OSCE
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Action Plan 2022–2025

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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**Federal Department of
Foreign Affairs FDFA**

Foreign Policy Strategy
2020–2023

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**OSCE
Action Plan
2022–2025**

This Action Plan serves to implement the Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23 🖉 with regard to Switzerland's OSCE policy. It sets out the fields of action, objectives and measures to be put into place by 2025, the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. The Action Plan is situated at the third level of the cascade of key foreign policy documents 🖉. A glossary of key terms is also included in the document.

Foreword

The geopolitical environment in Europe is becoming increasingly polarised. Unresolved conflicts pose significant risks for escalation, as demonstrated once again by the current tensions between Russia and the West. Hybrid means – cyberattacks combined with conventional military operations – are a characteristic of today's conflicts and crises. The foundations of the European peace order are being challenged.

The important role of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as a platform for dialogue is evident in this context. It is true that the organisation has witnessed a reduction of its capacity to act over the past years. All too often, a crisis of confidence between states has stood in the way of a joint approach to finding solutions. However, the current urgent need for increased crisis diplomacy can be an opportunity for the organisation to reconsolidate cooperative security in Europe.

2025 will mark the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act by heads of state and government. The agreement establishes the basis for the OSCE and its cooperative approach to security. Switzerland has been committed to the OSCE from the outset and always provided technical and practical support and funding. It was also twice elected to chair the OSCE in 1996 und 2014. The Swiss parliament is also engaged actively and participates with a parliamentary delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The upcoming anniversary provides a suitable framework for re-strengthening European security and putting it on a future sustainable footing. Current developments make it clear that the relevant discussions should begin now. Switzerland's Action Plan aims to support the organisation on this path. It is only possible to ensure peace and security in Switzerland if peace is also maintained in Europe and beyond.

The DDPS and other departments of the Federal Administration have also provided input into this Action Plan. The Action Plan is based on Switzerland's Security Policy Report and the Federal Council's Foreign Policy Strategy and highlights areas where Switzerland intends to add significant value by 2025. This will involve revitalising the OSCE's proven approach and working with other participating States to adopt a positive agenda for the future. The road to 'Helsinki 2025' is an opportunity for the 57 participating States to bring much-needed fresh impetus to the OSCE and its work in maintaining peace and security in Europe.

I would like to thank all the federal offices involved for their valuable contributions.

President of the Swiss Confederation Ignazio Cassis
Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

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Introduction

The European peace order is not in a good shape. The Federal Council addresses the crisis of European security in both its Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23 (FPS 20–23) ✎ and the 2021 Security Policy Report ✎. In its 2020 Foreign Policy Report ✎ (German, French, Italian only), it explains how the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is also increasingly facing a crisis of confidence and loses its capacity to act.
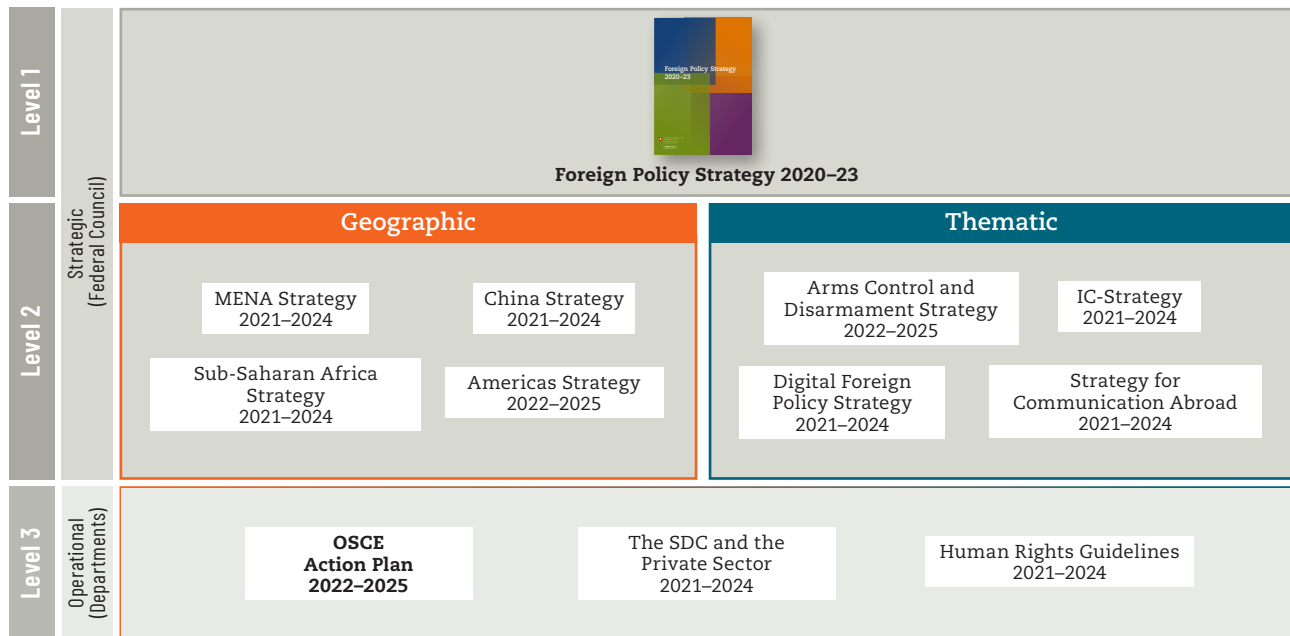
Switzerland has a key interest in maintaining a stable and peaceful environment across Europe and has always attached great importance to the OSCE. One of the reasons for this is that much like Switzerland, the OSCE adopts a comprehensive, cooperative approach to security. Switzerland therefore traditionally plays an active, bridge-building role within the OSCE, currently the world's largest regional security organisation with 57 participating States.

Albania Andorra Armenia Austria Azerbaijan Belarus Belgium Bosnia and Herzegovina Bulgaria Canada Croatia Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland France Georgia Germany Greece Holy See Hungary Iceland Ireland Italy Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Latvia Liechtenstein Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Moldova Monaco Mongolia Montenegro Netherlands North Macedonia Norway Poland Portugal Romania Russian Federation San Marino Serbia Slovakia Slovenia Spain Sweden Switzerland Tajikistan Turkey Turkmenistan Ukraine United Kingdom United States Uzbekistan

Graph 1: The 57 participating States of the OSCE (source: FDFA).

In its 2020 Foreign Policy Report, the Federal Council stated, inter alia, that strengthening the OSCE is one of Switzerland's priorities. As part of its 2021 annual objectives ✐ (German, French, Italian only), it announced that the FDFA would present an Action Plan in this area. This document serves to implement this objective and defines the corresponding fields of action, objectives and measures. The Action Plan is situated at the third level of the cascade of key foreign policy documents ✐. Its time horizon is the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025. The Final Act, which was largely negotiated in Geneva between 1973 and 1975, remains a core document underpinning the European peace order and forms the foundation of the OSCE.

Level 1	Strategic (Federal Council)	**Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23**	
Level 2		Geographic	Thematic
		MENA Strategy 2021–2024 / China Strategy 2021–2024 / Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy 2021–2024 / Americas Strategy 2022–2025	Arms Control and Disarmament Strategy 2022–2025 / IC-Strategy 2021–2024 / Digital Foreign Policy Strategy 2021–2024 / Strategy for Communication Abroad 2021–2024
Level 3	Operational (Departments)	**OSCE Action Plan 2022–2025** / The SDC and the Private Sector 2021–2024 / Human Rights Guidelines 2021–2024	

Graph 2: Cascading foreign policy strategy (source FDFA – illustrative selection of documents).

Switzerland is well positioned to help revitalise the OSCE. This is in no small part due to its independent foreign policy, its widely acknowledged credibility as a promoter of dialogue and peace as well as its long-standing experience within the OSCE, having chaired the organisation on two occasions. As a consensus-based organisation, the OSCE can nevertheless only play an effective role with the backing of its participating States. As such, the successful implementation of the Action Plan relies not only on Switzerland. The OSCE is currently less of a priority to many participating States than it is to Switzerland. Around half of the OSCE's participating States are also members of NATO and/or the EU, two organisations which are also important for European security, but which follow different approaches in certain areas. This diverse range of institutions and interests means that European security and the role played by the OSCE in its maintenance are viewed from very different perspectives.

Despite all this uncertainty – or precisely because of it – Switzerland's Action Plan is intended to send out a strong signal. In parallel to its candidacy for a seat on the United Nations Security Council in 2023/24, on a regional level Switzerland also pursues a path of effective multilateralism, whereby it attaches great importance to coherence between global and regional levels. A strong, effective OSCE is essential for a secure Europe.

1 Background

1.1 European security

In its recent 2021 Security Policy Report, the Federal Council provided a detailed overview of the security situation in Europe, which has become less stable, more complex and increasingly unpredictable. It noted greater levels of polarisation and increasing competition between major and regional powers. Tension has grown specifically between Russia and the West; there is no shared understanding over the approach to maintaining stability in Europe and, in particular, in their common neighbourhood. Nowadays, incidents can quickly lead to new conflicts. There has been an increased tendency to deploy "hybrid" warfare tactics that stop short of armed conflict, such as cyberattacks, influence operations, and disinformation campaigns. However, there has also been an increase in the use of conventional warfare, as was recently the case in Nagorno Karabakh. At the same time, threats such as terrorism and violent extremism have not disappeared. Climate change is leading to natural disasters occurring more frequently and on a more devastating scale. The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting global crisis have further accentuated these trends. Another catalyst for the security challenges in Europe is the rapid technological change and

the accompanying change in the spectrum of conflict and conflict management.

The origins of the European security crisis go back two decades. Hopes in the 1990s that the OSCE would help usher in an era of pan-European peacebuilding have to a large extent remained unfulfilled. The growing estrangement between Russia and the West, sub-regional conflicts and increasingly tangible differences in values are causing rifts, also within the OSCE. Russia's annexation of Crimea, the outbreak of the conflict in eastern Ukraine in 2014 and the questioning of the very foundations of the European peace order have exacerbated the security crisis in Europe and resulted in a further breakdown in trust.
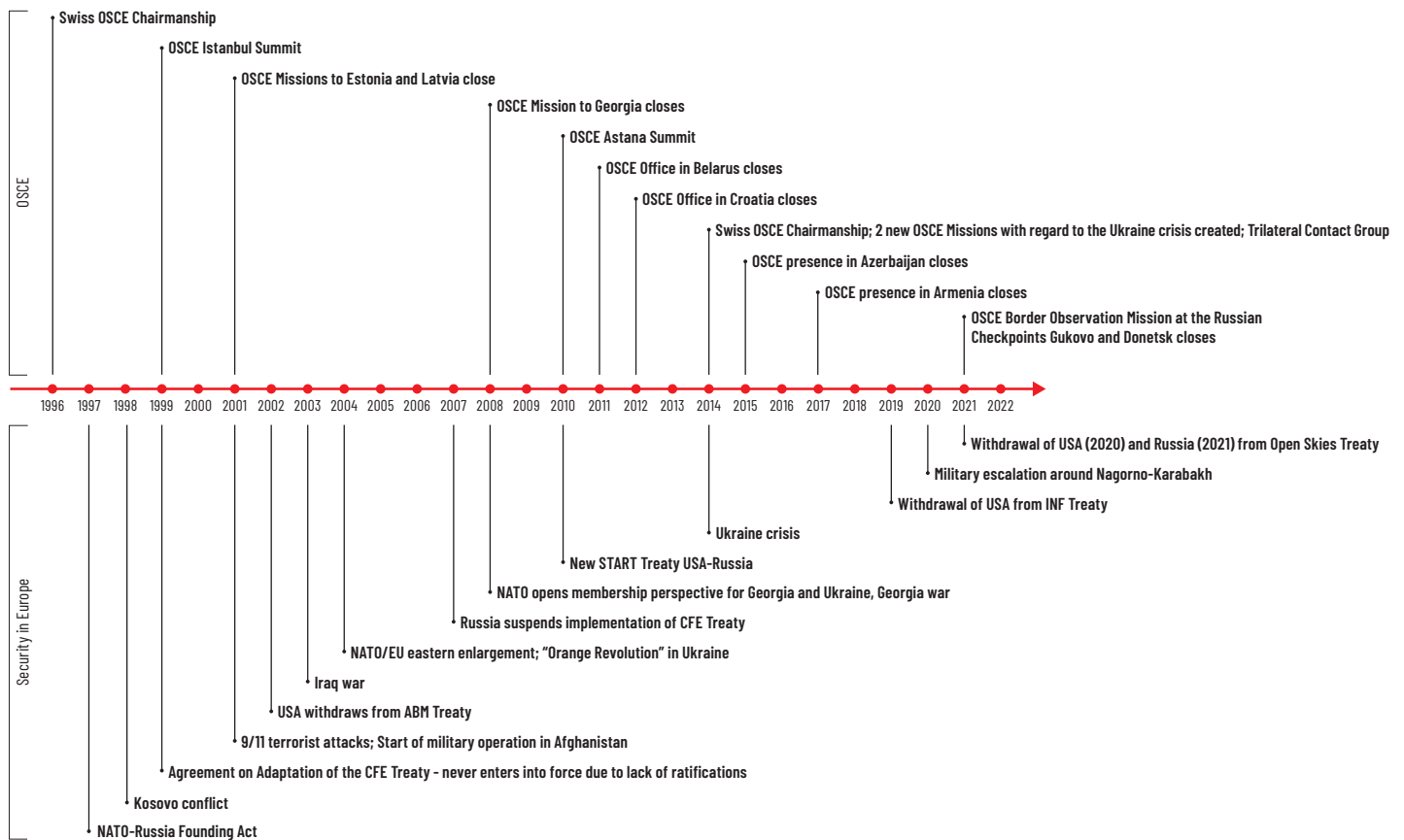
Graph 3: The OSCE and European Security since 1996. (Source: FDFA).

This has led to a general unwillingness to adopt transparency measures. Conventional arms control has eroded in Europe, which has significantly weakened the continent's security architecture. The entrenched divide between Russia, on the one side, and NATO and the EU, on the other, has shaped the security environment in Europe – and therefore also towards Switzerland. In recent years, there has been considerable disagreement in the OSCE area regarding compliance with fundamental democratic principles and the upholding of human rights. Certain OSCE participating States have severely curtailed fundamental rights, leading to domestic political tensions and political shifts at international level.

1.2 The OSCE

In recent years, the OSCE has experienced a number of divergent trends: On the one hand, in the context of the crisis in and around Ukraine, participating States have become more aware of the significance of the organisation. Under Switzerland's chairmanship in 2014 the OSCE became the most important actor in international crisis management. Participating States agreed to launch new field missions for the first time in ten years – the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) and the Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk (BOM). On the other hand, the OSCE has also been increasingly affected by growing international polarisation and sub-regional conflicts. Over the last two years, there have been growing signs of a crisis within the organisation. In autumn 2021, for example, it was unable to extend the above-mentioned BOM mission due to a lack of consensus among participating States.

Decisions at the OSCE must be taken by consensus. This has fuelled a trend towards a blockade of the organisation. An example of this is its annual budget, which is often only approved following a lengthy delay. Overall, very few landmark decisions have been taken in recent years. At the same time, there is a need for dialogue between West and East to enable compromises and to find, on the basis of an inclusive process, common solutions to the crisis of European security. The OSCE can be a suitable framework for this, as all parties involved sit at the same table. But for this to happen, the basic problem must also be addressed: New political will must be created to implement the principles agreed in 1975 in the Helsinki Final Act for regulating relations between the participating States.

Membership	57 participating States from the northern hemisphere, 11 partner states in Asia and the Mediterranean region.
Characteristics	World's largest regional security organisation, with a focus on political dialogue and the implementation of politically binding obligations in three 'dimensions': the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimension. Consensus principle, comprehensive and inclusive approach to security, no tools for sanctioning.
Total budget in 2020	EUR 270.7 million / Swiss contribution: EUR 8 million (2.95%).
Headcount in 2020	3,591 (60% local employees)
Fundamental documents	Helsinki Final Act (1975) &, Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990) &, as well as a range of further documents adopted in 1992 &, 1994 &, 1996 &, 1999 & and 2010 & at the Summits of Heads of State and Government.
Leadership	Political: annually rotating chairpersonship & by a participating State. Institutional: Secretary General and heads of independent institutions and field missions.
Dialogue forums (quorate)	Summits & (irregular, most recently 2010), Ministerial Council & (annual), Permanent Council & (weekly), Forum for Security Co-operation & (weekly).
Central institutions	Secretariat, Vienna & (approx. 400 employees); Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Warsaw & (approx. 150 employees), High Commissioner on National Minorities, The Hague & (approx. 35 employees), Representative on Freedom of the Media, Vienna & (approx. 15 employees).
Field missions	15 field missions with approx. 2,950 employees in Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, Central Asia and the South Caucasus & for the purpose of implementing OSCE commitments locally, e.g. the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine &.
Mandates	The OSCE Chair appoints Chairperson-in-Office representatives &, who play a key role in maintaining dialogues aimed at conflict prevention, for example in Ukraine, Georgia and Transdniestria.

Graph 4: Key information on the OSCE.

1.3 Switzerland's role

Since the beginnings of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), the predecessor to the OSCE, in the early 1970s, Switzerland's role in this multilateral process has been characterised by two features: firstly, Switzerland has always acted as a bridge-builder, in line with its tradition of providing good offices and promoting dialogue. During the Cold War, in its capacity as a neutral state, it was able to help negotiate package deals between the blocs, which took into account the interests of all parties. In recent years as well, Switzerland has often played a leading role in developing compromises and has been able to initiate dialogue and negotiations, for example during the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Secondly, Switzerland has always stood up for its liberal values in the OSCE. It played a significant role in ensuring that human rights were recognised as a feature of Europe's security regime in the Helsinki Final Act. Switzerland also places great emphasis on the promotion of democracy and protection of minorities.

Both in its role as a bridge-builder and in promoting its values, Switzerland often acts in partnership with other countries within the OSCE. In the 1970s and 1980s, it would frequently coordinate with other neutral and non-aligned states. Since then, joint actions taken have been based less

on Switzerland's neutrality rather than on a convergence of interests and values of those parties involved. Given the OSCE's consensus-driven approach to decision-making, it is important to ensure the broadest possible support in today's challenging environment.

Switzerland's profile in this respect is useful across various levels within the OSCE and has resulted in it taking on a wide range of roles. There are numerous examples of this:

– At a **political** level (usually foreign ministers), Switzerland consistently contributes ideas and enters into negotiations with the aim of resolving deadlocks and arriving at compromises. This was especially the case in both 1996 and 2014, years when it chaired the OSCE and hat to engage in a wide range of activities to provide political leadership. At the annual meetings of the Ministerial Council, Switzerland argues in favour of the OSCE delivering results on the ground and adopting substantive targets. Switzerland also takes a clear position when OSCE principles are being breached.

– At a **diplomatic** level, both in Vienna and in capitals of participating States, Switzerland advocates for OSCE-related issues, also by allowing for sufficient scope in its bilateral consultations with OSCE participating States. It frequently
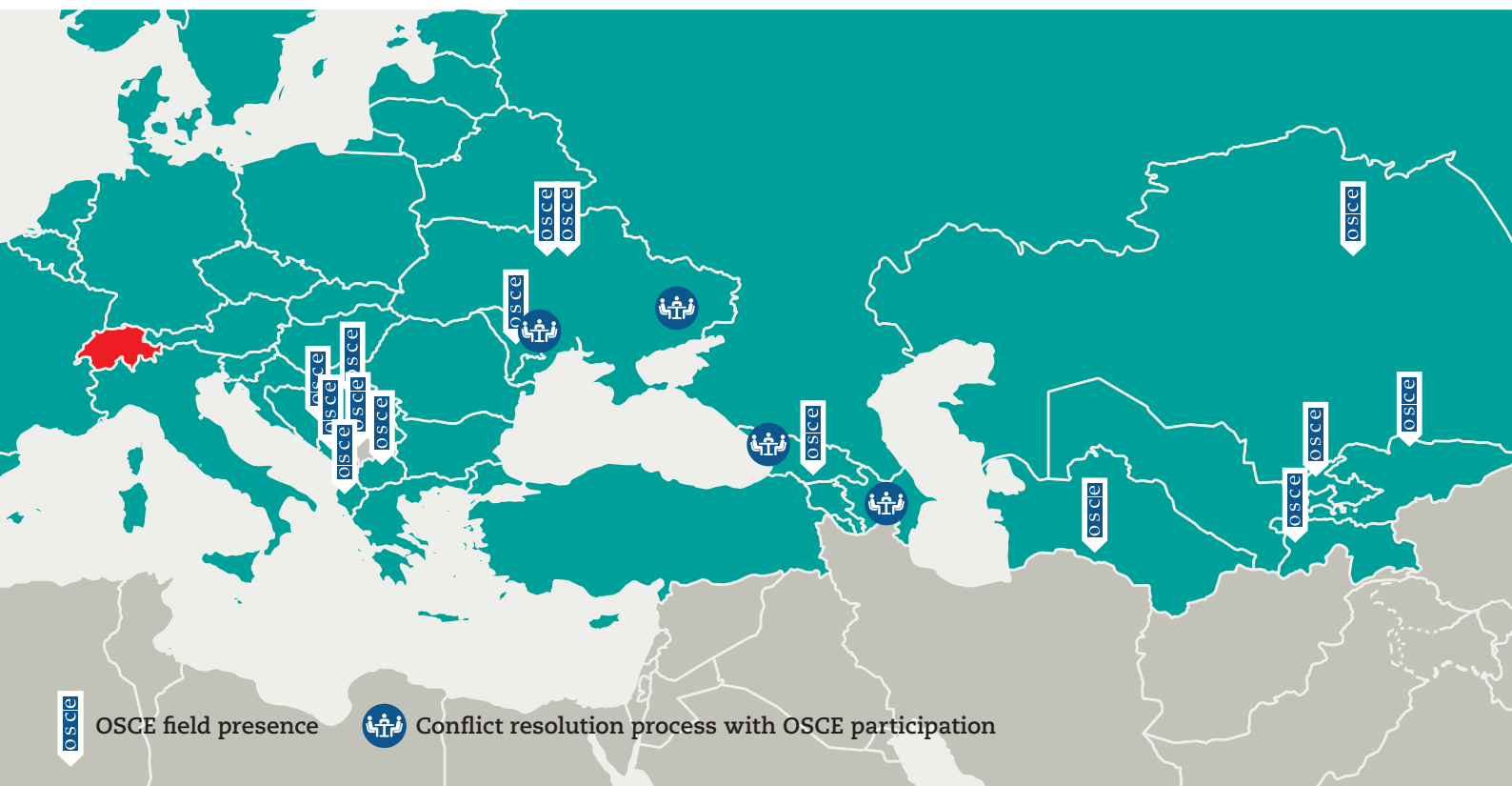
Graph 5: OSCE field presences and conflict resolution processes with OSCE participation, as of October 2021 (source: FDFA).

leads the way in promoting dialogue and building trust. For example, Switzerland initiated the [Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project](#) ⬀ at the end of 2014, together with Germany and Serbia.

– At an **institutional** level, Switzerland strengthens the OSCE's ability to take action, for example by specifically financing certain projects and seconding staff to field operations and key institutions. Between 2017 and 2020, Thomas Greminger has been Secretary General of the OSCE, where he strived to reform the organisation with his 'Fit for Purpose' agenda.

– At the level of **political mandates,** Switzerland frequently offers its expertise to help resolve specific problems. In recent years, numerous high-ranking Swiss diplomats and experts have performed vital crisis-management roles in the conflicts in eastern Ukraine and Georgia.

Switzerland is well placed to continue providing the organisation with effective support in the years to come. It is a highly credible actor within the OSCE, where it has proven itself to be an impartial and committed partner. There are good reasons that Switzerland has been elected twice to chair the OSCE (1996 and 2014), becoming the first country to take this responsibility for a second time. Thanks to its independent foreign policy, Switzerland has greater scope for action than many other countries. As such, it can and must work together with like-minded countries to ensure that the OSCE remains the reference organisation for preventing and resolving conflicts in Europe.

2 Security and trust in Europe

The Federal Constitution states in Art. 2 par. a: "The Swiss Confederation shall protect the liberty and rights of the people and safeguard the independence and security of the country." As the security of Switzerland is only possible in a peaceful continent, Switzerland is engaged with its foreign policy for security and trust in Europe.

Promoting peace and security through cooperation and dialogue between participating States is one of the OSCE's core missions. Its work is characterised by a 'cooperative security' approach, which sets it apart from other international organisations which rely on alliances, for example, to ensure collective security. The OSCE is the only regional security organisation that brings together East and West. It includes Russia and the United States on an equal footing, making it the natural forum for dialogue and confidence-building.

The year 2025 will mark the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. From Switzerland's perspective, this anniversary should be seen as a landmark point in time for the OSCE to regain its effectiveness, to restore a certain level of trust between participating States and thus to improve European security as a whole. This will involve strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act, while safeguarding the organisation's well-established acquis. The OSCE must also remain committed to its comprehensive understanding of security and be able to implement its obligations in the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimensions. It must adopt a forward-looking approach and also be able to develop responses to the new challenges facing European security.

The situation is challenging, not least because the conflicts in the OSCE region are sowing political discord and making dialogue more difficult between participating States. It is therefore important to set out this Action Plan to span the years until 2025 and to structure Switzerland's activities during this period in line with the overarching objective of "an effective OSCE for greater security and trust in Europe".

3   Fields of action

This Action Plan focuses on the following two fields of action, each of which have corresponding targets and measures:

1. **Revitalisation of previous OSCE achievements:**
   The organisation's current acquis is to be maintained, strengthened where possible, and updated as necessary. The upcoming fifty-year anniversary of the organisation represents an especially important landmark for this field of action.

2. **A positive future agenda in view of 2025:**
   Developing a common agenda, with a view to the new challenges and opportunities for European security, should help to promote trust between the participating states and thus reinforce the foundations of the European security regime.

The Action Plan is therefore based on proven approaches, but will also tap into new ideas. Upholding and strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE will be of great importance.

3.1   Revitalisation of OSCE achievements

OBJECTIVE 1
ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN DIALOGUE IN VIEW OF HELSINKI 2025

Against the backdrop of the worsening crisis of the European peace order, inclusive dialogue within the framework of the OSCE becomes all the more important. The 50th anniversary of the negotiations on the Helsinki Final Act of 1973–75 should provide additional political impetus to rebuild consensus on cooperation between participating States on the basis of the OSCE principles and rules. This will require an understanding between all of the actors involved and, in particular, between Russia and the West. Switzerland will aim to provide positive momentum to ensure that this historic opportunity is not lost.

Measures		Responsible[1]
1. a	Switzerland is promoting a dialogue process and the idea of an anniversary summit to consolidate the benchmarks of Helsinki 50+ and is involved in its design. It is building bridges with the aim of successfully shaping this process.	FDFA EURA, PHRD, ISD
1. b	Switzerland participates in the adoption of a declaration for cooperative security affirming the key aspects of European security. It supports efforts towards an 'agreement on a well-functioning OSCE'.	FDFA EURA, ISD, PHRD; DDPS
1. c	Switzerland is working together with other states – in particular with previous OSCE chairs – to promote the OSCE's budgetary reforms and to secure an appropriate budget for the organisation.	FDFA EURA

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1   The responsible organisational units (OUs) at the headquarters are listed. The Vienna mission (VM) is involved in implementing all measures. The OUs underlined have overall responsibility; for further explanations, please refer to section 4 and the list of abbreviations.

OBJECTIVE 2
STRENGTHENING ARMS CONTROL AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES

Conventional arms control and promoting confidence and security-building measures (CSBM) represent a key element of cooperative security in Europe. The corresponding multilateral arms control instruments have come under increased pressure in recent years. The aim is now to maintain, revitalise and, where possible, develop them in line with the arms control and disarmament strategy 2022–25.

The Vienna Document 2011 is the most important instrument for military confidence-building in the OSCE and it has not yet been possible to adapt it to the current military realities and technological developments. There is therefore less transparency over the capabilities and potential of armed forces. As long as discussions over the modernisation of the document remain blocked, Switzerland intends – as an interim measure – to act as a mediator with the aim of upholding the acquis and fully implementing the applicable provisions. It will also promote awareness of and strengthen compliance with the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, such as democratic control of armed and security forces. In particular, it will do so by means of specific projects and studies and by helping finance outreach activities and resolutions within the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE.

Measures		Responsible
2. a	Switzerland will involve experts in the security dialogue of the Forum for Security Co-operation so as to give new impetus. With regard to the modernisation of the Vienna Document, it will contribute 'food for thought' papers with a focus on conventional arms control.	FDFA ISD, EURA; DDPS
2. b	Switzerland participates in discussions about relaunching conventional arms control within the scope of the Structured Dialogue in Vienna and the group of like-minded countries in the Berlin format 🔗.	FDFA ISD, EURA; DDPS
2. c	With regard to small arms[2] and conventional ammunition, Switzerland, as a leader in negotiations and implementation, is committed to improving the prevention of proliferation and of accidents involving small arms and conventional ammunition and to strengthening assistance mechanisms for international cooperation.	FDFA PHRD, ISD, EURA; SECO; DDPS

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2   For the sake of simplicity, this Action Plan uses the term „small arms" instead of „small arms and light weapons". See Glossary.

OBJECTIVE 3
STRENGTHENING CAPABILITIES IN THE CONFLICT CYCLE

The OSCE has instruments at its disposal to take action in the various phases of the conflict cycle – early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. For this purpose, the organisation can rely on its network of field presences as well as the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) within the OSCE Secretariat. Its institutional capabilities are to be upheld and strengthened where possible. In this respect, Switzerland focuses on conflict resolution processes, promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda as well as on human rights and water diplomacy as integral components in preventing and resolving conflicts. It also explores options for posting staff to assist in each of these areas.

Support for conflict resolution processes

The OSCE is in charge of a number of conflict-related dialogue processes. These include the Trilateral Contact Group (for eastern Ukraine), the Minsk Group for Nagorno-Karabakh, the Geneva International Discussions following the conflict in Georgia in 2008 and the Transdniestrian Settlement Process. It is important that the OSCE processes are sustained and can focus on developing solutions.

Measures		Responsible
3. a	Switzerland continues to offer its services as a host of meetings and negotiations taking place as part of these processes.	FDFA EURA, PHRD, ISD; DDPS
3. b	It supports the OSCE in building up its mediation capacity.	FDFA PHRD, EURA
3. c	It puts forward candidates from its staff for OSCE roles in the dialogue processes.	FDFA EURA, PHRD, ISD

Promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda within the OSCE

Peace processes that address the concerns of all population groups lead to a more stable and lasting peace. This is the basis of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, which recognises the role played by women in preventing and resolving conflicts. One of the first successful measures was to put together an OSCE toolkit identifying best practices to advance the inclusion of women in peace processes; Switzerland intends to build on this success.

Measures		Responsible
3. d	Switzerland is seeking to regionalise the agenda set out in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 within the OSCE and via the OSCE structures, also through the OSCE field presences.	FDFA PHRD, EURA, ISD; DDPS

Respect for human rights is a key component of conflict prevention

Respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms is an important factor in preventing conflicts and maintaining peace. Switzerland has been advocating an increased focus on respect for human rights in discussions on security policy within the UN and intends to ensure that the OSCE gives greater prominence to this issue in future.

Measures		Responsible
3. e	Switzerland, with financial support and expertise, promotes the effectiveness of the OSCE's independent institutions responsible for upholding human rights.	FDFA PHRD, EURA
3. f	Switzerland intends to strengthen the OSCE election observation missions.	FDFA PHRD, EURA
3. g	Switzerland promotes its thematic priorities in accordance with the FDFA Guidelines on Human Rights 2021–24 ⇗ (minorities, death penalty, torture, freedom of expression) in the responsible OSCE bodies.	FDFA PHRD, EURA

Strengthening of water diplomacy (Blue Peace) as a conflict prevention tool

In the OSCE area, there are more than 150 river and lake basins that are jointly used by two or more countries. This can lead to tensions, but in line with the approach adopted by Blue Peace, it can also promote cooperation. Water – and managing it on a cooperative basis – is a key factor for peace in the region. Given its wealth of experience in water diplomacy, Switzerland intends to consolidate this approach within the OSCE.

Measures		Responsible
3. h	Switzerland strengthens the link between the knowledge of its Blue Peace programme and the OSCE's activities.	FDFA SDC, EURA, PHRD
3. i	Switzerland promotes a participatory approach in the area of water diplomacy and governance. In particular, the focus is on a greater involvement of young people and women, two groups which are still under-represented. New technologies (f.ex. digital solutions and mobile applications), are to be promoted in the OSCE water diplomacy projects.	FDFA SDC, EURA, PHRD

3.2 A positive future agenda in view of 2025

OBJECTIVE 4
DIGITALISATION AND SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

New technologies that depend mainly on digitalisation offer new opportunities for multilateral cooperation, but they also pose social and security-related challenges, such as cybersecurity, the protection of fundamental rights in the digital space, artificial intelligence, digital monitoring and influence operations. With its comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE is well positioned to strengthen cooperation between countries on these issues and to develop a shared vision of the opportunities and risks posed by digitalisation.

Switzerland intends to make a positive contribution towards anchoring the issue of digitalisation in the OSCE. In its Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23 ⚲, the Federal Council defined digitalisation as one of its thematic priorities for the first time. The Digital Foreign Policy Strategy 2021–24 ⚲ and the development of instruments within the FDFA to promote science diplomacy have helped raise the profile of Switzerland's foreign policy in this area. In the areas of education, research and innovation (ERI), Switzerland is a competitive, high-quality and internationally recognised location. Key factors are the presence of internationally active ERI actors and the availability of excellent framework conditions and resources. As a country that combines the ability to innovate and a culture of dialogue, Switzerland is well placed to make a credible contribution to a responsible, democratic and secure digital world, also within the framework of the OSCE.

Digitalisation in all dimensions of the OSCE

A number of initiatives in the area of digitalisation have already been launched within the scope of the OSCE. These must now be developed further and enshrined at a political level across the three dimensions, with further specific projects added where appropriate. Switzerland will continue to be actively involved in the work carried out in the various OSCE forums, for example by submitting written contributions or by providing experts on topics related to digitalisation.

Measures		Responsible
4. a	As part of the confidence-building measures aimed at reducing the risks of conflict arising from the use of ICT, Switzerland refines its profile within the OSCE. It supports the implementation of the conflict prevention measures already adopted and makes additional proposals as necessary. It also draws on the findings from the UN processes on cyber security.	FDFA ISD, EURA, PHRD; DDPS
4. b	Switzerland fosters discussions on the impact of the use of artificial intelligence in cyberattacks.	FDFA ISD, EURA; DDPS
4. c	Switzerland supports measures in the area of 'smart cities' in its digital component. The initiative aims to set up a network for communication between cities within the OSCE.	FDFA PSD, EURA, DIGI
4. d	Switzerland promotes the Spotlight on AI and Freedom of Expression (SAIFE) initiative, which investigates the impact of artificial intelligence, deepfakes and fake news on journalism and the work of the media.	FDFA ISD, PHRD, DIGI, EURA

Science diplomacy for a dialogue on security and environment

Climate change is impacting all OSCE participating States and acts as a threat multiplier. The organisation must address this issue more vigorously than has previously been the case. By contributing scientific expertise on climate issues to OSCE debates (science in diplomacy), it is possible to increase political awareness of the significant security challenges posed by climate change. Switzerland can make good use of its expertise in mediation and conflict management to work with partner countries on expanding cooperation in the OSCE at the intersection of environmental issues and conflict prevention.

Measures		Responsible
4. e	Geneva platforms and initiatives such as the Geneva Science Policy Interface are being harnessed for OSCE purposes (expert contributions and dialogues).	FDFA PSD, DIGI, EURA, SDC, PHRD
4. f	With the foundation GESDA "Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator", Switzerland is facilitating the anticipation of technological opportunities and challenges also within the OSCE, for the benefit of all persons, in order to avoid conflicts and to strengthen resilience, in particular for the prevention of natural disasters.	FDFA PSD, DIGI, EURA, SDC, PHRD; DDPS

OBJECTIVE 5
CONFIDENCE-BUILDING THROUGH ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY

Promoting economic connectivity within the OSCE can be an effective confidence-building approach. Such measures should increasingly be seen as part of a comprehensive security approach and be implemented accordingly. Between 2014 and 2017, while each chairing the OSCE, Switzerland, Austria and Germany together developed a corresponding agenda, which can be built upon today. Here it is possible to tap into potentially promising and specific opportunities for cooperation, for example in the areas of the green economy, increased resource efficiency, promoting sustainable economic growth, fighting corruption, and good governance.

Measures		Zuständig
5. a	Switzerland forges alliances in order to promote new initiatives in the area of economic connectivity in the OSCE. It takes into account the 2030 Agenda.	FDFA PSD, SCD, EURA; EAER SECO
5. b	It submits proposals to strengthen and incorporate good governance standards into connectivity projects and promotes the cooperation with the private sector where relevant.	FDFA SCD, PSD, EURA; EAER SECO
5. c	Switzerland (together with the DCAF) provides the OSCE with expertise in fighting corruption in the security sector.	FDFA PSD, EURA, PHRD; EAER SECO

OBJECTIVE 6
OVERCOMING DEADLOCKS THROUGH INNOVATION

Since the Ukraine crisis (2014), there has been an increase in political deadlocks within the OSCE, which can have a significant negative impact on the effectiveness of the organisation. Further conflicts and crises (e.g. in Nagorno-Karabakh or Belarus) have accentuated this trend in recent years. Tensions between participating States are frequently evident in discussions at the OSCE. Forums for discussion and negotiation, such as the Permanent Council or the Forum for Security Co-operation, are today used less for substantive debate and developing appropriate solutions than they are for "megaphone diplomacy" and sterile exchanges of statements. This runs counter to the spirit of dialogue, which is the OSCE trademark. Switzerland intends to use its independent, bridge-building foreign policy to help counteract this negative trend.

Initiatives for innovative forms of dialogue

The aim is to promote and improve dialogue between the 57 participating States by using informal means. Informal consultations or expert contributions can pave the way for formal debate. The aim is to overcome the formalistic logic. Digital diplomacy also presents new opportunities for informal communication.

Measures		Responsible
6. a	Switzerland submits proposals aimed at strengthening informal discussions with regard to the work of the OSCE Permanent Council. It assesses whether informal working groups should be established with the aim of establishing a positive agenda.	FDFA EURA, PHRD, ISD
6. b	Switzerland launches initiatives aimed at making better use of the potential for dialogue between OSCE, think tanks and the Geneva centres (in particular the GCSP, DCAF). Due consideration is to be given to the particular challenges of the 'states in between', i.e. the countries in the common neighbourhood of the EU/NATO and Russia.	FDFA EURA, ISD, PHRD; DDPS

Switzerland's good offices

In addition to innovative digital approaches, Switzerland's traditional good offices also provide opportunities to promote dialogue in the OSCE and develop peaceful solutions. In the past, Switzerland has been able to offer its good offices on numerous occasions, for example in 2014 when it chaired the organisation. It is prepared to continue offering its good offices to the OSCE in future as specific needs arise.

Measures		Responsible
6. c	Switzerland provides the OSCE and the participating States with its expertise in the area of good offices. In particular, the Swiss Delegation in Vienna provides good offices where they can add value and promote dialogue.	FDFA EURA, PHRD, ISD
6. d	Switzerland promotes cooperation with the country chairing the OSCE and provides the best possible support when required.	FDFA EURA, PHRD, ISD; DDPS
6. e	Switzerland offers its services as a host country for meetings and conferences.	FDFA EURA, PHRD, ISD; DDPS

4 Implementation and reporting

In presenting this Action Plan, Switzerland is defining the fields of action, objectives and measures to be put into place by 2025. To be able to implement these, coherent and coordinated action is required as well as the best possible utilization of existing resources. Various offices in the Federal Administration are working on OSCE-related issues and activities. The responsibilities for the areas set out in this Action Plan are set out in the section above alongside each measure.

The Eurasia Division of the FDFA's State Secretariat is tasked with the coordination of the OSCE file. Furthermore, the Eurasia Division, the International Security Division as well as the Peace and Human Rights Division take responsibilities within their respective areas of competence. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Prosperity and Sustainability Division, the Digitalisation Division, and the Special representative for science diplomacy also play a role according to their respective tasks.

In addition to the FDFA, the DDPS is strongly involved in formulating and implementing Switzerland's OSCE policy, in particular where politico-military aspects are concerned. As a result of the OSCE's comprehensive security approach, other federal departments and offices are involved, for example SECO in the EAER. The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the OSCE in Vienna acts as the main consultation and implementation partner for the Federal Departments.

An **OSCE interdepartmental working group (IDWG**) ensures that information is communicated and activities are coordinated across the Federal Administration *(Whole-of-Government-Approach)*. This IDWG will meet every six months to discuss progress in implementing the various objectives set out in the Action Plan and to report on progress to all the Federal offices involved annually.

Various actors outside the Federal Administration will also play important roles. A whole-of-Switzerland approach has been traditionally adopted with regard to the OSCE and this is set to continue in future. First and foremost, this involves Parliament. The OSCE has a Parliamentary Assembly, at which the Swiss delegation makes key contributions, thus underlining the importance of parliamentary foreign policy. The whole-of-Switzerland approach also encompasses the Geneva centres, think tanks, such as the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich and swisspeace, as well as a number of NGOs.

Finally, it is essential to coordinate and cooperate with other OSCE participating States and to liaise directly with OSCE functionaries in order to give the organisation the momentum it requires. The OSCE can only succeed if everyone plays their part. This is one of its weaknesses, but also its strength. A successful implementation of this Action Plan does not depend on Switzerland alone, but with it Switzerland aims to strengthen the OSCE, the collective security and thus Switzerland's security.

Annex 1: List of abbreviations

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty
BOM	OSCE Border Observation Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CPC	OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre
CSBM	Confidence and Security-Building Measures
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport
DIGI	Digitalisation Division
EAER	Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research
EU	European Union
EURA	Eurasia Division within the FDFA
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FPS	Foreign Policy Strategy
GCSP	Geneva Centre for Security Policy
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICT	Information and communications technologies
IDWG	Interdepartmental working group
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
ISD	International Security Division within the FDFA
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
New START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (nuclear weapon delivery systems)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PHRD	Peace and Human Rights Division within the FDFA
PSD	Prosperity and Sustainability Division within the FDFA
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation within the FDFA
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SMM	OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
VM	Permanent Mission of Switzerland Mission to the OSCE, to the United Nations and to the other international organisations in Vienna

Annex 2: Glossary ⚲↬

2030 Agenda: the 17 Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda provide a global frame of reference for three inextricably linked issues: society, the economy and the environment. Switzerland recognises the 2030 Agenda as an important guiding framework. Although it is not legally binding, it provides a mechanism for setting objectives and forming opinions in both domestic and foreign policy.

Blue Peace: the Blue Peace initiative supports water cooperation across borders, sectors and generations with the aim of fostering peace, stability and sustainable development. This can take the form of shared institutions and legal frameworks, bringing countries together in a commitment to resolve differences peacefully – and to use their shared water as a basis for wider economic and diplomatic cooperation. Blue Peace transforms competition for limited freshwater resources into cooperation fostering more peaceful, coherent and sustainable societies.

Civil society: this comprises the parts of society that are distinct from the government and private sector. It is made up of groups who have common interests, goals or values. These include NGOs, associations and foundations, citizen groups, religious organisations, political parties, professional associations, unions, social movements and interest groups.

Confidence-building measures: measures taken in political, economic or social areas to increase transparency and confidence between parties in order prevent the outbreak or escalation of conflicts. These may include joint activities to address a certain problem, establishing reliable communication channels or the institutionalisation of contacts. The participating States have agreed on 16 confidence-building measures with regard to cyberspace. The term 'confidence and security-building measures' is used in a military context.

Confidence and security-building measures in Europe: the term stems from the Helsinki Final Act, which sets out the "need to contribute to reducing the dangers of armed conflict and of misunderstanding or miscalculation of military activities." The key document covering this issue is the Vienna Document.

Conflict cycle: in the OSCE, this term was coined as part of the milestone 2011 Ministerial Council Decision about the elements of the conflict cycle. The Decision focused on the four key areas within the conflict cycle: early warning, early action, dialogue facilitation and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Conventional arms control in Europe: according to the 'Framework for Arms Control' set out in the Lisbon Document (adopted at the OSCE summit in December 1996), arms control, including disarmament and confidence and security-building, is integral to the OSCE's comprehensive and cooperative concept of security. The framework document sets out four key principles for future negotiations: sufficiency, transparency through information exchange, verification and limitations on forces. The following treaties are considered as the three pillars for conventional arms control in Europe: the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Vienna Document.

Cooperative security: a security framework that relies on inclusion and dialogue and thus differs from collective security systems (e.g. coercive measures) and collective defence (alliances, deterrence). The term is used specifically in connection with the OSCE. Further characteristics of cooperative security within the framework of the OSCE include the principle of unanimity and thus the sovereign equality of states, the political (and not legal) nature of obligations, the promotion of security by cooperating on a wide range of issues and the reliance on confidence and security-building measures.

Cyberattack: intentional unauthorised act committed by a person or group in cyberspace in order to compromise the integrity, confidentiality or availability of information and data; depending on the type of attack, this may also have physical effects.

Digitalisation: digitalisation involves the integration of digital technologies in society, government and business. It covers a wide range of digital applications, including new communication technologies, robotics, cloud computing, big data analytics, artificial intelligence and the internet of things.

Economic connectivity: the second OSCE dimension, the economic and environmental dimension, primarily seeks to promote good economic framework conditions for security and stability as well as connectivity among the participating States. This approach to connecting international politics and business is carried by the conviction that lasting peace and stability will never be achieved in the OSCE region unless economic ties are strengthened across the board.

Europe's security architecture: a globally unique framework of regional organisations: the EU, NATO, OSCE and European Council. This has given rise to a security regime encompassing all of Europe, with its origins in the Helsinki Process during the Cold War. In addition to the OSCE, its most important pillars include the 1997 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia as well as the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act.

Facilitation and mediation: a third party who mediates between parties to a conflict is known as a facilitator or mediator. A facilitator is a third party who supports, facilitates and promotes contact between parties to a conflict without substantively contributing to the negotiations. As in mediation, a facilitator is freely chosen by the parties to a conflict and allows them to meet at a suitable location, discuss possible ways of resolving the conflict, conduct negotiations and sign an agreement. A mediator is a third party who also substantively supports the negotiating parties in finding solutions, without, however, imposing them. Facilitation and mediation are part of Switzerland's good offices.

Geneva International Discussions (GIDs): the GIDs are talks to address the consequences of the 2008 conflict in Georgia. They were launched in October 2008 in Geneva and are jointly led by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), with representatives from Georgia, Russia, the US and the disputed territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Good offices: this is an umbrella term to describe the efforts of a third party to peacefully settle a conflict between two or more states. Switzerland's good offices consist of three areas: protecting power mandates (see 'Protecting power'), Switzerland as host state for peace negotiations, and Switzerland as mediator and facilitator and as supporter of mediation and negotiation processes (see 'Facilitation and mediation'). Good offices range from technical and organisational support (e.g. providing a conference venue) to mediation services and participation in international peace processes.

Good governance: democratic, efficient and effective management of a country's affairs for the benefit of all citizens. This includes political decision-making in transparent, participative processes; clearly allocated responsibilities; effective public services; an accessible, professional, independent legal system based on the rule of law and political control through a critical public.

Helsinki Final Act: on 1 August 1975, representatives of 35 Western and Eastern bloc countries signed the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki. Founded as a multinational forum for dialogue and negotiations between East and West, it aims to help launch joint projects in the areas of culture, science, economics and disarmament and contribute towards security and respect for human rights. In the Final Act, the participating States formulated ten principles to govern their relations. These include sovereign equality and respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty, refraining from the threat or use of force and the inviolability of frontiers. The Act provided an innovative, broad definition of security: in addition to traditional politico-military aspects, it also took into account economic, environmental and human rights aspects.

Human rights: inherent and inalienable rights to which all people are entitled, without distinction, by virtue of their being human. They are crucial to the protection of physical and psychological integrity and human dignity, and are an important foundation for the development of every individual. They are the basis of the peaceful coexistence of nations. They are guarantors of a society based on the obligation to respect the rights of the individual. They apply both in international relations and domestic policy, but also at the place of residence of every individual. Human rights are universal, indivisible and closely interrelated. Every state is obliged to respect, protect and implement human rights.

International humanitarian law: governs the conduct of war and protects the civilian population and people who are no longer taking part in hostilities. It applies in all international and non-international armed conflicts, regardless of the legitimacy or cause of the use of force.

International organisations: long-term alliances formed by at least two countries. They are entrusted with the independent performance of their own tasks and therefore have at least one body through which they act. They are generally based on a multilateral founding treaty (also called statutes or charters) which sets out the organisation's mandates and bodies.

International Geneva: Geneva forms the heart of the multilateral system and is the location of the UN's European headquarters. Thirty-eight international organisations, programmes and funds, as well as 177 states and 750 NGOs are represented there. International Geneva provides some 45,000 jobs and contributes more than 11% to the GDP of the canton (1% of Swiss GDP). Around 3,300 international conferences are held in Geneva every year, the main themes of which are: 1) peace, security, disarmament; 2) humanitarian aid and international humanitarian law, human rights, migration; 3) labour, economy, trade, science, telecommunications; 4) health; 5) the environment and sustainable development.

International law: results from interactions between states and governs how they coexist. It underpins peace and security and aims to ensure the protection and well-being of persons. International law comprises highly different areas, such as the prohibition of the use of force, human rights, protection of individuals during wars and conflicts (see also 'International humanitarian law'), prevention and prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, transnational organised crime and terrorism. It also governs other areas, such as the environment, trade, development, telecommunications and transport. On account of the sovereignty of states, international law only applies for each state insofar as it has agreed to adopt certain international obligations. This excludes binding international law, which comprises basic standards that no state may override, such as the prohibition of genocide.

Minsk Group (for Nagorno-Karabakh): since 1992, the Minsk Group, which is led by co-chairs from the United States, France and the Russian Federation as well as the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, has discussed approaches to resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Multilateralism: when issues of public interest are discussed and negotiated between more than two states. International organisations and bodies such as the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe are platforms for such discussions. Multilateralism allows Switzerland to achieve leverage through alliances and thereby increase its influence.

Neutrality: Switzerland's rights and obligations as a neutral state are derived from international law (see 'International law'). The core of these obligations involves Switzerland not being allowed to offer military support in the event of a conflict between states. At national level, neutrality is mentioned in the Federal Constitution as an instrument to safeguard Switzerland's independence. Switzerland's policy of neutrality thereby safeguards the effectiveness and credibility of its neutrality.

Neutral and non-aligned states: in the first phase of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, there were three groups of states – the NATO States; the Soviet Union and members of the Warsaw Pact; and the neutral and non-aligned states. The latter included neutral states (Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Finland and Ireland) and the non-aligned Yugoslavia, and were later joined by Malta and Cyprus.

Non-governmental organisations: any private, non-profit organisation that operates at the local, national or international level to pursue common goals and ideals with no significant state-controlled participation or representation. NGOs are part of civil society (see 'Civil society').

OSCE field mission: OSCE presence with responsibility for a certain territory. Each field mission has a specific mandate, which is negotiated with the host country and agreed upon by consensus by all participating States. The mandate usually exists for the territory of an entire country, but in some cases can be agreed for specific areas only. The field missions implement the OSCE's approach to security in the area for which they are responsible.

OSCE participating States: the OSCE emerged from a series of conferences and does not have its own legal personality. Therefore, it is not strictly speaking an international organisation. That is why the term 'member states' is not used, but instead 'participating States'.

Peacebuilding: civilian peacebuilding includes contributions to the prevention, mitigation and resolution of violent conflicts, in particular through confidence-building, mediation and the promotion of international humanitarian law and human rights (see 'Facilitation and mediation', 'International humanitarian law' and 'Human rights'). Peacebuilding activities after the end of violent conflicts comprise a range of activities, including dealing with the past, contributions to promoting democratic processes and elections, and strengthening human rights. Peacebuilding creates and reinforces the conditions needed for sustainable development. It comprises both civilian and military measures.

Private sector: the part of the economy that is financed and controlled by individuals or private entities, such as companies, shareholders or groups of investors. This is in contrast to companies that are financed and controlled completely or in part by the government.

Rule of law: the restriction of the arbitrary exercise of power by subordinating it to established laws. At the national level, the fundamental objective of the rule of law is to safeguard the primacy of the law at all levels of government and to protect the associated freedom of citizens. In terms of foreign policy, the rule of law is crucial to international peace and security, economic and social progress, development and the protection of human rights and freedoms. It is achieved primarily through the reinforcement of international law, which guarantees the political stability and reliability of international relations (see 'International law').

Regional security organisation: under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, Members are encouraged to enter into regional security arrangements and "make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council". The largest regional security organisation is the OSCE.

Science diplomacy: the term refers to, for example, the use of scientific collaboration between states to address common problems and to develop international partnerships. At the interface between science, technology and foreign policy, articulating issues and objectives from a scientific perspective can support confidence-building and stimulate both bilateral and multilateral discussions.

Small arms and light weapons: man-portable weapons. Small arms are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for individual use. They include, inter alia, revolvers and assault rifles. Light weapons are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for use by several persons serving as a crew. They include, inter alia, heavy machine guns, portable anti-aircraft guns and mortars of a calibre of less than 100 millimetres.

Sustainability: Switzerland promotes sustainable development on the basis of the Federal Constitution. In line with the Brundtland Report (1987), it defines it as a form of development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The principle was substantiated in 2015 in the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda (see '2030 Agenda').

Terrorism: violent criminal acts that seek to intimidate the public or a state, or to coerce an international organisation. International agreements and UN resolutions outline various universal measures designed to support countries in the prevention and prosecution of terrorist acts. It is recognised that such counter-terrorism measures must respect international law, in particular human rights, international humanitarian law and the international law on refugees.

Transdniestrian Settlement Process: a negotiation process aimed at achieving a comprehensive, peaceful and lasting resolution to the Transdniestria conflict on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognised borders. The talks, which take the 5+2 format, involve representatives from the various sides, mediators and observers – Moldova, Transdniestria, the OSCE, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the United States and the European Union.

Trilateral Contact Group: negotiations in this format provide the framework for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Talks have also been taking place since June 2014 under the chairmanship of the OSCE with participants from Russia and Ukraine as well as the disputed territories. This process has political support from the 'Normandy Format' countries (Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia).

UNSCR 1325 'Women, Peace and Security': this UN Resolution was unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council on 31 October 2000. For the first time, it highlights the impact of conflicts on women and particularly the active role and participation of women in political processes and institutions. It calls on UN member states – primarily, however, parties to a conflict – to protect women's rights and to include women in peace negotiations, the resolution of conflicts and reconstruction efforts on an equal footing. It is seen as a landmark resolution, which draws attention to and condemns sexual violence against women and girls in armed conflict; it makes an important contribution towards achieving gender quality and respect for women's rights as human rights; and makes a clear reference to the universality of human rights.

Vienna Document: a key instrument of military confidence-building between the participating States of the OSCE. It is based on the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and was adopted in 1990 as a further development of the Stockholm Document 1986 after the end of the Cold War. It was last updated in 2011. It includes measures for greater military transparency (e.g. in training, exercises and manoeuvres), military confidence-building (e.g. building up contacts) and conflict prevention (e.g. preventing military incidents).