuring accountability for the crimes committed and justice for the victims and include compensation, reparation and voluntary settlement of all the disputes and claims between Russia and Ukraine; acknowledge sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and not recognise legitimacy of the Russian occupation;
- if a peace agreement is concluded to stop the Russian aggression against Ukraine, use the OSCE potential and its security toolbox and technical expertise to the maximum extent possible to ensure sustainable peace, including using the OSCE as a platform to conduct negotiations on arms control and confidence-building measures, elaborate new security norms or improve the existing documents, assist in implementing post-negotiations arrangements and monitor their implementation, send monitoring missions and fact finding missions, hold human rights monitoring on the occupied territories, facilitate peace-building dialogue, etc. Monitoring and early warning should be done not only in Ukraine and Russia, but also in Belarus. Inquiry mechanisms should be actively applied, including the Moscow and the Vienna Mechanism;
- in discussions on prospects of possible deployment of a special mission to monitor implementation of a cease fire/peace agreement in Ukraine and ensure international security guarantees for Ukraine, work closely with the UN and for ensuring provision of UN security guarantees for Ukraine. The latter could be provided by a UN security force with participation of not only NATO or EU countries forces but also forces from the states of Global South. Such an international UN security force would draw its strengths from the fact that all participants, including Ukraine and Russia, would agree on its purpose, its task, its function, and the rules of its deployment; lessons learned from the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine should be thoroughly taken into account;
- take into serious consideration analysis and recommendations in the recent report on the OSCE toolbox by the European Leadership Network, including the need to revive political will of participating States to actively use the toolbox; more actively engage younger people

to help them understand the Helsinki Final Act; modernise and update tools in the areas which are interesting to participating States such as cybersecurity, disinformation, modern conflict scenarios; revamp some engagement formats; increase enhanced capacity building, including for local civil society actors; improve interagency cooperation;

- acknowledge a need for a more complex understanding of security and that security has different dimensions, that it is not only the military security but human security as well, which is about the well-being of society, including the questions of social security, access to resources, health, sexual and reproductive rights, education, care for life without violence; recognise that security is impossible to ensure only by military means and that the rise in military expenditures has negative consequences for the budgets and leads to the reduction of social services which in turn leads to the growth of insecurity;
- acknowledge that the making the comprehensive security work is impossible without civil society as an important actor, a partner, and an agent of change;
- establish a position of a civil society liaison in every OSCE body, institution and programme;
- strengthen the position of the Special Representative on Civil Society and broaden its mandate to make it multidimensional to assist in ensuring civil society access to the political-military dimension and making its engagement there more effective;
- make the OSCE more relevant for younger people, including by having a forum of younger generation and organising a follow-up to special youth conference in July foreseen in the Finnish Chairpersonship program;
- adapt and modernise OSCE tools to address hybrid threats to security, including propaganda and disinformation;
- allocate budget for more sustainable and active civil society engagement in OSCE activities and the Helsinki process.

To civil society:

- address the lack of structured approach by OSCE bodies and institutions to engagement with civil society more actively;
- in engaging with OSCE actors, take into consideration their mandates, interests, possibilities and limitations, context, and sensitivities of different actors and processes, and make use of both public and informal engagements;
- adapt our recommendations, choose relevant parts and package them in a way that they have better chances to be taken seriously by different bodies, institutions, and delegations;
- in engaging with various OSCE actors, reflect on what kind of messages are being delivered by civil society, how are they being delivered, what is the best way of communicating effectively in a particular context; demonstrate your credibility;
- identify friendly partners within delegations of States, OSCE staff and chairs of OSCE bodies, and stress that civil society involvement is not hostile but is aimed at making the organisation better fulfil its mandate, to do its job more effectively, to promote peace and security in the broadest sense across all three dimensions;

- invest more actively in working with friends of civil society and "coalitions of the willing" from among delegations of participating States and staff of OSCE bodies and institutions;
- reach out to parliamentarians in the OSCE PA and national parliaments;
- be creative and more actively explore flexibilities within the existing OSCE norms and procedures to create opportunities for engagement;
- make yourself known to the ministries of foreign affairs and ministries responsible for particular issues; explain that we are really there to help and not to be treated as hostile enemies; inform governments as much as possible about civil society's position and views;
- take active steps to overcome the "ghettoisation" in the OSCE when in the first dimension they only talk to think tanks because "they are experts", and in the third dimension they talk to civil society because "they are activists", fight the misconception that civil society deals with one set of issues and experts with another. Talk to people in OSCE institutions, give them information and analysis showing that we know the issues and OSCE commitments and have facts that will help them. Appreciate the work they have done;
- revive the CSP advocacy group to more actively and effectively engage with actors in the OSCE and beyond to present civil society positions and recommendations;
- while drafting civil society documents and reports, be aware that the most useful reports are the ones that have practical suggestions within the realm of what a particular body or institution can do and say how to use the flexibilities and the creativity within the system rather than simply call for "more political will" or say "we need participating States to implement their commitments and agree on everything";
- elaborate a strong and credible representation of civil society in the Helsinki process by getting on board other groups and sectors of society beyond the human rights community such as women's groups, churches and trade unions, minority groups, academia, universities, youth and student organisations, professional associations, climate movement, peace initiatives, people who have been affected by conflict, etc.;
- move our planning from Helsinki+50 to a longer term perspective, such as Helsinki 50+5 or Helsinki 50+10;
- consider an idea that we might need not to relaunch the OSCE, but to launch the COSCE, the Citizens' Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe;
- take actions to broaden knowledge about the Helsinki principles and the OSCE among members of the broad public;
- reflect on how we could make the Helsinki Final Act principles relevant to young people and consider involving young people in our work more actively;
- do not constrain our position to the reaffirmation of the importance of the OSCE; remember that a lot of the things that are needed now can also be done outside the OSCE;
- build ties and seek support in non-aligned parts of the world in order to more effectively put pressure on Russia to end its aggression against Ukraine and get rid of its imperialistic ambitions. Reorient the European human rights movement towards a global perspective and do away with the idea that we are the most important continent in the world and that everybody will have to help us in achieving peace in our part of the world;

- support civil society initiatives on the preparation of transitional justice measures in Russia and other countries violating the Helsinki principles, aimed at the recognition of legal responsibility of states and its representatives and moral responsibility of people for aggressive wars, occupation of territories and war crimes, understanding of international law, de-construction of the current unjust, immoral, and anti-human system of governance as well as thorough examination of totalitarian past and deconstruction of political and imperial, militaristic narratives and practices of the past and ideas behind the contemporary mythology that justify the crimes of the past and normalise the crimes of the present; support civil society's initiatives on developing transitional justice measures such as truth commissions, memorialisation, and guarantees of non-repetition. Acknowledge that incomplete and inconsistent measures of transitional justice lead to inevitable revenge of authoritarianism and aggression;
- support civil society initiatives on civic education aimed at dismantling stereotypes associated with the idea of an empire, military expansion, nationalism, racism, patriarchy, and the superiority of one nation over another, overcoming impunity, forgetfulness, re-writing of history, indoctrination, propaganda, and distorted understanding of how democratic institutions work, and empowering people to realise that they are not just the population but active citizens and agents of change;
- support U.S. civil society's efforts in documenting, analysing and opposing policies and actions of the current U.S. administration that contradict the OSCE commitments; challenge the U.S. Helsinki Commission on its state's adherence to the Helsinki principles;
- prepare two civil society manifestos on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. The first manifesto would contain key programmatic positions of civil society on what has to be changed in European and global security arrangements. It should be a short document to be accessible to policy makers and the media. Consider doing a quick campaign around the manifesto;
- another manifesto could be a strong voice saying that civil society wants, can, and is able to play an important role in the Helsinki process. It would acknowledge the evolving environment for civil society, the necessity for it to work on new ways of functioning, and include commitments to building a stronger public movement to promote the implementation of the Helsinki principles. It will be different from the outcome document of the reflection process, which will include practical recommendations. The manifesto will be about our principles, in this way similar to the Helsinki Decalogue;
- consider drafting a statement presenting civil society position with regard to principles that need to be included in peace negotiations to end the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Earlier statements by Ukrainian, Russian, and international NGOs might be used as a basis;
- include representatives of other civil society networks and coalitions into the editorial group for drafting documents on the occasion of the 50th anniversary to ensure a more inclusive process and the need to build alliances;
- engage with Finland and other states involved in the drafting of the Helsinki+50 conference outcome document to bring civil society perspective into the document;
- create our own speaking possibilities and spaces around the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act events, including street actions, art projects, spreading messages on social media, linking one campaign to another, etc.