

УДК 327

REINVIGORATING COOPERATIVE SECURITY IN A POLARISED WORLD¹

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Поступила в редакцию 22.02.2022

После доработки 28.02.2022

Принята к публикации 15.03.2022

Abstract: European security is at a critical juncture that could spin into conflict if left unattended. Deteriorating levels of mutual trust, eroding arms control frameworks, belligerent rhetoric, heightened transnational threats, and the danger of accidents and incidents are shaping our current polarised environment. While today's security threats urgently call for collaborative solutions, multilateral initiatives are increasingly questioned and weakened. As a result, Europe is captured in a gridlock that can only be resolved through dialogue, reengaging, and reforming multilateral institutions. Therefore, this paper aims to critically assess Europe's current security environment

¹ Статья бывшего генерального секретаря Организации по безопасности и сотрудничеству в Европе Томаса Гремингера, директора Женевского центра политики безопасности (GCSP), и Роуз Вашингтон (GCSP) посвящена проблеме обеспечения кооперативной безопасности в Европе в связи с растущими транснациональными рисками, конфликтами и деградацией системы контроля над вооружениями. Особое внимание уделено роли ОБСЕ в этом процессе. Статья была подготовлена в начале 2022 г., однако её концептуальные положения сохраняют свою актуальность и могут быть востребованы в обозримом будущем. (Прим. ред.) [The article by former Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Thomas Greminger, Director of the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP), and Rose Washington (GCSP) explores the problem of cooperative security in Europe in the light of growing transnational risks, conflicts and the degradation of the arms control system. Particular attention is paid to the role of the OSCE. Although the article was prepared at the beginning of 2022, its conceptual provisions remain relevant and might be in demand in the foreseeable future. (Editorial note)]

and propose effective pathways to mitigate risks and restore peace. Against this background, the authors argue that cooperative security is Europe's best option to sustainably counter the ever-growing security threats and prevent devastating conflicts or unintended escalation between states. From this perspective, this article stresses the need to identify common interests and challenges and anchor European security in jointly agreed principles to maintain and sustain peace in Europe. In this vein, it highlights the vital importance of a mutual understanding of fundamental security principles, as the current standoff between Russia and the West around Ukraine exemplifies. Beyond, it gives momentum to the renewal of cooperative security in the run-up to the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025.

Key words: Cooperative security, multilateralism, OSCE, European security, transnational security threats, Helsinki Final Act.

DOI: 10.31857/S0201708322030019

EDN: GEQJG

Introduction

Cooperative security is a timely endeavour given the growing polarisation between the key Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security players, the disarray of arms control regimes, and the increasing risk of military incidents. Moreover, low levels of trust and the crisis of multilateral institutions are amplifying Europe's fragile security climate.

On the one hand, an erosion of the complex network of arms control mechanisms undermines global security. To exemplify, this includes the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), the non-implementation of the Conventional Arms Control Treaty in Europe (CFE), the withdrawal of the USA and Russia from the Open Skies Agreement, and the blocked revision of the Vienna Document¹ (VD). The INF treaty legally bound the U.S. and USSR to eliminate and abandon ground-launched intermediate ballistic and cruise missiles ranging between 500 and 5500 km [Immenkamp, 2019]. With the end of the INF agreement, Europe's security backbone is destabilising. In addition, the CFE, the Open Skies Agreement², and the VD constitute Europe's overarching arms control framework. The CFE establishes an equilibrium of conventional forces; the Open Skies Treaty provides transparency mechanisms via aerial monitoring; and the VD manifests military confidence and security-building measures (CSBM) [Schmitt, 2018]. More optimistically, the United States and Russia agreed in February 2021 to extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) by five years. Despite this, the system that has provided us with relative peace and stability in Europe for the last three decades is eroding.

On the other hand, low levels of trust and an increased risk of accidents and incidents jeopardise international security. Incidents at sea, in the air, or on land could lead

¹ Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 30.11.2011. URL: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/4/86597.pdf>. (дата обращения: 09.02.2022)

² Treaty on Open Skies. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 24.03.1992. URL: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/5/14127.pdf>. (дата обращения: 09.02.2022)

to unintended escalations. Charap's research [Charap, 2020] highlights potential conflict drivers, revealing that such ambiguous incidents can cause friction and escalation. Especially in times of heightened tension, information on intention is unclear due to insufficient communication channels between key actors. Jervis' ground-breaking research [Jervis, 1976] emphasises the critical role of decision-makers' perceptions and misperceptions in international relations. Specifically, he highlights that the roots of many conflicts lie in the actors' diverging perceptions. Particularly in polarised or hostile environments, incidents are more likely to escalate in the absence of trust and dialogues between actors. As Jervis underlines [Jervis, 1976: 321], humankind is hesitant to believe that actions impacting them in a fast sequence could have occurred by chance. In this view, he states, «when two events are appropriately coincidental in time, space and sequence, an unavoidable and indivisible experience of causality occurs». In other words, security actors are more likely to perceive an incident or accident as planned instead of coincidental. This effect is reinforced if the involved parties are in conflict due to the limited information exchange. The fog of war is made thicker due to fake news and intentional misinformation. Because of perceived threat or insecurity, one side will seek to strengthen its security. This triggers a similar response by the other side, leading to a potentially dangerous tit-for-tat escalation. Therefore, it is imperative to de-escalate and de-militarise the situation, open communication channels, and put in place measures to increase confidence and predictability.

In a globalised world, nearly all security threats are transnational. Individual states can no longer contain these threats independently; a multilateral approach is essential. Examples include efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism, state and non-state threats in cyberspace, human trafficking, weapons, or technological changes (particularly Artificial Intelligence). Simultaneously, rapid technological advances in security bring along opportunities and risks as benevolent and malicious actors instrumentalise new and powerful tools. Rickli and Krieg [Krieg, Rickli, 2019] highlight the rise of *surrogate warfare*, characterising inter-state conflicts in the 21st century. The authors portray this phenomenon as the actors' partial or complete delegation of warfare's strategic, operational or tactical elements to human or technological substitutes aiming to minimise costs. These involve the usage of armed drones, private sector actors and cyber propaganda, among others. While surrogate warfare might facilitate the state's security provision in transnational conflicts, it can significantly contribute to the unpredictability, obscurity, uncontrollability, and spread of conflict [Krieg, Rickli, 2019]. Considering the obfuscated conflict actors, the high complexity and uncertainty can further mistrust between states and increase security risks. The OSCE's participating states designed 16 confidence-building measures (CBM) to address cyber security challenges and prevent interstate cyber incidents through unintended escalation¹. Hence, close collaboration between states and other relevant stakeholders is critical.

Consequently, this presents us with the paradoxical situation in which security actors contest multilateral cooperation and spaces for dialogues are shrinking while the im-

¹ Council Decision No. 1202. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 10.03.2016. URL: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/a/227281.pdf>. (дата обращения: 09.01.2022)

portance of collaboration and exchange is dramatically increasing. The OSCE resembles this paradox as the confrontational climate and heightened security challenges amplify the organisations' significant relevance [Tiilikainen, OSCE Network, 2015], albeit faced with critical voices and a lack of trust [Kortunov, 2021]. Simultaneously, polarisation constraints possibilities of exploring solutions as stakeholders mainly use dialogue platforms for public diplomacy. A lack of personal contacts exacerbated this as a result of COVID-19. Subsequently, public policy and issuing harsh statements online replaced discreet dialogues and quiet diplomacy [Greminger *et al.*, 2021]. Moreover, due to a lack of high-level political engagement, excessive attention is paid to business processes such as conference agendas, budgets, or personnel instead of addressing Europe's fundamental security challenges resulting in important dysfunctionalities of the organisation [Greminger *et al.*, 2021; Greminger, 2022].

With the COVID-19 pandemic, humankind has experienced how rapidly basic assumptions can change. In this context, preparing for potentially transformative events such as cyber-attacks (and blackouts), manufactured or natural disasters, space incidents, and conflicts is pivotal. Global cooperation is needed to tackle these modern security challenges which transcend borders. Given their complex and transnational nature, even the most powerful states cannot address these issues independently. As UN Secretary-General [UN Secretary-General, 2004:11] accentuated at the U.N. High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, today's threats recognise no national boundaries, are connected, and must be addressed at the global and regional as well as the national levels. No state, no matter how powerful, can by its own efforts alone make itself invulnerable to today's threats.

The COVID-19 crisis also demonstrates the importance of information-sharing and collaboration against common threats [Sachs, 2020]. Conversely, it also revealed the proliferation of fake news and its weaponisation, underlining the need for accurate information, evidence-based policy and effective communication campaigns [Greminger *et al.*, 2021].

While today's security risks urgently call for collaborative solutions, multilateral initiatives are increasingly questioned and weakened. States tend to seek national solutions due to a lack of trust in other states or inter-governmental organisations. As a result, Europe is captured in an impasse that can only be resolved through dialogue, reengaging, and reforming multilateral institutions. This paper aims to critically assess Europe's current security environment and propose effective pathways to mitigate risks and restore peace. Against this background, cooperative security is Europe's best option to sustainably counter the ever-growing security threats and prevent devastating conflicts or unintended escalation between states. This article forms seven chapters, unpacking the complex security landscape and the underlying mechanisms sustaining this argument. Chapter two begins by exploring the roots of the current security conditions and laying out the theoretical dimensions of this research. Chapter three sheds light on cooperative security as the proposed solution to conflict prevention. Chapters four and five then look at multilateralism and ways of renewing cooperative security in the face of the prevalent challenges. Chapter six provides directions and potential future pathways. Lastly, chapter seven concludes with a summary of the main findings and recommendations.

Need for dialogue

The contemporary polarised and complex security environment brings with it the need for dialogue to manage risks and cooperatively tackle common problems. Admittedly, this might seem self-evident, but relationships between Russia and the West have been at a low ebb for almost a decade, suggesting even dialogue is a delicate endeavour. However, it is crucial to foster dialogue with both proponents and opponents to prevent conflicts and address common challenges. In this fragile environment, identifying converging interests between different stakeholders and building areas of collaboration that enable effectively addressing global security challenges becomes essential. For instance, exploring what Friedrich Ebert Stiftung calls (FES) *Islands of Cooperation* [FLEET, 2018] or what the EU has referred to in the past as *Areas of Selective Engagement* [Fischer, Timofeev, 2018]. One example of possible fora for engagement is the Structured Dialogue in the context of the OSCE. Established in December 2016 at OSCE's Ministerial Council in Hamburg, this platform aspires to stimulate discussions on restoring arms control and enhancing CSBMs¹. It became a crucial space for information flow on perceived risks, military capacity, and de-escalation measures. Despite its vital role in fostering dialogue, lacking political attention led to the state's negligence thereof. Accordingly, revitalising safe spaces for structured dialogue is central to conflict prevention.

The process of constructive engagement itself can build confidence, overcome fears, and build trust. When explaining why misperceptions are more likely to occur between conflicting parties, Jervis [Jervis, 1976: 329] stresses that «(...) actors who are cooperating usually have detailed information about each other, and the greater the information, the greater the differentiation and diversity that will be perceived». Using a systematic game approach to analyse trust in international relations, Kydd [Kydd, 2005] observes that «distrust can be self-perpetuating». Equally, he also notes that cooperative gestures that stimulate chains of mutually beneficial behaviour can gradually strengthen trust. Cooperation can lead to reassurance² and establishing trust [Kydd, 2005]. Analysing the psychological mechanisms under threat conditions and the Cold War, Osgood [Osgood, 1962] identified the roots of the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union in mutual mistrust. He proposed the Gradual Reciprocation in Tension-reduction (GRIT) strategy to overcome this gridlock. The GRIT approach suggests a series of unilateral cooperative initiatives created to enhance the opponent's security without undermining one's own. Doing so aims to inform the adversary's perceptions and build levels of trust. Yet, the hardest part is often to take the first step: in a tense environment where both sides post aggressively, conciliatory gestures can be interpreted as weakness. Alt-

¹ From Lisbon to Hamburg: Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the OSCE Framework for Arms Control. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 9.12.2016. URL: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/e/289496.pdf>. (дата обращения: 09.01.2022)

² Kydd explains that «reassurance can be defined as the process of building trust. It involves convincing the other side that you prefer to reciprocate cooperation, so that it is safe for them to cooperate» [Kydd, 2005: 184].

though dialogues are crucial, verbal reassurance does not suffice to build trust. Instead, they need to be accompanied by costly signals testifying efforts of trustworthy reciprocal cooperation [Kydd, 2005]. Hence, dialogue is essential but must be followed by credible and reciprocal actions.

Cooperative Security

During crises, the conventional state strategy is to harden its security measures and strengthen its defences. However, while the logic is to enhance one's security, such action may increase tensions since the other side feels threatened and bolsters its position accordingly. Therefore, the challenge is to enhance one's security, but in a way that does not jeopardise the security of other states. That is the essence of cooperative security.

Grounded on the empirical findings above, cooperative security is an effective alternative to an escalating series of incrementally precarious tit-for-tat reprisals. Exiting this impasse requires Europe to re-centre its security policy around cooperative security. In contrast to defensive security mechanisms, cooperative security seeks collaborative solutions. Grounded on the premise that complex security issues require «security *with* each other, rather than *from* each other» [Vetschera, 2007: 39], cooperative security aims to enhance bilateral and multilateral inter-state relations. In essence, it fosters consultation in place of confrontation, reassurance as opposed to deterrence, transparency instead of secrecy, and prevention in lieu of coercion. The Schuman Declaration of 1950 exemplifies a case of cooperative security. French foreign minister Robert Schuman put forward the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community on 9 May 1950. Eager to prevent another world war, Schuman [Schuman, 2010: 147] concluded, «the solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible». Despite complex relations within the EU, 70 years of peace between its member states [Biti, Leerssen, Liska, 2021; Wallensteen, 2021] testify to the preventive power of multilateral collaboration.

Indeed, the more interconnected the world becomes, the more we realise that our security is indivisible. Humankind depends on each other for energy, trade, information technology, regulating flows of people, money and illicit goods. Collaboration is crucial to managing threats and challenges that know no borders, like pandemics, climate change, and terrorism. The European Union illustrates that cooperation is possible. However, Europe exceeds the European Union's borders, including the Balkans, the Caucasus, Turkey, and Russia. So, the question might arise: How can so many countries with diverging perspectives and national interests collaborate? As illuminated in the previous chapter, dialogue and exchange can enhance trust and cooperation between actors. Nevertheless, for this process to unfold, a joint interest in security combined with commonly defined and agreed rules and principles must govern the relations to establish fairness and predictability [Greminger *et al.*, 2021]. Cooperative security is about conceptualising security together. On these grounds, it encourages states to jointly identify and prevent threats rather than counter them through deterrence or force. Cooperative security presents an inclusive approach to building consensus while respecting the principle of sovereign equality.

While cooperative security may be needed more than ever to reduce tensions in a Europe that looks closer to war than at any time since the Second World War and to get states to work together on a broad set of interconnected and complex challenges that defy borders, how can it be achieved in practice?

Cooperative security can foster dialogue and collaboration among diverse security actors with diverging agendas. As OSCE's Secretary-General, searching for consensus among its members inherently surfaced difficulties and underlined that shaping cooperative security extensively relies on dialogue. As outlined above, dialogue is imperative for conflict prevention precisely under diverging positions. It enables security actors to identify red lines, maintain communication channels, and increase transparency in relations. Though this logical inference may seem too simplistic, it is also worth recalling NATO's Harmel doctrine from the late 1960s based on the pillars of *deterrence* and *détente* during the Cold War ushering the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe's (CSCE) Helsinki process. More recent efforts from think tanks further illuminate the path towards cooperation by providing expertise and uncovering public perceptions on European security issues. To illustrate, the Cooperative Security Initiative (CSI), constituted by 18 experts from OSCE regions, aims to foster cooperation and cultivate new ideas to reinforce multilateralism through the OSCE in Europe¹. In pursuance of a safer Europe, the CSI stimulates discussion and action to mitigate security risks and increase multilateral cooperation. Hence, cooperative security allows for consensus-building despite hardened relations.

Furthermore, cooperative security facilitates actions based on jointly defined principles and rules. For instance, as tensions were rising in Ukraine in early 2014, one of the authors (T. Greminger) acted as chair of OSCE's Permanent Council in Vienna. Despite major divisions between OSCE's participating countries Russia, Ukraine, the EU, and the US, the stakeholders reached a consensus on de-escalation measures and deploying an OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM)². After almost three weeks of negotiations with various impasses, all 57 OSCE participating states agreed, by consensus, to create the SMM. The stakeholders' firm political support was instrumental in overcoming negotiation hurdles and producing unanimity. A few weeks after adopting Permanent Council Decision No.1117 to deploy the SMM³, monitoring teams were established in ten locations across Ukraine⁴ [OSCE, 2021]. While initially 100 monitors were installed, the mission continuously expanded, comprising 1,287 mission members

¹ Cooperative Security Initiative. 2022. URL: <https://www.cooperative-security-initiative.org/de/info/>. (дата обращения: 09.02.2022)

² OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine was established in 2014. On 7th of March 2022 SMM completed evacuation of international staff from the area of operations in Ukraine, DPR and LPR. SMM mandate expired on March 31, 2022. (*Editorial note*)

³ Decision No. 1117 Deployment of an OSCE Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 21.03.2014. URL: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/6/116747.pdf>. (дата обращения: 10.01.2022)

⁴ Initially, first monitoring teams were in Chernivtsi, Dnipropetrovsk (renamed Dnipro in May 2016), Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Lviv, Luhansk and Odesa along with SMM's headquarters in Kyiv.

from 47 OSCE states as of 10 January 2022 [OSCE, 2022]. Since SMM's deployment, the international community mission has kept the mission under scrutiny to appease the tensions. Thus, affirming that action under adverse conditions is possible with cooperative security.

Reengaging and reforming multilateral institutions

As Secretary-General of the OSCE, one of the authors (T. Greminger) has witnessed first-hand how the politicisation of administrative issues, the pursuit of narrow agendas to the detriment of consensus, and public policy in place of quiet diplomacy [Kemp, Ignatieff, 2001], can lead to gridlock. As a result, the room for manoeuvre of multilateral institutions is further restrained, which causes national decision-makers to either neglect or ignore these bodies.

Numerous scholars have examined the reasons behind the crisis of multilateralism [Brunnée, 2018; Greminger *et al.*, 2021; Lavallée, 2021; Meyer, Sales Marques, Telò, 2021; Szpak, 2021]. Most researchers provide an endogenous explanation of its crisis, identifying its roots in a lack of legitimacy [Soares de Lima, Albuquerque, 2020; Zürn in Meyer, Sales Marques, Telò, 2021]. Another strand of literature emphasises exogenous explanatory factors contributing to multilateral institutions' decay. According to this line of argumentation, rising regional and global actors (such as Russia and China) are challenging multilateral institutions' composition, while their rising influence is pushing the international order toward *multipolarity* [Grant, 2012].

More recent attention has focused on their critical role in addressing the global COVID-19 pandemic [Cameron, 2020; Sachs, 2020; Carayannis, Weiss, 2021; Hösli *et al.*, 2021]. Cameron [Cameron, 2020] underlines the importance of the EU and Asia to collaboratively consolidate and strengthen multilateral institutions in light of the absent U.S. leadership in mitigating this crisis. The author particularly highlights that economic recovery strongly depends on a cooperative strategy. In the same vein, according to Sachs [Sachs, 2020], an effective multilateral system should replace unilateral leadership as only inter-state collaboration would allow us to combat the pandemic. Sachs [Sachs, 2020: 5] urges that «defending, protecting, preserving, and supporting the multilateral system should be imperative of our times». Hence, reforming multilateral organisations and reengaging their member states is decisive in breaking the vicious cycle and enhancing its capacity to address global security needs.

Linking bilateral and multilateral processes

While effective multilateralism is essential to deal with emerging threats and challenges, it will take time to restore confidence in the ability of inter-governmental organisations to cope with these threats and challenges. There are also a wider range of actors – beyond regional or international organisations – that can play a role in enhancing peace and security, including the private sector, civil society, think tanks and scientists.

The challenge will be to hold dialogues at different levels while eventually channeling them into a common direction. For example, in light of the crisis between Russia

and the West, bilateral conversations between Washington and Moscow in the Strategic Stability Dialogue are crucial. Western European countries also have a stake in the process, which requires engagement between Russia, the EU, and NATO. However, these organisations do not include countries in wider Europe, such as the Western Balkans, South Caucasus, Central Asia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. In this context, the OSCE, with its inclusive membership and comprehensive approach to security, plays a key role. Smaller negotiating formats, like the Normandy Four (comprising France, Germany, the Russian Federation and Ukraine), can also be critical in offering political impulses. However, despite the variety of platforms, it is often argued that the time is not ripe for dialogue. My first response would be: what are we waiting for, war? Suppose a more cooperative approach to security is impossible within these frameworks; a track two approach could allow to explore possibilities, make proposals, sketch out a process design, and identify common interests. This was the logic behind the CSI and reflects the Geneva Centre for Security Policy's (GCSP) efforts to continue encouraging the formulation of a cooperative security agenda.

The way forward

Grounded on these empirical findings, it is recommended to design a process to foster dialogue on European security considering the current polarised environment.

Such a process could revitalise the dialogue platform for cooperative security par excellence, the OSCE. As previously highlighted, we need to strengthen the instruments at our disposal and promote multilateral fora facing a crisis of confidence¹. Against this background, ensuring that the OSCE can act effectively again should be at the heart of this process. While this may seem straightforward, it inevitably requires the participating states' political will. Therefore, OSCE's member states should rally behind a plan focusing on capacitating the organisation and implementing institutional reforms to enhance its effectiveness. Effective change can be accelerated in close collaboration with the chairpersonship and the secretariat by centring on previously identified reform priorities and recommendations [see e.g., Greminger, 2022]. For instance, furthering the implementation of the *Fit4Purpose* reform agenda introduced during my tenure as OSCE's Secretary-General could be an initial step to increase the organisation's efficiency and efficacy. OSCE's current Secretary-General Helga Schmid also put this idea at the forefront by confirming her commitment to reform the management structure and building on some of the reforms one of the authors (T. Greminger) suggested during his tenure². In this spirit, a group of exceptionally committed participating states could drive the ef-

¹ Ambassador Thomas Greminger says, "The presentation of the new OSCE is a strong signal". Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. 31.01.2022. URL: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/das-eda/aktuell/newsuebersicht/2022/01/aktionsplan-osze-2025.html>. (дата обращения: 14.01.2022)

² Helga Schmid states "I want to create informal channels of dialogue". Security and Human Rights Monitor. 26.10.2021. URL: <https://www.shrmonitor.org/i-want-to-create-informal-channels-of-dialogue/>. (дата обращения: 30.01.2022)

forts of enhancing the OSCE's European security contribution. In its action plan 2022–2025, Switzerland has made a solid commitment to revitalising the OSCE by strengthening its capacity to act [FDFA, 2022]. Now more than ever, the commitment of OSCE's participating states is required to strengthen the most inclusive platform for cooperative security.

In a second phase, such dialogue could tackle the fundamental issue of cooperative security: creating a shared understanding of what the Helsinki principles mean in the 21st century. In the *spirit of Helsinki*, various European security actors recognise the importance of reviving the ten principles, concluded in Helsinki on 1 August 1975 by High Representatives of the CSCE's participating states¹. From CSCE's 35 participating states to the evolution into the OSCE with 57 member states, the Helsinki Final Act remains a core foundation of the organisation fostering peaceful relations among its member states and sustaining European security. The run-up to the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025 provides a unique opportunity to strengthen the OSCE and implement the Helsinki principles. As the president of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö² succinctly puts it, «The core components of the original Helsinki spirit are equally topical as they were in 1975: a willingness of adversaries and competitors to engage in dialogue despite their differences; a broad and cooperative concept of security, one that includes the human dimension and the interest of individual freedoms and rights, democracy, and the rule of law; and a commitment to arms control, transparency, and confidence-building. All of these elements are in great demand in the present».

The current standoff between Russia and the West around Ukraine illustrates the relevance of achieving a common interpretation of fundamental security principles. At the core of the crisis lies the need to reconcile two fundamental principles of European security reaffirmed by the Charter for European Security adopted by the Istanbul Summit³ and the Astana Commemorative Declaration of 2010⁴: *equal security* and *indivisible security*, i.e. each state has the right to freely choose its security arrangements including its alliances, but at the same time faces the obligation not to expand its own security to the detriment of another state. Applying these principles to those states situated in-between the Russian Federation and the OSCE as, for instance, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova or Armenia, represents a serious dilemma that can only be resolved by dialogue and diplomacy. The current lack of a unanimous interpretation around these principles plays out in the political arena, threatening European security. Therefore, it becomes evident that a

¹ Helsinki Final Act 1975. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 01.08.1975. URL: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/c/39501.pdf>. (дата обращения: 9.02.2022)

² Sauli Niinistö highlights “It’s Time to Revive the Helsinki Spirit”, Foreign Policy. 8.07.2021. URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/07/08/its-time-to-revive-the-helsinki-spirit/>. (дата обращения: 30.01.2022)

³ Istanbul Charter for European Security 1999. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 19.11.1999. URL: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/5/39569.pdf>. (дата обращения: 18.02.2022)

⁴ Astana Commemorative Declaration Towards a Security Community. Astana Commemorative Declaration of 2010. 3.12.2010. URL: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/6/74985.pdf>. (дата обращения: 21.02.2022)

shared understanding of the Helsinki principles among security actors is indispensable in maintaining peace.

In practical terms, the OSCE could serve as a platform to resume dialogue among like-minded and non-like-minded members and jointly re-interpret the Helsinki principles in the current security context. In addition, the GCSP launched a track 1.5 diplomatic dialogue process to bring together experts from the OSCE area and wider Europe to foster trust and explore joint venues towards global security. Therefore, non-governmental organisations such as the GCSP can constitute safe spaces where fresh ideas and constructive approaches are born to rebuild trust and revive the *spirit of Helsinki*. An active civil society engagement in shaping and driving momentum towards the Helsinki Final Act's 50th Anniversary should be at the core of this process.

Conclusion

This article highlighted the need to revitalise cooperative security due to the increasing transnational risks, incidents, and deteriorating arms control systems. Global threats such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, cyber threats, human trafficking, and irregular migration exceed national borders and require cross-border solutions. Augmenting incidents and accidents at sea, in the air, or on land accelerate the risk of unintended escalation. Arms control systems have dissolved, including the INF, CFE, and the Open Skies Agreement, previously safeguarding international security. At the same time, we are currently faced with a paradox, resulting in gridlock. While the alarming security situation urgently calls for global cooperation, multilateral institutions are increasingly being challenged and weakened. In other words, we are at a critical juncture in European security. Therefore, re-establishing cooperative security to restore European security is an urgent endeavour.

Grounded on Jervis' theoretical findings [Jervis, 1976], this article emphasised the vital importance of fostering dialogue in the contemporary heightened security environment to rebuild trust and mitigate risks. Against this background, this paper argued that cooperative security could pave the way towards enhanced mutual trust and European security despite these adverse circumstances. In essence, three fundamental characteristics of cooperative security sustain this argument: (1) it is inclusive while respecting sovereign equality; (2) it allows for consensus-building despite hardened relations; (3) it can produce action beyond dialogue. Considering that cooperative security can alleviate the current gridlock, reviving the OSCE as an inclusive platform is crucial. To do so, this paper recommended capacitating the organisation by implementing proposed reforms. As a second step, jointly re-interpreting and reviving the Helsinki principles in light of the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025 could foster relations and mutual trust while contributing to a safer future for Europe and its neighbours. Fifty years ago, 35 states signed the Helsinki Final Act contributing to the end of the Cold War and ushering the CSCE under threatening security conditions. In the wake of its anniversary, it now lies in our hands to jointly revive its principles and shape a more cooperative and secure Europe.

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