

Turkmenistan, Ukraine, UK, USA and Uzbekistan. *Partners for co-operation*: Afghanistan, Japan, Mongolia, South Korea and Thailand. *Mediterranean partners for co-operation*: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia.

Organization. The OSCE's regular body for political consultation and decision-making is the Permanent Council. Its members, the Permanent Representatives of the OSCE participating States, meet weekly in the Hofburg Congress Center in Vienna to discuss and take decisions on all issues pertinent to the OSCE. The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), which deals with arms control and confidence- and security-building measures, also meets weekly in Vienna. Summits—periodic meetings of Heads of State or Government of OSCE participating States—set priorities and provide orientation at the highest political level. In the years between these summits, decision-making and governing power lies with the *Ministerial Council*, which is made up of the Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating States. In addition, a Senior Council also meets once a year in special session as the Economic Forum. The Chairman-in-Office has overall responsibility for executive action and agenda-setting. The Chair rotates annually. The Secretary-General acts as representative of the Chairman-in-Office and manages OSCE structures and operations.

The Secretariat is based in Vienna and includes a *Conflict Prevention Centre* which provides operational support for OSCE field missions. There are some 400 staff employed in OSCE institutions, and about 1,000 professionals, seconded by OSCE-participating states, work at OSCE missions and other field operations, together with another 2,500 local staff.

The *Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights* is located in Warsaw. It is active in monitoring elections and developing national electoral and human rights institutions, providing technical assistance to national legal institutions, and promoting the development of the rule of law and civil society.

The *Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media* is located in Vienna. Its main function is to observe relevant media developments in OSCE participating States with a view to providing an early warning on violations of freedom of expression.

The *Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities* is located in The Hague. Its function is to identify and seek early resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, stability or friendly relations between the participating States of the OSCE.

The budget for 2012 is €148.1m.

Headquarters: Wallnerstrasse 6, A-1010 Vienna, Austria.

Website: <http://www.osce.org>

Chairman-in-Office: Eamon Gilmore (Ireland).

Secretary-General: Lamberto Zannier (Italy).

Further Reading

Freeman, J., *Security and the CSCE Process: the Stockholm Conference and Beyond*. 1991

Galbreath, David J., *The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*. 2007

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

History. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development was established in 1991 when communism was collapsing in central and eastern Europe and ex-Soviet countries needed support to nurture a new private sector in a democratic environment.

Activities. The EBRD is the largest single investor in the region and mobilizes significant foreign direct investment beyond its own

financing. It is owned by 61 countries and two intergovernmental institutions. But despite its public sector shareholders, it invests mainly in private enterprises, usually together with commercial partners. Today the EBRD uses the tools of investment to help build market economies and democracies in 30 countries from Central Europe to Central Asia.

It provides project financing for banks, industries and businesses, for both new ventures and investments in existing companies. It also works with publicly-owned companies, to support privatization, restructuring of state-owned firms and improvement of municipal services. The EBRD uses its close relationship with governments in the region to promote policies that will bolster the business environment.

The mandate of the EBRD stipulates that it must only work in countries that are committed to democratic principles. Respect for the environment is part of the strong corporate governance attached to all EBRD investments.

Organization. All the powers of the EBRD are vested in a Board of Governors, to which each member appoints a governor, generally the minister of finance or an equivalent. The Board of Governors delegates powers to the Board of Directors, which is responsible for the direction of the EBRD's general operations and policies. The President is elected by the Board of Governors and is the legal representative of the EBRD. The President conducts the current business of the Bank under the guidance of the Board of Directors.

Headquarters: One Exchange Square, London EC2A 2JN, UK.

Website: <http://www.ebrd.com>

President: Thomas Mirow (Germany).

Secretary-General: Enzo Quattrocioche (Italy).

European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

History and Membership. The Stockholm Convention establishing the Association entered into force on 3 May 1960. Founder members were Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. With the accession of Austria, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Sweden and the UK to the EU, EFTA was reduced to four member countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. In June 2001 the Vaduz Convention was signed. It liberalizes trade further among the four EFTA States in order to reflect the Swiss–EU bilateral agreements.

Activities. Free trade in industrial goods among EFTA members was achieved by 1966. Co-operation with the EU began in 1972 with the signing of free trade agreements and culminated in the establishment of a *European Economic Area (EEA)*, encompassing the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour throughout EFTA and the EU member countries. The Agreement was signed by all members of the EU and EFTA on 2 May 1992, but was rejected by Switzerland in a referendum on 6 Dec. 1992. The agreement came into force on 1 Jan. 1994.

The main provisions of the EEA Agreement are: free movement of products within the EEA from 1993 (with special arrangements to cover food, energy, coal and steel); EFTA to assume EU rules on company law, consumer protection, education, the environment, research and development, and social policy; EFTA to adopt EU competition rules on anti-trust matters, abuse of a dominant position, public procurement, mergers and state aid; EFTA to create an EFTA Surveillance Authority and an EFTA Court; individuals to be free to live, work and offer services throughout the EEA, with mutual recognition of professional