

CSIS-IND TASK FORCE

Supporting Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship Agenda



ABOUT THE PROJECT

In March 2009, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Institute for New Democracies (IND) launched an initiative to assist Kazakhstan in shaping its 2010 OSCE chairmanship agenda. The initiative is supported through a grant from the government of Kazakhstan. The CSIS-IND Task Force brings together policymakers, regional specialists, experts from non-governmental organizations, representatives of former OSCE chairing countries, and business leaders to offer recommendations for shaping a compelling and focused agenda for Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship. The *CSIS-IND Task Force* consists of two working groups in Washington, D.C. and in Astana. This Policy Brief benefited substantively from the inputs of the Washington Task Force but does not represent the views of any specific individual or the government of Kazakhstan.

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Challenges to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2010

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Executive Summary

The major challenge facing Kazakhstan during its chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010 will be to preserve the mandate of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which has been contested by Russia and several CIS participating states. At the OSCE Madrid Ministerial Meeting in November 2007, which designated Kazakhstan as OSCE chairman in 2010, Kazakhstan committed itself to protect the OSCE's core human dimension mandate, including the autonomy and current mandate of ODIHR.

Kazakhstan's performance during its OSCE chairmanship in 2010 will be a test for the potential selection of other non-EU post-Soviet states to chair the OSCE in the future. Continuation of domestic reforms in the areas of human rights and democracy will be critical for Kazakhstan, the OSCE, and all participating states from the CIS region.

During 2010 the OSCE will have to address several important issues in the security basket, including conflicts in Moldova and the Caucasus, the future of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, and Russia's proposal for a new European security pact. Although negotiating conflicting interests will be challenging, Kazakhstan with its "multi-vector" foreign policy may be in a good position to seek consensus if it can skillfully balance its approach.

Amidst these challenges, Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship has a strong potential to enhance regional cooperation in Central Asia. To maximize its position as OSCE Chair, Kazakhstan should address border management issues, including delineation, joint management, demilitarization, and demining. The Kazakh Chairmanship can prioritize enhanced cooperation on anti-narcotics and anti-trafficking activities as well as facilitate cooperation on migration. The OSCE can also provide a forum in which energy pipeline security is discussed and enhanced between participating member states.

Introduction

In November 2007, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) designated Kazakhstan as its Chairman-in-Office (CiO) for the year 2010. Kazakhstan became the first country of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to be given this responsibility, thus marking the commitment of OSCE to apply a system of incentives by assigning leadership positions to key transitional countries that are members of the OSCE. The choice was a controversial one, as OSCE members had to deal with countervailing pressures where the US and EU expressed concern that the OSCE support for democratic principles could be compromised. Kazakhstan faces two key challenges as it prepares to serve as the CiO: developing a compelling agenda for its chairmanship and pursuing and consolidating democratic reforms inside the country, including implementation of specific commitments Kazakhstan made at the 2007 OSCE Ministerial Meeting.

Kazakhstan's chairmanship presents important opportunities and significant challenges to both Astana and the OSCE. For 34 years the OSCE has operated as the largest regional security organization with three specific areas of concern: security, the economy, and the human dimension. In addition to its work on promoting cooperation in politico-military security, and its efforts to promote a healthy economic environment, the OSCE also has a mandate to enhance human rights protection and democratic reforms throughout the OSCE region, even though the primary responsibility for the implementation of OSCE commitments, including human rights, falls

to participating States. Over the years, the organization has evolved from a vehicle for dialogue between West and East during the Cold War to a comprehensive mechanism for advancing international cooperation based on commitments agreed to by all member states in a consensual process.

Today the organization is faced with important questions about its future that range from enhancing its security dimension and addressing existing threats faced by member states to strengthening its human dimension by drawing in countries that lag behind in implementing democratic reforms consistent with their OSCE commitments. This will be a challenge for the Kazakh CiO, as well as for the OSCE as a whole. For the first time a country that is widely considered to have a semi-authoritarian or supra-presidential political system will be chairing an organization tasked with promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. At the same time, Kazakhstan has the opportunity to focus the attention of OSCE on Central Asia, a region experiencing pervasive problems with economic development, water management, environmental deterioration, border security, trafficking, and human rights protection.

This Policy Brief will examine the current challenges facing the OSCE and Kazakhstan and the possible ways of addressing them in 2010. The document intends to provide a larger framework for discussion that will be developed in the next three CSIS-IND Policy Briefs that will focus on each of the three OSCE baskets.



OSCE Overview

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the largest regional security organization with 56 participating states. It was established as the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975 with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act by 35 Heads of State.

The Helsinki Final Act was a landmark agreement establishing the concept of comprehensive security based on three major areas of cooperation between West and East: politico-military, economic and environmental, and the human dimension. The accord also established a framework for economic cooperation between East and West, formally recognized the two German states, and led to the renunciation of nuclear weapons by West Germany.

Talks on establishing the CSCE were first initiated by Warsaw Pact leaders. However, the final results went far beyond Moscow's objectives of achieving favorable security arrangements and gaining economic benefits as some Western leaders insisted that the protection of human and civil rights be included in the accord. Signatory states could no longer shield human rights violations from international scrutiny by claiming that they were internal affairs.

The Helsinki Final Act featured three main sets of principles, or "baskets" based on the principle of comprehensive security:

- Basket I: politico-military, focusing on regional security, exercised collectively, including early warning, conflict prevention and, where needed, crisis management.
- Basket II: economic-environmental dimension, including immigration, economic and social policy.
- Basket III: the human dimension, mainly concerned with human rights.

Since the early 1990s, the 19 new states that emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia joined the OSCE along with Albania and Andorra. The Budapest Summit in December 1994 renamed the CSCE the OSCE and outlined a new course for the organization. The Charter of Paris for the New Europe tasked the organization with managing the complex transitional period in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Eurasia. The OSCE had to develop capacities to respond to the new challenges of the post-Cold War period, which led to the establishment of its permanent institutions and operational capabilities. The OSCE adapted its strategy and programs again after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 with the aim of addressing the emerging security challenges of the 21st century. Presently, the OSCE has over 3,500 employees, 19 field missions, and a budget of approximately 164 million euros.



OSCE Security Basket - Politico-Military Aspects of Security

The OSCE is concerned with enhancing the security of all member states. The threat of terrorist attacks is a risk for all OSCE members and each of these nations is affected by the narcotics trade and by trafficking in persons. Central Asia is a region in which such threats pose an especially large risk, given its proximity to Afghanistan and Pakistan. These threats compound security concerns in a region in which disputes over water management and border delineations continue. Central Asia is also faced by numerous other security problems such as trafficking of narcotics and human beings, and potential social instability that could ultimately lead to state collapse and even foreign intervention. Fortunately, the most serious threats are still latent ones and can be reduced through closer regional cooperation and targeted outside assistance.

Since the end of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the focus of international conflict resolution and conflict management is no longer within the region where NATO and the European Union (EU) are present and active but in the broader Eurasia (the former Soviet Union). Although the potential for political instability and human insecurity is still present in parts of the Balkans, the likelihood for armed conflicts there has drastically diminished.

The focus of attention on conflicts within the OSCE has shifted eastward – to the former Soviet region. The “frozen conflicts” in the Caucasus dating from the early 1990s – in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh – as well as in Moldova (Transnistria) have heated up in the wake of the Russo-Georgian war of August 2008. The situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia challenges core OSCE principles, especially the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity in the OSCE region. The premeditated and unilateral use of force to change national borders is a direct violation of the Helsinki Final Act. Russia violated its OSCE security commitments by deploying troops and assuming *de facto* control over two Georgian regions.

A major challenge facing the OSCE, as the only pan-European security organization, is its diminishing role in greater European security affairs. The last twenty years witnessed the growing importance and enlargement of Western-led organizations such as NATO and the EU and Russia’s development of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), whose operational capacities remain to be tested. Meanwhile, the OSCE has experienced protracted internal feuding concerning its role and mandate that has undermined the OSCE’s role as an agent of confidence-building, security, and democratization.

During the next few years, the OSCE will be involved in addressing major security questions such as the future of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), growing challenges to stability in Moldova, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, and the call by Russia’s authorities for a new European or Eurasian security architecture. The most important work that the OSCE chair can accomplish is to foster consensus among OSCE participating states on the common sources of instability and insecurity and propose a platform to address them.

The original CFE Treaty was negotiated and concluded during the last years of the Cold War. It established comprehensive limits on key categories of conventional military equipment in Europe and mandated the destruction of excess weaponry. The treaty established equal limits of conventional weaponry for the two military blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. It was signed in November 1990 and came into force in July 1992. The treaty included provisions for information exchanges, on-site inspections, challenge inspections, and on-site monitoring of destruction. The treaty facilitated a transparent, large-scale reduction of conventional military equipment in Europe by the end of 1995.

The CFE treaty is not part of the OSCE and not all OSCE participating states are party to it. However, on the margins of the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, the participating states signed an adapted draft CFE treaty. It reflected the different geopolitical situation of the post-Cold War era by setting national and territorial instead of bloc-based limits on conventional armed forces. At the summit, NATO members raised treaty compliance problems related to the continuing deployment of Russian troops and equipment in the “flank” (mainly in the North Caucasus) regions that were in excess of agreed treaty limits, as well as concerns about the continued Russian military presence in Georgia and Moldova.

The adapted treaty was signed by 30 OSCE members and Russia committed itself to withdrawing from Moldova, reducing its equipment levels in Georgia, as well as withdrawing from two bases (including one in Abkhazia), achieving an agreement on the future disposition of the remaining Russian military bases in Georgia and reducing its forces in the flanks to the agreed levels of the Adapted CFE Treaty. These agreements became known as the “Istanbul Commitments” and were included in the 1999 Istanbul Summit Declaration. However, all NATO members refused to ratify the adapted treaty as long as Russia refused to withdraw troops from Georgia and Moldova as agreed. As a result the Istanbul accords have never been implemented and Russia has increasingly rejected them.

Frictions between NATO and Russia over CFE Treaty compliance have been raised in recent years following U.S. plans to utilize small military bases in two new NATO members, Romania and Bulgaria. Russia considered the bases to be a breach of the treaty. Disagreements further deepened as a result of the U.S. intention to build a missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic. In December 2007, Russia suspended its observance of treaty obligations, an unprecedented step with no basis in international law. The problem was exacerbated with the Russo-Georgian war in August 2008 when Russia used its southern flank troops to occupy Abkhazia and South Ossetia and has since retained troops in these Georgian provinces. The future of CFE depends on resolving a number of problems stemming from Russia’s unilateral suspension of its CFE commitments, the attendant regional insecurities, and NATO’s non-ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty, which itself has become dated. Given these circumstances, it seems highly unlikely that Adapted CFE will enter into force in the near future and the OSCE’s role in international security affairs may continue to erode. During the last year, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev

proposed that an “all-European summit” be convened to draft a new European security arrangement, beginning a broad pan-European debate that would lead to a legally binding “European security treaty.” Although the idea has little detail, Russian officials have stated that they seek a legally binding pact enshrining arms control, a commitment not to use force, and guarantees that no single state or group of states can take a dominant role in the continent’s security. This appears to be aimed at undercutting the sovereign decision of any state to join organizations such as NATO. French President Nicolas Sarkozy responded that discussions on any new security arrangements should take place within the OSCE. Under the current Greek OSCE chairmanship, the Informal Meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers in Corfu on June 27-28, 2009 will begin to debate this question and the Ministerial meeting in December 2009 will continue the discussion.

Most recently, Kazakhstan asked the Finnish government to host an OSCE summit in Helsinki in 2010 to consider the Russian security initiative. However, rather than focusing on the NATO or transatlantic arena, where there are no major security concerns, the planned summit could develop OSCE initiatives in managing the zones of insecurity inside the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) or in addressing insecurities that affect the broader OSCE community. The former would involve potential instability in Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine, while the latter would focus on the “arc of instability” stretching across the Middle East to South Asia.

The purpose of any major OSCE security initiative needs to be clearly specified, especially how it would enhance the ability of governments and multi-national groupings to confront major internal and external security challenges. This effort should not become a means for sidelining NATO or undermining existing European security institutions such as the OSCE, or agreements such as the Helsinki Final Act and the CFE treaty. To avoid a potential failure the objective of the summit should not be to forge some over-ambitious European or Eurasian Security Pact or some hazy new security architecture that would simply create confusion without any added value. Kazakhstan must be practical and goal-oriented in its approach and set targets that can be achieved. Attempts to create a “Helsinki plus,” as suggested by President Medvedev, should not result in a “Helsinki minus.” Such a summit can also reaffirm the commitment of OSCE members to the values of the organization, including human rights and democracy. Further, energy security must become a key focus in

any discussions about a new security architecture in the OSCE region, given how many member nations (Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) are involved in the supply and transit of gas to Europe. Any new security architecture should establish and include signatory commitments to legal and regulatory instruments, which help protect the rights of producer, consumer, and transit countries and their citizens.

OSCE Economic and Environmental Basket

Activities in the economic and environmental dimension include the monitoring of developments in this area among participating states with the aim of alerting them to any threat of conflict, as well as assisting in the creation of economic and environmental policies and related initiatives to promote security in the OSCE region.

Climate change, threats to the environment, and resource scarcity have become the focus of virtually every government in the OSCE. Kazakhstan can offer and mobilize some specific solutions in ecological protection and resource sharing in two particular areas: rehabilitating the Aral Sea and dealing more effectively with water management throughout Central Asia. In this context, Astana can look at ways to marshal the prestige of the OSCE to establish a mechanism of consultation and mediation in striking a balance between water and energy usage on the one hand and economic productivity on the other. Although there have been efforts to address these issues within OSCE before, Kazakhstan might have a better chance of success given that it is a part of the affected region.

The projected effects of climate change in the Central Asian region indicate a growing shortage of water, which is likely to have a devastating impact on the region’s economy and could lead to escalating conflicts over water. During its CiO Kazakhstan will be uniquely placed to take a leadership role in establishing a platform for working with other concerned international agencies to foster regional cooperation in dealing with these destabilizing developments. This can be accomplished by pursuing closer relations with all of its neighbors – including non-OSCE member state China – and through the opportunity to develop the OSCE’s role in providing a forum for cooperation and exchange of information and technology.

In the light of the global financial crisis, the OSCE must examine ways in which it can contribute to developing its economic and environmental dimension. Undoubtedly, the main economic challenge is the global recession. However, the problem is too widespread and too deeply rooted to be addressed by any single organization or institution – it requires a global effort by economically significant states. The Greek chairmanship already looked into ways that the OSCE can assist in curbing the financial and economic crisis, but came to the conclusion that there is little that the OSCE can add to the efforts already being pursued by others.

However, Central Asia is experiencing a particular problem deriving from the financial crisis – the return of thousands of labor migrants from Russia. As foreign remittances that supported multi-member families have decreased or ceased altogether, the number of unemployed and poor in the region is dramatically increasing. The OSCE began to address this problem during the 2009 Economic and Environmental Forum, which was dedicated to “Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region.” Kazakhstan will need to expand on this work to see how the OSCE, in cooperation with other international agencies, can contribute to a regional approach to address the retraining, employment, and social challenges associated with loss of income from and return of labor migrants.

Kazakhstan’s priorities for its CiO should also include reinforcing the OSCE’s commitment to developing transportation and transit corridors linking the Central Asian countries with one another and with other OSCE states. This requires facilitation of agreements between neighboring countries, improvement of security of transportation, reliable and transparent customs, and trained civil servants at border crossings. Kazakhstan has already started consultations with other participating states on the theme of the 18th Economic and Ecological Forum: “Promoting good governance at border crossings, improving security of land transportation and facilitation of international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region.” Here too Kazakhstan’s role should include better integration of OSCE efforts in this area with those of other international actors, such as CAREC, the ADB, EBRD, and the World Bank, who are all actively engaged in improving these transport and trade corridors.

As an important oil producing and transit country Kazakhstan can play a significant role in the advancement of the OSCE *Energy Security Dialogue*. OSCE involvement in energy security is based on the 2003 Maastricht Strategy Document agreed in December 2003 at the Maastricht Ministerial Council. This document states that a high level of energy security requires a predictable, reliable, economically acceptable, commercially sound and environmentally friendly energy supply. It also underlines the need to ensure the safety of energy routes. Increased energy demand from emerging markets such as China and India heightens the importance of using available platforms for dialogue on energy security.

The 2006 OSCE Ministerial Council adopted in Brussels a *Decision on Energy Security Dialogue* which assigns the OSCE Permanent Council (PC) and the OSCE Secretariat the task of promoting dialogue on energy security, including producing, transit, and consuming countries. The OSCE concept of energy security goes beyond security of supply to include security of demand and security of transit, as well as energy efficiency.

The OSCE chairmanship can be used as an opportunity to focus and better integrate the efforts of the OSCE as they relate to questions of economic development and environmental protection throughout Central Asia with those of other concerned international actors. The OSCE can contribute to mitigating regional environmental problems, including those relating to the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing site and the Aral Sea area.

OSCE Human Dimension Basket

OSCE participating states have formally committed themselves to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They are expected to abide by the rule of law, to promote the principles of democracy by building, strengthening, and protecting democratic institutions (including free and fair elections), and to promote tolerance throughout the OSCE area. The OSCE has demonstrated the importance with which it regards these issues by creating (in 1990) the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). As the OSCE emphasis on the human rights dimension has increased, ODIHR became one of the most important instruments of the organization. To maximize the effectiveness of the ODIHR, it is important that the OSCE chair remains committed to the organization's democratic standards.

The Parliamentary Assembly has also played a pivotal role in enhancing the implementation of the OSCE democracy agenda through two major instruments: election-monitoring and supervising the work of national parliamentary bodies. As a result of this, the Parliamentary Assembly enhanced the responsiveness of national parliaments and executive bodies to fulfill the commitments made to the OSCE and implement the decisions of OSCE bodies at the national level.

The selection of Kazakhstan as OSCE Chairman brought criticism by human rights organizations, because the country is not in full compliance with international standards in civil and political rights. Kazakhstan is considered by observers and analysts as a semi-authoritarian or supra-presidential polity that is only partially democratized. Since the country was given the responsibility to chair a democratic organization, many have questioned Kazakhstan's ability to lead by example. In addition, past Russian attempts to diminish the role of ODIHR have spurred speculation that Kazakhstan's chairmanship might be used by Russia as a vehicle to achieve its goals to modify and weaken ODIHR's mandate.

At the OSCE Madrid Ministerial Meeting in November 2007, which designated Kazakhstan as OSCE chair for 2010, Kazakhstan committed itself to protect the OSCE's core human dimension mandate, including the autonomy and current mandate of ODIHR, and also to advance specific political reforms in the country before the end of 2008. The two issues, domestic democratic reforms and the preservation of ODIHR mandate, are related but distinct.

In principle, Kazakhstan responded positively to criticisms about its democratic deficiencies. Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin stated in Madrid that the country would reform

its laws on the media, elections and political parties, and local government. The Kazakh *Majilis* (parliament) passed amendments to these laws in 2008 and they came into effect in February 2009. Following the adoption of the new legislation, the U.S. government stated that they marked a step forward on Kazakhstan's path to democracy, but urged Kazakhstan to take further measures to create the conditions for advancing political pluralism. Such a program must include legislation ensuring that all political parties are represented on independent electoral commissions and that registration hurdles for political parties are reduced. Kazakhstan was also encouraged to improve its media legislation to include the decriminalization of libel.

The new legislation on elections preserved the relatively high threshold of seven percent for political parties to enter parliament, but included provisions for a second party to send members to the *Mazhilis*, even if it had not received 7% of the vote. The new provision is an improvement of the law, because it would ensure that at least two parties are presented in parliament. However, it has been criticized as insufficient by Kazakh and international NGOs. Currently Kazakhstan has a one-party parliament controlled by the presidential party Nur Otan. The parliament was elected in 2007, after constitutional changes introduced in May 2007 slightly enhanced parliament's powers. At the same time, more controversially, term limits were removed for the country's founding president, permitting Nursultan Nazarbayev to run for reelection.

The law on political parties was amended to reduce the required membership for registration (from 50,000 to 40,000 members), but created new cumbersome procedures for registering the initiative committees of new political parties. While Kazakhstan certainly has a great deal of serious work to do in the area of political party development and pluralism, Kazakh government officials have stated that this is only the beginning of the reform effort and the reform process will not stop with the recent changes.

As Kazakhstan's government initiated a "follow up mechanism," providing for consultations with ODIHR experts on the implementation of political reforms recommended by the OSCE, the international community has an open window through which to assist, encourage, and even pressure the authorities in Astana.

In 2007 the Constitution was amended to shift some responsibilities from the President to the parliament. For example, the cabinet must now be approved by the parliament. In an effort to reform its judiciary and criminal

justice system, Kazakhstan has introduced jury trials and judicial reviews of arrests, public online access to court records, and improved access to legal council.

The May 2009 report of the U.S.-based Human Rights Watch concluded that Kazakhstan had made modest improvements in human rights, pointing positively to the February 2009 ruling by Kazakhstan's Constitutional Council that a proposed restrictive religion law was unconstitutional due to its vagueness and because it failed "to ensure equality between religious communities" - specifically "religions previously not known in the Republic of Kazakhstan." Human Rights Watch concluded that Kazakhstan needed to do more to respect key rights, including the freedom of expression, religion, and assembly.

As the OSCE Chair, Kazakhstan will be in a pole position to focus on human security, specifically strengthening tolerance and non-discrimination. The Kazakh authorities are proud of their efforts to ensure inter-ethnic and inter-confessional accord and they view this as a significant achievement in the human dimension. Kazakhs believe that ethnic tolerance is a central feature of Kazakh culture that can be shared more broadly within the OSCE community. There are 130 ethnic minority groups in Kazakhstan and their assembly (the Assembly of Nations) is represented by nine members of the Mazhilis.

On another positive note, Kazakh civil society has started to play a more significant role in providing input into government policies, legislation, and program documents. The new program for reform – the National Human Rights Action Plan - 2009-2012, still pending presidential approval, was developed with the input of several local and international organizations working in Kazakhstan. The proposed program presents a comprehensive strategy for reform in key areas – from political liberalization and media freedom to freedom of association and religious beliefs, and recommends further liberalization to the recently amended laws on elections, political parties, and the media.

It is too soon to determine whether the forthcoming OSCE chairmanship will serve as an effective spur for further democratization and some observers have expressed concern that Kazakhstan may be slowing down or even reversing its democratic development, despite modest improvements in the country's legislation. Of particular concern is the recent draft law on the internet, allegations

of torture in Kazakh prisons, and banning from distribution of the controversial book by President Nazarbayev's ex-son in law, Rakhat Aliyev.

The new draft legislation to establish control over the Internet, which was passed by the *Mazhilis* and is currently being considered by the Senate, would subject all Internet content to the restrictions of the media law. The U.S. government has stated that in order to meet OSCE commitments to wider and freer dissemination of information and freedom of expression, a key aspect of which is access to the Internet, Kazakh law should secure such access for all citizens of Kazakhstan. In sum, in order to enhance its role as the OSCE chair, Kazakhstan must pursue its domestic reform program and not introduce any regressive measures.

Although Kazakhstan's political system remains in the early stages of liberalization, the country has developed a relatively secure economic environment for its citizens with opportunities for individual development and small business advancement. Every year the state sponsors 2,000 Kazakh students under the President's Bolashak (Future) program to receive higher education in universities around the world, including the U.S., Western Europe, Japan and Russia. Recently, the number of stipends for foreign education was tripled. This investment in the younger generation is an important way for Kazakhstan to switch from the old Soviet mentality and adapt to the competitive global environment.

Preserving and Strengthening ODIHR

The human dimension basket of OSCE is a unique mechanism for promoting human rights, rule of law, and democracy in conjunction with security and economic cooperation. The balance between the three dimensions is essential for making each of them equally strong and effective tools for a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Europe and Eurasia.

In recent years, Russia has sought to strengthen the OSCE's security dimension at the expense of the human dimension. In particular, Moscow has strongly opposed ODIHR's strategies for promoting human rights and democracy across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In 2007, Russia made a proposal that seeks to impose limitations on ODIHR's activities and place the OSCE's election-monitoring body under the control of participating states. The proposals called for reducing the size of the OSCE election missions to 50 or fewer people and limiting the number of monitors from any one country to fewer than 5% of that total. In addition, the observers would not be able to make public assessments of the vote until after government bodies had announced the official results. In contrast, Western governments are encouraging the OSCE to redouble its efforts to promote democracy and human rights in the former Soviet Union, where these values are severely threatened. In fact, preserving and strengthening the mandate and autonomy of ODIHR is viewed as a critical task by a number of Western governments including the United States.

Since Russia's proposal was initially endorsed by Kazakhstan, along with five other CIS countries, observers have raised concerns that under Kazakhstan's chairmanship the focus of OSCE may move from the human dimension to other OSCE baskets. The commitment that Kazakhstan made in Madrid to preserve and strengthen ODIHR countered these fears and made possible its OSCE chairmanship in 2010.

In reaffirming its "Path to Europe – 2009-2011" program, that underscores Astana's commitment to "joining the European integration experience and embracing its institutional and legal reforms," Kazakhstan will find that the OSCE chairmanship provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen the ODIHR mechanism that promotes its own reform and integration process. Indeed, Kazakhstan can help in supplementing the ODIHR mission by proposing ways in which the Office can more effectively monitor and promote a broad range of governance issues, including government accountability, transparency, implementation of the rule of law, and official corruption.

ABOUT CSIS AND IND

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