

# OSCE Guide on Non-military Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)



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*Previous Page:* The OSCE Mission to Skopje supports confidence building between all communities and the police. Skopje, 21 July 2010. (OSCE Mission to Skopje).

# Introduction

The origins of many contemporary non-military confidence-building measures (CBMs) can be traced to the early work of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Indeed, its 1975 Helsinki Final Act, 1986 Stockholm Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) and Disarmament in Europe, and 1990 Vienna Document (subsequently modernized in 1992, 1994 and 1999) put the Organization at the forefront in employing such measures as essential tools in building and maintaining confidence in different phases of conflict. While many of the measures developed in the earlier years were more focused on hard security and geared towards inter-State relations, and in particular towards reducing the potential outbreak of military confrontation, non-military CBMs are increasingly seen as providing an essential additional bridge to sustainable peace – especially, but not exclusively, in intra-State conflicts/crises such as those found in the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus, Moldova and elsewhere.

Discussions during the ‘Corfu Process’, launched in June 2009, as well as during the 2011 ‘V to V Dialogue’ have often highlighted the importance of CBMs (and CSBMs). Noteworthy, two separately focused workshops held in May 2011 as part of the ‘V to V Dialogue’ (the OSCE Chairmanship Workshop on Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and the OSCE Chairmanship Workshop on Economic and Environmental Activities as Confidence Building Measures) both highlighted the merit of developing a CBM Guide. Furthermore, Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 on ‘Elements of the Conflict Cycle, Related to Enhancing the OSCE’s Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation’, adopted in Vilnius in December 2011, *inter alia*, “encourages participating States and, within the framework of their mandate, the OSCE executive structures to make greater use of confidence-building and confidence- and security-building measures (CBMs and CSBMs), including those

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involving civil society representatives, across the three dimensions of security, in all phases of the conflict cycle and as agreed by participating States directly concerned”.

The success of CBMs is directly linked to the involvement of the parties to the conflict/crisis, for it is they who must agree to the modalities of CBMs and should derive the benefit from them. Not only is local ownership the key to success, its absence is very often a main cause of failure (i.e., the lack of mutual political will to implement CBMs in good faith). While the international community cannot solve the parties’ lack of political will, it can play an important enabling role, including through assistance in the design of CBMs and capacity building, provision of neutral verification and problem solving, administrative/logistical support and assistance in implementing complementary activities.

With the above in mind, this Guide has been prepared by the OSCE Secretariat’s Conflict Prevention Centre/Operations Service, in consultation with the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and OSCE field operations. It is provided for policymakers and practitioners who seek to develop and implement effective CBMs. It is hoped that this Guide will inspire new CBM initiatives in all dimensions across the OSCE area, and encourage the further development of CBMs that are already in place.

To that end, the Guide consists of three Chapters. In Chapter 1, the conceptual framework is laid out, covering, *inter alia*, what non-military CBMs are, their historical development, their relationship with CSBMs and other conflict-related measures as well as the nature, characteristics and limitations of CBMs. Chapter 2 includes practical guidance on developing and implementing CBMs and includes such topics as the factors to be taken into account when designing CBMs, the pitfalls to avoid, how to ensure local ownership and the role of international third parties. Finally, Chapter 3 includes ten examples of past and current CBMs implemented by the OSCE in its different regions and dimensions. The examples seek to give a more in-depth look at CBMs carried out in practice, highlighting different challenges and lessons learned.

The Guide seeks to provide information rather than prescriptions: its content should be applied with commonsense and judgement, and according to the specific circumstances in which a CBM is being or may be implemented. The Guide is intended as a living document; it may be reviewed and refined on a regular basis. Suggested improvements are welcome, and should be forwarded to the Operations Service of the Conflict Prevention Centre.

*Next Page:* The billboard in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë showing co-operation between the group of Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbian members of the Local Public Safety Committee (LPSC) and Kosovo police. The OSCE-supported project, organized in 2010, aimed to utilize the public awareness approach as an inter-ethnic CBM. (OSCE Mission in Kosovo)

should continue after the completion of the project. These meetings can help to reduce disputes over alleged misuse of water resources.

Joint cultural events, like friendship festivals, joint cleaning days ('sub-otniki'), sport tournaments, etc., organized in the framework of the project further contributed to cross-border confidence-building. Previous project activities showed that communities from both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan participate in such joint events with high interest.

Building in basic CBM elements like the exchange of information and people-to-people contacts in the project helped to create the conditions in which the capacity building project for the WUAs could be carried out and which then in turn could be further used to build confidence on water management issues.

The project shows how successful cross-border confidence building can be carried out on the community level on an issue which is potentially a source of inter-State as well as of inter-community tension. The project will not and cannot solve larger issues like disputes over national discharge quotas. However, by increasing transparency and reducing tensions on the level of affected communities, it can contribute to settling such issues by improving the environment for top-level negotiations.

## **10. Training on fighting forest fires in the South Caucasus (Environmental)**

Wildfires affecting forests and other vegetation pose a severe problem in the South Caucasus. Wildfires, if not well managed, can pose not only immediate risk to the population of the surrounding area but can have serious consequences in terms of increased threat of landslides, mudflows or floods. Wildfires and wildfire smoke can easily spread over boundaries and thus fire management might become an additional source of contention in already strained relations. Hence, because of the transboundary nature of wildfires and their potential impact, co-operating on fire management across borders is in the interest of all sides involved. Thus, like water management, fire-management might be a source of co-operation and an avenue for confidence-building.

With this in mind, the OCEEA, in co-operation with the German-based Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), is conducting a capacity-building project for fire fighters in the South Caucasus (OSCE-led ENVSEC project "Enhancing National Capacity in Fire Management and Wildfire Disaster

Risk Reduction in the South Caucasus”). This project is based on the outcomes of the “OSCE-led Environmental Assessment Mission to fire affected territories in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region” in 2006 and the “Joint OSCE/UNEP Environmental Assessment Mission to Georgia” in 2008, and conducted in the framework of the ENVSEC Initiative.

While the project is not explicitly established for confidence-building purposes it nevertheless contains a confidence-building component. It focuses on building national capacity and undertaking field assessments as the basis for the development of national forest fire management policies in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

In the framework of this project, a regional fire management training workshop was held in Antalya, Turkey, with participation of 30 representatives from the fire-fighting agencies and forest services of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. During the training participants conducted field exercises, discussed forest fire hazards in their

Participants in a regional fire management training workshop, held in Antalya with representation from the fire-fighting agencies and forest services of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. (OSCE/OCEEA)





regions and were introduced to best practices in fire management drawn from Turkey and several participating countries.

By bringing together experts from several countries dealing with trans-boundary threats like wildfires, this project has opened new communication channels and laid the foundation for technical co-operation in case of future wildfires. This helps to build confidence in three ways. First, the interpersonal contacts facilitated by the projects can contribute to build co-operative people-to-people contacts. Second, such projects can facilitate the establishment of communication channels between the relevant institutions. Third, these communication channels can (1) enable co-operation between such institutions in preventing and fighting fires and (2) help to increase transparency in case of fires.

The experience gained in this project reveals that such regional undertakings require continuous and stable dialogue between the participating countries and the facilitating organizations in order to successively build relationships both institutionally and personally between experts. Thus, multi-year projects are needed to ensure sustainable confidence- building. The effectiveness of such projects also requires the involvement of, and consultation with national counterparts at all stages of project conceptualization, formulation, implementation and monitoring. In this case, the ENVSEC National Focal Points in each country representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment are actively involved in the project cycle.

Another lesson learned from this experience is that the implementing organizations involved in such projects should have reputations as independent, neutral and technically recognized bodies.

The involvement and harmonization of work with other international agencies, institutions and networks are also equally important. In the case of promoting regional co-operation in fire management, the harmonization with the outreach activities of the UNECE and the Council of Europe has created positive synergies among all project stakeholders.

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Non-military confidence-building measures (CBMs) are tools that may be used, *inter alia*, to lower tensions and make it less likely that a conflict might break out, to foster trust and bridge dividing lines and to change perceptions and expectations. Confidence is best built by combining several CBMs reaching out to different layers in an incremental, cumulative process. They can be especially constructive when an integral part of a comprehensive approach, with CBMs being applied alongside other conflict prevention and resolution measures.

This Guide is provided for policymakers and practitioners who seek to develop and implement effective CBMs. It is hoped that this Guide will inspire new CBM initiatives in all dimensions across the OSCE area, and encourage the further development of CBMs that are already in place. It seeks to provide information rather than prescriptions: its content should be applied with commonsense and judgement, and according to the specific circumstances in which a CBM is being or may be implemented.