



Preventive Diplomacy in the Changing Landscape of Modern Conflicts: The Role of Regional Organizations

Concept Note

Background

In October 2018, in response to the call made by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres for a surge in preventive diplomacy, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), with the support of the Italian 2018 OSCE Chairmanship, hosted a panel discussion under the auspices of the UN. Representatives of regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the UN, the UN Secretariat and UN Member States all participated in the discussion in order to take stock of different experiences and approaches to preventive diplomacy with a particular focus on sustainable integration of diverse societies.

As regional organizations play a crucial role in preventive diplomacy and the promotion of resilient societies, as well as building upon their commitment to intensify co-operation, the OSCE HCNM initiated a follow-up to this event in co-operation with the Slovak 2019 OSCE Chairmanship. The primary objective is to ensure continued dialogue on the sustainable integration of diverse societies and enhance partnerships between regional organizations to strengthen preventive diplomacy.

Objective

The objective of the panel discussion is to engage regional organizations in further exchanging effective conflict prevention policies and measures, as well as to strengthen partnerships to devise common strategies in this field. Participants will, inter alia, reflect upon integration policies, including those in the field of education and the effective participation of all members of society in public life. Special emphasis will be placed on the role and inclusion of youth in different segments of social and public life. Therefore, the event will also engage youth networks in the discussion to highlight and further promote the important role of young women and men in peace and security.

Nature of the event and practical modalities

The panel discussion will be organized with the support of the Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the UN representing the Slovak 2019 OSCE Chairmanship. The event will take place in the margins of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. As such, it will resonate with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on partnerships, as well as with SDG 4 on education and SDG 16 on sustainable, peaceful and inclusive societies.

It will provide an opportunity for an informal debate in the form of a side-event on 19 July from 10:00 – 13:00 (Conference Room 11 UN HQ) and will consist of a high-level opening session followed by two panels composed of representatives of regional organizations and high-level officials from the UN Secretariat, Agencies, the Funds and Programmes as well as youth representatives. All UN Member States and observers will be invited to attend.

The language of the event will be English. For any outstanding questions, please contact Ms. Eleonora Lotti (Eleonora.Lotti@osce.org) and Ms. Jelena Nikolić (Jelena.Nikolic@osce.org).

Concept

In the changing landscape of today's conflicts, frictions and tensions between different communities, and even between States, are increasingly based on struggles over identity issues. Experience has shown that divisions and further escalation of tensions are often triggered by the politicization of issues such as the use of language, education and other matters closely related to the affirmation of one's identity. It is against this background that efforts to prevent crises and conflicts – a priority for the regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and multilateral diplomacy in general – need to be scaled up and adapted to the new nature of conflicts. This shift is in many ways challenging for regional and multilateral organizations which have traditionally focused on preventing and managing inter-State conflicts.

In the experience of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, whose mandate is to prevent conflict, one of the most effective tools to prevent this type of modern conflict is to implement policies that promote the integration of diverse and multi-ethnic societies. The OSCE has developed a wealth of experience in managing diversity in society, and successive High Commissioners have produced a comprehensive set of thematic recommendations over the last two decades, based on best practices and lessons learned. The review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDGs 16 and 17, allows us to tackle many aspects of sustainable integration that contribute to building conflict-resilient societies, especially in relation to policies on, among others, education, access to justice, access to information, inclusive participation and decision making at all levels. This event will provide a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and advance understanding of the key policy recommendations and compare these with policies and practices in other regions. The event will also explore how regional partnerships can be capitalized on to intensify conflict prevention efforts, including through attention for and involvement of youth and also from a gender perspective.

In its 2018 Ministerial Council Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security Efforts, the OSCE takes note of UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015) and the follow-up resolution 2419 (2018) and acknowledges the role of youth in contributing to a culture of peace, dialogue, justice and peaceful coexistence, trust and reconciliation. Advancing the youth, peace and security agenda in the OSCE is high also on the agenda of the Slovak 2019 OSCE Chairmanship, and this complements the long-term efforts and the leading role of the UN in this area. Recognizing the importance of education, and the meaningful and inclusive participation of youth as well as their role in conflict prevention, the event will have a special focus on youth, not only as beneficiaries of inclusive integration policies, but especially as valuable partners in conflict prevention efforts.