



Call for Papers – Submission deadline: 15 June 2014

Conference:

The Helsinki Final Act at 40: Reflections & Prescriptions vis-à-vis the OSCE in Eurasia 10-12 Sept. 2014, Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan

Background: The thaw in East-West relations during the Cold War led, among other things, to the signing on 1 August 1975 of the Helsinki Final Act. Initially signed by 35 states including the USSR and the US, the Helsinki Final Act was the cornerstone, which led to the formation of what is today the largest regional security organization in the world with 57 participating States: The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The CSCE/OSCE has demonstrated significant adaptability over the last four decades. However, it has also changed some of the fundamentals of its original institution. The most important characteristic features of the post-Cold War OSCE have been that the balance between different dimensions of activity of the organization has disappeared, and the human dimension with a broad agenda has gained weight over the politico-military and economic-environment dimensions. The aspiration of comprehensive security, in turn, faces difficulties to be realized. In addition, the geographical focus of OSCE activities has shifted to the east and south-east. This means that states of the western Balkans and the former Soviet Union have taken centre stage.

Today, OSCE field activities outside of Vienna, its headquarters, concentrate in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, with the aim of assisting the countries of these regions with their post-communist transformations. This strategy would not have presented much of a problem if the foundations of cooperative security would be solid. However, the perceptions of many OSCE participating States vis-à-vis the organization's geographical and functional foci have differed.

Given nearly a quarter-century past the fall of communism, it is timely that we take a look to Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and their participating States of the OSCE and analyze their security situation under fast changing conditions. Today, the OSCE has gained more relevance with the Ukrainian crisis evolving in front of our eyes. Does this development represent another temporary upswing, a potential failure or a lasting reassessment leading to the conclusion that the OSCE is able to make a relevant contribution to the cooperative management of Eurasian security?

When looking at the OSCE's work in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, some have also pointed at the apparent excessive focus on project-based activity, shortcomings in reaching out to the general population, a lack of criticism of human rights violations, and insufficient regional focus and coordination, all of which may have had the effect of pulling the OSCE away from its intended functions and lofty commitments and objectives of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.

The Conference: Hosted by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, the Conference titled: "The Helsinki Final Act at 40: Reflections & Prescriptions vis-à-vis the OSCE in Eurasia" is part of the annual Central Asia-related international events held by the Academy. The Conference aims to generate informed scholarly discussion on the role of the OSCE, past, current and future, in shaping overall political and security developments in the broad region of Eurasia. Panels will focus on the historic impacts of the Helsinki Final Act, the OSCE as an institution and a process, issues of inter-regional or inter-IO cooperation as well as particular security and human challenges and developments in Central Asia/Eurasia that have relevance to, or beg for the attention of, the OSCE.

Researchers, academics, doctoral students, policy makers and government officials from throughout the OSCE's geographical reach and beyond are encouraged to apply and participate in this Conference. Proposals are accepted both as individual contributions or full panels (consisting of 3-4 speakers).

The keynote speaker and a discussant for this event will be Dr Rick Fawn of the University of St Andrews in the United Kingdom, whose numerous books include, most recently, *International Organizations and Internal Conditionality: Making Norms Matter* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

The Conference will be held at a site by the picturesque Lake Issyk Kul, a few hours' drive outside of Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek. The OSCE Academy will seek publication of selected Conference papers in a special edition of an international peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the 40th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act.

The working language of the Conference is English. Applicants should send their (a) Abstract (150-250 words) and (b) Resume or CV to: conference2014@osce-academy.net **no later than 15 June 2014**. Please also indicate in your application if you request partial or full travel support to participate in the Conference.

Please note that though minimum travel reimbursements for participants with choice papers and financial need may be available, the OSCE Academy on the whole cannot cover international travel costs of all participants to Kyrgyzstan. However, all participants' accommodation and meals at the Conference venue will be covered by the Academy.