

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

30 May 2023

UN Headquarters, New York, (Room 12)

Concept Note

Background

In response to the call made by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres on the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace to transform the “moment of crisis into a moment for multilateralism”, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), together with the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, with the support of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of North Macedonia to the UN, representing the 2023 OSCE Chairpersonship, and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the UN, will host a panel discussion to identify pathways for peace through inclusive multilateralism.

This year, the OSCE HCNM marks the 30th anniversary of the opening of the OSCE HCNM office in The Hague. The position of the High Commissioner on National Minorities serves as a conflict prevention tool to support the OSCE participating States in their efforts to maintain peace, security and stability in the OSCE area. This anniversary offers an opportunity for the HCNM and other regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the UN Secretariat and UN Member States to take stock of different experiences and approaches to preventive diplomacy with a particular focus on the sustainable integration of diverse societies.

Objective

As regional organizations play a crucial role in preventive diplomacy and the promotion of resilient societies, the objective of this event is to continue dialogue on the sustainable integration of diverse societies and enhance partnerships between regional organizations on preventive diplomacy.

Participants will be invited to reflect on inclusive policies to more effectively achieve the commitment of ‘Leave No One Behind’, which is central to justice, peace and stability principles at the core of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Special emphasis will be placed on policies that focus on integration and ensuring the effective participation of all members of society in public life and the socio-economic sphere, with a special focus on national minorities, particularly national minority women and youth.



Concept

Globally, wars, conflicts and violence are on the rise with peace more under threat than it has been since World War II. It was during a similar challenging period in the 1980s and 1990s that diplomatic and multilateral efforts led to the creation of a plethora of regional initiatives to address the underlying tensions in violent conflicts rooted around claims of marginalization and exclusion of national minorities, or the instrumentalization of such claims. This led not only to the establishment of the OSCE HCNM's conflict prevention mandate, but also to the adoption of regional and global multilateral mechanisms and instruments such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Thirty years on, the global security landscape is again challenging. The claims of marginalization and struggles over inclusion, identity issues, and socio-economic participation are at the core of numerous contemporary conflicts. Divisions and a further escalation of tensions are often triggered by the politicization of issues such as the use of language – or its denial, and education; they are also often linked with a struggle around socio-economic resources and inclusion.

It is against this background that efforts to prevent crises and conflicts – a priority for the regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and multilateral diplomacy in general – need to be scaled up and adapted to the new nature of conflicts. This shift is in many ways challenging for regional and multilateral organizations which have traditionally focused on preventing and managing inter-State conflicts. As the first UN-World Bank Group joint report “Pathways to Peace” makes clear, it is only by refocusing the international community's attention on prevention that the goal set by the international community to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals can be met. This will require inclusive approaches to conflict prevention at the regional and global levels. Inclusive societies, and multilateral and diplomatic efforts to achieve these, are among the main pathways to address central issues such as exclusion from access to power, opportunity, services, and security to avoid the fertile ground for mobilizing group grievances, and their exploitation and instrumentalization.

In the experience of the OSCE HCNM and the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, one of the most effective tools to prevent this type of modern conflict is to implement policies that promote the integration of diverse societies and the effective participation of national minorities. The OSCE HCNM has accumulated a wealth of experience in managing diversity in society, and successive High Commissioners have produced a comprehensive set of [thematic Recommendations and Guidelines](#), based on best practices and lessons learned, in how to



achieve inclusive societies for all and avoid the instrumentalization of grievances related to national minorities. The review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular SDG 8 (Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all), SDG 16 (Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies) and SDG 17 (Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development), allows us to tackle many aspects of sustainable integration that contribute to building conflict-resilient societies, especially in relation to policies on effective participation in public life and socio-economic inclusion. This event will provide a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and advance understanding of the key policy recommendations and compare these with policies and practices in other regions.

Modalities of the event

The event will be organized with the support of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of North Macedonia to the UN, representing North Macedonia's 2023 OSCE Chair, and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the UN, representing Poland as the member of OSCE Troika. The discussion will resonate with relevant UN SDGs and the OSCE Chairpersonship of North Macedonia's priority to focus on the people. It will consist of a high-level opening session followed by two panels with the participation of representatives of regional organizations and the UN Secretariat, Agencies, Funds and Programmes. All UN Member States and observers will be invited to attend.

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