

The evolution of the Russian Federation's policy towards the OSCE? Case study: The OSCE Mission to South Ossetia and the diplomatic crisis of 2008

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June 22, 2015, The Hague

Executive summary

The aim of this paper is to reflect on Russian-OSCE relations and how this has changed from Russia's constructive engagement to gradual disillusionment. The history of Russia's engagement in the OSCE is traced back to the founding of the organisation in 1975, while there is particular focus on the Yeltsin and Putin administration. This paper looks at the root causes for the current crisis within the OSCE and analyses the significance of the Russian factor in it. In order to gather the data for the research, extensive desk research has been conducted in addition to personal interviews. The interviewees recruited for this research were OSCE experts, each with a unique point of view on the issues covered in this paper. A detailed study of all the developments and complexity of the OSCE is beyond the scope of this study.

After the end of the Cold War, there were ambitions of building a collective European security. The Yeltsin administration had a cooperative stance towards the OSCE as it had liberal aspirations and sought rapprochement with the West after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia had ambitions to make the OSCE the leading security organisation in Europe and pushed this idea in 1994 at the Budapest Summit and later in 1997 with a proposal for a "Charter on European Security". There was also fear of NATO and Russia viewed the OSCE as buffer against its eastward expansion. Several events led to Russia's realisation that its ambitions of turning the OSCE into a treaty-based security organisation were futile. One of them came in 1999 at the Istanbul Summit which happened at the time of NATO's bombing of Serbia. Russia disapproved of this action and realised that it had no support in its vision for European security. In addition, the closing down of the OSCE missions in the Baltic States at the beginning of the millennium was considered as premature by Russia which led to further disillusionment. Even though Russia no longer desired to turn the OSCE into the overarching security organisation in Europe, the OSCE was still important to Russia as it hoped to use the OSCE as a tool to stop NATO's eastward expansion. Russia hoped to achieve a central position for the OSCE, if not a dominant one. Putin's coming to power was marked by a much more confrontational attitude towards the organisation. Putin criticised the organisation heavily of imbalance between the three dimensions of the OSCE, of bias towards the East and for being subordinate to NATO and the EU. With regards to the three points of criticism, experts believe that some dimensions are more developed than the others. As for the bias, experts say that there are indeed more human rights violations East of Vienna than West of Vienna. It must be admitted that the OSCE has no legal status, it is a consensus-based organisation which puts the organisation in a weak position if participating States do not agree. The case study on the OSCE Mission to Georgia examines the OSCE's role in the South Caucasus and how Russia's involvement in the region affects the OSCE Mission. The Mission to Georgia was a failure not only because the OSCE lacks

sufficient institutional tools but because the parties involved in the conflict are either unwilling to compromise, or in the case of Russia, have no real interest in having the conflicts solved. Russia, with a foreign policy that is dictated by the principles of realism feels that it has interest in maintaining its hegemony in the former Soviet space and thus promotes controlled instability in the region. However, Russian OSCE policy also has elements of rational institutionalism and thus Russia also seeks to instrumentalise the OSCE in order to address its economic concerns.

The current crisis in the OSCE is the result of deep dividing lines within the organisation. The OSCE's failure to develop as a values-based security community is at the heart of the crisis and the reason for the protracted conflicts in the Caucasus. Even the renewed East-West confrontation is the result of fundamentally different perceptions about security. Experts agree that there are no prospects of resolving the differing security perceptions between Russia and the West but the dialogue needs to be open.

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Abbreviations

AO	Autonomous Oblast
BMO	Border Monitoring Operation
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces
CIS	Commonwealth of States
CSBM	Confidence and Security Building Measures
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EED	Economic and Environmental Dimension
EU	European Union
HCNM	High Commission on National Minorities
HFA	Helsinki Final Act
IMEMO	Institute of World Economy and International Relations
JCC	Joint Control Commission
JPKF	Joint Peacekeeping Forces
MC	Ministerial Council
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Russian)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NHC	Netherlands Helsinki Committee
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
RCI	Rational Choice Institutionalism
SCC	Special Command Centre
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SHR	Security and Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNM	United National Movement
UNOMIG	United Nations Mission in Georgia
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Introduction

During the Cold War there were grand visions for peace and democracy in Europe and there were hopes that the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (institutionalised into the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on 1 January 1995 by a decision of the Budapest Summit in December 1994) would play a central role in achieving those (as cited in Kropatcheva, 2015). The reality, however, is that “European security has been characterised by disillusionment and grand crises” (Kropatcheva, 2015, p.6). The OSCE, which is the largest and most inclusive security organisation in Europe, is in a crisis generated by Russia as Russia feels that the OSCE no longer serves its national interests (Ghebali, 2005; Kropatcheva, 2012). The political crisis within the OSCE runs deep as it is illustrated by the contradiction between its wide-ranging operations in the Caucasus, Central Asia, The Balkans, and Eastern Europe and the “unresolved” disputes between Russia and the West (Zellner, 2005). The balance of Russia’s interests vis-à-vis the OSCE has changed dramatically. Russia has become the OSCE's harshest critic even though it used to be one of its biggest supporters. The initial cooperative posture of Russia within the OSCE was driven by its hopes of using the OSCE as a buffer against NATO’s eastward expansion (Ghebali, 2005a; 2005b; Zellner, 2005; Schneider, 1997; Hurlburt, 1995). The romantic period in Russian foreign policy was marked by a desire to adhere to western liberal values and strive for a rapprochement with the West. However, this “democratic euphoria” of the Yeltsin administration was short-lived and was soon followed by a regression to Soviet-era realpolitik values (Abushov, 2009; Kropatcheva, 2015; Hurlburt, 1995). During the romantic period, Russia harboured ambitions of positioning the OSCE as the leading security organisation in Europe (Zagorski, 1997; Zellner, 2005; Kropatcheva, 2015). This rhetoric, however, is a thing of the past and has been abandoned (Mlyn, 2002). The OSCE has not lived up to Russian expectations which resulted in gradual disappointment and disengagement on the part of Russia. Another discrepancy of expectations within the Organisation was the fact that the USSR was primarily interested in the first two dimensions of the OSCE (politico-military and economic and environmental dimension, respectively) while the West had always been interested in the third dimension (human dimension).

The different perceptions about the purpose of the C/OSCE has unfortunately stumped the effectiveness of the Organisation and become an apple of discord within it (Kropatcheva, 2015). Frustration with the OSCE has led Russia to bypass it in favour of bilateral agreements such as the Russia-NATO Founding Act of 1997 (Ghebali, 2005a). This approach plays strongly into Russia’s interests in great-power status and desire to influence its near abroad through bilateral mediation

(Hurlburt, 1995). Thus, a former champion of the OSCE, Russia has become a very vocal critic of the Organisation, accusing it of bias, double standards and subordination to western organisations such as NATO and the EU (Entin & Zagorski, 2009; Ghebali, 2005b). Russia's participation and role in the OSCE is crucial as the future of the Organisation depends on it. Without it, the OSCE risks losing its *raison d'être* (Zellner, 2005). The crisis generated in the OSCE could be summed up to be the result of three factors. EU's enlargement, NATO and Russia's dissatisfaction with the organisation's *modus operandi* and political evolution. The OSCE's grievance with Russia needs to be analysed from a qualitative political perspective. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the OSCE had taken upon itself the mission to democratise Russia's institutions and transform it into a space where the rule of law is abided by. The OSCE, however, had assumed that Russia would maintain its cooperative stance from the 1990s and did not take into account a change in policy when Vladimir Putin assumed the presidency in March 2000. In this way, the OSCE dug itself into a hole by linking part of its relevance to the democratisation agenda of Russia (Ghebali, 2005a). This research aims to explain the change in foreign policy of Russia which is reflected in change in attitude within the OSCE (Hurlburt, 1995). Thus the central research question of this study is:

What is the evolution of the Russian Federation's policy towards the OSCE?

Russian interests in the OSCE have changed from positive to negative and these have been defined by Wolfgang Zellner (2005) as the OSCE either enjoying Russia's support or being openly hostile towards it. Similar terminology is used by Elena Kropatcheva (2015), namely obstructive and constructive strategies employed by Russia vis-à-vis the OSCE and the development of these strategies and gradual change in attitude is traced. In order to observe this change of heart on the part of Russia, the present paper looks at the evolution of Russia's role in the OSCE through tracing its development through the Cold War era to the Putin administration. To illustrate the attitude of Russia towards the organisation, the present paper examines the Georgian conflict in South Ossetia as a case study in order to see how cooperative has Russia been with regard to OSCE missions in conflict zones in the former Soviet space.

The crisis in the OSCE needs to be analysed as the OSCE is a major factor in European security. The OSCE is important in that it provides a unique platform for dialogue for western states and Russia. The OSCE is the most inclusive security organisation and its geographical reach is far wider than any other European or Euro-Atlantic institution (Dunay, 2006). Currently, the role of the organisation is important in monitoring the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and given the delicate political situation

between the EU and Russia, this makes the OSCE an important player in the political arena. This research project, however, does not cover the Ukraine crisis although the road ahead for the OSCE very much depends on the outcome of this crisis and a few references to Ukraine are inevitable. Making generalisations about Russian foreign policy is beyond the scope of this study, however, certain aspects of the Russian Federation's foreign policy are examined. Russian policy is primarily analysed in the realm of European security and in relation to the OSCE and to some degree to the West. Moreover, it should be noted that Russian foreign policy initiatives in the post-Soviet space have important consequences for the OSCE's activities (Hurlburt, 1995). In order to get to the bottom of this crisis, we need to examine the events which led to the current situation and try to address the critical issues and relationships within the organisation. First, the historical development of Russia's role within the OSCE is traced starting from the Soviet Union and then moving on to the Yeltsin and Putin administration. The case study examines the success of the OSCE mission to South Ossetia 1992-2008.

Methods

For this research project I used exclusively qualitative research methods. I did desk research which comprised review of published literature, academic journals and articles which deal with the research question. The collected data was used to answer the research question which has been divided into three sub-questions and one case study:

1. What is the historical development of the relationship between Russia and the OSCE?
2. What is the Putin administration's foreign policy - The Putin doctrine -in relation to the OSCE?
3. What is the relationship between Russia and the OSCE from international relations theory perspective?

Case study: What role did the OSCE mission play in the conflict in South Ossetia?

I chose to do a case study on the Russo-Georgian diplomatic crisis as the role of the OSCE in the crisis is indicative of the relationship with Russia as evidenced by a Russian veto on the extension of the OSCE mission to Georgia (Ghebali, 2004). For the case study I used desk research. For primary data I conducted four interviews with experts on Russian politics and the OSCE. I gained access to my interviewees through the network I created during my internship at the Netherlands Helsinki Committee. The NHC publishes the quarterly journal *Security and Human Rights* which deals exclusively with the work and principles of the OSCE and regularly chronicles OSCE events. As an editor intern for the journal I had access to the journal archives which gave me the opportunity to do

extensive research. In addition, I was in constant contact with the editorial board of SHR who are OSCE experts. I was also in contact with many of the authors who submit their articles to the journal. I had an interview with Barend ter Haar, a Senior Visiting Research Fellow at the Clingendael Institute and a former Dutch diplomat for the Ministry of Foreign affairs who took part in many multilateral negotiations within the EU, NATO, and the OSCE. The focus of discussion with Barend ter Haar was the role of the Russian Federation within the OSCE. I also had an interview with Sergey Utkin, a Faculty Member in the Department of European Political Studies at The Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) of the Russian Academy of Sciences and a member of the Editorial Board of the Security and Human Rights Journal. Our discussion centered on the Russian perspective in the OSCE and the conflict in Georgia. Two of my interviewees wished to remain anonymous. I have referred to one of them as EU diplomat, and the other one is referred to as EU expert. The main focus of my interview with the EU diplomat was the OSCE mission in Georgia as the person was on the ground in Georgia during the 2008 conflict. The interview with the EU expert discussed Russia's OSCE policy through international relations realist and rational institutionalist perspective.

Theory and Literature review

Theory

Prior to assessing Russia's OSCE policy and power projection in the South Caucasus, I first provide a framework of the theories used in this study. Since theoretical discussion is not the focus of this study, but rather how international relations theory can be applied in order to understand the behaviour of states, basic aspects of the theory, its postulates and axioms, is presented.

Realism

Realism encompasses several theories that share a set of core beliefs. Those are that states are the primary actors in international politics and they are the highest authority. World politics is characterised by anarchy, however, the absence of hierarchy does not necessarily mean there is chaos and violence but that states are the principal political unit. States compete among each other for power and the acquisition of power is what dominates realist thinking. World politics is a zero-sum game and beneath the veneer of cooperation between states lie the conflicting interests of states. As the survival of the state can never be guaranteed, war is a legitimate instrument of statecraft (Mearsheimer, 2002, p.25). The realist tradition is historically broad and the different types of realism include: classical realism, structural realism (also called neorealism and divided into structural realism I and structural realism II), neoclassical realism. Despite the significant differences between the different realist theories, realism subscribes to several common tenets, the so-called “three Ss”, namely: statism, survival and self-help. “Statism” is the first principle of realism. Statism make the point that the state is the central actor in world politics and there is no higher authority above the state (Dunne & Schmidt, 2011). The state is sovereign meaning it has the right to rule over its territory, or in the words of Max Weber, the state has “the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (as cited in Dunne & Schmidt, 2011, p.150). The second principle of realism, on which most realists agree, is “survival”. Survival is the principal objective of all states and security is their primary concern. Realists might be ambiguous about “whether the accumulation of power is an end in itself” but survival “is a precondition for attaining all other goals, whether these involve conquest or merely independence” (Dunne & Schmidt, 2011, p.151). In the words of the founder of neorealism Kenneth Waltz, “beyond the survival motive, the aims of states may be endlessly varied” (Dunne & Schmidt, 2011, p.152). Kenneth Waltz also argued that war and conflict were not what made international politics unique because these were also known to domestic politics. The main difference between

domestic and international politics can be found in their structure. The citizens of a state do not have to fend for their own security. The international system is characterised by anarchy. Thus, security can only be attained through self-help. States can only rely on themselves to guarantee their survival. States may coexist through maintaining the balance of power and some cooperation is possible but only if a state will gain more than the other states (Dunne & Schmidt, 2011).

Neoclassical Realism

Gideon Rose, who coined the term, (1998) writes that neoclassical realism integrates both external and internal variables which influence a state's domestic policy. Neoclassical realism is driven by, first and foremost, a state's place in the international system and specifically by a state's "relative material power capabilities" (p.146). Furthermore, these material power capabilities do not affect a state's foreign policy directly but in an indirect and complicated way as systemic pressures go through intervening variables before they reach the unit level. This is the so-called "transmission belt" which links material capabilities to foreign policy behaviour. This link, however, is not immediate or perfect as the foreign policy choices made by political elites depend on "their relative perceptions of power" and "not simply relative quantities of physical resources or forces in being" (Rose, 1998, p.147). Like other strands of the realist thought, neoclassical realism theorises that politics is a constant struggle between states for power and security in a world characterised by uncertainty and limited resources. Anarchy - the state is the absolute sovereign and there is no overarching government above it - is the principal cause of international conflict. Incentivised by systemic forces, all states strive for better efficiency to provide security for themselves (Taliaferro, Lobell & Ripsman, 2009). A state's foreign policy is affected by its relative power distribution, in this regard, Thucydides' observation seems astute: "The strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept" (as cited in Taliaferro, Lobell & Ripsman, 2009, p.4-5).

In conclusion, neoclassical realism assumes that states do not only seek security. Instead, states seek to control and influence their external environment. Therefore, whatever a state's interests might be, the more powerful states will be more capable of pursuing their foreign policy goals and extending their influence to the external environment. The essential empirical prediction of neoclassical realism is that the more material power resources a state possesses, the greater the magnitude of that state's foreign policy ambitions will be. A state's actions and ambitions will depend on the relative rise and fall of their relative power (Rose, 1998).

Rational Choice Institutionalism

Rational choice institutionalism (RCI) is one of the three analytical approaches within the term “new institutionalism”, which is becoming increasingly used in political science. The other two analytical approaches are historical institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. These approaches were popularised in the 1960s and 1970s and they try to explain the role of institutions in social and political outcomes although they depict the world of politics quite differently (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Here I will introduce only rational choice institutionalism.

Rational choice institutionalism emerged from the study of American congressional behaviour. In the late 1970s, rational choice analysts wanted to find out how Congressional outcomes could show considerable stability given the various preferences of legislators and the multifaceted nature of issues. Several arguments emerged to explain this discrepancy but in general terms, the institutions of the Congress lower the transaction costs of deals among legislators and this facilitates the passage of legislation. Williamson argues that organisational development stems from the desire to reduce transaction costs of an activity that could alternatively be undertaken without such an institution (as cited in Hall & Taylor, 1996). RCI has four notable features. The first feature posits that actors have a fixed set of preferences and they behave in a way that maximises the realisation of these preferences which includes strategy and a considerable amount of calculation. Secondly, RCI depicts a unique image of politics which Hall & Taylor (1996) describe as “a series of collective action dilemmas” (p.12). They argue that in the pursuit of realising one's preferences, individuals might achieve an outcome that is less optimal for all parties involved despite the available option which could improve the situation of at least one of the actors without making it worse for any of the others. Hall & Taylor argue that “what prevents the actors from taking a collectively-superior course of action is the absence of institutional arrangements that would guarantee complementary behaviour by others” (p.12). The “prisoner's dilemma” and “the tragedy of the commons” are classic examples of this. The third feature of RCI emphasises that strategic interaction determines political outcomes, meaning that a strategic calculus affects an actor's behaviour and this calculus is affected by the expectations of the actor about how others will behave. Institutions structure interactions so as to affect “the range and sequence of alternatives on the choice-agenda or by providing information and enforcement mechanisms that reduce uncertainty about the corresponding behaviour of others and allow “gains from exchange,”

thereby leading actors toward particular calculations and potentially better social outcomes” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p.12).

Finally, rational choice institutionalists explain that institutions exist because they have valuable functions for the actors involved in the institution. Institutions are created because actors realise their value and that they can gain from this cooperation. Hence, the creation of institutions precludes voluntary agreement on the part of the relevant actors. In a competitive environment, the survival of the institution over alternative institutions depends on the benefits it brings to the relevant actors (Hall & Taylor, 1996).

(Regional) Security Governance Theory

Regional security governance theory has had an important role in the study of security in the last fifteen years (Breslin & Croft, 2012). In order to understand security governance, it is necessary to define its component terms: security and governance. Breslin & Croft (2012) define security “in a broad sense to include the use of force and the threat of the use of force, as well as the issues related to the integrity of peoples” (p.6). The notion of state-centric security relies on the argument of unlikelihood of interstate war after the end of the Cold War. On the other hand, security threats today are “more diverse, less visible and less predictable” as shown by the occurrence of phenomena such as civil war, transnational crime, ethnic cleansing, and terrorism. In this new concept of security, political actors react to existing or perceived threats in the post-Cold War era which are not confined by the borders between states (Kirchner, 2006, p. 949). Organisations like NATO and the OSCE have concentrated on those new threats following the end of the Cold War and expanded the range of their security activities to fields such as war on terrorism, peacekeeping, dealing with refugees and minorities and the promotion of civil society (Krahmann, 2003). Governance, on the other hand, is distinct from government. In a traditional sense, a government is a centralised authority with the power to impose policy *nolens volens*. In comparison, governance looks at how societies are regulated by political actors outside of the government. This is an important distinction to make as in the international arena there is no one overarching government but rather there are “multiple centres of power” whose “combined and coordinated actions” tackle the “increasingly complex challenges of governing in a globalising world” (as cited in Webber et al, 2004). There are many actors involved in governance - individuals, public and private institutions, who interact among each other on a certain common issue. This suggests that governance has become less state-centric and involves institutions,

civil society and transnational organisations in addition to the state and government. Non-state actors are becoming increasingly involved in security policies, which were traditionally a domain of the state. This is illustrative of the extended meaning of security. However, despite the increased role of international organisations in governance, states remain the leading actors (as cited in Webber et al, 2004). Webber et al. (2004) write the five features that comprise “security governance”:

1. heterarchy¹
2. the interaction of a large number of actors, both public and private
3. institutionalisation that is both formal and informal
4. relations between actors that are ideational in character, structured by norms and understandings as much as by formal regulations
5. collective purpose (p.8)

In conclusion, the concept of security governance was based on centralised security during the Cold War era and this concept has developed and adapted to the increasingly complex security issues of today's world (Krahmann, 2003).

Literature review

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the largest and most inclusive security organisation in Europe with 57 members and covers the northern hemisphere of the globe from Vancouver to Vladivostok (Hækkerup, 2005). The OSCE finds its roots in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and it is the only security organisation in Europe in which The United States and Russia are partners with an equal status which gives the Organisation a unique role in bridging the East-West divide. The Organisation reached its peak during the Cold War but since the end of the Cold War it has become less and less visible in the European security architecture.

Hurlburt (1995) writes that there is lack of control in the Russian Foreign Ministry over policy or of governmental authorities over certain military operations; discrepancy between promises made and promises delivered by Russian representatives. Hurlburt (1995) illustrates this problem with the example of the Russian Foreign Ministry's refusal to meet with representatives of the OSCE Chechnya

¹ heterarchy - a formal structure, usually represented by a diagram of connected nodes, without any single permanent uppermost node

mission. Abushov (2009) analyses Russia's strategic interests in the South Caucasus and provides an explanation for Russia's support for the breakaway regions in Georgia. Abushov (2009) states that it could not be in Russia's interest to support instability in the South Caucasus as this might present a threat to the North Caucasus. However, on the other, the author maintains that controlled instability might suit the Kremlin's interests. There are different international relations theories that have been employed to analyse the Russian Federation policy vis-a-vis the OSCE. Abushov (2009) looks at Russia's policy towards the South Caucasus from a neo-imperialist lens. Jodok Troy (2013) in his book review for Lobell, Ripsman & Taliaferro's 2009 *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, cautions that neoclassical realism offers a more nuanced perspective on a state's behaviour and insists there is more to the international system than the "brutish" and "nasty power politics" of realism. Kropatcheva (2012b) describes Russia's OSCE policy as "pragmatic" and "selective" through the lens of rational institutionalism. It is important to make the distinction that neoclassical realism examines the behaviour of states towards other states and rational institutionalism looks at the behaviour of political actors within institutions. However, in the case of the OSCE those two are closely related as Russia's behaviour within the OSCE is dictated by the behaviour of the other states within it.

The strained relationship between the OSCE and Russia was evidenced by the failure of the OSCE mission to Georgia (Stöber, 2010; Jawad, 2008; Ghebali, 2004). As a major weakness in the mission, Ghebali (2004) identifies the OSCE's lack of credentials in the area of conflict resolution as the Organisation's real strengths lie in preventive diplomacy or post-conflict rehabilitation. The claim that the OSCE lacked the necessary instruments to carry out this mission is endorsed by Stöber (2010). Furthermore, Ghebali (2004) and Stöber (2010) assert that the OSCE's actions were indecisive and passive even when some of its major norms were violated. What is more, the OSCE failed to act even when it was intimidated by Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2002. For the most part, OSCE's efforts did not yield results despite prolonged diplomatic efforts. Ghebali (2004) points out that advancing democracy in a state that is torn by human rights violations is a nearly impossible task. Jawad (2008) also assesses the democratic efforts of the OSCE in Georgia since 1992 and emphasises that democratisation is a lengthy process and can only work if the state at which it is targeted is willing to change internally. This might be problematic considering that the secessionist regions pledge their allegiance to Moscow and enjoy its full support. Stöber (2010) also agrees that in almost two decades, the OSCE has achieved little in the way of a compromise that all sides (between South Ossetia-Georgia and Georgia-Russia) could agree on. The Organisation was incapable of preventing the situation from escalating, which ultimately led to war.

The evolution of the relationship between Russia and the OSCE

After the end of the Cold War, Russia was aware that the OSCE was the only European organisation in which Russia had the status of an equal partner. Hence, Russia harboured hopes of achieving comprehensive European security through the OSCE (Nikonov, 2003; Hækkerup, 2005). The creation of this pan-European security structure proved impossible for Russia as Western policies rather showed a preference for the enlargement of existing organisations. Any other Russian interest in the OSCE was largely “marginalised or unattainable” (Zellner, 2005, p. 390). What is more, Russia counted on NATO's dissolution and for the OSCE to “become the main pan-European security organisation with equal decision-making power by Russia and the West” (Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 10). Soon after, however, Russia had to come to terms with the fact that this was not meant to be. The fall of the Berlin Wall was a victory for the OSCE as it signified a victory for the values held by the organisation. The span of the OSCE stretches from Vancouver to Vladivostok, covering the whole of the Northern Hemisphere. This makes it truly pan-European in comparison with the narrower scope of NATO and the EU. However, despite Moscow's hopes, it was NATO which emerged as *the* security organisation in the post-Cold War era. To a certain extent, the reason for this was that NATO had the same values as the OSCE and it could offer security resources the OSCE did not have. Also, Article 5 of the Atlantic Charter, which stipulates that an attack on one NATO member is an attack on all garnered solidarity for NATO and made it unique in this way (Hækkerup, 2005). Apart from a strong military force, NATO also enjoys the support of the USA which delineated clearly the areas of influence between NATO and the OSCE. As for peacekeeping, the UN Security Council had the general role of mandating the missions. In the political or economic spheres, the influence of the EU is undeniable. The prospect of EU membership was a strong incentive for stability in Eastern and Central European countries half of which were OSCE members and finally in 2004 many of them joined the EU.

All of these factors put the OSCE in a doubly disadvantageous position as the fledgling democracies clearly preferred NATO and Russia hampered most peacekeeping attempts of the OSCE in the post-Soviet area. For example in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Russia preferred to use forces from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which is a regional organisation consisting of post-Soviet states that formed after the break-up of the Soviet Union. As a result, the influence of the OSCE was very limited. OSCE peacekeeping missions were allowed, but then again to a limited extent, in South Ossetia Tajikistan. More importantly, the OSCE was the only international organisation on the ground in Chechnya between 1995-2002 until Russia shut down the mission. During the 1990s, the OSCE was

still assigned missions by Russia and the US. However, when Putin came to power in 2000 and when George W. Bush became president in 2001, the OSCE became increasingly marginalised. Bush preferred to use so-called coalitions of the willing to organisations like the OSCE or NATO. In addition, the US focus shifted out of the OSCE area to Afghanistan and Iraq. President Putin's focus, on the other hand, moved to the Russian-led CIS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) - a security organisation consisting of former Soviet states tasked with fighting terrorism in the region (Hækkerup, 2005). The important role of the OSCE should, nevertheless, be acknowledged as the organisation's power is in areas such as election monitoring, arms control, democratisation, media freedom and minority rights as part of its many operations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the Caucasus. All of these activities, however, fall under the category of "soft security" because when "hard security" is required, the OSCE is left out of the picture. Thus, it is the interaction of several factors - Russia, Europe, the USA - that eventually reduced the OSCE's role to a marginal one in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Two major periods can be discerned in Russia's CSCE/OSCE policy, the cooperative period between 1970s to 1994, followed by gradually worsening relations from 1994 onwards. In between these periods there have been slight but insignificant changes of attitude from obstructive to constructive behaviour. Overall, Russia's policy has undergone transformations from "active engagement to disillusionment, lack of ownership, and disengagement" (as cited in Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 8). Crises in Russo-Western relations are reflected in Russia's OSCE policy and there have been attempts to regenerate those relations to pre-crisis levels. Between the different phases of Russian foreign policy, scholars recognise a short-lived "romantic" phase from 1993 to 1994. In this period Russian politics was characterised by dabbling in liberal ideas and a pro-Western attitude before reverting back to realpolitik concerns of geopolitics, nationalism and great power balance. The dynamics of Russian-Western relations are key to understanding Russia's OSCE policy (Kropatcheva, 2015). Russia's relationship with the West could be classified as asymmetrical. In its attempts to strengthen the OSCE, Russia has been given little choice but to depend on Western policy choices as it is the West that fundamentally decides on how European policy will be structured. Russia has had to accept this and thus be put into the role of "policy taker" rather than policymaker" (Zellner, 2005, p. 391). Even OSCE activity in the various regional conflicts in Russia's periphery has been pushed from the West, as well as OSCE's interface with Russia in general (Hurlburt, 1995). This subordinate role of accepting decisions taken by others has led to frustration among Russian politicians. In addition, Russia's interests in the post-Soviet space are well-known. Russia has consistently objected to any Western intervention, or any OSCE intervention for that matter, in the former Soviet states. The same

asymmetrical relationship can be observed between Russia and the other former USSR states. Unlike its power dynamic with the West, in the post-Soviet space, Russia is the more powerful state and can adopt the role of the policymaker. Russia made attempts in the early 1990s to restructure the OSCE in a way that its peacekeeping operations would be run by the CIS. Zellner (2005) believes that Russia's failure to achieve this led to heightened competition between Russia and the West and especially the USA in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. What is more, Russia's increasing tendency to act unilaterally has been the cause of confrontation within the OSCE and the West. This has been coupled with Russia's increasingly negative attitude and growing criticism towards the OSCE (Zellner, 2005). Russia's ambitions were to transform the OSCE into the central security organisation in Europe. Parallely, Russia wanted the OSCE "to be compatible with the development of the CIS into a regional organisation" in order to "enhance its freedom of action" (as cited in Zellner, 2005, p. 391). However, when Russia's efforts failed to achieve a central role for the OSCE in the European security architecture, the balance of the scales tipped negatively for the OSCE. This resulted in Russia's disappointment of and disengagement with the OSCE.

The socialisation function of the OSCE

Russia's policy towards the OSCE has undergone a transformation throughout the years. An analysis of the (regional) security governance literature is indicative of internal OSCE affairs and Russia's OSCE policy. Regional security governance could be defined as the demand for multilateral cooperation and collective problem-solving or the factors dictating actors' decision whether to cooperate on a certain issue or not (Kropatcheva, 2015). The OSCE is such a platform where participating States, the key actors within the OSCE, exercise security governance. The approach to security governance of a participating State, on which the effectiveness of the organisation depends, is reflected in the organisation itself. Thus, the governance approach of Russia, which is one of the central actors within the OSCE, is indicative of the way the organisation and its role have developed. Among the different systems of government, the security community is the most effective as it is based on liberal and democratic values. This type of relationship, Kropatcheva argues, is difficult to achieve which raises the question "whether it is enough for the OSCE participating States to be united by their intention to settle disputes peacefully or whether the Organisation needs to develop as a values-based security community" (2015, p. 19). IGOs can be instrumental in building a security community, but from a realist perspective, IGOs can also be the arena for "balance of power games" (as cited in

Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 7). In the following sections I will address the mode of security governance that Russia has pursued with regards to the OSCE and the development of Russia's OSCE policy.

Despite OSCE's central role for European security and the forum for dialogue it provided for Russian-Western relations, the OSCE has been fertile ground for “the major seeds of conflict between Russia and the West” (Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 9). The OSCE had achieved a socialisation function through the democratic values it lay down in the Helsinki Final Act. The organisation consolidated this function in subsequent CSCE documents such as the 1990 Charter of Paris, the 1990 Copenhagen Document, the 1991 Moscow Document, and the 1991 Helsinki Document. Despite the partial success of the socialisation of the OSCE and the adherence of its participating States to democratic norms, at least supposedly, some of the CIS countries have not fully conformed to those norms. As a result, this has led to disillusionment and dissatisfaction within the Organisation and the OSCE itself has contributed to the weakening of its socialisation by downplaying some contested issues (as cited in Kropatcheva, 2015). All of this has hindered the OSCE's development as a values-based security community. Moreover, the 10 HRA principles on “acceptable interstate behaviour” were forged with difficult compromises, which were “ambivalent and contradictory and depended on interpretation” from the very start (Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 9). Those very principles have become a tender spot in times of crises and a cause for altercation among OSCE participating States. More particularly, “the HFA principles of the inviolability of frontiers, the territorial integrity of states, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in internal affairs, and self-determination of peoples, especially Abkhazia, Chechnya, Crimea, Kosovo, and South Ossetia,” have been the cause of much controversy (Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 9). Despite its shortcomings, the OSCE played an important role during the Cold War “by bringing two conflicting sides together under conditions of uncertainty” (Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 10). The conditions for a dialogue between USSR and the West were right and the OSCE seized this opportunity. However, the different expectations of the sides and the inherent contradictions of the security governance principles lay the grounds for an unstable foundation (Kropatcheva, 2015).

The USSR and CSCE

Russia's OSCE policy can be traced back to the Soviet period when the USSR had expressed an interest in a conference for comprehensive European security in the 1950s and 1960s (Kropatcheva, 2015). Russia's biggest ambition for the OSCE was the establishment of a treaty on European security in which the OSCE would be the central actor as this would have cleared Russia's path towards

European integration (Zellner, 2005). The following years saw an increased interaction between the USSR and the West which resulted in the CSCE convening in Helsinki in 1975. This process is known as the Helsinki process in which the participating States signed the Helsinki Final Act (HFA) and solemnly proclaimed “to improve and intensify their relations and to contribute in Europe to peace, security, justice and cooperation...” (as cited in Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 8). The CSCE had played a crucial role in linking security and human rights in the HFA, which was “a significant breakthrough in the era of détente” (Lewis, 2012). The incentives for the USSR's interest in the CSCE lay in a desire to improve its weakening position, its ambitions of developing good economic and political relations with the West, as well as in the concern of maintaining its status as a superpower (Kropatcheva, 2015; Zellner, 2005). In addition, CSCE would have been an implicit acknowledgement by the West of Europe's division as well as a means of “drawing Europe closer to Russia and farther from the United States” (as cited in Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 9). The West, in its turn, had its own play in mind. By signing the HFA, the West went along with the Soviet Union aspirations of preserving the Cold War territorial status quo, but its underlying ambition was to change that status quo in the long run (Kropatcheva, 2015). This underlies the fundamentally different strategies of the two opposing actors in the OSCE - the Soviet Union being an actor who wanted to preserve the status quo, while the West had a vision for a change in the future (Zellner, 2005). When the USSR's power was waning, its interest in the OSCE even peaked as the idea of the uniting of two hostile blocs in one common European home appeared to be tailor-made for the CSCE. East-West relations were warming and “a gradual transformation of the CSCE from a process into an organisation” had begun (as cited in Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 9).

It should be noted, however, that Russia showed real enthusiasm in the idea of the transformation of the CSCE into a treaty-based organisation in the run-up to the 1994 Budapest CSCE Summit. Moscow's ambitions were to create an international organisation whose decisions would be legally binding on its members much like the UN's Security Council. The Soviet Union did not show this same enthusiasm in the 1990 negotiations on the Charter of Paris (Zellner, 2005). What was different in 1994 was that there were discussions on NATO enlargement and the decision at the Budapest Summit to discuss a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century “was intended above all to assuage Russian concerns over the process of NATO enlargement” (von Plate, 1998, p. 294). The Russian government was further incentivised by German and Dutch proposals at the Budapest Summit to make the CSCE “the institution of first resort in tackling regional conflicts”, an initiative entitled “CSCE First” (Schneider, 1997, p. 238). These proposals, however, were nothing more than an expansion of CSCE competences and structures which were already there.

This did not temper Russia's enthusiasm as the idea of a CSCE "Executive Council" was "commented on favourably" by the German side (Schneider, 1997, p. 238). This led Moscow to believe that "the transformation of the CSCE into an OSCE with a legal basis [...] with elements of regional collective security was at least a possibility - and this policy would at the same time offer the prospect of a "pan-European" alternative to an eastward enlargement of NATO" (Schneider, 1997, p. 238-239). Things took a turn for the worse in the summer and autumn of 1994, when Washington assumed a firm position on NATO enlargement. Days before the Budapest Summit, the NATO Ministerial Meeting resulted in a decision to welcome NATO's eastward expansion. Russia's ideas, despite initial support by Western participating States, had little prospect of being realised. What is more, the negotiations on the CSCE peacekeeping operations proved inconclusive, partly because Russia was lobbying for the CIS to be entrusted with peacekeeping responsibilities. In the end, Boris Yeltsin's vision for the OSCE, which he "passionately defended", was hopeless (Schneider, 1997, p. 239). Nevertheless, the CSCE was renamed to the OSCE (Zagorski, 1997; Schneider, 1997).

The Yeltsin administration

The role of Russia within the OSCE during the Yeltsin administration was marked by cooperation and moderation even concerning matters of particular interest to Russia. This process first changed after NATO's military intervention in Kosovo (1999). Examples of Russian cooperation include its acceptance to allow the OSCE's so-called "OSCE Assistance Group" into the Chechnya conflict of 1995. This intervention was fruitful as it contributed to the signing of the Kazaviurt Agreement of 31 August 1996 which ended the Chechen war. A year later, Chechnya successfully elected a president and a parliament with the help of the OSCE (election monitoring being of the main missions of the organisation). Russia's support was important in establishing an "Advisory and Monitoring Group" in Belarus in 1997 in order to pursue the democratisation agenda of the OSCE, which constitutes the third human dimension pillar. The situation was different, however, with regard to the frozen conflicts of Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan), South Ossetia (Georgia) and Transnistria (Moldova), where Russia maintained political dominance. The OSCE turned a blind eye to this as it enjoyed the cooperative posture of Moscow who had the authority to mediate those frozen conflicts. The West was also unwilling to intervene as those regions are not of immediate interest to it. This was coupled by a general belief that Yeltsin wanted to pursue a democratic agenda in the former Soviet states. Russia was aware that the OSCE was the only means available for stopping the eastward expansion of NATO. A CSCE with control over European security organisations would have ceded authority to Russia over

NATO activities, perhaps even remove the need for it (Hurlburt, 1995). Thus Russia sought to strengthen the organisation, then called CSCE, by transforming it into an international legal one, establishing permanent and rotating members, and generally trying to build an institution with overarching influence of Europe and Asia. Despite Russia's ambitions, the effort was met with very little enthusiasm except for support from Belarus, which was questionable due to anti-NATO bias. A trying process ensued for Russia as it was struggling to negotiate the Charter for European Security. Moscow's growing disappointment with the OSCE resulted in a political crisis "when the OSCE was unable to prevent or condemn NATO's military intervention in Kosovo (March-June 1999)" (Ghebali, 2005b, p. 378).

The string of setbacks pushed Russia to reaffirm Soviet-era principles of sovereignty and noninterference in internal affairs. Russian had plans to take back Chechnya with strong military force as it considered that OSCE's role in the region had ended. Nevertheless, writes Ghebali (2005b), President Yeltsin considered a peaceful solution to the Chechen problem and acknowledged OSCE's positive role in the conflict. At the same time, the 1999 OSCE Summit in Istanbul was to take place and despite Russian criticism of the Charter for European Security, President Yeltsin, nevertheless, signed the Charter. Other examples of the cooperative attitude of the Yeltsin administration include commitments to deal with the frozen conflicts in Moldova and Georgia. Russia was to destroy or withdraw armed forces and military equipment from Moldova by the end of 2001 through the CFE (Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe), as well as end its military presence in Transnistria by the end of 2002. Russia also made commitments to withdraw forces from military bases in Georgia by 2000, and from Abkhazia and Vaziani by 2001. In exchange for these acts of goodwill, Russia obtained an adapted the CFE Treaty at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul which would allow Russia some control over NATO's enlargement by limiting its expansion to the east through legal means. In addition, the participant states to the CFE Treaty reasserted Russia's sovereignty and denounced terrorism in Chechnya while turning a blind eye to Russia's role in the conflict (Ghebali, 2005b).

Public interest in the OSCE had waned by 1997 as there were other developments that attracted more attention. Plans to strengthen the EU with the European Currency Union, or the EU eastern enlargement, and particularly the NATO Summit Meeting in Madrid were topical issues in European policy. There was also increased interest in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and Russia. As a result, OSCE issues were drawing less attention and becoming increasingly marginalised in European policy (Zagorski, 1997). The Russian Federation's OSCE-centred European policy underwent revision after the appointment of Yevgeni Primakov as foreign

minister in 1996. One still recalls how different Russia's plans were for the OSCE years ago. Being the security organisation with the most members, the OSCE “was to be placed at the head of all other European organisations, even NATO” and decisions, including those on EU and NATO enlargement, were to be taken collectively (Betzuege, 2002, p. 44). Instead, Russia adopted a three institutional pillar approach, those pillars being the OSCE, NATO and the UN.

Russia's new foreign policy strategy resulted in the signing of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO (the third pillar in Russia's new institutional approach) and Russia on 27 May 1997. The Founding Act lay the foundation for future NATO-Russia relations and aimed to strengthen the UN Security Council's role in peace enforcement (Zellner, 2005). Even though it might have seemed as though the OSCE's role in Russian policy was secondary, and admittedly Russia did make an effort with NATO, in fact “in all phases of the negotiations Moscow viewed this settlement consistently in relationship to the OSCE and to the pan-European perspective that the OSCE provides” (Zagorski, 1997, p. 45). This is evident in the outline of a Charter on European Security from 17 July 1997, introduced at the Lisbon OSCE Summit, in which Russia's OSCE interests were made clear. An important point in the Charter considers the OSCE's overall position in the network of European institutions. Since 1994, discussions on future European security policy have pitted Russia's OSCE policy and NATO's eastward enlargement against each other. Even Russia's Concept for a Charter on European Security gives the impression of being in direct opposition to NATO's decision to expand to the East. In an attempt to dissipate such doubts, the Head of the Russian OSCE Mission, Ambassador Yuri Ushakov, remarked at the meeting of the Security Model Committee that the draft aimed to illustrate “Russia's commitment to the pan-European idea and its rejection of efforts to divide Europe yet again and to create artificial barriers” (as cited in Zagorski, 1997, p. 45). However, it should be pointed out that Ushakov avoided any explicit mention of NATO's enlargement plans. Nonetheless, the issue of enlargement was “the elephant in the room” and it was undoubtedly behind Russia's demand to deal “especially with the security interests of countries that belong to no military organisation” (von Plate, 1998, p. 295). This showed that the “shadow of NATO” was still lurking even after signing the Founding Act, but NATO certainly was not the sole focus of the Russian draft (von Plate, 1998, p. 295).

Russia applied the same rhetoric in its proposals on the European Security Model for the 21st Century discussed in the OSCE in 1995 and 1996, which determined “a central and co-ordinating role” for the OSCE in the European security architecture (Zagorski, 1997, p. 47). Even though Russia was unable to fully develop its approach, its intentions were made clear. The OSCE was no longer to be at the head

of a hierarchical system which was a clear indication that Russia had abandoned its previous strategy. These discussions led to the adoption of the “Charter on European Security” in 1999 at the Istanbul OSCE Summit. The Charter outlined how the various European security organisations and institutions would interact and cooperate through confidence-building, exchange of information, transparency and concerted action. In principle, the Russian proposal aspired to achieve a European security system in which institutions would complement and reinforce each other's work without any of them assuming a dominant role. At its heart, Zagorski (1997) points out, Russia still hoped to have a central position for the OSCE without intentionally overpowering the other institutions. Zagorski supports this view with the example of press statements issued with the proposal which clearly showed Russia's vision of the OSCE “as the core element of a future European system” playing “a central role in ensuring security and stability” (p. 47). Furthermore, this view was also supported by Russian scholars who ascribed a prominent position to the OSCE both in the European transformation process and as partner organisation of the UN. Zagorski notes that strengthening the OSCE was still central in Russia's foreign policy, especially with NATO's eastward expansion disregarding the settling of Russia-NATO-EU relations. However, it is important to stress that despite its continued support for the OSCE, Russia recognised the organisation's limitations, especially in the area of conflict settlement. In this regard, Russia is conflicted between its commitment to the UN Security Council as the primary legitimate organ for maintaining and restoring peace and its desire to “protect the post-Soviet area as far as possible from direct interventions by the OSCE” (p. 48). Instead, Russia would rather confer peacekeeping obligations to the CIS and bestow an appanage on it in the post-Soviet space. Bearing this in mind, it comes as no surprise that Russia had made repeated efforts to have the CIS recognised by the OSCE, especially in the run-up to the Lisbon Summit in 1996. However, the fact that the CIS is ill-suited for such a role is another matter (Zagorski, 1997; von Plate, 1998).

The Putin doctrine

After the unsuccessful democratisation process following the Yeltsin administration, Russian policies reverted back to limited sovereignty for the former Soviet states and attempts to draw them back into the Russian sphere of influence. What is more, “Russia's security interests in its south and threats to the Russian minorities in the relevant countries have been used to legitimise terms such as ‘near abroad’ or ‘Russian sphere of influence’” (Abushov, 2009, p. 189). It could be argued that after dominating the former Soviet republics for two centuries, it was difficult for Moscow to come to terms with the fact that these states are now sovereign entities. Russia does not take lightly any deviation or

disloyalty on the part of any CIS state. For example, Abushov (2009) comments that Russia considered the Colour Revolutions, which swept the former Soviet space and the Balkans in the early 2000s, as aided by the US. Russian policies, especially in the field of energy production and transportation, are designed so as to ensure Russia's dominant position in the South Caucasus and Central Asia - achieved through cooperative means or forced, if necessary (Abushov, 2009).

The beginning of the new millennium, at the time of the Austrian Chairmanship of the OSCE, was marked by internal debates over the obligations of the 1999 Istanbul Charter which deepened the crisis within the Organisation (Bettzuege, 2002). Moreover, when Putin came to power, he had a much more confrontational stance than his predecessor which was proved by the first Ministerial Council meeting of the OSCE after Yeltsin's departure (Ghebali, 2005b). At the meeting, Russia vetoed the adoption of a general ministerial declaration. The latter aimed to summarise OSCE's achievements of the past year and contained a vision of what was yet to be achieved. Putin criticised the organisation heavily - an action which was seen as an attempt to distract from any criticism towards Russia regarding Chechnya and the fact that Russia did not follow its commitments to the Istanbul Charter (Ghebali, 2005b). The political fiasco which NATO's military intervention in Kosovo generated - the OSCE further could do nothing to prevent it - aggravated the relations between Russia and the OSCE. The Putin administration declared the OSCE incapable of serving Russia's interests (Ghebali, 2005b). During the Austrian Chairmanship in 2000, Russia called for a comprehensive reform of the OSCE in the framework of the European security architecture. Grievances were expressed particularly over the OSCE's geographical imbalance and unequal treatment of the West and the East. The OSCE was accused of being more critical towards security-related issues in the post-Soviet space than for example conflicts in Western countries such as the conflict in Northern Ireland, The Basque Country and other issues such as xenophobia, human trafficking, extremism, separatism, terrorism, minority and migration problems. OSCE-Russian relations were particularly aggravated when the OSCE pulled the plug on the missions in Riga and Tallinn in January 2002. Those missions were important for Moscow as they dealt with the rights of the Russian minorities in Latvia and Estonia (Bettzuege, 2002).

Russia's grievances against the OSCE can be divided into three categories. Firstly, Russia claims that the organisation's development of the three dimensions (politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimension) is unbalanced. Secondly, the OSCE has been accused for having double standards in relation to other participating States and thirdly, for simply being a tool for

NATO and the EU to further their own agenda (Ghebali, 2005a; 2005b). In the following sections, an examination of these claims is offered.

Ghebali confirms that there is indeed imbalance between the three dimensions of the OSCE with the human dimension being the most developed one. The reason why the other two are underdeveloped or why no synergy between them all exists is that there are institutional limits to the sources of the organisation. For example, the politico-military includes a relatively well-developed political component but a weak military component. The CFE Treaty (Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe) does not extend to all participating States and there are limits to the confidence and security building measures (CSBM) in the Vienna Document. The economic and environmental dimension (EED) is the least active and visible of all three. Ghebali argues that strengthening EED is the most difficult task of all, perhaps even impossible, without investing substantial resources. In general, synergy between all three dimensions is needed if they are to function adequately. They need to have an equal status as well as guidance and oversight on the part of the participating States. As for the Russian argument about the OSCE's double standards, that the OSCE only focuses on countries located “East of Vienna” (the former Soviet Union states), there is some truth to this (Ghebali, 2005b). The two OSCE independent institutions bearing the brunt of this criticism are Field Missions and The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). ODIHR is the principal human dimension institution of the OSCE, tasked mainly with monitoring elections, and it is being accused of applying different standards to monitored elections depending on whether a state is situated West or East of Vienna. Russia's argument is that ODIHR's assessments are politicised and disregard the cultural specifics of the participating States. This may all be true, however, one must not forget that activities such as elections, human rights, non-discrimination and democracy are needed in places where the rule of law does not have a strong hold. It cannot be denied that the most human rights violations are committed in the former Soviet space and the Balkans, which justifies to a certain degree the East and West of Vienna divide.

What Ghebali (2005b) suggests could gap this divide and restore balance is try to achieve “equitable geographic representation” for the staff of OSCE institutions and Field Missions. As election monitoring has become such a contentious issue, an update of the 1990 Copenhagen election standards would be a step toward improvement. In addition, participating States should, in accordance with Art. 25 of the Istanbul Charter, take ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations based on its comprehensive comparative election laws analysis under serious consideration. The third charge of Russia against the OSCE is that it is subordinate to NATO and the EU. Even though the charges may

be exaggerated, there is truth to the statement that the OSCE's missions are carried out on a practical basis without much political control or administrative oversight. The OSCE suffers greatly from this lack of agenda setting from decision-making bodies and clear institutional rules. Its strength as an international organisation is undermined by the fact that the OSCE does not have an international legal status which prevents it from having an equal status with other partner organisations - and this is where NATO and the EU step in. In other words, in order to function effectively, the OSCE should establish institutional rules and a clear and effective political agenda (Ghebali, 2005a; 2005b).

Mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia

The OSCE's involvement in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict was formalised with the signing of the Sochi Agreement on 24 June 1992. The Agreement established a quadrilateral special structure - a Joint Control Commission (JCC) - which served as a negotiation mechanism between the parties involved in the conflict - Russia, Georgia, North Ossetia and South Ossetia - plus active participation of the OSCE in JCC meetings. The Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPKF), a trilateral peacekeeping force which was commanded by Russian forces and included Georgian and Ossetian units, were established under the auspices of the JCC. The JPKF were tasked with reinstating peace and maintaining law and order in the conflict zone (International Crisis Group, 2004). An important part of the OSCE's Mission mandate was to monitor the military situation in the conflict zone, conduct consultations with the JCC participants and send reports to the OSCE participating States (OSCE, n.d.).

The main priority of the OSCE Mission to Georgia was to help achieve a peaceful resolution to the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. The Mission employed a comprehensive approach to security, namely operating within the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimension of the OSCE. The original mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, adopted on 13 December 1992, was to encourage negotiations between the conflicting parties so that a peaceful political settlement could be reached. The mandate expanded on 29 March 1994 to include the monitoring of the JPKF as well as the following objectives in relation to the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict:

- help create a political framework towards a lasting political settlement with respect for the OSCE principles and commitments;
- increase discussion between parties to the conflict, organise round tables, identify and remove sources of tension, foster political rapprochement throughout the conflict area;

- organise an OSCE international conference with the participation of the UN to find a resolution to the conflict and define the political status of South Ossetia;
- with regards to the monitoring role of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces, establish contact with the military commanders of the forces within the context of OSCE negotiating efforts, do military reconnaissance, investigate violations of ceasefires, keep commanders informed about the political consequences of certain military activities;
- expedite cooperation among the parties involved together with the Joint Control Commission;
- be in contact with the local authorities and maintain OSCE presence in the area.

In relation to the conflict in Abkhazia:

- liaise with the UN Mission in Abkhazia, in order to be informed about the developments and report to the OSCE with a view to keeping representatives of the Chairman-in-Office up to date with the situation for the UN negotiations.

In relation to Georgia in general:

- advance respect of humans and fundamental freedoms and support the development of legal and democratic institutions, provide advice on the drafting of a new constitution, monitor elections, oversee the implementation of legislation and the establishment of an independent judiciary;
- work together with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and ODIHR, work in cooperation with the Council of Europe, establish contact with other international organisations in Georgia on these matters.

The OSCE's mandate includes also a Border Monitoring Operation (BMO) which observes and reports on movement across the border between Georgia and the Russian Federation. The mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia expired on 31 December 2008 by a decision of the OSCE Permanent Council and there has been no consensus on its renewal following the August 2008 war in South Ossetia (OSCE).

Case study:

The OSCE mission to Georgia 1992-2008, the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict 1992 and the Russo-Georgian war 2008

The dissolution of the Soviet Union fuelled a surge of ethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet space (Landay, 2008). Georgia is one case in point. Unable to adapt to the post-Soviet era, Georgia was torn by instability and civil wars as three of its constituent regions sought independence (Hill & Jewett, 1994). In this chapter I examine the case of South Ossetia. The conflict in South Ossetia is interesting to observe as Russia's unilateral actions to codify cooperation with the region has important geopolitical consequences and implications for European security. In addition, Russian interests in the South Caucasus affect directly the outcome of OSCE missions in the region. In the first two sub-chapters I present an overview of the two conflicts in South Ossetia, 1992 and 2008, respectively, to see how the political debates between the parties involved in the conflict differed. Following is an analysis of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. The concluding sub-chapter considers a broader assessment of the two conflicts and charts the road ahead for the OSCE mission in South Ossetia.

The escalation of tensions in South Ossetia 1989-1992

South Ossetia is a region with a largely titular population. In 1989, approximately 65,000 people out of a population of 98,000 were South Ossetians. Nevertheless, only 40 per cent of the Ossetians of Georgia lived within their Autonomous Oblast (AO) while almost 100,000 were spread throughout Georgia. Ethnic tensions in South Ossetia escalated relatively quickly and came to a boiling point in 1989 (Cornell, 2001). The law of “The State Programme for the Georgian Language”, aimed at strengthening the position of the Georgian language, was drafted in November 1988 and passed into law in August 1989. The law stated that Georgian would be language of instruction in all the educational institutions in the republic and there were no provisions for minority languages in the law (Anderson, 2013). This could be seen as the beginning of a “war of laws” which started in 1989 (as cited in Cornell, 2001, p. 153). In the spring of 1989, the leader of the South Ossetian Popular Front Ademon Nykhas, Alan Chochiev, sent an open letter to the Abkhaz people, declaring his support for their independence movement. In the following months there were reports of violent conflict between Ossetian and Georgian armed bands although the reliability of these reports is disputable (Cornell, 2011; Coene, 2009). In August 1989, Georgia passed a new law making Georgian the sole official

language (Whitman & Wolff, 2012; Coene, 2009). This provision affected South Ossetia as only 14 per cent of Ossetians spoke Georgian. In September, an equal status to the Russian, Ossetian and Georgian languages was proposed by the Ossetian authorities. In September, the movement for the unification of South Ossetia and North Ossetia gained strength. Consequently, Ademon Nykhas sent a petition to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, demanding the unification of South and North Ossetia. As tensions were mounting MVD troops were sent in to secure the area in late September. On 10 November, the South Ossetian oblast council made demands to change the status of the oblast into an autonomous republic. Within a week Georgia declared its right to leave the Union and reaffirmed its power of veto over all Soviet Union laws, “including those guaranteeing the autonomous status of South Ossetia” (Anderson, 2013, p. 240). Tensions were exacerbated in South Ossetia and in the autumn of 1989 inter-ethnic clashes broke out in the region and left mostly Georgian casualties (as cited in Cornell, 2011). On 19 November, Ossetic became the official language in the oblast by a resolution of the Supreme Council of South Ossetia. The first phase of the conflict lasted from November 1989 to January 1990 and was instigated by the “March to Tskhinvali”, the capital of South Ossetia, on 23 November 1989. The march was organised by the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia and the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Givi Gumbaridze. While the Georgian side insisted that the march had peaceful intentions - to protect the ethnic Georgian population in Tskhinvali, the Ossetians perceived it as a “provocation” (Coene, 2009, p. 152). The march, joined by between 12,000 and 15,000 people, was prevented from entering Tskhinvali by Soviet soldiers, called in at the request of the South Ossetia Oblast Soviet, and South Ossetians. The Soviet soldiers prevented an armed clash but the next two days witnessed inter-ethnic rioting nonetheless. Skirmishes continued until January 1990. In the first half of 1990 the atmosphere was tense but relatively stable. In April 1990, Anatoly Lukyanov, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, passed a law which strengthened the status of the autonomous regions towards the central government. This law worsened relations between the Georgian government and the autonomous regions as it showed, from a Georgian perspective, a convergence of interests between the autonomous regions and Moscow. In August, in an attempt to suppress the separatist movements in its autonomous regions, the Georgian government enacted a law which banned the participation of regional parties such as Ademon Nykhas from the October 1990 parliamentary elections. This effectively disrupted the fragile stability of the situation. In reaction, in mid-September, the South Ossetian Supreme Soviet unilaterally declared South Ossetia as an “Independent Soviet Democratic Republic”. The elections were won by the “Round Table - Free Georgia” coalition led by the Georgian nationalist Zviad Gamsakhurdia (Cornell, 2011; Anderson, 2013; Coene, 2009; Whitman & Wolff, 2012). On 9 December 1990, elections were held in South Ossetia. On 11 December 1990, Gamsakhurdia

abolished the autonomy of South Ossetia. In 1991, the situation escalated significantly leading to the Georgian occupation of Tskhinvali which lasted until July 1992. On 7 January 1991, the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev annulled both South Ossetia's declaration of independence and Georgia's abolition of South Ossetian autonomy as these decisions were a violation of the Soviet constitution. From a Georgian perspective this was seen as interference in Georgia's internal affairs (Cornell, 2011; Coene, 2009). Gamsakhurdia made several attempts in 1991 to restore control over South Ossetia but failed "in the face of well-organised, highly motivated and Russian-backed resistance" (Whitman & Wolff, 2012, p. 93). The conflict continued for another year, but when Gamsakhurdia fled the capital in December 1991 and former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze became the second Georgian President in March 1992, hostilities decreased and a temporary ceasefire was agreed in May. However, the ceasefire did not last long and soon fighting broke out again with a Georgian attack on Tskhinvali. At this point, Russia intervened by reprobating the Georgian government, sending helicopters to attack the Georgian national guard armoured forces and locating troops in North Ossetia (as cited in Cornell, 2011). The fear of "possible escalation of this hitherto localised conflict to a Caucasian war pitting Georgia against Russia was instrumental in engineering a rapprochement between Shevardnadze and Yeltsin" (Cornell, 2011, p. 158). On 22 June, the two leaders signed the OSCE-mediated Sochi Agreement which put in place a permanent ceasefire. An OSCE Observer Mission and a Russian-led CIS peacekeeping force were established in addition to the Joint Control Commission tasked with facilitating the cooperation between the sides (Whitman & Wolff, 2012).

The August 2008 war

The situation in South Ossetia remained relatively stable under Shevardnadze's presidency as all sides accepted the status quo. Things changed when Saakashvili came to power in 2004 as one of his campaign promises was to restore the territorial integrity of Georgia. Encouraged by his success in integrating Adjara back into Georgia, Saakashvili turned to South Ossetia, under the pretence of fighting corruption in Georgia at local and regional levels. Saakashvili closed down the Ergneti market, located in the outskirt of Tskhinvali - a market notorious for illegal trade and "a lifeline for the Ossetian community, who had few other sources of income or products" (George, 2009, p. 179). The violence surrounding the closure of the market damaged the confidence between Georgians and Ossetians and compromised the peace talks that were being negotiated at the time. As a matter of fact, there was an outbreak of hostilities which only stopped with a ceasefire agreement between Georgia

and South Ossetia which, however, lasted only a few days. The events in 2004 led to the worsening of relations on all sides, ceasefires were made and broken (Whitman & Wolff, 2012; George, 2009). Following Kosovo's independence from Serbia in March 2008, Russia increased its cooperation with South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Even though Russia's ties with the self-proclaimed republics was strong, and many Ossetians and Abkhazians already had Russian passports, it became more involved in the region by increasing economic aid to the regions. A few security-related incidents and events between Russia and Georgia deepened the crisis even more. In March Georgia withdrew from the Joint Control Commission. In April a Georgian drone was downed over Abkhazia. In May Georgia withdrew from a bilateral air defence cooperation treaty with Russia, there were explosions in South Ossetia and Russia allegedly captured a Georgian spy. In June, there were clashes between ethnic South Ossetian and Georgian villages, Russian peacekeepers were detained. Several bomb attacks occurred in July (as cited in Markovic, 2008; Coene, 2009). Georgia's military spending increased "from \$84m in 2004 to \$339m in 2006; in July 2008, the Georgian parliament approved a budget which raised it to \$1bn" (Wood, 2008). Georgia undertook "joint military exercises with the US, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Armenia - known as Exercise Immediate Response 2008" (as cited in Markovic, 2008). To counter these moves, Russia stepped up its peacekeeping presence in the region and sent combat aircraft to South Ossetia on 8 July to thwart potential Georgian military action in the region. Georgia responded in kind. A week before 7 August, clashes between Georgia and South Ossetia increased leaving numerous victims on both sides. For fear of escalating violence, civilians from Tskhinvali were evacuated by the de facto authorities (Cheterian, 2009). War broke out on the evening of 7 August and there is no agreement as to which side initiated the attacks. Georgia maintains it acted in self-defence against South Ossetian attacks, while South Ossetia insists that Georgia was the provoker. Georgia launched an attack on the South Ossetian capital but did not get far as soon Russian troops swooped in through the Roki tunnel and took back Tskhinvali in two days. Fighting went beyond the border of South Ossetia. Strategic locations throughout Georgia were targeted by the Russian air force. Airfields, navy vessels, a military factory and naval forces were destroyed, severely crippling Georgia's military infrastructure. Russian forces stopped 55 km short of the Georgian capital Tbilisi. After five days of war, the international community reacted and a ceasefire agreement was achieved on 12 August with the help of the French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Military operations were suspended and Russian troops withdrew from Georgia proper, albeit later than foreseen (Coene, 2009; Cheterian, 2009). The declaration of independence of Kosovo on 17 February, recognised by the US and many EU states, incentivised the Georgian breakaway regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia to demand the recognition of their independence from the international community, including Russia. Russia was initially unwilling to recognise their independence as the issue was discussed in April 2008 at the Federal

Council as this would have invalidated the Russian peacekeeping operations in the region. Subsequently, however, in reaction to the Kosovo precedent, the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed a decree recognising the independence and sovereignty of South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Coene, 2009; as cited in Markovic, 2008).

The OSCE Mission to Georgia: Great expectations and futile attempts

The OSCE Mission to Georgia was established in 1992 on invitation from Georgia and the consent of the two secessionist regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Initially launched on 3 December 1992, the purpose of the Mission was “to serve as a forum for negotiations with all the parties concerned” (Rie, 2009, p. 321). In 1994, the Permanent Council of the OSCE expanded the Mission's mandate to include participation in the Joint Control Commission (JCC), which was to provide Russia, Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia with an opportunity to discuss the different aspects of the situation. The OSCE Mission was to observe the military situation, examine ceasefire breaches, conduct negotiations with all the warring parties, defuse tensions, collaborate with the military commanders of the peacekeeping forces (JPKF) and stabilise the security situation between the two breakaway regions, examine ceasefire breaches. The Mission was also tasked with helping to find a solution to the issue of status of South Ossetia (Stöber, 2010).

The Mission was in a disadvantageous position from the very start for several reasons. First of all, the application of the principle of territorial integrity of Georgia was a prerequisite for the Mission, largely supported by Russia. The de facto authorities in South Ossetia also recognised this condition at the launch of the Mission even though they demanded independence from Georgia. Thus, the OSCE was put in a position where it had to show South Ossetia that its activities were neutral. On the other hand, it also had to show it took South Ossetian demands seriously albeit without raising the issue of Georgia's territorial integrity. Secondly, the JCC's Military and Security working group was under Russian control and the Foreign Ministry in Moscow initially only allowed the OSCE Mission the status of a cooperating partner. The Mission's powers were upgraded to active participation in the JCC only after Georgia and South Ossetia insisted upon it (Stöber, 2010).

The OSCE made several attempts at mediation independently of the JCC. In 1994, the Mission brought together representatives of Georgia and South Ossetia to the negotiating table and presented a draft proposal which offered South Ossetia autonomous status within the Georgian state. In 1995, Russia

also drafted an “Intermediary Document” outlining principles and guidelines for settlement. Afterwards Georgia presented its own version of the “Intermediary Document” and thus negotiations continued. The negotiation points were the recognition by South Ossetia of Georgia's territorial integrity. Several rounds of negotiations took place between 1999-2003 none of which produced any results. Discussions on issues about the return of refugees and displaced persons were equally unsuccessful (Ghebali, 2004).

A major disadvantage of the OSCE military monitors is the fact that they are unarmed and nearly not enough in numbers which makes effective monitoring of the situation in South Ossetia, including the borders of Chechnya and Russia, “hardly realistic” (Rie, 2009, p. 324). Furthermore, the OSCE and the UN (OSCE monitored all Georgia, except Abkhazia which was under UN monitoring) were outnumbered by Russian, South Ossetian and Abkhaz military peacekeeping forces. In an attempt to enhance security in the region, and in cooperation with Georgia and South Ossetia, the OSCE launched the so-called Special Coordination Centre (SCC). The SCC was a law enforcement unit trained through OSCE programmes and based in South Ossetia. Cooperation, however, has not come easily and the OSCE has had to push both sides to agree on measures to tackle the growing crime rate in the region with implications that the law enforcement on both sides was involved in illegal trade between Russia and Georgia through South Ossetia (Rie, 2009).

Given the length of the mission, one would think that a political solution to the situation would have been found, but the reality is different, especially given the constraints of the OSCE such as “no legal basis, decisions by consensus, increasing opposition from the part of CIS countries” (Rie, 2009, p. 319). The OSCE had great difficulty implementing its mandate monitoring the security at the borders of Tbilisi and Tskhinvali. It had limited capacity both in terms of resources and politically. At the start of the mission in 1992 it had 8 monitors, a number which increased to 142 by February 2008. Incidents occurred frequently, “ceasefires were agreed and broken time and time again until May 1994 when the Moscow Agreement established a permanent ceasefire line with military exclusion zones on either side” (as cited in Wolff, n.d.). UNOMIG, the UN Observer Mission in Georgia was passed through resolution 854 of the UN Security Council. The CIS also sent a peacekeeping force to the area. Incidents were sporadic although “the general security situation, especially in the Kodori Gorge, a Georgian-held area in Abkhazia, deteriorated sharply in 1998, 2001, 2006, and 2008, bringing both sides to the brink of new war” (Wolff, n.d.).

In the aftermath of the war when there were discussions about the extension of the Mission's mandate, the OSCE came in for a lot of criticism, especially by Russia. Accusations were directed at the Finnish Chairmanship for negotiating poorly and the OSCE Mission to Georgia for being slow with reporting to the delegations in Vienna. The Mission reported security incidents days before August war such as Georgian police officers wounded, people killed or hurt in fire fights or artillery bombardments as being a serious outbreak of violence since 2004. The observers reported that villages of both ethnicities were evacuated and warned that the situation would escalate rapidly if political dialogue between the warring parties was not re-established. On 7 August, the Mission reported that the situation was deteriorating and Georgian troops were moving towards the town of Gori, situated south of the conflict zone. When hostilities commenced during the night of 7 August, the three OSCE observers on the ground took shelter underground and were evacuated the next day. Despite growing escalation on 7 August, the OSCE made attempts to mediate by arranging several high level meetings and there was confidence that the situation would calm down. On 9 August, the OSCE Special Envoy Talvitie and Head of Mission Tehri Hakala and a few other representatives travelled to Tbilisi in an effort to reach a ceasefire agreement between Russia and Georgia (Stöber, 2010).

It would appear that the main mediator that accomplished a ceasefire was not the OSCE but the EU and particularly the French President Nicolas Sarkozy (Bloed, 2008b). On 8 September 2008, Russia signed a six-point plan but soon afterwards the Russian Federation's actions questioned its commitment to the plan. Russia not only back-pedalled on the cease-fire agreement but it contested the legitimacy of the plan itself and denied access to EU observers and humanitarian aid into the war zones. In the few cases when OSCE observers were allowed into South Ossetia they were accompanied by Russian military. The reaction of the OSCE at the outbreak of the war in 2008 was quick with OSCE monitors being deployed only 12 days after the start of hostilities. The lead, however, was quickly taken over by Nicolas Sarkozy with his six-point plan on 1 September followed by a heads of state meeting in Moscow. This was an attempt by the EU "to solve the crisis as quickly as possible and by doing so discarded the instrument of the OSCE" (Rie, 2009, p. 322). The OSCE had been "outmanoeuvred" by the "political and economic interests between Russia and the EU" (Rie, 2009, p. 322). Certainly, meetings on a presidential level had a better chance of resolving the issue quickly than meetings between ministers of foreign affairs not least because the possibility of a Russian veto in the OSCE could be circumvented (Rie, 2009). The agreement that was reached with the personal mediation of Sarkozy and Moscow allowed Russia to keep security zones in South Ossetia and Abkhazia which was received with little enthusiasm by the international community. These concessions mean that Russia has an excuse to maintain a military presence on Georgian territory. The

Mission of the OSCE in Georgia was very small comprising unarmed military monitors who had to leave the region at the commencement of hostilities. After a round of negotiations between the Finnish Chairman-in-Office and Russia, Russia agreed to allow a group of 20 military monitors near the South Ossetian border but not enter its territory. This limited the capacity of the Mission as it could not monitor the mass migrations of ethnic Georgians. Even this privilege was revoked by Russia at the end of August when the OSCE monitors could not even enter the security zone this time, tying the hands of the Mission. Despite the OSCE's agreement with the Russian President to send monitors to the region, those efforts have largely been ineffective resulting in the Chairman-in-Office abandoning efforts of reaching an accord with the Russian administration. What is more, even the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) was denied access to South Ossetia, despite guarantees on the part of Russian diplomats (Bloed, 2008b; Hurlburt, 1995). Soon, after negotiations over the six-point plan reached an impasse, the legitimacy of the plan was questioned by Moscow and the de facto authorities of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were denied participation in the Geneva discussions, the OSCE was again "back in the game" (Rie, 2009, p. 322). Georgia and Russia cut diplomatic relations and the OSCE became the "only diplomatic channel" where the two parties could meet (Rie, 2009, p. 322). The OSCE was asked to mediate an agreement on the non-use of force between Georgia and the two secessionist states despite Russian skepticism of its role in the conflict. This was in all likelihood "a pre-emptive attempt to corner" the OSCE as an agreement to comply would translate into "implicit recognition of the independence" of the breakaway regions (Rie, 2009, p. 322). Subsequently, Russia's offer was rejected by Georgia ("Georgia Rejects Nonuse of Force Deal - Moscow", 2013). This rejection put the leaders of the breakaway regions at unease who frequently voiced fears of Georgia preparing for another military attack. Those accusations, however, have been largely unfounded as the EU monitors reported no evidence of a military preparation on Georgian side (Bloed, 2009).

The issue of the non-use of force agreement is still ongoing. Regardless of the hopes for the resolution of the conflict, the wordings of the 1992 Sochi Agreement, 1994 Moscow agreement and the 2008 six-point plan, show that the aim of these agreements is lasting ceasefire and the implementation of it. Despite talks of a peace conference where these issues could be discussed, things have never gotten, up to date, as far as to a peace agreement and the OSCE is still far away from a peace settlement (EU diplomat, personal interview, May 11, 2015). Russia's complete devastation of the Georgian army has left a deep scar in the Caucasus fraught with frozen conflicts (Gateva, 2010). "The Georgian-Russian war has drastically changed the political landscape in Europe due to a Russian foreign policy that no longer shies away from using force against other countries" (Bloed, 2008a).

OSCE in South Ossetia: Taking stock - when the dust has settled and the road ahead

When considered from the point of view of the international community, experts agree that involvement in the conflict differed from when the OSCE Mission was first established in 1992 and when the war broke out in 2008. The EU and OSCE participating States within the EU were significantly more involved in the 2008 conflict. There are several factors to account for this. Firstly, EU foreign policy in 1992 was not as coherent and Eastern European countries were not part of the EU yet which made a big difference. This was coupled with the fact that former Soviet Union states were going through a period of transformation after the collapse of the Soviet Union and they had enough on their plates as it was. Therefore, too much had been going on to single out the conflict in Georgia as the key issue of international relations in 1992. Reports in the press each month told about erupting conflicts in the Balkans, in the South and North Caucasus - Nagorno Karabakh, the Chechen wars. The eruption of these conflicts was a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, for some it showed that this is a clear sign the collapse should have been prevented, for others it was a momentary turmoil that was going to be pacified eventually. The situation was very different in 2008 when attention to the conflict in South Ossetia was much more focused. This was also evidenced by the fact that several presidents of OSCE participating States and EU Member States went to Georgia within days after the outbreak of hostilities which is indicative of the change in attitude in 2008. In 2008, the crisis was seen as a major issue in the European security environment where, according to Sergey Utkin, the first clashes of a real information war could be seen (personal interview, May 12, 2015). At the beginning of the 1990s, the hostilities were mainly a local affair, one between the warring parties. However, in the Georgian conflict of 2008, Russia's involvement in the war was quite direct and the development of the conflict depended very much on Russian decision-making which could be seen in the issue of the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia (EU diplomat, personal interview, May 11, 2015; S. Utkin, personal interview, May 12, 2015).

Today, within the OSCE framework, the Georgian conflict is part of the Geneva talks where the implementation of the six-point ceasefire plan is still discussed. The Geneva talks co-chairs issue statements at every round. The last round of talks in March 2015, which were described by an EU expert as “quite messy”, coincided with the Russian Federation signing an integration treaty with de facto authorities in South Ossetia, which came a year later after signing a similar treaty last year with Abkhazia (Freeman, 2015). This round of the Geneva talks was expected to resolve the conflict but because of the integration agreement, there was a lot of tension and even some walk-outs and no viable solution was found in the end. Even though these were not officially peace talks, they were important

as they concerned the implementation of the six-point plan. The agreement in the six-point plan stipulates that all signed parties withdraw their troops to the lines before 6 August 2008. Georgia has complied with this while there are still 10,000 Russian Federation troops in South Ossetia and 12,000 in Abkhazia. The argument for non-compliance on the Russian side is that after recognising the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on 26 August 2008, the six-point ceasefire plan became invalid as at the time when it was signed South Ossetia and Abkhazia still belonged to Georgia according to international law. Hence, from a Russian legal perspective the ceasefire agreement was only valid between 16 (the date when it was signed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev) and 26 August. Thus, the Russian view is that in order to have a valid agreement, a new one needs to be made with the governments of the two new independent states. From the OSCE and international community perspective, however, the plan is still valid although it is not implemented. The OSCE mission to South Ossetia was closed down in December 2008 and the OSCE has been making attempts since to start it again and have an OSCE presence on the ground. The 2008 Finnish and 2011 Lithuanian OSCE Chairmanship made attempts to restart the mission albeit unsuccessfully. According to an EU diplomat, the main issue is ultimately status (personal interview, May 11, 2015). The Russian Federation and the authorities in South Ossetia and Abkhazia would probably agree to an OSCE presence on the ground provided that there are three missions - one to South Ossetia, one to Abkhazia and one to Georgia. However, this is unacceptable to Georgia, to the majority of OSCE participating States and the EU. Negotiations are still ongoing and creative solutions need to be found, says an EU diplomat.

Russian Realism, the OSCE and the realm of European Security

There are two phases that can be discerned in Russia's OSCE policy after the end of the Cold War, one that lasted from the 1990 until 1999 when the OSCE Istanbul Summit was held. During that period Russia had the ambition to create a treaty-based organisation using the OSCE as a tool as Russian security needs were not satisfied, Russia had just experienced the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact and NATO and the EU emerged as victors. Russia harboured its ambitions of a creating a treaty-based pan-European security organisation through the OSCE throughout the 1990s and fought hard to achieve this. However, things came to a head in 1999 at the Istanbul Summit, which was a turning point for Russia's OSCE policy. At the Summit, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin clashed and argued and Yeltsin even walked out of the Summit two days before its closing. Nevertheless, an agreement was signed by the Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov. The major points of contention at the Summit were the NATO bombing campaign in Kosovo as Russia was kept out of the loop and there was no mandate from the Security Council. This resulted in a lot of frustration on the Russian side and Russia further realised that it was not going to receive support for its idea for a treaty-based security organisation. Russia first tabled this idea in 1997 when they drafted the European Security Charter which, after years of negotiation was watered down and signed in 1999 but it was a long way from what Russia had hoped for. All of this goes to show that Russia has been making efforts to satisfy its security needs through the OSCE as it felt that its national interests were threatened by NATO expansion to the East. NATO is a collective defence organisation and there is always the implicit association of a common enemy that this collective defence is directed against, regardless of whether this is Russia or not. The Russian perception is that NATO and the EU are working against Russia's security and national interests and so in 1999 a different strategy, approach had to be adopted and Russia realised the OSCE was not going to be answer to this (EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015). Russian communiqués “indicate that Russia continues to see NATO as a central threat to its security and peace in Europe, and the OSCE is a potentially useful diversion, but little more” (Hurlburt, 1995, p. 10). The OSCE is weak because it wants to “retain Western acceptability while avoiding intrusive scrutiny over which Russia exercised no control” (Hurlburt, 1995, p. 14). In Chechnya, for example the OSCE had to make concessions in order to gain access to the conflict zone. It had no presence at the ceasefire or settlement phase, and it had to make sure that its activities did not come across as protests against human rights violations. This was the reason for Russia's reluctance to mandate an OSCE mission as such an act would have given the impression that there are human rights violations. Nevertheless, after pressure from the West to establish an OSCE mission (the signing of a trade agreement was used as leverage to persuade Russia), Russia accepted the so-called “Assistance

Group” which was to be executed conjointly with the Russian authorities. These actions speak clearly of Russia’s “determination to retain initiative” while disregarding “OSCE norms as it deems necessary” (Hurlburt, 1995, p. 15). Russia’s willingness to “use the OSCE to enhance its claim to a decisive role in Europe and equal status with the United and the European Union but not to consider an OSCE activity as a sufficient or even desirable solution to its policy dilemmas in its own region is a pattern typical of great power response to international organisations” (Hurlburt, 1995, p. 16).

Russian rhetoric with regards to the OSCE was fundamentally different starting from 2000 onwards. At the 2007 Munich Conference, Putin described the OSCE, to the dismay of many, as “a vulgar instrument designed to promote the foreign policy interests of one or a group of countries” (Schreck, 2007). In 2008, Medvedev, at a conference in Berlin, suggested that there should be a new security treaty that would cover the “the whole Euro-Atlantic space from Vancouver to Vladivostok” (Shchedrov, 2008). An EU expert claims that Medvedev’s speech came as a shock as the West was not interested in a new European security treaty, it had NATO and the OSCE and, unlike Russia, was content with the status quo, the security architecture in place (personal interview, May 11, 2015). NATO satisfied the security demands of the West and the OSCE provided a more comprehensive approach to security with the inclusion of the human and the economic environmental dimension in addition to the politico-military dimension. The western OSCE participating States decided they had to act to appease Russia as well as make sure that there was not going to be a new security organisation to replace the existing ones. This was the beginning for discussions about OSCE reform which started with the Greek Chairmanship in 2009 when a large conference was convened on the Greek island of Corfu, which came to be known as the Corfu Process. The aim of the conference was to find a way to satisfy the security needs of both Russia and the West. The Corfu process did not amount to much (EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015). The following year, in 2010, under the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship the Astana Summit was held where a declaration was adopted which highlighted the need for, in the words of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan “a united and indivisible security space, free of dividing lines and different levels of security” (Bugajski, Assenova & Weitz, 2011, p. 2). And this is what Russia has wanted from 1990 onwards - one united security community without dividing lines instead of NATO on the one side and Russia with a number of other states on the other (EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015). This is easier said than done. Zagorski (2010) argues that the OSCE “participating States have long been deeply divided on the issue of what is, or what should be, the rationale and the common purpose of the OSCE” and this “dividing line” which “runs through the OSCE” became evident during the Corfu Process and the Astana Summit (p. 32). Those words were put in a declaration but no one has ever succeeded in putting them into practice. It

started with the Corfu Process, followed by the European Security Dialogue. Now it is called Helsinki+40 (to mark 40 years of the Helsinki Final Act). It has been an endless process and, according to an EU expert, it is not surprising that no agreement has been reached because “how do you put this united security community into practice if the West does not want this?” The West is content with the current institutional framework - NATO serving the security needs and the EU serving the economic interests - and it wants “to enlarge those institutions to the East as much as possible without thinking twice that it is in the end not in the interest of Russia”. The EU expert further contends that “the Ukraine crisis is nothing but a symptom of this crisis which has been going on since the end of the Cold War”. From a realist point of view and from the point of Russian national interests, the OSCE is not serving Russia's national interests so Russia wants to change it into a pan-European security organisation and if that is not working, then it wants something else (EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015).

In Russian politics, traditional geopolitics is often associated with political realism (realpolitik) (Erse, 2005). Emre Ersen (2005) argues that “by reducing geography to something that might be conquered or distributed in the name of keeping a balance of power, geopolitics becomes almost identical with the realist theory of international relations”. Realism and traditional geopolitics view “conflict” (this concerns either conflicts between nation-states or between land and sea power) as pivotal in world politics (p. 33). This “connection between realism and geopolitics can be observed in the Soviet strategy during the Cold War” and this traditional geopolitical thinking can be observed in post-Cold war Russia as well (Erse, 2005, p. 33). This theoretical framework sheds light on the fundamental problem of Russia's withdrawal from one of the basic principles of the OSCE - namely the inviolability of borders. After the Second World War, Russia's borders stretched out from Vladivostok to Central Europe and parts of Germany and there was fear in Russia that Europe might contest those borders. This is why, in 1975, this principle of the OSCE was the biggest allure for the Soviet Union to sign the Helsinki Final Act because this guaranteed preservation of the status quo. By signing the Helsinki Accords the Soviet Union also agreed to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the borders of Europe and Central Asia changed and 15 independent states emerged. Russia was very dissatisfied with the new borders that it was confronted with because those borders were suddenly not in Russia's favour. It had lost Central Asia, the Baltic States but also large parts of former Russia (Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan). And what Russia has been doing for the past ten years is “trying to, whenever possible, get something of their former empire back” (B. ter Haar, personal interview, May 13, 2015). Barend ter Haar further argues that Russia has been trying in different ways to dominate its near abroad, for example, through unions

and attract neighbours like Kazakhstan and Belarus to join them. However, when governments are unwilling to cooperate closely with Russia, as was the case in Moldova and Georgia, it employs annexation tactics as the cases of Transnistria in Moldova, South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia and Crimea in Ukraine demonstrate.

Experts agree that fear of NATO expansion has been a strong factor that has influenced Russia's security policy. From a theoretical perspective, neoclassical realism emphasises the importance of external factors in a state's policy. In this way, "Russian foreign policy towards the West predominantly changes together with the West's policies towards Russia" (Kropatcheva, 2012a, p. 32). Russia has had to come to terms with the fact that Central Europe, the Baltic States and even parts of the former Soviet Union have become members of NATO. As Russia feels threatened by NATO expansion, it is less willing to honour the OSCE principle of inviolability of borders. Barend ter Haar explains that from a Russian perspective NATO used to be an alliance against the Soviet empire, so to speak, and Russia feels that "NATO still exists as an alliance against Russia". However, Ter Haar emphasises, "NATO is not, or should not be, an anti-Russian organisation". Experts agree that Russia believes it has an interest in supporting instability in its near abroad yet things are not as "black and white", instead they are more "nuanced" (Abushov, 2009; B. ter Haar, personal interview, May 13, 2015; S. Utkin, personal interview, May 12, 2015; EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015; EU diplomat, personal interview, May 11, 2015). Abushov (2009) and Hurlburt (1995) maintain that Russian foreign policy in the South Caucasus has often been incohesive. Abushov (2009) argues that from a neo-imperialist perspective Russia does not seem to have a clear strategy in supporting the status quo in the South Caucasus. Unlike the USA, whose incentives for intervening in Iraq were energy resources and hegemony in the Middle East, Russia does not seem to have a clear end goal in supporting instability in the post-Soviet space. The policies of both superpowers could be defined as neo-realist. This policy is a far cry from the "democratic euphoria of the Yeltsin government" whose aspirations for attaining the principles of Western democracies proved evanescent (Abushov, 2009, p. 189). Factors that lead to Moscow's disillusionment and return to Cold War isolationism were the unsuccessful privatisation process, corruption, and the Chechen wars. An EU expert agrees that there is a lack of coherence in Russia's behaviour in its near abroad. This is illustrated by Russia's concerns regarding the independence of Chechnya and the fact that Russia has in the past "brutally crushed" any rebellion. On the other hand, Russia is a strong proponent of the self-determination movements in Transnistria, South Ossetia, Nagorno Karabakh and it "fiercely" supports those movements financially and militarily. From a realist perspective it would be in Russia's national interests to pacify Chechnya as it is within Russia's borders. On the other hand, Russia feels threatened by strong neighbours. Thus,

it would be in Russia's interest to create instability in Moldova and Georgia as this would prevent those countries from joining NATO or the EU and coming ever closer to the Russian borders. In this line of thought this is what is happening with Ukraine as well. Russia considers Ukraine to be its “security buffer” and if Ukraine were to join NATO this would raise questions such as what would happen to Russia's Black Sea fleet in Crimea (EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015). Barend ter Haar and Sergey Utkin assert that rather than “complete chaos” controlled or “managed instability” could be “one of the possible tools in a bigger game” which is to keep the influence Russia has on its neighbouring states and whenever possible to strengthen it.

Russian politics is not only about hard-core realism and if we go beyond the security concerns of Russia, we will see that Russia also has economic and environmental interests in the OSCE. This is where neoclassical realism and rational institutionalism come into play. Neoclassical realism stipulates that “states may view each other simultaneously as security threats and valuable economic partners” and Russia has “consistently aspired to promote the development of its national economy through its foreign policy” (as cited in Kropatcheva, 2012a, p. 32). Faced with EU enlargement, Russia also has to take care of its economic interests. If we look at the integration treaties Russia has signed with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, we will find a reference to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in addition to the defence and security issues. This means that the treaties entail legislative changes for the integration of South Ossetia and Abkhazia into the EAEU within a period of three years, something that is not too unlike the EU accession process. The Russian aim is to ultimately create a Eurasian economic space of which South Ossetia and Abkhazia would be part of and Crimea already is, from a Russian perspective, perhaps even Transnistria (EU diplomat, personal interview, May 11, 2015). As regards the economic security, Barend ter Haar claims that the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension has never been particularly robust. Sergey Utkin agrees that few would dispute the institutional imbalance within the OSCE. He remarks that when it comes to substantive economic issues, the OSCE is not the platform for this kind of debate but rather institutions such as the EU or the WTO. In the economic realm, and not only, “the West has missed an opportunity to engage Russia more in Western institutions” (as cited in Kropatcheva, 2012b, p. 375). In an increasingly multilateral world, Russia has made attempts to advance multilateral institutions but has met little support from the West. Russian scholars and politicians have expressed criticism of “US unilateralism, neglect of Russia's interests and Western competition with Russia in the post-Soviet space” which has resulted in Russian policy-makers to “make efforts to prevent non-Russian controlled multilateralism from encroaching on the post-Soviet space” (as cited in Kropatcheva, 2012b, p. 375).

Kropatcheva (2012b) observes Russia's OSCE policy through rational institutionalist and realist lenses and observes how its policy has become "instrumentalist" and "selective". For example, according to an EU expert, Russia has been making efforts to strengthen the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE and has demonstrated great interest in topics such as management of natural disasters, energy security, environmental protection, anti-corruption. What is more, if we look at decisions taken in the second dimension of the OSCE, we can see a lot of consensus and cooperation from the Russian side. However, things look different in the first (human) and third (politico-military) dimension. A trend that can be observed in Russia's OSCE policy is intentional weakening of the human dimension which borders on active sabotage. Examples include vetoing decisions which aim to strengthen ODIHR or any decision related to basic human rights - freedom of assembly, freedom of the media, freedom of speech, strengthening civil society. This is an area in which Russia has previously cooperated. This trend in Russian politics aims on the one hand to keep civil society under control in Russia but on the other hand it is also retaliation against the West (EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015). For example, in the OSCE Ministerial Council (MC) in Dublin 2012 and Vilnius 2011 no human rights decisions were adopted due to a Russian veto (Liechtenstein, 2012). Zellner (2012) asserts that Russia's uncooperative attitude on the human dimension decisions at the 2011 Vilnius MC could be explained by a "re-worsening" of US-Russia relations (p. 7). As a result of the failure of human dimension decisions, a series of important draft decisions related to transnational threats and cyber security, "which [...] provide[d] much of the political substance of the Vilnius MC meeting, could not be adopted" (Zellner, 2012, p. 8). As for the 2012 MC in Dublin, Russia blocked the consensus because of an "underlying significant divergence on what is meant by fundamental rights and democratic principles in today's world (despite the existence of clear precedents and agreed basic texts from Helsinki onwards)" (as cited in Liechtenstein, 2012, p. 320). The December 2013 MC in Kiev broke this two year hiatus although an important decision on the protection of journalists was not adopted as the Russian Federation was the only delegation who blocked the consensus (Liechtenstein, 2013). The Russian rationale is that the West is only interested in strengthening the human dimension of the OSCE and using human rights violations for political purposes (S. Utkin, personal interview, May 12, 2015). Russia fears that a strong human dimension could lead to democratic change in Ukraine or Georgia or Moldova. Western style democracies are perceived as threats to the Russian authoritarian system (EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015). Barend ter Haar confirms this view and notes that the thinking in Moscow is in terms of zero-sum game. He observes that the dilemma around the concept of common security - whether your security is my security or threat - is still ongoing.

The current discussions within the Helsinki+40 process, initiated in 2012, have not produced tangible results “as they have either looked at symptoms (protracted conflicts, lack of progress on conventional arms control) or at issues not related to the core problem (transnational threats, economic and environmental issues, OSCE institutional reform)” (Liechtenstein, 2015). Liechtenstein (2015) states that OSCE reform does not address the underlying problem. A strengthened OSCE might help Russia play a more constructive role but it is very doubtful that it will lead to any resolution to the conflicts in Georgia or Ukraine. The conflicts will remain frozen as long as this is in the interest in one of the parties. Experts believe that there has not been done enough to address this issue (Boren 2015; EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015). Discussions about Permanent Council reform or the position of the Secretary General are secondary to recognising the main problem, namely the different security perceptions between Russia and the West.

Conclusion

The OSCE has gone through different transformations in its history. From its creation in 1975 until 1990, it was a reaction to The Iron Curtain, “an awkward instrument for dialogue and negotiation during even the darkest days of the East-West divide” (Mlyn, 2002, p. 50). And from the 1990s to the present, the OSCE has generally served “as a response to the end of the Cold War” (Mlyn, 2002, p. 50). The 1990s saw many debates over the OSCE's shape and role as its participating States were often in disagreement about OSCE's nature and role in European security. The 1990s were also marked by Russia's attempts to transform the OSCE into the “overarching Security organisation for Europe” although this was met with little support from other states (Mlyn, 2002, p. 49). The US has always been a strong proponent of NATO's supremacy in the European security architecture and The Russian Federation's efforts to stop NATO enlargement were also unsuccessful. Even though the Russian side achieved some compromises such as transforming the Conference into an Organisation at the 1994 Budapest Summit, there is no denying that the United States emerged as the victor over “the battle for NATO primacy” and the OSCE was kept “in what may best be termed a supporting role” (Mlyn, 2002, p.49).

As the OSCE was increasingly marginalised, Russia's support for the Organisation declined gradually. This happened parallelly to worsening Western-Russian relations. Since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, Russia's OSCE policy has been selectively constructive and obstructive but with Putin's coming to power, it gradually leaned towards balance-of-power politics. If we look at Russian political rhetoric over the years, we can see that Russian policy-makers have expressed grievances over Russia's unfair treatment by the West, insisting that Russia wanted to be an equal partner in the design of the unified European security architecture and that “it is no Soviet Union” or a “bear” that is “all too willing to grasp neighbouring territories” and that the EU and NATO “are not right in seeing Russia through the prism of the past” (Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 18). Kropatcheva (2015) comments that “Russia has undermined its own efforts” and it is perceived as “a threatening revisionist power” by the West, “willing and able to challenge the current European security order” (p. 19). She observes that the Western actors have also “gradually brought unilateralist, realist balance-of-power politics into the OSCE” (p. 19). Indeed, experts agree that the West has not done enough to address Russia's security concerns and economic interests (B. ter Haar, personal interview, May 13, 2015; EU expert, personal interview, May 11, 2015). The fundamental problem is that NATO and the EU see their enlargement policies as promoting stability and peace in Europe, while in the Russian view these are “hostile steps, dividing Europe and alienating it” (Kropatcheva, 2015, p. 19). European security discussions should be

more inclusive of the OSCE. If the actions of the EU, NATO, Council of Europe and the OSCE were co-ordinated this could have an advantage as countries which belong neither to the EU nor NATO could have a voice in European decisions (Betzuege, 2002). OSCE participating States should engage in open discussion and focus on common interests such as strengthening the economy and tackling climate change. In this way, the core problems within the OSCE would be addressed instead of simply treating the symptoms (Liechtenstein, 2015). The OSCE could be more effective but this very much depends on the cooperation of its participating States. The OSCE is a relatively weak organisation and there is very little it can do but then again the chances of solving the conflicts depend on how willing the governments are to cooperate (B. ter Haar, personal interview, May 13, 2015). As Andrei Zagorski (2010) puts it “the success or failure of any international organisation, and particularly of one such as the consensus-based OSCE, depends on all its participating States, on whether or not they are mature enough to be able to articulate their common purpose despite disagreeing on particular issues” (p. 31). However, Kropatcheva (2015) argues, shared interest is not enough for maintaining peace in the OSCE area. In the tradition of security governance, a values-based security community is necessary and this is where the differing agendas of Russia and the West come into play. Kropatcheva (2015) observes that the OSCE has developed into “a hybrid governance system, shifting between the practices of cooperation [...] and non-cooperation and [...] balance of power” (p. 19).

Fourty years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, the dividing lines within the OSCE run deep and the power play between Russia and the West is as relevant today as it was in 1975. Without a real security community, the frozen conflicts in the OSCE space are likely to remain unresolved and the lack of such community has resulted in the eruption of new violent conflicts (Kropatcheva, 2015). Nevertheless, despite the lack of shared values, the dialogue within the OSCE should be kept open as currently there are not many platforms left where Russia and the West could engage in active discussion. As Sergey Utkin notes, how to mend the ailing Russia-West relationship “is the hundred billion dollar question” and there is no way “to make Russia and the West see eye to eye in the short-to-middle term perspective, given the existing attitudes in the Russian government, and in the West. In the meantime, it is important to make use of the existing [OSCE] mechanisms [in order] to avoid further escalation and release tension” (S. Utkin, personal e-mail, May 19, 2015).

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Student Ethics Form

Student Ethics Form**European Studies
Student Ethics Form****Your name:** Sema Syuleyman**Supervisor:** Antje Grebner**Instructions/checklist**

Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>). If you are planning research with human subjects you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.

- a. ☐ Read section 3 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
- b. ☐ Complete sections 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
- c. ☐ Ask your project supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and sign the form.
- d. ☐ Append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation.

Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)

- (i) **Title of Project:** The evolution of the Russian Federation's policy towards the OSCE. Case study: The OSCE Mission to South Ossetia and the diplomatic crisis of 2008
- (ii) **Aims of project:** This projects aims to trace the role of the Russian Federation in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) since the founding of the Organisation in 1975 in order to make an analysis of the current crisis in the OSCE.
- (iii) **Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your supervisor, you should answer 'NO' to this question.)**

YES

If no: you should now sign the statement below and return the form to your supervisor. You have completed this form.

This project is not designed to include research with human subjects. I understand that I do not have ethical clearance to interview people (formally or informally) about the topic of my research, to carry out internet research (e.g. on chat rooms or discussion boards) or in any other way to use people as subjects in my research.

Student's signature _____ - date _____

If yes: you should complete the rest of this form.

Section 2 Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.

(i) What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure):

The participants will answer a number of questions related to the topic of the research.

(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited?

The participants in the study will mostly be academics and scholars and general experts in OSCE-Russian Federation matters. The Security and Human Rights journal which specialises in OSCE matters should prove a valuable resource for recruiting participants. The participants will be contacted via email.

(iii) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to, tick the appropriate boxes and then state what they are in the space below?

Questionnaires[]; Pictures[]; Sounds []; Words[X]; Other[].

A list of interview questions exploring the research project will be used as material to gather primary data.

(iv) Consent: Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. Either verbally or by means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. A standard informed consent form is available in the Dissertation Manual.

(vi) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data? Personal data (name, addresses etc.) should not be stored in such a way that they can be associated with the participant's data.

Student's signature: date: 11 April 2015

Supervisor's signature (if satisfied with the proposed procedures): date: 11/4/15

Appendix 2 Informed Consent Form – Barend ter Haar

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

- 1) Research Project Title
What is the evolution of the Russian Federation's policy towards the OSCE? Case study:
The Russo-Georgian diplomatic crisis of 2008 and South Ossetia 1991
- 2) Project Description (1 paragraph)
The aim of this paper is to reflect on Russian-OSCE relations and how this has changed from Russia's constructive engagement to the escalation in 2008 in Georgia. The OSCE is in a crisis generated by Russia as Russia feels that the OSCE no longer serves its national interests. Examples include a lack of consensus on high politics issues for two years in a row—in Maastricht (2003) and Sofia (2004) because of a Russian veto. Russia has become the OSCE's biggest critic even though it used to be one of its biggest supporters. This research aims to explain the change in foreign policy of Russia which is reflected in change in attitude within the OSCE.

If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.

I am 16 years of age or older.

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

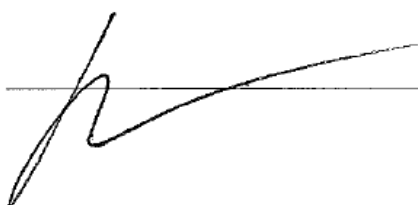
I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed:  Date: 13 ✓ 2015

Appendix 3 Informed Consent Form – EU expert

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

- 1) Research Project Title
What is the evolution of the Russian Federation's policy towards the OSCE? Case study:
The Russo-Georgian diplomatic crisis of 2008 and South Ossetia 1991
- 2) Project Description (1 paragraph)
The aim of this paper is to reflect on Russian-OSCE relations and how this has changed from Russia's constructive engagement to the escalation in 2008 in Georgia. The OSCE is in a crisis generated by Russia as Russia feels that the OSCE no longer serves its national interests. Examples include a lack of consensus on high politics issues for two years in a row—in Maastricht (2003) and Sofia (2004) because of a Russian veto. Russia has become the OSCE's biggest critic even though it used to be one of its biggest supporters. This research aims to explain the change in foreign policy of Russia which is reflected in change in attitude within the OSCE.

If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.

I am 16 years of age or older.

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

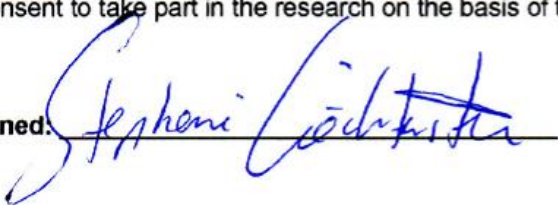
All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed:



Date:

11/5/2015

Appendix 4 Informed Consent Form – EU diplomat

Informed Consent Form**Informed Consent Form****1) Research Project Title**

What is the evolution of the Russian Federation's policy towards the OSCE? Case study:
The Russo-Georgian diplomatic crisis of 2008 and South Ossetia 1991

2) Project Description (1 paragraph)

The aim of this paper is to reflect on Russian-OSCE relations and how this has changed from Russia's constructive engagement to the escalation in 2008 in Georgia. The OSCE is in a crisis generated by Russia as Russia feels that the OSCE no longer serves its national interests. Examples include a lack of consensus on high politics issues for two years in a row—in Maastricht (2003) and Sofia (2004) because of a Russian veto. Russia has become the OSCE's biggest critic even though it used to be one of its biggest supporters. This research aims to explain the change in foreign policy of Russia which is reflected in change in attitude within the OSCE.

If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.

I am 16 years of age or older.

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

KKa *11.05.2015*

Please do not use my name in the study.

Appendix 5 Informed Consent Form – Sergey Utkin

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

- 1) Research Project Title
What is the evolution of the Russian Federation's policy towards the OSCE? Case study:
The Russo-Georgian diplomatic crisis of 2008 and South Ossetia 1991
- 2) Project Description (1 paragraph)
The aim of this paper is to reflect on Russian-OSCE relations and how this has changed from Russia's constructive engagement to the escalation in 2008 in Georgia. The OSCE is in a crisis generated by Russia as Russia feels that the OSCE no longer serves its national interests. Examples include a lack of consensus on high politics issues for two years in a row—in Maastricht (2003) and Sofia (2004) because of a Russian veto. Russia has become the OSCE's biggest critic even though it used to be one of its biggest supporters. This research aims to explain the change in foreign policy of Russia which is reflected in change in attitude within the OSCE.

If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.

I am 16 years of age or older.

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

13.05.2015

Appendix 6 Interview transcript – Barend ter Haar

S.S.: Can an OSCE reform help bring back Moscow's cooperative stance towards the OSCE?

BH: Well, in any case I would not agree, I think, let me start with that, with what you're saying kind of black and white, Russia was in favor of the OSCE and later not in favor of the OSCE. I mean it's more, I would say nuanced than that. My impression is that they still feel that in many fields the OSCE is playing a useful role and can also be in their interest, but not always.

SS: Russia still believes that?

BH: It depends on the issue. So, whenever it suits them, then they like to make use of it, when it does not suit them, they will not make use of it. There is the, the most fundamental problem is that they have changed their mind on one of the basic principles of the OSCE that was in their favor twenty-five years ago, and is no longer in their favor now, and that is the inviolability of borders - the rule that you cannot change borders between states. For them, in '75, that was the big attractiveness of the CSCE at the time because they always feared that the West would start discussing their borders. Because after the Second World War they took over parts of Germany and so on. So, the deal was, so to say, that we accepted the borders as they were, and they accepted that there were certain basic human rights rules. So at that time it was in their interest to accept the borders as they were. But then we got the dissolution of the Soviet Union into, what is it, fifteen different states, and that made them change their mind because they were not happy at all with the borders as they were confronted with.

SS: Who changed their mind?

BH: Russia and certainly Putin. The borders after the Second World War were in favor of the Soviet Union. They [had] expanded their territory. They took over parts of Poland, they took over parts of Germany, so they became bigger. It was in their favor to have those new borders accepted, when we did it in '75. But in '91 when the Soviet Union fell apart in different parts, they were suddenly confronted with new borders which were much closer. They lost Belarus, they lost the Baltic States, they lost Ukraine, they lost all the other states. And suddenly they were not that happy with the borders because the borders were suddenly not in their favor. And what they had been doing, during the last ten years, is trying to, whenever possible, to get something of their former empire back. After the second world war the borders went from Vladivostok up to far in Central Europe, but they not only lost Central Europe, they also lost a big part of the former Russia. Ukraine has been part of Russia for a long time. Belarus and Kazakhstan and so. And they lost all that. They felt that that was not in their interest and what they have been trying to do is whenever they could get something back, one way or another, they have tried to, either getting it back by having a union like with Kazakhstan and Belarus. They tried to have a union where Russia would be the leading power. Or, if that was not possible because the government was not willing to cooperate so closely with Russia, as in the case of Georgia or in the case of Moldova, they tried to take over, at least when they got the chance, parts of the country. So they took over – de facto – in Moldova its Transnistria, they took over – de facto – South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia. And took now, you could also argue, over Crimea of course and a part of Eastern Ukraine. So they at least got something back. Whether it's a wise policy is something different. But clearly they are less interested in accepting the borders as they were. Officially they are accepting it, but they are in practice, South Ossetia and Abkhazia for instance are to some extent at least it seems, integrated in Russia.

SS: But what about NATO expansion?

BH: Well that's of course what they've feared. After the Second World War they expanded, and then they had to accept that Central Europe became a member of NATO, even parts of the former Soviet Union became parts of NATO, the Baltic States. And they fear that Ukraine and Georgia at some point also become part of NATO. So they really felt, rightly or wrongly, threatened by the expansion of NATO. That's why they were less willing to accept the rule of the OSCE that borders are borders. So officially they accept it, but in the case of Crimea they have clearly not accepted it. But that is a general point to start with.

SS: Russian criticism came to a head in February 2007, when President Vladimir Putin declared to the 43rd Conference on Security Policy in Munich, "What do we see happening today [with the OSCE]? We see this balance [between the political-military, the economic and the human dimensions] is clearly destroyed. People are trying to transform the OSCE into a vulgar instrument designed to promote the foreign policy interests of one or a group of countries." - Do you agree with this statement? If yes, can we see the balance between the political-military, the economic and the human dimensions restored?

BH: Well, the OSCE transforming in an instrument designed to promote the foreign policy interest of one, or a group, of countries, well that is basically what I have just been saying. It now, suddenly, after the dissolution of the Soviet empire, the rule of inviolability of borders has become an argument in favor of NATO and not of Russia. So they are confronted with an implication of what they have earlier accepted, which is they feel is no longer in their favor. "*The balance between the political economic and human dimension is clearly destroyed.*" I think that is right, but this balance has always been difficult. And it certainly is not the case that you can blame the West only, for destroying this balance. The human dimension for instance is something that the Russians have always had difficulty with. The human rights situation is less ideal, let's say, than some other countries.

SS: Would you say that their fear of NATO expansion is justified, because NATO did get closer to Russian borders?

BH: I'm not saying that it is not justified. They feel it's justified. It depends on how you look at NATO. You can imagine the reasoning they have, because NATO used to be, let's say, an alliance against the Soviet empire, and now they feel that NATO still exists as an alliance against Russia, which is not necessarily true. My personal view is that NATO does not necessarily, or should not be, an anti-Russian organization. But I also know that, for some people certainly, in certain countries, they feel that NATO is a kind of alliance against a possible attack of Russia. So it's complicated. It's not a clear issue. You can imagine that formally, there is no reason for Russia to complain. Because NATO is not against Russia, it's just an alliance of countries and Russia has nothing to fear because there is absolutely no plan of NATO to invade Russia or something like that. One could imagine that some Russians feel humiliated by the fact that all the parts of the former Soviet empire are now becoming part of an alliance that used to be an anti-Soviet alliance. So it's slightly more nuanced than that. So I do not fully agree with this statement, certainly not. I do understand where they are coming from and as far as there is no good balance between political and military, economic and human dimension, I do agree but it's a much wider problem than what we are talking about now. We are talking about the political-military balance. For instance in the field of economic – you do not mention it but it is also in

the papers – the economic and environmental dimension. We are confronted with big problems of climate change and environmental problems that are problems for us all. For Russia as well as for all. And we have to tackle it together. In principle, I would argue, Russians and we, the other countries in Europe, have a common interest in dealing with these problems. And in dealing with the energy problem, getting a CO2 reduction etcetera. But that is quite a difficult problem. The OSCE has never been very strong in that field. But in principle, I would argue, that, if you look at it objectively, Russia and the rest of Europe has a lot common interests. The challenge is to build upon that, and not to build upon those areas where they feel they have different interests.

SS: Is for example the human dimension in the OSCE more developed than the other two?

BH: No, I would argue that the political-military dimension is the best developed because they have these arms control treaties and so on that are connected to the OSCE. Certainly of the three, it's the economic –environmental dimension that is least developed. And the other two, the human dimension is developed to some extent but the OSCE is relatively weak.

SS: Would you say there is a bias between the East and West divide when it comes to human rights violations? This is at least what Russia says, that there is a bias within the OSCE.

BH: I won't say that there is never a bias but the problem is, and that is not a problem of bias, that is just an objective problem, that in some parts of Europe, human rights violations are much more common than in others. The situation is much worse, let's say, in Kosovo or Belarus than in The Netherlands or Belgium. I would argue that is an objective fact. It is not that we don't have human rights violations. Think about people without legal status and so on.

SS: The Basque country, Northern Ireland.

BH: Yes, we have problems too. But the biggest problems are in Central Asia: Chechnya, in Russia. I would argue that you can objectively say that the problems are bigger there. The freedom of press in Russia is much more under threat than it is here. So in that sense, the problem in some countries is worse than in others, and therefore there is more attention for those countries, that's right. I'm not saying there is never a bias, but the fact that there is much more attention for the human rights situation in the countries where the situation is worse is only logical. The OSCE should pay attention to all countries, in principle they do that also, and then note that in some countries the problems are bigger than in others.

SS: Would you say that Russia sometimes intentionally sabotages the human dimension of the OSCE?

BH: Oh yeah.

SS: In what ways? Or to what end?

BH: One reason is that Russia has not a real, open – it's a difficult situation, it's not a dictatorship but neither is it a free and open society. There is to some extent a free press in Russia but it is much more difficult in Russia for opposition parties to publish their opinions than for instance in Western European countries. You see that, now for instance, this publication about the Russian role in Ukraine. One way or the other, it is made very difficult for publications to print and distribute anti-governmental information, information that the government does not want to be distributed. For instance about the

Russian involvement in Ukraine is, as far as I can tell a clear case, is denied by the Russian government. So in that sense they are sabotaging those human rights that they feel are not in the interest of the government.

SS: Can an OSCE reform return Moscow the sense of ownership?

BH: Well, it depends very much on themselves. It can help if they really try to play an active role, I would say, then it can help. But if it will work out, I don't know. The question is too general for that.

SS: What is your opinion of the current Panel of Eminent Persons?

BH: I don't see any results of that (the current Panel of Eminent Persons). I think it is always good, certainly at a point as this, at the current moment, to sit back and consider what role the OSCE is playing now and how it could play a better role. This is what we have been discussing. We are in a difficult situation where there are tensions between countries, between Russia and the rest, so to say. But also very much common problems that we have to deal with commonly. Also, Ukraine, we will have to find a solution that gives the population of Ukraine a prospect of a good life in that country, and make up their kind of civil war. The same is true for Nagorno Karabakh and for Transnistria. There are a lot of common problems that are in the interest of everybody to deal with: climate problems, energy problems. So, it's a big agenda that we have to deal with and the OSCE can play a considerable role because there, Russia is at the table, they are a full member of the OSCE. They are also a member of the Council of Europe and not of the EU or NATO. So to some extent the OSCE could play a role, and if they are willing to let the OSCE play a role, and others are willing too, then in principle, this process could help. And such a Panel of Eminent Persons could also help new ideas to do things better.

SS: So are you positive about the potential outcome?

BH: The potential outcome, yes. But I have not seen an outcome.

SS: There is a lot of skepticism too.

BH: Yes, sure. But in that sense it is my profession. I am an optimist as a diplomat. Always, even when you are not sure of it you have to try. And it is very easy to say: oh it's all bad and nothing will come from it. But then you are certain that nothing will happen. And I'm not saying that it will happen, but at least you should give it a try. I mean I don't see that another option would be better. It's easy to be cynical but we have to go on trying to get things better. Look at what we have reached during the last fifty, the last seventy years. I mean it is immense. Almost everybody in Europe has a better life, so we have something to protect. But still, the problems are not small and we have to tackle them one way or another. One way is sit around a table with people from different countries, knowledgeable people, and say: okay what are the options? That's what the Panel will do. If we are then willing to take over those proposals, I'm not sure, it depends. But at least it's a first step. I think it's something that we should do anyway.

SS: Focus on the common ground.

BH: Yes and see what is the best way to tackle problems. Not just by getting more tense so to say. That won't solve it. I'm not saying we can do without tense but that's not the solution. That's what we learned in the OSCE process, that there are better ways to deal with problems than fighting.

SS: Can an OSCE reform help bring back Moscow's cooperative stance towards the OSCE?

BH: I'm not so sure whether it is OSCE reform that is needed. It's not that the OSCE is not working properly, that's not the main problem. They could be working better but a reformed OSCE, I'm not sure whether it might be... A strengthened OSCE I would rather say, might help for them to play a more effective role. But if you're saying: bring Moscow back on board. Well, they are on board in the OSCE. They are there, so what do you mean with back on board?

SS: I mean their cooperative stance. Their cooperative attitude.

BH: As far as the conflict in Ukraine and in Georgia are concerned, I don't think a reformed OSCE will help them to get another policy. In that sense I'm not too optimistic.

SS: Another policy would result in conflicts?

BH: Yes, the reason that Russia has its current policy towards Georgia and Ukraine is not that the OSCE is not working properly, the reason is that the thinking in Moscow is a zero-sum game thinking. They believe that when a country comes closer to NATO and the EU, nowadays that may be so, it will automatically go further away from Russia, which is a way of thinking which is in my view wrong. But it won't be changed by changing the OSCE. The OSCE in fact – and if you go back to the original OSCE – is a... The bright idea of the OSCE is like the bright idea behind the European Union, is that the relationships between states is not a zero-sum game. That one country becomes stronger does not mean that the other country gets weaker or more threatened. That was old-fashioned thinking. And it is very interesting to compare the – I'm not sure whether you know about that – the MBFR, Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions negotiations we had in Europe with the OSCE? Well, the old thinking was this: the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions was a negotiation between NATO and the Soviet Union, basically. Saying: okay, if we both have less tanks and less missiles and less weapons, then we're better off. So we're both weaker but we are less threatened, sort of. That is a zero-sum game. If you are somewhat weaker, that's good for me. And if I'm somewhat weaker, it's good for you. Now the completely opposite thinking is: when you are doing well, it's in my favor too. The European Union is built on the idea that when things would go well in Germany, it would be in favor of France too. And when things would go well in France, it would be good for Germany too. That's exactly the opposite of the former thinking where when Germany became stronger, France felt threatened. And we have built the European Union on the idea that it's a zero-plus game. So, the better things go in Poland and in Yugoslavia, the better it is for The Netherlands. And the better our economy is doing, the more we can import from those countries, the better it is for Poland.

SS: But does Russia think that way too?

BH: No, they think in the old way. They think that when Ukraine is doing badly, it's in their favor. And that's a completely different way of thinking. In fact, we are still – although we have the European Union and the OSCE was built on the idea that by cooperation you would strengthen each other – these two, concepts, these two ideas are still there. And in Russia now, the old-fashioned thinking is let's say the main thinking. But also in Western Europe, a lot of people are still thinking in the old-fashioned way and believe that whenever things go badly somewhere else it's good for us. So this fight about the concept of what is sometimes called 'common security' – your security is my security instead of your security is my threat – this conceptual fight is still going on.

SS: Would you say that this rationale is sometimes behind Russia's interest of supporting instability in the Southern-Caucasus?

BH: Well, that's what they seem to believe. That they are better off with weak neighbors than with strong neighbors. That's a weak Ukraine and a weak Georgia. They feel threatened by strong neighbors. So it's a very fundamental question. So can OSCE reform help bring Russia back on board? No, it can help to solve problems, at least to contain problems, I think rather than solve them. I think that our countries, the Western countries, NATO, the EU, the US, should do whatever they can to convince Russia that cooperation is also in their interest. And of course we make mistakes there too but that's the message that we should convey. And that's much more above the level of the OSCE, that's what every country has to do, America but also... So anyway, it's not just OSCE reform that can bring that about.

SS: Where does the OSCE stand today with relation to Russia?

BH: The OSCE is a very small, weak organization, a small secretariat. It's just a big room with fifty people or something around the table. Not so much else than that. It's good that it is, and Russia is there. It depends also very much on the input of countries, member states, whether they make use of the opportunities that the OSCE provides them. Sometimes there was a tendency of countries to think: oh, the OSCE is not that important at all so we send our ambassador with no instructions. It might help but the OSCE is not that place where all the problems can be solved, but you could give it a try. Again, you should always look at every avenue, every opportunity that might help. But the problem is quite fundamental. As long as Russia believes that weakening Georgia and Ukraine is in their interest, they will not be easily forced to accept strengthening Ukraine. Although I believe that our policy should be strengthening Ukraine, strengthening Georgia, also because I do not believe that it is against the interest of Russia because we should take their interest into consideration. We have this EU-Ukraine economic cooperation, we should make sure that eastern Ukraine can continue its cooperation with Russia etcetera.

SS: What is Russia's current OSCE policy?

BH: I'm not sure they really have an OSCE policy. They have a policy with regard to certain countries, to Ukraine, to Georgia, and they make use of the OSCE as far as they can. So it's rather an instrument for them. My impression is that they at the moment not have a view on how European cooperation should develop. When you want to have a policy on the OSCE it would be part of a policy on European cooperation. And as far as I can tell now, that policy is lacking because Russia has a national policy, defending their interest in the way they think is wise, by interfering in Ukraine, by interfering in Georgia. One would wish they have a European policy, that they would have a view on how European cooperation would develop and what role the OSCE should play in that. But for the moment it seems to be lacking. They are so busy with themselves that they have no time for the other, so to say.

SS: How did the political debates differ between 1992 and 2008 in the case of South Ossetia?

BH: I wouldn't know. I haven't followed the political debates in the OSCE so closely that I could say.

SS: Perhaps you are familiar with the mandate of the High Commissioner for National Minorities?

BH: Yes. On national minorities. It's an important difference. It's not the High Commissioner 'for', it's High Commissioner 'on' National Minorities. That's important because there is a misunderstanding that he is there to protect the rights of minorities. That's not the case. He is there to prevent conflicts that might be the result of not dealing properly with national minorities. There's a slight difference.

SS: So in the case of Georgia, in the 2008 conflict, would you say that the Commissioner on National Minorities should have issued an early warning?

BH: Possibly. I'm not sure whether he did that or not.

SS: He did not. The Commissioner has only issue warnings on two occasions. I do not remember which those occasions were. But I know for sure that he did not issue a warning in Georgia. Usually, they do it if there is ethno-political tension.

BH: I do not know enough about the situation that I can really give a good answer to that question. Well even on the question of the role of the OSCE in conflicts and the position of Russia towards that, even when they have a policy of conflict, so to say, like they have now, it can be in the interest of Russia to contain conflicts. And there the OSCE can play a role. It might be in the perceived interest of Russia that Georgia is not strong, and that Ukraine is not strong. But this does not necessarily mean that they would be interested that it's a complete chaos in those countries. That would not be in their interest. They might feel that it is in their interest to contain the conflict. For instance, by taking over Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine. They might make sure that Ukraine has great difficulty in becoming a well-functioning state. But at the same time they don't want complete chaos because that would have repercussions also for Russia.

SS: So perhaps we could say that Russia's interest is in controlled instability.

BH: Yes. Well you have to ask them. But that might seem so, yes. They are not that stupid that they think that it would be in their interest to have complete chaos break out in Ukraine. That's millions of people fleeing to Russia and so on. They see that. But there the OSCE can play a role. They certainly won't let the OSCE take Crimea back, so to say, but to contain the conflict might be in the perceived interest of Russia. So there the OSCE can still play a role. It's a minor role. Not a role that you might want to solve the conflict, but containing the conflict...

SS: Containing it or turning it into a frozen one?

BH: Yeah, well. Like Merkel said about it: the DDR was also in a sense a frozen conflict. The division of Germany. It has taken a long time but in the end, it was solved. And if you take a long-term view, one step would be to contain the conflict, and the next step is to see how you can solve it in the long-term. In that sense containing would be at least one step. I'm not saying that I would be in favor of that, but in comparison with the current situation where there is still fighting going on I understand in Mariupol, in the south, the airport, and so on. The stopping of the fighting would be one step. It would be better than the current situation. And I would guess that solving it will be a long-term issue. And whether Russia is willing to cooperate for really solving it remains to be seen. It will depend, I think, on a change of view in Moscow. As long as they don't believe it's in their interest, like what we discussed before. Only when they recognize that a good functioning Ukraine is also in their interest. Like we, a good functioning Belgium, Germany and Bulgaria is in our interest.

SS: Because if we look at the OSCE's track record, it's not very positive. Because a lot of the conflicts are frozen, there are no peace talks.

BH: Yes.

SS: There are only ceasefires.

BH: Yes. But that's why the OSCE can also do very little, I think. Again because it's basically a room with all these delegations, and a small secretariat. But how many people are in the secretariat? I don't know how many but they're not thousands of people working for the EU or for NATO. So there's not that much they can do unless the OSCE council agrees. Unless Russia agrees. And it depends very much on the chairman. I think the Swiss did what they could during their chairmanship last year. I cannot say much about the current Serbian chairmanship. It seems they are at least willing to do whatever they can. But it's too early to know how much they can do. The Swiss took their best diplomats and involve them in the OSCE, and that's what you need to do. You need really, very good diplomats to be able to get these conflicts to move ahead a little bit. And even then, there must be willingness. If one of the parties is not willing, it is very difficult.

SS: Especially if there is a situation where there is an information war or asymmetry in war. This can make the job of those diplomats very difficult.

BH: Very difficult. Or when organized crime plays a role. Especially in these misty countries like Transnistria. And that's the danger also for east Ukraine, where there is not a very clear, central power. Not a very clear department, not a very clear role of the police. It becomes much easier for organized crime to do whatever they want, and they have a vested interest in preventing a real stabilization. As long as there is no effective police, and no effective rule of law. That's in almost everybody's disadvantage, except for organized crime. They prefer that. It kind of depends on the situation on how to deal with it but it's certainly not something, as a diplomat, that you can easily solve. But the OSCE can potentially play a role, and if the countries involved feel, and that's not yet the case, that it's in their interest to come to a conclusion, then you can solve it. You can solve Transnistria and Abkhazia and South-Ossetia rather easily if the different governments are willing to cooperate.

SS: So the OSCE is as strong as the governments are willing to...

BH: Absolutely. Yes. They have no power of themselves. Only the power delegated by the governments. It's a little bit comparable to the European Union. As European Union you cannot do that much if the countries are not allowing the European Union to do it. Only the big difference is that now they've delegated so much power to the European Commission that they can still, even if governments are not willing, to do something. So much more than the OSCE. Brussels is to some extent a power in its own right nowadays. To some extent, don't overrate it. In Brussels there are thousands of people having a legal basis to work on, to deal with issues, which in practice can only happen when countries are cooperating. But nevertheless, they can do a lot. The OSCE is as many people as can sit on this terrace.

SS: It has no legal personality?

BH: It has no legal personality. It has no legal power. It can only do work on the basis of the mandate that's given, time to time, by the Member States. And if there is no mandate, they can do nothing. So

again, the problem is with the Member States. They allow it, the OSCE can only make sure that, the moment they get the mandate, that they are prepared to do the job. Which is difficult of course, if you have very little money, and so on. So there, I think, the OSCE could be strengthened. They could prepare better for their role. But again, the member states will have to pay for that. Take for instance the role they play now in Ukraine. The Swiss have done a wonderful job by getting so quickly so many people in Ukraine. I think five-hundred or something like that. It's quite an amazing fact. Think for yourself. If we two now start an operation in South-Ossetia, where do we get the people who speak the language? How do we organize that? I mean that's an enormous job. Organizations like NATO have thousands of people, ready for these types of operations. In Belgium, just eight-thousand people just planning operations. And then you can plan, you know more or less what to do. The OSCE has only a few people.

SS: But also, there is the problem of access as well. Access is not always...

BH: Sure. That's essential. But I would argue then that the moment Russia's, for instance in South-Ossetia, the Russians and Georgians agree on a pass for solving the conflict, with the role of the OSCE, then the OSCE should be able to play that role. But that takes preparation. You cannot just from one day to another deploy five-hundred people just like that. I mean you need an organization, you need rules of procedure. Those people need to know to who they should report, how they should report. Once a week, or every day? Because every country has its own traditions. But you need some rules, otherwise it becomes a complete chaos. Three people can sit together every morning but five-hundred people can't sit together when they are spread out over the country. But you can prepare for that. If countries are willing to let the OSCE play that role, they could do more to give the OSCE that opportunity to look at it more properly. And that's not always the case. We always want to spend as little as possible on these organizations.

SS: We know that Russia has cut the budget on missions.

BH: Sure but not only the Russians. It's also our governments that are not very eager to spend. What you need, and that's the difficulty with international organizations, is that governments have the wisdom to also spend money on organizations that are not high on the frontlines, to prepare. I definitely don't believe that the OSCE should become like an eight-thousand people planning organization. But some more planning would be very useful. Governments can do it themselves. I mean they are probably not doing it now. I mean we could, the Bulgarian and Dutch government could also sit together and say: okay, if we are somewhere working together, closely together, how can we do that better? Because a lot of things you can prepare. We don't have to be very intelligent to understand that some preparation could be useful.

SS: Does Russia have interest in supporting instability in the Caucasus?

BH: Well, for the time being, with the current Russian government seemingly believing that it's not in their interest to solve the issues in their neighboring countries. Or to promote real rule of law in these countries, it will be difficult to solve. So, from our side, I think, Western countries should continue to, on the one hand put pressure on Russia to more forthcoming in solving the issues, and on the other hand also stress that we need Russia as a partner in dealing with all these common issues. And then just hope that at some point Russia will be more forthcoming. But without Russian willingness to solve Georgian problems, we cannot do very much.

SS: Will Russia be willing if there are sanctions against it? That's not really a strong incentive to...

BH: No, it's only a small incentive but it helps at least. It's difficult to do without it because, and that's more the case of Ukraine then, we as Western governments should make clear to Russia that we have a, let's say, two track policy. When they believe that we are only interested in their gas and that we don't mind at all what happens in Georgia or wherever, they will feel that they can do whatever they want. So, these sanctions help to make clear to Russia: no, there are limits to what you can do. We don't just accept whatever you do. It's more a sign than that it's really effective. You need that sign because otherwise Russia might for instance just invade Ukraine and take over Odessa etcetera. So you need to make a fist to make clear that they cannot do just whatever they want. On the other hand you have to continue to make clear that you really want to cooperate. And also, to take into consideration their interest and so on. And that's a difficult message. It's not a clear, one-dimensional message. But we have to continue doing that I think. There is no other choice. Just being friendly, and saying: oh, whatever you do we will accept it. It won't work. And just saying: we are against you and we need more tanks, won't work either. It's a complicated message but we have to continuously bring that. And we have not always done that. The Dutch government sometimes seemed to think that we have just trade with Russia and not to bother too much what is going on in other countries. This I think is a mistake. As we've learned in Ukraine.

Appendix 7 Interview transcript – EU expert

SS: Which theory explains best Russia's OSCE policy?

OE: If you look into security policy, realism is the dominant policy, if you look into other topics, for example i have read many negotiations on the WTO or climate change negotiations, those are quite well explained by liberal institutionalism which also has realist tradition but a bit more flexible. A state will accept the fact that another state also gains something, as long as they gain, others can benefit as well, with trade negotiations, liberal institutionalism explains it quite well. Then there are constructivists, I have problems with constructivist, because I think they really overdo it, but they have a point, for example, when you look at some topics in the EU, EU negotiations, where they argue if certain expert or diplomats stay in this kind of environment for very long, in this EU environment where they get socialised through the EU tradition and the common values that they represent and so on and they argue that sometimes it can also happen that the whole institutional environment socialises them and changes their thinking and changes their perceptions about common values. There is some truth in it but in my opinion you can never apply this on negotiations for example security related issues.

SS: In the latest article by Kropatcheva, there is a chapter on the socialisation function of the OSCE and whether the OSCE has developed into a regional security governance approach, but the OSCE has not achieved to become a value-based security community.

OE: The OSCE calls itself a community of values but in my opinion, to be honest, there is no community of values, the values are so different and also the focus, the three dimensions, this whole topic about the balance of the dimensions, this is where you can see that there is no real community because certain states place different emphasis on the different dimensions. So, it's on paper but I don't think it's really in practice. This might be stronger in the EU where you can argue that we have a

number of states together in a community that represents roughly the same values and that they have also incorporated them into their constitutions and policies, definitely more than in the OSCE in my opinion.

The point is you can probably always argue either side, it's just how you prove it and how you argue it, which is why these people who are so focused only on theory or International Relations can get into very heated debates and fights, one side always thinks they are right, you listen to them and think both sides are right, which is also true, what I'm always skeptical about, when I hear these people, very good academics write about this, who have never worked in any of these organisations or in this kind of environment because when you do work in this kind of environment you see how things work in practice and you see dominantly, states act according to their interests and if it is all and if it also in their interests they will engage in some form of cooperation and they will also accept that other states gain from this cooperation but they will never give up on their national interests.

SS: How would you comment on Russia's OSCE policy from a realist perspective?

OE: When you look at Russian policy from the end of the Soviet Union, so the end of the Cold War, 1989-1990 until today, you can see two phases, one that lasted from the end of the Cold War until approximately 1999, which was when there was the Istanbul summit and during this time the national interests of Russia was to use the OSCE and to create what they called a treaty-based security organisation through the OSCE because they had experienced was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and NATO and EU survived. And so they found themselves in this situation where, when you put yourself in their shoes, you think what's my interest, my interest is to have one organisation to which we are also members, we also have a say, and which we can create into pan-European security organisation. This is what they tried for a long time, at least from the end of the Cold War until the Istanbul Summit in 1999 when they through different demarches tried to create a treaty-based pan-European security organisation through the OSCE. The Istanbul Summit was really a turning point, and this summit Yeltsin and Clinton clashed and they had a really bad argument and Yeltsin left the Summit I think even two days before it closed and there was the Russian foreign minister who stayed on and who then signed the declaration, they got into an argument also because of the NATO war in Serbia, because of Kosovo, where in fact NATO started the bombing campaign without ever informing Russia and without getting a mandate from the Security Council. So this angered Russia, and at the same time they released that none of the states would support them in their idea of creating a treaty-based organisation. They fought very hard for many years, in 1997 they tabled a document which was called The European Security Charter which was then negotiated for many years and changed and watered down and eventually it was adopted in 1999 but it did not really satisfy what Russia had hoped for. Russia was looking to gain something out of the OSCE that was in their security interests, because what they wanted was to have one organisation where all these countries are members, they are members and have an equal say. So that basically they would not be in situation where you have a NATO which then also started to enlarge. You can argue whatever way you want to, NATO is a collective defence organisation so when you say collective defence it's always directed against some sort of enemy. If the enemy is Russia or someone, that doesn't matter, but that it is directed against someone. Russia's interest was to have something where they could have an equal say because in NATO they had no say, although they started a partnership but they didn't have the same say as all the other members. Basically this failed in 1999, they realised that all their efforts had failed and on top of that not only had the effort to change the OSCE failed but also they realised that the whole security architecture as it was in place with NATO and EU is working against their security and national interests. NATO went to the bombing campaign against Serbia without a Security Council mandate, and on top of that it started to enlarge towards the East. Within an area that arguably Russia has some interest, in the rest of Eastern Europe, basically they had to change their strategy because they realised, ok it's not working so what are we doing. Many analysts tried to explain how Russia

then changed its strategy, Zagorski has written quite a lot on Russia's policy towards the OSCE and he argues that from 1999 onwards Russia realised that it's not working with the OSCE, we have to do something else.

SS: So 1999 was a turning point?

OE: Yes, in every respect it was a turning point, because of Kosovo but also because Russia realised that the OSCE cannot be used according to its own national interests and its national interests would have been to create with the OSCE a pan-European treaty-based security organisation. So basically, as of 2000 onwards Russia tried different things one of which was to create a new organisation, in 2008 when Putin was speaking at the Munich security conference when he said that the OSCE is a vulgar instrument, which I remember because at the time I was in the OSCE and everybody was really shocked and saying omg why does he say this and so on, and I was also shocked at the time but now that I have read so much it's actually logical. It's logical that they say this and they just got fed up. It's not working with what they want. In 2008 Medvedev then suggested to negotiate a new security treaty, in a speech that he gave in Berlin, have you read it?

SS: No.

OE: Okay, then I'll send it to you because it's very important in terms of Russian policy towards the EU. He gave a speech in June 2008 in Berlin, when he was president, he said the OSCE is not serving Russia's interests, so what he is suggesting is that all European states come together in a conference and negotiate a new European security treaty. And so everybody got shocked again and said omg what is Russia trying to do, we cannot have a new security treaty because we have NATO, NATO is our security organisation and we have the OSCE and this is how it should stay in the western view. From the western view, obviously, the security demands are satisfied through NATO, from the NATO members, and the OSCE satisfies all the other needs in terms of a more comprehensive view of security, so the human rights aspects, the economics aspects, so basically the western states are satisfied with the security architecture as it is in place but Russia is not. This was Medvedev's suggestion in 2008 and then all the western OSCE states came together and said we have to do something, we have to make sure that there is not going to be a new security organisation, that this stay within the OSCE and so, the 2009 Greek Chairmanship then convened in a large conference on the Greek island of Corfu which then became to be known as the Corfu process, that you might have read about, basically the 57 or at the time 56 states, started to sit together and discuss the OSCE reform, what can we do with the OSCE that also satisfied Russia's needs, and satisfies the West's security needs and this was like an endless, endless debate, at the time I was still in the OSCE and we didn't hear much about it but eventually in 2010 at the Astana Summit when Kazakhstan had the Chairmanship, they adopted a declaration which basically highlighted by consensus the need to create a united security community without dividing lines. And this is exactly what Russia has said basically from 1990 onwards that they want one united security community and not two in a sense of , you know, NATO on the one hand and Russia with a couple of other states on the other side. And so they put this in this declaration, and it's there but no one has ever managed to put this into practice, this has been going on since 2008 until today, and at the beginning it was called the Corfu process, then it was called something dialogue, then it was called Helsinki +40 process, it's been going on forever, and no wonder, there is no agreement, how do you put this united security community into practice if the West doesn't want this united security community. They want things to stay the way they are, they want NATO to stay the way it is, they want the EU which serves the economic interests, and obviously to enlarge those institutions to the East as much as possible without thinking twice that it's in the end not in the interest of Russia. So, here we are and it's not getting any better, it's getting worse and the Ukraine crisis is nothing but a symptom of this crisis which has been going on since the end of the Cold War. So, from the realist point of view, you can see, if you put yourself into this Russian and purely analytical national interests point of view, then you come up with this and you say, it's not in

our interests, the OSCE is not serving our interests, so we want to change it, we want to change it into a pan-European security organisation, that's not working, so then we want something else, then that's also not working, so...

SS: To me it seems like there is no way out?

OE: Yeah, I mean, in a way there is no way out but you know, I'm not entirely sure there is no way out. Because in the end what you need is to find the common interests and the common interests could be somewhere also in the economic sphere, where you could find ways to take Russia on board even more, where you could make arrangements that Russia is not losing because of the EU common market so in this sense you ease tensions but you could also ease tensions more if NATO accepts more the fact that it is perceived as a threat in Russia and you would have to work on the Russia-NATO partnership diplomatically, you would have to do more diplomacy and also in the OSCE, in my opinion, they have not done enough of a job to address precisely this problem. They've been talking about how to reform the Permanent Council and the position of the SG and all these things but that's not important, the important thing is to address the different security perceptions. In my opinion, this has not been enough trying in this direction.

SS: Russia's interest and concern, such as NATO enlargement?

OE: Yes, on the one hand, it is security concerns but you cannot forget also the economic concerns because if you have the EU also enlarging it means that all these states that get members in the EU become part of the EU common market, so basically this means that Russia also has economic concerns, but in my opinion these could also be addressed but you just have to do it, you have to bring Russia on board, you have to include in these negotiations and say, look, this is how you can also win, this is how you can gain economically. There are other examples in the world where you have different customs unions but they don't work against each other, they work for each other, so that's what you have to address in the long run because otherwise they will be just more and more frustrated and the core problem will never be solved. I'm very much for this speaking about, for example, the Russian domestic situation, about human rights violations, all the things that are going on there, you should not exclude this from the discussions, but it's not going to help if you just say to them: it's wrong what you do, if you don't address their concerns because in the end every state has its national interests and security interest and economic interests, so it's not going to help if you always shame and blame, you do this wrong, you do that wrong, although I think it's important to do it because just to close your eyes on it would also be wrong but we have to do in addition to the other stuff.

SS: So the criticism towards the OSCE that it focuses on the East of Vienna instead of West of Vienna is justified?

OE: I think this has been more problematic, I think it has changed a bit, this was very much an issue in the 1990s and also beginning of 2000 but then this fact was recognised more also by western states, they are really making an effort now to balance this, ODIHR also has now election monitoring missions in western European countries, there was one very good example by the Swiss Chairmanship, they started a self-evaluation exercise where they had different NGOs who evaluated the human right situation in Switzerland and they published a report about it afterwards, and Serbia is going to do the same, these are signs to eastern European states that western European states accept the fact that they also have problems so while this was an argument before, it's not an argument now, I think they have made enough efforts to balance this out in my opinion.

SS: You said the OSCE wasn't serving Russia's interest, this sounds like the realist approach where the hegemon wants to use an international organisation to its benefit, but on the other hand RF also wants a common ground between EU and RF.

OE: You can argue that when you have absolute and relative gains. The zero sum-game, or the win-win situation, you gain something but it's fine if the others gain as well, and that is something that I have seen in the OSCE. It's still within the realist tradition but it's not hard core realism, where you would never agree to something when someone else gains from it. That would be pushing it too far. What I have seen many times is that Russia would also agree to a document or to something if all the other states gain from it. That is also something that the liberal institutionalists argue, it's still within the realist tradition but it's a softened version and I think that is what I would use probably use to explain it. Maybe a Russian would tell you otherwise, maybe a Russian would tell you: No, we would never agree to something if America gains from it, I don't know. I don't think it goes that far to be honest, if there is an agreement on something and everyone gains from it and can sell it to the public then it's fine.

SS: They've been looking for this agreement since 2008...

OE: You mean the OSCE reform and the reform of the European security architecture?

SS: Yes.

OE: Yes, that has basically started in 2008 when Medvedev gave his famous speech in Berlin but discussions of OSCE reform, institutional reform have been going on even before that, there was something in 2005, a Panel of Eminent Persons, similar to the Panel that we have now, but they were looking more at institutional reform and how you can strengthen the OSCE institutions. As of 2008 it was less focused on institutions, although still a little bit, but less, and more focused on basically addressing the problem of the European security system.

SS: 1999 was the turning point of Russia, the OSCE wasn't going to be what RF wanted it to be. What does RF want with the OSCE now, what can RF gain from the OSCE today?

OE: I think what they are trying to do now is they (note: RF) failed to create what the OSCE wanted, they have also failed to create a new European security organisation, so what they are doing now is two things, I think within the OSCE they are trying as much as they can to weaken the human dimension, this is really one of the main things that I have seen, really sabotaging it, by not agreeing to any of the decisions that for example strengthen ODIHR, based in Warsaw, not agreeing to any of the basic human rights decisions that have to do with freedom of assembly, freedom of the media, freedom of speech, strengthening civil society, all these basic human rights things that have been agreed on previously, that have been signed by them also, this is what they are trying to weaken as much as they can, they believe that western states are only interested in strengthening the human dimension and are using it to basically, a Russian would have to tell you but my opinion is that Russia is afraid that the stronger the human dimension will become in the OSCE, the more you will have the possibility for democratic change in countries like Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, the chances are higher that eventually you will have western style democracies in these countries and the chances are higher that eventually you will have a threat also to the Russian system, which is a very authoritarian system, you can see a lot of fear from Russian experts, diplomats that there is going to be regime change in their country, they are very much afraid of this and they are trying to weaken this dimension as much as they can.

Last year in Basel there was just one human dimension decision, in Kiev there was one and in the two years before that there were none. Because they vetoed every single one. What they do very frequently is that they do in retaliation, we want something else in the economic dimension or in the first dimension and if they don't get it, they block the consensus on the human dimension. They have done it almost three years in a row when there were no human dimension decisions at all. When the previous Chairmanship worked very hard two years in a row at least, Ireland and Lithuania, they both very hard on the freedom of the media decisions, protection of journalists decisions, every time they just got

vetoed by Russia, so you have 56 states agreeing, and one state saying no, this has been a very strong trend, it can be explained on one side because Russia is very nervous about keeping civil society under control in its own country, but you could also come to the conclusion that it's a bit of a retaliation against the West because the West is not really listening to the security interest of Russia, so they are saying we didn't get through the OSCE what we want, so you will not get it either, you will not get strengthening of ODIHR, protection of journalism decisions, we will also veto more money for these institutions. This has been definitely one trend, another trend I can see is that Russia is trying very hard to strengthen the second dimension, the environmental and economic dimension, you can also see in the last couple of years a lot of consensus in this dimension, so when you have very fierce debates going on in the first dimension and the third dimension, it's very calm in the second dimension and there is a lot of agreement because Russia is very much interested in all these topics starting from natural disasters, management of natural disasters, energy, security topics, environmental protection topics, anti-corruption issues, and that is also an interest of the West, so maybe people nowadays are arguing if you revive the second dimension, you could in a way get Russia back on board and have a better atmosphere in the OSCE.

SS: So there is imbalance between the different dimensions?

OE: It really depends from which side you see it. In my opinion, there is no imbalance, in Russia's opinion there is an imbalance. From a western point of view, if you look at the OSCE, you have a security approach from three dimensions, not only from a military point of view, through a human dimension lens, you have security through a lens of the economy and the environment and you want that, because you believe that security can only be ensured if all those three dimensions are covered. And that makes perfect sense to me because the security of a country can be in danger, not only if its lacking military protection but also it's lacking a strong civil society, because the country can be in danger, its security can be in danger, the security can also be in danger if you have a lot of corruption going on. So it's really this multidimensional approach which makes up the whole OSCE and which is so important to many western states but obviously, Russia views this differently, since Russia has not gotten satisfied the military security point of view, they believe that the West is just using the OSCE to promote their democratic and human dimension values, that is how they see it. From their point of view it's different because their national interest perspective their first dimension security needs are not satisfied, whereas in the western states this security interest is satisfied because they are a member of NATO and so they feel protected militarily, so we can say that what we are looking at now is not only the military protection, but we are looking at approaching security from three dimensions, in my perspective, there is not really an imbalance, but from the Russian perspective, there is an imbalance. And they feel threatened, that's the point, they feel threatened, in my opinion, through the human dimension aspect because it's not working in their interest.

SS: Russian policy in the South Caucasus is incohesive, on the one hand it's in Russia's interest to have instability in the South Caucasus, on the other hand it might lead to instability in the North Caucasus. Or is this lack of coherence a retaliation. Is this connected?

OE: Yes, it's connected, definitely, and I agree with you that there is lack of coherence and I would not only call it lack of coherence but I would call it completely illogical. Because on the hand, they are so concerned about Chechnya becoming autonomous, about Chechnya fighting for independence and they have in the past brutally crushed any revolts, but on the other hand they are strongly supporting the self-determination autonomy movement in Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno Karabakh, they fiercely support it, they think they have to be independent and it's in their interest and they support them financially and also militarily, they have just recently concluded agreements, they recognised their independence after the Georgia war, it's not logical, you cannot say that this has any logic. The only logic again is national interest, if you look it from a national interest realist perspective, it's in Russia's interest to keep Chechnya calm because it's within Russian border and you don't want

this part of your country to secede or to be unstable but you do want instability in Georgia, in Moldova, because if those countries are unstable, they have in the long run no chance of ever becoming a member of NATO or the EU and this is eventually what your national interest is because your national interest is to keep what they call “near abroad” or “sphere of influence” unstable so that the borders of the EU and NATO don’t come even closer. And this is exactly the same what they are doing in Ukraine. They just feel very much threatened and Ukraine is even more, if you look at it from a purely security point of view, it is even to a certain degree understandable, they consider Ukraine to be a security buffer and they had this agreement of stationing their naval force in Crimea and so in the long run, if you think, what will happen if Ukraine becomes a member of NATO, what happens to their black sea fleet. So, all of this again if you look at it again from a national interest security point of view, it makes sense for them to create instability in this areas because how else are they going to get their interests, their interest is that these borders don’t get any closer to them. That is why, in my opinion, most of the protracted conflicts, you will not be able to solve them unless you solve this underlying problem because keeping a conflict is in the interest in one of the main parties, the conflict cannot be solved. It’s in their interest to keep the conflict.

SS: Because otherwise they will turn to the EU or NATO.

OE: Yes, very likely and that is why they have always tried to support in these countries pro-Russian leaders, that is why Russia became so nervous when Yanukovich fled the country and just left and created this vacuum, they knew what would be next, that it would be a pro-western government and in their view it’s the first step towards EU or NATO membership. Since, they could see in the past that this has happened with other countries, for example the Baltic countries, what do you do, you don’t believe in diplomacy anymore because you’ve tried it for quite long and I’m not making excuses, I think it’s terrible what they’ve done, in the end there is no justification, there is just an explanation, why they have done it but not a justification, so basically you create instability, you create warfare and you try to keep it as long as possible. And you look at all kinds of excuses like you have to protect the poor Russians, everyone knows that in the end they were never really threatened, you can always have better minority rights, you can improve the situation, they were never threatened to a degree that someone would have to go war to protect them.

SS: This would also explain Russian lack of cooperation when it comes to OSCE missions, like in Georgia for example or Chechnya.

OE: Yes, in Chechnya if I’m not mistaken, it was also because the Baltic missions were closed prematurely in 2001, in the Russian point of view, and this was something that threatened their interests. This was an OSCE mission that threatened their interests because it was protecting Russian nationals in the Baltic States. In the Russian point of view these missions were closed prematurely and in retaliation, Russia vetoed the prolongation of the Chechen mission. So this is always how it has happened and with Georgia, when they recognised the independence of South Ossetia, I think what they said was there would have to be a separate mission in South Ossetia since now it’s an independent country. So obviously the rest of the OSCE states don’t recognise South Ossetia as an independent state, and so they said no this cannot be an independent mission, it’s part of the Georgian mission. Eventually Russia said ok then there is no mission at all.

But in this whole debate about the missions, what I still find extremely interesting is that in 2014 in this escalating confrontation between Russia and the West, there was agreement on this special monitoring mission to Ukraine, which I find quite astonishing because if you look at the past like we have just analysed it now, you could always see that when there was a lot of confrontation, then eventually there was no agreement on a mission. But this case proves the exact opposite point, there

was a lot of confrontation in 2014, probably has never been worse actually, but still they agreed on a large scale mission.

SS: Why?

OE: Well, I try to explain it myself and I've spoken to the Swiss ambassador to the OSCE who spoke very openly about this because, as the Chairmanship, he was in charge of basically negotiating the mandate, and at the beginning he thought it was absolutely hopeless, he thought we're trying but it's never going to work because Russia is against everything we do and Russia has just started a war, even if it's a hybrid war, but they've started a war and so why should we ever have a mission there. What he explained to that was quite interesting is that eventually Russia again could be convinced because Germany and Switzerland jointly convinced Putin that this mission was in their national interest. They convinced him apparently in a telephone conversation where they said, Look the mandate of this mission is going to be to also protect Russian nationals in the east of Ukraine, which has been Putin's main argument, he's been arguing we have to protect our nationals, we have to make sure that they will have their interests, and rights represented by the government in Kiev, and so basically they convinced him and said, this mission will have the mandate to look after your people. So how can you be against such a mission? So this is apparently when the negotiations changed and Russian at least attended the negotiations because in the first couple of weeks it didn't even show up. There were all these ambassadors sitting around the table without Russia because said no, we're not interested. And then apparently they said we're coming to the table and we're speaking and there was just one main contentious issue left which was the issue of Crimea because Crimea was already annexed by Russia at the time so Russia said we can have a mission as long as it doesn't go to Crimea because Crimea is part of Russia. So everyone thought again it's not going to work because we all believe that Crimea is still part of Ukraine, we will never put in a document that Crimea is part of Russia, so we will not be able to agree. And then someone, I don't know who it was, came up with a very clever idea formulation in this mission mandate, which you can read if you look it up, it say something like, it's very ambiguous, it's what you call constructive ambiguity, when you're basically putting ambiguous language in a document so that it can be interpreted in different ways by both sides. So, I don't have the language in front of me, but in the end, it could be interpreted by Russia as saying that Crimea is not part of the mandate but it can be interpreted by the West as saying that Crimea is part of the mandate, the fact is they are not going to Crimea, the monitors are not entering Crimea because they are being shot at when they go there, so that's a fact, but at least in documents, it satisfies both interests, that's actually how they agreed on this mission, which I really find quite cool.

SS: I think that's linguistic genius, to achieve a document that sounds like this to both sides. About the missions in the Baltic States, why were they shut down against the will of Russia?

OE: I don't know exactly to be honest but what I have read is, I think this was in the end of 2001 that they were shut down, I think at the time some of the Nordic states who had very strong ties with the Baltic states, were strongly lobbying for the Baltic states that the missions close down and basically the main reason was that the Baltic states wanted to become member of NATO and you know that it is better not to have a foreign mission in your country if you want to become a member of NATO. That's how I explain it but maybe you have to ask someone else also about this because I'm not 100% sure, but I think the overall interest of the Baltic States was to become a member of NATO as quickly as possible and they had a strong group of states which were lobbying in their favour which were the Nordic States in the OSCE. You can argue that this was a mistake, because again you were taking something that was of Russia, and you have to balance things out because otherwise consensus falls apart, you always need to have different parts of the ... that are in the interest of the different main players. Because if the whole thing is not in your interest anymore then you will boycott everything and then you will be against everything and that cannot be in the ultimate interest of all the other states.

I think, if I'm not mistaken, the Chechnya mission was the only mission ever on Russian territory, from today's point of view it was quite an achievement, and it's really quite remarkable that Russia at the time agreed to this, and if you analyse things thoroughly you can see that in the 1990s Russia agreed on almost everything because at the time it was still thinking, was still under the impression that the OSCE was serving their long term interest, so they agreed to the most amazing human dimension documents, like the Copenhagen document, to me it meets that the Copenhagen document and the Moscow document, 1990 and 1991, they would die to just burn it, you know, but at the time they were fine, they agreed to it and to many other things.

SS: If there would be balance in the different dimensions of the OSCE then this would return a sense of ownership of the OSCE?

OE: Yeah, I think you know, the point is that through this whole dialogue that was started in 2009, by the Greeks and was continued till today, this was the main intention, to bring Russia back on board, and to find ways to satisfy Russian interest. Now the problem is that the Ukraine crisis started and with this crisis we have now relations are so strained that you could probably argue that in today's atmosphere this is going to be extremely difficult, but the Ukraine crisis emerged again because of this confrontation between NATO EU on the one hand, and Russia on the other side. So, this was not an OSCE thing but it's this East-West problem which creates this very poisoned atmosphere, and what can you do in such an atmosphere, sometimes I'm not sure to be honest, from the time I was in the OSCE I was always sitting in these meetings where everybody exchanged this beautiful diplomatic language but now they just scream at each other. They are not very friendly anymore.

SS: Is OSCE reform the same thing as restoring the balance between the dimensions or are these different things?

OE: Basically, when I speak of OSCE reform, what I mean is the whole dialogue that started in 2009 with the Corfu process under the Greek Chairmanship, it continued to the V to V dialogues under the Lithuanian Chairmanship and it was then that it was turned to the so-called Helsinki + 40 dialogue which continues until today, and this dialogue process is one the one hand about OSCE reform, which is for example restoring the balance between the three dimensions but it's also about reforming for example the legal personality of the OSCE, there are different elements within this, 7 or 8 elements, subtopics, which were originally part of these discussions, which are a ... OSCE institutional reform but also more broader security related discussion for example the protracted conflicts and this kind of things.

SS: I'm asking because earlier you said that Russia declared it wants a different security organisation in 2008 to replace the OSCE so I wondered what does Russia want, a different organisation or a reform of the OSCE?

OE: That's a good question, because I think in 2008 the suggestion was to create a new organisation because they were unhappy, then they quickly realised that all the other states in the OSCE were basically saying no, we have the OSCE, we'll keep it, and we can have a dialogue but within the OSCE, so what has happened since then is that Russia has started to create its own security architecture, with the creation of this Eurasian Economic Union, which is part of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, which is a reaction to the fact that you have the EU and NATO, so basically Russia has now started in my opinion to create its own institutions, because it has come to realise that there is not going to be a united security community, you have the security community consisting of the NATO and EU states and then you have the rest, so Russia is trying to create its own structure through this Eurasian Economic Union but also a bit through the CSTO - Collective Security Treaty Organisation, those are two organisations that Russia is now heavily supporting, most probably because it has come

to realise that all the other approaches have failed which again reinforces this division because if you have now two other organisations on the other side then you have EU and NATO on this then the whole thing's falling in two parts which completely goes against the vision of the 2010 Astana Summit (note: dividing lines) where everyone has said yes we have to create a united security community but no one knows how to do it, I also don't know how to do it (laughs).

SS: Russia is taking matters into its own hands and reverting back to realpolitik.

OE: Yeah, I mean, you can argue it like that, I think this is just from my own thinking, this is how I've come to understand what is going on because Putin has been very much behind this idea of his EAEU and he's been very disappointed when Ukraine said that they don't want to join it. Because I think Yanukovich was already having talks with Putin about Ukraine joining this Union and then all of a sudden he said no I'm signing this EU Association Agreement and that's how the whole thing blew up, Putin said, no, that's not going to work, because you said you'd come to my Union, not to the other Union. So that is why he is trying so hard to get Armenia to join, so that he can have his own Union.

SS: Tell me about your predictions or expectations about the near future, about the Helsinki +40 process, will it lead to progress?

OE: Probably a year ago I would have said yes, but now I'm very skeptical because, in Basel at the Ministerial Council (MC), they launched again a Panel of Eminent Persons which was not launched by consensus but just by the Swiss Chairmanship in cooperation with Serbia and Germany, the incoming Chairs, from what I've heard the problem with this panel is that it consists of people who are very senior and not very much OSCE veterans, they are senior politicians but not very much OSCE experts. I don't think this panel is going to come up with any grand ideas. And even if they do, the fact that the panel has not been launched by 57 states by consensus, I'm not sure that 57 states will take very seriously their recommendations. So this was one of the main problems at the MC in Basel, that they failed to gain the consensus of 57 states, I spoke to many people in Basel to ask them why they couldn't join the consensus, and some of them said to me, they didn't think that this would make any difference. It's too independent and the states will not think that the recommendations are related to them, because the panel is too independent and it's not close enough to the OSCE. Until the end of the year when we go to the MC in Belgrade, there is not very much time left, I'm very skeptical.

SS: So no positive outcomes for the OSCE reform anytime soon.

OE: I mean from all the people that I've spoken to, they seem to be skeptical that anything meaningful can be achieved by the end of this year, because basically at the end of this year the Helsinki +40 process comes to an end, because in 2015 we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Helsinki Final Act and by that date that they had set themselves the deadline to come up with solutions. And I don't think that in the context of today's Ukraine crisis they will be able to come up with anything by the end of that date. Now that doesn't mean that they cannot come up with something afterwards but within that time frame I'm very skeptical that they can come up with anything meaningful. Who knows, maybe there will be surprises.

SS: Because from what I understand Russia's future cooperation very much depends the outcome of this process.

OE: Yes. Well, this is what many people still said a year ago but you know the problem is the Ukraine crisis changed everything. On the one hand it made the whole process more relevant because we can now all see that we need the process and we need the talks and we need to have these problems addressed, but on the other hand, it's so much more difficult because of the tensions. What I'm trying to say is I'm not sure that there will be any meaningful solutions by the end of this year but that doesn't

mean that there can't be some creative way of continuing the talks even after 2015. This is what I'm hoping.

SS: Maybe they will change the name to something else. (both laugh)

OE: We are trying to write now from the board of editors recommendations or at least ideas to the Panel and what I'm trying to tell them in my blog is that they have to address this underlying problem which we have just discussed now, which consists of the different perceptions about the security architecture and the different interests that the West and Russia have in this. And as long as this doesn't get addressed and as long as they don't try to think about how to this vision of the united security community into practice, it actually in the end doesn't make sense to think about anything else because everything else is related to that, almost everything else, there are of course you could do, you could revive the second dimension, for example, you could try to cooperate more on these topics, and you could think more about economic cooperation, and so on, I'm not saying you cannot do anything but the core problems can only be solved if you address the core problem.

SS: That was a nice conclusion.

OE: The more you read about these things the more you realise how complex it is, in the end my conclusion is that you know, I'm sure one day there will be a solution, I'm just not sure that this solution will be under Putin, because sometimes you need windows of opportunity to open, when things change and then you can make a profound change, I think you can see this all throughout history. Things under certain circumstances change and then the rest can also change. And in the meantime just try to keep the tensions low.

Appendix 8 Interview transcript – EU diplomat

SS: I have your permission to record?

EUD: Yes.

SS: Is there imbalance between the three baskets (political-military, the economic and the human dimension) of the OSCE as Russian criticism claims?

EUD: I wouldn't say so. I think the balance is still there. I don't think that anybody is able to transform the OSCE into anybody's instrument (note, this refers to a statement made by President Vladimir Putin in 2007 "People are trying to transform the OSCE into a vulgar instrument designed to promote the foreign policy interests of one or a group of countries"), the OSCE is a collective security treaty organisation and it's impossible for any one group or a group of countries to dominate it. It's how its setting is done from the Cold War era, 1975, 40 years now from Helsinki, it's just impossible in my opinion....I would say that the big thing that happened in the OSCE was that Russia withdrew from the Treaty of Convention of Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), back in 2007, a year before the war in Georgia, and this was quite important, a milestone, a cornerstone in European security. The Russian Federation never fully implemented the treaty, there was disagreement. Basically the Russian argument was that, before the Baltic States sign the treaty, Russia will not implement, the other side argued that before Russia implements it Baltic States and others will not sign it. And then of course one year before the war in Georgia, the RF withdrew from the treaty and at the moment there are talks about a new treaty within the OSCE framework, should there be a new treaty, what kind of treaty should there be but there is no progress as far as I can see. The countries, apart from Russia, they still

consider this treaty valid and they still comply with it, the RF doesn't, it's difficult to say whether this treaty is now still valid or not.

SS: There were similar arguments after the Istanbul Summit in 1999 when Russia did not follow through with the obligations.

EUD: I think that's the thing, the OSCE, in a way the UN, there are very few instruments to enforce a treaty if one side is not fulfilling the obligations, there is no mechanism, a punitive mechanism to enforce it, one side withdraws and that's it. That's a problem I think, whoever is now drafting a new treaty or new agreements, they should take that into account. Even if you go through the lengthy process of drafting a treaty, one or two years, you sign, agree, negotiate and then after one or two years or ten years somebody withdraws, not fulfil it. That is I think the fundamental problem today at the OSCE if you ask me. But in general, I think the OSCE's strength is that the three dimensions are together, for example in the HCNM's (High Commissioner on National Minorities) office they are scared that once we belong to the politico-military dimension, legally speaking, but of course we deal also with economic aspects, for example minorities and conflicts and the human dimension, so I think this is the strength of the OSCE that it's cross-dimensional and it can address issues from the environment, civil military monitoring like they are doing in Ukraine right now.

SS: So you don't think there is imbalance between the different baskets?

EUD: No, I don't think so. Traditionally of course, the politico-military dimension was stronger but economic perhaps the weakest, could be developed further, human dimension was also quite strong and still is quite strong and important so I don't think that there is any imbalance.

SS: Can an OSCE reform return Moscow the sense of ownership?

EUD: There was an OSCE conference in April and there were guys who actually negotiated the OSCE treaty back in 1975, actually started in 1965 and even earlier. Helsinki +40, OSCE General Secretary Lamberto Zannier was there as well and they talked a little bit about the logic behind and how it came to be the OSCE as it is, the Helsinki treaty and so on, and I think there is nothing in the way, to say that, two sides fundamentally, during the Cold War came together and the organisation is face of this two sides, it's not one-sided and it can't be one-sided, because of this so, that's why I would say ownership is still there, I don't see it disappearing anywhere. If you look for example at the OSCE missions, there are many many Russian citizens in the missions, in the EU missions there are virtually no Russian citizens or non-EU citizens but in OSCE missions there are many Russians in key positions. The Vienna talks require consensus and if there is no consensus then things will not happen. Even one country, big or small, doesn't matter, can block everything.

SS: So you're saying there isn't any obstructive behaviour on Russia's part in vetoing the decisions in 2003 and 2004?

EUD: No, no, sure, of course Russia is following its own interests, whatever those interests are, they define them and of course they have the veto power, like all OSCE countries, so in this sense there is nothing odd in it, but this shows ownership, this shows you because Russia is able to veto, they own it, fully. If they don't own it it means the OSCE is doing something they don't want.

There was an OSCE mission to Georgia, the monitoring mission from 1990 to 2005 more or less and most of it was Chechnya, Georgia is harbouring Chechen terrorists in the Pankisi Gorge, eastern part of Georgia and this mission was there for many years and then it was blocked fundamentally by the Russian Federation, the budget was not extended in December 2004 and the mission was closed down in the summer of 2005.

SS: Why?

EUD: They did not give a reason, it was not a political decision, the budget was blocked. If there is no budget, there is no mission. As far as I remember there was no reason really given. They objected to having this OSCE mission in Georgia, they blocked it and the mission got cut out. The smaller mission stayed, the border monitoring mission got out.

SS: Why weren't the OSCE monitors given access to the conflict zone in South Ossetia?

EUD: Basically, they got access. The initial ceasefire monitoring mission had the right to have 5 monitors at all times in South Ossetia and Tskhinvali. But what happened after the war, the OSCE wanted to have extra monitors, they wanted to have 20 monitors to have full access to Ossetia and then they wanted a 100 to have access to the areas, there were negotiations in 2008, right after the war had started, so September, October, December, there was hope that the RF will agree that extra monitors will be sent in addition to those 5 who had anyway the right to go but this didn't happen. In 2009 summer, RF did not extend the budget of the mission and that's why the OSCE mission in Georgia, the big one at that time, the ceasefire monitoring was small but they had other parts as well, was closed down in 2009, UNMIK, 2008 September up until 2009 summer July, there were three OSCE missions on the ground, the UNMIK mission - the UN monitoring mission but then two were closed down. But access to the conflict zone, the thing is that like in Ukraine today you can see as well that OSCE monitors they are civilian monitors, they might have military background but very often they were not given access to certain areas within the conflict zone. For example, even in South Ossetia if you look, before the war, they went to certain villages and they were turned back saying no you have no access there.

SS: Why?

EUD: There was no reason given. Reason is never given. We can assume and when we talked to monitors privately they would say that most likely in those areas, somebody, in this case often the de factos were hiding heavy military equipment and weapons which were not supposed to be in this area. Because you see the OSCE should report if they see tanks or heavy military equipment and if access is not given they cannot report, they don't know, they just write in the report that there is no access.

SS: If there was military equipment, it belonged to the secessionist state or...?

EUD: You need to look where access was not given, if access was denied by the de factos, then most likely they had something to hide if you read the monitoring reports. If the Georgian side didn't give access, then it could have belonged to the Georgian side as well. For example, I was in Georgia during that time before the war, or it is war already but the beginning of August 2008, and there were mortar firing allegedly from the de facto controlled villages to Georgian controlled villages. Georgian side provided access to the international community, to all the areas which were allegedly fired up and from as well. The Ossetians didn't, they claimed that the Georgian side fired to Georgian villages or the Ossetian villages but they didn't give access to OSCE monitors, they didn't give access to EU diplomats, whoever was on the ground, whatever reason, they didn't explain. So this happened but I would say that if international monitors are not provided access to certain area, this could be very indication that there is something to hide in this area, it means that there is some equipment which is not supposed to be there and which of course if the international monitors see and report back then this is a violation. If they don't see it, they can't report it. That is very often the case I think in South Ossetia.

SS: Did Russia have any say in whether monitors can access or not?

EUD: Officially....it's difficult to say, they were kind of joint peacekeeping forces. So they could have put pressure and all that but maybe they even did, who knows, but the access usually is not granted

(note: denied) by the de factos which are not subject of international law, they are not recognised by anybody. So 100% the refusal came not from the RF but from the de factos. So you can't blame anybody for that but in South Ossetia as well, the conflict zone was quite complex, surrounded, Tskhinvali there was a belt, which areas get access, how, when.

SS: A lot of sources claim that the mission was a failure. There was a ceasefire achieved not by the OSCE but rather the French President at the time Nicolas Sarkozy who agreed to a 6-point plan.

EUD: First of all, we need to remember that actually in August 2008 what happened, it wasn't the new hostilities but it was the breaking of the ceasefire, the Moscow or Sochi ceasefire which existed at that time, the 1990s, the old ceasefire and for 20 years we had a ceasefire regime which the OSCE was supposed to monitor, so it wasn't something new, the ceasefire regime was broken, who broke it, it's difficult to say, if the OSCE had some capacities on the ground, we couldn't say, but what happened was that Georgian President Saakashvili declared unilateral ceasefire on 7 August at 6:30 pm which means by logic that some hostilities already took place beforehand. War probably started on 6 or 5 or even before, many reports say that hostilities started only on 7th of August at night half past eleven or whatever, the problem with this is that this was actually stopped unilateral breaking of the ceasefire already, you see, you need to timeline it. The OSCE had monitors on the ground in Georgia, in South Ossetia, in Tskhinvali, on 7th of August night to 8th August morning, 5 people I think, Finnish person, Hungarian person, British person who travelled there, a deputat, you need to realise that if the security situation worsens, those personnel go to a cellar, they are not able to confirm one way or another which side broke the unilateral ceasefire declared by Saakashvili between 6:30 and 11:30 in the evening, they can only confirm that somebody broke ceasefire, they heard shootings from the cellar coming from the norther part of Tskhinvali but who exactly broke it, how it started, they can't confirm it. The OSCE at that time differently from Ukraine for example, they had no UAVs, drones, unmanned air vehicles, none of them, if they had had them you could see who started shooting but there were no helicopters either. The bottom line is that the Georgian side in 2008 declared unilateral ceasefire, whether they held it or not is another question, but they declared it. De factos never declared, so they continued hostilities throughout the 2008 war. But in general, what South Ossetia 1990s and 2008, now Ukraine link, I think the one thing is, first of all, back in the 1990s as I understand I wasn't there but there was some kind of agreement, there was a fact finding team in 90s conflict from OSCE and UN. A Swedish diplomat was sent at the beginning of the 90s for fact finding for the OSCE and the UN. And then it was decided by the UN and the OSCE that UN would take care of the Abkhazia conflict and set up mission in Abkhazia, and the OSCE will do the conflict in South Ossetia. At that time what is interesting to follow is, according to OSCE reports, there was a denial of course from the RF side that the RF was involved at that time already but there is an OSCE report that the Georgian side shot down a fighter plane in 1992-93 whatever it was, and there was a Russian pilot inside, Russian military instructions to bomb Georgian locations, which is official confirmation basically of the Russian involvement in the 90s conflict, but in general you need to look at the 2007 August 6, one year before the war, there was the missile incident in Georgia. Two fighter planes came across the border from the northern direction and dropped the bomb near the radar station. This bomb did not explode. Then the OSCE sent a fact finding team, the EU also sent teams to study this case, EU conclusions and OSCE conclusions different in a way. The EU concluded that this fighter jet came from RF, they were Russian military and they dropped the bomb. The OSCE report was inconclusive because they could not confirm one way or another. They could confirm that the plane most likely came from northern direction but nothing more.

SS: What do you think?

EUD: I wasn't part of the team so I have no clue. But I've seen the EU report and for me it was convincing enough. I would say again this shows the limitations of what one can expect.

SS: How do the political debates about the Georgian conflict within the OSCE and participating States differ between 1992 and 2008?

EUD: I'm not sure how much the OSCE in 1992 was involved in Georgia, I think it was but the EU as far as I understand and the Member States were less involved, significantly, and 2008, within the OSCE again, EU Member States were for sure more involved.

SS: What was different?

EUD: A few things. First of all, in 1992 the EU foreign policy at that stage was not as coherent as it was subsequently, the common security defence policy, eastern European countries were not part of the EU at that time so it makes a huge difference. Of course some countries went through the transformation process after the collapse of the Soviet Union at that time and they didn't even have time to focus, there were the Balkans conflicts as well. Whereas in 2008 you can see that many countries which were not active in 1992, they sent presidents, I think 5-6 presidents went to Georgia within 10-11th of Georgia from OSCE Participating States and EU Member States as well. So this shows you the different kind of attitudes as well of that time.

SS: The OSCE mission was established in 1992. Was there any difference in the success of the mission between the start of it and later? Did EU's involvement change something in the mission?

EUD: The fact that there wasn't a full scale, large scale military conflict between 1992 and 2008 shows that it was the most successful during this period of time, and of course because there was the 2008 conflict it shows that it probably wasn't as successful as we had hoped. Of course everybody hoped to have a resolution of the conflict, if you look at the wordings of the 92 and 93 and 94 agreement, the aim was a lasting ceasefire and the implementation of it. But not even coming to the peace agreement, because there were all ceasefires, there is a Sochi ceasefire agreement and a Moscow ceasefire agreement. Afterwards there was supposed to be a kind of peace conference, the issues were discussed but it never got to a peace agreement. Up to date, no. Now we have the Geneva talks on the Georgian conflicts, in the OSCE framework. This is basically to oversee the implementation of the 6-point ceasefire plan, the OSCE, the EU and the UN. We have this question about the non-use agreement. These talks continue today, non-use of force is one part of it, there are two working groups, one is security group, which deals with security issues, non-use of force and others, the other working group is the humanitarian working group which deals with IDP Georgia would say but also humanitarian issues, access to sanitary facilities, property, return to relatives. These talks are still continuing, if you read their statements, Geneva talks chairs issuing statements at every round, they have now 3-4 rounds per year, the last round was 17-18 March 2015, it was quite messy, at the same time the RF signed integration treaty with South Ossetia de facto authorities in Moscow. They coincided, the Geneva talks in Switzerland which was supposed to resolve the conflict, on the other hand you have the integration treaty signed with the de factos in Moscow. Because of this there were a lot of tensions in the talks and the talks failed, they were very very complicated, there were walk outs, these kind of talks are not easy. These are not officially peace talks. These are actually implementation, monitoring of the implementation of the ceasefire fundamentally. So we haven't even go to the peace talks. Even the 6-point ceasefire is not implemented. The agreement in the 6-point plan was, all signed parties, withdraw their troops to the line before 6th of August. As far as we can see the Georgian side has complied with this point but RF not, currently RF probably has 10, 000 in South Ossetia and 12, 000 troops in Abkhazia. The Russian point is that in 2008 they claim that the moment they sign recognition agreement with de factos at the end of August 24-25, 2008, at this moment the ceasefire agreement already became invalid. So the ceasefire was valid actually only two weeks from Russian legal perspective because they recognise the independent countries of South Ossetia and Abkhazia but

when the ceasefire was agreed, on 12th of August, South Ossetia and Abkhazia were still part of Georgia according to international law and according to Russian understanding as well. Disputed but still. When RF recognised SO and A two new countries according to Russian legislation appeared and because of this the old treaty became invalid. Now you need to have an agreement with the governments of these new de facto authorities and not with Georgia and anything agreed with Georgia is invalid. But if you start digging, it's quite complicated because on the one hand the RF declares that this 6-point ceasefire is not valid anymore, on the other hand, for example, RF took the western part of SO, Perevi, one village, totally out of SO, there's no question, outside the former autonomous oblast of SO, they took it and then they withdrew in 2009 November-December, one year after the war, and they say, now we withdraw from Perevi, withdraw from the 6-point plan which means that somebody from the RF considered the plan to be valid up until 2009, also RF officials claim that from August 2008 it was not valid.

SS: So there is this discrepancy...

EUD: Discrepancy, exactly. If you read this...is it valid, at one was it valid, why it's not valid, now is it valid, is it fulfilled, all these kind of issues. In the end, I think there is no good study of this if you ask me.

SS: Some studies say that Russian foreign policy is not very cohesive, government officials may say one thing and military commanders might do something completely different. What you just told me is an example of this.

EUD: But I think it's also, we assume that it is by accident or it's not deliberate. But if you assume that the aim is, if you look at the hybrid war concept, what's happening now in Ukraine, in Crimea, asymmetrical, non-traditional war then maybe then mean to have this confusion, you to tell one person you need to go out and say this thing, another person goes on to say this thing and then it's confusion, nobody understands what is happening. And for diplomats and international organisations it's very difficult to work in this kind of situation where it's not even clear this disagreement now, is it valid or not, there is also implementing measures, you need to realise this, 6-point ceasefire 12th of August, at the beginning of September 2008, 9th I think, they also signed implementing measures, it's in French, is it part of this agreement is it not, are they together, should they be seen together, some would say that it is implementing measures, it's kind of a first stage of implementation of this 6-point ceasefire. RF are saying that these implementing measures is a new agreement because the old 6-point ceasefire of 12 August isn't valid anymore. So it's quite complex from a legal aspect.

SS: Is the situation still unresolved today?

EUD: Yes, I would say the 6-point ceasefire from the OSCE perspective, from international community perspective, apart from RF, 6-point ceasefire agreement is still valid and they together with implementing measures and I think, Sarkozy's letter as well, together they are considered as a ceasefire deals, so to speak, and it should be implemented, as far as we can see it's not implemented. OSCE is no longer on the ground and does not monitor it, OSCE has been trying since the war in 2008 to increase its presence but did not succeed. And since 2009 since the OSCE mission was closed down. They tried to start the mission again and some kind of OSCE presence on the ground. The Finnish presidency tried very hard, they failed, the Lithuanian Chairmanship in 2011, and it was 1 year chairmanship, they tried but so far in has not succeeded, the main issue is that ultimately it is a status thing, probably the RF and the de facto Abkhazia South Ossetia authorities would allow OSCE presence on the ground, but not one presence, three presences, OSCE mission to Abkhazia, OSCE mission to Tskhinvali, OSCE mission to Georgia, three different missions, but this is not acceptable to Georgia, first of all, and also the majority of OSCE participating states, they see Georgia as one country within internationally recognised borders. All EU countries, other countries as well, the

majority of OSCE countries, that is why this kind of three missions is not possible, but one mission is rejected by the de facto authorities and the RF. So that is why it is still negotiated. So perhaps some kind of creative solutions should be found.

SS: RF is rejecting one mission...

EUD: Russia is rejecting one OSCE mission as it used to be. And which could also enter and have a mandate in Abkhazia or South Ossetia

SS: Because Russia recognises these countries as independent

EUD: Exactly, that is the logic of it.

Regarding security you need to look at the Corfu process, it started you've probably seen, and now it is called Helsinki +40 process, they are kind of all linked, what the new security architecture should be. Now if you look at the Eminent Persons Panel that they should basically come up with new ideas vision for Europe and Eurasian security architecture, just now, this year, they are preparing papers. Also RF experts are also there, in this panel, as are Georgians and others. It could be interesting to see what comes out of it, what deal it is and so on but as I understand it doesn't look very promising at the moment.

SS: Is the status of the situation in South Ossetia a frozen conflict currently?

EUD: Within the OSCE system, it's now it's again, yeah, you can call it a frozen conflict fundamentally. At the moment it's a ceasefire, there is no peace deal, accord, agreement. It's a ceasefire and it's a process of the implementation of the ceasefire or non-implementation of the 2012 ceasefire, look at the post-Soviet ceasefire or conflicts, Transnistria, Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Tajikistan, civil war, whatever, linked with it, 1997 ceasefire. One can argue that most of them or none of them were implemented. In the Georgia case what many people don't know, there were many ceasefires before the Moscow and Sochi agreement, in Abkhazia and South Ossetia case but Abkhazia case especially, there were several ceasefires before 1994 which were facilitated by UN and OSCE which were not implemented by all sides. What happened was that the ceasefire was agreed, July 1993, Georgian side withdrew heavy military equipment and troops from certain areas within 2-3 weeks, one month, de facto forces moved forward to this area, took the area where the Georgian forces withdrew the troops and military equipment, and so there were 2 or 3 of these ceasefires before, from the 1990s already, in this sense the track record of these ceasefires and monitoring them is not very good and implementing them as well. Of course now there is no OSCE peacekeeping mission, this is just monitoring mission, it's different. You can have peace enforcement mission, you can have police mission on the ground, large scale, small scale, whatever you want, so it's a difficult case. And in Ukrainian case in this case.

SS: Which of these missions is the OSCE best suited for?

EUD: I don't know. The OSCE has done...in Georgia it was a monitoring mission, it was kind of capacity building, democratisation mission - this the OSCE has done. In Ukraine the mission now is a monitoring mission.

SS: Was it successful?

EUD: In this sense, monitoring, one can argue that whether it was successful or not, did we know what's happening, one can that maybe...

SS: I meant the democratisation process.

EUD: Well, yeah, it's kind of transition how to measure it, if you look ODIHR for example, elections and reports, whatever, there is no measurement, there is no comparison which country is more or less democratic, there are comments about elections but fundamentally it's all arguable.

SS: What you said about the disagreement about a new mission in Georgia - one mission or three missions. Sounds like an impasse.

EUD: That's where people are also coming in trying to be creative. How to get out of this situation, that's exactly what people are working on right now. Various options have been on the table. One way to do it is actually that you have one mission but it's not based in Georgia at all, it's based in for example in Vienna or Geneva. From a legal perspective it would be one mission, not based in Georgia, so nobody can accuse that it's a Georgia based mission. It can be called Security Monitoring or Support Mission to the South Caucasus, do not even mention Georgia - South Caucasus for example. The mission will have field offices in Tbilisi, in Tskhinvali, in Sukhumi, maybe even in Yerevan, in Baku, whatever. This could be one solution for example, to have mobile teams so to speak which you can't pin down. The EU had the EU Special Representative (SR) to the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby, a Swedish diplomat, his title was not EU SR for Georgia, it was EU SR for the South Caucasus, this was a good title, because it wasn't EU SR for Georgia, it was South Caucasus, because of this you could access South Ossetia and Abkhazia easily. They didn't see it as it the EU has appointed somebody only for Georgia, which South Ossetia and Abkhazia don't feel part of. Secondly, this EU SR was based not in Tbilisi but in Brussels and because of this it has better access as well. If you are based in Tbilisi you might have trouble with access. This is where I think the idea is coming from but so far obviously country diplomats have not found a compromise on which everybody would agree, we need to be quite creative how to think through so that all sides are happy fundamentally which is not always easy.

SS: Would you say that the Kremlin has interest in supporting instability in the South Caucasus? Supporting secessionist regions.

EUD: I think it's correct to say that the RF is interested in creating stability in Abkhazia, South Ossetia but on its own terms, meaning that if you look at the integration treaties for example with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, with Abkhazia I think they signed it November last year, with South Ossetia in March this year, it's clear that its aim is stability, but not as a part of Georgia but more integrated with RF, so in this sense, it's not a black and white situation. I would say it's stability but as a part of integrated with the RF, even Georgia, I would say, stability in case Georgia moves further away from the EU and closer to the... You need to look at it from this perspective and if you look at the integration treaties for example, there is reference to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), meaning in addition to everybody has seen it has a reference to defence and security issues but actually the A and SO integration treaties include reference of EAEU and integration of SO and A to EAEU which means that it is kind of legislative changes, something like the EU accession process, if you want to, within 3 years. For this you can see that its aim is ultimately creating some kind of Eurasian economic space where A and SO are a part, Crimea surely already in a way, from Russian perspective, and Transnistria maybe and I'm not sure about Nagorno Karabakh.

SS: Would you say that Georgia was a test for Ukraine?

EUD: The setting is different in all cases. A and SO are already different because if I remember correctly, Abkhazians and South Ossetians organised a referendum, de facto authorities organised it, in 2009, saying that "Do you want SO to be independent state within the Russian Federation?". That's the first question, you realise what's the problem with this question, yeah? You want SO to be an independent state within RF.

SS: Is it independent or is it part of RF?

EUD: Exactly. But it was one question, and this was organised, in 2009, I'm not commenting on this question but the Abkhaz refused to organise this referendum, de facto authority Ankvab was president at that time. Locals in A and SO also see the future differently, probably the majority of SO, who are now there, still remaining ones, see it as a part of RF in the future and if you look at the statements, the political parties, what aim they have this is SO, A is not, not to everybody, I think there has been very strong pro-independence movement in A, which doesn't want to be part of neither Georgia, nor RF. This is quite strong, and there is a part, the Georgians mostly who probably want to see a future inside Georgia, to be part of Georgia again at some point, and then of course there is a part that wants to see a future as part of the RF, even more integration and these integration treaties show it, which people are behind it and what are the ideas. It's difficult to say what's the reasoning but, I guess the population as well, from an international point of view, A and SO is slightly more complex, local population as well, there are massive refugees, IDPs, would they have right to return or not, I'm not sure RF, this IDP return for example, my understanding is that the RF, if for example A and SO become part of RF, like Crimea, then I think RF should allow IDP return because the RF has signed relevant treaties and conventions, whereas if A and SO stay independent states from RF perspective then I think they don't need to allow it because they haven't signed any international agreements and have no obligations, this is what I would say the difference probably.

SS: The difference in the responsibilities of RF.

EUD: Ultimately, yes, exactly. Because also you need to realise that inside the RF, for example if A becomes part of RF, inside the RF there could be (note: are) half a million ethnic Georgians who have Russian passports, who will have the right to go to A or any part of RF, own property, do whatever they want, this is quite complex as well, you realise, and probably the Abkhaz de factos and some people don't want to see 1 million ethnic Georgians coming to Abkhazia, buying property, buying flats there, establishing themselves, as Russian citizens, not Georgian citizens.

SS: Do you know why the Baltic missions were shut down in 2002?

EUD: I think officially they fulfilled their mandate and there was no need to have those missions any longer, this was the agreement between the participating states.

SS: But not in Russia's view?

EUD: Yeah, sure. But the overwhelming majority of OSCE participating states agreed with it probably. The EU SR Semneby, he was the head of the OSCE mission to Riga, Latvia. At that time when this mission was closed down. My understanding was that I think in Estonia the agreement was that the issues were tackled, addressed by the OSCE mission on the ground, Russian speaking minority, non-citizens and so on, they have been tackled by the government more or less ok and that was the reason to shut it down there, if those issues are addressed. But in Latvia maybe not, but it was linked, Latvia and Estonia missions were linked and they were closed down together somehow. It's unfortunate but some OSCE participating states maybe, they consider it as a stigma as well to have an OSCE mission on the ground. It's a negative, it means that you are not considered as a full-fledged democracy, a developed country, you need help by some international community. And that is why they saw OSCE missions, in addition to political missions and so on, in many places have been closing down or downgrading. If you look in Ukraine for example, before the conflict, there used to be an OSCE mission to Ukraine, then it was downgraded to OSCE project office to Ukraine, project office is significantly lower than OSCE mission, and there are different names but if you look at the statuses of different OSCE presences in different countries, it's very different. The Azeris for example, there used to be the OSCE mission to Azerbaijan then it was downgraded to project office, I'm not even sure what title it now has. Armenia I think it's the same. The Azeris already announced that they want the

OSCE mission out. It basically means that countries consider that, it shows that if you need an OSCE presence it means that you have some problems basically in areas like legislation, capacity, democracy, rule of law, minorities, whatever the issue is.

SS: I read in an article about the mission in Chechnya that Russia didn't want to name it a mission because it would imply that there are human rights violations there. But the mission was established after pressure from the West.

EUD: Yes, possibly. Then you name it differently, OSCE presence, office, fact finding team, temporary team, whatever, you name it.

SS: What is Russia's current stand with relation to the OSCE?

EUD: I think basically now there are quite a few things in there and what will come out of it nobody knows I think. One thing is now what we call this Helsinki + 40 process, basically 40 years since the Helsinki agreement, and there are celebrations linked with it but also revision and rethinking of what the OSCE has achieved, what not, how it could be improved, strengthened and so on. And what will come out from this process nobody knows. It's how the OSCE could be strengthened, what should be done and so on. These discussions are now ongoing and the RF is part of these discussions as well, that is why I said to you that this OSCE Eminent Persons Panel 2015 is quite key, I think, what comes out of it, they are preparing a paper now Lessons Learned from Ukraine for OSCE, and there will be institutional paper on OSCE and there will be more general security paper as well. **And there is this informal way of inserting views and visions what how should the security architecture in Europe look like according to Russian understanding.** We know from public statements and speeches that it is radically different at the moment from the vision of many western states, from NATO countries, so what comes out of it it is difficult to say, for OSCE it's difficult times, the Ukraine crisis was in a way bad and good. What was good was that it showed this kind of cross border boundary line security organisation has validity, usefulness, because I am not sure the EU could have sent this type of mission to Ukraine, the OSCE could do it because the RF is part of it. Of course if you look at the RF official narrative, RF is not part to the conflict, it's a mediator, a facilitator, and because of this it contributes to the OSCE and to the mission as well and being part of it as well. And in this sense, this narrative makes the OSCE stronger, because maybe it's not good Ukraine, for the western countries, Europe, whoever, but for the OSCE I don't think it's necessarily bad. Because if you are not part to the conflict but you are a facilitator, then why weaken the OSCE? Then let's make the OSCE stronger, if you believe you are a facilitator. This is the logic. It shows of course the many limitations the OSCE has and had and will have always. Because the OSCE has monitored many ceasefires. Nagorno Karabakh ceasefire - Minsk Group, still monitors ceasefire implementation, no big successes I don't know in how many years. Transnistria 5+2 talks, Georgia, Geneva talks no big successes, now Ukraine, there is this contract group, they copy more or less Geneva talks, what they do in Ukraine, Contact group Tagliavini, now they have working group, they copy more or less Geneva talks. If you look at the track record of post-Soviet frozen conflicts is not very good, none of the ceasefires were fully implemented, ever.

SS: Is it because different participating states have different expectations of the OSCE? Different values.

EUD: Sure but if you go back and look at why the OSCE was created in 1975, negotiations started earlier, on the one hand the West recognised the post Second World War borders which perhaps some countries like Baltic states wasn't good. On the one hand, with the Helsinki treaty, Russia, the Soviet Union at that time, recognised that the purely internal issues, human rights for example, are not any more internal, the international community has a right to intrude into domestic affairs. But whether the RF recognises it is another question, when the Soviet Union signed the Helsinki deal, they recognised

it. As West considers, but is it true or not I don't know. I think it could be as well that the RF, SU at that time, got the recognition of the borders, what they wanted, the West recognises the annexation of the Baltic states, and they got it with the Helsinki treaty and at the same time did they allow internationalists too much into their human rights issues I'm not sure.

SS: The Soviet Union wanted the status recognised but the West had long-term goals for the future.

EUD: Yeah, exactly. The West hoped it would change.

SS: There was a cooperative period in Russia's OSCE history but when it saw that the OSCE cannot be the security organisation in Europe, then Russia was disillusioned as NATO emerged as the central security organisation.

EUD: NATO didn't disappear and probably won't. I'm not sure what the thinking was when the treaty was signed back in 1975 but the thinking was that NATO will disappear, maybe somebody hoped, but it doesn't make sense if you ask me. Maybe somebody hoped that NATO would disappear after 1991, 1992, after the collapse of the Soviet Union there would be no need for NATO. But this is naive as well, this goes beyond. And maybe somebody hoped that OSCE will substitute NATO in a way, but in the OSCE there is no Art. 5, there is no collective defence to any members, any participating states so I don't see how the OSCE can realistically do this kind of stuff and on top of that the OSCE is not even an international organisation legally, different from EU or UN, OSCE is still a conference in a way because it has no legal personality. OSCE summit in Almaty in Kazakhstan a few years ago now, 2010, some OSCE participating states tried to introduce legal personality and structure and all that but some were against, officially it's still a conference, kind of a permanent conference so to speak, but that is why it is participating states and not member states, that's the difference between NATO, EU and the OSCE.

SS: Russia would like to push this forward but they would be opposition.

EUD: The thing is that the OSCE (both its strength and weakness) is not a single bloc and no single country is able to dominate it, no, dominate maybe, and block, yes sure, but it goes both ways in a way. Block decisions sure.

SS: Do you think that Russia is less cooperative with the OSCE than it used to be? Has there been change in attitude?

EUD: I think in Ukraine we see that they cooperate, they provide personnel. OSCE access to RF has not been great. RF itself hasn't been great. But even before the Ukraine crisis, for example HCNM who deals with minorities in OSCE countries has not had visits to RF since 2009 I think. This also tells you something. I think it's a fundamental thing, it's not about OSCE, international access, access to Russia, for example UN and UNHCR missions to Northern Caucasus, there used to be big missions after the Chechen wars, in Ingushetia and Vladikavkaz, but those were also closed down since 2011.

But what else, I think of course, as a student you can ask about this South Ossetia conflict. HCNM, if you consider SO conflict as ethno-political conflict. Did the HCNM have the right to issue an early warning on this? High Commissioner's mandate is if HC sees there are ethno-political tensions which might develop into conflict, then HC has the right to issue early warnings. HC has done it twice so far. In F.Y.R.O.M. Macedonia case in 1999, when there was a similar situation like now in Macedonia, the second case was in 2010 in Kyrgyzstan Fergana Valley. Then you can ask, should these warning be issued in the 1990s, the HC was created in 1992 by January 1993 it was in place so you need to look at what as well. 2008 the SO case, should an early warning have been issued? Who should have issued it? Nagorno Karabakh, Transnistria, should there have been a warning issued? How much the OSCE

should have been involved? You need to realise that within the OSCE there are several actors. One is the Secretary General, currently Zannier, which legally is not even a political job, it's an administrative job, but over the years the Secretary General has become more political, like the EU SG, foreign policy Ashton or Solana for example, or NATO SG, then OSCE key political actor is actually Chairman-in-Office, currently Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, the last year it was Switzerland, these are key, the Foreign Ministry of the Chairman-in-Office country, Zannier SG, Chairman-in-Office, and you have independent institutions, or executive structures, whatever you call them, HCNM, Media Freedom - Dunja Mijatović, you have ODIHR in Warsaw, director of ODIHR - Link, all quite independent, plus missions on the ground, heads of missions on the ground. So there is no unified OSCE, it could be that attitude toward ODIHR and election monitoring is bad. For example, RF making statement that ODIHR is monitoring elections only in East from Vienna and from West from Vienna, maybe valid point. Targeting ODIHR, diminishing its role. Somebody might be interested in diminishing the role of HC as well, not to discuss those issues, not to go countries, not to write those reports, and of course the headquarters in Vienna, plus Chairman-in-Office as well. Of course, RF can become Chairman-in-Office as well. I'm not sure whether they have been to be honest. Kazakhstan has been, sure.

So, early warnings, what could have been done, should the mission have been bigger? Should the mission Georgia, SO, should they have had drones, UAVs like they have now in Ukraine, to better monitor the situation. To have access to areas patrol can't go.

SS: Is there criticism towards the HCNM that he should have issued an early warning?

EUD: I don't know and I haven't heard. I would say as a scientist, academic, we can speculate, should it have been done? If you look at the mandate because if you look at the mandate, HC should issue early warning if you think that ethno-political tensions turn into conflict. In SO 2008 it is difficult to say, the conflict started already in the 90s, so what happened in 2008 there is already a conflict, it's a continuation of the conflict from the 90s, so an early warning should have been issued in 1988 before the conflict started, if you consider that it's a long conflict - from 1988 to 2008 - a 20-year conflict. If you consider it an incident or part conflict so to speak, should be issued before that, do you think it's ethno-political or only political, are there ethno-political elements in it, full or not? Then of course, you need to look, there was an OSCE mission on the ground at the time, it was felt that if something happened this mission will report, head of mission at the time was Finnish diplomat Terhi Hakala, she would report to Vienna to the Chairman-in-Office, and the Chairman-in-Office would take care of it one way or another, this was probably one of the reasons, Abkhazia UN mission UNOMIG should report, if it's with an ethno political aspect one could argue that HC has a mandate, this has changed if you read the OSCE documents, 2011 in the Vilnius Ministerial Council, there is this decision 3/11 it's called, on conflict cycle, in this decision the right to issue an early warning on all cases of tension, for example if there are tensions in Bulgaria, ethno political tensions, religious tension between minorities, Muslim minorities, or ethnic Turkish minority, then according to, if before 2011 Vilnius decision, the right to issue an early warning and highlight the issue and go to Vienna, ask participating states to come together and do something about it was the responsibility of the HCNM, in the 2011 decision it goes to SG as well, participating states gave right to SG to issue an early warning, SG has a right to write a report and issue an early warning. So it's not only ethno political but all kind of, could be domestic as well, religious as well, whereas the HCNM mandate is very specific, only ethno-political. Ultimately, is this kind of conflict hypothetically happens in Bulgaria, who should issue early warning now? Who should take the lead so to speak?

SS: SG or HCNM?

EUD: It's not clear. If it's domestic, then SG, if it's opposition fights against the ruling party, if it's religion, Muslims against orthodox, then it's probably SG, if there is ethno-political aspects to that, then HCNM has a role as well.

SS: I suppose the line can be difficult to divide.

EUD: Exactly, sometimes, sure.

SS: What are your expectations/predictions for the future of Russia's role within the OSCE?

EUD: The thing is to look into the Eminent Person's Panel, the near future is EPP, what the OSCE EPP comes up with. And this is within the next few months, inside this panel the RF provides input to this, through an eminent expert. It's a question of how the OSCE will be transformed in the next few months or next year. The EPP will give the answer, if not then it will stay like this and nothing will change. And if there is no agreement, between most western countries and the RF, then things will stay and there will be probably downgrading, cutting budgets, closing down missions, not giving budget, not giving opportunities. This could happen as well if there is no agreement.

SS: I should say Russia's role within the OSCE...

EUD: Yes, is it increasing or not, what RF will do if its role is not increasing, what Russia will do if role is decreasing, relative strength or whatever is decreasing. If you look at the Munich conference 2010-2011, there is also panel of experts, who published a report, and it says that basically Russian aim is to see that an Eurasian Economic Community within the OSCE as well, visa, freedom to travel throughout, from Vladivostok to Lisbon, this kind of stuff, so the vision is there at least, what they want to see.

SS: So Russia still have interest in the OSCE?

EUD: Yes, sure, to form it in certain ways, but now the bigger problem is for example, Crimea now, is it already part of the Eurasian Economic Union, whereas countries have not recognised the annexation. That's a big problem.

Appendix 9 Interview transcript – Sergey Utkin

SS: Where should I start, first of all do you think there is an imbalance between the three dimensions of the OSCE? Because in an article I am going to quote here there was a quote of Putin with criticism at 2007 conference on security policies in Munich. He said what do we see happening today with the OSCE? We see that the balance between the political, military, the economic and human dimension is clearly destroyed. People are trying to transform the OSCE into a vulgar instrument designed to promote the foreign policy interest of one or a group of countries would you agree with this statement?

SU: Well I would split two things, one is Putin's vision and one is this balance in itself because few people would argue that the three dimensions are perfectly balanced. The most observers agree that that are issues with that. And the thing is what they actually consider is important to strengthen among the dimensions, some would argue that the human rights issues are not really widely represented the OSCE agenda when it comes to human rights in some countries not just in Russia but Azerbaijan and other countries people don't pay attention to the norms that were once agreed in Europe and on the

global level. We can say the same thing about the economic dimension. We see ideas that OSCE could hardly play a role here, and some of these ideas are Russian in terms of making it a platform for discussing the interaction between integration areas of the Eurasian community and the EU but still, well, If we speak about the substance of the economic issues most of it is discussed in the EU or the WTO or elsewhere but not in the OSCE. It is the same with the environmental issues, the people do think about the environment but they do not necessarily see the OSCE as not just the main platform but one of the main platforms for this kind of debate. When it comes to the political and security matters on the one hand people do use the OSCE to debate on those issues. But there are indeed those situations where people decide to act in this area without prior consultations in the OSCE or without consensus being reached in the OSCE and in this case I can't really say that this is purely an issue of imbalance between the dimensions of the OSCE, or is something more than that? Is it about the nature of the international environment in Europe and beyond? When people seem to see that, or they have to act in certain situations and they see that the OSCE mechanism isn't providing them with the necessary tools to do the things that they consider important to do? The imbalance is there but I think when you pointed at the imbalance and say that this is a problem and we should make a system of balance, this is a matter of hot air, if you want the real reform of the organization if you want to make it more up to date you need to talk in detail, what is there to change precisely? In many cases I think this very idea of balancing the dimension would find well quite a lot of obstacles also on the part of the Russian decision making system because it is very easy to state that you support the balancing of the dimensions but when people come and say to you that well they think it is important to strengthen the human rights dimension then you might have a problem. You may remember another famous quote from Putin on the ODIHR actions when he said that the ODIHR should better go and teach their wives how to prepare the soup this was also kind of an irritation that he expressed in regard to one of the OSCE dimensions. So one thing is that the problem is there and another thing is how you can resolve it.

SS: Do you think OSCE reform could bring Moscow back on board?

SU: I don't think anyone can bring Moscow back on board, in terms of good relation with the West any time soon, I mean you cannot expect Putin to give Crimea back to Ukraine, You cannot expect the crisis in Ukraine just to disappear in a month or two and leave the space to construct a co-operation between the Russian government and the west. So you should not formulate the aims which are not achievable at this point. But if you speak about any international organization we should always understand that has quite serious limits in what they can do and what they cannot do. In the case of the OSCE it is quite clear that while we speak about reform we should not forget that quite a substantial number of issues will continue to be discussed in the European Union and other organizations that exist in Europe, so it's not the only game in town but you can boost its performance, you can give the organization more resources. The resources that it has now are definitely insufficient to operate because this huge environment, this huge area that includes well, the US, the European countries in central Asia. You need significant resources for that, just to achieve any kind of results. Keep in mind that other organization that didn't did issues that the OSCE is part of now. So the reform is a good thing to have if it is a product of consensus if it is supported by all the participating states and it can be an important achievement in terms of moving ahead a crisis resolution around Ukraine. But I don't think we will get to the business as usual at least as far as the mood in Russia is the same as dominated the minds in the Kremlin in the course of the Ukraine crisis.

SS: Where would you that the OSCE stands today with relation to Russia, what is Russia's current OSCE policy?

SU: If you speak about the OSCE as the organization it is or as the product of consensus and I think it is very important, it is something that many people understood only during this Ukraine crisis, it is very important that in the OSCE all the countries of the region are represented as participating states so it is not like a closed club that you can be a member of or you can stay outside of it. If you are in the region you take part in the decision making and the consensus building and in general I think this is the first step in achieving the result because I think at least no one feels itself excluded even the countries that are heavily criticized for their action and attitudes they feel that when decisions are taken in the OSCE, these are also their decisions and this is what helps the organization to play an important role in the course of the Ukraine crisis. I think that this is also what gradually changing the stands of Russia regarding the OSCE. You can remember the time when basically every communique Issued by Russian MSH? On OSCE matters the organization was heavily criticized and you could get an impression that people are seriously thinking about leaving the organization but just not being part of it anymore.

SS: The Russian federation leaving the OSCE union?

SU: That was the vision that was quite strongly represented in the Russian discourse around 2007-2008. And now you see that it now happens to be also clear for the Russian authorities that they don't have any substitute for the OSCE if they need, not even the resolution, but at least gradual stabilization of the crisis in Ukraine they have very few tools for international mediation and this regard the OSCE happen to play an unique role. So sometimes it just happens that you need a crisis to reveal the actual potential of the organization. But I don't think that this rebirth of the organization is a guarantee that we will not encounter our problems in the future, also in the terms of the attitude of Russia towards the organization because today you can see that this attitude has become more favorable but tomorrow you may see, well not tomorrow but next year, the parliamentary elections in Russia, you may again see critiques on the part of the **ODIHR** and may again see some irritation in the Russian political elite how people think that it is not up to the OSCE to judge if we are democratic enough or not. You can always find reasons to make resurges so it's getting better for now but its, uhm, I would not exclude that it would be more like waves in this attitude rather than a plan towards definitely better relationship between Russia and the organization. In terms of this period when Russia was thinking about leaving the organization, I don't know if you have read an article by Dr Zagorski and Dr Entin from 2009.

SS: Is it from the EU centre?

SU: NO, it was in the Russia in global affairs journal it was on "Why should we leave the OSCE?" Anyway I can send you the link, this journal also has an English version so in this case the language is not an obstacle .And I think this obstacle is one of the cases when the academic research could at least play some role in changing the minds of decision makers in Russia because Dr Zagorski is well known as the key Russian expert on the OSCE and Dr Entin is one of the most well-known experts on international law and he is currently Russia's ambassador to Luxembourg. So he is nothing like an opposition to the Russian government. Now at the last point, when they wrote this article, they made an argument against this dominating discourse that we basically don't need the organization or we don't need it in, without reform and they have shown, in my opinion in a very well argued way

that the organization is a good thing for Russia to have. If we don't use its potential to a full scale this is rather a problem of ours, so as a problem of our foreign policy machinery rather than an issue within the organization. I will send you the link.

SS: About ODIHR, do you think Russians criticism of ODIHR is justified? That it focusses more on East of Vienna?

SU: Yes it was one of the criticisms. The other one was that they had no proper criteria which is the same for everyone when they make judgements about elections so that, they differ from one election to another. I think that it is quite understandable that you don't have to pay that much attention to the elections in countries that are established democracies and you pay more attention to the election in countries which are in of conditions. But I also can understand that as a matter of equality and making the rules of the game the same for everyone, it could be a good thing to have monitoring for every country on pretty much the same principles and the same matter as for any other countries. But the thing is you would need much more resources for that, and again, it's kind of a technical issue the resources that it's not that often raised at the political level. But it's a key thing, if you don't have money to monitor each and every election on the same or similar scale than you can't set it as an objective and still attain nothing. So it is also a matter of changing the financial foundations of the organization and when it comes to ODIHR the institution is sort of semi-independent. Also and that means if you reach a consensus to invest more in this institution, this consensus might come with additional directions being given by the participating states to the ODIHR. This is questionable whether these kind of additional directions would be a good thing or a bad thing. Given that the situation of democracies is very different from one state to another. You may come to the conclusion that the current state of ODIHR is actually better than the one that we could get if we go too far in reforming it. But, one can always do better, I mean it is to make of the institute more transparent because part of the allegations that were made, I think they are only possible because people don't know enough about what the ODIHR is actually doing and what are the procedures uses at the elections and to explain it to make it understood by everyone could be a step forward.

SS: I would like to ask you about the Munich conference from 2010 or 2011, did it include something saying that the Eurasian Economic Community should integrated somehow in the OSCE, do you know something about that?

SU: Yes, the idea was basically that the OSCE includes both members of the Eurasian Economic Community and the EU. If you are very theoreticalthis gives you a reason to think that the OSCE is the ideal platform to establish the interaction between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union and eventually this could be the revival of the economic dimension of the OSCE. I think it would be a good idea to start a dialogue on those issues in the OSCE. But this would only work if we understand that a number of issues, just because of the, well, for the legal reasons for institutional reasons, a number of issues are decided and will be decided in the EU and in the direct talks between the European Commission and the Eurasian Economic Commission. You can't move all in the OSCE but you can use it as a platform for dialogue and probably quite technical dialogue as well. I mean meetings between experts in gaps that exist between the standards that are used by the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union. This is possible actually, if some people want to present these ideas, as a way to resolve all the issues between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union, I think it would be naïve to expect these kinds of results. Small step forward to a bit of more understanding probably, but to let's

say leave aside, this initial idea of 2011 and get back to the current situation, you can say that we can get out of the Ukraine crisis simply by establishing the dialogue between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union, well most of the people agree that currently it's not about the trade even if the government was in the Ukrainian crisis that doesn't mean that it is also the key to resolving it, the crisis is now much deeper.

SS: So this statement has rather become obsolete or irrelevant?

SU: Well, again, it depends on the level of your ambition. If you see this statement as a kind of attempt to make the OSCE the pivot of economic activities across the OSCE area, this is simply impossible. If you see it as an attempt to start a dialogue on these issues, this is what the OSCE often does. It does serve as a forum to discuss all sorts of issues and some of the debates may lead to practically important results. Si if you limit your ambitions you can go on with that.

SS: Can we see the statement as an attempt from Russia to strengthen, as you said, the economic dimension of the OSCE?

SU: Well, strengthen the economic dimension is not an aim in itself. If Russia thinks that the Eurasian integration is important, and it seems that in the West there is a, how to put it, ambiguous feeling about this Eurasian integration, they look for ways to sort of legitimize this process, to talk about it on international level more, to establish various connections to the strong and well-known integration entities like the EU and the Eurasian Economic Community/Union. So this is just part of those attempts and you have to keep in mind that eventually the damage that might be caused by these kind of issues being discusses in the OSCE is very limited. So you may start the discussion, if the discussion goes in the direction Russia wouldn't like people would simple never come to a result, to any substantial agreements on those issues. So if it stays as an exchange of work without any substantial consensus being built, well so be it. Russia will not lose anything from talking about those issues and either is forbidden for states to talk about those issues.

SS: So Russia uses the OSCE as a form to gain acknowledgements for the Eurasian Economic Union?

SU: I think it tries to use it also this way but I don't think this is the main subject that Russia hopes to achieve, I think it is more like a side dish. Something that would be good to help and something that comes to mind of people that think about what they can get out of the economic dimension of the OSCE. But still they all understand that the economic dimension is still pretty much underdeveloped. In political and security dimensions you may hope to achieve much more if you are consensus vision between the participating States. And if you don't get to a consensus vision you won't get a result in any of the dimensions.

SS: What is Russia's current interest in the organization? Because I know that in the 90s Russia was hoping that the OSCE would develop into the pan-European security organization, but then Russia realized that is wasn't going to happen because NATO emerged as the dominant security organization. So Russia's influence must have changed, what does Russia currently want to achieve in the organization?

SU: Yes, well that was pretty much the vision of that was the time of the Soviet Union and quite soon after that people understood that the way history is going and currently I think the Russian vision

towards the OSCE is much more limited and so to say instrumental. People see the organization as an instrument that can be used in this or that case, as an important platform for dialogue, but they do understand that it will never substitute the NATO or the EU. You may not have heard that the Member States of these two organizations would one day say: o yes the OSCE is better and close down the NATO and EU, this will not happen. You may find issues when people have to work together, I mean not just the EU members but the EU members with the members of the Eurasian Economic Union so they all have to come together. All countries of the region, the OSCE is especially available and you just saw this in the discourse of the Ukrainian crisis, when you have the growing divide between the East and the West in Europe. The principles on which the organization was based were written at the time of, well, a similar divide between the East and the West, it happens to be very much operational in the course of the Ukrainian crisis, so you cannot do without it and the interest of Russia to keep it on float to keep it working, to keep it one of the priorities also for the countries which are in the EU in NATO, not to let them forget about this institution that gives Russia full rights.

SS: Let's talk about the Helsinki + 40 40:12 process, do you think that process will help Russia return a sense of ownership of the OSCE?

SU: To be honest I don't think it will be a major success, the people seem unprepared to achieve any breakthrough result.

SS: Who do you mean by people?

SU: Well I mean experts, people whom I hear in Russia and outside Russia. I mean I have not really seen any assessment that would be really optimistic about the upcoming results of the Helsinki plus 40. My impression is that a good kind of PR move on the part of the organization to remind people of what it can do, but what you can get in the end of this process at best is that participating states would reaffirm their visions to leave an accordance. I don't really think that lets say the Crimea affair is something that happened because the Helsinki principles are not quite clarified and if only we had a different wording of these principles than the Crimea crisis I think it is more complicated it is not only about the text on paper it is not only about the political obligations in the OSCE and that means that Helsinki plus 40 is a good form for a bit more sincere talk on those issues but I don't expect the process to bring significant results. I actually have an idea on how we can help the OSCE and how we can introduce significant results to Helsinki plus 40 I think we have to concentrate on some very concrete issues, on how the OSCE missions are working, what they actually lack, how the financing of the organization is arranged, and those kinds of issues. I am afraid that people who deal with the Helsinki plus 40 they will in most cases think, Oh these are the technical issues let's concentrate on big things, and one the big things they simply will not achieve anything.

SS: What is your opinion of the current Panel of Eminent Persons?

SU: Well I sort of hinted precisely to this panel, I mean, again it's a good PR move it's good to draw attention to serious diplomats, academics that the OSCE is still there and that they can contribute to its work, that they can come with their proposals. I am afraid that the debate there will be very diplomatic and what we will get in the end of this effort, there will be some very vague declarations on the necessity to stick to the principles and in the same time sort of acknowledgement that we agree to disagree on many things.

SS: Because I heard that there was lack of confidence in those elements? First of all because there were no real OSCE experts, they are high profile persons but they are no real OSCE experts so I heard there was lack of confidence.

SU: First, if you really, really need the experts on the organization, you can always bring them together and you basically have this network of think tanks that was also arranged by people like: Dr.Zellner, Dr. Zagorski, and the network is still there. I mean if you need in depth research in some particular issue you may have a mechanism like that like the Panel of the Eminent Persons is asking the network of the think tanks to work out a solution for some particular problem that they see in general but they don't enough about the details of it.

SS: Is possible to do that?

SU: Yes if you are moving towards a result, you can't find a way to involve experts, a panel, any kind of panel I mean could be meetings in parliaments, they never work in the backroom, they normally try to experts to take into account their opinion and I can remember this one case when, well some of the think tanks that work in Europe, they tried to make this interaction possible they tried to organize events that were aimed particularly at the panel of eminent persons to increase their understanding of the expert's opinions so I don't think it's kind of a threshold you can't cross. It is more like a technical issue that you can resolve if you are going this way. The bigger danger, I would say, is that these eminent persons themselves may be very skeptical to the task their given they may think from the beginning; Oh well, we will meet a couple of times we will discuss this and that nothing will really come out of it so why bother why invest our time and effort in that. So I think if we care about trust, it's more about the trust of the members of the panel in the task their given rather than some people in the OSCE who don't trust them.

SS: Let's talk a bit about the Georgian conflict. How would you say the political debate around the conflict in 1992 was different from the one in 2008?

SU: Well in the beginning of the 1990s, too much had been around to single out this conflict as the key issue in international relations of that time. You basically had each month reports in the press about the erupting conflicts in the Balkans, in the Caucasus, Armenia Azerbaijan, conflict in the north Caucasus which are now sort of pacified but you had not just the Chechenia but the conflict between the Ossetians and the Ingush people. Given this context I don't think many people could really see what happened back then as something very important for the state of international relations in 20 years. They thought that, well this is kind of a turmoil that will be pacified, there were of course some activist who even then, saw this context as kind of a disadvantage that shows to us that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a bad thing and that it had to be prevented. But for the majority it was just another headache that had to pass one day. In 2008 the attention was much more concentrated, the crisis was seen as a major eruption in European security environment. You could see the first clashes of a real information war. Back in the beginning of the 1990s if an information war happened, it happened on the local level. It happened between the warring parties themselves. For Russia that was something that people read about in the press and would think, well again some interesting clashes when will it end and we support this or that. But with the Georgian conflict it was quite clear that Russia is in war directly, the development of the conflict depends on Russian decision making and they would also see it as a separate issue the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, so one thing is the context itself and if it would be resolved without changing the borders even from the Russian point of view. Then I

don't think that many people would remember it clearly today but the fact that it had some significant consequences in terms of how the sea, the geographical map of Europe, that makes it reappear on the surface of world politics again.

SS: Do you think that the recognition of those two states as independent was more important from a political point of view in 2008 than it was in the beginning of the 90s?

SU: In 1992, as far as I understand, they did not talk about recognizing these entities I mean people who were taking these decisions they were clearly pointing at the examples set by Kosovo. They were saying that because the West can do it to Kosovo we can do it to other areas that we consider important. In the beginning of the 90s the basic idea, the idea which is still formally there when it comes to Transnistria, was that the territorial integrity has to be cut and even if there was quite some significant support from Russia to those entities, that was more in terms of having leverage in Georgian politics maybe, but not really to create the independent states. Probably there was much more willingness and interest to gain the real independence inside these entities than in Russia where people discuss issues more in terms of conflict resolutions and not conflict perpetuation, which is what happens when you unilaterally recognize independence of another state.

SS: Would you say Russia has interest in creating or supporting instability in the South Caucasus?

SU: This is an interesting question which is been asked in expert debates here and there. Well if we talk about the country In general my vision of Russia's national interest. I don't think we are interested in instability and we should be worried by any signs of instability. But in a number of cases you saw that kind of a "managed instability" probably is one of the possible tools in a bigger game. So it's not the only tool, not the tool which is always used but one of the tools. In some cases you find it quite hard to reject publicly this argument but at least in some cases when it comes to Armenia/Azerbaijan when it comes to the current Russia's relations with Georgia it looks much less like Russia supported instability than as Russia's attempt to keep things as they are, to maintain the *status quo*. I mean the Russian decision makers are seen an undesirable change of the *status quo*, for example some countries of the South Caucasus, well Georgia, joining the NATO, the EU or developing stronger ties with the West. If they see it as a change in the *status quo* and they see the West is favorable to these kind of development they have to look for antidotes to that and sometimes the antidotes happen to be very negatively perceived in countries which are neighbours of Russia.

SS: What is the bigger game then? You said that this was a tool used in a bigger game.

SU: The bigger game in the eyes of the Russian policy makers is always between Russia and the West. They see the world in a duo political paradigm. They think that international politics is pretty much about the battle for influence, they don't believe in the EU, it's not the game they are playing they think that the EU is playing exactly this game. Association Agreements, the enlargements and they think they have resourced if not to be on the global level, not to become a country similar to the US or China but at least to keep the influence Russia already has in neighboring states and to strengthen this. They think this is a goal that deserves spending resources on this.

SS: So Russian politics is pretty much about *realpolitik*?

SU: Yes, I think this quite clear at this point.

SS: Is this something that started with the Putin administration or is it something that went, because there was a democratic aspirations during the Yeltsin administration?

SU: I think it developed during Putin's rule and even in the beginning of Putin you might have seen a number of signs that he is trying to use the approaches to foreign policy that were developed during the Yeltsin era, he had all these ideas of common spaces with the EU, he had the NATO Russia council being established by Putin's initiative basically. So they had the different Putin's term in the beginning of the 2000s but I think he got disappointed with that. The further **1:02:50** he tried to make new offerings to the West. He saw that the West is still hesitating and he saw this as a confirmation of the fact that what he has been taught in KGB back in the 70s was actually true. That the West dislikes Russia not because it is Soviet, because it is communist but because it is a huge country with different geopolitical visions, and he will reconcile the geopolitical vision if you think you have to **1:03:35** fight for your own. This is probably the understanding he came to.

SS: In one of the articles, in the Security and Human Rights I read that Russia wanted the OSCE to broker a non-use of force agreement with Georgia. I know that Georgia rejected this non-use of force agreement but here it says that Russia wanted the OSCE to be the mediator of this agreement and 01:04:40 since this general agreement would mean implicit recognition independence of his regions the plan will most likely not work out and the proposal could almost be regarded as a preemptive attempt to corner the OSCE. Did the OSCE broker the agreement on the non-use of force? In Georgia and Russia's request in the end or did it not?

SU: Well I probably don't know some of the details of this part to be honest. The idea of this non-use of force was discussed in the Geneva talks **01:05:35** which kind of includes the OSCE as one of the observers but in the end of the day it's about the dialogue between Tbilisi, Tskhinvali and Sukhumi. The dialogue was never easy, has never been easy and the major obstacle is not an absence of mediator or that the OSCE would find itself in unwelcoming role if it would agree to be the principal mediator. The principle obstacle is from the point of view of Tbilisi the agreement on the non-use of force shall be with Russia. And from the official Russian point of view, Russia has never been part of the conflict. It's a conflict between Tbilisi, Tskhinvali and Sukhumi and the non-use of force agreement shall be between those parties. What kind of mediation could help in this regards? I don't know I think it's more up to the Russian leadership to rethink its approaches if it ever does, or to Tbilisi to rethink his approaches to those issues of principles, so this misunderstanding is not a result of parties really unable to understand each other, they perfectly do but they take different stances on this issue and another kind of mediator will not change much.

SS: About the High Commissioner on National Minorities, do you think he should have issued an early warning in 2008? Do you think this was an ethno-political case?

SU: Well, I think the details may matter a lot here. In the case of Georgia in 2008 we have the OSCE present on the ground before the conflict erupted and the OSCE representatives decided to leave at the point when the conflict erupted which is understandable because it was not their mandate to stay there indefinitely and risk their lives but eventually this produced an impression that the OSCE underperformed in this crisis situation. But as far as I understand most of the things were reported by the OSCE representatives on the ground and the brought to the decision making bodies of the OSCE so they basically knew that serious things are in the making and then the decision making bodies cannot

come to a consensus. Which is all that is needed. I cannot exclude that in the case of this Commissioner this could also be kind of the case, he could not be more active because of the fear that this would stop the consensus. But this is just a guess, you will have to talk to the persons that were part of this process. This is based on things which are not on paper, things that stay in between the officials and the decision makers.

SS: A lot of experts say that the OSCE mission in Georgia was a failure, do you agree with this?

SU: Well again, in the first place you don't give the organization enough resources and a mandate that is not large enough and then you blame it for being a failure. I think it is kind of unfair, the fact that it was not a success is quite clear but why it wasn't a success? Was it because people on the ground underperformed? Or because there was no consensus in the organization in the first place to give more resources to the mission to invest more? I think it is rather this latter explanation.

SS: What was the role of Russia in the OSCE mission? Did it contribute somehow to the failure? In what way did it effect the mission?

SU: Well, I don't know about any particular Russian contribution to the failure of the mission. In general Russia, as far as I understand, tries to be represented to a certain level in the missions in the Caucasus in the staff I mean. But also Russia could also probably invest more in having its experts on the OSCE missions because currently it's different from one country to another. Some countries are very flexible with this second man system of gathering the best person available even if they had nothing to do with governmental service. In the case of Russia the second man is strictly linked to the Minister of Foreign Affairs so if they don't have people for some particular position then these positions are filled by somebody else not by Russia. This could be one of the issues in all cases, I don't have information that this particular influence of Russians role in the Georgian mission.

SS: I spoke to a senior OSCE advisor and he told that when they were talking about the ceasefire 6-point implementation measures there was agreement that the Georgian troops had to withdraw from certain borders in 2008 but then a year later Russian military commanders said that, I don't remember the details, there was discrepancy in what they said they said something that the implementation of the cease fire agreement was invalid in 2008 and then a year later some Russian military commanders withdrew because they said the agreement was invalid they had to a year later which kind of shows as if there was a lack of communication a lack of information between these two events I also read an article that sometimes Russian foreign policy seems to be inconclusive like there seems to be confusion about it, authorities say one thing and then military commanders might do something else so I was wondering do you think this lack of coherence sometimes that is deliberate or is it intentional in a asymmetric war or hybrid war.

SU: Starting would be the easiest part, this lack of coherence is a vague and very convenient notion that could be used perfectly everywhere. If you speak about the US foreign policy or about the EU's foreign policy making you may always mention lack of coherence and you will be right in the most of the cases cause there will always be some sort of lack of coherence. So I think you can register it in Russian foreign policy but this is not an issue in itself. When this recognition happened then for Russia, Georgian territory has changed. And that basically means for Russia that there are no Russian troops on Georgian territory.

SS: So you are saying there is no such thing as asymmetrical/ hybrid war?

SU: There is definitely such a thing as hybrid war but in this case, again you can call anything a hybrid war but it makes no sense to bring everything under this notion of hybrid war. In this case there was one thing we had during the conflict in Georgia and another thing that happened for example in Ukraine you can look for similarities but there are quite some differences, it is not just a coincidence that the notion of hybrid warfare happened to be so popular only in Ukraine and not so much in Georgia.

SS: I want to ask one more questions on the dimensions of the OSCE, would you say that Russia is deliberately sabotaging the human dimension of the OSCE? For example by closing down missions or cutting down budgets for missions.

SU: I don't know examples of sabotage, I cannot exclude that this can happen because they official Russian vision is that the claims of human rights violations are often used by the west for political purposes. So if this is the claim, then from a Russian point of view would not be seen as sabotage but in terms of Russia's national interest. It is not like denying human rights it's like saying that we depend on the rights of our citizens through our own legislation and we don't need anyone to tell us how to do this. This position is quite natural for the kind of political viewing that they have in Russia but you may have a long run on the differences on how Russia and the other countries understand human rights and democracy standards, these differences will get smaller cause at the end of the day it is indeed about the political elite that we have and not about how people in general in Russia see human right or democracy.

SS: What are your expectations/prediction about Russia the OSCE and the role of Russia in the OSCE in the near future?

SU: My predictions are basically linked to the developments of the Ukraine crisis. Not much prediction but scenarios. If we go the way of freezing the conflict in Ukraine than there will be a huge demand for a stronger OSCE that can basically play a role that the UN plays in other crisis areas, in this case Russia would be interested to support the organization if it supports freezing the conflict, if n the other hand we have the radical vision for the Ukraine within Russia and that means further escalation the OSCE would be no more than a scape goat, and for the to be that you don't need to strengthen it but simple play with it in political games, those are two basic scenarios because if we talk about some full scale political solution in the conflict in Ukraine that would not be just freezing but a real way out of the crisis I don't see possibilities for that any time soon.

Appendix 10 Personal e-mail – Sergey Utkin**Sergey Utkin, Personal e-mail**

from: **Sergey Utkin** <sv.utkin@gmail.com>

to: Sema Syuleyman
<syuleymansema@gmail.com>

date: Tue, May 19, 2015 at 9:18 PM

subject: Re: dissertation interview

Dear Sema,

1. I agree that the weaker Russia's cooperation with the EU/NATO is, the more valuable the OSCE looks like. Of course, another prerequisite for it to be valued is that Russia is a plenipotentiary participating state along with the others, unlike with EU/NATO (and the formal decision to work on equal national basis in the NATO-Russia Council never really worked). But this other prerequisite wasn't an impediment for harsh critics towards the OSCE, when it still didn't look like the only remaining way to compensate the absence of other routes.

I disagree with the "propaganda" vision. The faults in other communication channels are real, the demand for the OSCE mechanisms is real. Of course, when these mechanisms are being used in Ukraine, one may try to instrumentalise them for political games, propaganda etc. but all of it is secondary to the obvious necessity to have some basic mutually acceptable monitoring on the ground, which no one else is able to provide. I don't see how the OSCE presence in Ukraine and its regular reports can distract attention from Ukraine, if this was the idea you quoted.

And a kind of a technical remark to that: the "OSCE euphoria" is not a propaganda term per se - it can rather be used as a critical description of Russia's and other countries' attitude to the OSCE in these last months. But even in this regard, frankly I don't see it all reaching the stage of euphoria - most people understand the natural limitations of the OSCE and so far there has been no influential proposals on upgrading it significantly. What we do see is not the euphoria but rather that in a serious crisis the toolbox of the Organization happened to be useful and, hence, more visible.

2. On how to mend it all - this is a hundred billion dollar question. My answer is that we actually cannot make Russia and the West to look eye to eye in the short-to-middle-term perspective, given the existing attitudes in the Russian government, and in the West. Only time will help, probably. But in the meantime, it is important to make use of the existing mechanisms to avoid further escalation and release tension, when possible.

3. Yes, the form, I'll try to send it to you tomorrow.

Best regards,

Sergey