

# **Reimagining the OSCE for a New Generation**

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# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Methodology .....	2
The Generational Lens .....	3
We Navigate a More Expansive and Complex Information Landscape.....	3
We Recognize the Power of Our Voice.....	4
We Value Global Interconnectivity .....	5
We Will Inevitably Have to Inherit the World, and We Are Aware of That.....	5
Current Events Through Our Lens and the Importance of the Multilateral System.....	6
Past and Present .....	6
The Helsinki Final Act.....	7
Consensus in the OSCE .....	7
OSCE Missions.....	8
The Existential Crisis.....	9
Recommendations.....	12
1. Harness the Power of Social Media to Engage New Generations .....	12
2. Carve Out Environmental Security as a Fourth Security Dimension of the OSCE.....	14
3. Implement a Consensus Minus Two Fail-Safe for the OSCE Chairmanship.....	17
4. Diversify OSCE Funding Sources Through Private Sector Donations .....	19
5. Extend Budget Terms to Promote Continuity and Financial Health .....	20
6. Reform the Permanent Council to Stimulate Dialogue and Co-operation.....	22
Conclusion .....	23
Bibliography .....	25

# Introduction

Almost 50 years after its inception, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) struggles as a shell of its former self. Russia, waging an illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, plunged the Organization into disarray by blocking consensus and threatening the OSCE's very existence by hostaging the OSCE's administrative functions. The crisis has limited the OSCE's ability to conduct field missions and confidence-building work among its 57 participating states and has exposed fundamental flaws and institutional weaknesses within the Organization.

Despite these challenges, there remains opportunities for reform that—although currently infeasible due to Russia's intransigence—will safeguard the organization from dysfunction and prevent future conflicts.

The nine authors of this paper belong to the generation born between the years 1997 and 2012 (hereafter referred to as “our generation”).<sup>i</sup> Growing up in a world connected by social media and the internet, we have learned to navigate a complex information landscape and wield the tools at our disposal to shape society. While we do not speak on behalf of the entire generation, we recognize common traits and values in our generation as its members.

Through these shared values—our so-called “generational lens”—we reimagine the OSCE as a leading intergovernmental institution aligned with our goals and ideals and devoid of the problems left unsolved by those currently in power.

To adapt to our increasingly interconnected world, enhance the Organization's effectiveness, and address the specific needs of our generation, we recommend that the OSCE:

1. Harness the power of social media to engage new generations;
2. Carve out environmental security as a fourth dimension of the OSCE;
3. Implement a consensus-minus-two fail-safe for the OSCE Chairpersonship;
4. Diversify OSCE funding sources through private sector donations;
5. Extend budget terms to promote continuity and financial health;
6. Reform the Permanent Council to stimulate dialogue and co-operation.

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<sup>i</sup> We chose not to use the term “Generation Z” due to negative connotations associated with the letter “Z” (initially used to mark Russia's military vehicles in Ukraine; now, a pro-war propaganda symbol that is often compared to the swastika in Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking discourse), which we felt was inappropriate in the context of this paper.

Before delving into a detailed discussion of our recommendations, we will provide an overview of our methodology, discuss our “generational lens,” lay out a brief history of the OSCE, and dissect the existential crisis the OSCE faces today.

## **Methodology**

This section outlines the systematic approach we adopted to analyze and propose recommendations for the OSCE. Informed by our generational lens, our methodology encompasses a multi-faceted research strategy designed to provide comprehensive insights into the organization’s structure, functioning, and areas requiring reform.

### **Literature Review**

We began our research by conducting an extensive review of existing academic literature, white papers, and official documents related to the OSCE and its current existential crisis. Through our literature review, we aimed to gather a foundational understanding of the organization's history, mandate, and previous reform attempts. Our focus centered on publications from non-governmental organizations and think tanks, such as the Security and Human Rights Monitor and Amnesty International.

Through a systematic exploration of scholarly works, we identified key themes and recurring patterns that would provide insights into the OSCE’s effectiveness and adaptability in addressing looming challenges. By consulting a range of sources, our review aimed to construct a nuanced understanding of the organization’s dynamics. It also emphasized a close analysis of reform proposals, seeking to discern the evolution of strategies intended to strengthen the OSCE, all while illuminating both its successes and failures.

### **Stakeholder Interviews and Observation**

Our team engaged in structured interviews with more than 25 key stakeholders from a wide range of functions relating to the OSCE, including current and former officials from the Secretariat and participating states. This dialogue provided us with a contextual understanding of the OSCE’s role and offered qualitative insights into the organization’s challenges and potential areas for improvement.

Members of our team also traveled to the OSCE’s headquarters in Vienna, Austria to observe the day-to-day operations of the organization. We attended a portion of a Permanent Council meeting at the Hofburg Palace and participated in informal discussions with senior staff from the Secretariat’s office. By immersing ourselves in the Organization's environment, we gained a

deeper understanding of its inner workings, allowing us to supplement interview data with real-time observations. This on-site engagement facilitated a more holistic and contextual analysis, which contributed significantly to the depth and accuracy of our findings and subsequent recommendations.

## **Synthesis & Recommendations**

After conducting interviews and analyzing the existing literature, we applied our generational lens to synthesize our findings into a set of well-informed and practical recommendations for a reimagined OSCE. This process involved iterative refinement, ensuring that the proposed reforms were realistic, contextually relevant, and aligned with both the organization's overarching goals and our generational lens.

By employing this methodology, we accomplished a thorough examination of the OSCE from varied perspectives while providing a robust foundation for our recommendations.

## **The Generational Lens**

This paper and the recommendations presented are relevant in that they are colored by what we refer to as our “generational lens.” As members of our generation, we have a unique perspective on the world. This perspective forms our generational lens, a common but non-exhaustive set of characteristics that have shaped the collective psyche of many of us. While we recognize that we do not speak on behalf of our generation, we understand the power of wielding our voice in advocating for issues important to us all.

Like every generation before us, our views have been influenced by the world in which we grew up. We are the first generation to truly be considered “digitally native,” having had access to advanced info-communication technology for most of our lives. Our world feels more connected than ever before, thanks to the proliferation of social media and the ease of global communication. We have witnessed the detrimental effects of climate change in our communities and experienced firsthand the urgency of taking action to protect our planet for generations to come. Each of these factors has shaped our values and priorities, how we interpret the world around us, and ultimately how we choose to navigate the current events unfolding today.

### **We Navigate a More Expansive and Complex Information Landscape**

Born into a world seamlessly integrated with the internet, our generation has witnessed a rapid transformation in the way information is stored, shared, and created. As a consequence of being digital natives, we can deftly navigate through unprecedented volumes of information with

unparalleled speed. Our capacity to seek out and consume information extends across a diverse spectrum of mediums, encompassing tangible sources like books and documentaries, alongside virtual platforms such as social media, newsletters, and podcasts.

Consequently, we utilize information to make both monumental choices, such as electing a national leader, and mundane decisions, such as where to have dinner. Moreover, we recognize the role that we can play in contributing to the creation and dissemination of new knowledge—be it through videos posted on social media or responses to questions on an online forum.

These shifting trends have made our generation more sensitive to the information we consume and the sources from which they originate. While comment sections and TikTok videos have shaped the way we have been able to access news headlines, they have proliferated misinformation and false narratives. Studies have found that our media-literate generation is more skeptical about the content we consume and share than other generations and is more likely to be aware of the source of our information.<sup>1, 2</sup>

With misinformation on the rise, our generation has learned to value authenticity and direct communication.<sup>3</sup> We have shunned “legacy” social media platforms such as Facebook in favor of apps like BeReal and TikTok that promote greater spontaneity and candor.<sup>4</sup> We are less likely to be swayed by traditional authority figures and politicians than individuals and organizations that demonstrate genuine commitments to positive change.<sup>5</sup>

### **We Recognize the Power of Our Voice**

Our generation is uniquely aware of the power of our voice in shaping the world around us. Having lived with the internet from a young age, we are empowered to transcend geographical boundaries and have developed an acute sense of awareness of the world. In particular, the internet and social media have allowed us to witness firsthand the impact that collective action and advocacy can have on a global scale.

Social media platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, have leveled the playing field, providing all users, regardless of background or resources, an equitable platform on which to speak. This accessibility has allowed our generation to raise awareness about causes that might otherwise go unnoticed and has amplified the collective impact of our voices. The internet has also connected us to people with a greater diversity of thought than ever before, forcing us to expand our worldview and critically examine traditional narratives. As a result, our generation recognizes the value of different perspectives, experiences, and identities and advocates for spaces where every voice is not only heard but valued.

Our generation refuses to be passive observers of the world around us and, instead, chooses to wield the tools at our disposal to effect change. We recognize that our voices are instruments of influence, capable of shaping conversations and driving progress. We have harnessed the very platforms that have shaped us, leveraging hashtags and viral campaigns to select our audience and proliferate our messages.<sup>6</sup> Our strategic use of technology has allowed us to create movements and inspire action on a scale that was once unimaginable.

### **We Value Global Interconnectivity**

In an era marked by significant advancements in information and transportation technology, our world is more interconnected than ever before. This interconnectedness permeates various facets of our lives, exerting its influence across countless domains including trade, cultural exchange, and international diplomacy.

While global interconnectivity is not unique to our generation, it has left an indelible mark on us, shaped by pivotal events and developments during our formative years. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, stands as a poignant testament to the vital importance of international co-operation. We saw disastrous consequences when countries forewent partnerships to cater to short-sighted national needs. On the other hand, we all benefited from global collaboration to improve immunity through knowledge-sharing and vaccine-development.<sup>7, 8</sup>

Additionally, global interconnectivity now emphasizes equity and diversity. This global exchange has allowed us to transcend geographical boundaries and recognize the richness of other cultures' values, knowledge, and ideas. Our generation, perhaps more than any previous generation, is aware of the strength that arises in our collective diversity and is committed to fostering environments where all can thrive.

Furthermore, we have seen the symbiosis between the public and private sectors play an increasingly pivotal role in our current world. In the United States, for example, we have witnessed the private sector invest approximately 3.5x more in research and development (R&D) than the public sector.<sup>9</sup> Even the United Nations draws on private funding to supplement organizations such as UNICEF.<sup>10</sup> We recognize that successful global interconnectivity often means financial co-operation between private and public institutions.

### **We Will Inevitably Have to Inherit the World, and We Are Aware of That**

As we enter the workforce, we will soon inherit positions of influence in domestic and international institutions from our predecessors. We will reckon with the consequences of their decisions and bear the responsibility of shaping our world for the better.

To that end, we are eager to play an active role on issues of importance. Members of our generation are among the most engaged with climate change and are more likely than our generational peers to express anxieties about the future.<sup>11, 12</sup> This sense of “eco-dismay” that we feel stems from what we see as inaction by politicians and policymakers to the existential threat faced by us all.<sup>13</sup> But, while we may be discouraged, we are not afraid to hold those in power accountable and call for future-oriented decision-making. During the 2022 U.S. midterm elections, the voters of our generation turned out at a higher rate than any previous generation has ever done in their first midterms.<sup>14</sup>

Our sense of pragmatism—fueled by discontent over the climate crisis—has only strengthened in recent years. Many of us were in school when the COVID-19 pandemic first began, and we were suddenly forced to adapt to remote environments and social distancing. As we enter the workforce, we face growing fears of a recession. These events have proven that as a generation, there is very little that we can take for granted.

### **Current Events Through Our Lens and the Importance of the Multilateral System**

When viewed in aggregation, these generational characteristics create a lens through which we can interpret the current events unfolding around the world. In the troubled times that we live in, we recognize the importance of a comprehensive, rules-based multilateral system. Many of the multilateral systems that we use today were created by the generations that lived through the horrors of the World Wars and the Cold War; they hoped that a robust multilateral system would facilitate a more just world for all. But as the decades went on, some of the generations that have inherited those institutions have only served to weaken them. Rather than strengthening these institutions for co-operation and the common good, contemporary states have instrumentalized them to satisfy ulterior motives. What we are left with today are institutions that have been led astray from their original values.

Our generation is uniquely hopeful, yet pragmatic, about the current state of the multilateral system in a way that some of the generations that precede us have not been. As the multilateral system’s inheritors, we understand its immense value and its potential to do good but also recognize its historical failings. We are not afraid to call on those in power today to use the international institutions for good and leave them stronger than they found them. With that comes a call for less cumbersome bureaucracy and rigidity and increased efficiency and effectiveness.

## **Past and Present**

In 1975, signing of the Helsinki Final Act formed the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). During the Cold War, the CSCE provided a platform for the East and West to

negotiate and cooperate.<sup>15</sup> The conference met regularly to discuss and form new commitments until the adoption of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe in 1990, which marked a new era for European security. The post-Cold War era prompted the CSCE to formalize the institution and enhance operations, culminating in the change to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) at the 1994 Budapest Summit.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Helsinki Final Act**

The 1975 Helsinki Final Act established three dimensions, or areas of focus, for the CSCE. The first aimed at reducing tension and building confidence in the political and military spheres, emphasizing respect for the sovereignty and borders of participating states.<sup>17</sup> The second dimension affirmed a commitment to economic co-operation and exchange of information between states. The third dimension covered humanitarian co-operation and human rights, including the freedom of press and information and movement of people. While some dimensions were controversial, the Helsinki Final Act proved to be extremely valuable, especially at the end of the Cold War because the CSCE included a wider range of participating states than NATO and the EU.<sup>18,19</sup>

Additionally, the humanitarian aspect of the Helsinki Final Act became a powerful mechanism for monitoring human rights and freedoms among the CSCE's participating states.<sup>20</sup> The expectation of progress in all aspects of the Helsinki Accords supported a regular dialogue between states on humanitarian matters which was "unprecedented."<sup>21</sup> Monitoring groups were quickly established within countries in the Soviet Bloc which were able to "promote democratic change" in those "closed societies."<sup>22</sup>

The Helsinki Final Act also built a platform for increasing the transparency of military action. This was a key confidence building mechanism for security in Europe, which was especially important in lowering tensions and increasing trust during and at the end of the Cold War. The current era of increased tension and conflict elevates the need to engage with the principles upon which the OSCE was built and reimagine the Organization's role in European security.<sup>23</sup>

### **Consensus in the OSCE**

The OSCE's roots as a conference underpins the Organization's spirit of dialogue and collaboration. A central pillar and strength of the OSCE is its ability to providing a platform for dialogue amongst non-like-minded states, with consensus-based decision making serving as the fundamental equalizer in the Organization. In general, consensus encourages the engagement of all participating states, as all have equal status. Consensus was originally adopted in 1973 to strengthen the Helsinki Final Act and ensure that all participating states would adhere to the agreed upon principles.<sup>24</sup> The OSCE defines consensus as "the absence of any objection expressed by a

participating State to the adoption of the decision in question.”<sup>25</sup> Full consensus remains the requirement for decisions; however, under extreme circumstances there are exceptions. Specifically, the 1991 Moscow Mechanism, built upon the 1989 Vienna Mechanism,<sup>26</sup> can be employed in “cases of clear, gross and uncorrected violations of OSCE commitments” and requires “consensus minus one,” as opposed to a unanimous vote.<sup>27</sup>

Historically, the OSCE’s focus on dialogue and the requirement for consensus established the Organization’s reputation as a key forum for transparency, co-operation, and confidence-building. In the context of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture, the OSCE provides the forum that allows states in the EU and NATO to engage with states and regions that could be considered “vulnerable to Russian influence.”<sup>28</sup> Considering that the OSCE includes a broader range of states than any other security organization, the requirement of consensus could be considered one of its “comparative advantages.”<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, this comparative advantage has been misused by participating states, such as Russia, to restrict the OSCE.

## **OSCE Missions**

Missions form an important part of the OSCE’s management of security and conflict. Most of these missions focus on Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Central Asia. Each operation has its own mandate, agreed to by consensus, and the host country must agree when establishing field operations. These mandates are often purposefully broad, so that the strategy and goals of the mission can shift to suit unique challenges as they appear.<sup>30</sup> Historically, missions have been successful in improving the human dimension in OSCE states.

Through these missions, the Organization supports governments and civil society in finding solutions to humanitarian and security concerns based on the OSCE’s core principles. The OSCE has recently supported projects in the areas of arms control, cybersecurity, climate change, human trafficking, and gender equality. OSCE missions work with local stakeholders to deal with security issues on the ground and foster change. The OSCE also engages in work that allows them to monitor for corruption and implement best practices in regional governmental organizations. For example, the OSCE developed trial-monitoring projects in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro. The Organization’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and Parliamentary Assembly have conducted election monitoring missions in more than 50 countries. The OSCE also drafts guidelines that push participating states to design more inclusive and innovative policies to deal with issues related to national minorities. Ongoing OSCE missions include monitoring the security environment in Moldova, combating extremism in Turkmenistan, implementing anti-trafficking measures in Kazakhstan, countering transnational threats in Kyrgyzstan, and addressing corruption in Tajikistan. Additionally, the OSCE has undertaken a variety of missions in Uzbekistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and North Macedonia.

## **The Existential Crisis**

Since the organization's transition from the CSCE to OSCE, the OSCE has faced significant criticism and hurdles in its mission to uphold the Helsinki Principles as an organization. Even prior to the signing of the Charter of Paris in 1990, the international community raised concerns about the OSCE's role in peacekeeping and peacemaking operations, its relationship with NATO and the EU, and its future as an international organization.<sup>31,32</sup> The fundamental problems with the OSCE have only become clearer since then, as made evident by the Permanent Council, which has become a platform for grandstanding and empty dialogue.

Additionally, the consensus rule has been subject to heavy criticism since the beginning of the OSCE and this criticism has only grown as the relationship between NATO and Russia and its allies has deteriorated.<sup>33</sup> However, actions to amend the consensus policy have been met with heavy pushback by both Russia and its allies, as well as by smaller countries that rely upon consensus to maintain their power. Various mechanisms have been created over the years to bypass consensus-based decisions, such as the Moscow Mechanism.<sup>34</sup> The organization has also attempted to use the "consensus minus one" method to suspend a member that the other nations agreed had violated the OSCE's founding principles. For example, when the organization was known as the CSCE, it suspended Yugoslavia due to its human rights violations. Former Yugoslav states would not rejoin the OSCE until some eight years later.<sup>35</sup> The CSCE's statement asserted that "appropriate action may be taken by the Council or the Committee of Senior Officials, if necessary, in the absence of the consent of the State concerned, in cases of clear, gross and uncorrected violations of relevant CSCE commitments."<sup>36</sup> However, this avenue of bypassing consensus to suspend a member state that no longer upholds the OSCE's values has not been pursued by the OSCE since, even in the presence of Russia's gross human rights violations during its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

One such instance where the "consensus minus one" rule could have been applied was during Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008. The OSCE was unable to organize an agreement between the two states, despite its supposed position as a mediating organization, because the participating states could not reach consensus about the OSCE's role. Furthermore—and perhaps most importantly—the organization was unable to maintain its field mission in Georgia due to Russian vetoes.<sup>37</sup> The OSCE's inadequate response to member-on-member aggression would reemerge as a recurring theme after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The consensus issue carries over to other aspects of the OSCE, as well—in particular, the budget. OSCE participating states have only agreed upon a Unified Budget in time for the new year seven times since 2002.<sup>38</sup> Any state that has an objection to a line of the budget can reject it, making budgetary agreements extraordinarily difficult. The OSCE frequently works on month-to-month

and quarterly allotments. Short-term budgeting makes it difficult for the OSCE to manage basic expenses, such as paying for office space and Secretariat salaries.<sup>39</sup> As a result, the OSCE relies heavily on member state contributions and goods and services offered by private companies for free. This makes the organization vulnerable to international issues and lowers its operating capacities. For example, a lack of budget decisions has reduced or halted field mission activities.<sup>40</sup>

On February 24, 2022, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine exacerbated the OSCE's pre-existing problems, stymieing its day-to-day operations, and plunging the organization into a state of existential crisis.

In 1975, the Helsinki Final Act established the Decalogue—the organization's ten foundational principles that should govern the behavior of participating states towards their citizens and each other. Those principles are worth remembering: sovereign equality, refraining from the use of force, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity of states, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in internal affairs, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, co-operation among states, and the fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law.<sup>41</sup> In the past two years, Russia has violated them all.

Since the start of its unjustified full-scale invasion, Russian military forces have been specifically targeting noncombatant populations: they shell apartment blocks, schools, and maternity hospitals; systematically destroy critical infrastructure, leaving people without water, heat, and electricity; torture, rape, and execute civilians in occupied zones; open fire on humanitarian corridors; separate families in filtration camps, kidnapping children and forcibly deporting them to Russia for illegal adoption and “re-education.” According to *Amnesty International*, these atrocities are not “isolated incidents and are likely part of a larger scheme” of the Russian government.<sup>42</sup> Its official narrative equates de-Nazification to de-Ukrainization, calling for the complete liquidation of “Ukrainianism.”<sup>43</sup> Russia is committing genocide in Ukraine. Yet, it still retains a seat at the OSCE.

Beyond moral concerns, Russia's obstructionism currently hinders the organization's day-to-day functions. 2022 marked the first year that the annual OSCE Ministerial Council meeting failed to adopt any decisions, including the Unified Budget proposal of \$143 million for 2023, which Russia blocked, alongside Armenia and Azerbaijan.<sup>44</sup> This lack of an approved budget restricts the OSCE to a limited operational mode, relying on provisional monthly allocations based on the previously agreed-upon 2021 budget. As per financial regulations, the OSCE is prohibited from initiating new projects, except for extra-budgetary ones, during this period.<sup>45</sup> Stephanie Liechtenstein, in her analysis for *Foreign Policy*, characterized Russia's action as “a political tool to erode the activities of vital OSCE institutions.”<sup>46</sup>

Until December 2023, aside from not having a Unified Budget, the OSCE lacked a Chairpersonship for 2024 due to Russia's and Belarus' opposition to Estonia's bid. In response to the deadlock, Austria offered to step in as the Chair for 2024 if a consensus could not be reached on Estonia's candidacy. Similarly, Kazakhstan expressed readiness to step in as Chair if necessary.<sup>47</sup> Yet, Estonia remained steadfast in pursuing the 2024 Chairpersonship, emphasizing its commitment to the OSCE's principles and rejecting any substitution. In turn, the EU maintained its endorsement of Estonia's candidacy.<sup>48</sup> However, at the Ministerial Council in Skopje, the OSCE electorate selected Malta to as the Chairperson for 2024, giving them a prohibitively small amount of time to adequately prepare for the role.<sup>49</sup>

The crisis of Chairpersonship extended further: the OSCE troika, a crucial body comprising the current, previous, and incoming Chairs, that ensures the continuity of the organization's activities, lacked the latter. To prevent its breakdown, North Macedonia invited Finland, the Chair for 2025, to join the troika on an ad interim basis until the Chairpersonship for 2024 was determined. While serving to sustain operational activities, this measure was a remedy, not a solution to the crisis.

Adding to the complexity, the mandates for key leadership positions within the OSCE, such as OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Teresa Ribeiro, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Matteo Mecacci, and High Commissioner on National Minorities Kairat Abdrakhmanov, were set to expire at the end of 2023. The renewal of these mandates relies on consensus, and given Russia's recent lack of co-operation, a seamless transition appears highly uncertain.

The OSCE adapts to the new reality—and often, successfully so. For instance, after Russia vetoed the extension of the OSCE field missions in Ukraine, operational since 2014, the Organization established an extra-budgetary Support Program for Ukraine (SPU). This initiative is financed through voluntary contributions from 31 participating states, addressing immediate challenges faced by civilians and supporting the long-term resilience of democratic and social institutions, as well as civil society.<sup>50</sup> Michael Carpenter, U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE, noted that “while extra-budgetary assistance provides greater flexibility, it should not be considered a long-term solution,” since it “demonstrates how [the OSCE's] normal budget procedures are broken.”<sup>51</sup>

The OSCE's “existential crisis” will be a persistent reality as long as the Russia-Ukraine war goes on, and Russia continues to weaponize consensus against the Organization. The question is how resourceful the Organization would have to become to circumvent the Russian veto and maintain its effectiveness; or, where the OSCE will draw red lines regarding Russia's war crimes in Ukraine and reach a point where the framework of “no business as usual” loses its relevance.

# Recommendations

## 1. Harness the Power of Social Media to Engage New Generations

As the first digitally native generation, we value global interconnectivity more than ever before. Not only does our global interconnectivity and digital literacy amplify our voice, but we are intent on using the power of our voice to engage with leaders and shift the trajectory of the world toward peace and stability, especially through the multilateral order. We use social media as the pathway to connectivity, engaging through apps such as Instagram and TikTok to interact with content from all over the world. Social media does not merely provide entertainment but serves as a critical platform for sharing information and activism. Many other organizations and institutions are already engaged in global interconnectivity through social media and find considerable attention and support from their audiences.

Our team observed that the OSCE lacks a broad and effective social media campaign. While the OSCE has been a forum for dialogue among non-like-minded nations, providing a forum solely for state leaders is no longer enough; our generation expects engagement with the public at-large. Therefore, we demand that the OSCE meet our generation's informational needs, and we implore them to harness our voice through the internalization of said values.

*1.1 To meet this demand, the OSCE should focus on harnessing the power of social media to engage with the people in our generation.*

As the world continues to become more interconnected, the OSCE should add additional layers to its communication strategy to engage the public through social media and to generate greater transparency and accountability with the public. An engaged public will lead to a more influential organization that has greater power to create positive change on the international stage; furthermore, an expanded reach would allow audiences within participating states to hold the OSCE accountable for its commitments. Under the watchful gaze of their citizenries, participating states would have a greater incentive to work together to promote meaningful dialogue and facilitate change toward a safer, more stable Europe. Additionally, research indicates that social media can have positive implications for trust in government. A study published in *Public Performance and Management Review* elucidates “(1) that use of government social media is significantly and positively associated with perceptions of government transparency, [and] (2) that perceptions of government transparency are positively and significantly related to trust in government.”<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the OSCE could use an expanded social media presence to increase citizens' trust in the organization and its credibility within its sphere of influence.

*1.2 The OSCE should incorporate influencers into their social media campaigns to help increase the OSCE's online presence.*

Our generation has witnessed firsthand the power of social media in stimulating public support for governmental issues. For instance, the Biden administration implemented use of social media influencers and activists to heighten public awareness of crucial legislation and key executive actions.<sup>53</sup> By using this same strategy, the OSCE could target existing audiences of influencers to inform an untapped sector of the public about the OSCE's successes.

*1.3 The OSCE should focus on generating media content that is approachable and accessible.*

The most effective social media posts are “vivid, practical, interesting, personalized, and interactive.”<sup>54</sup> Keeping posts short but ‘catchy’ will motivate people to engage more with the OSCE's content and learn more about the Organization's positive work on operations and missions. Short videos and eye-catching infographics, like those published by the United Nations, can be used as a template for the OSCE's posts. Such tactics could be particularly helpful in engaging younger more social media savvy audiences since the “consumption of traditional versus online and social media news sources is strongly correlated with age.”<sup>55</sup>

*1.4 The OSCE should employ targeted regional strategies—including immediate and effective translation services—to promote the OSCE's work online.*

By increasing the number and expediency of translation services for their social media and marketing platforms, the OSCE's marketing campaigns would be accessible to a wider audience. As a generation, we value information accessibility and inclusivity. To meet our generational standards of inclusivity, the OSCE should publish statements in real-time in multiple languages to allow people who speak those languages to understand the OSCE's priorities. Furthermore, the OSCE should think through the various needs and values of individual participating states to create content that speaks to those priorities. Research indicates that different regions respond differently to the same social media posts.<sup>56</sup> Regional social media teams focused on tailoring content to generate high engagement within their region would allow the OSCE to appeal to a greater number of unique global populations.

*1.5 The OSCE should stream Permanent Council meetings.*

Currently, these scripted, formal meetings remain inaccessible to the public. While Permanent Council (PC) meetings are a useful forum for stating and restating national policy positions, real-time streaming and periodic post-meeting press conferences with OSCE Ambassadors would allow a broader sector of the public to better understand a complex and seemingly distant organization.

To facilitate active engagement, the OSCE needs to act to help the public engage with the Organization's daily and weekly tasks, including important meetings such as those of the Permanent Council.

An updated social media strategy and an expanded public outreach plan will increase public engagement, resulting in a more powerful, reputable, transparent, and influential OSCE. Ultimately, our generation will inherit the OSCE. The OSCE needs to transform to meet the growing communication needs of a globally connected world.

## **2. Carve Out Environmental Security as a Fourth Security Dimension of the OSCE**

Our generation in America considers the environment to be the most important global issue, as of 2021.<sup>57</sup> Across the globe this has manifested in high rates of climate anxiety among young people and backlash against inadequate governmental responses.<sup>58</sup> Drastic and destructive climate events, such as the heatwaves in Europe, the floods in Somalia, and the hurricanes in the Caribbean, have been burned into our memory, which has led to increased environmental activism. In 2023, 32% of our generation claimed to have personally taken action to address climate change.<sup>59</sup>

While the OSCE has pre-existing initiatives to address environmental issues and security, these initiatives appear disjointed and inadequate to address an issue so pressing for the upcoming generation. The OSCE's current stance on and approach to environmental issues is outdated. The following recommendations offer various ways in which the OSCE could refocus its efforts. This new focus could work in tandem with the OSCE's presence on social media to bring more attention to the Organization. Additionally, the nature of environmental security issues, which affect the whole earth rather than select countries, may allow more room for transnational communication and negotiation during more contentious periods in the Organization. This could be an avenue for bringing countries to the table when other negotiation fora are failing.

*2.1 The OSCE should establish an environmental security dimension, separating the preexisting economic and environmental dimension into two parts.*

Currently within the OSCE, this proposed environmental security dimension exists as a sub-set of the OSCE's second dimension—the economic dimension—legislated through the Economic Affairs, Science, Technology & Environment General Committee and implemented through the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. Together, the second dimension is responsible for a multitude of issue areas including, but not limited to: good governance, connectivity, digitalization, migration governance, narrowing socio-economic disparities, climate change, disaster risk reduction, environmental security, environmental governance, hazardous waste management, water management, and energy security. Economic affairs and the environment are historically linked due to the damaging effects of poor business

practices on the environment.<sup>60</sup> However, we argue that the current fusion of economic and environmental activities within a single dimension may limit the organization's effectiveness in addressing the pressing issues related to environmental security.

The existing second dimension should be split into two for two reasons. First, as it is, the second dimension is responsible for too many issue areas, resulting in unnecessary pressure on the Office of the Coordinator. Furthermore, the Office of the Coordinator already appears to assign work into either economic or environmental field activities. This indicates that an informal split between environmental and economic issues has already occurred. Second, the second dimension was expanded in the 1990s, and, in the 1999 charter, environmental issues were clearly included as an afterthought. For example, in introducing the dimensions of the OSCE, the document simply states: "we will address the human, economic, political and military dimensions of security as an integral whole."<sup>61</sup> The environment is only discussed in one section of the charter and is not mentioned in other discussions of the OSCE dimensions. Since the 1990s, environmental issues, such as climate change, have moved to the forefront of international discourse because of their increasing severity and their growing importance to OSCE member state populations.

*2.2 To implement Recommendation 2.1, the OSCE should create a new Environmental Forum, Environmental Committee, and Office of the Coordinator of Environmental Activities.*

The Environmental Forum would meet annually, like its predecessor. The Forum on Economic Activities would remain. The two forums would allow for both to have a stronger focus on their respective issues. The Environmental General Committee would meet weekly as part of the parliamentary assembly. This will allow for focused policy alignment for both economic and environmental issues. Science and technology would stay with economic activities in order to mitigate turnover. Finally, the new Office of the Environmental Coordinator would be established within the Secretariat and take on roles already assigned to the "environmental field." The Office of the Economic Coordinator would also remain. This would allow for more targeted resource allocation.

*2.3 The OSCE should expand current informal working groups on the environment.*

In addition to formalizing an environmental fourth dimension of the OSCE, we still see value in the informal mechanisms that exist. Informal dialogue can facilitate transnational relations outside of forum and committee settings. The OSCE already has an informal working group on environmental issues called "Friends of Environment," launched at the 2019 Forum on Economic and Environmental Issues.<sup>62</sup> The group only has 14 members, so we recommend that this group expand and welcome other OSCE participating states.<sup>63</sup> This would improve the effectiveness of the group.

*2.4 The OSCE should take advantage of the existing security and organization structures to institute a strengthened focus on environmental protection and security.*

We acknowledge the value of utilizing existing resources and institutional memory to enhance environmental security. However, our generation is focused on reimagining the current infrastructure to create effective change. The OSCE has considered the importance of the link between environment and security since the organization's inception. The threat of environmental degradation and climate change to security has only increased since then. The 2021 ministerial decision affirming the importance of co-operation "to address the challenges caused by climate change" emphasizes the political will within the organization to increase environmental protection and security.<sup>64</sup> For this reason, we propose reimagining current security structures of the OSCE to meet the increasing global environmental challenges we face today.

*2.5 The OSCE should include environmental protection and security in the mandates of all ongoing and future missions.<sup>65</sup>*

Our generation is pragmatic and focused on practical solutions to the many challenges we face today. Missions are an important and effective part of the OSCE's field work. Some participating states have used extra-budgetary funding to pursue programs in climate security.<sup>66</sup> However, this limits the scope of these projects and makes building the role of the OSCE in environmental security more difficult.<sup>67</sup> Including the environmental dimension in mission mandates is a practical way to enhance the OSCE's environmental action. This should encompass assessing environmental security risk, such as climate risk, and taking direct action in areas such as mitigation and adaptation. Mission field work could serve as a critical tool for implementing environmental programs. For example, these missions could work closely with regional Aarhus Centres, with an emphasis on co-operation and information sharing which includes local stakeholders.<sup>68</sup> A particularly valuable element of missions is the close interaction with local stakeholders, including both local authorities and private organizations. In the area of environmental protection, especially climate and security, all actors need to be a part of the solution. The close ties between local actors and missions can foster increased dialogue and action outside of direct OSCE involvement. The sharing of information is particularly valuable and would foster more effective action in this area.

*2.6 The OSCE should strengthen the focus on environmental protection and security in missions where this approach already exists.*

Some field missions already include environmental activities, such as the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This mission highlights the adverse impact of environmental degradation on sustainable development and security.<sup>69</sup> Like other missions with environmental aspects, the

Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina works closely with the region's Aarhus Centres.<sup>70</sup> However, current work within missions is often limited in scope. The Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina mostly focuses on waste and pollution management, with no mention of climate risk or other environmental challenges.<sup>71</sup> Given the increasing environmental challenges, especially climate change, which will disproportionately impact our generation, increasing the scope of the existing environmental action in mission is important.

*2.7 The OSCE should strengthen the emphasis on environmental security and protection in the mandates of other OSCE bodies.*

Across all structures of the OSCE there are opportunities to further consider the influence of environment and security. The OSCE Secretariat has already used extra-budgetary funding to conduct "projects in the field of climate security".<sup>72</sup> The OSCE should seriously consider including environmental security in the scope of all its offices and bodies. This could be easily implemented by including a review of climate security risk in other ongoing more expansive security risk assessments and conflict prevention.<sup>73</sup> Other OSCE bodies, like the Transnational Threats Department, have tasks that clearly interact with environmental security, such as the targeting of critical natural resources by terrorists. Current security structures must adapt to acknowledge these kinds of environmental security threats, which will likely increase into the future and impact our generation. We recommend that these bodies re-examine and increase their commitments to environmental security.

### **3. Implement a Consensus Minus Two Fail-Safe for the OSCE Chairmanship**

Our generation is acutely aware of the importance of taking aggressive action to preserve our future, and we will not accept administrative barriers. We recognize the value of existing structures of international co-operation but are focused on making sure those tools are useful and effective.

Consensus-based decision-making has been a hallmark of the OSCE since transitioning from the CSCE in 1994.<sup>74</sup> As an organization dedicated to co-operation and dialogue, consensus is vital to maintaining the integrity of the OSCE. Our generation values the idea that every voice has a seat at the table. Thanks to the consensus principle, participating states all have equal status in the decision-making process, which encourages active engagement and co-operation.

However, upholding consensus can significantly weaken the Organization in times of high security tensions or conflict, such as in Russia's ongoing illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. Deliberate abuse of consensus allows one state to hold the Organization 'hostage,' preventing any decision making, even in administrative matters such as approving the budget or choosing a Chair-in-Office. Blocking consensus on the Chair reduces the Organization to 'survival mode', rendering the Organization unable to adapt to meet new security challenges and halting any meaningful

progress. The OSCE has found ad hoc strategies to circumvent the consensus requirement, such as using extra-budgetary funding to sustain operations in the absence of an approved budget. However, other issues, such as the issue of selecting a Chair-in-Office, allow for no such flexibility. The OSCE participating states generally elect a Chair one or more years in advance, but the Organization failed to reach consensus to elect a Chair for 2024 until a month before they were set to take office. The OSCE narrowly avoided the unprecedented obstacle of entering the new year without a Chair, but the late selection leaves the OSCE with an unprepared leader.<sup>75</sup>

*3.1 To ensure the continuation of the fundamental administrative functions of the organization, the OSCE should introduce a new mechanism, referred to here as the “Estonia Mechanism”, which would allow for a “consensus minus two” model if countries fail to reach consensus on selecting a new Chair of the OSCE at least one year before the Chair would take office.*

In the past and under extreme circumstances, the OSCE has voted to circumvent consensus, with the implementation of the Moscow Mechanism being the most illustrative example. The OSCE has also implemented a consensus minus one model to expel former Yugoslavia from OSCE in 1992.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, when considering consensus in the context of the OSCE, we must understand that although consensus is foundational, it is not absolute. Member states have relaxed consensus for the greater good of the OSCE and in support of advancing the principles of the Decalogue. We recognize that Russia’s weaponization of consensus significantly limits the OSCE and that, in the current political climate, it would not be possible to reach consensus to implement a change such as the Estonia Mechanism. However, our generation values the OSCE, and we want to preserve the future of the organization. Therefore, we propose that once the Organization returns to a ‘business as usual’ level of functionality, the OSCE must take action to ensure that the basic administrative functions of the Organization are never again ‘held hostage’ by one or two rogue countries. The Estonia Mechanism preserves the spirit of consensus while protecting the day-to-day operations of the Organization.

Compared to a “consensus minus one” model, a “consensus minus two” model anticipates that an intransigent state may be able to convince another OSCE member state to support its objections. This relationship between the two states can take many forms. Perhaps, a more powerful country places pressure on a neighboring country or a smaller, less powerful country, such as in the case of Russia and Belarus. Or, two countries may have the same ideologically position, but are at odds with the other 55 states. Additionally, two countries at war or on the precipice of conflict, such as Azerbaijan and Armenia, may block consensus in order to draw attention to their conflict. However, in the unique case of approving a Chair-in-Office, a voting block of 3.5% should not have the power to indefinitely delay such a key leadership appointment. At the same time, we do not recommend a consensus minus three model because, if three countries align, we are more confident that they may present a legitimate objection to the candidate for the Chairpersonship.

Additionally, the Estonia Mechanism would only be an available option if the Chair-in-Office has not yet been selected within one year of assuming office. Chairs are often selected years before their Chairpersonship and use the year prior to prepare for effective leadership on their first day in office. If a Chair is not selected at least a year in advance, they will not be able to adequately equip themselves to lead the OSCE and complete a seamless transition when replacing the existing leadership.

Furthermore, by applying a time constraint to the Estonia Mechanism, the one or two countries holding up the selection process for the Chair face a deadline for co-operation. If they do not pursue an adequate compromise prior to a year out from the Chairpersonship, they will be shut out of the selection process altogether. This reality will de-incentivize countries from using the Chair-in-Office selection process as a political battleground.

#### **4. Diversify OSCE Funding Sources Through Private Sector Donations**

Our generation understands the utility and pragmatism of pooling the resources from the private sector in the service of the public sector. Particularly today, we cannot divorce globalization and commercial interconnectivity from traditional, political interconnectivity. As we reimagine the OSCE, we must consider the OSCE as part of this ecosystem of globalization and interconnectedness that thrives on a symbiotic relationship between private and public institutions. As a participant in this ecosystem the OSCE must modernize its funding sources beyond public funds.

Today, the OSCE runs on a budget of approximately \$150 million (140 million euros), which pays salaries for 400 Secretariat employees, 200 other institutional staff, and about 2,100 field operators, as well as other expenses.<sup>77</sup> While the OSCE does engage in joint projects with corporate partners, such as Thomas Reuters, they do not accept private monetary donations, which limits their resources and, therefore, their impact potential.<sup>78,79</sup>

##### *4.1 The OSCE should allow supplementary private funding.*

To implement Recommendation 4.1, the OSCE should look to other international bodies, such as the United Nations (UN) as an example for the constructive use and vetting of private funds. The UN uses private funding for the UN Trust Funds, such as the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), which accept calls for “proposals that advance the application of human security to accelerate the SDGs and realize priorities in Our Common Agenda, the new Agenda for Peace and other global agendas,”<sup>80</sup> which are endorsed by governments and developed in consultation with the DCO Regional Director and Resident Coordinators for the area of operation. Other private

sector funding goes to specific UN organs, such as UNESCO and World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>81</sup>

*4.2 The OSCE should emulate WHO's public sector guidelines when building their own portfolio of donors and contributors.*

WHO published *Guidelines on Working with the Private Sector to Achieve Health Outcomes*, which lays out some fundamental principles for working with private companies.<sup>82</sup> First of all, there should be transparency and active conversations around potential conflicts of interest, as well as a legal assessment of conflicts of interest, to avoid compromised integrity situations. The partnership should meet the objective of improving whichever issue the international organization hopes to mitigate. The optics, “integrity of the company” and financial health should also be considered when evaluating partners, and only direct partnerships, not organized by a third party, are advisable.<sup>83</sup> For cash donations, WHO will only accept money from “commercial enterprises whose business is unrelated to that of WHO” and whose activities are not antithetical to WHO’s mission.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, WHO will not accept a donation if the company has a “direct commercial interest in the outcome of the project.”<sup>85</sup> The Legal Council should be consulted for any suspected indirect interest of a donor.

Additionally, the amount accepted from any one donor should be supplementary. If those funds are pulled, it should not result in collapse of the program. This will decrease the leverage any one donor has over a project or program. To that end, private donations may not be used to directly pay salaries because this could cause a conflict of interest for employees. Finally, acknowledgment of all donors must be made publicly available, and donations must be properly accounted for in all financial reporting.

By employing private donations to increase funding, the OSCE can better resource their existing missions and the Secretariat, as well as supplement more missions and activities. And, with more donations available to pay for the non-salary line-items of the OSCE budget, the OSCE could offer more competitive salaries from its permanent budget.

## **5. Extend Budget Terms to Promote Continuity and Financial Health**

Our generation values a strong multilateral system. Therefore, we recognize the need for the OSCE to attract and retain talent, as well as reliably fund its activities. Without strong and sound financial infrastructure, the OSCE will not be able to command the resources it needs to make meaningful contributions to European security. Ignoring the OSCE’s precarious financial stability constitutes a strategic mistake because future generations will lose trust in the organization’s ability to deliver on its programs and promises. By laying the foundation for extended budgets, as well as a roll-

over policy, we seek to reimagine the OSCE as a reliable pillar of European security, rather than a resource deficient organization suffocating under its own inability to pass a budget.

Since the outbreak of Russia's war in Ukraine in February 2022, Russia has taken the OSCE hostage by abusing the consensus mechanism to halt the passage of the budget. The lack of a normal operating budget forces the OSCE to meet their financial needs through "monthly allotments," which is unsustainable in the long run for an organization of this size and scope, and negatively impacts the OSCE's credibility worldwide.<sup>86</sup>

*5.1 The OSCE should adopt a two-year budget and only require consensus for new budget items and not previously agreed-upon line-items for existing programs.*

In 2022, the United States spoke at the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna and offered a series of suggestions and calls to actions. Notably, the United States emphasized that extra-budgetary programs are only a short-term solution for the OSCE's funding dilemma. They suggested adopting a two-year budget and an "automatic rollover process that requires consensus only for new commitments."<sup>87</sup> These two recommendations presented by the United States are an excellent starting point for OSCE budget reform. And, as indicated in the U.S.'s statement, reforms already have traction among OSCE participating states.<sup>88</sup> We agree that extending the budgetary cycle would allow for further de-politicization of the mechanics of the Organization because member states would be encouraged to think deeply about the long-term implications of holding up a budget proposal.

Furthermore, the OSCE's missions and the Secretariat rely on highly educated and capable employees whose credentials qualify them for much more lucrative jobs, particularly in the private sector. For example, an OSCE position posted for Economic Advisor (P3) in Vienna offers a yearly salary of about \$94,000. While this is competitive pay, it requires at least 6 years of experience and language skills. In the private sector, particularly for those working in financial institutions, someone with six years of economic policy experience could easily earn well over six figures in an advisory or investment role.<sup>89</sup> While many people who pursue public sector work decided to forego private sector income to pursue a more altruistic and, arguably, more impactful career, that does not mean that they will accept ambiguity around when or if they get their next paycheck. If the OSCE cannot credibly commit to paying their employees in the long run because of budgetary disputes and an inability to reach a consensus, the OSCE risks losing talent. If the quality of the people the OSCE employs decreases, so too will the quality of the OSCE's work and, therefore, its credibility in the field as well as in the international arena. A two-year budgetary cycle would give employees peace of mind that their paychecks will continue to arrive, even during times of extreme political tension amongst the 57 countries.

The U.S. proposal also tackled the issue of a consensus vote each year to renew line items from the previous budget, as well as approve new measures. We agree with the U.S. that introducing a roll-over clause for existing budget items increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE's budgetary process. Because countries already consented to these line-items in previous years, it is inefficient to revisit them yearly. Unless there is a recession or a diversion of resources due to an invasion or economic unrest, most countries' economic situations and priorities do not drastically shift from year to year. And most of these programs are going to be renewed for the next budgetary cycle anyway. The only budget items potentially requiring a consensus vote are new expenditures and sunsets of old programs. Otherwise, countries should continue funding an inflation-adjusted rate based on their pledged amount. This allows for more continuity and security in the budget so that member states can focus more on policy and less on payment.

## **6. Reform the Permanent Council to Stimulate Dialogue and Co-operation**

Our generation values global connectivity. While we understand the importance of formal communication and signaling, we are also intimately aware that informal communication is key to breaking down barriers and finding compromise. Just as personal arguments become murky and difficult to resolve when a degree of separation exists between the communicators, such as communicating via text or instant messaging, delegations will not be able to resolve international crises just by reading pre-approved statements to stakeholders at the Permanent Council meetings. Ambassadors and their staff must foster interpersonal dialogue and move beyond grandstanding to meaningful conversation which occurs organically in more informal settings.

PC meetings are undoubtedly a meaningful venue for participating states to reaffirm their respective positions to fellow delegates and other relevant audiences, as well as engage in discussion. However, the PC meetings, as they stand, suffer from inefficiency and rigidity. When individual delegations unilaterally delivered their statements, we observed much grand-standing, redundancy, and a lack of productive dialogue. We believe participating delegates' time would be spent more productively if reforms were made to the structure and culture of the PC meetings.

### *6.1 The Chair should encourage participating states to give joint statements.*

Not only would this measure cut down on redundancy and talking time, but it would also encourage co-operation and coalition building among participating nations. Given that participating states often use similar language during their statements, implementation of this recommendation would be feasible. Joint statements would also provide an additional opportunity for states to discuss their positions in-depth and find common ground. Consensus-building through joint statements has the potential to contribute to a more cooperative atmosphere at PC meetings.

*6.2 The Chair-in-Office should institute 20-minute breaks between topics on the agenda where participating states are encouraged to engage in informal dialogue and find common ground.*

Delegations could use the time saved by joint statements to participate in other coalition-building activities. Particularly, when reimagining the PC, we envision a permanent body where nations not only signal their positions, but also engage in active and productive dialogue.

No one expects countries to find compromises for these complex issues during 20-minute breaks between topics on the PC agenda. However, we believe that these unmoderated breaks would allow countries to begin conversations that they could continue outside of the PC; sometimes gathering in the same room to start these conversations can be politically sensitive in other venues. We strive to turn the PC into a space where all countries are encouraged to engage freely with each other and where ambassadors feel comfortable engaging with countries that they may not have invited to a formal meeting outside of the PC. We believe in the power of informal dialogue, interpersonal relationships and proximity when seeking compromise and understand that these must be prioritized for the multilateral system to thrive.

*6.3 In the context of Recommendation 1.5 which suggests livestreaming PC meetings, live streams should be paused during these unmoderated breaks.*

We want countries to take risks with each other and push for co-operation. Public scrutiny during such delicate conversations would hinder the negotiation process and may push countries towards rigidity, rather than compromise because leaders do not want to seem like they are stepping away from their positions or engaging with unsavory countries.

## **Conclusion**

The OSCE has been an important component of the world's security framework since its beginnings as the CSCE in 1975. As the world's largest regional security organization,<sup>90</sup> our generation values the infrastructure the OSCE provides for security, dialogue, and co-operation. However, the ongoing European security crisis has exposed some of the weaknesses of the current architecture of the OSCE. We wish to preserve the longevity of the Organization by reimagining it for the coming generation and modern international climate while maintaining the central spirit of the Organization. Our recommendations reflect our generation's ambition to use international organizations as tools for security to take effective and pragmatic action on the issues we care about.

We designed each recommendation to align with values that are closely held by our generation. First, we hope to harness the power of social media, by expanding the OSCE's social engagement, releasing more information in different languages to the general public, and streaming PC sessions. This would touch on our generation's desire for strong and open communication and interaction with massive information coming from across the globe. Second, we aim to expand the OSCE's work on the environment by establishing a fourth dimension focused on environmental security and establishing an environmental mandate for every current and future mission. This would demonstrate interest in the issues that our generation believes are most fundamental and potentially provide a platform for us to act upon. Third, we wish to enact commonsense administrative reforms by creating a consensus minus two-rule for electing the OSCE's Chair-in-Office, allowing private funding, and extending the budget cycle. This would address our generation's frustration with existing bureaucratic inadequacy and allow the OSCE to continue and hopefully function better for future generations. Finally, we want to stimulate dialogue and co-operation by encouraging joint statements and establishing frequent breaks in the Permanent Council. These reforms reimagine the OSCE as an organization that is socially aware, responsive to current events and opinions, administratively functional, and supportive of frank discussion. These recommendations reflect the spirit of what our generation values and searches for in multilateral organizations, and we hope that their implementation will allow the OSCE to become a stronger pillar of European security moving forward.

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<sup>90</sup> “Why the OSCE Matters,” U.S. Mission to the OSCE, June 30, 2023, [https://osce.usmission.gov/our-relationship/why-the-osce-matters/#:~:text=The%20Organization%20for%20Security%20and%20Cooperation%20in%20Europe%20\(OSCE\)%20is,and%2011%20additional%20partner%20countries.](https://osce.usmission.gov/our-relationship/why-the-osce-matters/#:~:text=The%20Organization%20for%20Security%20and%20Cooperation%20in%20Europe%20(OSCE)%20is,and%2011%20additional%20partner%20countries.)