

Highlights from the Call for Action – Helsinki+50 third meeting on “The role of the OSCE in addressing the war in Ukraine and its consequences”¹

Wednesday, 22 June 2022, 14:30 – 17:00 CEST, Zoom

Main points raised by panellists:

- Highlighted that the war in Ukraine continues to have devastating effects on the civilian population as well as the environment, economy, and security of the entire region;
- Recounted how, even amongst the war, civilians extend kindness and humanity to their fellow citizens and environment.
- Stated that the war has created a new security environment with far-reaching consequences on the sovereignty and common defence of states beyond Ukraine;
- Reflected that the OSCE mission to preserve security is more important than ever;
- Recalled the history of OSCE involvement in Ukraine including the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) and the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU) which provided the “eyes and ears” on the ground and strengthened Ukraine’s democratic institutions throughout the course of their mandates;
- Regretted that the OSCE presence in Ukraine is coming to an end without consensus on extending the SMM or PCU, as was announced at the 23 June Permanent Council;
- Hoped that the OSCE would continue active engagement in Ukraine through different means including the direct involvement of the OSCE Institutions as well as possible extra-budgetary projects, and called for participating state flexibility and help in funding these possible projects;
- Compared the “Justice” (full defeat of Russia,) and “Peace” (compromise between the two sides,) approaches to ending the conflict each with benefits and drawbacks. The “Justice” approach would be fairer but exact a higher human cost while the “peace” approach would be unfair but minimise lives lost;
- Recognised that this conflict will most likely end through negotiations after a stalemate;
- Demonstrated how public support for the “Justice” approach was strongest in Poland, the Baltic states, the United States, and United Kingdom;
- Showed the Turkish and Hungarian public are out of step with the rest, more likely to reject additional sanctions, supplying weapons, and military involvement;

¹ The Highlights from the OSCE PA Call for Action - Helsinki +50 Meetings are not intended to be official conclusions, nor an exhaustive list of all issues or suggestions raised during the debate, but rather a compilation of points recorded for possible future reference. As this compilation is not exhaustive, any comments or suggested additions are welcome.

- Demonstrated that public support for Ukraine’s EU accession was increasing;
- Established that support for pragmatic foreign policy that involve working with non-like-minded states was increasing along with backing for “interest-driven” policies;
- Cautioned that the United States shows increasingly isolationist tendencies;
- Concluded by stating that large majorities support an active role for their country in finding peace and resolving international tensions.

General suggestions:

- Supported new, more flexible projects in Ukraine that could require extra-budgetary support to replace the previous missions in this time of critical need;
- Encouraged co-operation between the “justice” and “peace” perspectives to foster western unity, essential to keep up the pressure and end the war;
- Discouraged the promotion of an autocracy versus democracy dichotomy that threatens European unity on common security;
- Attendees questioned Russia’s role in international affairs and in relation to their country’s economy both during and after the conflict has ended;

Recommendations by individual participants:

- Sought increased OSCE and OSCE-PA action on mediation and post-conflict reconstruction efforts;
- Urged MPs not to use “soft” language to describe the war to be consistent and not obscure its illegality and immorality;
- Called for Russia to be excluded from the OSCE, saying that this international system failed to prevent the war;
- Called on states to impose more sanctions to further isolate Russia from the international community and global economy.
- Called for more energy security and clean energy investment as Europe feels pressure from their sanctions on Russian energy;
- Urged increased financing to international organisations like the OSCE while avoiding duplication to ensure accurate information and co-operation for peace;
- Suggested sanctioning countries that refuse to impose sanctions on Russia, including China and India;
- Called on the OSCE to have a stronger role in Ukraine and in conflict prevention;
- Called for more states to adopt the “justice approach” and not allow Russia to gain from their war of aggression, urging states not to give way to “war fatigue”;
- Urged attendees to consider amendments to the international peace framework at the annual session in Birmingham;

Matters of information raised by individual participants:

- Attendees were informed that UK MP John Whittingdale will become the special rapporteur on war crimes in Ukraine to press for accountability for violations of humanitarian law;
- Participants were also informed of the appointment of a Special Representative for Parliamentary Dialogue around peace in Ukraine;
- Stated that Türkiye will continue to use strong ties to Russia and Ukraine to try to act as an intermediary and foster peace;
- Highlighted that lack of Ukrainian grain in markets threatens a global food crisis;
- Informed attendees of Portugal's increased aid to Ukraine and support for refugees.