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**THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE IN MAINTAINING PEACE
AND CONFIDENCE**

Abstract. This article analyzes the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in maintaining peace and trust in the European region. In particular, the author examines the main formats of the OSCE's work such as the Minsk Group, the Transnistrian settlement, the Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Mission in Skopje and examines the experience of this work. According to the author, the OSCE activities are commendable, but many conflicts have not yet been resolved, due to the fact that OSCE decisions are not binding, the absence of a statute of the Organization, and an unbalanced internal institutional mechanism.

Keywords: armed conflicts, regional security, conflict resolution, OSCE, principle of mutual assistance

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ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ПО БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ И СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВУ В ЕВРОПЕ В ПОДДЕРЖАНИИ МИРА И ДОВЕРИЯ

Аннотация. В статье анализируется деятельность Организации по безопасности и сотрудничеству в Европе (ОБСЕ) по поддержанию мира и доверия в европейском регионе, который на протяжении многих веков был и остается местом кровавых конфликтов и войн. В частности, рассматриваются основные форматы работы ОБСЕ, такие как Минская группа, Приднестровское урегулирование, Миссия в Боснии и Герцеговине, Миссия в Скопье, и анализируется опыт этой работы. По мнению автора, деятельность ОБСЕ заслуживает высокой оценки, однако многие конфликты до сих пор не урегулированы, что связано с тем, что решения ОБСЕ не имеют обязательной силы, отсутствует устав Организации, несбалансирован внутренний организационный механизм.

Ключевые слова: вооруженные конфликты, региональная безопасность, решение конфликта, ОБСЕ, принцип взаимопомощи

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Europe, as a geographical and political space, has been and remains the site of bloody conflicts and wars for many centuries. As V.A. Mesestnikov, “the very names of these wars characterize their scale: Seven Years, Thirty Years, Centennials, World War I, World War II. If in the wars of the XVII century. in Europe, 3 million people died, and in the XVIII century – 5 million, then the losses in the First World War amounted to 10 million people. World War II snuffed out 55 million lives. Noting the fact that both world wars began in Europe, the main battles of these wars took place on European soil and the main human losses were suffered by the European countries» [1, с. 4]. The other equally bloody pages of European history at the turn of the XX–XXI centuries should be noted here: the Cyprus conflict (1974 – present), the war in Yugoslavia (1991–2001), etc.

Concerning the flared conflicts in the post-Soviet space, most of them have not yet been resolved: the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Transnistrian dispute,

Abkhazian South Ossetian armed conflict and differences in eastern Ukraine, the Chechen wars, Tajik conflict, etc.

All this together creates a need for maintaining peace, good-neighborly relations between European countries, ensuring collective security and introducing institutions and mechanisms for resolving conflicts that have arisen. The main such international body in Europe and modern space is the OSCE organization.

The OSCE (before January 1, 1995 – CSCE) was established by the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki, 1975). This act is a fundamental document declaring the principles of relations and key agreements of the participating countries: «the consolidation of the political and territorial results of the Second World War, a statement of the principles of relations between the participating states, including the principle of inviolability of borders; territorial integrity of states; non-interference in the internal affairs of foreign states, etc.»¹.

The OSCE is currently working to prevent the emergence of conflicts and promote a lasting, comprehensive political settlement of existing conflicts. It also contributes to peace consolidation and post-conflict reconstruction. To this end, it works with all relevant parties, including partner international and regional organizations such as the United Nations. The OSCE is a cornerstone in preventing conflicts and then as a rule – a post-conflict reconstruction, crisis management tool and, also referred to as the «conflict cycle». The OSCE, in order to maintain regional peace and confidence, operates in several main formats:

1. Minsk group. In this format, the OSCE is looking for a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the participation of the co-chairs of France, the United States and the Russian Federation.

2. Transnistrian settlement. At the moment, the OSCE, with the participating parties (the Republic of Moldova and the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic), is looking for a solution to the Pridnestrovian conflict. This format also assumes the participation of the co-chairs in the person of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the OSCE itself, as well as observers in the person of the United States and the European Union. Returnees, in particular Bosniaks in Republika Srpska, face intimidation and discrimination, including in the areas of education and employment, and face hostile refusals to acknowledge past grievances and perpetuate the memory of the victims.

3. Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite the long-term end of the conflict, formalized by the signing of the Dayton Accords in 1995, tensions in

¹ Совещание по безопасности и сотрудничеству в Европе. Заключительный акт [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/c/39505_1.pdf (дата обращения: 28.05.2021).

Bosnia and Herzegovina caused by the complex ethno-confessional composition and political structure of the state still persist. As the US Mission to the OSCE notes, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the collective privilege of selected groups may take precedence over the individual rights of citizens. The widespread acceptance of ethnicity in government and political life has created the paradox that some citizens are actually not allowed to work in government offices because of their ethnicity. Agreements on the division of power along ethnic lines formalize discrimination even for appointed positions, making it impossible for those who, on all other grounds, are entitled to hold office in power. Returnees, in particular Bosniaks in Republika Srpska, face intimidation and discrimination, including in the areas of education and employment, and face hostile refusals to acknowledge past grievances and perpetuate the memory of the victims¹.

4. Mission to Skopje. North Macedonia became one of two countries, along with Slovenia, that managed to get out of the Yugoslav crisis without crucial battles. Equally in the late 1990s, tensions began to escalate over the Albanian-populated regions of the north and north-east of the state. These events reached their climax in 2001, when armed clashes between Albanian separatists and Macedonian law enforcement agencies took place. In this regard, in order to prevent further escalation of the conflict and its resolution, an OSCE mission was established the capital of North Macedonia in Skopje. Despite the fact that a solution to the conflict was achieved in the political field, the risk of new clashes is still high, an example of which can be seen in the clashes in the city of Kumanovo in 2015.

In our opinion, the OSCE's activities in maintaining regional peace and confidence should be highly appreciated. The OSCE has prepared a Handbook on Non-Military Confidence-Building Measures. As the preamble of this document states, «the purpose of the Guide is to provide information, not ready-made prescriptions: its content should be used with common sense, in a balanced manner, and taking into account the specific circumstances in which a particular confidence-building measure is or may be carried out»², and as well as a number of other documents serving as guidance for both military personnel and civilian authorities of conflicting states and entities. It is unpleasant to look on the OSCE declining influence on resolving contemporary conflicts. It reflects in inability to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict over the entire period of its existence, acting inconsistently and uncertainly. This circumstance became the reason for the actual removal of the Minsk Group from the settlement of the conflict following the war in the region in 2020. The situation is also complicated by the fact that de

¹ Толерантность и недискриминация [Электронный ресурс] // Миссия США при ОБСЕ. URL: <https://osce.usmission.gov/ru/tolerance-non-discrimination-statement-working-session-10-hdim-2016-ru/> (дата обращения: 28.05.2021).

² Совещание по безопасности и сотрудничеству в Европе. Заключительный акт.

jure decisions of the OSCE are not binding. The absence of the Organization's Charter, the imbalance in the internal organizational mechanism lead to negative results in the practical application of the existing Organization's means in maintaining the security in the region facing challenges and threats.

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