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## The German OSCE Chairmanship and reestablishing of West-Russia dialogue: general approach and human dimension aspects

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Next year Germany will chair the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). This is quite a challenging task on the backdrop of current European security crisis triggered by the most serious Russia-West confrontation since the end of the Cold War.

Generally, there have been declared three main pillars of future activities of the German OSCE Chairmanship in 2016, namely dialogue, trust and security. All of these principles have to be equally implemented in order to settle current European security crisis amid tough Russia-West confrontation.

As for the dialogue is concerned, one could hardly overestimate the importance of this principle having in mind own German experience that could be definitely used in reestablishing West-Russia communication.

To successfully apply this principle, there is an obvious need to consider security environment, under which current confrontation is taking place in the context of an ongoing unravelling of the Potsdam/Yalta order being identified by Moscow as a rather useful international system that needs to be reinstated. One of the so-called “advantages” of this international system that could be of great interest for Moscow is a shortage of strong legal foundations of the established security order.

Russia is obviously not so supportive for the principles that do not contribute to the reestablishment of the former bipolar system. This might be also the reason for the ongoing crisis in the OSCE, as it faces a deep divide amid failure to implement the Helsinki+40 process.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is also brought into question by Moscow amid its attempts to diminish the role of the U.S. in settling protracted conflicts, especially in the Middle East.

The West is concentrating now on getting dialogue with Russia back on track to reduce tensions while executing a pragmatic effort to find principles that would enable an agreement based on shared interests and obligations without having common values. There was a suggestion to start with issues where it would be easy to reach an agreement with Russia that would help to build mutual confidence and trust, and then build on these to tackle more complex challenges. International terrorism and illegal migration have been identified among the most urgent transnational threats requiring a unified approach.

Official Berlin seems to have no desire to begin a discussion on reviewing the basic OSCE principles but rather using them as key elements to enhance security in the OSCE area. It also has been stressed that under current circumstances the reestablishment of cooperative security and trustful dialogue would only be possible if all participating States equally apply common rules of behavior. Such approach partially coincides with a view expressed by the Russian side.

In order to curb Russia’s expansion, the West (including Germany as well) would most probably be concentrated on gradually applying “soft power” measures while formally supporting principles and norms of the post-Cold War international order, and promoting its values based

on sustainable governance, anti-corruption activities, human rights protection, strengthening democracy and supporting unified moral norms.

Nevertheless, Moscow would be more liable to use “hard power” methods in protecting its far-reaching ambitions for gaining a foothold among the world’s major powers, not caring so much about agreed principles and norms as such, but interpreting them on a case-by-case basis, unless facing adequate countermeasures. The Kremlin’s strategy would go in line with the Yalta-type bipolar security order characterized by the absence of clearly declared norms and principles.

Along with chairing the OSCE, there are also other international negotiation formats that would most probably influence German position for reestablishing security dialogue, including the Normandy format and recent international antiterrorist initiatives.

Another issue, which would affect Chairmanship’s efforts in strengthening dialogue, is closely related to the leading role of Germany in implementing the EU external policy strategy, namely the renewed European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). The public consultation process is rather a unique approach of the ENP to include stakeholders’ views in formulation of what is to become a part of foreign policy strategy. This approach was also successfully exercised by Berlin while adopting new German foreign policy strategy early this year. Stepping up the security cooperation, including neighbors of the neighbors, provisions for more flexibility and ownership, and increased attention to prevention of radicalization represent the main inputs from a new EU rethinking exercise to be followed by the German OSCE Chairmanship as well. The main idea here could be to support civil society actors in a push for more accountable societies on the one hand, and in involving civil society as a plat-

form for deliberation in preventing radicalization on the other. The renewed neighborhood policy confirms EU’s traditionally multidimensional view on security, where “soft measures” play an indispensable role in fostering stability and security.

Having all these factors in mind that is the OSCE to become a main platform for reestablishing West-Russia dialogue under the German Chairmanship in 2016. While maintaining political dialogue the German OSCE Chairmanship should take due account of civil society interests and possible implications to the developments in all the affected participating States within the disputable area to prevent further escalation and avoiding obscure reaction to future compromised agreements that could impede their implementation on the ground.

One of the main preconditions for reestablishing such a dialogue should be refusal of all participating States from propaganda and hostile political rhetoric in pursuing different narratives challenging current security order.

As a possible way forward in strengthening implementation of the existing OSCE principles and norms, including those related to human dimension, could be considered a new tendency in bringing inter-state claims to the European Court on Human Rights started by Ukraine. At the moment, there are three cases pending, concerning claims lodged by Ukraine against Russian Federation for the events related to military incursion in Eastern Ukraine and the annexed Crimea.

Thus, human rights issues have become increasingly intertwined not only with protracted conflicts but also with other political and value-driven disputes. Therefore, there is a need to prevent any regression in the human dimension during the German OSCE Chairmanship next year.

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