

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE COLD WAR – 12



Freedom and Security

*The CSCE and the End of the Cold War
(1986–1989)*

Edited by NINA HECHENBLAIKNER
and ANDREA BRAIT

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Freedom and Security

New Perspectives on the Cold War

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Nina Hechenblaikner
Andrea Brait

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The CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna (1986–1989)

An Introduction

Nina Hechenblaikner and Andrea Brait

1 From Helsinki to Vienna via Belgrade and Madrid¹

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is regarded as one of the high points of the so-called policy of *détente*, the need for which had become apparent after various escalations of the Cold War in the 1950s and early 1960s. It was based on Soviet proposals for a pan-European security conference in 1954 and 1966, but the so-called West – the member states of the European Communities (EC) and NATO – responded cautiously, demanding that all relevant issues relating to human and civil rights be dealt with at the same time.² In 1970 the NATO Council finally agreed to a proposal made in the previous year by the Warsaw Pact to hold a conference on peacekeeping and political cooperation, on the condition that there had to be progress in the negotiations on the German question. This was achieved with the so-called Eastern Treaties of 1970, the Four-Power Agreement on the status of Berlin and the German-German Basic Treaty of 1972.³

After multilateral preparatory talks in Dipoli from November 1972 to June 1973, the CSCE finally began in July 1973 with a meeting of the foreign ministers of a total of 35 states (seven Warsaw Pact states, thirteen neutral or non-aligned states and the fifteen NATO states), with Canada and the USA being included at the request of the EC states. The negotiations were concluded with the signing of the Final Act on 1 August 1975 in Helsinki by the heads of state

1 This volume was printed, translated and copyedited with the support of the Austrian Science Fund (Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung, FWF) (PUB 1144-P). Previously untranslated German-language sources were translated for this chapter.

2 On the prehistory of the CSCE see e.g. Peter Ruggenthaler/Anna Steiner, “Der Weg nach Helsinki. Entspannung mit Bonn als letzte Etappe auf dem Weg zur Einberufung der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa”, in: Michael Borchard/Stefan Karner et al. (eds.), *Entspannung im Kalten Krieg. Der Weg zum Moskauer Vertrag und zur KSZE*, Graz-Wien 2020, p. 677–701.

3 See Thomas Fischer, “Die Sowjetunion, Österreich und die finnische KSZE-Initiative vom 5. Mai 1969”, in: Wolfgang Mueller/Michael Portmann (eds.), *Osteuropa vom Weltkrieg zur Wende* (Zentraleuropa-Studien 10), Wien 2007, p. 313–339.

and government of the participating states.⁴ The CSCE focussed on three relevant subject areas, which were negotiated in so-called “baskets” that also structure the final document: Basket I covered chiefly issues of security in Europe, Basket II focussed on cooperation in the fields of economy, science, technology and environment and Basket III dealt with issues of human and civil rights as well as information and cultural exchange. Finally, a Basket IV dealt with the consequences of the conference. The neutral and non-aligned states (N+N) contributed significantly to the success of the conference by tabling compromises that were acceptable to all states.⁵ The Final Act was viewed favourably by both military blocs: the Warsaw Pact states saw the inviolability of their borders confirmed and the West hoped for progress with regard to the protection of human rights in the so-called Eastern bloc states. By agreeing to continue the talks, an East-West forum was established that enabled mutual influence through regular communication across the blocs, including the N+N states.⁶

The signing of the Final Act is often described as the high point of the policy of détente,⁷ which was supported by the so-called Ostpolitik of the German chancellor, Willy Brandt, and the policy of so-called “active neutrality” practised by his Austrian counterpart, Bruno Kreisky, together with the Swedish prime minister, Olof Palme.⁸ However, the first two Follow-up Meetings in Belgrade

4 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1 August 1975. See e.g. Oliver Bange/Gottfried Niedhart (eds.), *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, New York-Oxford 2008.

5 See e.g. Hanspeter Neuhold (ed.), *CSCE: N+N Perspectives. The Process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe from the Viewpoint of the Neutral and Non-aligned Participating States*, Wien 1987; Thomas Fischer, *Neutral Power in the CSCE. The N+N States and the Making of the Helsinki Accords 1975* (Wiener Schriften zur Internationalen Politik Vol. 12), Baden-Baden 2009.

6 Andrea Brait/Michael Gehler, “The CSCE Vienna Follow-up Meeting and Alois Mock, 1986–1989”, in: Helmut Wahnout/Michael Gehler et al. (eds.), *Christian Democracy and the Fall of Communism* (Civitas. Studies in Christian Democracy 1), Leuven 2019, p. 75–92, on p. 79.

7 See e.g. Gerd Schneider/Christiane Toyka-Seid, *Entspannungspolitik*, <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/das-junge-politik-lexikon/320215/entspannungspolitik/>, accessed 12.11.2023.

8 See e.g. Wilfried Loth/Georges-Henri Soutou (eds.), *The Making of Détente. Eastern and Western Europe in the Cold War, 1965–75* (Cold War History Series Vol. 20), London 2008; Angela Romano, *From Détente in Europe to European Détente. How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE* (Euroclio Vol. 44), Bruxelles-New York 2009; Poul Villaume/Odd A. Westad (eds.), *Perforating the Iron Curtain. European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965–1985*, Copenhagen 2010; Steven Casey (ed.), *The Cold War. Volume IV: From Détente to the End of the Cold War* (Critical Concepts in Military, Strategic, and Security Studies), Abingdon-Oxon 2013; Stephan Kieninger, *The Diplomacy of Détente. Cooperative Security Policies from Helmut Schmidt to George Shultz* (Cold War History Series), London 2018; Maximilian Graf, “European Détente and the CSCE. Austria and the East-Central European Theatre in the 1970s and 1980s”,

(1977–1978) and Madrid (1981–1983) took place under different circumstances and cannot be counted as successes.⁹ Differing objectives, increasingly strident demands regarding the protection of human rights and renewed tensions in East-West relations in general – in particular the Russian intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, the NATO Double-Track Decision in 1979, the boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow and the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981 – put considerable strain on the negotiations.¹⁰ In the end, the N+N played a major role in ensuring that the CSCE process did not come to a standstill and that at least an agreement on its continuation could be reached.¹¹

By the time the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting (1986–1989) began, the global political environment had again changed dramatically, a process associated in particular with the reforms introduced in the Soviet Union by the new General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), Mikhail

in: Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War. Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990*, New York, NY 2019, p. 249–274; Borchard/Karner et al. (eds.), *Entspannung im Kalten Krieg*.

- 9 See e.g. Hermann Volle/Wolfgang Wagner (eds.), *Das Belgrader KSZE-Folgetreffen. Der Fortgang des Entspannungsprozesses in Europa in Beiträgen und Dokumenten aus dem Europa-Archiv*, Bonn 1978; Jussi M. Hanhimäki, “Ironies and Turning Points. Détente in Perspective”, in: Odd A. Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War. Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (Cass Series: Cold War History 1), London 2001, p. 326–342; Franz Ceska, “Détente und KSZE-Prozess. Österreich zwischen Helsinki (1975) und Madrid (1983)”, in: Oliver Rathkolb/Otto M. Maschke et al. (eds.), *Mit anderen Augen gesehen. Internationale Perzeptionen Österreichs 1955–1990. Österreichische Nationalgeschichte nach 1945, Band 2* (Schriftenreihe des Forschungsinstitutes für politisch-historische Studien der Dr.-Wilfried-Haslauer-Bibliothek, Salzburg 6/Sonderbd. 2), Wien-Köln-Weimar 2002, p. 507–521; Wanda Jarzabek, “Lost illusions? The Polish government and human rights issues from Helsinki to Belgrade, 1975–1978”, in: Vladimir Bilandžić/Dittmar Dahlmann et al. (eds.), *From Helsinki to Belgrade. The First CSCE Follow-up Meeting and the Crisis of Détente* (Internationale Beziehungen: Theorie und Geschichte Vol. 10), Göttingen-Bonn 2012, p. 305–320; Philip Rosin, “Neutralität in der Menschenrechtsfrage? Die Schweiz in Belgrad und Madrid”, in: Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer), Berlin-Boston 2013, p. 173–189; Douglas Selvage, “The Superpowers and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1977–1983”, in: Peter/Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt*, p. 15–58.
- 10 See e.g. Leopoldo Nuti (ed.), *The Crisis of Détente in Europe. From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975–1985* (Cold War History Series Vol. 23), London 2009; Matthias Peter, “Saving Détente. The Federal Republic of Germany and the CSCE in the 1980s”, in: Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War. Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990*, New York, NY 2019, p. 275–304.
- 11 See Thomas Fischer, *Keeping the Process Alive. The N+N and the CSCE Follow-Up from Helsinki to Vienna* (1975–1986) (Zürcher Beiträge zur Sicherheitspolitik Vol. 84), Zurich 2012.

Gorbachev.¹² Expectations for the Follow-up Meeting were correspondingly high. In his opening address on 23 September 1986, the Austrian foreign minister, Peter Jankowitsch, announced that it would be “one of the largest and most significant conferences to have taken place in the Austrian capital since the Congress of Vienna of 1814/15”.¹³ The two major areas of negotiation at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting were undoubtedly security and humanitarian concerns. Notable successes were achieved in both: mandates were agreed for further conferences on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs; Stockholm II) and negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe (CFE); in the area of humanitarian concerns, consensus was reached on human rights at the normative and operational levels, including the organisation of a series of human rights conferences.¹⁴ The Vienna Concluding Document can be interpreted as a bridge facilitating the reorganisation of Europe after the upheavals of 1989. Although the CSCE’s contribution to these developments is subject to debate,¹⁵ the creation of a CSCE system with a human dimension and the agreement on negotiations on military confidence-building and conventional disarmament in January 1989 can be described as the beginning of the end of the East-West conflict, even if this was perceived in a completely different manner at the time than it appears with the benefit of hindsight.

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- 12 See e.g. Astrid von Borcke, *Die Abrüstungsvorschläge Gorbatschows und das „neue Denken“*. Indizien aus der sowjetischen Innenpolitik (Berichte des Bundesinstituts für Ostwissenschaftliche und Internationale Studien Vol. 32), Köln 1987; Vojtech Mastny, “Did Gorbachev liberate Eastern Europe?”, in: Olav Njølstad (ed.), *The Last Decade of the Cold War. From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation* (Cass Series: Cold War History 5), London-New York 2004, p. 402–423; Marie-Pierre Rey, “Gorbachev’s New Thinking and Europe, 1985–1989”, in: Frédéric Bozo/Marie-Pierre Rey et al. (eds.), *Europe and the End of the Cold War. A Reappraisal* (Cold War History Series 19), London-New York 2008, p. 23–35; Yuliya von Saal, *KSZE-Prozess und Perestroika in der Sowjetunion. Demokratisierung, Werteumbruch und Auflösung 1985–1991* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 100), München 2014; Andrei Grachev, “Gorbachev and the ‘New Political Thinking’”, in: Wolfgang Mueller/Michael Gehler et al. (eds.), *The Revolutions of 1989. A Handbook* (Internationale Geschichte/International History 2), Wien 2015, p. 33–46; Archie Brown, “Mikhail Gorbachev and the Politics of Perestroika”, in: *Russian History* 49 (2022), issue 2–4, p. 123–145, doi: 10.30965/18763316-12340044.
- 13 Rede von Außenminister Dr. Peter Jankowitsch zur Eröffnung des KSZE-Vorbereitungstreffens im Redoutensaal, Wien, 23. September 1986, ÖStA, AdR, II-Pol 1986, GZ 803.01/51-II.7/86.
- 14 Das abschließende Dokument des KSZE-Folgetreffens in Wien vom 15. Januar 1989, in: *Europa-Archiv* 44 (1989), issue 5, D133-D164.
- 15 See e.g. Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker, “‘Helsinki-Mythos’ oder ‘Helsinki-Effekt’? Der KSZE-Prozess zwischen internationaler Politik und gesellschaftlicher Transformation”, in: Peter/Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt*, p. 1–14.

2 State of Research

The CSCE has long remained in the shadows of research in contemporary history. This became particularly apparent in 2009 and 2014, when numerous studies on the upheavals of 1989 were published without any significant reference to the CSCE.¹⁶ By contrast, political science took an interest in the CSCE process at an early stage.¹⁷ Moreover, some of the diplomats involved published their assessments and experiences.¹⁸ There are also publications on the third CSCE Follow-up Meeting (1986–1989) in Vienna, some of which would perhaps be better categorised as sources of oral history¹⁹ while others are works of political science.²⁰

16 For an overview see Wolfgang Mueller, “The Revolutions of 1989: An Introduction”, in: Mueller/Gehler et al. (eds.), *The Revolutions of 1989*, p. 3–30.

17 See Boris Meissner (ed.), *Oststaaten und europäische Sicherheit 1972–1975. Analysen und Dokumentation*, Köln 1977; Frenzke Dietrich/Alexander Uschakow (eds.), *Die Oststaaten, das sowjetische Bündnisssystem und die KSZE vor und nach Helsinki*, Köln 1980; Jost Delbrück/Ropers Norbert et al. (eds.), *Grünbuch zu den Folgewirkungen der KSZE*, Köln 1977; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (ed.), *DGFK-Jahrbuch 1979/80. Zur Entspannungspolitik in Europa*, Baden-Baden 1980; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (ed.), *DGFK Jahrbuch 1982/83. Zur Lage Europas im globalen Spannungsfeld*, Baden-Baden 1983.

18 On this see the individual contributions in Hermann Volle/Wolfgang Wagner (eds.), *KSZE. Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa in Beiträgen und Dokumenten aus dem Europa-Archiv*, Bonn 1976; Volle/Wagner, *Das Belgrader KSZE-Folgetreffen*; Hermann Volle/Wolfgang Wagner (eds.), *Das Madrider KSZE-Folgetreffen. Der Fortgang des KSZE-Prozesses in Europa in Beiträgen und Dokumenten aus dem Europa-Archiv*, Bonn 1984; Victor-Yves Ghebali, *La diplomatie de la Détente. La CSCE, d’Helsinki à Vienne (1973–1989)*, Brüssel 1989; Michael Zielinski, *Die neutralen und blockfreien Staaten und ihre Rolle im KSZE-Prozeß* (Nomos Universitätsschriften – Politik Vol. 13), Baden-Baden 1990; Wilfried v. Bredow, *Der KSZE-Prozess. Von der Zählung zur Auflösung des Ost-West-Konflikts*, Darmstadt 1992; Peter Schlotter, *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Wirkung einer internationalen Institution* (Studien der Hessischen Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung Vol. 32), Frankfurt am Main-New York 1999.

19 For the views of an Austrian and a German diplomat involved see Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West Relations* (Austrian Institute for International Affairs Series), Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford 1991; Hans-Heinrich Wrede, *KSZE in Wien. Kursbestimmung für Europas Zukunft*, Köln 1990.

20 See e.g. Neuhold, *CSCE: N+N Perspectives*; Karl E. Birnbaum, “Die KSZE nach der Stockholmer Konferenz als Rahmen für die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Ost und West in Europa”, in: *Europa-Archiv* 42 (1987), p. 171–178; Wilhelm Bruns, “Mehr Substanz in den Ost-West-Beziehungen. Zur dritten KSZE-Folgekonferenz in Wien”, in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (1989), issue 12, p. 3–9; Michael Groth, “Fortschritte im KSZE-Prozeß. Das dritte Folgetreffen in Wien”, in: *Europa-Archiv* 44 (1989), p. 95–102; Karl E. Birnbaum/Ingo Peters,

Yet for a long time, historians hardly dealt with the CSCE in any depth. In general accounts of the Cold War, it often figured as “an interlude of détente in the rivalry of the superpowers”.²¹ However, in order to determine more precisely the role and importance of the CSCE process in ending the East-West conflict in Europe²² in a multifactorial context, it is necessary to analyse a wide range of sources. The project “The CSCE Process: Multilateral Conference Diplomacy and its Consequences 1975–1989/90”, carried out by the Institute of Contemporary History Munich-Berlin (Institut für Zeitgeschichte, IfZ) in cooperation with the Universities of Paris IV and Erlangen-Nuremberg, has contributed significantly to advancing our knowledge. Within this framework, studies were carried out on the role of important participating states: Western and Eastern as well as neutral and non-aligned.²³ While the vast majority of previous contributions and monographs concentrated on the CSCE Conference in Helsinki from 1973 to 1975 and the Final Act of 1975,²⁴ with only occasional references to

“Die beiden deutschen Staaten auf dem Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffen”, in: Karl E. Birnbaum/Ingo Peters (eds.), *Zwischen Abgrenzung und Verantwortungsgemeinschaft. Zur KSZE-Politik der beiden deutschen Staaten 1984–1989*, Baden-Baden 1991, p. 71–105; Arie Bloed/Pieter van Dijk (eds.), *The Human Dimension of the Helsinki Process. The Vienna Follow-up Meeting and its Aftermath* (International Studies in Human Rights Vol. 20), Dordrecht-Boston-Norwell 1991; Stephan Martini, *Die sicherheitspolitische Funktion der KSZE im entspannungspolitischen Konzept der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1975–1990*, Berlin 2006.

- 21 Matthias Peter, *Die Bundesrepublik im KSZE-Prozess 1975–1983. Die Umkehrung der Diplomatie* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 105), Berlin 2015, p. 10.
- 22 On differing views of the CSCE see Peter/Wentker, “‘Helsinki-Mythos’ oder ‘Helsinki-Effekt’?”. See also the debates in the special issue “CSCE, the German Question, and the Warsaw Pact” of the *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18 (2016), issue 3.
- 23 Anja Hanisch, *Die DDR im KSZE-Prozess 1972–1985. Zwischen Ostabhängigkeit, Westabgrenzung und Ausreisebewegung* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 91), München 2012; Benjamin Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983. Neutraler Vermittler in humanitärer Mission* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 98), München 2013; Philip Rosin, *Die Schweiz im KSZE-Prozess 1972–1983. Einfluss durch Neutralität* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 99), München 2014; von Saal, *KSZE-Prozess und Perestroika in der Sowjetunion*; Peter, *Die Bundesrepublik im KSZE-Prozess 1975–1983*; Veronika Heyde, *Frankreich im KSZE-Prozess. Diplomatie im Namen der europäischen Sicherheit* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 113), Berlin-Boston 2017.
- 24 See e.g. Jussi M. Hanhimäki, “‘They can write it in Swahili’. Kissinger, the Soviets, and the Helsinki Accords, 1973–75”, in: *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 1 (2003), p. 37–58; Carla Meneguzzi Rostagni (ed.), *The Helsinki Process. A Historical Reappraisal*, Padova 2005; Bange/Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*; Andreas Wenger/Vojtech Mastny et al. (eds.), *Origins of the European Security System. The Helsinki Process Revisited, 1965–75* (CSS Studies in Security and International Relations), London-New York 2008; Nuti, *The Crisis of Détente in Europe*; Romano, *From Détente in Europe to European Détente*;

the follow-up conferences in Belgrade (1977–1979)²⁵ and Madrid (1980–1983),²⁶ the IfZ project focussed on the process character of the CSCE up to 1983, looking at both state and civil society actors. However, due to restricted archival access, the research concentrated on the years leading up to 1975 and 1983. With a few exceptions, this also applies to studies on the Warsaw Pact states.²⁷

As a result, there are hardly any source-based studies on the CSCE at the end of the 1980s. This applies in particular to the third Follow-up Meeting in Vienna (1986–1989), whose significance for the end of the East-West conflict has therefore hardly been researched.²⁸ Research desiderata include the role of the N+N in connection with the end of the Cold War, although their

Villaume/Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*; Petri Hakkarainen, *A State of Peace in Europe. West Germany and the CSCE, 1966–1975*, New York-Oxford 2011.

25 See Bilandžić/Dahlmann et al. (eds.), *From Helsinki to Belgrade*.

26 See Sarah B. Snyder, “The Foundation for Vienna. A Reassessment of the CSCE in the Mid-1980s”, in: *Cold War History* 10 (2010), issue 4, p. 493–512; Sarah B. Snyder, *Human rights activism and the end of the Cold War. A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Human Rights in History), New York 2011, p. 135–157.

27 The 1980s are touched upon only in the studies by Wanda Jarzabek on Poland and Douglas Selvage and Walter Süß on the GDR: Wanda Jarzabek, “Preserving the Status Quo or Promoting Change. The Role of the CSCE in the Perception of Polish Authorities”, in: Bange/Niedhart (eds.), *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 144–159; Jarzabek, “Lost illusions?”; Wanda Jarzabek, “Troublesome Human Rights. The Polish Strategy between the Belgrade and Madrid CSCE Follow-up Conferences”, in: Peter/Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt*, p. 121–135; Douglas Selvage/Walter Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess. MfS zwischen SED und KGB (1972–1989)* (Analysen und Dokumente Vol. 54), Göttingen 2019. On Bulgaria see Kostadin Grozev/Jordan Baev, “Bulgaria, Balkan Diplomacy and the Road to Helsinki”, in: Bange/Niedhart (eds.), *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 160–174; Jordan Baev, “Bulgaria and the Warsaw Pact consultations on the CSCE Process. From Helsinki to Belgrade”, in: Bilandžić/Dahlmann et al. (eds.), *From Helsinki to Belgrade*, p. 107–118. On Hungary and Romania see e.g. Csaba Békés, “The Warsaw Pact, the German Question and the Birth of the CSCE Process, 1961–1970”, in: Bange/Niedhart (eds.), *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 113–128; Mihail E. Ionescu, “Romania, Ostpolitik and the CSCE 1967–1975”, in: Bange/Niedhart (eds.), *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 129–143. On Czechoslovakia see Benjamin Müller, “Von der Konfrontation zum Dialog. Charta 77, Menschenrechte und ‘Samtene Revolution’ in der Tschechoslowakei 1975–1989”, in: Helmut Altrichter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Der KSZE-Prozess. Vom Kalten Krieg zu einem neuen Europa 1975 bis 1990* (Zeitgeschichte im Gespräch 11), München 2011, p. 99–110.

28 See e.g. Altrichter/Wentker (eds.), *Der KSZE-Prozess*; Oliver Bange, “Der KSZE-Prozess und die sicherheitspolitische Dynamik des Ost-West-Konflikts 1970–1990”, in: Oliver Bange/Bernd Lemke (eds.), *Wege zur Wiedervereinigung. Die beiden deutschen Staaten in ihren Bündnissen 1970 bis 1990* (Beiträge zur Militärgeschichte 75), München 2013, p. 87–104; Peter/Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt*; von Saal, *KSZE-Prozess und Perestroika in der Sowjetunion*.

importance as mediators between the blocs has been repeatedly emphasised in the literature.²⁹ By the same token, there are still few findings on the attitude and influence of transnational actors such as non-governmental organisations and opposition groups in the CSCE process of the late 1980s.³⁰ The research situation is, of course, a result of embargoes on state documents – with the exception of those from the GDR, which is why the first research findings are already available on that country.³¹ Studies on other states have therefore had to fall back on other sources.³²

In consequence, the existing studies leave many questions unanswered. For instance, the significance of the CSCE agreements in relation to new demands for compliance with human rights and fundamental freedoms within Eastern Europe is quite controversial.³³ The role of the CSCE with regard to the

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- 29 See Thomas Fischer, "Austria and the Helsinki Process", in: Arnold Suppan/Wolfgang Mueller (eds.), *"Peaceful Coexistence" or "Iron Curtain". Austria, Neutrality, and Eastern Europe in the Cold War and Détente, 1955–1989* (Europa Orientalis 7), Wien-Berlin-Piscataway, NJ 2009, p. 168–202; Fischer, *Neutral Power in the CSCE*; Fischer, *Keeping the Process Alive*; Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983*; Jussi M. Hanhimäki, "Non-aligned to what? European neutrality and the Cold War", in: Sandra Bott/Jussi M. Hanhimäki et al. (eds.), *Neutrality and Neutralism in the Global Cold War. Between or within the blocs?* (Cold War History Series), Abingdon-Oxon-New York, NY 2016, p. 17–32.
- 30 Some general statements can be found in Kurt P. Tudyka, "Nichtstaatliche Organisationen und die OSZE", in: *OSZE-Jahrbuch 7* (2001), p. 503–513, on p. 503 f.; Anja Mihr, *Amnesty International in der DDR. Der Einsatz für Menschenrechte im Visier der Stasi*, Berlin 2002, p. 116 f.; Christie Miedema, *Not a Movement of Dissidents. Amnesty International Beyond the Iron Curtain* (Schriftenreihe Menschenrechte im 20. Jahrhundert Vol. 4), Göttingen 2019; Ned Richardson-Little, *The Human Rights Dictatorship. Socialism, Global Solidarity and Revolution in East Germany* (Human Rights in History), Cambridge 2020.
- 31 See Erhard Crome/Jochen Franzke, "Die SED-Führung und die Wiener KSZE-Konferenz 1986 bis 1989. Dokumente aus dem Parteiarchiv", in: *Deutschland Archiv 26* (1993), p. 905–914; Selva/Süß, *Staatsicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*. See also Jens Kaiser, "Zwischen angestrebter Eigenständigkeit und traditioneller Unterordnung. Zur Ambivalenz des Verhältnisses von sowjetischer und DDR-Außenpolitik in den achtziger Jahren", in: *Deutschland Archiv 24* (1991), p. 478–495.
- 32 See e.g. Ralf Roloff, *Auf dem Weg zur Neuordnung Europas. Die Regierungen Kohl/Genscher und die KSZE-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1986 bis 1992*, Vierow 1995.
- 33 See Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*; Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect. International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism*, Princeton, N.J. 2001; Daniel C. Thomas, "Human Rights Ideas, the Demise of Communism and the End of the Cold War", in: *Journal of Cold War Studies 7* (2005), issue 2, p. 110–141. On the broader topic see also e.g. Floribert Baudet, "It was Cold War and we wanted to win'. Human Rights, 'Détente', and the CSCE", in: Andreas Wenger/Vojtech Mastny et al. (eds.), *Origins of the European Security System. The Helsinki Process Revisited, 1965–75* (CSS Studies in Security and International Relations), London-New York 2008, p. 183–198; Gregory F. Domber, "Transatlantic Relations, Human Rights, and Power Politics", in: Poul

development of the global human rights regime has not yet been substantiated with appropriate sources.³⁴ Similarly, the question of a new security order after the conclusion of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE)³⁵ and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, on which some contemporary publications exist,³⁶ has so far hardly been analysed with reference to the CSCE process. This volume aims to close some of these gaps, at least in part.

3 The Chapters

While this publication brings together contributions that stem directly from the research of the German-Austrian-Swiss project “The CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna (1986–1989). Struggling for Human Rights and European Security at the End of the Cold War”,³⁷ the aim was also to broaden these

Villaume/Odd A. Westad (eds.), *Perforating the Iron Curtain. European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965–1985*, Copenhagen 2010, p. 195–214; Christian P. Peterson, *Globalizing Human Rights. Private Citizens, the Soviet Union, and the West*, New York-London 2012; Rasmus Mariager/Karl Molin et al. (eds.), *Human Rights in Europe during the Cold War* (Cold War History Series), New York 2014. But see e.g. the assessment of Jeremi Suri, “Détente and human rights. American and West European perspectives on international change”, in: *Cold War History* 8 (2008), issue 4, p. 527–545, on p. 540.

34 On the development of a human rights regime see Jan Eckel, *Die Ambivalenz des Guten. Menschenrechte in der internationalen Politik seit den 1940ern*, Göttingen 2014; Jan Eckel/Samuel Moyn (eds.), *Moral für die Welt? Menschenrechtspolitik in den 1970er Jahren*, Göttingen 2012; Peterson, *Globalizing Human Rights*; Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia. Human Rights in History*, Cambridge 2010; Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (ed.), *Moralpolitik. Geschichte der Menschenrechte im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2010; Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights. A History*, London 2007.

35 See on the Stockholm CDE the exhaustive account by two diplomats involved, Oleg Grinevsky/Lynn M. Hansen, *Making Peace. Confidence and Security in a New Europe*, New York 2009.

36 Among contemporary studies see esp. Hans-Joachim Spanger/Vladimir Handl, *Wie weiter bei der Vertrauensbildung? Zu den Wiener VSBM-Verhandlungen und darüber hinaus* (HSFK-Report Vol. 6), Frankfurt am Main 1989; Dewitt David/Hans Rattinger (eds.), *East-West Arms Control. Challenges for the Western Alliance*, London-New York 1992; Michael R. Lucas (ed.), *The CSCE in the 1990s. Constructing European Security and Cooperation* (Demokratie, Sicherheit, Frieden Vol. 83), Baden-Baden 1993; Hans-Joachim Schmidt, “Die Anfangsphase der Wiener Verhandlungen über konventionelle Streitkräfte in Europa (VKSE)”, in: Erwin Müller/Götz Neuneck (eds.), *Abrüstung und Konventionelle Stabilität in Europa* (Demokratie, Sicherheit, Frieden 63), Baden-Baden 1990, p. 11–36.

37 This was a cooperative project funded jointly by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF). It consisted of the following sub-projects:

research perspectives. It was particularly important to include developments in the Warsaw Pact countries, as a sub-project of the project proposal planned for these countries was not approved by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the project therefore had to focus much more strongly than originally planned on the NATO countries and the N+N.³⁸ The volume also refers to various project cooperations, including with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on the Consequences of War (Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Kriegsfolgenforschung).

The volume opens with two contributions which are dedicated to the CSCE process prior to the Vienna Follow-up Meeting and thus shed light on the prerequisites for the negotiations in the Austrian capital. In her chapter “Moscow and Vienna on the Road to Helsinki”, Anna Graf-Steiner focuses on the importance attached to Austria by the Soviet Union in realising its idea of a European security conference in the 1960s. The analysis clearly shows, on the one hand, the persistence of Austrian diplomacy with regard to anchoring the humanitarian dimension and, on the other, the personal commitment of the Austrian chancellor, Bruno Kreisky, in the course of bilateral talks to promote the conclusion of the CSCE Final Act.

The chapter “From Helsinki to Vienna” by Herman Wentker provides an overview of developments between 1977, the start of the Follow-up Meeting in Belgrade, and 1986, the start of the Follow-up Meeting in Vienna. The focus of the analysis is on the interactions between the CSCE negotiations and the global political tensions at the time. The study shows that the agreements were by no means able to change the international order or destabilise dictatorships, but that they did form a basis for a commitment to human rights in the Warsaw Pact states, which increased the pressure on the regimes and contributed

Breakthrough in Human Rights? The Effects of Change in Eastern Europe on the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting (Institut für Zeitgeschichte/Universität Innsbruck, project leader: Andrea Brait, project assistant: Nina Hechenblaikner).

Cooperation and Confrontation: The Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic at the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting (Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich/Berlin, project leader: Hermann Wentker, project assistant: Willi Schrenk).

From Stockholm to Vienna: Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBM) and CFE Mandate (Institut für Geschichte/Universität Hildesheim, project leader: Michael Gehler, project assistant: Jonas Kaiser).

The N+N: European Security and Human Rights in Vienna (Graduate Institute Geneva, project leader: Jussi Hanhimäki, project assistant: Kai Habel).

38 Since the project was based in German-speaking countries and on account of the travel restrictions in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, which covered much of the project's duration, it focuses on these countries and the relevant subjects and sources. This tendency is reflected in the present volume.

to concessions, for example at the CSCE Meeting of Experts on Human Contacts in Bern in 1986. At the same time, the study shows how stable the opposing basic positions were. With reference to the Soviet Union's abandonment of these positions even before the start of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, the analysis provides evidence of the frequently cited "Gorbachev factor".

Maximilian Graf has chosen a biographical approach to diplomatic history for his chapter "Austria's 'Mister CSCE' Helmut Liedermann". He emphasises the influence exerted by individuals – in this case Helmut Liedermann, a senior diplomat and the long-standing head of the Austrian delegation – on the course of the CSCE process. In doing so, the analysis sheds light on Liedermann's professional career before, but especially on his involvement in the creation of, the CSCE and the subsequent process, showing how Liedermann's experiences outside the conference influenced his decisions and thus also the guidelines of the Austrian delegation. Liedermann's CSCE career was ultimately crowned by the position of executive secretary at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. In Graf's assessment, Liedermann was one of the CSCE's creative negotiators, one who made compromises possible and always believed in the success of the process.

In his contribution "The Concluding Document of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting, 15 January 1989", Michael Gehler examines the Concluding Document's genesis from the perspective of the Austrian delegation and compares the documents of 1975, 1979, 1983, 1986 and 1989. His analysis shows that at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, significant progress in the negotiations was made only after mid-1988, due mainly to the increasing willingness of the Soviet Union to make concessions and the pressure it exerted on those Warsaw Pact states (above all the GDR and Romania) that wanted to block them. This made it possible for the Vienna Final Document to become the most substantial of its kind besides the Helsinki Final Act, containing the most far-reaching agreements in the areas of security policy and human rights.

The next set of texts looks at individual negotiation topics, focussing on those highlighted both in contemporary discourse and in previous publications, as well as those rarely discussed in the existing scholarship on the CSCE. In her chapter "Negotiations on Cultural Cooperation at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting from the Perspective of the Austrian Foreign Ministry", Andrea Brait takes a general look at the importance of foreign cultural policy for Austria and the significance of cultural cooperation in the CSCE, focusing on the genesis of the agreements reached in this area at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. The cultural area proves to be the one in which many forms of cross-bloc cooperation were possible and – compared to other topics – final compromises could be found early on in the negotiation process. The analysis clearly shows that not only

were concrete cooperation agreements reached, but also fundamental steps taken towards the democratisation of the cultural sector.

Roland Ernst Laimer addresses a topic that has so far received little attention in research on the CSCE. His essay “The ‘neglected step-child’ of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting” deals with the negotiations on environmental protection and asks whether Basket II was really – as is so often claimed – of little interest to the negotiators. The focus is on the actions of the Austrian delegation. Austria, the analysis shows, was active in this area of the CSCE and made far-reaching proposals that met with fierce resistance from other participating states – an indication that Basket II was not as uncontroversial as it is often portrayed. Trade-offs between the environment and the economy often played an important role. Subsequent comparison between the proposals submitted and the Concluding Document shows which proposals could be successfully implemented.

The next two contributions address the negotiations in the areas of human rights and security, two closely linked areas that are usually at the centre of research on the CSCE. In her essay “Front Page News or Side Note?”, Nina Hechenblaikner analyses the reporting of *Die Presse* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on this topic. In addition to quantitative and thematic analyses, the focus is on questions of public interest and the influence of human rights organisations. The analysis shows that both newspapers continuously reported on the Follow-up Meeting and especially the negotiations on humanitarian questions, and that various governments and delegations as well as NGOs increasingly made it their business to keep the public informed. Nevertheless, according to many participants, the conference remained a marginal foreign policy issue in terms of public perception.

In his chapter “Questions of Security”, Jonas Kaiser analyses the development of the security policy dimension of the CSCE from the first proposal for such a conference in 1954 until after the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. The study emphasises that non-compliance with the provisions agreed in Helsinki led to mistrust between the participating states. The chapter also analyses how the CSCE and other security policy negotiations (such as the CDE and the CFE mandate) influenced each other. Finally, the analysis concludes that the link between security and human rights was transformed into a constructive interrelation in Vienna, contributing significantly to progress in the area of security.

The next chapters focus on the intentions and goals of individual participating states or alliances. These studies shed light on internal difficulties within the blocs and strategies for overcoming them, as well as on the interaction between the CSCE and national politics. In “Shifting Agendas?”, Jussi Hanhimäki examines the role of the USA and the Soviet Union at the third CSCE

Follow-up Meeting in Vienna. The chapter analyses the foreign policy goals of the two participating states and the expectations they had of the CSCE, focussing on the topic of human rights. Special consideration is given to the influence of the reforms announced by Gorbachev, which raised high expectations among both the Western participants and the neutral states. The analysis concludes that the decisions of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting ultimately even exceeded these expectations. The United States never saw the CSCE as its main foreign policy interest but as an opportunity to exert influence on the Soviet Union. This seemed to have been achieved in Vienna.

The chapter “European Political Cooperation at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting (1986–1989)” by Matthias Peter sheds light on the efforts at coordination on the part of EC member states before and during the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. Although European Political Cooperation (EPC) was institutionally consolidated and strengthened with the Single European Act (SEA) – which came into force on 1 July 1987, at an early stage of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting – the analysis clearly shows that there were difficult coordination processes and that it was mainly in Basket II that it was possible to act as a unit with joint proposals. In other areas, national interests were decisive and therefore the states often acted independently of each other or in different. However, with the proposal that was central to the group, EPC succeeded in pushing through a mechanism for the “human dimension”.

In the chapter “Divergent Neutral Strategies”, Kai Habel looks at the work of the neutral and non-aligned states at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. The study emphasises the special role of this group of states, which acted as mediators while bringing its own interests to the conference table. The analysis also shows that major divergences arose between individual states, particularly in Vienna. Using the topic of disarmament as an example, the diplomatic strategies pursued by the N+N and how they succeeded in finding and pursuing a common line are explained in more detail. The chapter also shows the challenge the N+N faced in being part of disarmament negotiations within the CSCE.

This is followed by a focus on the actions of Warsaw Pact states. In his chapter “East German Intelligence Perspectives on the CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna”, Simon Graham focusses on the actions of the GDR. He examines the assessments of the Main Directorate for Reconnaissance (Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung, HVA) of the GDR Ministry for State Security (MfS) against the background of the incipient changes in Eastern Europe, which were taking place against the backdrop of reforms in the Soviet Union. The analysis shows that the HVA did not pursue a clear or consistent line of argument in its internal papers: Initially, it expected that the Follow-up Meeting would not lead to

any significant results; in 1988, it warned the GDR state leadership about the effects of the CSCE agreements in the area of human rights; but after its signing in 1989, the Vienna Final Document was seen as progress in terms of the further development of human rights and in terms of human contacts.

The chapter "A German-German Conflict in a Multilateral Framework" by Willi Schrenk is dedicated to the most contentious issue between the two German states at the third CSCE Follow-up Meeting. The study traces the development of the conflict, which affected all travellers to the GDR, from 1964 until after the conclusion of the Follow-up Meeting. The analysis includes both the conduct of negotiations in Vienna and external factors that ultimately led to concessions on the part of the GDR. It particularly emphasises the GDR's isolation towards the end due to its hard-line position even within its own alliance. The chapter emphasises the special nature of this area of negotiation, as bilateral conflicts were not normally negotiated within the CSCE framework.

The last two contributions are also dedicated to Warsaw Pact states. In the chapter "Human Rights, the Vienna Follow-up Meeting and Political Transformation in the Eastern Bloc", Wanda Jarząbek focuses on the negotiations on political rights and their impact on the upheavals of 1989 and the phase of political transition. It begins by analysing the human rights situation in Poland before the Vienna Follow-up Meeting before going on to look at the interactions between the negotiations in Vienna and developments in Poland. The chapter concludes that the CSCE contributed to better conditions for the political opposition. It can therefore be seen as one, but not the sole or decisive, factor contributing to political change in the Warsaw Pact states.

Mirsolav Kunštát comes to a similar conclusion in his chapter "The Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting and Czechoslovakia", which analyses both official state diplomacy at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting and the interactions between the events in Vienna and the actions of dissidents. The study also refers to the negotiation dynamics in Vienna, which were marked by a lack of coordination and various political tensions between individual Warsaw Pact states. Kunštát shows that until the beginning of the revolution in November 1989, critics of the regime constantly referred to the Vienna Final Document in order to highlight various humanitarian abuses and to emphasise their demands. The CSCE thus served as an important support for their arguments.

4 Conclusion

This volume is the first collection of essays to focus on the third CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna. Since the expiration of the archival embargo, government files on this meeting have become accessible in many participating

states, enabling research into this phase of the CSCE process. 2019 marked the beginning of the international research project The CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna (1986–1989). *Struggling for Human Rights and European Security at the End of the Cold War*. First results have already been published³⁹ with more texts, which will examine different aspects of the Follow-up Meeting, in preparation.

As the contributions to this volume show, the CSCE can be studied from a wide range of perspectives and using a variety of theoretical approaches including biographical approaches, multi-archival studies and media analyses. Many of the studies collected here show a close interaction between the conference and political developments – both globally and nationally. Analyses of interests and negotiation strategies show that the participating states had different expectations of the CSCE Follow-up Meeting, which in many cases can be traced back to their assessment of the CSCE and its potential. Many contributions also point to coordination difficulties within the alliances. A thematic focus on human rights can be identified in this volume. Both country-specific and cross-bloc contributions chose this area of negotiation as their (exemplary) focus. However, the CSCE's security dimension and the interplay between these two aspects are also discussed in detail. Other contributions are devoted to topics that have so far been neglected by research. What all the chapters have in common is the realisation that far-reaching results were achieved in Vienna. This is due not least to the new dynamic between the major powers, as several contributions to this volume explain. Both the increased interest of the United States in the CSCE under President Ronald Reagan and the reforms announced by Gorbachev contributed to a change in the basic conditions for negotiations. This shows how important the views of the CSCE held by heads of government were. However, the influence of delegation members should not be underestimated either.

This insight results not only from an analysis of the documents but is also supported by diplomats who took part in the negotiations. In order to capture these voices, the project team conducted interviews with people who were involved in or associated with the third CSCE Follow-up Meeting in various

39 Nina Hechenblaikner, "Diplomatie und ihre Einflüsse. Prägende Akteursgruppen für die Verhandlungen zur humanitären Dimension beim KSZE-Folgetreffen in Wien (1986–1989)", in: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 35 (2024), issue 2, p. 154–173; Nina Hechenblaikner, "Die humanitäre Dimension des KSZE-Prozesses und das Ende des Kalten Krieges", in: Beate Fieseler/Oksana Nagornaia (eds.), *Der Zerfall der Sowjetunion und das Ende der DDR als historische Zäsuren*, Wiesbaden 2024, p. 15–26; Jonas Kaiser, "Von Stockholm über Wien nach Paris. Vertrauens- und Sicherheitsbildende Maßnahmen und das KSE-Mandat im Rahmen des KSZE Prozesses 1984–1990", in: Fieseler/Nagornaia, *Der Zerfall der Sowjetunion und das Ende der DDR als historische Zäsuren*, p. 1–13.

capacities. Transcripts of these interviews approved for publication will be published in a separate volume.⁴⁰ Collecting the testimonies of different individuals should also help to capture aspects of the third CSCE Follow-up Meeting that cannot be reconstructed from files. For example, the later Austrian foreign minister Ursula Plassnik, who was involved in the Vienna Follow-up Meeting as a diplomat and drafted the opening speech for the Austrian chancellor, Franz Vranitzky, reported that she participated in the negotiations in Basket III with “great enthusiasm”, as they concerned “people and their lives in this divided Europe.” One of the distinguishing features of the CSCE process was that a large proportion of the provisions were (pre-)negotiated in unofficial meetings before being officially adopted in the plenary sessions. However, this approach, as well as the mood during the negotiations, can hardly be deduced from the available archive material. Plassnik, for example, remembered that even at an early stage of the Vienna negotiations she had expressed the opinion that the Berlin Wall had to disappear, even though nobody at the time could have imagined how quickly the global political situation would change.⁴¹

The Vienna Follow-up Meeting and its comprehensive Concluding Document can be considered the second highpoint of the CSCE process after the Helsinki Final Act. The Concluding Document exceeded the expectations of many delegations.⁴² In all areas of the negotiations, provisions were agreed that potentially had far-reaching effects not only on relations between states but also on the populations of the participating states. As in the previous negotiations, the areas of human rights and security policy proved the most controversial in Vienna. They were closely interrelated, with concessions in one area often tied to concessions from the other side in the other area. However, significant further developments were also achieved in seemingly less controversial areas such as information, culture, environmental protection and the economy.

The agreements reached in Vienna included rights that seemed almost unattainable for many people in January 1989, especially in the Warsaw Pact

40 Kai Habel/Nina Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges. Erinnerungen an die dritte KSZE-Folgekonferenz in Wien 1986–1989*, Baden-Baden 2025.

41 E-Mail from Ursula Plassnik to Nina Hechenblaikner, 2.5.2022. The editors would like to express their sincere thanks to Dr. Plassnik for giving us access to these notes.

42 Hermann Wentker, “Die KSZE als Ordnungsfaktor. Höhenflug und Bedeutungsverlust einer Idealvorstellung europäischer Politik (1989–1991)”, in: Tim Geiger/Jürgen Lillteicher et al. (eds.), *Zwei plus Vier. Die internationale Gründungsgeschichte der Berliner Republik* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 123), Berlin-Boston 2021, p. 125–141, on p. 125.

states, such as the right to freedom of movement, the free choice of residence and settlement within the borders of each state, the right to travel from one district to another and the possibility of leaving and returning to one's own country – rights that were to be curtailed only in exceptional circumstances. These measures were particularly important for family visits and reunions. In another CSCE document, the West's demand for freedom of movement was described in detail for the first time. This contributed to cross-border visitor traffic, including the possibility of reducing restrictions in a gradual process to support travellers and to facilitate personal contacts and family reunions. Three follow-up conferences on human rights were also organised: a first in Paris in 1989, a second in Copenhagen in 1990 and a third in Moscow in 1991. Although some states did not intend to implement all the provisions of the Concluding Document, key provisions soon gained practical significance. At this point, it is worth mentioning the Vienna Mechanism, which enabled the participating states to react to human rights violations between and outside CSCE events⁴³ and is still an important basis for the actions of its successor organisation, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).⁴⁴

Not only can the Vienna Follow-up Meeting be understood as a turning point in the CSCE process,⁴⁵ it also took place at a time when the entire global political situation was in a state of flux. The CSCE follow-up process undoubtedly interacted with the reform process in the Soviet Union, initiated by the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, and its impact on the entire Warsaw Pact. However, this was felt in a complex form at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting: on the one hand, the Warsaw Pact adhered to the coordination mechanism tested within the framework of the CSCE and to the necessity of presenting a united front within the conference framework, while on the other hand, the Warsaw Pact states also pursued different interests in accordance with their circumstances. A development over time can be observed in this respect: while the Eastern bloc states were still quite united at the conference during the implementation phase, differences emerged in the subsequent proposal phase, intensified in the drafting phase and culminated in an open confrontation in the final phase of the Follow-up Meeting.

43 Rachel Brett, "The Human Dimension Mechanism of the CSCE and the CSCE Response to Minorities", in: Michael R. Lucas (ed.), *The CSCE in the 1990s. Constructing European Security and Cooperation* (Demokratie, Sicherheit, Frieden 83), Baden-Baden 1993, p. 143–160, on p. 144–145.

44 OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), *OSCE Human Dimension Commitments*. Vol. 1, Thematic Compilation, Warsaw 42023.

45 Snyder, "The foundation for Vienna: A Reassessment of the CSCE in the mid-1980s", p. 493.

The question of the significance of the CSCE for the end of the Cold War has been raised many times, and the answer has usually been that it should be neither underestimated nor overestimated. No conclusive answer can be given to the question of how great the influence of the CSCE on these processes was, nor does it appear to be genuinely useful for research into the CSCE. It was one factor among many that ultimately led to the (temporary) end of the East-West confrontation.

The historical study of the CSCE is a relatively young field of research, one which offers a variety of thematic focuses and research approaches. This volume aims to help contextualise the significance of the CSCE within the web of the Cold War. It also aims to show the potential for and gaps in research on the Meeting.

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⁴⁶ The authors were able to make the last additions and revisions to the content in December 2024.

Moscow and Vienna on the Road to Helsinki

Anna Graf-Steiner

When the third follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was held in Vienna (1986–1989), it was finally Austria's turn to become the scene of a gradually dynamising CSCE process. The glasnost and perestroika policies of Mikhail S. Gorbachev, general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), allowed the so-called “Helsinki effect”, the transformative potential of the CSCE Final Act signed in Helsinki in 1975, finally to unfold. Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet leader who was the driving force behind the first CSCE Conference in Helsinki and Geneva (1973–1975), naturally had a very different idea of its value and implications when he put his signature to the document.¹ Brezhnev celebrated the signing of the Final Act as the greatest diplomatic achievement in the history of the Soviet Union, for he saw the project of a pan-European security conference as a foreign policy tool to have the European post-war borders confirmed on a multilateral level.² While the West considered the inclusion of the humanitarian dimension, the “Third Basket”, its success, the consensus in the Kremlin was that the existence of these provisions was a matter which there was no need “to talk about in any detail at home”.³

For Brezhnev, Moscow's road to Helsinki was a long one – and from the Soviet point of view, Austria played a decisive role in the realisation of “their” conference project.⁴ Early on, the Kremlin regarded the European neutral

1 Preparatory work for this essay was conducted at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War (BIK), Graz – Vienna – Raabs, in collaboration with Graz University and the City of Graz. It was supported by the FWF in the context of the project “The Role of the Neutral States in Soviet Foreign Policy Strategy, 1969–1975” (10.55776/P31869). This paper is based on the author's resulting publications: Anna Graf-Steiner, *Die Rolle des neutralen Österreich in der außenpolitischen Strategie der Sowjetunion, 1969–1975*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Graz, 2023, which in the same year received an “Award of Excellence – State Prize for the Best Dissertations” from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research; and Anna Graf-Steiner, *Brückenbauer im Kalten Krieg. Österreich und der lange Weg zur Helsinki-Schlussakte*, Graz-Wien-Berlin 2024.

2 Michael C. Morgan, *The Final Act*, Oxford 2018, p. 74–78.

3 Anatolij F. Dobrynin, *Sugubo doveritel'no*, Moscow 2016, p. 383 (translated).

4 On Austria's role see Benjamin Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983. Neutraler Vermittler in humanitärer Mission*, Munich 2013; on the Soviet view of Austria see note 1.

countries as possible advocates for a pan-European security conference.⁵ This chapter will examine the question of how the Soviet Union saw the role of neutral Austria in the preparation and realisation of the (first) CSCE, what interests it had vis-à-vis the neutral actor and how successful this strategy proved.

1 European Security and the Warsaw Pact

Brezhnev became general secretary of the CPSU in October 1964 after Khrushchev was overthrown by the plenum of the CPSU Central Committee. Among other things, Khrushchev's internal opponents criticised that he had neglected European security issues in favour of the conflict with China, thereby also upsetting allies states, notably Poland and the GDR. Both had urged Moscow to take a firmer stand against NATO's plans for a multilateral nuclear force (MLF).⁶ In response, the Polish government declared in February 1964 that the so-called "Rapacki plan", a plan to create a regional demilitarised zone in Central Europe first proposed by the Polish foreign minister, Adam Rapacki, at the UN General Assembly in 1957,⁷ "remained fully relevant".⁸ In December, Rapacki proposed to the UN General Assembly that the issue be discussed at a "conference of all European states", including the Soviet Union and the United States.⁹

5 On Soviet perceptions, policies and strategies toward neutral and nonaligned European countries in the Cold War see Mark Kramer/Aryo Makko/Peter Ruggenthaler (eds.), *The Soviet Union and Cold War Neutrality and Nonalignment in Europe*, Lanham-Boulder et al. 2021; on the neutrals and the CSCE see Thomas Fischer, *Neutral Power in the CSCE: The N+N States and the Making of the Helsinki Accords 1975*, Baden-Baden 2009; on Austrian neutrality see Günter Bischof/Peter Ruggenthaler, *Österreich und der Kalte Krieg*, Graz 2022; Wolfgang Mueller, *A Good Example of Peaceful Coexistence? The Soviet Union, Austria and Neutrality, 1955–1991*, Vienna 2011.

6 Douglas Selva, *The Warsaw Pact and Nuclear Nonproliferation, 1963–1965*. (The Cold War International History Project Working Paper Series Vol. 32), Washington D.C. 2001, p. 17; Idem, "Poland and the Sino-Soviet Rift, 1963–1965", *CWIHP e-Dossier* 10, 2004, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/poland-and-the-sino-soviet-rift-1963-1965>, accessed 9.9.2023; Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens*, Stanford 2009.

7 Michael Gehler, Neutralität und Neutralisierungspläne für Mitteleuropa?, in: Dominik Geppert/Udo Wengst (eds.), *Neutralität – Chance oder Chimäre?*, Munich 2005, p. 105–131, on p. 124; on the Polish position see Piotr Długolecki, Diplomatic file. An Unknown Context of the Rapacki Plan, in: *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs* 20 (2011), p. 59–71; Wanda Jarzabek, *Hope and Reality* (CWIHP Working Paper Series Vol. 56), Washington D.C. 2008.

8 Memorandum of the Polish government of 29 Feb. 1964, in: Friedrich-Karl Schramm/Wolfram-Georg Riggert/Alois Friedel (eds.), *Sicherheitskonferenz in Europa: Dokumentation 1954–1972*, Frankfurt a. M. 1972, p. 414–415 (translated).

9 Speech of the Polish FM Adam Rapacki before the General Assembly of the United Nations on 14 Dec. 1964, in: Schramm et al. (eds.), *Sicherheitskonferenz*, p. 415–416 (translated).

In early 1965 Moscow did not yet have a clear line on how to deal with the Polish proposal. Brezhnev sharply condemned the MLF at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee (PCC) of the Warsaw Pact countries in January 1965 in Warsaw,¹⁰ which smoothed pact relations. However, he neither mentioned a pan-European security conference nor a collective security system. The Polish initiative for a conference found its way into the final declaration of the Warsaw Pact,¹¹ but without defining any measures.¹²

To thwart MLF, Moscow henceforth relied on international diplomacy, including its relations with Austria. In March 1965, the Soviet ambassador to Austria, Viktor I. Avilov, suggested to the Soviet foreign ministry that Austria, as a neutral country, should be more involved in the issue of European security.¹³ Avilov emphasised that the policy of neutrality pursued by Austria for the last ten years had been the main factor in the country's increased international prestige, and stressed "that the Soviet government has confidence in Austria".¹⁴

2 From Idea to Strategy – Brezhnev and the Pan-European Security Conference

The idea of a security conference was not announced in Moscow until the spring of 1966. Brezhnev saw the growing disagreements within NATO – France had officially announced that it wanted to leave NATO's military structures¹⁵ – as the perfect backdrop against which to bring forward a renewed initiative. The Nordic NATO member countries in particular were under pressure

10 Brezhnev's Speech at the Meeting of the PCC of the Warsaw Pact States, 20 January 1965, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), F. 10, op. 3, d. 19, l. 30–47, l. 36 (translated).

11 Communiqué of the Meeting of the PCC of the Warsaw Pact States, Warsaw, 20 January 1965. Ibid., d. 18, l. 1–7, l. 5–6 (translated).

12 Andrej Zagorskij, *Chel'sinskij Process*, Moscow 2005, p. 21.

13 Embassy of the USSR in Austria [V. I. Avilov] to the Third European Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Materials for the talks of FM Gromyko with Austrian statesmen in May 1965, 31 March 1965, Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVP RF), F. 066, op. 49, p. 237, d. 7, l. 21–28, l. 22–23; see also Anna Graf-Steiner/Herbert R. Reginbogin, "Austria: The NPT, Diplomacy, and National Identity", in: Pascal Lottaz/Yoko Iwama (eds.), *Neutral Europe and the Creation of the Nonproliferation Regime 1958–1968*, London-New York 2023, p. 169–184, on p. 171.

14 Embassy of the USSR in Austria [V. I. Avilov] to the Third European Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, AVP RF, F. 066, op. 49, p. 237, d. 7, l. 21–28, l. 23.

15 Burkard Schmitt, *Frankreich und die Nukleardebatte der Atlantischen Allianz 1956–1966*, München 1998, p. 195.

from the Soviets.¹⁶ So was France, as de Gaulle's conception of a new security system, if necessary without taking the United States into account, basically accommodated Soviet efforts to prevent a renewal of the NATO treaty, which would be due in 1969.¹⁷

At the XXIII. Party Congress of the CPSU in March/April 1966, it became the official Soviet position to seek the final confirmation of borders in the framework of a pan-European security conference. The USSR wanted to present itself as the guardian of peace and give "new dynamics" to those civil society and political forces in Western Europe critical of US hegemony.¹⁸ Accordingly, the Warsaw Pact's PCC meeting in Bucharest in July 1966 declared a pan-European security conference a main political goal of the bloc.¹⁹ The proposed concept included the establishment of a European security system, the withdrawal of foreign troops from Europe, the dissolution of alliances, the reduction of military forces in the FRG and the GDR, the recognition of existing borders, renunciation of violence, and an expansion of scientific-technical and cultural cooperation.²⁰ In the final declaration, the link between European security and the neutral states as advocates for the cause was also publicly stated for the first time.²¹

3 Multilateralisation and "the Spring of 1969"

After the Bucharest Declaration, discussions on the subject of the security conference intensified in the West. Soviet diplomacy focused primarily on France and its partial break with NATO, on the smaller NATO countries and the neutrals.²² This marked the beginning of increasing Soviet pressure on

16 Thomas Wegener Friis, "Dänemark. NATO-Horchposten zur Ostsee", in: Stefan Karner et al. (eds.), *Prager Frühling. Das internationale Krisenjahr 1968. Band 1: Beiträge*, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2008, p. 617–631, on p. 618–619.

17 Georges-Henri Soutou, "Paris und der 'Prager Frühling'", in: Stefan Karner et al. (eds.), *Prager Frühling*, p. 355–364, on p. 356–357.

18 Brezhnev's Speech at the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, 12 December 1966, RGANI, F. 2, op. 3, d. 49, l. 10 (translated).

19 Csaba Békés, "The Warsaw Pact, the German Question and the CSCE Process", in: Oliver Bange/Gottfried Niedhart (eds.), *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, Brooklyn 2008, p. 113–128, on p. 115; Wanda Jarzabek, "Preserving the Status Quo or Promoting Change?", in: *Ibid.*, p. 144–159, on p. 144.

20 Morgan, *Final Act*, p. 80–81.

21 Declaration of the Warsaw Pact States in Bucharest of 6 July 1966, in: Schramm et al. (eds.), *Sicherheitskonferenz*, p. 425–435.

22 Petri Hakkarainen, *A State of Peace in Europe*, New York-Oxford 2011, p. 20; Matthias Peter, *Die Bundesrepublik im KSZE-Prozess 1975–1983*, Berlin-München-Boston 2015, p. 71–73.

Austria. Vienna showed interest in the conference project from the beginning, but repeatedly made it clear that it could not take any initiative,²³ clearly not wanting to be perceived as a mouthpiece of the Kremlin.

The suppression of the “Prague Spring” only meant a temporary suspension of détente. The Warsaw Pact sent a clear signal of relaxation to the West with the declaration of the PCC in Budapest of 17 March 1969, when the member states agreed to discuss Western disarmament plans and abandoned their demands to dissolve the military alliances and to withdraw foreign troops from Europe.²⁴ However, Brezhnev’s actual main goals remained unchanged: the recognition of the status quo regarding the inner-German border and the Oder-Neisse line, the relinquishment of the FRG’s capacity to deploy nuclear weapons and a special status for Berlin. NATO reacted cautiously positively to the conference plans and spoke out in favour of consultations on the topic at its Ministerial Council meeting in April.²⁵

In parallel, efforts to win diplomatic favour resumed in the spring of 1969, especially for the small and neutral European states, with a focus on Austria and Finland.²⁶ On 17 April 1969, the first secretary of the Soviet embassy, Albert Dmitriev, told the Austrian ambassador in Moscow, Walter Wodak, that “the special role and function of Austria as a neutral state suggested that Austria should be proactive in the much-discussed question of convening a European security conference” – without, however, specifically stating what measures were to be taken.²⁷ At the same time (14–18 April 1969), the Bulgarian leader, Todor Zhivkov, visited Austria and made a similar request to Chancellor Josef Klaus, which suggests previous synchronisation with Moscow. Zhivkov,

23 Gilde, *Neutraler Vermittler*; Fischer, *Neutral Power*, p. 87–88.

24 Document No. 63: Appeal for a European Security Conference, March 17, 1969, in: Vojtech Mastny/Malcolm Byrne (eds.), *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955–1991*, Budapest 2005, p. 330–331; Csaba Békés, “Der Warschauer Pakt und der KSZE-Prozess”, in: Torsten Diedrich/Winfried Heinemann/Christian F. Ostermann (eds.), *Der Warschauer Pakt*, Berlin 2009, p. 225–244; Morgan, *Final Act*, p. 82–83; Thomas Fischer, “Austria and the Helsinki Process”, in: Arnold Suppan/Wolfgang Mueller (eds.), *Peaceful Coexistence” or “Iron Curtain“*, Wien 2009, p. 168–202, on p. 173; Helga Haftendorn, “The Link between CSCE and MBFR. Two sprouts from one bulb”, in: Andreas Wenger/Vojtech Mastny/Christian Nuenlist (eds.), *Origins of the European Security System*, p. 237–258, on p. 240.

25 Communiqué on the North Atlantic Council ministerial meeting in Washington, Apr. 10–11, 1969, in: Schramm et al. (eds.), *Sicherheitskonferenz*, p. 70–71.

26 This refutes Thomas Fischer’s thesis that Soviet interest from 1968 onwards was directed primarily at Finland: Fischer, *Neutral Power*, p. 89.

27 Talks with Soviet diplomats. Wodak to SPÖ Party Chairman Kreisky, 17 April 1969. Stiftung Bruno-Kreisky-Archiv (SBKA), VII.1 Länderbox UdSSR, Box 2, ex 1240 (translated).

however, expressed his wishes in more concrete terms: “[i]f you find, for example, that it would be appropriate to convene this conference in Austria [...] we will support you in doing so”.²⁸ However, the chancellor apparently did not see Austria as being a position to initiate a convocation without both superpowers on board.²⁹

Finland was also in the Soviet Union’s sights at the same time. The Soviet ambassador in Helsinki had asked the Finnish foreign minister, Ahti Karjalainen, for Finland to “make a start” and speak out in favour of holding a pan-European security conference in the near future. Karjalainen informed the Austrian foreign ministry about this conversation via the Austrian ambassador.³⁰ Finland indeed made a start soon afterwards, but reinterpreted the original Soviet idea in such a way that it served Finland’s interests of pursuing a policy of active neutrality more independent of Moscow.³¹ On 5 May 1969, Finland approached with the European states as well as the USA and Canada, declaring itself available as a venue for a pan-European security conference. The bi- and multilateral consultation process between the Warsaw Pact, NATO countries and the neutral and non-aligned states gained momentum. Only a few days after the Finnish initiative, the first secretary of the Soviet embassy expressed his regret to Wodak that the initiator had been Finland – and not Austria.³²

4 Austria in Moscow’s Sights

Valentin M. Falin, head of the second European department of the Soviet foreign ministry, was a driving force in courting Austria. He told the Austrian

28 Minutes of conversation Josef Klaus – Todor Zhivkov, Central State Archive Sofia (CDA), F. 378b, op. 5, a.e. 386, n. d. [14.–18.4.1969], l. 20 (translated).

29 Ibid., l. 20–21.

30 Außenminister Dr. Karjalainen zur Frage der Abhaltung einer europäischen Sicherheitskonferenz, Helsinki, 21. Apr. 1969, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), BMAA, Politische Sektion, Abteilung 7 Entwicklung (11-Pol), Politische Berichte, Zl. 49-Pol/69, p. 3 (translated).

31 Kimmo Rentola, “Der Vorschlag einer europäischen Sicherheitskonferenz und die stille Krise zwischen Finnland und der Sowjetunion 1968–1971”, in: Geppert/Wengst (eds.), *Chance oder Chimäre?* p. 177–202; Idem, “Finnlands Ruf nach einer Europäischen Sicherheitskonferenz im Jahr 1969”, in: Michael Borchard/Stefan Karner/Hanns Jürgen Küsters et al. (eds.), *Entspannung im Kalten Krieg*, Graz-Wien 2020, p. 645–655; Thomas Fischer, “A Mustard Seed Grew Into a Bushy Tree”, in: *Cold War History* 9 (2009), p. 177–201; Fischer, *Neutral Power*, p. 89–100; Morgan, *Final Act*, p. 87.

32 Amb. W. Wodak to SPÖ Chairman Bruno Kreisky, 13 May 1969, SBKA, VII.1 Länderbox UdSSR, Box 2, ex 1240.

ambassador that the “political influence of neutral states” should not be underestimated³³ and suggested to the Soviet foreign ministry in a letter dated 3 December 1969 that it should “speak out for a more active participation of Austria in the preparation of the conference”.³⁴ Falin observed greater consultation activity on the part of the Austrian government and interpreted this as a sign that Vienna wanted to make up for its failure to take the initiative.³⁵ He assumed that Austria could be expected to continue its commitment to the preparation and implementation of the conference, which in turn Moscow would use for its own agenda.

Even if the Warsaw Pact officially signalled gratitude for Finland’s willingness to host talks at their meeting of foreign ministers in Budapest on 21–22 June 1970, this was not a clear commitment that the preliminary talks, still less the actual conference, would take place in Helsinki.³⁶ Austria also openly offered itself as a possible venue – and the Kremlin was ready to make political capital out of the unresolved question, as evidenced by a Politburo decision of 17 April 1970:

In order to influence Austria’s policy and to consolidate its position of neutrality, more active use should be made of the Austrian government’s interest in international negotiations, conferences, congresses being held in Vienna and in Austria’s capital becoming the seat of new international organisations.³⁷

The means of choice for exerting pressure on Austria was stated just as clearly: the reference to Moscow’s rights under the Austrian State Treaty and Austrian neutrality.³⁸

33 Die Sowjetunion und Österreich. Report of Austrian Ambassador to Moscow, Walter Wodak, to Foreign Ministry, Nov. 14, 1969, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau 1969, Zl. 46-Pol/69, p. 5 (translated).

34 Letter of V. Falin to L. F. Il’ičev, 3 December 1969, AVP RF, F. 66, op. 48, p. 103, d. 13, l. 21–24, l. 21 (translated).

35 Ibid.

36 Memorandum of the Conference of Foreign Ministers, June 21 and 22, 1970, in: Schramm et al. (eds.), *Sicherheitskonferenz*, p. 520–522, on p. 521. In this document, the participation of the USA and Canada in this conference was officially accepted by the Warsaw Pact.

37 Protocol No. 160 of the meeting of the Politburo of the CC of the CPSU, Apr. 17, 1970, RGANI, F. 3, op. 72, d. 331, l. 1. 6; 39–48, l. 48 (translated).

38 Ibid., l. 45. In the same decision, the Politburo recognized that the Austrian State Treaty did not in fact provide any legal means for Moscow to prevent Austria’s possible association with the European Economic Community (EEC). However, the concession remained an internal one. Towards Austria, the incompatibility between closer economic relations

A decision in favour of Vienna became unthinkable in January 1973, when Vienna had been designated as the venue for the negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR).³⁹ On 29 May 1973, it was decided that the CSCE ambassadorial negotiations would take place in Geneva.⁴⁰

5 Kreisky as Vicarious Agent?

Aleksandr Bondarenko, head of the third European department in the Soviet foreign ministry, pleaded for more Soviet involvement in Austria in a letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU on January 3, 1973.⁴¹ Sharply criticising chancellor Bruno Kreisky for his insistence on including the Middle East issue on the CSCE agenda, at the same time he read Kreisky's persistence as proof that the Austrian chancellor did not shy away from unpopular issues and might be won over to certain Soviet interests. Bondarenko explicitly recommended that "the interest of the Kreisky cabinet to play a more active role in European affairs" be used in conjunction with the pan-European conference.⁴² As a concrete measure, he suggested a return visit by Alexei Kosygin, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, to Austria, to which he had already been invited in 1967.⁴³

At the plenum in April 1973, Brezhnev took up this proposal and ordered an increase in diplomatic visits to the neutral countries to speed up the preparatory talks in Helsinki.⁴⁴ A visit by Kosygin to Austria (2–5 July 1973) was arranged at remarkably short notice, barely a month in advance.⁴⁵ The fact that it took place immediately before the end of the meeting of foreign

with the EEC (and the FRG) and the State Treaty's "Anschlussverbot" was to be insisted on even more strongly.

39 Haftendorn, *Two Sprouts from One Bulb*, p. 251–252; Christoph Breitenmoser, *Sicherheit für Europa*, Zürich 1996, p. 122.

40 Philipp Rosin, *Die Schweiz im KSZE-Prozeß 1972–1983. Einfluß durch Neutralität*, München 2014, p. 73–75.

41 Materials for the CC of the CPSU for Talks with Austrian Representatives. Head of the Third European Department, Aleksandr Bondarenko, to the First Deputy Head of the CC of the CPSU, Vadim Valentinovich Zagladin, Jan. 3, 1973, RGANI, F. 5, op. 66, d. 884, l. 29–35.

42 Ibid., l. 33 (translated).

43 Ibid., l. 32.

44 Brezhnev's Speech at the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, Apr. 26–27, 1973, RGANI, F. 2, op. 3, d. 292, l. 30–32.

45 Offizieller Besuch des Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates der UdSSR, Alexej N. Kossygin, in Österreich vom 2. bis 5. Juli 1973, June 25, 1973, SBKA, VII.1 Länderbox UdSSR, Box 2, Besuch Kossygin ex 738a 1973 Informationsmappe, Zl. 39–976-6(Pol)73.

ministers in Helsinki caused an international stir.⁴⁶ The CIA assumed an “orchestrated effort” on the part of Moscow to influence the neutrals.⁴⁷

Washington noticed that the joint communiqué on the occasion of Kosygin’s visit referred for the first time to Austria’s “neutrality anchored in the constitution” and officially recognised Vienna’s contacts with the European Economic Community.⁴⁸ Furthermore, in the communiqué both states declared their commitment to strengthening peace and security in Europe on the basis of the principles worked out in Helsinki. However, the only principles cited were those that happened to be Soviet priorities: the “sovereign equality” of all states, “renunciation of the use of force”, “non-interference in internal affairs” and “cooperation for mutual benefit”.⁴⁹ No mention was made of “human rights”, “peaceful change of frontiers” or the “right of peoples to self-determination”. It was precisely these principles not mentioned here that were at issue between East and West (with Austria taking the Western position) at the Helsinki meeting of foreign ministers. For the sake of “good neighbourly relations”, the Vienna leadership proved quite willing (or felt compelled) to turn a blind eye when Moscow “forgot” the transformative principles.

In contrast, the Austrian CSCE delegation, led by Helmut Liedermann,⁵⁰ was particularly active in the negotiations on the Third Basket. Most of the text in the “Human Contacts” section of the Third Basket was drafted by Austrians, as was its preamble, which indeed represented “one of the finest hours of Viennese post-war diplomacy”.⁵¹ This was in contrast to the strategy of the Austrian chancellery and foreign ministry. The Austrian government did not believe that changes in the socio-political situation should be sought at the conference table, instead preferring quiet diplomacy in the humanitarian sphere.⁵²

Moscow, for its part, showed surprisingly little resistance to Austrian diplomacy in this regard. Instead, the Soviet leadership focused on working towards a summit that would end the discussions and secure the status quo in Europe.

46 The CSCE Foreign Ministers’ meeting in Helsinki took place from 2–7 July 1973, Chiffre der österreichischen Botschaft in Paris [Bielka] an das Außenministerium in Wien, July 4, 1973, SBKA, VII.1 Länderbox UdSSR, Box 2, Zl. 22792.

47 *Central Intelligence Bulletin* No. 0163/73, 9.7.1973, p. 2.

48 Ibid.

49 Österreichisch-sowjetisches Kommuniqué [signatories: Kosygin, Kreisky], 5 July 1973, SBKA, VII.1 Länderbox UdSSR, Box 2 (translated).

50 See the article by Maximilian Graf in this volume.

51 Günter Bischof, “Rezension zu: Benjamin Gilde, Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983. Neutraler Vermittler in humanitärer Mission, München 2013”, in: *sehpunkte* 14 (2014), issue 2, <http://www.sehpunkte.de/2014/02/24330.html>, accessed 9.9.2023 (translated); see also: Gilde, *Neutraler Vermittler*, p. 106.

52 Gilde, *Neutraler Vermittler*, p. 71–78.

Kreisky was seen as a suitable proxy in this effort, as he himself showed little interest in the conference proceedings in Helsinki and Geneva and in the positions of his delegation represented there. He remained disappointed that the Middle East issue was not on the agenda and from the outset would have preferred a top-level summit to “another diplomatic conference”.⁵³ This ambiguity was closely watched by Moscow.⁵⁴

Kreisky visited the Soviet Union from 28 May 28 to 1 June 1974. From the Soviet Union’s point of view, the main result of the meeting was the public commitment of the Austrian side, namely Kreisky, to do everything possible for a speedy conclusion of the CSCE.⁵⁵ Kreisky’s statement was received with horror, both in the Austrian foreign ministry and within the delegation. Not only was it contrary to the interests of the delegation, but it was feared that Moscow was trying to ensnare Kreisky for tactical reasons.⁵⁶ Soviet files show that this concern was not unfounded.

After U.S. President Nixon’s stopover in Salzburg (11–12 June 1974), Kreisky personally informed Soviet chargé d’affaires V. M. Mamontov of the contents of the talks.⁵⁷ Kreisky said that he had pressed Nixon for a summit as soon as possible.⁵⁸ To Mamontov, the Austrian chancellor stated he had told Nixon and Kissinger that it was “not necessary [to] solve all the questions that are currently being discussed in Geneva”, the Third Basket in particular containing “many small and simply unnecessary questions”.⁵⁹ According to the U.S.

53 Ibid., p. 188 (translated).

54 See for example: Information from the Soviet Embassy in Austria, 21 February 1972, RGANI, F. 5, op. 64, d. 567, l. 28–33; Official diary of V. S. Semenov. Conversation of the Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR [V. S. Semenov] with the Austrian Chancellor B. Kreisky, 31 January 1972, Ibid., F. 5, op. 64, d. 568, l. 8–12.

55 Political Report of the Embassy of the USSR in Austria [Mamontov], 5 July 1974, RGANI, F. 5, op. 67, d. 814, l. 162–171.

56 Gilde, *Neutraler Vermittler*, p. 188–189.

57 U.S. President Nixon visited Salzburg from 11–12 June 1974 on a stopover on his way to the Middle East. Nixon exchanged views with Kreisky on the Socialist International’s recent fact-finding mission to the Middle East. The U.S. president’s trip to Moscow followed from 28 June 28–1 July 1974.

58 Transcript of the conversation of the chargé d’affaires of the USSR in Austria, V. M. Mamontov, with Austrian Chancellor Kreisky, 20 June 1974, RGANI, F. 5, op. 67, d. 814, l. 136f.; see also: Memorandum of Conversation Nixon – Kreisky, June 11, 1974. Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum, NSC, Memoranda of Conversations, 1973–1977, box 4, Nixon Administration, <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0314/1552720.pdf>, accessed 30.9.2023.

59 Transcript of the conversation of the chargé d’affaires of the USSR in Austria, V. M. Mamontov, with Austrian Chancellor Kreisky, June 20, 1974, RGANI, F. 5, op. 67, d. 814, l. 136f (translated).

transcript, Kreisky pleaded not to wait too long for further concessions from the East: “We can’t avoid going to a conference in the long run, and if we do not do it now, we will go without any concessions.”⁶⁰ In the conversation with Mamontov, Kreisky did not mention that he had cited the follow-up conferences to Nixon and Kissinger as an argument for signing the Final Act as quickly as possible. The follow-ups were needed “so the situation doesn’t get frozen”.⁶¹ For Kreisky, the focus was on the CSCE process, not on the substance of the Final Act.⁶²

6 Conclusion

The Final Act was eventually ready for Brezhnev, Kreisky and 33 other statesmen to sign on 1 August 1975. From the perspective of 1975, East and West could celebrate the Final Act as the crowning achievement of the policy of détente, if only because the conference ended in a spirit of general consensus.

It must have been clear to the Western actors that, in the short term, the human rights principle and the Third Basket were mere window-dressing in a deal that recognised the Soviet Union’s hegemony over the states of Eastern and Central Europe. In the foreseeable future, Moscow could be expected at most to show understanding for individual “cases of hardship”, but by no means to promote systemic change. That was the price one was willing to pay for détente.

Contrary to what some supporters of a “Helsinki effect” claim,⁶³ it was neither the Final Act nor the follow-up conferences per se that thawed Europe. In retrospect, however, Austrian diplomacy in 1975 and its focus on the Third Basket proved to be far-sighted, almost prophetic. In spite of a commitment to follow-up conferences in which they might be fleshed out, the Austrian delegation did not desist from its efforts to demand substance in the humanitarian provisions of the Final Act. It seized the opportunity to enshrine these

60 Nixon – Kreisky, June 11, 1974. Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum, NSC, Memoranda of Conversations, 1973–1977, box 4, Nixon Administration.

61 Ibid.

62 On Kreisky’s role, see Anna Graf-Steiner, “Kreisky, the Soviet Union, and the Helsinki Process”, in: Günter Bischof/Michael Burri (eds.), *Bruno Kreisky’s Foreign Policy: A Reassessment* (Austrian and Habsburg Studies Vol. 39), New York-Oxford 2025, p. 167–202.

63 Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism*, New Jersey 2001; Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt*, München 2012; Bange/Niedhardt (eds.), *Helsinki 1975*.

provisions for good, if initially only on paper. When the time was ripe for transformation and the Cold War was coming to an end, the Third Basket was able to prove its full potential. Underestimated by many – including their country's own chancellor, who would have preferred to take the negotiations into his own hands, and Brezhnev, who relied on influencing the political leadership – the Austrian delegation persevered. They laid the foundation on which the CSCE process would later emerge as a transformative force, especially during the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.

From Helsinki to Vienna

The CSCE Process in the Second Cold War

Hermann Wentker

1 Introduction

In Helsinki on 1 August 1975, 35 European and North American heads of state and government signed the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).¹ This marked the end of a long process of negotiation which, its prehistory since the mid-1950s notwithstanding, had been initiated by Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) at the time. The purpose of the Final Act was to establish, even amid the conflict between East and West, a *modus vivendi* in Europe. At the time, both sides had secured important goals in tough negotiations. The Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc states received a guarantee of the status quo in Europe, even if they had to concede the possibility of peaceful boundary changes. Western demands, on the other hand, were met by the inclusion of human rights in the catalogue of principles (Basket I) and a commitment to improving human communication and contacts (Basket III), even if the phrasing used was far from binding. Basket II, which was of particular concern to the East, dealt above all with economic and technological exchange. Finally, Basket IV pledged the parties to periodic meetings in order to prevent the CSCE from remaining a one-off event.²

Since the provisions of Basket IV inaugurated a process that culminated in the 1990 Paris Charter, the CSCE was equipped with three dimensions

1 The term “Second Cold War” in the title strikes me as the most appropriate way of characterising the fundamental break with the era of *détente*. It began in the mid-1970s, culminated in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and ended with the INF Treaty in 1987. Gottfried Niedhart and Oliver Bange argue that, in view of the increased research focus on the policy of *détente*, the term “Cold War” should either be dispensed with completely or used only to refer to the 1950s. This, however, would not do justice to the intensity of the conflict. See Gottfried Niedhart, “Der Ost-West-Konflikt. Konfrontation im Kalten Krieg und Stufen der Deeskalation”, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 50 (2010), p. 557–594, on p. 588–594; Oliver Bange/Bernd Lemke, Einleitung, in: Idem (eds.), *Wege zur Wiedervereinigung. Die beiden deutschen Staaten in ihren Bündnissen 1970 bis 1990*, München 2013, p. 9–10, p. 13.

2 On the origins of the conference and the Final Act see most recently Michael Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act. The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War*, Princeton 2018.

constitutive for international relations. It fulfilled, first, a function of establishing order. The broad recognition of the political and territorial status quo in Europe meant, on the one hand, that the Western states fundamentally questioned neither the dictatorial forms of government in Eastern Europe nor the dominant role played there by the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the Soviet Union recognised the close alliance between the states of Western Europe and North America, while the neutral and non-aligned (N+N) states could feel equally secure in this status quo-oriented Europe. This entailed a shared catalogue of goals, rules of conduct and statements of intent to which all participating states pledged themselves. West Germany in particular regarded this as both an achievement and an obligation. “German security policy interests demand”, stated a joint study of the ministries of defence and foreign affairs in 1976,

that it be repeatedly made clear to the East that the treaties and agreements made – not least the Final Act of the CSCE – are the foundations of international relations, respect for which is a precondition for the functioning of cooperation between states and for safeguarding peace.³

In addition, there was the processual nature of the CSCE inscribed in Basket IV. By establishing a system of expert conferences and follow-up meetings, a forum was created in which East and West were committed to a perpetual dialogue which, though it might falter in times of crisis, was never wholly abandoned. Accordingly, the CSCE rules have rightly been called “a Magna Carta of East-West relations in Europe”.⁴

Second, once conventional arms control had been moved to the Vienna MBFR (Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions) talks in 1973, the dimension of security policy referred only to Confidence- (later Confidence- and Security-) Building Measures, which consisted primarily of transparency through information, inspection and control of manoeuvres and troop movements. Large-scale manoeuvres were to be announced and observers exchanged,

3 Aufzeichnung der Arbeitsgruppe Auswärtiges Amt/Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 10.2.1976, in: *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1976*, München 2007, Dok. 45, p. 196–211, on p. 207. Previously untranslated German language sources were translated by the author.

4 Peter Schlotter, “Heiße Luft oder Magna Charta? Der KSZE-Prozeß nach dem dritten Folgetreffen”, in: Hanne-Margret Birckenbach/Uli Jäger/Christian Wellmann (eds.), *Jahrbuch Frieden 1990. Ereignisse, Entwicklungen, Analysen*, München 1989, p. 76.

though the Final Act's provisions to that effect were vague and its phrasing non-committal.⁵

Third, consideration of the humanitarian dimension – the commitment, that is, to improve personal contacts and communication – can be traced to a demand made by the NATO foreign ministers in November 1969 for “freer movement of people, ideas, and information” between East and West.⁶ The Soviet Union felt the risks associated with such a commitment to be manageable. Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet foreign minister, saw the risk as limited because, as he reportedly said, “We are masters in our own house”.⁷ Thereby, and by enshrining human rights in Basket I, the CSCE opened up new possibilities for dissident groups, which could cite the Final Act in support of their protests.⁸ Yet it was not only various Helsinki groups and human rights discourse in East and West that were given a boost but also movements to emigrate from Eastern bloc states, particularly the GDR.⁹

The Helsinki Final Act thus contained elements that were both stabilising and dynamic. This study deals, first, with the relation between stability and dynamics in the CSCE process between 1977 and 1986, when the international order entered a new period of turbulence known as the Second Cold War. It examines, second, to what extent rising tensions in international politics were reflected in the CSCE process. Third, it shows how, even before the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, the Soviet Union appeared ready to make far-reaching concessions, which is why this study focuses on that period's final years.

5 On the background see Morgan, *Final Act*, p. 95–100, 189–195.

6 Declaration of the North Atlantic Council 4./5.12.1969, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_26760.htm, accessed 19.6.2023; cf. Matthias Peter, *Die Bundesrepublik im KSZE-Prozess. Die Umkehrung der Diplomatie* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 105), Berlin-München-Boston 2015, p. 82.

7 Quoted in Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence. Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents*, New York 1995, p. 351.

8 Ernst Wawra, “Ein Schandfleck der westlichen Diplomatie? Der KSZE-Prozess und die Bürger- und Menschenrechtsbewegung in der Sowjetunion 1976–1982”, in: Helmut Altrichter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Vom Kalten Krieg zu einem neuen Europa 1975 bis 1990* (Zeitgeschichte im Gespräch Vol. 11), München 2011, p. 63–73; Gunter Dehnert, “‘Eine neue Beschaffenheit der Lage’. Der KSZE-Prozess und die polnische Opposition 1975–1989”, in: *Ibid.*, p. 87–98; Benjamin Müller, “Von der Konfrontation zum Dialog. Charta 77, Menschenrechte und die ‘Samtene Revolution’ in der Tschechoslowakei 1975–1989”, in: *Ibid.*, p. 99–110.

9 Anja Hanisch, *Die DDR im KSZE-Prozess 1972–1975. Zwischen Ostabhängigkeit, Westabgrenzung und Ausreisebewegung* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 91), München 2012.

2 Confrontation and Tactical Concessions: the Follow-up Meetings in Belgrade (1977–1978) and Madrid (1979–1983)

When the first Follow-up Meeting began in Belgrade on 4 October 1977, relations between East and West were already beginning to be strained by the Soviet Union's deployment of modern SS-20 ballistic missiles. Even before negotiations began, the Warsaw Pact states had agreed among themselves not to make any further concessions.¹⁰ The US delegation, however, was emphatic in its pursuit of human rights questions, meeting with no less fervent resistance from the Soviet Union. Neither the Federal Republic with its moderate attitude nor the efforts of the N+N participants could help produce a substantial concluding document.¹¹ According to Per Fischer, the head of the West German delegation, there had been no real negotiations in Belgrade.¹² Although the meeting ended only with a short, vague document, the Soviet Union did not renege on the *acquis de détente*, for it had not left the conference and had agreed to another Follow-up Meeting.¹³ Moreover, it remained committed to arms control talks with the United States, a commitment underscored by the signing of the second Strategic Arms Limitation Talks treaty (SALT II) by the two superpowers on 18 July 1979.¹⁴

The Second Cold War, which was triggered towards the end of 1979 by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the NATO Double-Track Decision, boded ill for the CSCE process. Yet at the beginning of the Madrid Follow-up Meeting in November 1980, relations between the Western and Eastern groups of states were much less confrontative than they had been three years earlier, as the Soviet Union from the outset was seeking a mandate for a European conference on disarmament. This was motivated by a desire to burnish its image as a power for peace, which had suffered from both the intervention in Afghanistan and its own nuclear rearmament. By doing so, the Soviets hoped in turn to

10 Ibid., p. 188–191.

11 On the Belgrade Follow-up Meeting see Vladimir Bilandžić/Dittmar Dahmann/Milan Kosanović (eds.), *From Helsinki to Belgrade. The First CSCE Follow-up Meeting and the Crisis of Détente* (Internationale Beziehungen. Theorie und Geschichte Vol. 10), Göttingen 2012.

12 Per Fischer, "Das Ergebnis von Belgrad. Das KSZE-Folgetreffen in seiner Bedeutung für den Entspannungsprozeß", in: *Europa-Archiv* 33 (1978), p. 221–230, on p. 226; Peter, *Bundesrepublik*, p. 316.

13 Ibid., p. 317.

14 Douglas Selvage, "The Superpowers and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1977–1983", in: Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990*, München 2012, p. 15–58, on p. 26.

strengthen their influence with the peace movement in the West and thereby to prevent Western rearmament. In order to win Western consent to such a conference, the Soviets made far-reaching concessions, particularly in Basket III, on questions of family reunification, marriage and working conditions for foreign journalists. Yet since Moscow was interested above all in securing the aforementioned conference on disarmament, these were tactical concessions that did not entail any departure from fundamental positions.¹⁵

Although all Warsaw Pact states followed the Soviet lead, the Soviets' concessions had taken their alliance partners by surprise and massively compromised their interests. This was particularly true of East Germany, whose leadership under Erich Honecker was well aware that the easing of restrictions on family reunifications and marriages would act as a catalyst for the country's emigration movement.¹⁶

Moreover, following a promising start in the summer of 1981, negotiations stalled because the United States were now demanding even more Soviet concessions but were rebuffed. The proclamation of martial law in Poland in December 1981 placed a further burden on negotiations, with Washington now eager to "punish" Moscow and to make a Concluding Document conditional on improvements in the human rights situation in the Eastern bloc. Bonn, by contrast, was loath to jeopardise the CSCE process, and the West German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, was able to persuade the United States not to abandon the talks.¹⁷

Although the delegations parted in May 1982, they agreed to resume the Meeting in November, as the Western states too were concerned not only with humanitarian improvements but also with a conference on disarmament. They were minded to implement the rearmament provisions of the NATO Double-Track Decision while signalling their continued interest in disarmament. Negotiations regained momentum in the spring of 1983. The Western states signalled increased flexibility, the Soviet Union, with its overriding interest in a disarmament conference, remained prepared to make concessions, while the N+N states offered their services as mediators in the drafting of a final document.¹⁸ The Meeting thus ended in September 1983 not only with a substantive Concluding Document but also with a mandate for a Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe

15 Ibid., p. 28–30.

16 Hanisch, *DDR im KSZE-Prozess*, p. 261–264, p. 273–278, p. 285–286.

17 For a West German view see Peter, *Bundesrepublik*, p. 445–491.

18 See, with a special focus on Austria, Benjamin Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983. Neutraler Vermittler in humanitärer Mission*, München 2013, p. 406–430.

(CDE). Moreover, the participants in Madrid agreed to a further five smaller meetings and one regular Follow-up Meeting, to be convened in Vienna in 1986.¹⁹ In the middle of the Second Cold War, the CSCE was thus the only East-West forum to remain from the era of détente. And once negotiations on nuclear disarmament were concluded in Geneva, the CDE became the most prominent forum in which East and West were able to discuss questions of arms control.

3 From Confrontation to Concessions: the CDE in Stockholm (1984–1986)

The CDE, which opened in Stockholm on 17 January 1984, was concerned less with disarmament than with Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs). Whereas the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act intended to provide transparency by means of information and inspection of the other side's manoeuvres and troop movements had been framed in general terms and placed on a voluntary basis, the aim of the CDE was to specify them, make them obligatory and to "provide [them] with adequate forms of verification".²⁰

For its part, the Soviet leadership sought to use the CDE as a tribunal, as Boris Ponomarev of the Central Committee (CC) of the CPSU explained to the CC secretaries of the brother parties, in which to denounce the NATO states immediately after the decision to deploy Western medium-range missiles in Western Europe and to win over the public in favour of Soviet peace propaganda.²¹ As the propaganda function of the CDE was the main focus for Moscow, the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko explicitly instructed the leader of his country's delegation, Oleg Grinevsky, at the end of 1983: "Negotiate only on the major political measures. [...] Forget about any notifications and observations."²² Furthermore, in his opening speech at the

19 These were to be expert meetings on peaceful dispute settlement in Athens, on human rights and fundamental freedoms in Ottawa, on human contacts in Bern, a seminar on security issues in the Mediterranean in Venice and a cultural forum in Budapest: Sarah Snyder, "The Foundation for Vienna: A Reassessment of the CSCE in the mid-1980s", in: *Cold War History* 10 (2010), p. 493–512, on p. 494–495.

20 Concluding Document of the Madrid meeting 1980 of representatives of the participating states of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held on the basis of the provisions of the Final Act relating to the follow-up to the conference, 1983, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/d/40871.pdf>, p. 9, accessed 23.10.2024.

21 Douglas Selvage/Walter Süß, *Staatsicherheit und KSZE-Prozess. MfS zwischen SED und KGB (1972–1989)* (Analysen und Dokumente Vol. 54), Göttingen 2019, p. 443–444.

22 Quoted in in Oleg Grinevsky/Lynn M. Hansen, *Making Peace. Confidence Building*, New York 2009, p. 121.

Stockholm Conference, Gromyko held out the prospect of further developing the “announcement of major military manoeuvres” while rejecting demands that did not serve to “consolidate trust” but were aimed only at “spying on the neighbour through a gap in the fence”.²³ The background to this statement was that the Soviet Union did in fact have something to hide. As Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov explained to Grinevsky, the Soviet leadership planned to open hostilities with nuclear strikes in the event of a war with NATO.²⁴

Accordingly, the Warsaw Pact states, almost all of which subordinated themselves to the Soviet leadership, countered Western proposals to increase transparency in military affairs by demanding agreements to abstain from the use of force and a ban on the first use of nuclear weapons. They had no interest in CSBMs, especially in verification measures, which might reveal details of their own military arrangements to their opponents.²⁵ From the outset, therefore, there was a “fundamental disagreement in the conference goals between West and East” in Stockholm,²⁶ with the Warsaw Pact states loath to negotiate specific CSBMs until the West had agreed to the aforementioned Soviet demands. This stance did not pay off, however, as the vast majority of the participating states were, according to Klaus Citron, the leader of the West German delegation, very keen on “reaching agreement on concrete CSBMs” while showing little interest in the Soviet proposals.²⁷ The Soviet Union also initially adopted an obstructive stance on procedural issues, with the result that both sides did not agree to set up two working groups until the beginning of December 1984.²⁸ The fundamental confrontation between West and East had not changed in Stockholm by the end of the year, nor did Citron anticipate any major substantial progress for 1985.²⁹

The replacement of Konstantin Chernenko as general secretary of the CPSU in March 1985 and of Gromyko by Edvard Shevardnadze as foreign minister in July of the same year initially had no effect on the largely stagnating talks – not

23 Rede Gromykos, 18.1.1984, in: Andrei Gromyko, *Auf dem Friedenskurs Lenins. Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften*, Berlin (Ost) 1985, p. 411.

24 See Grinevsky/Hansen, *Making Peace*, p. 118–119.

25 Horst Bacia, “Die Stockholmer Konferenz über Vertrauensbildung und Abrüstung in Europa vor der entscheidenden Phase. Eine Zwischenbilanz”, in: *Europa-Archiv* 41 (1986), p. 69–78, on p. 73–75.

26 Aufzeichnung des Botschafters Ruth, 18.1.1984, in: *AAPD 1984*, Berlin-München-Boston 2015, Dok. 11, p. 51–58, on p. 55.

27 Botschafter Citron, Stockholm (KVAE-Delegation), an das Auswärtige Amt, in: *Ibid.*, Dok. 275, p. 1264–1265.

28 Bericht Citrons vom 14.12.1984, in: *Ibid.*, Dok. 311, note 11, p. 1445.

29 Botschafter Citron, Stockholm (KVAE-Delegation), an das Auswärtige Amt, 19.12.1984, in: *Ibid.*, Dok. 348, p. 1597.

least because in Moscow, the military and the KGB continued to push for a tougher course in opposition to the more flexible foreign ministry.³⁰ Actual negotiations in Stockholm did not begin until October, and only as 1985 turned into 1986 did Moscow seem to change tack, with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze signalling to Grinevsky that they were seriously interested in reaching a settlement in Stockholm and were prepared to make concessions to do so – including in the question of verification, which had hitherto divided East and West. Yet the military leadership remained steadfast in its opposition.³¹ On 15 January 1986 Gorbachev made a spectacular proposal to abolish all nuclear weapons by the year 2000, in which he also mentioned the CDE, where it was time “to take effective measures [...] to deal with unresolved issues”.³²

The diplomats at the CDE, which was to terminate in September 1986, began drafting the Concluding Document in January 1986, with the delegates of the NATO states expressing cautious optimism regarding the outcome of the Conference. Yet by March, not one substantive issue had been resolved.³³ Even at the end of May, Citron reported to Bonn that the drafting process was making no progress because the Soviet Union continued its obstruction on key points. He identified a “tentative and insecure conduct of negotiations” on the part of the East and recorded his impression “that within the Soviet delegation, the political and military sides seem not always to be in agreement”.³⁴ This state of affairs also held true for Moscow. Although Gorbachev, addressing the Politburo on 24 April, pushed for greater flexibility in negotiations and instructed the Soviet delegation accordingly, the foreign ministry remained at odds with both the military leadership and the KGB.³⁵ Although the Soviet side indicated the possibility of partial concessions in Stockholm, the chief of the general staff, Sergey Akhromeyev, speaking in the Politburo on 7 August, still opposed Gorbachev’s view that a limited number of inspections on Soviet territory did not pose a security risk. Ultimately, however, Akhromeyev had to give up his

30 This point is made with reference to 1984 in Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 447–449; for the more flexible attitude of Shevardnadze; Grinevsky/Hansen, *Making Peace*, p. 351–356.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 393–398, p. 425–426, p. 430–450.

32 Erklärung Gorbatschows vom 15.1.1986, in: Michail Gorbatschow, *Ausgewählte Reden und Aufsätze*, Vol. 3: Oktober 1985–Juli 1986, Berlin (Ost) 1988, p. 146–159, on p. 155.

33 Botschafter Hansen, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 24.1.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, Berlin-Boston 2017, Dok. 21, p. 124–129, on p. 126; Botschafter Citron, Stockholm (KVAE-Delegation), an das Auswärtige Amt, 14.3.1986, in: *Ibid.*, Dok. 71, p. 392–402, on p. 393.

34 Botschafter Citron, Stockholm (KVAE-Delegation), an das Auswärtige Amt, 23.5.1986, in: *Ibid.*, Dok. 151, p. 778–788, the quotes p. 779, 780.

35 Grinevsky/Hansen, *Making Peace*, p. 493–499, p. 516–523.

opposition.³⁶ In spite of continued resistance to Western inspections on the part of the military, the CDE was able to end on 22 September 1986 with a substantial Concluding Document.³⁷ For the first time, the East made far-reaching concessions to the West, particularly with regard to on-site inspections.³⁸ As the West German foreign ministry noted, the Soviet Union had agreed to a document “that very largely reflected the Western starting position”.³⁹

4 Confrontation in Ottawa, Concessions in Bern

At the Meeting of Experts on Respect for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in Ottawa (7 May–17 June 1985), East and West could still be found pitted against one another in the usual fashion. The Soviet delegation had been instructed to uphold the Soviet conception of human rights with particular emphasis on socio-economic human rights and to reject any criticism of Eastern bloc practices as interference with those states’ internal affairs. Once more, therefore, East and West were set on a collision course in Ottawa, with a mediation proposal from the N+N states rejected by the Eastern side. No concluding document could be agreed on; the East stood isolated at the Meeting’s end.⁴⁰ Remarkably, Gorbachev himself defended Soviet intransigence in Ottawa in a letter to Ronald Reagan: “However, there should be no misunderstanding concerning the fact that we do not intend and will not conduct any negotiations

36 Botschafter Citron Stockholm (KVAE-Delegation) an das Auswärtige Amt, 18.7.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, Dok. 203, p. 1061–1070; Grinevsky/Hansen, *Making Peace*, p. 574–579.

37 Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe convened in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Concluding Document of the Madrid Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, 19.09.1986, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/d/41238.pdf>, accessed 23.10.2024. Although the document was not signed until 22 September, it is dated 19 September 1986 because the clock was stopped during the negotiations on that day.

38 Botschafter Citron, Stockholm (KVAE-Delegation) an das Auswärtige Amt, 22.9.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, Dok. 253, p. 1337–1343, on p. 1342.

39 Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrats I. Klasse Hartmann, 30.9.1986, in: *Ibid.*, Dok. 267, p. 1399–1403, on p. 1402; see also Horst Bacia, “Die Stockholmer Konferenz – Schlußverhandlungen, Ergebnis und Ausblick”, in: *Europa-Archiv* 42 (1987), p. 369–378, on p. 377.

40 Yuliya von Saal, *KSZE-Prozess und Perestroika in der Sowjetunion. Demokratisierung, Wertenumbruch und Auflösung 1985–1991*, München 2014, p. 61–62; Ekkehard Eickhoff, “Das KSZE-Expertentreffen über Menschenrechte in Ottawa – eine Bewertung”, in: *Europa-Archiv* 40 (1985), p. 573–580, on p. 578–579.

relating to human rights in the Soviet Union.”⁴¹ Nonetheless, in consequence of the meeting, Gorbachev gave instructions to develop a distinctly Soviet conception of human rights that would allow a more forward approach.⁴² Since this was not, however, made known, one West German diplomat anticipated that there would be no substantial agreement on human rights at future meetings of experts.⁴³ Less pessimistic was Ekkehard Eickhoff, the leader of the West German delegation, who pointed out that there had after all been a genuine if hard-fought debate on respect for human rights, as a result of which the “character of the Final Act as point of appeal for the fulfilment of human rights obligations in other CSCE states was not only left untouched but indeed strengthened”.⁴⁴

By the time of the Meeting of Experts on Human Contacts in Bern (15 April–27 May 1986), which discussed questions such as family reunifications and travel and immigration regulations, the situation had fundamentally changed. Although the Soviet delegation pursued “the buttoned-up Gromyko style” by rejecting, from the outset, Western demands for public involvement and distributing only selected speeches to the media, the “influence of the Gorbachev factor on the course of this meeting could hardly be ignored”,⁴⁵ for as the Soviet ambassador, Yuri Kashlev, recalled, he had received flexible directives and hence enjoyed considerable leeway in negotiations. Although, at the beginning of the meeting, the West criticised the Eastern bloc’s non-implementation of CSCE provisions, and despite East and West each finding the other side’s proposals to be unacceptable, the Soviet side (unlike the GDR) indicated its willingness to make concessions. In any case, Kashlev was able to persuade the Eastern delegations to agree to a substantial Concluding Document on the basis of an N+N proposal, even if the East Germans felt that Soviet concessions went too far.⁴⁶ From the Western European (and particularly the West German) perspective, too, the Meeting concluded with a text whose provisions were more binding than those

41 Gorbachev to Reagan, n.d. [June 1985], in: *Ronald Reagan, An American Life*, New York 1990, p. 619.

42 Snyder, “Foundation”, p. 499; Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 486.

43 Bodo Karkow in einem Runderlass vom 26.6.1985, in: *AAPD 1985*, Berlin/Boston 2016, Dok. 168, note 24, p. 884.

44 Eickhoff, *KSZE-Expertentreffen*, p. 574–575.

45 First quotation in: Andreas Doepfner, “Das KSZE-Expertentreffen über menschliche Kontakte in Bern. Einordnung, Beschreibung, Bewertung”, in: *Europa-Archiv* 41 (1986), p. 515; second quotation in: von Saal, *KSZE-Prozess*, p. 63.

46 See *Ibid.*; Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 503–508.

of Helsinki and Madrid had been.⁴⁷ The United States, by contrast, whose head of delegation, Michael Novak, set greater store by “practical outcomes” – i.e. the resolution of specific cases – rejected the document as containing too many loopholes.⁴⁸ This stance remained unchanged even though Novak received, immediately before the Meeting was to conclude, a list of 36 emigration applications which the Soviets had granted.⁴⁹ West German attempts to change Washington’s mind were unsuccessful, again leaving the Meeting to end without a concluding document on 27 May. Yet it was no failure from the perspective of the West German government, which expected positive effects of the implementation debate and the Western proposals on the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.⁵⁰

The Soviet leadership, which had struck observers in Bern by its willingness to make concessions, also appeared to have learnt from events. It is surely no coincidence that on 28 May 1986 Gorbachev, speaking in the foreign ministry, announced that “we are making a turnaround on human rights”. He not only encouraged his audience to be less fearful in the human rights debate but also called for concrete measures to be taken with regard to family reunions as well as emigration and immigration.⁵¹ Moreover, a department of human rights was set up as part of a restructuring of the Soviet foreign ministry in 1986, a clear indication that the Soviet Union was preparing for the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.⁵²

5 Conclusion

How then to describe the balance of stability and dynamism in the CSCE process between 1975 and 1986? On the one hand, it can be seen that, far from destabilising it, the agreements signed at the CSCE and its Follow-up Conferences recognised the post-war order. Yet they did unleash social dynamics, for

47 Runderlass des Vortragenden Legationsrats I. Klasse Pleuger, 28.5.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, Dok. 156, p. 808.

48 See Doepfner, *KSZE-Expertentreffen*, p. 517; Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 508.

49 Von Saal, *KSZE-Prozess*, p. 63. As one US senator observed, “This is the first time that the Soviets have resolved such cases in the context of a CSCE meeting.” Quoted in: Snyder, “Foundation”, p. 501.

50 Doepfner, *KSZE-Expertentreffen*, p. 520; Runderlass des Vortragenden Legationsrats I. Klasse Pleuger, 28.5.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, Dok. 156, p. 810.

51 Grundsatzrede Gorbatschows im Außenministerium, 28.5.1986, in: Michail S. Gorbatschow, *Gipfelgespräche. Geheime Protokolle aus meiner Amtszeit*, Berlin 1993, p. 182–200, on p. 195–196.

52 Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 509.

instance by encouraging the formation of Helsinki groups or emigration movements. The pressure from below created by these dynamics was felt not least in the negotiations, for instance at the Bern Expert Meeting, compelling the Eastern side to make more concrete commitments on human contacts.

On the other hand, the basic positions from which East and West embarked on the Follow-up Meetings turned out to be relatively stable. Neither in Belgrade nor in Madrid was the Eastern side prepared to surrender key positions. Any concessions made in Madrid were of a tactical nature, aimed at securing a propagandistically useful disarmament conference. Yet these concessions encouraged the emigration movement in East Germany, adding to that country's growing instability.

At the beginning of the CDE, which coincided with the peak of the Second Cold War, nothing had changed in the confrontation between East and West. Even Gorbachev, once he had taken office, could not simply flip the switch but had to expend considerable energy in order to overcome resistance to his policies from the military and the KGB. By accepting on-site inspections and making commitments on military transparency, Moscow could be seen to make a clear move away from its previously held basic positions – and this even before the Vienna Follow-up meeting. The background lay in the paradigm shift in Soviet policy inaugurated by Gorbachev, away from absolute security for the Soviet Union and towards a relative security that considered other states' security interests and which was to enable the government to reallocate funds from the military to the civilian sector. Against this background, the West had reason to hope that the Soviet Union and the states of the Eastern bloc would show a greater willingness to make concessions in Vienna than they had before.

Austria's "Mr. CSCE" Helmut Liedermann

A Biographical Approach to the Helsinki Process

Maximilian Graf

1 Introduction: Biographies Matter

In the beginning, the historiography of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was strongly shaped by the memoirs of diplomats who were part of the negotiation process. The writings of diplomats provided historians with valuable insights into the CSCE process. The most prominent examples are surely John Maresca (United States) and Jacques Andréani (France), but Michael Alexander (Great Britain), Hans-Jörg Renk (Switzerland), Berndt von Staden (Germany), Luigi Vittorio Ferraris (Italy) and Markku Reimaa (Finland) have also made notable contributions. Still, we know little about the biographical influences that made certain diplomats especially important actors of making and shaping the CSCE. Making use of multiarchival research and with more and more documents declassified, scholarship on the CSCE has grown over the past two decades and moved away from the initial focus on diplomats and their writings. Martin D. Brown and Angela Romano recently aimed to bring renewed attention to the role of diplomats, asking whether they were executors or creative dealmakers. In their pilot study on France and Great Britain, they “hypothesized that diplomats at the CSCE also served as vital communication channels, mediators and ‘trouble shooters’ with a shared esprit de corps that fostered relationships among the delegations of the participating states”.¹

Brown and Romano sought “to assess whether diplomats and their interactions can be counted among the factors making the CSCE ‘work’”. More specifically, their research agenda “scrutinizes a variety of sources to appraise the contribution made by diplomats on the ground and employs prosopographical

1 Martin D. Brown/Angela Romano, “Executors or Creative Deal-Makers? The Role of the Diplomats in the Making of the Helsinki CSCE”, in: Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War. Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990*, New York 2019, p. 43–73, on p. 44, for full references to the publications mentioned above, see p. 62 (endnote 2).

methods in order to relate CSCE diplomats' personal and career trajectories to their diplomatic action on site".² They define prosopography

as 'the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives', and its method consists in collecting various types of information about individuals of a selected group (for example, about birth and death, social origins, education, occupations, religion, experience of office and so on), then juxtaposing and combining them in order to detect correlations with behaviours and actions of these individuals.³

Education, occupation, and experience of office are certainly the most relevant factors when looking at the making of Austria's "Mr. CSCE". Helmut Liedermann (1926–2019) was a distinguished diplomat whose career was intertwined with the CSCE process from the initial stages of the negotiations in Dipoli, Helsinki and Geneva to the Follow-Up Meeting in Vienna and even beyond. This chapter explores the biographical factors that made him an outstanding CSCE diplomat, revisits his key achievements in the making of the Helsinki Final Act and addresses his later role as an observer of and participant in the CSCE process until the end of the Cold War – a period during which he held posts in Belgrade, Moscow and finally Vienna, where he was tasked with preparing the third follow-up meeting.

In his groundbreaking study of Austrian CSCE policy, the German historian Benjamin Gilde has set the record straight on the importance of actors: "It was not Chancellor Kreisky who drove the country's CSCE policy and ensured its humanitarian focus, but the negotiating diplomats, first and foremost Helmut Liedermann and Franz Ceska."⁴

In contrast to many other CSCE diplomats, Liedermann did not leave his memoirs to posterity, and his factual publications on the CSCE⁵ provide only

2 Ibid., p. 44.

3 Ibid.

4 Benjamin Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983. Neutraler Vermittler in humanitärer Mission*, München 2013 (quotation on the back cover).

5 Helmut Liedermann, "Österreichs Rolle beim Zustandekommen der KSZE", in: Oliver Rathkolb/Otto M. Maschke/Stefan August Lütgenau (eds.), *Mit anderen Augen gesehen. Internationale Perzeptionen Österreichs 1955–1990* (Österreichische Nationalgeschichte nach 1945 Vol. 2), Wien 2002, p. 487–505; Helmut Liedermann, "Österreichs Image im ehemaligen Jugoslawien", in: Ibid. p. 523–562; Helmut Liedermann, "Von Helsinki über Belgrad nach Madrid. Die Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa aus der Sicht eines österreichischen Konferenzteilnehmers", in: Peter Fischer/Heribert Köck/Alfred Verdross (eds.),

little insight into his personal actions and perceptions. Still, his remarks on the importance of personal contacts between the members of all delegations and the Austrian delegation's role as a mediator between East and West clearly support the thesis put forward by Brown and Romano. Apart from his own writings and the existing studies on Austria and the CSCE,⁶ the following analysis is based on Liedermann's personal file at the Austrian foreign ministry⁷ and his diplomatic reports from his various diplomatic posts from the mid-1960s until the mid-1980s. While the extensive personal file provides insights to his career and the foreign ministry's view of his role in the CSCE process, his diplomatic reports show how Liedermann perceived the situation related to Basket III in various Warsaw Pact countries before and after the Final Act. These insights enable us to understand why he became such a distinctive CSCE diplomat. With regard to the later years of the process, they also shed light on the unsatisfying implementation of the provisions of the Final Act until the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting.

2 The Making of a CSCE Diplomat

Liedermann's biography – his background and the diplomatic posts he held abroad and at home – help explain his career as a leading CSCE diplomat. The Catholic Liedermann studied law at the University of Vienna and earned his

Völkerrecht und Rechtsphilosophie. Internationale Festschrift für Stephan Verosta zum 70. Geburtstag, Berlin 1980, p. 427–443; Helmut Liedermann, "Some Reflections on the Humanitarian Dimension of the CSCE Process", in: Hanspeter Neuhold (ed.), *CSCE: N+N Perspectives. The Process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe from the Viewpoint of the Neutral and Non-Aligned Participating States*, Wien 1987, p. 135–143.

6 Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess*; Anna Graf-Steiner, *Brückenbauer im Kalten Krieg. Österreich und der lange Weg zur KSZE-Schlussakte*, Graz-Wien 2023. For a broader account of the participation of the European neutrals in the Helsinki process, see Thomas Fischer, *Neutral Power in the CSCE. The N+N States and the Making of the Helsinki Accords 1975*, Baden-Baden 2009. For my assessment of Austria's CSCE policy from the making of the Final Act until the end of the Cold War, see Maximilian Graf, "European Détente and the CSCE. Austria and the East-Central European Theatre in the 1970s and 1980s", in: Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War. Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990*, New York 2019, p. 249–274.

7 I am grateful to the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs for granting me access to Helmut Liedermann's personal file at the foreign ministry. Previously untranslated German language sources were translated by the author.

doctorate in 1950.⁸ He remained active in this field but in the present context, it is his diplomatic career that is of particular interest.

After entering the diplomatic service in 1955, his first post abroad was in post-Stalinist Poland, where he witnessed a liberalising national communist regime under the leadership of Władysław Gomułka. In terms of international relations, Liedermann's time in Poland covered a period ranging from an early thaw to the hottest moments of the Cold War: the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Nevertheless, Austrian-Polish relations significantly improved during those years with mutual visits by the foreign ministers. On the Polish domestic scene, the absence of collectivisation and the prominent role of the Catholic Church stood out among Eastern bloc countries. However, even in the early 1960s the first signs became visible that the Polish leadership's comparatively liberal approach was drawing to an end.⁹

In Warsaw, Liedermann served under the leading international law expert Ambassador Stephan Verosta, rising to *chargé d'affaires* in 1961. From this time on, reports written and signed by him personally exist. It did not escape his observation that Gomułka "has long ceased to be the hope of the Poles, as he was in 1956".¹⁰ Not surprisingly, many of Liedermann's reports addressed the relationship between the state/party and the Church. In one of his 1961 reports on renewed and aggravating crisis between them, he concluded: It "should not be forgotten, however, that despite the existing difficulties, the situation of the Church in Poland is still a relatively good one; [...] that the Church in Poland still enjoys a far more liberal treatment than in all other Eastern bloc countries".¹¹ In spite of latent conflicts, he was convinced: "However, the Church will certainly not perish in Poland; on the contrary, in the long run, [...] it will ultimately only emerge stronger from this conflict."¹² During his time in Warsaw Liedermann provided the ministry "with information that went far beyond what could be expected of a young official." Furthermore, he

8 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, Bundesministerium für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten (BMEIA), Geschäftszahl (GZ) 17L.256-7/54.

9 Maximilian Graf, "Kreisky und Polen. Schlaglichter auf einen vernachlässigten Aspekt der österreichischen Ostpolitik", in: Lucile Dreidemy et al. (eds.), *Bananen, Cola, Zeitgeschichte. Oliver Rathkolb und das lange 20. Jahrhundert*, Vol. 2, Wien 2015, p. 692–706.

10 Liedermann to Bundesministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (BMAA), Warsaw, 04.05.1961, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), BMAA, Politische Sektion, Abteilung 7 Entwicklung (II-Pol), Zahl (Zl.) 27-Pol.

11 Liedermann to BMAA, Warsaw, 27.04.1961, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Warschau, Zl. 24-Pol.

12 Liedermann to BMAA, Warsaw, 10.10.1961, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Warschau, Zl. 36-Pol.

continuously established connections between the Vatican and the Polish Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.¹³

Following his return from Warsaw in 1962, Liedermann became deputy head of the human resources department of the foreign ministry in Vienna. After three years at Ballhausplatz, his next posting abroad took him to the frontline city of the Cold War: Berlin. From September 1965 to March 1971, Liedermann was consul general and, as such, the Austria's leading diplomat in West Berlin. From there he was able to follow how German "Ostpolitik" was gaining momentum, forming an important part of European détente and one of the basic prerequisites for the CSCE process. His activities beyond observing political developments in Berlin were, of course, not limited to representing Austrian interests in West Berlin, but also included contacts with the GDR, which was not diplomatically recognised by Austria until late 1972.

The rigid East German regime could not be compared with the comparatively liberal Poland of the late 1950s and early 1960s. There were intractable disputes between Austria and the GDR, especially concerning the fate of some 20,000 Austrians living in the GDR, whom the regime in East Berlin regarded as East German citizens. Liedermann was tasked with all kinds of complicated and frustrating humanitarian interventions with the East German foreign office. When intervening for family visits, marriages or travel, Austria's sole leverage lay in denying East German officials their visa to Austria and thus to the West. However, this leverage became less and less effective as détente progressed and made the international recognition of the GDR only a matter of time.¹⁴

3 Liedermann and the Making of the Helsinki Final Act

Equipped with this experience of day-to-day Cold War diplomacy, Liedermann returned to Vienna. Following the example of other foreign ministries, a new department "to deal exclusively with the project of holding a European security conference" was set up within the ministry's political department in 1971,¹⁵ and Liedermann was chosen to head it.¹⁶ He held the position from 1971 to

13 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 273910/22-VI.1/93.

14 Maximilian Graf, *Österreich und die DDR 1949–1990. Politik und Wirtschaft im Schatten der deutschen Teilung*, Wien 2016.

15 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 57.242-1A/71.

16 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 108.116-11/71.

1977, leading the Austrian CSCE delegation during the negotiations in Dipoli, Geneva and Helsinki, where he played an important role.

Liedermann's role in the multilateral preparatory talks in Dipoli and in the actual CSCE negotiations in Geneva and Helsinki has been excellently researched by Benjamin Gilde, whose analysis of Austria's CSCE politics and Liedermann's role in Dipoli can be summarised as follows: While there was great scepticism on the part of the foreign minister, Rudolf Kirchschläger, and his ministry regarding Basket III, Austrian diplomats "gradually moved from initial reticence to supporting the Western positions on Basket III and, at times, even defending them in the front line". Helmut Liedermann and his colleagues "recognized the potential of this issue and the mediation opportunities that opened up for them". Additionally, "in the interest of their own credibility and the image of their country, they felt it necessary not to lag behind the other neutrals on these issues" and gradually "they were able to occupy a special position among the neutrals in this regard and were accepted as mediators by both West and East". Despite remaining sceptical, Kirchschläger apparently relied on their assessment as well as on the political director Ludwig Steiner, "who supported the delegation from Vienna, and let them have their way". Probably Austria's greatest success during the Multilateral Preparatory Talks was the draft preamble to Basket III. According to Gilde, Dipoli "meant a great foreign policy success" for Austria, "a clear increase in international prestige and an enhanced profile as a neutral state with a special interest in humanitarian issues, which always affirmed that it had no missionary intentions". Gilde stresses:

This result can be attributed primarily to the Austrian delegation, above all to Helmut Liedermann, who made a name for himself in CSCE circles with his knowledge of the situation and his persistence in dealing with the East, and who was also able to convince his own foreign ministry.¹⁷

Clearly, Liedermann's engagement was shaped by his frustrating experiences with the GDR and his recollection of how much more liberal things had been in Warsaw.

Liedermann and his delegation continued to play this role in Geneva and Helsinki. During these one and a half years, he cultivated extensive personal contacts and held numerous informal meetings with Eastern and Western participants on the premises of the Austrian delegation. The resolution of

¹⁷ Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983*, p. 131–133.

the preamble crisis through the N+N "package deal"¹⁸ was their most important mediation activity. As "Western actors in neutral clothes" within the N+N-group, Austrian diplomats contributed to making the Final Act possible. Nevertheless, Austria's mediation efforts, though considerable, should not be overestimated, since the most crucial obstacles were ultimately overcome through superpower negotiations and compromises.¹⁹ Retrospectively, the foreign ministry highlighted especially Liedermann's role as a coordinator for the most difficult and sensitive aspects of Basket III concerning human contacts, acting by the "consensus of all delegations".²⁰

4 Follow-up Meetings and the Implementation of the Final Act

Liedermann's engagement with the CSCE did not end with the signing of the Final Act in 1975. In fact, Liedermann's next posting was supposed to be The Hague, where his accreditation as ambassador had already been granted by the government of the Netherlands. However, when the Austrian ambassador to Yugoslavia caused a hunting accident in 1977, the foreign ministry dispatched Liedermann to Belgrade instead "because, as a profound expert on the CSCE complex of problems, he is ideally suited to take charge of the Belgrade Conference".²¹ Additionally, the foreign ministry stressed "his previous assignments (many years in Warsaw, head of the Berlin delegation), and his excellent knowledge of the problems of East-West relations and European security".²² Liedermann served as Austrian ambassador in Belgrade until 1981.

18 Austria had played a major role in the formulation of the preamble to Basket III in Dipoli, thereby laying the foundation for the preamble crisis. Since the text of the preamble contained virtually no restrictions, the Soviet Union demanded the inclusion of the principles of non-interference and sovereign equality. As a mediator and coordinator, the Austrian delegation, together with the other neutrals, repeatedly helped to move the negotiations forward step by step. Still, progress depended on the readiness of the Soviet Union and the United States to compromise. In the end, the Austrian delegation played a significant role in the negotiations for the joint N+N package deal, which constituted a compromise between Eastern and Western demands (acceptable for all states) but cleverly placed the respective wordings in wisely chosen sections of the preamble. The Soviet Union did not achieve the inclusion of its demands in the preamble of Basket III and the only Western concession in return was the inclusion of a reference to national laws and regulations in the Declaration of Principles of Basket I.

19 Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983*, p. 159–186, p. 255–257, for the quotation see p. 439.

20 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 273910/22-VI.1/93.

21 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 1337.1/23-VI.1/76.

22 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 1337/4-VI.1/77.

Strictly speaking, Liedermann was not part of the Austrian delegation during the Belgrade preparatory meeting, but “as the Austrian ambassador to Yugoslavia, he occasionally took part in the discussions”. During the follow-up meeting (1977–1978), Liedermann again headed the Austrian delegation. In his opening statement on Basket III, he addressed questions of human contacts, information, culture and education in particular. Despite limited progress since the signing of the Final Act, he struck a hopeful note, refraining from polemics and, above all, from naming and shaming individual states.²³ During the meeting, Liedermann sketched first outlines of possible proposals for improvements in the humanitarian field. The Austrian proposals were held back for tactical reasons, to be used later as compromise papers, if necessary, once the European Community (EC) proposals became available. The EC would present maximum proposals and Austria would seek to implement them as coordinator and mediator.²⁴

Austria wanted progress in Basket III, but already at the early stages of Belgrade Liedermann had learned from the East German head of delegation, Ernst Krabatsch, that the Warsaw Pact states would not agree to an emphasis on human rights. After the meeting, Liedermann warned “not to see everything ‘through the lens of a rather modest conference paper’”. In the end,

[t]he most important achievement of Belgrade, [...] was the agreement on the place and time of the next follow-up meeting, which was primarily due to the Austrian delegation, which had advocated this most vehemently and had essentially already pushed it through during the preparatory meeting.²⁵

The CSCE moved from Belgrade to Madrid, where the next follow-up began in late 1980. Liedermann himself moved not to Madrid but to Moscow, where he held the prestigious position of Austrian ambassador to the Soviet Union (1981–1985). In his new post, he remained one of Austria’s key diplomats during the crisis of détente that overshadowed the Madrid Follow-Up Meeting (1980–1983). In an article published in 1980, Liedermann stressed that Madrid needed to revive détente and secure the progress of the CSCE process. He wanted

23 Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983*, p. 332, p. 341–343.

24 Ibid., p. 352–357. On the EC and Belgrade, see Angela Romano, “The European Community and the Belgrade CSCE”, in: Vladimir Bilandžić/Dittmar Dahlmann/Milan Kosanović (eds.), *From Helsinki to Belgrade. The First CSCE Follow-up Meeting and the Crisis of Détente*, Bonn 2012, p. 205–224.

25 Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983*, p. 391, p. 442.

Madrid to become the new "milestone", a focus for many people's hopes and expectations.²⁶ However, his hope came to naught: shortly after Liedermann arrived in Moscow, the CSCE finally stalled after the imposition of martial law in Poland on 13 December 1981.²⁷

Although he was no longer directly involved in the CSCE negotiations anymore, it is evident how close to his heart the CSCE still was. In a report about the end of a hunger strike by Andrey Sakharov and his wife that finally enabled the emigration permit for his daughter in law, Liedermann stated: "In the present case, foreign policy interests obviously prevailed over internal considerations." However, "Sakharov's hunger strike and its successful outcome unfortunately distort Soviet reality". Liedermann knew that applicants for family reunification often lost their jobs after submitting applications, contrary to the provisions of the CSCE. Furthermore, he stressed that the Soviet authorities – also contrary to the provisions of the Final Act – placed internal laws and regulations above the Final Act. In view of that, he recalled that the provisions of the Final Act do not allow for such a conclusion. Contrary to Soviet practice, the participating states were "required to implement the provisions of the Final Act with due regard, even if this necessitates a change in the legal situation or administrative practice of the participating states".²⁸

Liedermann frequently reported about the Soviets blaming the United States for the failure quickly to achieve a final document in Madrid given Moscow's favorable view of the N+N draft.²⁹ Always with reference to the CSCE, Liedermann pointed to the worsening of the human rights situation, the persecution of dissidents and the breakup of Helsinki groups:

On balance, the Soviet policy of repression against dissidents can actually be described as quite successful. The main groups have been practically crushed. Most of the known dissidents have either been arrested or gone abroad. Their successors are hardly known abroad. It now seems

26 Liedermann, "Von Helsinki über Belgrad nach Madrid", p. 443.

27 Maximilian Graf, "Österreich und die 'polnische Krise' im Kontext 1980–1983", in: Peter Ruggenthaler/Wanda Jarzabek (eds.), *Österreich – Polen. Stationen gemeinsamer Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert*, Graz 2021, p. 201–221.

28 Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 15.12.1981, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 671-Res.

29 Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 15.03.1982, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 214-Res; Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 24.03.1982, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 341-Res; Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 15.10.1982, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 544-Res; Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 14.12.1982, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 660-Res.

only logical to prevent a situation like that which arose in the 1970s, when numerous dissidents became the darlings of the Western press.³⁰

Nor was progress made on humanitarian issues of bilateral concern. Hence, Liedermann asked the Austrian CSCE delegation to raise these issues in Madrid once the negotiations had resumed.³¹ Soviet media constantly ignored Basket III in its coverage of the CSCE process and even the concluding document of Madrid was summarised by *Pravda* with no reference to Basket III. In consequence, Liedermann advocated using the Final Act “more than before as the basis for interventions in human rights cases and in favour of facilitating human contacts [...] Greater use of the above-mentioned document is also recommended, [...] because otherwise it may become a piece of dead paper and be forgotten.”³²

5 Executive Secretary of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting

Clearly, in Liedermann's view, the Helsinki process and especially the implementation of the Final Act had to make progress, and it seems that Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power made him cautiously optimistic. Before the opening of the Vienna meeting, Liedermann wrote:

Notwithstanding all shortcomings in the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act, the CSCE process has had a perceptible impact in many spheres. It is now accepted as a matter of course that the CSCE process is a thematically comprehensive forum that does not accept the East-West dichotomy as an immutable fact of life but is designed to help eliminate it.

Against the background of a newly intensified dialogue between East and West, Liedermann hoped that Vienna would contribute to fostering détente

30 Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 19.10.1982, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 531-Res.

31 Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 14.01.1983, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 17-Res; Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 02.02.1983, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 53-Res; Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 12.07.1983, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 393-Res.

32 Liedermann to BMAA, Moscow, 21.10.1983, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, Politische Berichte Moskau, Zl. 482-Res.

and facilitating the implementation of the Final Act. He concluded with an appeal:

It is in the interest of all CSCE participating States that they should succeed at the Vienna Meeting, not only in ensuring the continuity of the CSCE process, but also in moving closer and closer towards fully implementing the rules of conduct to which they committed themselves in Helsinki and Madrid, and in making substantive and successful progress along the dynamic road of the CSCE process. The idea of the CSCE process is not to replace deeds by words. It is, however, to make words credible by unreserved implementation of the commitments that have been assumed. It is only in this way that we shall be able to ensure lasting peace. And that is what the peoples of the participating States hope will be achieved by the CSCE process, as the catalyst of their expectations from a process of détente.³³

In the run-up to the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting, "an office for the preparation of the Vienna meeting of the participating States of the CSCE, subordinate to the cabinet [i.e. the core staff] of the Federal Minister, was created" in the foreign ministry. At its head was Liedermann, who just had returned from Moscow. Next, he was appointed Executive Secretary of the CSCE Follow-Up Meeting in Vienna with the rank of "Assistant Secretary General" of the United Nations.³⁴ Subject to the agreement of the participating states, the Executive Secretary of CSCE meetings always was a national of the host country. He was responsible for all technical and financial matters during the meeting, which included the registration of proposals adopted and their circulation among the participants. Reservations or interpretative statements concerning given decisions had to be submitted by the participants in writing to the Executive Secretary. This made Liedermann a well-informed man and it seems that his contacts with the representatives of all participating states and the Austrian institutions involved were not limited to the coordinating and organizational tasks Liedermann had been given once all participating states had approved of his appointment.³⁵ His career at the CSCE was thus crowned with this "elder

33 Liedermann, "Some Reflections on the Humanitarian Dimension of the CSCE Process", p. 140–141, p. 143.

34 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 1337/25-VI.1/85; Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 1337/23-VI.1/85.

35 Memo "KSZE; 3. Folgetreffen in Wien; Nominierung des Exekutivsekretärs", Vienna, 12.11.1985, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 804.00/60-II.7/85; Memo "Wiener Folgetreffen,

statesman"-like diplomatic role for which he was "respected by all delegations even in difficult times".³⁶ Given his experience of and network within the CSCE, he was an ideal communicator during the meeting, though a full assessment of his more informal activities must remain subject to further research. Gradually Liedermann's vision for the Follow-Up and ultimately for overcoming the East-West divide in Europe materialised. In its initial stages, the debate about the implementation of humanitarian issues in Vienna did not differ much from those in Belgrade and Madrid. The West tested Gorbachev's readiness to make concessions in the humanitarian field. Against the background of accelerating reforms in Eastern Europe, expectations in the West were growing and divergences within the Socialist bloc became more and more obvious. Finally, in January 1989, all countries involved accepted a strong concluding document that once again originated from an N+N proposal.³⁷

After the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting, Liedermann remained executive secretary of the negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures within the framework of the CSCE, executive secretary of the CSCE Committee for the preparation of the Paris summit in 1990, and, from mid-1991, secretary general of the Open Skies negotiations in Vienna. After successfully organising the World Conference on Human Rights held by the United Nations in Vienna 1993,³⁸ he retired from the diplomatic service. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Liedermann looked back at the CSCE, recalling that

the conference results were initially quite controversial. Some saw it as a rather worthless document that, like many others, would disappear into the archives of foreign ministries. Others feared that it would seal the division of Europe and freeze the political and territorial status quo. However, it was to turn out quite differently: not a sealing of the status quo, but the starting point for a dynamic process that led to the overcoming of the division of Europe and had unimagined repercussions inside what was then the Communist sphere. [...] The CSCE Final Act, signed at the highest political level on 1 August 1975, will not be forgotten in the assessment of the events of the twentieth century, but will be remembered as one of the most significant milestones of that period.³⁹

Kandidatur Botschafter Dr. Helmut Liedermann, Zustimmung der übrigen KSZE-Teilnehmerstaaten", Vienna, 18.3.1986, ÖstA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 803.01/33-II.7/86.

36 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 273910/22-VI.1/93.

37 Graf, "European Détente and the CSCE", p. 263–265.

38 Personalakt Helmut Liedermann, BMEIA, GZ 273910/22-VI.1/93.

39 Liedermann, "Österreichs Rolle beim Zustandekommen der KSZE", p. 492–493.

6 Conclusion

Liedermann's insider assessment of the CSCE accords with the findings of much recent scholarship on the CSCE. However, the Helsinki process was not a straight road from the making of the CSCE to the end of the Cold War. It needed diplomats capable of negotiating not only the provisions of the Final Act but also their implementation. Liedermann's experiences in Warsaw and Berlin made him an ideal CSCE diplomat regarding the challenges ahead in Basket III, to which he made significant contributions. He must be regarded as one of the creative dealmakers who made the necessary compromises possible. As a Western actor in neutral clothes, he achieved much during the negotiations. However, his experiences in Belgrade and of the Soviet Union in the 1980s also serve as a reminder of how limited progress in the humanitarian field was before the Vienna Follow-Up. Despite this, he saw the value and potential of the CSCE process and believed in its ultimate success, which he witnessed during the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting and the subsequent "peaceful revolutions" in Eastern Europe. Future comparative research on Liedermann and his fellow CSCE diplomats of both East and West will certainly enhance our knowledge about how the Final Act was made and how the struggle to implement its provisions was fought until the end of the Cold War.

The Concluding Document of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting, 15 January 1989

*An Analysis of Its Drafting and an Interpretation in Comparison with Other
Declarations*

Michael Gehler

1 From Helsinki to Vienna, 1975–1989¹

The Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) represented a political compromise between Eastern territorial and security interests and Western human rights interests. Basket I contained a catalogue of ten “principles” that were to govern relations between the participating states, including cooperation in humanitarian areas. In addition, there was a “Document on confidence-building measures and certain aspects of security and disarmament”. Basket II enclosed guidelines for cooperation in the fields of economics, science, technology and the environment. Basket III included concrete facilitations for family visits and reunions and improved working conditions for journalists.²

This chapter answers five questions: What course did the Vienna Follow-up Meeting take? How did its Concluding Document come about? What is its structure and focus compared with other final documents (1975, 1978, 1983 and 1986)? What outcomes were achieved? These questions are answered with reference to Austrian observations and judgements.

The CSCE Follow-up Meetings in Belgrade (1977–1978)³ and Madrid (1980–1983), which served to review and continue the policy of *détente*, were affected by the intensifying Cold War and failed to achieve any resounding success.⁴ By the time of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting (1986–1989), Cold War

1 Previously untranslated German language sources were translated.

2 Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Schlussakte, Helsinki 1975, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/e/39503.pdf>, accessed 16.08.2023; Michael Gehler, “Meilenstein der Friedenspolitik. Vor 45 Jahren, am 1. August 1975, wurde in Helsinki die KSZE-Schlussakte unterzeichnet, ein internationaler Vertrag neuen Typs”, in: *Extra. Die Wochenend-Beilage der Wiener Zeitung*, 01.08.2020, p. 33.

3 On the follow-up meeting in Belgrade, see Wilfried von Bredow, *Der KSZE-Prozeß. Von der Zählung zur Auflösung des Ost-West-Konflikts*, Darmstadt 1992, p. 79–88.

4 Jörg Kastl, “Das KSZE-Folgetreffen von Madrid. Verlauf und Schlußdokument aus der Sicht der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”, in: *Europa-Archiv* 20 (1983), p. 617–626, also published in:

tensions were fading. It provided mandates for negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), with progress made in all baskets.⁵

2 The Course of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting and the Drafting of the Concluding Document from the Austrian Perspective

Due to the negative experiences with the Madrid preparatory meeting, which had lasted nine and a half turbulent weeks, the relevant final document had defined the mandate of the Vienna preparatory meeting in “very narrow” terms, as summarised in an Austrian foreign ministry report. The agenda, task list and modalities of the Madrid meeting were to be adapted only in points “which required amendment due to the change of date and place, the drawing of lots and the mention of other meetings held in accordance with the decisions of the Madrid meeting.”⁶ The Vienna Follow-up Meeting was officially held from 4 November 1986 to 19 January 1989 and was organised in six sessions, with opening and closing taking place at foreign ministerial level.⁷

The Concluding Document was drafted at Ballhausplatz, the seat of the Austrian Foreign Ministry until 2005. Although the material to be discussed of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting was available in full by Easter 1987, negotiations regarding the text took a long time to begin. The conclusion of the conference had been set for 31 July 1987. However, the date passed without a single sentence of the Concluding Document having been formulated and finalised. It was not until the autumn of 1987 that the drafting work got off even to a “slow

Hermann Volle/Wolfgang Wagner (ed.), *Das Madrider KSZE-Folgetreffen. Der Fortgang des KSZE-Prozesses in Europa*, Bonn 1984, p. 45–54; von Bredow, *Der KSZE-Prozess*, p. 88–96. On the end of détente and subsequently the end of the Cold War in the 1980s see John Lewis Gaddis, *Der Kalte Krieg. Eine neue Geschichte*, München 2008, p. 243–292.

5 On the CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna and the new quality of the CSCE process see von Bredow, *Der KSZE-Prozess*, p. 111–132; for a summary see Wilfried Loth, “Der KSZE-Prozess 1975–1990: eine Bilanz”, in: Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer), München 2012, p. 323–331, on p. 330–331.

6 Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), BMAA, politische Sektion II/Abteilung 7 Entwicklung (II-Pol.) 1989, GZ 804.00/2-11.7/89. The information can be found in BMAA-Abteilung II.7-1989, 804.00 to 804.02.02 OZ 1–120, there from photograph number (Bericht im Haus): 3222–3252 and again from (Bericht im Ausland): 3253–3362 (translated).

7 Ibid.; on Liedermann, see the article by Maximilian Graf in this volume.

start". According to Austrian diplomats, the reasons for this delay lay partly in the large number of proposals but above all in political factors.⁸

Until July 1987, the struggle of the NATO countries to reach a common position on military questions acted as a retarding force. The neutral and non-aligned (N+N) states also had difficulties in maintaining a common stance. Yugoslavia, Sweden and Finland had sought the participation of the N+N in the arms control negotiations, while Switzerland had "completely ruled out" any such participation for itself. After the NATO states, with the agreement of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (the "Warsaw Pact"), had de facto established the concept of the twenty-three NATO states acting as autonomous negotiators within the CSCE framework, all N+N countries fell in with this solution, which Austria had favoured for some time.⁹

The Warsaw Pact states used the delay of the Western proposal on military issues to "justify slow progress" in the human rights and humanitarian fields. From the perspective of the Ballhausplatz, the considerable problems in reaching new normative agreements had "deeper-rooted reasons".¹⁰

The reforms initiated in the USSR by Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the CPSU,¹¹ as well as those in the Central and Eastern European states had raised expectations in the Western camp regarding a positive conclusion to the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. On the one hand, the aim was to increase the pressure for implementation in areas where the realization of the Final Act was deficient – for instance, freedom to leave the country and freedom of religion – by means of concrete provisions, and on the other hand to set the existing "mechanism" in motion through permanent monitoring of the human rights practices of the participating states as a result of the obligation to provide information, notification procedures, and bilateral and multilateral meetings. Due to the different political developments in the socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe, however, it was uncertain whether the negotiations in Vienna would produce a reliable result. As a result of this uncertainty, the Western states adopted a wait-and-see attitude, which initially was not conducive to progress in the negotiations.¹²

The representatives of the Warsaw Pact states were on uncertain ground. The already emerging power rivalries in the Kremlin and increasing differences

8 Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens (translated).

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid. (translated).

11 On the "Gorbachev Factor" see Bernd Stöver, *Der Kalte Krieg. Geschichte eines radikalen Zeitalters 1947–1991*, München 2007, p. 437–462.

12 Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens.

among the Eastern delegations between “progressive”, reform-oriented countries such as Hungary and Poland on the one hand and the “conservative” Warsaw Pact states such as Czechoslovakia and Romania on the other – a group that also included “with qualifications, Bulgaria and the GDR” – contributed to an atmosphere of uncertainty.¹³

It was the representatives of the neutral states with their particular commitment to the “human dimension” who enabled effective negotiations on the text to begin. On 30 July 1987, an Austro-Swiss working paper was brought to bear on Basket III, organising the now confusing negotiating material on 11 pages and suggesting possible solutions for the relevant and still unresolved issues. In autumn 1987, a series of non-papers by the head of the Austrian delegation, Rudolf Torovsky, in his capacity as coordinator, served the same purpose for controversial issues in the area of human rights such as freedom of information, freedom of expression and freedom of travel.¹⁴

In Basket II,¹⁵ in which the work had been completed in Madrid after a relatively short time, negotiations in Vienna on the agreement on the drafting of the final text proved difficult. The Western camp was concerned chiefly with more openness on the part of the Central and Eastern European state systems and better conditions for economic cooperation.¹⁶ A new focus in Basket II was environmental protection. Austria submitted five proposals regarding cross-bloc cooperation for the further development of international environmental law.¹⁷

A revealing interim assessment from the Austrian diplomatic perspective concluded that the course and results of the fifth session of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting from 22 January to 25 March 1988 had so far been, in Torovsky’s view, “disappointing”. It became clear from the individual baskets that “little concrete progress had been made in the efforts to draft a concluding document”.¹⁸

The negotiations on military security were the most promising in terms of reaching an agreement, particularly among the states organised in blocs, which was not particularly surprising given that the discussions were primarily focussed on agreeing mandates for future substantive negotiations. According to Torovsky, an East-West climate favourable to arms control issues had a

13 Ibid. (translated).

14 Ibid.

15 See the article by Roland Laimer in this volume.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Zusammenfassung der Sitzungsperiode 22.1.–25.3.1988, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), BMAA, politische Sektion II/Abteilung 7 Entwicklung (II-Pol.) 1988, GZ 803.12/16-II.7/88. (translated).

positive effect in this area. In other sectors – as with Basket II, about which there had been little controversy in previous follow-up meetings – the results achieved before the end of 1987 were rounded off and consolidated with minor textual modifications, although there were some setbacks, not least the fact that the negotiations barely touched upon the proposals of the follow-up programme.¹⁹

Torovsky saw the CSCE and the follow-up meetings as parts of a long-term process with a “tendency towards processual development, in which phases of progress in negotiations alternate with phases of stagnation and setbacks”. In his view, the negotiations in Vienna were characterised by plenary meetings and formal drafting groups, numerous informal forms of consultation, contact groups and task forces – all typical of the CSCE. Leaving aside limited problems in individual baskets, in which there was a difference between tactical reservations on the one hand and substantial political resistance on the other, Torovsky felt able to discern a possible outcome of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting in “broad outlines” as early as April 1988. The final result seemed likely to fall “somewhere between the very high expectations at the beginning of the [Vienna Meeting] and a Madrid-style outcome”, but Austria’s leading diplomat at the CSCE did not rule out the possibility that “hardening positions on both the Western and Eastern (or both) side(s)” might, in extreme cases, “also produce a short document with not much of a follow-up programme, as was the case in Belgrade”.²⁰

Against the backdrop of easing East-West relations and Gorbachev’s reforms in the Soviet Union, the question was repeatedly raised why the Vienna negotiations had so far been so “tough” and why the high expectations placed in the follow-up meeting had not yet been fulfilled and “relative failure” could not be ruled out. Torovsky cited two reasons:

1. Despite improved East-West relations, especially in terms of superpower dialogue, the conflicts of interest and differences in ideology and politics remained. Relations improved primarily in the fields of arms control and the resolution of regional conflicts, while many of the CSCE’s broad spectrum of issues had not yet been addressed.
2. According to Torovsky, the slowing of Gorbachev’s reform efforts had brought about only “marginal improvements in relations between individuals and the state or party” by April 1988, which had “significantly reduced” the likelihood of a greater willingness on the part of the USSR and other socialist states to implement the human dimension provisions.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid. (translated).

In Torovsky's view, misguided expectations regarding the positive impact of both factors and the understandable desire for a qualitative leap in the CSCE process had greatly raised the level of expectations among Western and N+N states in the initial phase of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, just as most Central and Eastern European states also entertained heightened expectations of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.²¹

In spite of all this, Torovsky felt entitled to hope that "more precise and clearer commitments could be agreed in each of the baskets, which should serve greatly to improve respect for the Final Act". At the beginning of April 1988, he recognised for the first time the possibility in the CSCE process of creating "a co-operative monitoring system (or at least serious moves in that direction) of compliance with the CSCE provisions on the human dimension". He also noted that "the negotiating structures in the military field which are close to being agreed upon [...] may encourage moves in the direction of conventional disarmament and a consolidation of military confidence-building".²²

The state of repeated deadlock in the negotiations continued until the spring of 1988. A turning point was reached on 13 May, when the N+N states presented a draft Concluding Document based on the previous negotiations. The initiative led to a re-examination of the Soviet position by the representatives of the N+N and resulted in more flexible instructions, which brought new momentum to the sensitive humanitarian and human rights issues. However, the Soviet delegation had difficulties persuading its less reform-minded allies to support its new course. The greatest resistance came from the Romanian delegation, which, even a month after the presentation of the N+N document, completely rejected any relevant regulations in the area of human rights and Basket III.²³

In the autumn months of 1988, new progress was made in the work on the Concluding Document and in the consultations on the mandate for conventional arms control negotiations, which were taking place simultaneously. The particular focus lay on fulfilling the task of holding a conference on human rights and humanitarian issues in Moscow. The proposal presented by the Soviet delegation in the opening phase of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting had initially been met with scepticism and outright rejection by the Western states, especially the United States, Great Britain and Canada. The American delegation had demanded changes to the practice of the Soviet human rights regime as a precondition for its agreement, which in practice amounted to a rejection. As a result, the Soviet delegation had pursued its suggestion with

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid. (translated).

23 Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens.

reduced commitment, which might have been taken for its factual abandonment. Unexpectedly, the Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, in an exchange with his partners in September 1988, insisted on holding the Moscow Conference as an integral element of concluding the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, while at the same time vigorous efforts were made to improve human rights practices, such as the release of political prisoners, the resolution of family reunification cases, the increase in the number of emigrants from the USSR and the cessation of jamming Western radio broadcasts. This change in attitude amounted to factual compliance with the American conditions and allowed the West to give its unanimous approval to the Moscow Conference. After a dispute between the French and American delegations about the relation between conventional arms control negotiations and the CSCE process, which flared up again in November 1988, the basis for the conclusion of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting was in place. In the second half of December, the N+N delegations presented a revised version of their draft, which on 15 January 1989 was adopted by all 35 participating states as the Concluding Document of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.²⁴

Although Romanian statements made it clear that the country would not implement Western aspects of the human rights agreements, and although demonstrations taking place in Czechoslovakia and the GDR were being suppressed at the same time, the adoption of the Concluding Document was welcomed as a historic event in East-West relations. This was also the general tenor of the final declarations issued by the foreign ministers of the participating states from 17 to 19 January.²⁵

3 Organisation, Structure and Priorities of the Vienna Concluding Document

Including its appendices, the Vienna Concluding Document contains 81 closely-spaced pages in its German version, 41 of them form the main part. It is divided into first a section on security issues in Europe with 27 principles and their respective subsections, and second a section on CSBMs and certain aspects of security and disarmament in Europe, based on the Conference on Security and Confidence Building Measures and Disarmament in

24 Ibid., on the Vienna Concluding Document see also Michael Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act. The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War*, Princeton-Oxford 2018, p. 244–245.

25 Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens.

Europe (CDE) held in Stockholm (1984–1986) and the assessment of the progress made, negotiations on CSBMs and on conventional forces in Europe, and meetings to exchange views and information on the progress of negotiations on conventional forces in Europe. Third, there follows a section on cooperation in the fields of the economy, science and technology, and the environment, including trade and industrial cooperation and other areas, covering 46 points. Fourth, there is a section on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region and, fifth, one on cooperation in humanitarian and other areas, including 71 points on human contacts, information, cultural and educational cooperation and exchanges. The sixth section addresses the human dimension of the CSCE, based on the principles and provisions of the Final Act and other relevant CSCE documents, with four resolutions on developments in the human dimension, including the implementation of specific CSCE commitments and their review, as well as the functioning of the procedures described in the four resolutions (later known as the Vienna Mechanism). It also contained a commitment to discuss the information provided and to consider practical proposals for new measures aimed at improving the implementation of the commitments relating to the human dimension of the CSCE and the effectiveness of the procedures described therein. On the basis of these proposals, the Conference was to consider the adoption of new measures.²⁶

A first meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension was to take place from 30 May to 23 June 1989 in Paris, a second from 5 to 29 June 1990 in Copenhagen and a third from 10 September to 4 October 1991 in Moscow. The agenda, timetable and other organisational modalities were contained in a separate appendix (X).²⁷

A seventh section of the Concluding Document deals with the consequences. The fourth main meeting after Belgrade, Madrid and Vienna was to be held in Helsinki from 24 March 1992 to assess the functioning of the procedures set out in the four resolutions and the progress made at the meetings of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE. The stated intention was to examine ways of further strengthening and improving these procedures and to pass resolutions accordingly.²⁸

26 For this and the following, see *Abschließendes Dokument des Wiener Treffens 1986 der Vertreter der Teilnehmerstaaten der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, welches auf der Grundlage der Bestimmungen der Schlussakte betreffend die Folgen der Konferenz abgehalten wurde*, Wien 1989. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/a/40883.pdf>, accessed 30.6.2023.

27 *Ibid.*

28 *Ibid.*

For the purpose of adapting the agenda, task list and modalities used for the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, a preparatory meeting was to be held in Helsinki from 10 March 1992. It was agreed that modifications should be made to those items requiring them due to changes in time and place, the drawing of lots and the mention of other meetings held in accordance with the decisions of the 1986 Vienna Follow-up Meeting. The duration of the preparatory meeting was not to exceed two weeks.²⁹

The results were to be duly taken into account at the main meeting in Helsinki. The remainder of the Concluding Document contains eleven major appendices and two sub-appendices.³⁰

4 The Final Documents Compared³¹

A comparison of the five final documents of Helsinki, Belgrade, Madrid, Stockholm and Vienna (Table 1) provides initial insights regarding the frequency of certain terms. In terms of substance, the selection can be justified as follows: These terms were to be found in most of the final documents and they

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 The analysis was based on the German versions of the documents. The overview table therefore contains both the English and German terms. Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Schlussakte, Helsinki 1975, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/e/39503.pdf>, accessed 16.08.2023; Abschließendes Dokument des Belgrader Treffens 1977 der Vertreter der Teilnehmerstaaten der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, welches auf der Grundlage der Bestimmungen der Schlussakte betreffend die Folgen der Konferenz abgehalten wurde, Belgrad 1978, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/c/40867.pdf>, accessed 30.6.2023; Abschließendes Dokument des Madrider Treffens 1980 der Vertreter der Teilnehmerstaaten der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, welches auf der Grundlage der Bestimmungen der Schlussakte betreffend die Folgen der Konferenz abgehalten wurde, Madrid 1983, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/c/40873.pdf>, accessed 30.6.2023; Dokument der Stockholmer Konferenz über Vertrauens- und Sicherheitsbildende Maßnahmen über Abrüstung in Europa, Einberufen in Übereinstimmung mit den einschlägigen Bestimmungen des abschließenden Dokuments des Madrider Treffens der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, Stockholm 1986, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/2/41240.pdf>, accessed 30.6.2023; Abschließendes Dokument des Wiener Treffens 1986 der Vertreter der Teilnehmerstaaten der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, welches auf der Grundlage der Bestimmungen der Schlussakte betreffend die Folgen der Konferenz abgehalten wurde, Wien 1989, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/a/40883.pdf>, accessed 30.6.2023

TABLE 1 Comparison of key terms in the final documents

	Helsinki 1975	Belgrade 1978	Madrid 1983	Stockholm 1986	Vienna 1989
Abrüstung (disarmament)	7	0	10	9	14
Energie (energy)	12	0	2	0	10
Entspannung (détente)	6	2	6	0	2
Fortschritt (progress)	18	0	10	2	17
Freundschaft (friendship)	10	1	5	3	5
Frieden (peace)	20	0	8	5	4
Gegenseitigkeit (reciprocity)	4	0	3	2	2
Gemeinschaft (community)	1	0	3	0	9
Gerechtigkeit (justice)	7	0	2	1	2
Gleichheit (equality)	7	0	1	2	3
Grenzen (borders)	7	0	6	6	2
Grundfreiheiten/Freiheit ([basic] liberties)	13	0	11	2	34
Integrität (integrity)	7	0	0	1	2
Klima (climate)	4	0	0	0	0
Kultur/kulturell (culture/cultural)	84	1	21	1	71
Menschenrechte (human rights)	7	0	11	1	15
Minderheiten (minorities)	8	0	1	0	8
Selbstbestimmung (self-determination)	4	0	0	0	1
Sicherheit (security)	60	11	42	31	72
Souveränität (sovereignty)	4	0	0	0	0
Stabilität (stability)	5	0	1	0	7
Umwelt (environment)	51		8	1	31
Unabhängigkeit (independence)	4	0	0	1	2
Verantwortung (responsibility)	3	0	0	0	5
Verhandlungen (negotiations)	4	0	5	1	67
Verkehr [Transit] (traffic [transit])	27	0	3	1	8
Vermittlung (mediation)	1	0	0	0	1
Verständnis/Verständigung (understanding/rapprochement)	19	0	3	1	4
Vertrauen (confidence)	19	0	18	21	24
Zusammenarbeit (cooperation)	162	11	52	8	101
Total	585	26	232	100	523

obviously represented central concerns of the participating states from both East and West as well as from the perspective of the non-aligned and neutral states. In terms of methodology, it should be borne in mind that the frequency of mentions alone does not automatically say anything about all the priorities of the participating states. In some cases, the final documents represented compromise formulas in which concessions had to be made with regard to the original objectives. Only a complete and reciprocal evaluation of all negotiation records in their various languages can provide further information on what terminology and formulations ultimately had to be softened, deleted or reinserted. A purely quantitative analysis is thus necessarily limited, especially as terms might convey qualitatively different levels of meaning across languages and have different meanings from an Eastern or Western perspective. This terminological survey therefore represents only an initial, superficial and preliminary attempt that requires further analysis and refinement. What exactly did the West, as opposed to the East, understand by “freedom” or “human rights”? This was by no means already decided and established with the Vienna Concluding Document, as its first interpretations – e.g. by the East German leadership – suggested.

These caveats in mind, what trends does this quantitative analysis suggest? “Disarmament” was prioritised in Vienna, “peace” in Helsinki – joined, in Vienna, by basic liberties, freedom, human rights, security and confidence. Based on the frequency in which these concepts were mentioned, the Helsinki Final Act and the Vienna Concluding Document can be identified as the two outstanding, most substantial, comprehensive and far-reaching documents of their kind – ground-breaking, that is, in terms of *détente* and security policy and decisive in terms of human rights. Vienna and Helsinki closed a circle. While Belgrade represented a clear step backwards, Madrid contributed to cohesion but did not achieve any significant progress, while the Stockholm document on “security” and “confidence” acted as an essential link and indeed a catalyst between Helsinki and Vienna.

These findings are further emphasised when all significant uses of these terms are added up: Helsinki, with 585 mentions, and Vienna, with 523 mentions, are in the lead, with Madrid and Stockholm trailing far behind with 232 and 100 mentions, respectively. The Belgrade final document appears the least substantive due to the text’s very sparse content. To be fair, it must also be added that Stockholm addressed a more limited subject matter, namely “confidence building” and “disarmament”. However, the importance of Vienna after Helsinki becomes abundantly clear in this type of word field analysis.

5 Outcomes

The agreement reached in Vienna went far beyond the texts negotiated in Belgrade and Madrid. It reaffirmed freedom of travel for citizens of participating states, gave them the opportunity to appeal against administrative decisions (e.g. on applications for exit visas), committed governments to tolerate Helsinki Monitoring Groups and established a procedure to monitor how well each state was implementing its CSCE commitments. The Western allies agreed to participate in conventional disarmament negotiations, a new round of talks on CSBMs and the human rights conference in Moscow. In almost all points, the agreement met the criteria of glasnost and the ideas of Gorbachev's "common European home".³² In return, the document gave Gorbachev a new instrument to overrule his critics and justify further domestic reforms.³³

During the 27 months of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, relations between East and West developed with unprecedented dynamism. In complex and controversial negotiations, a Concluding Document was drawn up that translated the impetuses and impulses of previous years into provisions and regulations. This laid the foundations for further progress, particularly in terms of human rights and humanitarian issues. Agreements on human contacts, ease of travel, freedom of information and working conditions for journalists were intended to ensure greater openness between the participating states, the removal of barriers and a free flow of information between East and West. The negotiations on religious freedom, national minorities, control rights and legal remedies were starting points for the creation of pluralism and the rule of law. The newly created mechanism for the permanent monitoring of the implementation of the CSCE human rights agreements, in conjunction with an annual conference on the human dimension, was intended to strengthen the mutual responsibility of states for the fulfilment of their commitments.³⁴

32 Deborah Cuccia, "The European Common House: The Soviet Prescription for Reshaping Europe", in: Michael Gehler/Wilfried Loth (eds.), *Reshaping Europe. Towards a Political, Economic and Monetary Union, 1984–1989* (Publications of the European Liaison Committee of Historians Vol. 20), Baden-Baden 2020, p. 443–459 (translated).

33 Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act*, p. 244–245; see also: Rolf Steininger, "Entspannung und Abrüstung im Kalten Krieg. Der KSZE-Prozess und seine Auswirkungen auf die innenpolitischen Situationen in Ost und West", in: Andreas H. Apelt/Robert Grünbaum/Jens Schöne (eds.), *2 x Deutschland. Innerdeutsche Beziehungen 1972–1990*, Halle 2013, p. 111–126.

34 Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens; on the major breakthrough of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting 1986–1989 from the Vatican's perspective see

In military questions, the launch of negotiations by the 23 NATO states on conventional armed forces provided a new approach to a key area of European security issues. The negotiating mandate attached to the Concluding Document prepared a framework for communication that would subsequently become an important element of the arms control dialogue. The simultaneous negotiations of all CSCE states on CSBMs opened up the opportunity to follow up on the CDE and achieve further progress in the calculability and transparency of military activities and potentials. In the field of economic co-operation, regulations were drawn up for business contacts, economic information, joint ventures and compensation deals.³⁵

The USSR's more conservative allies tried to prevent this move towards openness. Although most Central and Eastern European heads of state and government accepted the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty negotiated between Gorbachev and Reagan on 8 December 1987 (in force from 1 June 1988) and supported the Moscow Conference proposal, some Warsaw Pact states feared that Gorbachev and Shevardnadze would go too far. The East German foreign minister, Oskar Fischer, warned that the Soviets would give in to the West's "particularly extortionate" pressure on human rights, by means of which the Soviets would undermine Communist sovereignty, grant the West a "right to interfere" and a "right to complain" under the auspices of the CSCE, and ultimately help it to dismantle socialism by "infecting the socialist states with bourgeois values". The Romanian delegates, who raised similar objections, declared that they would not regard any of the agreements reached in Vienna as binding. However, given Gorbachev's determination to press ahead, opponents and sceptics had little chance of blocking the realignment of Soviet foreign policy.³⁶ By the time of Vienna, the so-called Eastern bloc had long ceased to exist and was visibly disintegrating, and the Vienna Follow-up Meeting itself thus contributed to the end of the Cold War.

also Paul Wuthe, *Für Menschenrechte und Religionsfreiheit in Europa. Die Politik des Heiligen Stuhls in der KSZE/OSZE* (Theologie und Frieden Vol. 22), Stuttgart 2002, p. 174–208; on the Concluding Document: *Ibid.* p. 192–194; on human rights in the CSCE process: Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki effect. International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism*, Princeton 2001; Sarah B. Snyder, "The foundation for Vienna. A reassessment of the CSCE in the mid-1980s", in: *Cold War History* 10 (2010), issue 4, p. 493–512; Andrei Zagorski, "The Human Dimension of the CSCE, 1975–1990", in: Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War. Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990*, New York 2019, p. 17–42.

35 Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens.

36 Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act*, p. 245.

6 Conclusion

The course of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting negotiations was essentially divided into two phases: 1987/88 and 1988/89. Initially, no decisive breakthroughs were achievable. A combination of three “positive” factors played a role in the final success from the second half of 1988 onwards. These were the resurgence of the Gorbachev effect with pressure on Eastern delegations, which led to their more or less willing concessions, the disarmament agreement between the superpowers on nuclear weapons in Europe, and the mediating influence of the neutrals in particular.

A comparison of the final documents shows that Vienna and Helsinki closed a circle in terms both of scope and of substance, while Belgrade and Madrid, in retrospect, appear as merely intermediate and transitional stages. Remarkable successes of mediation and agreement were achieved in the policy areas of “freedom” and “security”, so that Vienna can be seen as the fulfilment of Helsinki, especially with a view to further negotiations on the reduction of conventional weapons systems in Europe. The Vienna Concluding Document thus also paved the way for the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, one of the most important international agreements in helping to end the Cold War in Europe.

Under Torovsky’s leadership, the Austrian delegation was particularly committed to raising the profile of Vienna as a meeting place, presenting the outcome of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting as a success story of the Ballhausplatz for the benefit of Europe and thereby moving out of the shadow of the country’s internationally largely isolated president, Kurt Waldheim.³⁷ However, Austrian CSCE diplomacy was not crowned by the honour of hosting the adoption of the charter declaring the end of the Cold War in Vienna. This was to take place in Paris in 1990 at the request of the French president, François Mitterrand.

37 Michael Gehler, “Die Affäre Waldheim. Eine Fallstudie zur Instrumentalisierung der NS-Vergangenheit zur politischen Vorteilsverschaffung 1986–1988”, in: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 69 (2018), issue 1/2, p. 67–85.

Negotiations on Cultural Cooperation at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting from the Perspective of the Austrian Foreign Ministry

Andrea Brait

1 Austria's Foreign Cultural Policy¹

Cultural diplomacy is a policy area that has received increased scholarly attention only in recent years,² perhaps because it is a policy area in which almost impossible to measure effects. Nevertheless, the benefits of cultural diplomacy are repeatedly asserted. Benno Signitzer, for example, emphasises that its aim is to serve general diplomatic goals.³ Austrian activities in this policy area are also driven by the hope of positive effects in various contexts. These activities are mainly the responsibility of the Cultural Policy Section of the foreign ministry, which coined the term “foreign cultural policy”, an unusual term in an international setting. From the early 1970s, under the then foreign minister, Rudolf Kirchschläger, this *Auslandskulturpolitik* developed into the third pillar of Austrian foreign policy alongside traditional diplomacy and trade policy.⁴

In contrast to the classic areas of tension during the Cold War, such as human rights or arms control, the cultural sector was often seen as a policy area in which borders could be overcome. The former Austrian foreign minister, Peter

1 The research for this article was conducted as part of the project “*Breakthrough in Human Rights? The CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna (1986–1989)*” and was financed in whole or in part by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) [project number: I 4139]. Previously untranslated German language sources were translated.

2 In recent years, in addition to general studies on the significance of cultural diplomacy, a number have also been published that deal with the Cold War period. Jessica C. Gienow-Hecht/Mark C. Donfried (eds.), *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, New York-Oxford 2010; Simo Mikkonen/Pia Koivunen (eds.), *Beyond the Divide. Entangled Histories of Cold War Europe*, New York-Oxford 2015; Christopher Hollings, *Scientific Communication Across the Iron Curtain*, Cham 2016; Simo Mikkonen/Pekka Suutari (eds.), *Music, Art and Diplomacy. East-West Cultural Interactions and the Cold War*, London-New York 2016.

3 Benno Signitzer, “Public Relations and Public Diplomacy: Some Conceptual Explorations”, in: Ansgar Zerfass/Betteke van Ruler et al. (eds.), *Public relations research. European and International Perspectives and Innovations*, Wiesbaden 2008, p. 205–218, on p. 207.

4 Andrea Brait, “Die große Trennungslinie, die an unserer Haustür vorbeiführt, überbauen! Zur Vermittlerfunktion der österreichischen Kulturaußenpolitik zwischen Ost und West”, in: Maximilian Graf/Agnes Meisinger (eds.), *Österreich im Kalten Krieg. Neue Forschungen im internationalen Kontext (Zeitgeschichte im Kontext Vol. 11)*, Göttingen 2016, p. 259–295.

Jankowitsch, is convinced that cultural exchange enabled encounters between people who would not have been able to meet by other means.⁵ The Austrian foreign ministry also sees the cultural sector as an important contribution to peacekeeping. The Austrian ambassador Emil Brix, for example, emphasises that cultural diplomacy has developed from an attempt to spread a positive image of one's own country in the post-war period to the use of images and stereotypes to build trust and promote dialogue.⁶ In many cases, however, it can be assumed that the importance of contacts in the cultural sphere was overemphasised, as it became clear time and again how much these contacts were burdened by conflicts in other political fields.⁷ For its part, the Austrian foreign ministry was aware that the cultural sphere could not operate in an ideological or political vacuum.⁸

In contrast to the importance that the Austrian foreign ministry likes to ascribe to foreign cultural policy,⁹ it has so far been the subject of little research.¹⁰ This applies to bilateral cultural relations, on which individual studies have emerged in recent years,¹¹ but even more so to foreign cultural policy in the context of multilateral diplomacy. It therefore comes as no great

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- 5 Peter Jankowitsch, "Das Kongressgeschehen in Wien war sehr wichtig für das, was sich dann 1989 und später abgespielt hat.", in: Kai Habel/Nina Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges. Erinnerungen an die dritte KSZE-Folgekonferenz in Wien 1986–1989*, Baden-Baden 2025, p. 92.
 - 6 Emil Brix, "Austrian Cultural and Public Diplomacy After the End of the Cold War", in: Günter Bischof/Ferdinand Karhofer (eds.), *Austria's International Position after the End of the Cold War* (Contemporary Austrian Studies Vol. 22), Innsbruck 2013, p. 95–107, on p. 105.
 - 7 Andrea Brait, "Österreichisch-tschechische Kulturdiplomatie zwischen 1918 und 2018 aus der Perspektive des österreichischen Außenministeriums", in: *Paginae Historiae* 27 (2019), issue 2, p. 184–234.
 - 8 Bundesministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, *Außenpolitischer Bericht 1985. Bericht des Bundesministeriums für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten*, Wien 1986, p. 20.
 - 9 The then Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock referred to this, for example, in 1987 in connection with the international criticism of the controversial wartime past of the Austrian Federal President Kurt Waldheim: "Introductory speech by Vice-Chancellor Dr Alois Mock Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs before the Foreign Cultural Conference on 31 August 1987", in: Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs (BMAA) (ed.), *Auslandskulturtagung 1987*, Wien 1987, p. 2–9, on p. 4.
 - 10 Andreas Stadler, "Auslandskulturpolitik", in: Martin Senn/Franz Eder et al. (eds.), *Handbuch Außenpolitik Österreichs*, Wiesbaden 2023, p. 269–283, on p. 270.
 - 11 Peter Bachmaier, "Austrian-Bulgarian Cultural Relations", in: Arnold Suppan/Wolfgang Mueller (eds.), *"Peaceful Coexistence" or "Iron Curtain". Austria, Neutrality, and Eastern Europe in the Cold War and Détente, 1955–1989* (Europa Orientalis Vol. 7), Wien-Berlin-Piscataway, NJ 2009, p. 487–508; Alexander Burka, *Was blieb vom Fenster in den Westen? Zur Auslandskulturpolitik Österreichs in Ostmitteleuropa seit 1945 am Beispiel Polens und*

surprise that, with regard to Austria's actions in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) – which Benjamin Gilde has already analysed in detail for the years 1969–1983¹² – the negotiations in the area of cultural cooperation, which were located in Basket III, have so far played only a marginal role in research.¹³ The following study aims to contribute to closing this research gap. Specifically, it examines the question of what the Austrian delegation advocated in the context of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting of the CSCE (1986–1989) with regard to so-called “cultural cooperation” (kulturelle Zusammenarbeit), how this approach was (internally) argued by the Austrian foreign ministry and which of the goals pursued could be achieved.

2 Cultural Cooperation in the Context of the CSCE

The cultural sector was part of the CSCE process from the very beginning and was seen as an opportunity to contribute to an understanding between East and West. For instance, in the context of the negotiations on the humanitarian dimension in Geneva (1973–1975), the French president, Georges Pompidou, spoke in favour of infecting the Warsaw Pact states with the “virus of liberty”, to which cultural exchange was to make an important contribution.¹⁴ In his comparison of various international agreements in the field of cultural policy, Olaf Schwencke concludes that “no post-war agreement [...] had a similar significance in terms of peace policy and ultimately also cultural policy as the

der Tschechoslowakei/Tschechiens (Politik und Demokratie Vo. 23), Frankfurt am Main-Berlin-Bern et al. 2012.

12 Benjamin Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983. Neutraler Vermittler in humanitärer Mission* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 98), München 2013.

13 This is consistent with the studies on other states and with CSCE research as a whole: apart from minor publications, the negotiations on cultural cooperation are not at the centre of academic studies. Helmut Altrichter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Der KSZE-Prozess. Vom Kalten Krieg zu einem neuen Europa 1975 bis 1990*, München 2011; Anja Hanisch, *Die DDR im KSZE-Prozess 1972–1985. Zwischen Ostabhängigkeit, Westabgrenzung und Ausreisebewegung* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 91), München 2012; Philip Rosin, *Die Schweiz im KSZE-Prozess 1972–1983* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 99), München 2014; Matthias Peter, *Die Bundesrepublik im KSZE-Prozess 1975–1983. Die Umkehrung der Diplomatie* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 105), Berlin 2015; Veronika Heyde, *Frankreich im KSZE-Prozess. Diplomatie im Namen der europäischen Sicherheit*, Berlin-Boston 2017.

14 Daniel Möckli, “The EC Nine, the CSCE, and the changing pattern of European security”, in: Andreas Wenger/Vojtech Mastny et al. (eds.), *Origins of the European Security System. The Helsinki process revisited, 1965–75*, London-New York 2008, p. 145–163, on p. 148.

so-called CSCE process.¹⁵ However, cultural cooperation in the implementation of the objectives laid down in the Helsinki Final Act¹⁶ was subject to government control where Warsaw Pact states were involved.¹⁷ For instance, the Austrian diplomat Franz Ceska criticised the fact that the Soviet Union was only interested in sending state-approved events or artists to the West as part of cultural exchange.¹⁸

Cultural exchange became the focus of the CSCE ten years after the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. The occasion was the CSCE Cultural Forum, which took place in Budapest from 15 October to 25 November 1985, after the Polish delegation had first proposed a meeting dedicated to cultural heritage at the CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Madrid (1980–1983).¹⁹ Around 600 cultural figures from all 35 CSCE states actively participated in this meeting, the first CSCE meeting in a Warsaw Pact state.²⁰ The aim of the Cultural Forum was to specify and deepen the agreements on cultural cooperation. However, negotiations were severely hampered by the completely different interpretations regarding the significance of culture in society between East and West. In the discussions, while the representatives of the Warsaw Pact states emphasised that culture and art should not be commercial and should promote peace in society, the representatives of the Western-oriented states stressed the importance of independent artistic and cultural activity.²¹ There was also a heated debate about the most appropriate methods of cultural cooperation: foundations, personal contacts, events or treaties between states.²²

15 Olaf Schwencke, *Das Europa der Kulturen – Kulturpolitik in Europa. Dokumente, Analysen und Perspektiven – von den Anfängen bis zum Vertrag von Lissabon* (Edition Umbruch Vol. 26), Essen 2010³, p. 191.

16 Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, Schlussakte, 01.08.1975.

17 Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, “Auswärtige Kulturpolitik”, in: Hans-Adolf Jacobsen/Gert Leptin et al. (eds.), *Drei Jahrzehnte Außenpolitik der DDR. Bestimmungsfaktoren, Instrumente, Aktionsfelder* (Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft Vol. 44), München-Wien 1979, p. 235–260, on p. 257.

18 Franz Ceska, “Insofern war das die aufregendste Sache meines Lebens.”, in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 64.

19 Adam D. Rotfeld, “The New Dimensions of the CSCE Process”, in: Halina Ognik/Adam D. Rotfeld (eds.), *Cultural Heritage and the CSCE Process. Selected Documents*, Warsaw 1991, p. VII–XIII, on p. XII.

20 For an overview from the perspective of the Austrian foreign ministry see: *Außenpolitischer Bericht 1985*, p. 20–22.

21 Hubertus Knabe, “Der schwierige Kulturdialog in Europa. Anmerkungen zum KSZE-Kulturforum in Budapest”, in: *Osteuropa* (1986), issue 5, p. 380–388.

22 Schwencke, *Das Europa der Kulturen*, p. 197.

A total of 198 proposals were formally submitted, twelve of which by Austria and a further six with Austrian support.²³ According to its own records, Austria actively participated in the negotiations and provided the first draft of a paper of the neutral and non-aligned states (N+N), which was the basis for negotiations on a final document. It proved impossible, however, to reach a consensus regarding such a document.²⁴ The Cultural Forum thereby exposed the lines of conflict not only between the two blocs but also within them: the Hungarian delegation's attempt to adopt at least a three-sentence final declaration at the end of the conference was blocked by Romania, presumably due to the two states' disputes over ethnic minorities.²⁵

Although no final document was adopted, the Cultural Forum was considered a success by the Austrian foreign ministry, as it had succeeded in bringing together many cultural representatives across blocs.²⁶ This assessment was in line with that of various other states, as is evident from the opening statements of the foreign ministers at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.²⁷ As the German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, underscored in a speech at the Danube-European Institute in Vienna in August 1986, the Cultural Forum made it possible to hold joint discussions without the participants having to betray their political convictions.²⁸ In retrospect, the Austrian journalist Burkhard Bischof even associates the Cultural Forum with the first signs of change in Eastern Europe.²⁹ Moreover, the inclusion of non-diplomats was considered exemplary for the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.³⁰

23 Der Korb III in der KSZE, in: KSZE; 3. Folgetreffen; Eröffnung auf Aussenministerebene, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), BMAA, politische Sektion II/Abteilung 7 Entwicklung (II-Pol.) 1986, GZ 803.00/50-II.7/86.

24 Interparlamentarische Union, Besuch einer Parlamentarierdelegation in Ungarn, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 801.04/10-II.7/86.

25 Knabe, *Der schwierige Kulturdialog*, p. 387 f.

26 *Außenpolitischer Bericht 1985*, p. 21.

27 KSZE; WFT; Eröffnungserklärungen der Außenminister (4.–7.11.1986); Zusammenfassende Information, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/220-II.7/86.

28 Rede AM Genschers im Donaueuropäischen Institut am 27. August 1986, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/96-II.9/86.

29 Burkhard Bischof, "Aber für Europa war das Geschehen in Wien ein Wahnsinn.", in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 342.

30 Besuch des HGS in Ungarn; 19./20.6.1986, Information über WFT, Kulturforum, KVAE; Abrüstungsvorschläge zu den bilateralen Beziehungen, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 801.04/29-II.7/86.

3 The Course of Negotiations on Cultural Cooperation at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting

For the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, the Austrian foreign ministry set itself the goal of “analysing the extensive material of the Budapest Cultural Forum and compiling a package of measures from it that could be agreed upon”.³¹ Preparations were already made within the foreign ministry in the summer of 1986, although assessments of possible proposals changed over the months: while twelve were still being considered in June 1986,³² the number was down to eight in July³³ and six in September.³⁴

In a manner similar to Basket II,³⁵ the Austrian foreign ministry also liaised with other relevant ministries on the subject of culture in order to take their expertise into account. According to a list from the foreign ministry, at the beginning of October 1986, the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Sport and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research were in favour of supporting or contributing 34 proposals from other states, while ten proposals from other states received a negative assessment. The latter category included, for example, the idea of an “immediate scheme to strengthen the influence of women in culture”, which was favoured by eleven states at the Budapest Cultural Forum, including the United States.³⁶

By early December 1986, more concrete drafts had been produced on five subject groups, all of which had been submitted to the Budapest Cultural Forum by persons not belonging to the foreign ministry: an exhibition of contemporary graphic art, a CSCE youth orchestra, an exchange of catalogues between art institutions, an exchange of cultural television programmes and a CSCE children’s book series.³⁷ In addition, the submission of the proposal for a symposium on the cultural heritage of the CSCE states, as discussed at the

31 WFT, KSZE-Folgetreffen, Entwurf der österr. Grundlinie, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/74-11.7/86.

32 WFT; Korb III, Kultur, Vorbesprechung über österreichische Vorschläge vom 13. Juni, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.04.06/11-7/86.

33 WFT, KSZE-Folgetreffen, Entwurf der österr. Grundlinie, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/74-11.7/86.

34 WFT; österreichische Linie Befassung der Vertretungsbehörden, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/101-11.7/86.

35 See the article by Roland Laimer in this volume.

36 WFT; allfällige Weiterverfolgung von Vorschlägen des Budapester Kulturforums, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.04.06/27-11.7/86.

37 KSZE, WFT, Korb III; Präsentation österreichischer Vorschläge, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.04.01/5-11.7/86.

Budapest Cultural Forum (CFB.106),³⁸ had already agreed with Poland in the summer of that year.³⁹

With this approach, the Austrian foreign ministry pitted itself in opposition to Romania, which in the summer of 1986 had announced, in a communication between a civil servant in the Romanian foreign ministry and Andreas Berlakovic, the Austrian ambassador, that it wanted to prevent the direct forwarding of proposals from Budapest.⁴⁰ However, this did not change the Austrian position. During a bilateral meeting at the beginning of the Follow-up Meeting, Jankowitsch assured his Hungarian counterpart, Péter Várkonyi, that Austria would endeavour to ensure that the proposals drawn up in Budapest would not be lost.⁴¹

The Austrian foreign ministry's thinking about the development of proposals on cultural cooperation was based on the assumption that there would be a greater willingness to engage with "Eastern European" culture in Austria if there were better travel and contact opportunities. The aim was therefore to focus on removing these obstacles.⁴²

However, from the internal deliberations of the Austrian foreign ministry it is also clear that, although staff wanted to introduce a variety of proposals, they were also aware that cultural activities required a financial outlay, leading to concerns about funding. The foreign ministry therefore wanted to concentrate in particular on proposals that were expected to have a particular foreign policy impact. For example, a youth orchestra was expected to have an "immediate and lively effect", while other ideas, such as the exchange of exhibition catalogues, were classified as "peripheral and administrative measures".⁴³

Finally, at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, proposals were reintroduced by the Cultural Forum in an adapted form and in some cases in new constellations. 14 of the 154 proposals made at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting related

38 WFT; Korb III, Symposium über das kulturelle Erbe der KSZE-Staaten, Stellungnahme der Abteilung II.7, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.04.06/15-II.7/86.

39 KSZE, 3. Folgetreffen, Wien, ab 4.11.1986 brain-storming am 4.7.1986, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/73-II.7/86.

40 Bericht ÖB Bukarest an das BMAA betr. KSZE; Wiener Treffen; Vorbereitung, 14.07.1986, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 803.00/77-II.7/86.

41 Gespräch des HBM mit dem ungarischen Außenminister Peter Varkonyi, Protokoll vom 7.11.1986, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 222.18.09/2-II.3/86.

42 Korb III Zusammenarbeit und Austausch im Bereich der Kultur und Bildung, in: KSZE, 3. Folgetreffen, Wien, ab 4.11.1986 brain-storming am 4.7.1986, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/73-II.7/86.

43 KSZE – Wiener Folgetreffen, Korb III; Bereich Kultur; Überlegungen zu den österreichischen Initiativen, in: Bela Bartok Folklorenzentrums, gemeinsamer österr.-ungarischer Vorschlag, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.04.06/39-II.7/86.

to cultural cooperation. Three of these – and thus more than in any other area – were joint proposals from N+N and Warsaw Pact states; two were submitted by NATO, N+N and Warsaw Pact states.⁴⁴ Austria ultimately supported five proposals in the field of culture.⁴⁵

Most of the proposals concerned specific projects. As Stefan Lehne, a member the Austrian delegation, emphasised, it became clear early on during the Vienna meeting that there was insufficient political will to make decisions on such projects.⁴⁶ This applied, for example, to the proposal jointly submitted by Austria and Hungary in December 1986 (WT.7) for the establishment of an international folk art centre to be named in honour of Béla Bartok,⁴⁷ a proposal ultimately abandoned due to lack of Western support.⁴⁸

As the Austrian foreign ministry noted in mid-1987, overall interest in the cultural sector at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting was “noticeably lower than in the past”. This was probably due, on the one hand, to recent detailed exchanges at the Cultural Forum, which had failed to achieve any concrete results, and, on the other, to interests which continued to diverge.⁴⁹ The Austrian foreign ministry also noted a discrepancy between “formal Soviet negotiating positions at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting” and “Western ideas about ‘GLASNOST’”.⁵⁰

In order to achieve progress in the negotiations on Basket III, in the summer of 1987 Austria and Switzerland decided to draw up a joint “non-paper”, which was officially submitted on 30 July 1987. The Austrian foreign ministry’s aim was to underline Austria’s interest in Basket III, to recapitulate Austrian and Western interests, to remove non-essential and unrealistic proposals, and to facilitate further work in autumn 1987.⁵¹

44 Stefan Lehne/Hanspeter Neuhold, “The Role of the Neutral and Non-Aligned Countries at the Vienna Meeting”, in: Arie Bloed/Pieter van Dijk (eds.), *The Human Dimension of the Helsinki Process. The Vienna Follow-up meeting and its Aftermath* (International Studies in Human Rights Vol. 20), Dordrecht-Boston-Norwell 1991, p. 30–53, on p. 53.

45 Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West Relations*, Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford 1991, p. 213.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

47 Zusammenfassung der 7. Konferenzwoche des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens (Stand: 18.12.1986), ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/246-II.7/86.

48 WFT; Zusammenfassung der Sitzungsperiode 22.1.–25.3.1988, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1988, GZ 803.12/16-II.7/88.

49 WFT, Korb III, Zusammenfassung der 3. Sitzungsperiode, 5. Mai bis 31. Juli 1987, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1987, GZ 803.12/41-II.7/87.

50 WFT; Zusammenfassung der Sitzungsperiode Jänner bis April 1987, Korb III, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1987, GZ 803.12/20-II.7/87.

51 WFT; Österreichisch-schweizerische Initiative im Korb III, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1987, GZ 803.04/1-II.7/87.

Building on this, the first points were successfully put beyond dispute in March 1988. These aspects concerned the involvement of NGOs in drafting cultural agreements and the general encouragement of wide-ranging cultural cooperation.⁵² By contrast, the proposed paragraph on national minorities, which was initially opposed by Romania and the Soviet Union⁵³ and to which Bulgaria had long demanded the addition of the phrase “where they exist”, proved much more controversial.⁵⁴ As with other issues, the Warsaw Pact states did not act as a united bloc when it came to cultural cooperation.

The resistance of individual states to certain points was abandoned in the first half of 1988, with many a change of heart occurring within a few days.⁵⁵ Following the submission of an N+N draft for the final document, the area of culture was considered largely uncontroversial in May 1988,⁵⁶ which is why the focus turned mainly to other areas.⁵⁷ Overall, culture received significant attention only during a few weeks of negotiations, which was undoubtedly due to the other highly controversial and politically explosive issues in Basket III.

In the Concluding Document, the participating states finally formulated sixteen goals for cooperation and exchange in the field of culture.⁵⁸ The assessments of diplomats involved in the Vienna Follow-up Meeting differ considerably. For example, Hans-Heinrich Wrede, a delegate for the Federal Republic of Germany, is convinced that the Vienna Follow-up Meeting succeeded in striking a good compromise between the opposing positions with regard to the status of culture in society.⁵⁹ Lehne, on the other hand, concludes

52 Zusammenfassung der 51. Konferenzwoche, Stand 3.3.1988, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1988, GZ 803.12/9-II.7/88.

53 Zusammenfassung der 48. Konferenzwoche, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1988, GZ 803.12/7-II.7/88.

54 KSZE, WFT; Zusammenfassung der sechsten Sitzungsperiode vom 15.4. – 5.8.1988, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1988, GZ 803.12/38-II.7/88.

55 In the 54th week of the conference, the USSR agreed to numerous articles in Basket III that had been rejected in the 53rd week of the conference. These included two articles concerning cultural cooperation. Zusammenfassung der 54. Konferenzwoche Stand 24. März 1988, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1988, GZ 803.12/13-II.7/88.

56 Zusammenfassung der 60. Konferenzwoche, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1988, GZ 803.12/22-II.7/88.

57 Zusammenfassung der 61. Konferenzwoche, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1988, GZ 803.12/23-II.7/88.

58 Abschließendes Dokument des Wiener Treffens 1986 der Vertreter der Teilnehmerstaaten der Konferenz für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, welches auf der Grundlage der Bestimmungen der Schlussakte betreffend die Folgen der Konferenz abgehalten wurde, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/a/40883.pdf>, accessed 22.11.2023.

59 Hans-Heinrich Wrede, *KSZE in Wien. Kursbestimmung für Europas Zukunft*, Köln 1990, p. 116.

that it was mainly Western concerns that were realised, some of which had initially met with considerable Eastern resistance, such as unhindered public access to cultural events.⁶⁰ From the perspective of the Austrian foreign ministry, the following points were seen as being of key importance:

- “Encouraging the establishment of cultural institutions”,
- the “regulation of unhindered access to cultural events”,
- “encouraging direct personal contacts in the cultural sector as well as joint artistic activities, exhibitions and tours” and
- the “substantial expansion of previous regulations concerning national minorities.”⁶¹

4 The Proposed Symposium on Shared Cultural Heritage

Among the measures included in the Concluding Document was a symposium on common cultural heritage, to be held in Krakow. Since – as mentioned above – it proved impossible to reach a consensus on many of the proposals for concrete measures in the field of cultural cooperation, this represents a major exception.⁶² As had been discussed in advance in the summer of 1986, the corresponding proposal (WT.6) was submitted by Austria together with Poland in the seventh week of the conference in December 1986.⁶³ As Wrede emphasises in his memoirs, this was the first time in the entire CSCE process that there had been cooperation across blocs on an important issue,⁶⁴ and the proposal was accordingly seen as a “manifestation of their will to overcome the bloc divide”.⁶⁵ The head of the Austrian delegation, Ambassador Rudolf Torovsky, explained the significance of such a meeting in the plenary session on 17 December 1986 as follows:

First and foremost, we are concerned with working out what we have in common, with revealing and raising awareness of connecting lines that together make up what we understand to be our common cultural

60 Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting*, p. 168.

61 Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), BMAA, politische Sektion II/Abteilung 7 Entwicklung (II-Pol.) 1989, GZ 804.00/2-II.7/89.

62 Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting*, p. 105.

63 Zusammenfassung der 7. Konferenzwoche des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens (Stand: 18.12.1986), ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/246-II.7/86.

64 Wrede, *KSZE in Wien*, p. 118 f.

65 Rotfeld, *The New Dimensions*, p. XII.

heritage. [...] We do not accept any geographical dividing lines in this endeavour: For us, signs of the common cultural heritage of the CSCE States extend from Vladivostok to Hawaii.⁶⁶

In proposing such a symposium, the Austrian foreign ministry was not only pursuing the goal of initiating a process of cooperation on the basis of cultural commonalities. The proposal was also linked to an overall strategic goal, as an internal ministry document shows:

Austria has traditionally taken the view that broad forms of cooperation should be actively sought within the CSCE framework wherever objectively possible and justified. In this way, the ever-increasing solidification of blocs can be counteracted and the basic democratic, cross-bloc claim of the CSCE can be realised in practice, at least in some areas.⁶⁷

As can be seen from its internal deliberations, the foreign ministry was well aware that there were only a few areas in which cross-bloc proposals stood a realistic chance. In addition to culture, the areas of education and sport were mentioned. After a corresponding attempt at a joint proposal with Hungary at the Bern Meeting of Experts on Human Contacts (1986) had failed, it became the declared aim of the Austrian foreign ministry to realise such a cross-bloc initiative at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting,⁶⁸ which explains why Austria had already agreed on submitting, jointly with Poland, a proposal to that effect in the summer of 1986.⁶⁹

The Austro-Polish proposal was – to the surprise of the Austrian foreign ministry – supported by the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Sweden in the fifteenth week of the conference in March 1987;⁷⁰ Denmark and Yugoslavia followed in the sixteenth week.⁷¹ Ultimately, fourteen states supported the

66 Erklärung des Leiters der österreichischen Delegation zum Wiener Folgetreffen der KSZE, Botschafter Dr. Rudolf Torovsky, 17.12.1986, in: Zusammenfassung der 7. Konferenzwoche des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens (Stand: 18.12.1986), ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/246-II.7/86.

67 Symposium über das kulturelle Erbe der KSZE-Staaten, aktueller Stand (1. Dez. 1986), ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.04.06/43-II.7/86.

68 Symposium über das kulturelle Erbe der KSZE-Staaten, aktueller Stand (1. Dez. 1986), ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.04.06/43-II.7/86.

69 KSZE, 3. Folgetreffen, Wien, ab 4.11.1986 brain-storming am 4.7.1986, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/73-II.7/86.

70 WFT; 15. Konferenzwoche, Zusammenfassung, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1987, GZ 803.12/14-II.7/87.

71 WFT, 16. Konferenzwoche, Zusammenfassung, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1987, GZ 803.12/15-II.7/87.

proposal.⁷² Although the US delegation (and it alone) remained quite sceptical for a long time,⁷³ the proposal was ultimately accepted. In the Vienna Concluding Document, the signatories agreed to hold a “symposium on the cultural heritage of the participating states of the CSCE”,⁷⁴ which ultimately took place – as planned, but in completely changed political circumstances – in Krakow in 1991.⁷⁵ For the first time, a document dedicated exclusively to cultural issues was successfully adopted at this symposium. It emphasised that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential prerequisite for the full development of cultural creativity; specifically, various cultural freedoms were enshrined, such as the freedom of artistic creation, the freedom to publish artistic works and the freedom of access to culture. The preservation of monuments and memorials commemorating tragic events in the common past of the participating states was also laid down.⁷⁶ The agreements reached became fundamental to the CSCE/OSCE’s commitment to the protection of cultural heritage, for example in the context of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo established in 1999, which for many years launched numerous initiatives to protect religious and cultural heritage.⁷⁷

5 Conclusion

The diplomats at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting unanimously recalled the cultural sector as a less prominent subject of negotiation. Lehne, for example, remarks:

I can remember that a tremendous amount of proposals were made for all kinds of follow-up events on culture, especially by Romania. I think there were around 20 or 25 different events. But most of them never

⁷² Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting*, p. 105.

⁷³ Zusammenfassung der 73. Konferenzwoche, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1988, GZ 803.12/41-11.7/88. According to Wrede, the US delegation was fundamentally opposed to a large number of CSCE expert meetings and also saw the danger of a too large international stage for a Warsaw Pact state. Wrede, *KSZE in Wien*, p. 119.

⁷⁴ Abschließendes Dokument des Wiener Treffens.

⁷⁵ Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, Dokument des Krakauer Symposiums über das kulturelle Erbe der KSZE-Teilnehmerstaaten, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/o/a/24398.pdf>, accessed 18.11.2023.

⁷⁶ Bundesministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten, *Außenpolitischer Bericht 1991*, Vienna 1992, p. 69.

⁷⁷ Protection of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/b/522892.pdf>, accessed 11.4.2024.

materialised. Overall, culture only played a subordinate role in the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.⁷⁸

The Swedish diplomat Nils Eliasson also remembers a number of topics in the field of culture, while emphasising that, in retrospect, “the focus in my view were [sic] on the human contacts and on the information part of the third basket. That was where the most controversies were taking place and where most of the difficulties on formulation occurred.”⁷⁹ Due to the disputes in these areas and the developments within the Warsaw Pact, it is not surprising that questions of cultural cooperation were not the focus of the negotiations and have therefore not been central to the accounts published to date.

However, it should be noted that the Austrian foreign ministry recognised the opportunities presented by the subject matter of the negotiations and therefore sought – ultimately successfully – to make cross-bloc proposals. This is in line with the fundamental principle of Austrian foreign policy of seeking to act as a bridge-builder in the cultural sphere. After a similar attempt had failed at the Bern Expert Meeting, a certain opening of the Warsaw Pact can also be observed at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting – at least with the benefit of hindsight, in light of subsequent developments. It should also be noted that, in contrast to the Budapest Cultural Forum, it was possible to overcome differences of opinion even in sensitive areas of cultural exchange, including in relation to national minorities.

Finally, it should be noted that the CSCE also created a framework for communication across bloc borders and had an impact beyond its formal final documents. For example, a proposal to establish a youth orchestra was submitted to the Cultural Forum in Budapest (CFB.9).⁸⁰ Although no final document was adopted in Budapest, this orchestra was finally founded in Vienna in

78 Stefan Lehne, “Es ‘zeigte sich sehr rasch, dass ‘der Osten’ nicht mehr existiert”, in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 196.

79 Nils Eliasson, “Towards the middle of the Vienna meeting, nothing was said at the formal meetings”, in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 282.

80 Vorschlag der Delegation Österreichs “KSZE-Jugend-Symphonie-Workshop und -Orchester”, in: KSZE; WFT; Anfrage Abg. Höchtl/Ettmayer/Neisser betreffend Menschenrechte, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/138-II.7/86.

May 1986⁸¹ and still exists today. The proposal (WT.68)⁸² submitted by Austria together with Czechoslovakia, the GDR and Hungary at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting had therefore already been overtaken by actual developments at the time of its submission.

81 Vermerk über ein Gespräch des Leiters der Abt. KIL, Genossen Rolf Dill, mit dem künstlerischen Leiter des Gustav-Mahler-Jugendorchesters, Sitz Wien, Prof. Dr. Hans Landesmann, am 20.5.1987 im Ministerium für Kultur der DDR, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PA-AA), Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR (MfAA), ZR 2684/14.

82 Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting*, p. 213.

The “Neglected Step-Child” of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting?

Basket II from the Perspective of the Austrian Foreign Ministry

Roland Ernst Laimer

1 Introduction¹

“No other item on the agenda of the CSCE [Conference for Safety and Security in Europe] process had gained as much international attention and urgency since the closure of the Madrid meeting than the protection of the environment.”² In these words the Austrian diplomat Stefan Lehne summarised the increased importance given to protecting the environment at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting. Lehne was involved in the meeting as a member of the Austrian delegation, with responsibility for the issues in Basket III.³ Basket II, which dealt with matters of economics, science and technology, and environment, was considered to be of relatively minor importance within the CSCE process. Yet environmental questions were growing in importance internationally, in society as well as in politics. Lehne referred to Basket II as the “neglected step-child”⁴ of the entire CSCE process, as an “empty basket” in terms of substance.⁵

1 The following discussion is based on the author’s master’s thesis: Roland Ernst Laimer, *Die KSZE und der Umweltschutz. Korb II beim Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffen (1986–1989) aus der Perspektive der Ballhausplatzdiplomatie*, MA thesis, Innsbruck 2023. It was written as part of the project “Durchbruch bei den Menschenrechten? Das KSZE-Folgetreffen in Wien (1986–1989)” and was funded fully or in part by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) [project number: I 4139]. The term Ballhausplatzdiplomatie is used synonymously for Austrian foreign policy, the Austrian foreign ministry having been located at Vienna’s Ballhausplatz until 2005. See Andrea Brait, *Das Bundeskanzleramt in Wien, Ein österreichischer Gedächtnisort* (Schriften zur Kulturgeschichte Vol. 16), Hamburg 2010. Previously untranslated German language sources were translated for this chapter.

2 Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West Relations*, Boulder-San Francisco 1991, p. 82.

3 Ibid; Stefan Lehne, “Es zeigte sich sehr rasch, dass ‘der Osten’ nicht mehr existiert”, in: Kai Habel/Nina Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges. Erinnerungen an die dritte KSZE-Folgekonferenz in Wien 1986–1989*, Baden-Baden 2025, p. 183–216. On Basket III see the articles by Nina Hechenblaikner and Wanda Jarzabek in this volume.

4 Michael R. Lucas, *The CSCE in the 1990s*, p. 99.

5 Ibid., p. 98.

But was this really the case? Were the participating states truly as uninterested in Basket II as Lehne claimed?

Since the following essay is unable to cover all fields of negotiation contained in Basket II, it will restrict itself to highlighting cooperation in the field of environmental protection – which, as Lehne stated, was accorded greater weight at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting.⁶ The question to be discussed here concerns the targets set by the Austrian delegation in the negotiations on Basket II at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting with regard to environmental issues and to what degree these targets were ultimately met.

In order to answer this question, this essay will begin by examining the role of Basket II within the CSCE process and the state of research. The second part of the essay will then analyse three selected sources that throw light on Austria's position in approach to negotiations at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting. These sources are then compared with the meeting's Concluding Document.⁷

2 State of Research

Unlike Baskets I and III, Basket II has so far received scant attention in research on the CSCE, with few historians have examining the negotiations in the fields of economics, science and technology, and environment. Contemporary perspectives on Basket II at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting have been provided by the German delegates Ekkehard Eickhoff,⁸ Hans-Christian Reichel⁹ and Hans-Heinrich Wrede,¹⁰ who are unanimous in recognising greater

6 Austria presented six proposals in the field of environmental protection at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting: Vienna Meeting (Wiener Treffen, WT.) 8 "Air protection and forest dieback", WT.11 "Cross-border transport and the environment", WT.30 "Transboundary environmental protection and acute environmental accidents", WT.109 "Cross-border transport of hazardous waste", WT.114 "Protection of international watercourses" and WT.127 "European Measurement and Evaluation Programme (EMEP)"; see also Laimer, *Die KSZE und der Umweltschutz*.

7 On the Vienna Concluding Document, see the article by Michael Gehler in this volume.

8 Ekkehard Eickhoff, "Das Dritte KSZE-Folgetreffen in Wien, Implementierung der Wirtschaftsbestimmungen", in: *Europa Archiv* 42 (1987), p. 59–66.

9 Hans-Christian Reichel, "Die Bonner Wirtschaftskonferenz und die Zukunft der KSZE", in: *Europa-Archiv* 45 (1990), p. 461–470; Idem, "Die Stimmung generell, die war natürlich vorzüglich und, wie ich hinzufügen will, aufregend und spannend", in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 141–163.

10 Hans-Heinrich Wrede, *KSZE in Wien. Kursbestimmung für Europas Zukunft*, Köln 1990.

opportunities for cooperation between the states of the Warsaw Pact, of NATO, and the neutral and non-aligned (N+N) states than in Baskets I and III.¹¹

The Finnish historians Simo Laakkonen and Tuomas Räsänen discuss environmental cooperation in northern Europe in the 1970s, arguing that Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Baltic Sea, adopted in 1972, paved the way for Basket II in the CSCE by implementing cross-bloc cooperation on water protection, or protection of the marine environment.¹² Meanwhile, the Swedish historian Arne Kaijser has shown how Norway attempted to limit air pollution in the Nordic region in cooperation with the Soviet Union.¹³ Nor have historians studying the CSCE had much to say about Basket II. An essay by the Finnish historian Juhana Aunesluoma looks at the negotiations on Basket II at the CSCE in Helsinki, where issues of environmental cooperation were discussed at a multilateral diplomatic level between “East” and “West” for the first time.¹⁴

3 Source Analysis

In order to analyse the Austrian negotiating position at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting, the files of the foreign ministry, which are kept in the Austrian State Archives, were consulted. These papers consist of official notes containing individual proposals, drafts, statements or weekly reports.¹⁵ The Concluding Document of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting provided a further source.¹⁶ Methodologically, the essay is based on a critical study of the

11 Laimer, *Die KSZE und der Umweltschutz*, p. 46–47.

12 Simo Laakkonen/Tuomas Räsänen, “Negotiating the Maritime Commons, Protecting the Baltic Sea in a European Context”, in: Anna-Katharina Wöbse/Patrick Kupper (eds.), *Greening Europe, Environmental protection in the long twentieth century – a handbook* (Contemporary European History Vol. 1), Berlin-Boston 2022, p. 243–268.

13 Arne Kaijser, “Combatting ‘Acid Rain’. Protecting the Common European Sky”, in: Wöbse/Kupper (eds.), *Greening Europe*, p. 363–387, on p. 382–383.

14 Juhana Aunesluoma, “Finlandisation in Reverse. The CSCE and the Rise and Fall of Economic Detente”, 1968–1975, in: Oliver Bange/Gottfried Niedhart (eds.), *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, New York-Oxford 2008, p. 98–112, on p. 104.

15 On the study of documents see Druck und Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, *Kanzleiordnung für die Bundesministerien. Erlassen am 10. Dezember 1974*, Wien 1975; Michael Hochedlinger, *Aktenkunde, Urkunden- und Aktenlehre der Neuzeit* (Historische Hilfswissenschaften Vol. 3), Wien-Köln et al. 2009.

16 Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting 1986 of representatives of the participating states of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held on the basis of the provisions of the final act relating to the follow-up to the conference.

files and their subsequent analysis.¹⁷ The selected official documents include an internal exchange of ideas in preparation for the negotiations,¹⁸ the official negotiating line in Basket II (both from 1986)¹⁹ and a statement by the head of the Austrian delegation, Rudolf Torovsky,²⁰ from April 1988.²¹

4 From Draft to Concluding Document: the Negotiations in Basket II from the Austrian Perspective

4.1 *Initial Thoughts on Basket II*

In early June 1986 the Austrian foreign ministry organised a brainstorming session on all the negotiating baskets. Among the participants were the ambassadors Rudolf Torovsky and Franz Ceska, the envoy Christian Zeileisen, and Stefan Lehne. The foreign ministry hoped “that positive results could be achieved here at the Vienna Follow-up meeting” with regard to environmental questions.²² This statement should be seen against the background of the environmental discourse and environmental policy in 1980s Austria. The Chernobyl nuclear disaster on 26 April 1986 gave rise to a worldwide rethink

<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/7/40881.pdf>, accessed 18.10.2024; on the Vienna Concluding Document see the article by Michael Gehler in this volume.

- 17 Stefan Jordan, *Theorien und Methoden der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Orientierung Geschichte Vol. 1), Paderborn 2013², p. 49; Georg Eckert/Thorsten Beigel, *Historisch Arbeiten. Handreichung zum Geschichtsstudium*, Göttingen 2019, p. 78–79.
- 18 Dienstzettel des Bundesministeriums für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (BMAA) vom 10.7.1986 betreffend “3. KSZE-Folgetreffen in Wien; BMAA-interner Gedankenaustausch zur Vorbereitung”, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), BMAA, politische Sektion II/Abteilung 7 Entwicklung (II.-Pol.) 1986, Geschäftszahl (GZ) 803.00/47-II. 7/86; Dienstzettel des BMAA vom 7.7.1986 betreffend “KSZE, 3. Folgetreffen, Wien, ab 4.11.1986; brain-storming am 4.7.1986”, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/73-II. 7/86.
- 19 Dienstzettel des BMAA vom 2.9.1986 betreffend “WFT; österreichische Linie. Befassung der Vertretungsbehörden”, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.00/101-II. 7/86.
- 20 The envoy Gerhard Velcovsky was charged with running Basket II at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting; see also René Pollitzer, “in meinem Bereich, den Bereichen Umweltschutz, Landwirtschaft und Wirtschaft, war wahrscheinlich die Autonomie der einzelnen Länder, egal welchem Block sie zugehörten, am größten”, in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 313–334.
- 21 Dienstzettel des BMAA vom 3.3.1988 betreffend “WFT; Plenarsitzung am 4. März 1988; Erklärung von Bot. Dr. Torovsky zu Korb II”, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II.-Pol. 1988, GZ 803.10/2-II. 7/88.
- 22 “KSZE, 3. Folgetreffen, Wien, ab 4.11.1986; brain-storming am 4.7.1986”, GZ 803.00/73-II. 7/86.

on the issue of environmental protection.²³ In addition to Chernobyl, “acid rain” and the associated “forest dieback”,²⁴ air protection with the reduction of chlorofluorocarbons²⁵ and water protection were also high on the international environmental protection agenda.²⁶ Austria-specific issues were the anti-nuclear power policy following the Zwentendorf referendum in 1978²⁷ and the occupation of the Hainburger Au in the winter of 1983/84.²⁸ This was also a time when parties dedicated to environmental issues, such as the Green Party in Austria, were gaining political influence.²⁹

Based on environmental protection agreements such as the Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution,³⁰ the foreign ministry envisaged further strengthening intergovernmental cooperation on environmental protection at the level of the CSCE. Even in the run-up to the negotiations, the Austrian delegates considered it problematic that the “Western” states held divergent opinions on the matter, with the United States and Great

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- 23 Joachim Radkau, *Die Ära der Ökologie. Eine Weltgeschichte*, München 2011, p. 500; Peter Bihöfer, 26. April 1986: *Tschernobyl. Folgen einer Katastrophe* (Zeitpunkte der Geschichte), Stuttgart 2021.
- 24 Gerhard Strohmeier, “Umwelt’: Österreichische Mythen, Topoi und Erinnerungen, Die Gedächtnisorte ‘Zwentendorf’, ‘Hainburg’ und ‘das Waldsterben’”, in: Emil Brix/Ernst Bruckmüller et al. (eds.), *Memoria Austriae I. Menschen, Mythen, Zeiten*, Wien 2004, p. 357–399; Richard Hölzl/κ. J. Oosthoek, “Transforming Woodlands. European Forest Protection in a Global Context”, in: Wöbse/Kupper (eds.), *Greening Europe*, p. 157–184.
- 25 Radkau, *Die Ära der Ökologie*, p. 547–549.
- 26 Udo Ernst Simonis/Ernst Ulrich Freiherr von Weizsäcker, “Globale Umweltprobleme. Neun Thesen”, in: *Europa-Archiv* 45 (1990), p. 1–12.
- 27 Robert Kriechbaumer, *Nur ein Zwischenspiel* (?). *Die Geschichte der Grünen in Österreich* (Schriftenreihe des Forschungsinstitutes für politisch-historische Studien der Dr.-Wilfried-Haslauer-Bibliothek Vol. 66), Wien 2018, p. 16–40, p. 63–92; Andreas Kuchler, “Die Umweltbewegung (1965–1985), Österreich im postmateriellen Zeitalter”, in: Oliver Rathkolb/Richard Hufschmied et al. (eds.), *Wasserkraft. Elektrizität. Gesellschaft. Kraftwerksprojekte ab 1880 im Spannungsfeld* (Schriftenreihe Forschung in der Verbund AG, Vol. 104), Wien 2012, p. 226–232.
- 28 Andreas Kuchler, “Hainburg (1980–1985), Menschen und Medien kippten ein Megaprojekt”, in: Rathkolb/Hufschmied et al. (eds.), *Wasserkraft. Elektrizität. Gesellschaft*, p. 245–256; Kriechbaumer, *Nur ein Zwischenspiel* (?).
- 29 Franz Schandl/Gerhard Schattauer, *Die Grünen in Österreich. Entwicklung und Konsolidierung einer politischen Kraft*, Wien 1996; Othmar Pruckner, *Eine kurze Geschichte der Grünen. Ereignisse, Persönlichkeiten, Jahreszahlen*, Wien 2005; Kriechbaumer, *Nur ein Zwischenspiel* (?).
- 30 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP), <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/1979%20CLRTAP.e.pdf>, accessed 3.3.2022; on the treaty see Philippe Sands/Jacqueline Peel et al., *Principles of International Environmental Law*, Cambridge-New York et al. 2012.

Britain, for instance, prioritising their economic interests over environmental considerations.³¹

Ideas for potential negotiating points were developed in a brainstorming session. According to the official note, possible proposals for the Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting were already being drafted. In Austria, as the foreign ministry lacked in-depth expertise in areas such as environmental protection, it was up to the relevant ministries to concretise the content of the proposals for Basket II.³² Austria concurred with Western Germany and Sweden in wanting to list all environmental protection treaties adopted by the CSCE states to date in the Concluding Document in order to achieve more durable results in the future.³³ An important concern for Austria was the inclusion of environmental education, a field that had been developing since the 1970s, in the Concluding Document.³⁴ According to the Foreign Ministry, such a proposal would be “constructive” and “uncontroversial”.³⁵ Yet ultimately, no proposal on environmental education was tabled, though it is unclear why.³⁶

From a territorial perspective, Austria also found the CSCE to be ideally suited for adopting a convention on the protection of international waters from pollution, in which Austria saw great potential for deepening East-West cooperation. The model for this idea was the Baltic or Helsinki Convention.³⁷ However, debates on hydro-electric plants – a live issue in Austria since the occupation of the Hainburger Au in 1983/84 – were not considered,³⁸ nor did protests against a projected power plant in the Hungarian Danube in 1988 inform the subsequent course of negotiations.³⁹

31 “KSZE, 3. Folgetreffen, Wien, ab 4.11.1986; brain-storming am 4.7.1986”, GZ 803.00/73-II. 7/86.

32 Pollitzer, “in meinem Bereich [...]”; Laimer, *Die KSZE und der Umweltschutz*, p. 49–50.

33 “KSZE, 3. Folgetreffen, Wien, ab 4.11.1986; brain-storming am 4.7.1986”, GZ 803.00/73-II. 7/86.

34 “Environmental education” refers mainly to in-school teaching of a responsible engagement with nature; see e.g. Georg Pfligersdorfer/Ulrike Unterbruner (eds.), *Umwelterziehung auf dem Prüfstand, Ergebnisse der Tagung “Umwelterziehung in Österreich”: Prüfbericht der OECD, Forschung und Ausblick*, Innsbruck 1994.

35 “KSZE, 3. Folgetreffen, Wien, ab 4.11.1986; brain-storming am 4.7.1986”, GZ 803.00/73-II. 7/86.

36 Laimer, *Die KSZE und der Umweltschutz*, p. 52.

37 “KSZE, 3. Folgetreffen, Wien, ab 4.11.1986; brain-storming am 4.7.1986”, GZ 803.00/73-II. 7/86; on the Baltic or Helsinki Convention see Laakkonen/Räsänen, “Negotiating the Maritime Commons”, p. 257, p. 258–259.

38 Kriechbaumer, *Nur ein Zwischenspiel (?)*, p. 69, p. 84, p. 86.

39 Daniela Neubacher, *Stop Nagymaros! Die Geschichte einer Grenzüberschreitung*, PhD thesis, Budapest 2021, p. 8–9, p. 88, p. 91.

4.2 *The Austrian Negotiating Line in Basket II*

About a month before the start of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting, the Austrian foreign ministry laid down the official negotiating line for Basket II, essentially reiterating the stances developed in the brainstorming session. Once again, foreign ministry officials emphasised that environmental protection should be one of Austria's priorities at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting. In the area of economic cooperation expectations were low given the divergence between the economic systems of capitalism in the "West" and real socialism in the "East".⁴⁰

In accordance with the Austrian negotiating line aspects of intergovernmental exchange in the event of transboundary environmental disasters were negotiated at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting. This proposal arose in view of the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 and was submitted to the foreign ministry at the request of the Austrian parliament, the Nationalrat.⁴¹

4.3 *Torovsky's Statement on Basket II, March 1988*

Austria's ideas and demands were highly ambitious. Accordingly, they met with considerable resistance as negotiations progressed. Some proposals, such as those on air and water protection, were too progressive (i.e. restrictive) for the other participating states.⁴² In a statement dated 4 March 1988, Torovsky expressed his disappointment with the course of the negotiations and the slow progress in the drafting of Basket II, arguing that Austria had scaled back its ambitious goals to a level that was "fundamentally acceptable to all sides. But even these modest ideas were often rejected as unrealistic".⁴³

For example, negotiations on the Austrian proposal WT.11 "Cross-border Traffic and Environment" proved difficult⁴⁴ as two NATO states, the Netherlands and Turkey, regarded this proposal as a threat to their national transit

40 "WFT; österreichische Linie. Befassung der Vertretungsbehörden", GZ 803.00/101-II. 7/86.

41 Dienstzettel des BMAA vom 10.7.1986 betreffend "Nuklearunfälle, Frage der Information und des Schadenersatzes, Entschließung des Nationalrates vom 11.6.1986", ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.03.07/4-II. 7/86; Antrag in der 144. Nationalratssitzung von 11. Juni 1986: Stenographisches Protokoll, 144. Sitzung des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich, XVI. Gesetzgebungsperiode, 11.6.1986, <https://www.parlament.gv.at/recherchieren/protokolle>, accessed 18.4.2023, p. 12636.

42 On the Basket II negotiations at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting see Laimer, *Die KSZE und der Umweltschutz*.

43 "WFT; Plenarsitzung am 4. März 1988; Erklärung von Bot. Dr. Torovsky zu Korb II", GZ 803.10/2-II. 7/88.

44 On the Austrian proposal WT.11 "Cross-border Traffic and Environment" see Laimer, *Die KSZE und der Umweltschutz*, p. 78–98.

interests.⁴⁵ The Austrian government’s aim was to use WT. 11 to regulate transit traffic passing through its territory.⁴⁶ Yet the Turkish delegation interpreted the expansion of rail transport called for in the proposal as “discrimination” against road transport.⁴⁷ It went so far as to question the ecological credentials of rail transport,⁴⁸ a charge which the Austrian CSCE delegation was able to refute with an expert opinion.⁴⁹

Moreover, in his statement Torovsky also emphasised the consequences of transboundary environmental disasters. Without an intact environment, he argued, quality of life would decline worldwide. In addition, the costs and consequences of environmental disasters would ultimately lower economic output in all countries – whether NATO, Warsaw Pact or N+N.⁵⁰ As examples, Torovsky cited the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and the major fire in the Schweizerhalle near Basel⁵¹ (both 1986).⁵²

4.4 *Comparison with the Vienna Concluding Document*

To what extent did the Austrian delegation succeed with its environmental demands? In the Vienna Concluding Document, 16 of the 46 paragraphs from the chapter on Basket II covered environmental questions.⁵³ The document contained numerous measures against air pollution, with half the points

45 Dienstzettel des BMAA vom 27.8.1987 betreffend “WFT; Zusammenfassung über die Verhandlungsphase vom 5. Mai bis 31. Juli 1987”, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1987, GZ 803.12/42-II. 7/87.

46 Laimer, *Die KSZE und der Umweltschutz*, p. 78–98.

47 Dienstzettel des BMAA vom 2.7.1987 betreffend “WFT – Zusammenfassung der 27. Konferenzwoche Stand 2. Juli 1987”, GZ 803.12/42-II. 7/87.

48 “WFT; Zusammenfassung über die Verhandlungsphase vom 5. Mai bis 31. Juli 1987”, GZ 803.12/42-II. 7/87.

49 Dienstzettel des BMAA vom 29.9.1987 betreffend “WFT; Korb II; Übersendung von Unterlagen über Emissionen”, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1987, GZ 803.03.05/9-II. 7/87.

50 “WFT; Plenarsitzung am 4. März 1988; Erklärung von Bot. Dr. Torovsky zu Korb II”, GZ 803.10/2-II. 7/88.

51 The flagration at the Schweizerhalle in Basel on 1 November 1986, in the course of which water used to extinguish the fire became contaminated with chemicals and entered the Rhine, led to the death of fish on a catastrophic scale. See Walter Giger, “Der Rhein rot, die Fische tot. Brandkatastrophe in Schweizerhalle 1986 – Rückblick und Bilanz”, in: *UWSF – Z Umweltchem Ökotox (Umweltwissenschaften und Schadstoff-Forschung)* 19 (2007), special issue 1, p. 11–23; Andreas Schuler, “Schweizerhalle 1986. Roter Rhein und grüne Wirtschaft”, in: *Akzent: Magazin für Kultur und Gesellschaft* (2016), issue 6, Arbeit und Verdienst: Basel und seine Wirtschaft, p. 18–22.

52 “WFT; Plenarsitzung am 4. März 1988; Erklärung von Bot. Dr. Torovsky zu Korb II”, GZ 803.10/2-II. 7/88.

53 Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting 1986.

including demands for the reduction of chlorofluorocarbons and other pollutants potentially damaging to the Earth's climate.⁵⁴ The Concluding Document also committed the signatory states to cooperation on water protection⁵⁵ and to "improving and coordinating their arrangements for prevention, early warning, exchange of information and mutual assistance in cases of industrial accidents".⁵⁶

Austria's demand for a solution to the transit problem was rebuffed. According to paragraph 38, under the heading of "Cooperation in other areas", the participating states were to "encourage the elaboration of measures for achieving an economically more efficient transport system", which was to be achieved through joint conferences of experts or research efforts.⁵⁷ However, Austria's call for a reduction or regulation of transit flows has remained de facto unresolved until nowadays.⁵⁸

5 Conclusion

On questions of environmental cooperation in Basket II, the Austrian delegation at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting set itself ambitious goals and made forward-looking demands – without being able to secure their full implementation. The other participating states found Austria's proposals for environmental protection to be too restrictive and thereby damaging to their own economic interests. Austria drew up a number of proposals in the run-up to the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting, and the source documents allow the process to be traced, in the manner of a case study, from brainstorming to the official tabling of a proposal and ultimately the completion of a paragraph in the Vienna Concluding Document. Some Austrian proposals – for instance, the proposal for resolving the transit problem – were ahead of their time and addressed issues that are still unresolved.⁵⁹ Nor were negotiations in the area of environmental protection frictionless and uncontroversial, as can be seen from the Austrian proposal for WT. II "Cross-border Traffic and Environment". With regard to environmental protection, Basket II was therefore rather more

54 Ibid., paragraphs 24–30.

55 Ibid., paragraph 31.

56 Ibid., paragraph 36.

57 Ibid., paragraph 38.

58 Romed Aschwanden/Maria Buck et al. (eds.), *Conflicts d'usage depuis 1950 – Conflitti d'uso dal 1950 – Nutzungskonflikte seit 1950* (Histoire des Alpes – Storia delle Alpi – Geschichte der Alpen 2022/27), Zürich 2022.

59 Laimer, *Die KSZE und der Umweltschutz*, p. 99, p. 107–108.

than the "step-child"⁶⁰ which some CSCE delegates found it, in retrospect, to have been.

Basket II still holds much potential for research. Historians have yet to explore and contextualise the various environmental treaties of the 1970s and 1980s. Nor is the Austrian delegates' conduct of the negotiations at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting fully understood. For instance, the two pioneering figures of the Austrian Green movement, Freda Meißner-Blau and Peter Pilz, appear on the lists of CSCE delegates,⁶¹ yet it remains unknown whether they were involved in the negotiations in Basket II and, if so, what influence they exerted there.

60 Lehne, *The CSCE in the 1990s*, p. 98.

61 Wiener Treffen 1986 der Vertreter der Teilnehmerstaaten der Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, Haupttreffen, Liste der Teilnehmer, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PA-AA), B 28, Zwischenarchiv (ZA), Referat 212, Bd. 153421.

Front Page News or Side Note?

The Human Dimension of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Austrian and West German Newspapers

Nina Hechenblaikner

1 Introduction¹

The main task of mass media, including newspapers, is to keep the public informed of (current) events. Yet they should be considered not only as sources of information but also in their effects on political structures and processes.² Besides situating topical issues in the context of global politics, mass media offer views, commentary and opinions. Analysing the emphases placed by newspapers shows what areas are considered to be of particular relevance by a given media outlet. While it is of course impossible to make direct inferences regarding public opinion from published opinion, a media analysis is able to show what image was intended for public consumption. Although research in the field of contemporary history has paid increasing attention to political communication,³ an analysis of reporting on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and its follow-up meetings remains a research desideratum.

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- 1 The research for this article was conducted as part of the project “Durchbruch bei den Menschenrechten? Das KSZE-Folge treffen in Wien (1986–1989)” and funded wholly or in part by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) [project number: I 4139]. Previously untranslated German language sources were translated by the author.
 - 2 Peter Maurer, “Einflussfaktoren auf die Handlungsautonomie der Medien im politischen Prozess westlicher Demokratien. Eine theoretische Analyse”, in: Barbara Pfetsch/Silke Adam (eds.), *Massenmedien als politische Akteure. Konzepte und Analysen*, Wiesbaden 2008, p. 73–91, on p. 73.
 - 3 For theoretical foundations see e.g. Martin Klimke/Joachim Scharloth (eds.), 1968. *Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung*, Stuttgart-Weimar 2007; Barbara Pfetsch/Silke Adam (eds.), *Massenmedien als politische Akteure. Konzepte und Analysen*, Wiesbaden 2008; Thomas Mergel, “Politisierete Medien und medialisierte Politik. Strukturelle Koppelungen zwischen zwei sozialen Systemen”, in: Klaus Arnold/Christoph Classen et al. (eds.), *Von der Politisierung der Medien zur Medialisierung des Politischen? Zum Verhältnis von Medien, Öffentlichkeit und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig 2010, p. 29–50; Otfried Jarren/Patrick Donges, *Politische Kommunikation in der Mediengesellschaft. Eine Einführung* (Springer Link Bücher), Wiesbaden 2011³; Winfried Schulz, *Politische Kommunikation. Theoretische Ansätze und Ergebnisse empirischer Forschung*, Wiesbaden 2011³.

The opening of the third Follow-up Meeting of the CSCE, which spanned from 4–7 November 1986, was met with considerable interest from the international media. Newspapers, radio and television reported on the opening ceremony as well as on the various events (both official and unofficial) that flanked the meeting's opening. For example, the opening speech by Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, written by the then young diplomat and later Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik, was particularly praised by the media.⁴ At the end of the first week, the Austrian daily *Die Presse* reported that 1059 journalists representing media from 47 countries had come to Vienna to report about the opening events.⁵ It can therefore be stated without a doubt that the start of the third Follow-up Meeting attracted international media attention. This chapter examines how two daily newspapers – the Austrian *Die Presse* and the West German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) – reported throughout the course of the Follow-up Meeting on one of its focal points, the Human Dimension. These two newspapers are exemplary as national dailies newspapers which aimed primarily at middle-class audiences and were among the newspapers with the highest circulation in their respective countries at the time. On the one hand, the analysis focuses on the question of the continuity of reporting and on the other on that of how the selected media reported on human rights organisations, that were active in the context of the Follow-up Meeting and whether these organisations actively used daily newspapers to draw attention to their concerns. Finally, a case study takes a closer look at everyday journalistic life around the third Follow-up Meeting.

2 The Vienna Follow-up Meeting as a News Subject

The first question to address is whether the Vienna Follow-up Meeting even was the subject of continuous reporting in the two newspapers. The answer is a resounding yes. In the month of the opening of the Follow-up Meeting, *Die Presse* published 60 articles about the conference; in the same month, the FAZ reported on the Follow-up Meeting in 29 instances. In total, during the period analysed, *Die Presse* published 536 articles on the CSCE, the FAZ 250.⁶ Both

4 E-Mail from Ursula Plassnik to Nina Hechenblaikner, 02.05.2022. The author would like to express her sincere thanks to Dr Plassnik for giving her access to these notes.

5 "Zwischenbilanz im KSZE-Pressenzentrum. Ein 'Barbar' unter 1059 Journalisten", in: *Die Presse*, 11.11.1986, p. 2.

6 This survey includes articles published between September 1986 and March 1898. This period was chosen in order to be able to include the preparations for the meeting and its first repercussions.

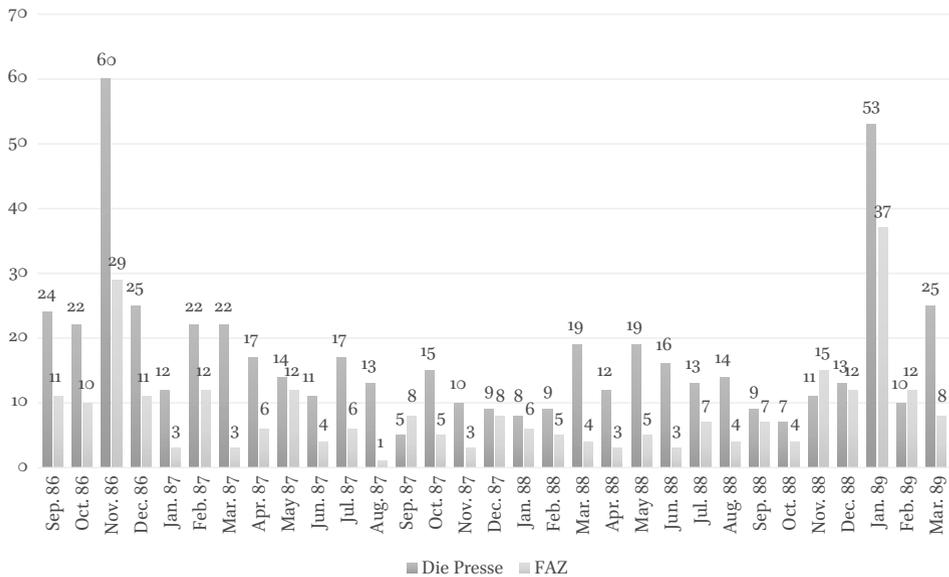


FIGURE 1 Reporting on the CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna

SOURCE: CREATED BY THE AUTHOR

newspapers kept up their reporting on the conference even during breaks in the negotiations.

Both newspapers picked up on the conference even before it opened. The preliminary negotiations, which took place from 23 September to 10 October, were therefore also of interest to them. An article in *Die Presse* from early October 1986 criticised the fact that only Rudolf Torovsky, the leader of the Austrian delegation, was holding press conferences at this time.⁷ Soon after the opening of the conference, the number of reports on the Follow-up Meeting decreased, remaining at a constant level until the numbers rose again for the signing of the Concluding Document in January 1989. According to the journalist Burkhard Bischof, who reported on the Vienna Follow-up Meeting for *Die Presse*, the dwindling number of articles was due to the fact that during many phases of the negotiations not much was happening that was worth reporting on.⁸ Due to the protracted course of the conference and given the scant

7 "Europa in kaiserlichem Glanz. Eifersüchteleien und Strategien rund um die Wiener KSZE-Tagung", in: *Die Presse*, 03.10.1986, p. 3.

8 Burkhard Bischof, "Aber für Europa war das Geschehen in Wien ein Wahnsinn.", in: Kai Habel/Nina Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges. Erinnerungen an die dritte KSZE-Folgekonferenz in Wien 1986–1989*, Baden-Baden 2025, p. 343.

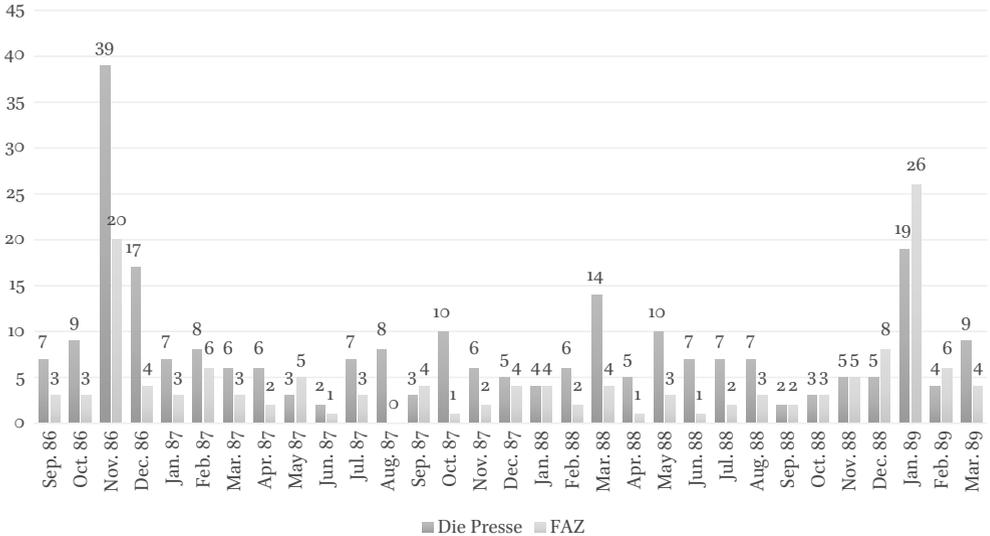


FIGURE 2 Reporting on the Human Dimension of the CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna
SOURCE: CREATED BY THE AUTHOR

information that leaked out in the press conferences, there was not much public interest in the reporting on the Follow-up Meeting. This impression was confirmed by several diplomats who were involved in the negotiations.⁹ Bischof also reported that he often had difficulty fleshing out the articles on the CSCE demanded by his editors.¹⁰

The remainder of this article takes a closer look at reporting on the Human Dimension¹¹ of the third CSCE Follow-up Meeting. 250 articles on this topic were published in Die Presse, 138 in the FAZ.

The articles most frequently found in both dailies deal with the Human Dimension in general or in connection with other negotiation topics (Die Presse: 120, FAZ: 86). Articles addressing a specific aspect in greater detail are rarer. Most contain additional information on military security (Die Presse: 56, FAZ: 44). A combination of the two subject fields seems obvious given that the

9 Nils Eliasson, "Towards the middle of the Vienna meeting, nothing was said at the formal meetings," in: *Ibid*, p. 284–285; Stefan Lehne, "Es 'zeigte sich sehr rasch, dass 'der Osten' nicht mehr existiert", in: *Ibid*, p. 195.

10 Bischof, "Aber für Europa war das Geschehen in Wien ein Wahnsinn," p. 343.

11 The term Human Dimension refers to all those areas of the CSCE process that deal with aspects of human rights. It covers issues that have had the most direct impact on the lives of people living in a Europe that was divided by the Iron Curtain. E-Mail from Ursula Plassnik to Nina Hechenblaikner, 02.05.2022.

close connection between military and human negotiations was one of the reasons for the success of the CSCE process.¹²

Articles dealing with specific negotiation topics follow the focus of the conference itself. Both *Die Presse* and *FAZ* contain numerous items on family reunification (*Die Presse*: 10, *FAZ*: 14), religious freedom (*Die Presse*: 17, *FAZ*: 11) and the protection of minorities (*Die Presse*: 25, *FAZ*: 20). The Soviet proposal to hold a human rights conference in Moscow following the Vienna meeting (WT.2) received a great deal of attention in both media analysed (*Die Presse*: 41, *FAZ*: 26). As in the negotiations themselves, the proposal was mentioned in the reporting throughout the course of the Follow-up Meeting. There was hardly any evidence of national priorities in the reporting of *Die Presse*. It followed the topics that were particularly prominent in the negotiations at the time. In the *FAZ*, on the other hand, a focus on the question of freedom of movement can be recognised. The problems of “Germans”¹³ applying to leave Warsaw Pact states took centre stage. This coincides with the West German government’s focus during the human negotiations in Vienna.¹⁴ It can also be seen that both *Die Presse* and the *FAZ* spoke most frequently with and about members of their country’s delegation.

12 Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West relations*, Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford 1991, p. 138–139; Douglas Selvage, “The Superpowers and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1977–1983”, in: Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer), Berlin-Boston 2013, p. 15–58, on p. 34; Michael C. Morgan, “North America, Atlanticism, and the making of the Helsinki Final Act”, in: Andreas Wenger/Vojtech Mastny et al. (eds.), *Origins of the European Security System. The Helsinki process revisited, 1965–75*, London-New York 2008, p. 25–45, on p. 31.

13 Most articles do not specify the nationality of the persons concerned.

14 This includes both freedom of movement and freedom of travel for media professionals. Rede Hans-Dietrich Genschers zur Eröffnung des dritten KSZE-Folgetreffens, 7.11.1986. CSCE/WT/PVR.7, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PA-AA), B 28, Zwischenarchiv (ZA) (Referat 212), Bd. 153432, p. 85; Korb III Arbeitsunterlagen. Vorbereitungsstreffen 23.09.1986, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), Bd. 158438; Intervention des Leiters der Delegation der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 10.11.1986, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), ZA Bd. 158442. The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) (co-)submitted seven proposals on these topics. Vorschläge, PA-AA, B 28 (Referat 212), Bd. 153448. The focus of the FRG on this issue was not surprising. After all, the people of the two German states were more affected by the division of Europe than anyone else. The West German delegation therefore clearly had the support of N+N during the negotiations. E-Mail from Ursula Plassnik to Nina Hechenblaikner, 02.05.2022.

3 Human Rights Activism and Its Coverage

Human rights organisations had been closely associated with the CSCE process since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.¹⁵ The follow-up meetings were an important means for activists to draw attention to their concerns. In the course of the CSCE process, the organisations received increasing recognition from delegations and governments¹⁶ and accordingly organised numerous events at the opening of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. They also distributed reports on the human rights situation in numerous countries to various delegations.¹⁷

Human rights organisations too criticised the lack of public information about the CSCE.¹⁸ Although informing the public about violations of the Helsinki Final Act was not the primary goal of the groups, they nevertheless sought the attention of the media, as members of human rights organisations also had no direct access to the negotiations. Daily newspapers thus offered an opportunity to attract the attention of delegations. The various groups organised press conferences and sent information to editorial offices.

At the beginning of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, events held by various organisations received particular media attention. These events included demonstrations, lectures by dissidents, exhibitions and (often publicly staged)

15 Shortly after the signing, so-called "Helsinki groups" were formed in the Warsaw Pact countries. In Western participating states, too, organisations were founded that campaigned for compliance with the human provisions of the Final Act, or the cause was taken up by existing organisations. Examples include Helsinki Watch in the USA, the League for Human Rights and the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF).

16 Andrei Zagorski, "The Human Dimension of the CSCE, 1975–1990", in: Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War. Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990*, New York 2019, p. 17–42, on p. 30–31.

17 Hester Minnema, "The [CSCE] process at that time was what was needed.", in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 371, 376, 383. For instance, the IHF wrote country reports on many Warsaw Pact states especially for the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, which were printed individually as books and distributed to delegation members and other interested parties, e.g. The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Violations of the Helsinki Accords: Bulgaria. A Report for the Helsinki Review Conference Vienna*, Wien 1986; The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Violations of the Helsinki Accords: Czechoslovakia. A Report for the Helsinki Review Conference Vienna*, Wien 1986; The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Violations of the Helsinki Accords: USSR. A Report for the Vienna Review Conference*, Wien 1986.

18 "Gestern das Baltikum, heute Afghanistan, morgen die ganze Welt'. Schwere Vorwürfe gegen Moskau", in: *FAZ*, 5.11.1986, p. 6.

submissions of reports.¹⁹ So many events took place around the opening of the Follow-up Meeting that *Die Presse* devoted a separate article to the “chaos of dates in the human rights struggle”.²⁰ However, the various organisations were not only present in Vienna as a group of actors. They also drew attention to the human rights violations suffered by the members of various Helsinki groups.²¹

Besides the “scheduling chaos” at the opening, there were further aspects that were viewed less favourably by the media. A report in *Die Presse*, for example, criticised that in some cases, the public’s interest had apparently been underestimated. This was reflected, among other things, by too few seats and overheated rooms.²² In another article, the Austrian daily wrote that the unmanageable number of events and demonstrations cast a negative light on the Follow-up Meeting.²³ According to a report in *Die Presse*, the Soviet ambassador in Vienna felt so disturbed by the numerous activities of various human rights organisations that he complained about them to the Austrian government.²⁴ In addition, the Soviets insinuated that the people protesting against human rights violations during the opening in Vienna were in the pay of the Americans.²⁵

Human rights organisations therefore were definitely covered at the opening of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. Keeping the attention of the media in the long term, however, involved a great deal of effort for the members of the groups. According to the co-founder of the International Helsinki Federation

19 E.g. “Die Balten wollen in Wien die ‘Mauer des Schweigens’ durchbrechen. Hilferufe vor dem KSZE-Treffen”, in: *FAZ*, 04.11.1986, p. 2; “‘Der Gulag existiert weiter’. Vorwürfe gegen Moskau bei Veranstaltungen des ‘Helsinki Spiegels’ in Wien”, in: *FAZ*, 06.11.1986, p. 7; “‘Gestern das Baltikum, heute Afghanistan, morgen die ganze Welt’. Schwere Vorwürfe gegen Moskau”, in: *FAZ*, 5.11.1986, p. 6; “Erschütternde Berichte. Menschenrechtsgruppen bei der KSZE in Wien”, in: *FAZ*, 08.11.1986, p. 6; “Entspannung von unten. Memorandum über Grenzen hinweg”, in: *Die Presse*, 04.11.1986, p. 2; “Exilgruppen fordern: Schlußfakte als Einheit behandeln”, in: *Die Presse*, 04.11.1986, p. 2; “Orlow: Druck des Westens hilft den Bürgerrechtlern”, in: *Die Presse*, 04.11.1986, p. 2.

20 “Terminchaos im Menschenrechtskampf. Veranstaltungen am Rand des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens: wichtig, aber unkoordiniert”, in: *Die Presse*, 30.10.1986, p. 3.

21 “Fast alle Mitglieder der Helsinki-Gruppen in Haft oder im Exil. Dokumentation über Familienzusammenführung und Ausreiseverweigerung”, in: *FAZ*, 12.11.1986, p. 6; “Wir werden Fälle von Menschenrechtsverletzungen beobachten’. Polnisches und tschechoslowakisches Helsinki-Komitee in die ‘Internationale Helsinki Föderation für Menschenrechte’ aufgenommen”, in: *FAZ*, 05.12.1988, p. 6.

22 “Europäisches Chaos über Wien zur KSZE-Eröffnung. Alle Wege führen zum Heldenplatz”, in: *Die Presse*, 05.11.1986, p. 3.

23 “‘Ohne Menschenrechte kein Friede’. Vranitzky setzt Auftakt für KSZE”, in: *Die Presse*, 05.11.1986, p. 1.

24 “Gestern das Baltikum, heute Afghanistan, morgen die ganze Welt”.

25 Moskau: USA zahlen Wiener Demonstranten, in: *Die Presse*, 05.11.1986, p. 2.

for Human Rights (IHF), Jana Starek, the media's attention and trust had to be earned.²⁶ The newspapers tended to always quote the same, already well-known organisations, explained Hester Minnema, an IHF employee. The IHF tried for a long time to be mentioned in the FAZ. To this end, they sent the newspaper reports, articles and other materials. However, the breakthrough only came when the editors needed information that Minnema could provide at short notice. From this point onwards, the IHF was featured regularly in the FAZ's coverage.²⁷ Die Presse also drew on information provided by the IHF. In an article on human rights violations in various Warsaw Pact states, for example, it quoted directly from reports written by the non-governmental organisation (NGO).²⁸

However, various NGOs not only dealt with human rights violations in Warsaw Pact states but also denounced abuses in Western or neutral states. These cases were also taken up in the daily newspapers analysed. The International Society for Human Rights (Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte, IGFM), for example, reported on refugees from Warsaw Pact countries who had been denied asylum in Finland and Yugoslavia, which the NGO considered to be a violation of human rights. In an article in the FAZ, the IGFM also criticised the way the Finnish head of delegation, Markku Reimaa, dealt with the accusations.²⁹ After overcoming the first hurdle, some human rights organisations were able to place their concerns in the reporting of the two daily newspapers examined and also express criticism of the actions of neutral and/or Western states.

26 Jana Starek, "Es ist uns vieles von dem, was wir wollten, gelungen", in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 423.

27 Minnema, "The [CSCE] process at that time was what was needed", p. 382–383. In the period under examination, the FAZ published six articles discussing the IHF – one each in 1986, 1987 and 1988, and three in 1989; "Gestern das Baltikum, heute Afghanistan, morgen die ganze Welt. Schwere Vorwürfe gegen Moskau", in: FAZ, 5.11.1986, p. 6; "Rhetorisches Entgegenkommen der Sowjetunion in Wien. Menschenrechte und Abrüstung", in: FAZ, 24.09.1987, p. 2; "Wir werden Fälle von Menschenrechtsverletzungen beobachten"; Petition zur Freilassung Havels", in: FAZ, 09.02.1989, p. 2; "Über das schlagende Herz der Partei wird in Prag nicht verhandelt. Schauprozesse offenbaren die Verlegenheit des Regimes", in: FAZ, 22.02.1989, p. 7; "Über die Verletzung der Menschenrechte in Rumänien berichtet. Eine Anhörung vor dem Europäischen Parlament/Minderheiten, politische Gefangene, Psychiatrie, Dorfzerstörung", in: FAZ, 22.02.1989.

28 "Information als KSZE-Hürde. Rumänien behindert Medien", in: *Die Presse*, 23.07.1987, p. 2.

29 "Die Auslieferung von Flüchtlingen beanstandet. Finnlands KSZE-Delegation will mit der IGFM keine Fälle erörtern", in: FAZ, 14.12.1987, p. 5. In an interview conducted in 2022, Reimaa claims that neutral states like Finland had been of virtually no interest to the NGOs and their enquiries. Markku Reimaa, "The CSCE could defuse the antagonism between the two military alliances.", in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 239.

4 Keeping the Public Informed about the Vienna Follow-up Meeting

Another distinguishing feature of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting lay in the fact that increased attention was paid from various sides to keeping the public informed about the negotiations.³⁰ The Austrian government had already stated in the preparations for the conference that the CSCE was not only a task for statesmen and diplomats, but that it must also be supported by the public.³¹ One step in this direction was the opening of some plenary sessions to the public. Unlike at previous CSCE meetings, interested parties were now able to attend selected sessions.³² The head of the US delegation, Warren Zimmermann, hoped that this would also lead to an improved and expanded exchange with the media.³³

The head of the Austrian delegation, Rudolf Torovsky, too emphasised the importance of maintaining a close relationship with the media and of keeping them informed about the status of the negotiations. He was well aware of how difficult it was for the media to present the topics and negotiations of the CSCE to their audience in an understandable and interesting way.³⁴ In doing so, Torovsky was also fulfilling a wish of the Austrian chancellor, Franz Vranitzky, who at the opening of the third Follow-up Meeting had called for more contact between the negotiations and the public.³⁵ In the course of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, Torovsky repeatedly complained about the public's lacking awareness of the CSCE process, which in his opinion contributed to scepticism and negative judgements about the negotiations. According to Torovsky,

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- 30 The Austrian public's general lack of interest in foreign policy issues had already been recognised earlier. Renate Kicker and Wolfgang Benedek speak of a vicious circle of lack of interest and lack of information. Renate Kicker/Ruth Deutschmann, *Die außenpolitische Berichterstattung der Neuen Kronzeitung. Eine empirische Untersuchung des Jahres 1978* (Grazer rechts- und staatswissenschaftliche Studien), Graz 1981, p. 9.
- 31 Wiederveröffentlichung der KSZE-Texte durch das BMAA, Entwurf eines Vorwortes des HBM und einer Einführung, 11.02.1986, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), Bundesministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (BMAA), politische Sektion II/Abteilung 7 Entwicklung (II-Pol.) 1986, Geschäftszahl (GZ) 801.01/2-II.7/86.
- 32 In previous meetings, Western delegations had endeavoured to inform the media about the progress of the negotiations by sending them the texts of their speeches. See Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989*, p. 86.
- 33 "Viel Lob für Neutrale und Blockfreie", in: *Die Presse*, 08.10.86, p. 2; "Weitgehende Einigung über KSZE-Konferenz", in: *FAZ*, 7.10.1986, p. 1.
- 34 "Von Tag zu Tag – Wiener Folgetreffen 'Konferenz für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa'", *Ör*, 01.06.1987.
- 35 KSZE; WFT, Eröffnungserklärung von HBM Dr. Peter Jankowitsch, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol. 1986, GZ 803.10/2-II.7/86.

public support was an essential aspect for the CSCE's success.³⁶ To counteract this deficit, he not only turned to the media but also addressed the citizenry directly – for instance, through lectures at adult education centres.³⁷ In a programme on the Austrian radio station Ö1, Torovsky addressed the concerns of callers and was confronted with the question of “whether this conference will achieve anything at all”, reflecting public scepticism towards the CSCE. Torovsky responded by referring to family reunions, the simplification of visits and the release of political prisoners in the Soviet Union since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, which he argued were due to the CSCE.³⁸

Despite the efforts of various heads of delegation, the third Follow-up Meeting nevertheless remained a marginal topic that attracted little interest outside informed circles. In an article published at its close, the FAZ came to the sobering conclusion that the acronym CSCE was unlikely to mean anything to most people in Western Europe.³⁹ Bischof too surmised that the coverage of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting was of no importance to the majority of readers.⁴⁰ The FAZ judged that the Concluding Document of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting would therefore not find many readers in the West. However, it also recognised that the new resolutions on human rights would be of particular interest to people in the Warsaw Pact states.⁴¹

5 Behind the Coverage

As shown at the beginning, international press interest was particularly large at the start of the Follow-up Meeting. Numerous journalists from all over the world were present in Vienna to report on the opening and the events held to accompany it. It was important to the organisers to present a good international image. Since, to accomplish this, they depended not least on favourable coverage, great importance was attached to a well-functioning press office.⁴² While the media representatives were highly satisfied with the organisation of the press centre, the head of press relations, Martin Sajdik, reported an incident in the press office. An unknown person had ripped the power cord

36 “Bei Konferenz in Venedig: Dialogchance blieb ungenutzt”, in: *Die Presse*, 08.02.1988, p. 2.

37 “Der Diplomat und Volksanwalt. Wie Österreichs Delegationsleiter Torovsky den KSZE-Alltag miterlebte”, in: *Die Presse*, 18.01.1989, p. 4.

38 In the original: „ob diese Konferenz überhaupt einmal etwas bringen wird“, “Von Tag zu Tag – Wiener Folgetreffen ‘Konferenz für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa’”.

39 “Abschluß in Wien”, in: *FAZ*, 17.01.1989, p. 1.

40 Bischof, “Aber für Europa war das Geschehen in Wien ein Wahnsinn.”, p. 344.

41 “Abschluß in Wien”.

42 “Zwischenbilanz im KSZE-Pressenzentrum”.

feeding an electric typewriter from the wall and rigged up a new connection for himself, causing several short circuits. Among other things, the system relaying the translation failed during a speech by the US Secretary of State.⁴³

In addition, supporting events were organised to “put [the journalists] in a good mood”.⁴⁴ A welcome party, a trip to a typical Viennese wine tavern⁴⁵ and museum tours were laid on for this purpose. However, things did not always run smoothly. On 4 November 1986 the Federal Press Service had invited the more than 1200 journalists accredited at the time to an informal evening get-together. As it was not possible to predict attendance, approximately 150 sandwiches were provided. However, as almost all of those invited turned up, the food was eaten before the official start of the event, according to the report in *Die Presse*. In order to cater for the attendees, sausage and cheese were swiftly purchased from a nearby delicatessen, though trading laws had to be temporarily suspended due to the late hour. Frozen bread was supplied from the emergency reserve of the Federal Press Service. In addition, officials bought up everything that a nearby “Würstelstand” (hot dog stand) had to offer.⁴⁶

Day-to-day reporting during the conference was beset by fewer incidents. Bischof confirmed the impression recorded by some of his colleagues in reports that Torovsky, the leader of the Austrian delegation, was particularly approachable. He held a press conference every Friday and was also available to answer questions from the media at other times.⁴⁷ Bischof also had positive memories of the dissemination of information by West Germany and the USA, with the latter, according to the journalist, being particularly keen to inform “their own” press.⁴⁸ This impression was also confirmed in an article by an American journalist in *Die Presse*. Unlike all delegations, that of the United States initially held its press conferences away from the official press office, using the Hilton Hotel instead.⁴⁹

However, the journalists received at least as much information as at the press conferences at evening events where they were able to exchange views

43 Ibid.

44 In the original: „mit einem Rahmenprogramm ‚gütig‘stimmen“. “Zwischen Ghetto und Weißen Pferden”, in: *Die Presse*, 07.11.1986, p. 2.

45 Heurige, taverns specialising in local wine, are a Viennese institution.

46 “Zwischen Ghetto und Weißen Pferden”.

47 Bischof, “Aber für Europa war das Geschehen in Wien ein Wahnsinn.”, p. 337. Several other diplomats also met the media at their request. Hans-Heinrich Wrede, “Wir mussten aufpassen und geschickt spielen, wir als Bundesrepublik, wenn wir deutsche Themen durchbrachten”, in: Habel/Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges*, p. 123–124.

48 Bischof, “Aber für Europa war das Geschehen in Wien ein Wahnsinn.”, p. 342.

49 “Zwischenbilanz im KSZE-Pressenzentrum”.

with delegation members. According to Bischof, the media representatives responsible for CSCE reporting in Vienna were pretty collegial towards each other. Most of them were keen to help one another and there was a lively exchange of information.⁵⁰

6 Conclusion

In conclusion about the coverage of the Human Dimension of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting it can be noted that the two groups of actors analysed in this chapter had already recognised the importance of keeping the public informed before the opening of the Follow-up Meeting. Vranitzky's opening speech and Torovsky's public appearances and regular press conferences clearly indicate that the Austrian government was keen to maintain the flow of information. The activities of the press office, which offered a supporting programme of networking and entertainment for the benefit of media representatives in addition to handling the daily journalistic routine, show that the host country also wanted to project a favourable image of itself internationally. Human rights organisations also increasingly relied on public attention, which they hoped to gain not least by featuring in the coverage of the daily newspapers.

Nevertheless, in the estimation of delegations and the media alike, the Vienna Follow-up Meeting remained a marginal topic in public perception of foreign policy reporting. Yet this did not deter both *Die Presse* and the *FAZ* from reporting on it continuously. The Human Dimension of the conference was a constant feature of the coverage. Despite efforts on many parts, the *FAZ* drew a sobering conclusion at the meeting's end:

To most people in Western Europe, not to mention the North Americans, the acronym CSCE means very little: At best, they know that the representatives of 35 states from the West and the East have been discussing European security and respect for human rights in Vienna for more than two years.⁵¹

According to the daily newspapers analysed and contrary to the wishes of many of those involved, the goal of involving the public in the CSCE process through media coverage was thus not accomplished.

50 Bischof, "Aber für Europa war das Geschehen in Wien ein Wahnsinn.", p. 343.

51 "Abschluß in Wien".

Questions of Security

The Role of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting on the Road from the CDE to the CFE Treaty

Jonas Kaiser

1 Introduction¹

The third Follow-up Meeting to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) took place in Vienna from 4 November 1986 to 19 January 1989. Already well received by contemporary observers,² the Vienna Follow-up Meeting was subsequently regarded as an important step in overcoming the East-West conflict.³ In addition to successes in the field of human rights, groundbreaking successes were also achieved on military and security policy issues,⁴ including further negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) and the mandate for negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe (CFE Mandate).

This essay provides an insight into one of the core questions of a doctoral project⁵ examining the discourse on disarmament, security and peace policy issues within the CSCE in the period from 1984 to 1990, from the Conference

1 Previously untranslated German language sources were translated by the author.

2 From the perspective of the West German delegate Hans-Heinrich Wrede, the contemporary response to the final document of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting was consistently positive; Hans-Heinrich Wrede, *KSZE in Wien. Kursbestimmung für Europas Zukunft*, Köln 1990, p. 147.

3 Hermann Wentker, “Die KSZE als Ordnungsfaktor. Höhenflug und Bedeutungsverlust einer Idealvorstellung europäischer Politik (1989–1991)”, in: Tim Geiger/Jürgen Lillteicher/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Zwei plus Vier. Die internationale Gründungsgeschichte der Berliner Republik*, Berlin-Boston 2021, p. 125–141, on p. 125–126.

4 The Austrian delegate Stefan Lehne points out that the successfully negotiated provisions on human rights and those on military security were equally important and that neither was “less significant”; Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West Relations* (Austrian Institute for International Affairs Series), Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford 1991, p. IX–x.

5 The project “Von Stockholm nach Wien: Vertrauens- und Sicherheitsbildende Maßnahmen und das KSE-Mandat” (“From Stockholm to Vienna: Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and the CFE Mandate”) is part of a joint project of the University of Hildesheim Foundation, the University of Innsbruck, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies Geneva and the Institute of Contemporary History Munich–Berlin. It is funded by the German Research Foundation, the Austrian Science Fund (Austria) and the Swiss National Science Foundation.

on Security and Confidence-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE) in Stockholm (1984–1986) to the Vienna Follow-up Meeting (1986–1989) and the CSCE Summit in Paris in 1990, at which the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) was signed. More specifically, it investigates the role played by the Vienna Follow-up Meeting in this security policy process up to the CFE Treaty.

2 The Titular “S”: Security and the CSCE

As the “S” in its name suggests, security was an integral part of the CSCE from the very beginning. The CSCE as such was initially conceived as a European security conference against the backdrop of the Cold War. As early as 1954, at the beginning of the post-Stalinist era, Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, proposed such a conference⁶ with the aim of dissolving existing alliances, maintaining Europe’s post-war political order and forcing the United States out of Europe. Molotov’s proposal was not accepted, not least because the two non-European NATO states, the USA and Canada, were to be excluded.⁷ During the 1960s, the Warsaw Pact states in particular repeatedly called for a European security conference. But it was not until 1969, against the background of the Harmel Report⁸ of 1967 and the much more relaxed international situation,⁹ that individual NATO states declared their willingness to hold multilateral talks with the Warsaw Pact states. With the mediation of the neutral and non-aligned (N+N) states, preliminary negotiations began in 1972, and the CSCE was established in Helsinki and Geneva in 1973.

In the context of the CSCE, “security” generally meant conventional security and arms control, referring to troops and heavy weapons systems such as tanks, combat helicopters and artillery. However, in the CSCE process, security

6 Jussi M. Hanhimäki, “‘They can write it in Swahili’. Kissinger, the Soviets and the Helsinki Accords, 1973–75”, in: *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 1 (2003), issue 1, p. 37–58, on p. 38–39.

7 Wrede, *KSZE*, p. 20.

8 The report on NATO’s political orientation, initiated in 1967 by the then Belgian foreign minister, Pierre Harmel, led to a strategic reorientation of the Alliance: a dual strategy of deterrence on the one hand and détente via diplomatic relations on the other; Johannes Varwick, *NATO in (dis)order. How transatlantic security is being renegotiated*, Bonn 2017, p. 45–46.

9 Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker, “‘Helsinki-Mythos’ oder ‘Helsinki-Effekt’? Der KSZE-Prozess zwischen internationaler Politik und gesellschaftlicher Transformation. Zur Einleitung”, in: Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer), München 2012, p. 1–14, on p. 1.

was regarded not as a purely military phenomenon but from a holistic perspective.¹⁰ Even a brief look at the Helsinki Final Act, especially Basket I, reveals the security policy dimension of the CSCE, in which the principles of the inviolability of borders and the territorial integrity of the participating states were just as important in terms of security policy as the agreement on future disarmament talks and an initial catalogue of CSBMs, such as the announcement of military manoeuvres and the invitation of military observers to such manoeuvres.¹¹ In theory, this particular CSBM was a good building block for making Europe more secure in that it aimed to reduce the military threat posed by armies by enabling realistic assessments of the danger and threat posed by another army. The principle of “everyone watching everyone else” was intended to make war less likely.¹²

3 CSBMs: Implementation, Deficiencies and Attempted Reforms

However, the post-1975 implementation of CSBMs, especially in the area of military manoeuvres, was inadequate. Either manoeuvres were not registered on time, no observers were invited or invitations to observe were repeatedly declined without explanation. The implementation of the Helsinki Final Act by the Warsaw Pact states, especially the Soviet Union, thus came to be perceived as “unsatisfactory” by the Federal Republic of Germany, especially compared with its own conduct. Particular criticism was levelled at the practice both of the selection of manoeuvres to be observed and the states invited to do so.¹³ The Austrian journalist Andreas Unterberger came to a similar conclusion, albeit far more strongly worded, accusing the Soviet Union of having “completely hollowed out” the Helsinki CSBM agreements “by tricks, by stretching their wording to breaking point”. He too supported this claim with reference to

10 Peter Jankowitsch: “Das Konferenzgeschehen in Wien war sehr wichtig für das, was sich dann 1989 und später abgespielt hat.”, in: Kai Habel/Nina Hechenblaikner et al. (eds.), *Diplomatie am Ende des Kalten Krieges. Erinnerungen an die dritte KSZE-Folgekonferenz in Wien 1986–1989*, Baden-Baden 2025, p. 97.

11 “Schlussakte von Helsinki vom 01.08.1975”, in: Auswärtiges Amt, Referat Öffentlichkeitsarbeit (ed.), *20 Jahre KSZE. 1973–1993. Eine Dokumentation*, Bonn 1993, p. 18–81, on p. 27–31.

12 Erwin Müller explains the CSBM issue succinctly: “Vertrauensbildende Maßnahmen (VBM)”, in: Dieter S. Lutz (ed.), *Lexikon Rüstung, Frieden, Sicherheit*, München 1987, p. 316–320.

13 Antwort Staatssekretär Peter Kurt Würzbach vom 27. September 1985 an MdB Helmut Sauer bezüglich dessen Fragen vom 18. September 1985. Betreff: Einladungspraxis KSZE Manöverbeobachter durch die Sowjetunion, Bundesarchiv (BArch), BW 1/284826, p. 2–3.

the lack of announcements of military manoeuvres and the anecdotal accusation of that observers had been deliberately issued with faulty binoculars.¹⁴ It can therefore be concluded that such violations of the Helsinki Final Act could quickly strain relations between the CSCE states by generating mistrust. Confidence- and security-building measures thus inadvertently turned into mistrust- and insecurity-building measures.

Conversely, however, the implementation of CSBMs by Western states also provoked criticism from the Warsaw Pact. West Germany, for instance, for a long time would accept only persons officially accredited at the respective countries' embassies as military observers.¹⁵ These were usually military attachés, "members of your permanent mission in the Federal Republic of Germany."¹⁶ Although this was in line with the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, Poland was one county to take exception to this German practice, complaining in 1986 that it had "for many years made it impossible to send Polish observers to manoeuvres" since there was "no military department in the embassy of the People's Republic of Poland in Cologne".¹⁷ Such behaviour, though in conformity with the letter of Helsinki Final Act, hardly served the cause of confidence-building.

The entire CSBM system was therefore in need of reform, something of which the participating states were well aware. Thus, in the final phase of the Madrid Follow-up Meeting, the Soviets and above all the French showed an increasingly strong interest in a disarmament and CSBM conference, the later CDE. The fact that this conference was able to take place at all, in Stockholm, was in itself a milestone of political negotiation, the United States, for one, having initially rejected the idea. American concerns regarding the final document of the Madrid Follow-up Meeting – and, explicitly, the mandate for the Stockholm CDE – could only be overcome when improvements were promised in the humanitarian field, especially in the Warsaw Pact. The head of the

14 Andreas Unterberger, "Punktesieg über das Mißtrauen. KVAE-Beschlüsse. Was sie wiegen und wie sie zu umgehen sind", in: *Die Presse*, 25.09.1986, p. 3.

15 Karl-Heinz Lutz, "Vom Schwinden des Misstrauens. Deutsch-deutsche Manöverbeobachtungen 1987/1989", in: *Militärgeschichte. Zeitschrift für historische Bildung* 35 (2020), issue 3, p. 4–9, on p. 5.

16 KSZE-Vertrauensbildende Maßnahmen. Ankündigung und Einladung von Manöverbeobachtern zu dem NATO-Manöver "Certain Sentinel", 23.12.1985. Anlage: Note des Bundeskanzleramts an die Ständige Vertretung der DDR in Bonn vom 30.12.1985, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PA-AA), B 43, Zwischenarchiv (ZA)/130140, p. 2.

17 Antwort der Botschaft der Volksrepublik Polen auf die Verbalnote des Auswärtigen Amtes der Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 1. September 1986, 09.09.1986, PA-AA, B 43, ZA/130140, p. 1.

US delegation, Max Kampelman, explicitly linked American acceptance of the CDE to the release of prominent Soviet dissidents, to which effect he had received reassurances from Yuri Andropov, the general secretary of the CPSU.¹⁸ This example illustrates a phenomenon typical of the CSCE, the trade-offs between security and human rights concerns.

4 CDE: the Foundation for Building Confidence and Security?

The aforementioned CDE was brought to a successful conclusion in September 1986, helped by the contemporary awareness of the danger of “the ‘accidental’ outbreak of war due to mistrust or misjudgement of enemy troop movements”.¹⁹ The Stockholm conference heralded vast improvements in the area of CSBMs. The measures already adopted in the Helsinki Final Act were extended and specified in the CDE Final Document,²⁰ which came into force on 1 January 1987. The registration of manoeuvres and the invitation of observers to them were regulated in detail; furthermore, a control mechanism with on-site inspections was introduced. The USSR’s agreement to these inspections came as a great surprise, particularly to the West, since the Soviets had previously considered them tantamount to “legalised espionage”.²¹ Due to the successful negotiation of several Western positions and, above all, because of the on-site inspections, the Stockholm Final Document was regarded by some observers as a “Western victory on points”.²²

The CDE was of great importance for the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, with the Stockholm provisions already coming into force while it was in progress. Even as further CSBMs were being negotiated in Vienna, the implementation of the most recently adopted measures could be observed in parallel. By and large, the implementation of the Stockholm resolutions went smoothly in

18 Veronika Heyde, *Frankreich im KSZE-Prozess. Diplomatie im Namen der europäischen Sicherheit 1969–1983*, Berlin-Boston 2017, p. 426–430.

19 Unterberger, *Punktesieg*, p. 3.

20 Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, convened in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Concluding Document of the Madrid Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Stockholm 1986, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/d/41238.pdf>, accessed 25.6.2023.

21 Wrede, *KSZE*, p. 32.

22 Unterberger, *Punktesieg*, p. 3.

terms both of manoeuvre observations and of inspections. Although the process was not entirely frictionless,²³ no major violations of the Stockholm CDE provisions were identified during the Vienna Follow-up Meeting or beyond. This contributed to a mood of optimism among the CSCE states concerning future CSBMs and disarmament agreements, giving a boost and further substance to their negotiations in Vienna.²⁴

5 Security at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting: CSBM and the CFE Mandate

The original plan was to organise the CDE process in two stages. While concrete CSBMs were to be negotiated in the first stage, the Stockholm KVAE, the second was to focus on further disarmament negotiations during the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. In Vienna itself, however, it was decided, mostly in accordance with American demands, to divide this process into further CSBM negotiations involving all 35 CSCE participants on the one hand, and separate negotiations on conventional disarmament (CFE Mandate) with only the 23 member states of NATO and the Warsaw Pact on the other. This division, which would have meant excluding the N+N states from the CFE negotiations, was highly controversial at first. France in particular put up massive resistance, with the so-called mandate dispute overshadowing the Vienna negotiations for almost a year until the summer of 1987 and impeding decision-making processes, particularly in the West.²⁵

The concerns of France and the N+N in the context of the mandate dispute were allayed by ensuring a strong integration or “encapsulation” of the CFE

23 There were certainly minor difficulties in the practical implementation of the Stockholm Document, for example during the Swiss manoeuvre “Feuerdorn” in November 1988, where from the German point of view there was a disproportion between the times allocated to observation (13 hours) and transport and the rest of the programme (36 hours). However, this shortcoming was not classified as serious, especially since the manoeuvre observation was carried out largely in accordance with the KVAE document; KVAE-Manöverbeobachtung vom 20.–24.11.1988 in der Schweiz, Bericht aus rüstungskontrollpolitischer Sicht, 14.12.1988, PA-AA, B 43, ZA/144811, p. 1–4.

24 Kurzprotokoll der 6. Sitzung des Unterausschusses für Abrüstung und Rüstungskontrolle, 6. November 1987, BArch, B 136/30771, p. 4–8.

25 A summary of the mandate dispute from the perspective of the Federal Republic of Germany can be found in: Sachstand Konventionelle Rüstungskontrolle, 05.06.1987, BArch, BW 1/30789, p. 2–3.

negotiations within the CFE framework. As part of this close link between the CFE negotiations and the CSCE, regular, mandatory reports were issued by the 23 CFE negotiators to the other twelve CSCE states, providing information on decisions and the status of negotiations. The continuing CSBM and CFE negotiations also took place in close spatial and temporal proximity. Both forums were opened and held at the same time in March 1989 in the Vienna Hofburg, albeit in separate rooms, in order to signal the formal synchronisation and integration of the CFE with the CSCE process.²⁶

This CFE mandate can also be counted a success of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting in terms of security policy, as this new forum meant that there was once again a real chance of conventional disarmament. The negotiations over Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR), which began in Vienna in 1973, had the function of concluding a treaty on conventional disarmament between East and West. However, by the beginning of 1989, they had become so muddled and hopeless²⁷ that they were cancelled after 16 years and de facto (if not officially) replaced by the CFE negotiations. From the perspective of the Austrian foreign ministry, the integration of conventional arms control into the CSCE process in itself improved the process of détente between East and West.²⁸

In addition to the mandate dispute, dual-capable systems – weapon systems that can be deployed both nuclear and conventionally – were another major bone of contention. As these were essential to France's nuclear force, their integration into the CFE negotiations would also have led to a weakening of French nuclear power, which would also have meant a violation of French security policy. According to Wrede, this problem was solved in a "Solomonic" fashion: the reduction of nuclear weapons within the CFE framework was excluded but the conventional form of dual-capable systems was not.²⁹ Other contentious questions included the Soviet proposal for the inclusion of naval forces or the question of the area to which any agreement would apply ("From the Atlantic to the Urals"),³⁰ but none of these issues was as dominant as the mandate dispute.

26 Wrede, *KSZE*, p. 90–95.

27 The data dispute, the question of the exchange and disclosure of official figures on troop levels and heavy weapons in the military blocs constituted a serious impediment to MBFR negotiations; "Neuer Nato-Vergleich der Streitkräfte in Europa", in: *FAZ*, 26.11.1988, p. 5.

28 Michael Gehler, *From Saint-Germain to Lisbon. Austria's Long Road from Disintegrated to United Europe 1919–2009*, Wien 2020, p. 546–547.

29 Wrede, *KSZE*, p. 95.

30 Sachstand Konventionelle Rüstungskontrolle, p. 2–3.

6 Achievements in Vienna: Dissolving the Interdependence of Security and Human Rights

A major stumbling block for the mandate for negotiations on conventional disarmament was the interdependence between security and human rights issues. The aforementioned trade-offs between security and human rights also came to the fore in Vienna. The American position was already clear at the beginning of the Follow-up Meeting in December 1986: a mandate for conventional arms control negotiations (the later CFE mandate) could be realised only if the Warsaw Pact made far-reaching concessions in the area of human rights.³¹ The West had to take advantage of increased Soviet interest in arms control to achieve further successes in human rights negotiations. In April 1987, during the mandate dispute, France was also of the opinion that further steps in the negotiations on conventional security could be taken only once the East had made concessions in the area of human rights.³² While for the Warsaw Pact the success of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting was linked to a mandate for conventional disarmament negotiations, for the United States concessions in the area of human rights on the part of the East were essential for a successful conclusion to the conference.³³ However, the Soviet Union had already taken the first symbolic steps in the area of human rights at the beginning of the Vienna Meeting. One such step was the revocation of Andrey Sakharov's exile in December 1986, which was noted favourably by the American public.³⁴ In the view of the Austrian delegate Stefan Lehne, the participants in Vienna perceived the trade-off between military security and human rights to be, in contrast to the previous follow-up meetings, more than just an impediment to negotiations. In fact, successful negotiations in one area could advance those in another. According to Lehne, the strong interest shown in the CFE mandate by both East and West during the Vienna Follow-up Meeting not only helped to bring it to a successful conclusion but also had a positive influence on the negotiations in the area of human rights.³⁵

31 Ministerialdirektor Freiherr von Richthofen, z. Z. Brüssel, an das Auswärtige Amt. 12.12.1986, in: *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1986*, Berlin-Boston 2017, Dok. 362, p. 1879–1893, on p. 1880–1881, p. 1886–1887.

32 Aufzeichnung des Ministerialdirigenten Kastrup. 24.04.1987, in: *AAPD 1987*, Berlin-Boston 2018, Dok. 117, p. 584–588, on p. 585–586.

33 Michael Gehler/Andrea Brait, "The Breakthrough. Freedom and Security at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Conference 1986–1989", in: Michael Gehler/Wilfried Loth (eds.), *Reshaping Europe*, p. 477–495, on p. 487.

34 Aufzeichnung Kastrup. 24.04.1987, *AAPD 1987*, p. 585.

35 Lehne, *Vienna Meeting*, p. 137–139.

Ultimately, there were significant successes in Vienna both in the area of security and in that of human rights, which would not have been possible without the political change that was taking place in the Soviet Union.³⁶ The so-called Gorbachev factor³⁷ formed the essential foundation for the massive reduction of weapons systems, for the Warsaw Pact and above all the Soviet Union had previously long resisted disarmament, which contributed to the failure of the MBFR negotiations. From the mid-1980s at the latest, there was a strong desire in both blocs, East and West, to establish conventional security. On the Soviet side, conventional disarmament was enormously important for the implementation of Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika reforms. These required large economic and financial resources which were, however, tied up in the military and the defence industry. Disarmament seemed a promising strategy for freeing up these economic resources.³⁸ According to von Bredow, considerations of security policy also played a role in Gorbachev's disarmament initiative.³⁹

The motivation of Western states to limit conventional armaments was also multifaceted. According to the West German delegate Klaus-Jürgen Citron, the primary goal of Western states was stability, i.e. "a stable, secure balance of conventional armed forces at a low level",⁴⁰ in contrast to the Soviet Union, which favoured the reduction of conventional weapons stocks over stability. However, Citron was also certain that with the right wording in the CSCE

36 Yuliya von Saal, *KSZE-Prozess und Perestroika in der Sowjetunion. Demokratisierung, Werteumbruch und Auflösung 1985–1991* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 100), München 2014, p. 4–8.

37 The term "Gorbachev factor" refers to the dominant influence of Mikhail Gorbachev as general secretary of the CPSU on the politics, economy, military and society of the Soviet Union. Helmut Altrichter, *Russland 1989. Der Untergang des sowjetischen Imperiums*, München 2009, p. 16–19. This also had an impact on the further course of the Cold War. The term was coined by Archie Brown; Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, Oxford 1997.

38 Detailed explanations of the domestic political and economic implications of Gorbachev's disarmament policy can be found in e.g. Florian Pressler, "A Triumph of Disarmament? The 1980s and the International Political System", in: Christoph Becker-Schaum/Philipp Gasser et al. (eds.), *The Nuclear Crisis. The Arms Race, Cold war Anxiety, and the German Peace Movement of the 1980s*, New York-Oxford 2016, p. 338–351, on p. 348; Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert*, München 2017, p. 1030; Helmut Altrichter, *Kleine Geschichte der Sowjetunion 1917–1991*, München 2013, p. 160–161, p. 178–179.

39 Wilfried von Bredow, *Der KSZE-Prozess. Von der Zählung zur Auflösung des Ost-West-Konflikts*, Darmstadt 1992, p. 114.

40 Stenographisches Protokoll der 9. Sitzung des Auswärtigen Ausschusses und der 10. Sitzung des Verteidigungsausschusses, 14.10.1987. Parlamentsarchiv des Deutschen Bundestages (PA-DBT), 3104 Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, 3104/4, 11, WP Prot. 9, p. 46.

negotiations, both goals could be harmonised and the wishes of both sides taken into account. As a border state and potential front in the event of war, West Germany in particular had a genuine interest in conventional disarmament. Trade-offs between human rights and security that might prevent conventional disarmament negotiations were therefore not in the interests of the Federal Republic.⁴¹

Furthermore, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) Treaty of 1987 reshuffled the cards with regard to disarmament. In this treaty, the Soviet Union and the United States committed themselves to scrapping their land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles. This led to a shift in the global arms balance: while NATO was superior in the naval and nuclear fields, the Warsaw Pact was superior in the conventional arms.⁴² The nuclear disarmament of the USA increased the threat potential of the Warsaw Pact's conventional superiority. This imbalance was very worrying for some Western states such as Germany, which is why the need for conventional armaments appeared all the more urgent in order to restore the global balance of deterrence.⁴³

Despite some difficulties, the negotiations on the CFE mandate were ultimately successful and led to the signing of the CFE Treaty in November 1990,⁴⁴ which was regarded as a foundational treaty on conventional disarmament and arms control. It set upper limits for the stationing of heavy weapons systems (battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery, combat aircraft and attack helicopters) in Europe, thereby shaping the conventional balance in Europe for years after the Cold War. It has endured to this day and remains in force except in the Russian Federation, which de facto withdrew from the CFE Treaty in 2015⁴⁵ but formally remained part of the agreement until 2023.⁴⁶

41 Richthofen. 12.12.1986, *AAPD 1986*, p. 1880–1881, p. 1886–1887.

42 According to US estimates, the ratio of conventional Warsaw Pact forces to their NATO equivalents was approximately 2:1 in 1987; William W. Kaufmann, *Glasnost, Perestroika and U.S. Defence Spending*, Washington D.C. 1990, p. 32.

43 Gespräch des Bundesministers Genscher mit den Außenministern Howe (Großbritannien), Raimond (Frankreich) und Shultz (USA) in Chevening. 09.12.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, Berlin-Boston 2017, Dok. 353, p. 1825–1834, on p. 1826–1827.

44 Vertrag über konventionelle Streitkräfte in Europa. Über die vorläufige Anwendung einiger Bestimmungen des Vertrags über konventionelle Streitkräfte in Europa, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/207276/b1196519ae7598a29c873570448a59e9/kse-vertrag-data.pdf>, accessed 25.6.2023.

45 Kingston Reif, "Russia Completes CFE Treaty Suspension", in: *Arms Control Today*, April 2015, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2015-04/news-briefs/russia-completes-cfe-treaty-suspension>, accessed 25.6.2023.

46 In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian War, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced Russia's final withdrawal from the CFE Treaty in May 2023; "Putin besiegelt

7 Conclusion

Both the West and the Warsaw Pact states were strongly interested in conventional arms control, albeit for different reasons, as were the N+N states. The desire for conventional disarmament became a kind of lowest common denominator in matters of security for all participants in Vienna. It was so great on all sides that, on the one hand, it was possible to resolve security policy conflicts such as the mandate dispute or the question of the inclusion of dual capability systems – which Shevardnadze, the Soviet foreign minister, held to be nothing less than the “question of questions”⁴⁷ – and, on the other hand, a further argument was created in favour of achieving success in other areas of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, particularly in the humanitarian dimension. This in turn required large concessions from the Warsaw Pact in order not to jeopardise the meeting’s security policy dimension and thus also the CFE Treaty.

This led to a double tie-break in East-West relations. The first was the Stockholm CDE, which utilised the positive changes in the international climate from 1985 onwards to produce the first concrete arms control document; the second was the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, which met the challenge of transforming this positive starting position into concrete negotiation results and resolving the interdependence between security and human rights, which was particularly obstructive at the beginning, during the implementation phase, into a constructive interrelationship between the two areas of negotiation. The Vienna Follow-up Meeting thus fulfilled something of a pioneering function in the field of security. On the basis of the decisions made and negotiating experience gained in Vienna, it became possible to continue security policy negotiations and sign the CFE Treaty in 1990.

Russlands Austritt aus KSE-Vertrag”, in: *Spiegel Online*, 29.05.2023, <https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/abruistung-wladimir-putin-besiegelt-russlands-austritt-aus-kse-vertrag-a-60241242-22ab-4122-8f14-d5ed50d5811c>, accessed 25.6.2023.

47 Wrede, *KSZE*, p. 95.

Shifting Agendas?

The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Vienna CSCE, 1986–1989

Jussi M. Hanhimäki

1 Introduction

“They can write it in Swahili”, was how Henry Kissinger once dismissed the significance of the Helsinki Accords. And while the former national security advisor and secretary of state would later express his appreciation for the role that the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) played in bringing about an end to the Cold War, the anecdote does capture a significant point about the United States’ thinking about the process.¹ Compared to the challenges elsewhere, Europe in the 1970s and 1980s remained a place of relative stability and continuity, a geopolitical arena divided between two military alliances and a few neutral countries with a very small likelihood of significant change. The transformational events that would occur between 1989 and 1991 and change the face of Europe appeared beyond improbable.²

While the CSCE was never central to US foreign policy, it was accorded a certain significance. Few policymakers in the Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan administrations thought that the CSCE could set in motion a wholesale and dramatic transformation of the Warsaw Pact. Yet there was an intrinsic value in keeping the Soviet bloc on the defensive on the issue of human rights. From the long and arduous multilateral negotiations in the early 1970s through the follow-up meetings in Belgrade (1977–1978) and Madrid (1980–1983), American policymakers saw it as a means of engaging the USSR and perhaps even moderating its behaviour. The CSCE also served as a multilateral forum in which the United States could act as the proverbial leader of the

1 Quoted in Jussi M. Hanhimäki, “‘They Can Write it in Swahili’: Kissinger, the Soviets, and the Helsinki Accords, 1973–1975”, in: *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 1 (2003), issue 1, p. 37–58. See also Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York 1994, p. 760.

2 For overviews see: Michael Morgan, *The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War*, Princeton 2018; Sarah Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network*, New York 2011; and Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism*, Princeton 2001. One of the best of many edited collections is Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990*, New York 2019.

free world, demanding the Soviets' and other Warsaw Pact countries' adherence to the principles of human rights laid out in Basket III of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. In short, if the Soviet Union remained America's primary foreign and security policy concern, the CSCE was useful as a means both of engaging the Soviets and of holding the "West" together. By the time the Vienna CSCE opened in November 1986, however, Soviet policy on human rights appeared to be in the process of rapid change because of the drive for reform initiated by the country's new leader, Mikhail Gorbachev.

So how, if at all, did American policy Vienna differ from the previous CSCE follow-up conferences? Did Gorbachev's evident push for openness (*glasnost*) and economic liberalisation (*perestroika*) convince the Reagan administration that a serious transformation in Soviet policy – particularly regarding freedom of movement and political rights – was afoot? Or did the Reagan administration remain deeply suspicious about the USSR's motives all the way to the signing of the Concluding Document of the Vienna meetings in early 1989?

2 The Primacy of the USSR: Détente and Confrontation

While US foreign policy was global in nature, the role of the Soviet Union remained fundamental to America's strategic calculations in the 1980s. This is hardly surprising. Ever since the 1940s the Soviet Union had been "Subject A" – as Richard Nixon once put it³ – for US foreign policy. To be sure, the potentially catastrophic consequences of a thermonuclear war between two superpowers necessitated at least a minimum of diplomatic contact and negotiation to minimise the likelihood of a direct military confrontation that could lead to a global nuclear catastrophe. In the decade after the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, Moscow and Washington had improved bilateral communications to avoid nuclear disaster, signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty (1963), and agreed to combat nuclear proliferation in the form of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968). Yet even in the heyday of détente summitry in the early 1970s – which produced the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I), the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) and a series of other bilateral agreements – competition and proxy military confrontation continued. Detente and Confrontation was how

3 This is what Nixon called the Soviet Union in his much-cited address to the Bohemian Club on 29 July 1967. For the full speech: 2. Address by Richard M. Nixon to the Bohemian Club, Office of the Historian, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume 1, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969–1972, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v01/d2>, accessed 1.7.2023.

the former US diplomat Raymond Garthoff aptly summed up Soviet-American relations.⁴ Moscow and Washington may have moved towards détente in the 1970s and 1980s, but the underlying ideological hostility and ongoing geopolitical competition were hardly things of the past.⁵

In fact, concerns about the Soviet Union continued to influence virtually every aspect of American foreign policy in the last decades of the Cold War. The normalisation of Sino-American relations in the 1970s was justified in large part in terms of its perceived benefits for the United States' dealings with the USSR. Already in the mid-1970s Kissinger referred to the People's Republic of China (PRC) as "one of our best NATO allies",⁶ and the Sino-American relationship became a tool of America's policy of containment. In practice, this meant that throughout the remainder of the Cold War the United States treated China very differently from the Soviet Union. The Carter administration cast aside concerns about China's questionable human rights record as it moved fully to normalise diplomatic relations in early 1979. Throughout the 1980s a Sino-American strategic partnership (or "strategic association") aimed at containing the Soviet Union continued under the Reagan administration. Even the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Kremlin at first did nothing to alter the perception that a stronger China translated into an asset for the United States in its ongoing confrontation and competition with the Soviet Union.⁷

Underlying American concerns about the Soviet Union was the perception that in the 1960s and 1970s Moscow had truly gone global. As the United States moved gradually to extricate itself from Vietnam, the Soviet leadership appeared relatively confident in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Moscow rivalled and ultimately overtook China as the principal supporter of North Vietnam and could hence claim some credit for the country's unification in 1975. The USSR became increasingly active in Africa (particularly in Angola and the

4 Raymond Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: Soviet-American Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, Washington D.C. 1994; For an overview see Jussi M. Hanhimäki, "Détente and the Reconfiguration of Superpower Relations", in: David C. Engerman/May Paul Friedman/Melani McAlister (eds.), *The Cambridge History of America and the World. Volume 4: 1945 to the Present*, New York 2022, p. 512–534.

5 General accounts on the long 1970s include: Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and the Transformation of the Cold War*, Washington D.C. 2012; Daniel Sargent, *Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s*, New York 2015; Barbara Zanchetta, *Transformation of American International Power in the 1970s*, New York 2013.

6 Quoted in Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy*, New York 2004, p. 419.

7 For a detailed discussion of Sino-American cooperation in the last decades of the Cold War, see: S. Mahmud Ali, *US-China Cold War Collaboration, 1971–1989*, London-New York 2005.

Horn of Africa) in the 1970s while maintaining its close relationship with Castro's Cuba.⁸ Towards the end of the decade, various regional conflicts further eroded the basis of détente. Rather remarkably, seen from today's perspective, the 1977–1978 war between Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden Desert was considered, both in Washington and Moscow, as a key conflict in Cold War terms. Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, won support within the administration for viewing Soviet bloc aid to Ethiopia as a direct challenge to the United States. On the Soviet side, some leaders believed that by receiving Soviet advisers and Cuban troops, the leftist military regime in Ethiopia would become a shining example of the inevitable triumph of socialism across Africa.⁹

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 is widely seen as the end of superpower détente. The Carter administration withdrew SALT II from ratification by Congress and issued the so-called Carter Doctrine in January 1980. A year later the new president, Ronald Reagan, made no effort to hide his sentiments about the Soviet Union and its leadership.

I know of no leader of the Soviet Union since the revolution, and including the present leadership, that has not more than once repeated in the various Communist congresses they hold their determination that their goal must be the promotion of world revolution and a one-world Socialist or Communist state, whichever word you want to use,

Reagan said during his first press conference as president.¹⁰ Under the Reagan Doctrine, the United States claimed to contain Soviet influence all across the globe¹¹ – most obviously by supporting all manner of “freedom fighters” as long as they were plausibly anti-communist. Whether it was the mujahidin in Afghanistan, the UNITA in Angola or the Contras in Nicaragua, the Reagan administration challenged the Soviet Union and its perceived allies and proxies on a global scale. But such aid was for the most part indirect (and not always

8 The most comprehensive work on these issues remains Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War. Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, Cambridge 2007.

9 Louise Woodroffe, *Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden: The United States, the Horn of Africa, and the Demise of Detente*, Kent, OH 2013.

10 The President's News Conference, January 29, 1981, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/presidents-news-conference-1>, accessed 7.7.2023.

11 For a compact discussion of the Reagan Doctrine and its impact see: Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order*, Ithaca, NY 2016, p. 68–118.

sanctioned by Congress) and its actual impact difficult to measure. American assistance certainly contributed to Soviet troubles in Afghanistan and made it difficult, if not impossible, for the Sandinistas to cement control in Nicaragua. But whether the Reagan offensive – such as it was – helped bring the Soviet Union to the brink of collapse remains a matter of heavily partisan (and heavily “American”) debate.¹²

The tensions of the early 1980s did not change everything. Even during Reagan’s first term as president, Soviet-American relations continued to bear the imprint of détente. This was most evident when it came to nuclear weapons. Negotiations for an Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) began already in September 1981. There were problems and diversions. The Soviets suspended these talks in November 1983 and despite widespread public protests the Americans began deploying medium-range missiles to Europe in 1984. Yet by 1985 – following the re-election of Reagan and the arrival Mikhail Gorbachev in the Kremlin – bilateral Soviet-American summitry returned. Détente was making a comeback. But it appeared that the focus would remain, as it had done since the Nixon presidency, on reducing the likelihood of nuclear war through bilateral treaties. Throughout the 1980s, the primary agenda in Soviet-American relations remained largely unchanged.

3 CSCE: Pragmatism and Human Rights

There is a simple reason for the virtual absence of the CSCE from the above narrative, which is that none of the American administrations in power in the 1970s and 1980s considered the Helsinki process to be central to their foreign policy. It is easy to see why. The “real” issues – the nuclear arms race and military interventionism – were addressed elsewhere. Compared to the many armed conflicts and changing superpower tactics of the 1970s and 1980s, the Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan administrations viewed the CSCE process as a long-term tool to be used to moderate Soviet behaviour – or at least remind the world of its brutal excesses.

Moreover, the CSCE already carried domestic baggage in the 1970s. “Jerry don’t go” ran the Wall Street Journal’s memorable headline on 23 July 1975, pleading with President Ford not to go to Helsinki and “capitulate” to the Soviet

12 See Jussi M. Hanhimäki, “Introduction”, in: Bernhard Blumenau/Jussi Hanhimäki/Barbara Zanchetta (eds.), *New Perspectives on the End of the Cold War: Unexpected Transformations?*, London 2017, p. 1–12. For a brief account of the “Reagan offensive” in the third world see Westad, *Global Cold War*, p. 331–363.

Union. To many, the Helsinki agreements – and détente in general – amounted to a betrayal of American values and a legitimization of the Soviet sphere. In 1976 the presidential candidates Reagan (who narrowly lost to Gerald Ford in the Republican primaries) and Jimmy Carter (who eventually claimed victory in the general election) were both critical of the Helsinki Final Act. Yet after 1977 the Carter administration came to see the CSCE as a venue for promoting the new president's human rights agenda. Taking over in 1981, the Reagan administration essentially continued in the same vein.¹³

While human rights remained a centrepiece of the United States' agenda during the Belgrade (1977–1978) and Madrid (1980–1983) follow-up meetings, American policymakers never expected fast results. Entrenched totalitarian regimes like the Soviet Union, with well-developed mechanisms and institutions devoted to containing internal dissent, were unlikely suddenly to shift their policies. When it came down to such questions as freedom of movement or the persecution of dissidents, “our expectations must be realistic”, a presidential review memorandum of July 1977 noted in advance of the Belgrade follow-up meeting.¹⁴ The Carter administration emphasised the need to monitor Soviet (and other Warsaw Pact countries') compliance with the CSCE human rights provisions. The Reagan administration followed this practice and continued working with Congress and private groups to highlight abuses of human rights in the Soviet bloc. Both administrations also exhibited pragmatism as individual cases were occasionally dealt with via high-level diplomatic channels.¹⁵ There was significant continuity from Carter to Reagan in their approach to the question of human rights and the CSCE. Both administrations viewed the issue of rights as a tool of undermining the legitimacy of totalitarian rule and something that enabled the United States to emphasise a common “Western” agenda. Focusing on human rights was also domestically useful as it provided a basis for engaging with the Congress and private groups. After all, it would be difficult to go wrong by advocating for individual freedom.

From the perspective of advancing human rights, however, the end results of American pressure as well as all the transnational activism that had

13 E.g. Sarah B. Snyder, “Jerry, Don't Go': Domestic Opposition to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act”, in: *Journal of American Studies* 44 (2009), issue 1, p. 67–81; Carl J. Bon Tempo, “Helsinki at Home. NGOs, the Helsinki Final Act and Politics in the United States, 1975–1985”, in: Badalassi/Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War*, p. 230–246.

14 David F. Schmitz/Vanessa Walker, “Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy”, in: *Diplomatic History* 28 (2004), issue 1, p. 113–143, on p. 126.

15 Christian Philip Peterson, “Confronting' Moscow. The Reagan Administration, Human Rights and the Final Act”, in: *The Historian* 74 (2012), issue 1, p. 57–86.

proliferated since the Helsinki Final Act were not encouraging. Soviet and East European governments had not substantially changed their approaches to political rights or freedom of movement. When engaging with their American and West European counterparts, Warsaw Pact representatives emphasised that human rights were not just political and legal rights but included economic, social and cultural rights. In essence, this implied that there was to be no change in repressive measures brought against the activities of dissidents and human rights groups across the Soviet bloc. (“We are masters in this house”, the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, had confidently told his Politburo comrades in the mid-1970s.¹⁶ In the years that followed, the future general secretary (1982–1984) made sure that dissidents were unable to challenge this dictum.) Reagan, in a speech commemorating the tenth anniversary of Helsinki, set out the American view in straightforward terms:

Sadly, despite some gains, the Soviet Union and several other signatories of the Helsinki Act have failed to keep their promises. Despite the solemn pledge that citizens have the right “to know and act upon” their rights, brave men and women have suffered for taking this commitment by their governments seriously. Those who have tried to exercise freedoms of religion, thought, conscience, and belief have often paid a tragic price. The Helsinki accords called for freer movement of people and ideas across the European divide, but that flow remains impeded, and in the case of the Soviet Union it is but a trickle.¹⁷

Despite the installation of Gorbachev as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union six months earlier, little had changed when it came to human rights. Instead, the focus of a “reset” in Soviet-American relations was on nuclear arms negotiations. In November 1985 Reagan met with Gorbachev in Geneva; the following year they would hold another summit in Reykjavik. Ultimately, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the INF Treaty in 1987, indicating that Soviet-American détente was truly back on track. While

16 As cited in Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence. Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents*, New York 1995, p. 346. For Soviet dissidents see Peter Reddaway, *The Dissidents*, Washington DC 2020.

17 Ronald Reagan's statement on the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, July 30, 1985, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/state-ment-10th-anniversary-signing-final-act-conference-security-and-cooperation>, accessed 10.7.2023.

no one anticipated that a major transformation was just around the corner, it would not be business as usual at the Vienna CSCE.

4 Vienna and the Moscow Proposal

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's opening speech in Vienna in November 1986 placed human rights firmly on the Vienna agenda. He issued an invitation for a CSCE meeting, to be held in Moscow, "to consider the whole range of problems, including human contacts, information, culture and education."¹⁸ In other words, the Soviets were taking the initiative on Basket III, on the very issue which the United States and Western European diplomats had been trying to force for over a decade. The Soviet delegation formally submitted the proposal on 10 December 1986. Although both Shevardnadze's speech and the formal proposal were short on detail, they were important demonstrations of a shifting Soviet agenda on human rights. In fact, the Soviets sponsored over thirty proposals in the first four months of the Vienna meeting.¹⁹

The United States and its Western allies did not take the sudden new Soviet openness at face value. Distrust of Soviet motivations and sincerity was sufficiently deep-seated to effectively place the Moscow proposal on ice for several months pending evidence that Gorbachev was seriously moving towards the Western position on human rights. In other words, the question was whether, after years of keeping human rights on the agenda as a means of putting pressure on the USSR, real progress might now be on the cards. The evidence seemed limited or indeed contrary to Soviet rhetoric, as when the news broke that Anatoly Marchenko, one of the founders of the Moscow Helsinki Watch Group, had died in prison on 10 December 1986, International Human Rights Day.²⁰

Despite the promising rhetoric of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, there was no immediate change in the US approach. A week after the opening of the Vienna Conference, Secretary of State George Shultz had summed up the American approach in a message to President Reagan:

18 Quoted in Chris van Esterik/Hester Minnema, "The Conference that Came in from the Cold", in: Arie Bloed/Pieter van Dijk (eds.), *The Human Dimension of the Helsinki Process. The Vienna Follow-up Meeting and its Aftermath* (International Studies in Human Rights Vol. 20), Dordrecht-Boston-London 1991, p. 1–29, on p. 5.

19 Snyder, *Human Rights Activism*, p. 176–177; Morgan, *Final Act*, p. 244.

20 Snyder, *Human Rights Activism*, p. 177–180.

On human rights, we will continue in our bilateral contacts to press on emigration and specific cases. The Vienna CSCE Follow-on Meeting will give us another means to keep the spotlight on human rights and to press for improved compliance. Deeds – emigration, specific cases – are our bottom line [...]. Together with our Allies, we should probe the Soviet invitation, expressing our readiness to consider it *if* the Soviets meet our other CSCE objectives, agree to consider Western proposals, and agree to conditions that would make the Moscow meeting meaningful.²¹

In fact, relatively little changed on either side throughout the first year of the Vienna conference. Rhetoric aside, Soviet and other Warsaw Pact diplomats continued to employ a well-tested tactic to deflect Western criticism of their human rights policies by emphasising the importance of economic, social and cultural rights in contrast with political and civil rights. On the Western side, too, old habits died hard. In the fall of 1987 Colin Powell, the US national security adviser, recommended to Reagan that the US should defer a decision on a possible Moscow Conference as long as possible in order “to prolong pressure on the Soviets to improve human rights performance if they wished to keep open the door for a Moscow conference.” Should the Soviets insist on a decision on a Moscow conference, then Powell advised that “our decision would be ‘no.’” Even in early 1988, more than a year after the initial Soviet proposal, National Security Council staff recommended that the US

should avoid either rejecting or embracing a Moscow human rights meeting prematurely, thus maintaining our best leverage on Soviet human rights performance and the indicators of performance which are the best expression of that leverage.²²

Change was, however, in the air. In 1987 the Soviet Union improved its human rights record by releasing political prisoners, resolving a number of contested family reunification cases, liberalising emigration policy and curbing radio jamming. In 1988, both at the annual Soviet Communist Party conference and in meetings with Warsaw Pact leaders, Gorbachev kept insisting on the need

21 8. Memorandum from Secretary of State Shultz to President Reagan, November 14, 1986, Office of the Historian, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1981–1988, volume VI, Soviet Union, October 1986 – January 1989, Document 8, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1981-88v06/d8>, accessed 11.7.2023 (emphasis added).

22 “CSCE Endgame” Fritz W. Ermath to Colin Powell, January 27, 1988, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, CSCE Vienna 1987 (3) Perina, Rudolf U. Files RAC, Box 1 Colin Powell memo (1987).

for serious human rights reform. Avoiding “serious conversation about human rights”, the Soviet leader maintained in a speech to his Warsaw Pact counterparts in July 1988, was “a weak spot in us”. Instead of “rewarding” the USSR for such efforts, however, the American delegation kept up the pressure. “Why can’t all prisoners of conscience be released?”, Warren Zimmermann, the head of the US delegation to Vienna, asked at congressional hearings in August 1988.²³

But perhaps the most significant and unpredictable factor for Western – and particularly American – restraint in face of the Soviet charm offensive was Gorbachev’s push for a “Common European Home”. Broad in principle but vague in detail, the Soviet leader started making his case in earnest in the spring of 1987. However, one implication of the concept was particularly alarming for the United States and its allies. As Neil Malcolm put it, Gorbachev essentially maintained – in a manner not entirely dissimilar to Charles de Gaulle’s notion of a “Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals” – that while the USSR “was inside the European home by right, the United States was there by invitation, and perhaps only on special occasions.”²⁴

For Washington, the transatlantic dimension was always embedded in the CSCE process as a complicating factor. While the West European states may, at times, have objected to America’s dominant role in NATO, they were far from ready to contemplate a European security system without the United States. At the same time, there was no denying that the United States (and Canada) were geopolitical outsiders and that European political cooperation and economic integration had raised concerns about an emerging transatlantic rivalry since the 1970s. In the 1960s and 1970s several European governments – most spectacularly West Germany with its Ostpolitik – had embarked on independent initiatives vis-à-vis the Soviet bloc that rang alarm bells in Washington.²⁵ In 1988, as some of these same countries appeared ready to accept the Soviet proposal for a human rights meeting in Moscow, with the West German and French foreign ministers, Hans Dietrich Genscher and Roland Dumas, paying a surprise visit to Vienna on 1 July 1988, to press the negotiators to conclude the meeting as soon as possible. Other NATO allies, including Great Britain and

23 Snyder, *Human Rights Activism*, p. 192–193.

24 Neil Malcolm, “‘Common European Home’ and Soviet European Policy”, in: *International Affairs* 65 (1989), issue 4, p. 659–676, on p. 665.

25 For an overview of transatlantic relations in the Cold War era see Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *Pax Transatlantica, America and Europe in the Post-Cold War Era*, New York 2021, p. 13–41.

Canada, appeared less in a hurry, continuing to demand full compliance on human rights issues from the Soviet bloc.²⁶

The pressure seemed to work. Throughout 1988, American negotiators in Vienna and Secretary of State Shultz in his meetings with Shevardnadze insisted that the US would only accept the Soviet Moscow conference proposal if there was clear evidence that the USSR was changing its human rights policies. The Soviets continued to release more political prisoners and allowed more people to emigrate. While there was no wholesale capitulation – human rights violations would continue until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 – it was becoming increasingly difficult to argue that Gorbachev was making merely token gestures.

In the end, Gorbachev's public diplomacy helped clinch an agreement in Vienna. On 7 December 1988, at the UN General Assembly in New York, the Soviet leader made one of his most cited speeches. After declaring the continuation of the recently relaxed policies on emigration and an end to all jamming of foreign radio broadcasts, Gorbachev announced the unilateral withdrawal of 50,000 Soviet troops from Eastern Europe. Outlining the ongoing political reforms in the USSR, Gorbachev affirmed his commitment to engaging "in the human rights monitoring arrangements in the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation." There appeared to be no doubt, Gorbachev asserted, that all this meant "we have the preconditions for making 1989 the decisive year."²⁷

It was a seminal moment and helped remove the remaining obstacles to an agreement about the human dimension of the Concluding Document of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting. There would be a Conference on the Human Dimension in Moscow in 1991, but it would be preceded by two other conferences: Paris in 1989 and Copenhagen in 1990. Moreover, the Vienna Concluding Document also included an agreement on a comprehensive human rights monitoring process. In effect, the Soviet Union had accepted most of the human rights demands of the United States and its NATO allies. In 1989, East Europeans expressed their preference by overthrowing communist governments one by one.

26 Esterik/Minnema, "The Conference that Came in from the Cold", in: Bloed/van Dijk (eds.), *The Human Dimension*, p. 24.

27 Snyder, *Human Rights Activism*, p. 209. For the full speech see: Provisional verbatim record of the 72nd meeting, 7 December 1988: General Assembly, 43rd session. United Nations Digital Library, A/43/PV.72, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/54974?ln=en>, accessed 12.7.2023.

5 Conclusion

At a meeting of President Ford's cabinet in August 1975, Henry Kissinger summed up the American approach to the CSCE quite succinctly. The CSCE, he opined, "was never an element of US foreign policy. We never pushed it and stayed a half step behind our allies all through the process. But we didn't want to break with our allies or confront the Soviets on it." Yet Kissinger had seen potential in the Helsinki Accords. "All the new things in the document", he maintained, "are in our favour – peaceful change, human contacts, maneuver notification."²⁸ That Kissinger considered the likelihood that real change would occur limited does not change the fact that Helsinki provided a framework for highlighting the most obvious deficit of totalitarian systems: their disregard for human rights.

The CSCE never dominated the US foreign policy agenda, but the Soviet Union did. The ability to challenge the USSR on human rights in a multilateral forum was a useful asset employed by successive American administrations throughout the follow-up conferences in the late 1970s and early 1980s. But relatively little had changed in Soviet human rights practices by the time the Vienna conference opened. Scepticism about the nature and purposes of Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika was dominant as many dissidents continued to languish in jails in the USSR and free speech remained heavily curtailed across Warsaw Pact nations. The Soviet proposal for a human rights conference to be held in Moscow was thus met with doubt and suspicion: was Gorbachev simply disguising his ultimate aim of maximising Soviet power and influence? In the Soviet leader's notion of a "Common European Home", American policymakers instinctively suspected a ploy to drive a wedge between Washington and its NATO partners. In this context, highlighting the gap between the Soviets' human rights rhetoric and practice was not only a strong issue of principle but also made the Vienna meetings a multilateral platform from which the United States could coordinate a common Western position and retain its role as the proverbial leader of the "free world".

The outcome – an effective Soviet acceptance of Western human rights standards – was far beyond what Kissinger or any American policymaker could have expected in 1975 or even at the beginning of 1989. In less than three years after the conclusion of Vienna, the Soviet Union itself was no more. It

28 Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, August 8, 1975, 2 p.m., Office of the Historian, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, VOL. XXXIX, European Security, Document 339, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v39/d339>, accessed 13.7.2023.

is impossible to “prove” that this shift in Soviet policy and the outcomes it contributed to was in a result of US policy. But Gorbachev’s reforms did not proceed in isolation and each of his statements related to human rights not only raised expectations but also strengthened the arguments in favour of full compliance with the standards embedded in the CSCE. While its causes were multiple, the outcome of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting had shifted the international human rights discourse decisively in favour of the West and undoubtedly contributed to the eventual unravelling of the Cold War order in Europe.

European Political Cooperation at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting (1986–1989)

Matthias Peter

1 European Political Cooperation and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)

At their council session on 27 October 1970, the foreign ministers of the six member states of the European Community (EC) – Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany – adopted the so-called Luxembourg (or “Davignon”) Report, committing themselves to greater cooperation in the field of foreign policy. By introducing European Political Cooperation (EPC), they provided themselves with an instrument for the coordination of foreign policy positions that was to flank economic cooperation.¹ By taking this step, the EC sought to strengthen its cohesion and establish itself as a player on the international stage. The long-term goal, as formulated by the heads of state and government in a 1973 document entitled “The European Identity”, was a “European Union”, in which EC and EPC would be merged, and the fostering of a European identity.² From the outset, the CSCE was at the centre of this joint undertaking. This was in accordance with the stated intentions of the EC foreign ministers, who in 1970 had defined the CSCE, alongside the Middle East, as a further focus of EPC’s work.³ Last but not least, the member states of the EC – nine in number since Denmark, the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom joined in 1973 – regarded the CSCE process as a suitable

1 Bericht der Außenminister der EG-Mitgliedstaaten über die Politische Einigung vom 27.10.1970 (Davignon-Bericht), in: *Europa-Archiv* 1970, D 520–524.

2 “Declaration on European Identity”, 14.12.1973, in: Christopher Hill/Karen E. Smith (eds.), *European Foreign Policy. Key Documents*, London-New York 2000, p. 93–97; *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1973*, München 2004, III, Dok. 422, p. 2059–2062; Berndt von Staden, “Politische Zusammenarbeit der EG-Staaten”, in: *Außenpolitik* 23 (1972), p. 200–209, on p. 202; Matthias Peter, *Die Bundesrepublik im KSZE-Prozess 1975–1983. Die Umkehrung der Diplomatie*, (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte Vol. 105), Berlin-München-Boston 2015, p. 56–59; Angela Romano, “The European Community and the Belgrade CSCE”, in: Vladimir Bilandžić/Dittmar Dahlmann/Milan Kosanović (eds.), *From Helsinki to Belgrade. The First CSCE Follow-up Meeting and the Crisis of Détente* (Internationale Beziehungen: Theorie und Geschichte Vol. 10), Göttingen-Bonn 2012, p. 205–224, on p. 205–207.

3 Runderlass von Staden, 23.11.1970, in: *AAPD* 1970, München 2001, III, Dok. 564, p. 2100–2103.

instrument for countering the bilateralism of the superpowers and formulating distinctly European interests.⁴ Just as the CSCE was an important driving force in the development of EPC, the EC member states also influenced the course of the Conference. In particular, they succeeded in adding dynamic elements to the Kremlin's static concept for a European security conference, considerably expanding the topics to be addressed (especially in the humanitarian field), formulating rules for the follow-up to the conference and – as was demonstrated at the first Follow-up Meeting in Belgrade (1977–1978) but above all at the second Follow-up Meeting in Madrid (1980–1983) – making the CSCE an instrument of East-West détente.⁵

However, its claim to act as a unit within the CSCE also made EPC an important forum for EC countries to present their own positions in order to gain the support of their partners for their national goals. This was particularly true for West Germany, part of a divided country in the middle of Europe. In the phase of the realisation and further development of the Final Act after 1975, it sought the backing of its EPC partners in order to push for improved rights for Germans beyond the Iron Curtain. France, on the other hand, which was not part of NATO's military command structure, pursued its special interest in establishing a forum for disarmament and arms control within the CSCE process.⁶ Something similar could be said for the United Kingdom in its capacity as transatlantic "bridge builder"⁷ or for the Netherlands with its pronounced interest in seeing human rights implemented. In December 1985, just under a year before the start of the Vienna follow-up meeting, the European Council adopted the Single European Act (SEA), which placed EPC on a new footing. With the SEA, the member states – twelve since the accession of Greece (1981) and Portugal and Spain (1986) – also made provisions for the organisational consolidation of their political cooperation. Specifically, this referred to the

4 On the significance of the first phase of the CSCE (1972–1975) for the development of the EPC see the detailed account in Daniel Möckli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War. Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity*, London-New York 2009, p. 99–139.

5 Möckli, *European Foreign Policy*, p. 109–123; Frans A. M. Alting von Geusau, "The Nine and Détente", in: Nils Andréén/Karl E. Birnbaum (eds.), *Belgrade and Beyond: The CSCE Process in Perspective*, Alphen aan den Rijn/Rockville, MD 1980, p. 17–25, on p. 20; Peter, *Die Bundesrepublik im KSZE-Prozess*, p. 314–317, p. 530–532; Romano, *The European Community*, p. 216–224.

6 Veronika Heyde, "Nicht nur Entspannung und Menschenrechte. Die Entdeckung von Abrüstung und Rüstungskontrolle durch die französische KSZE-Politik", in: Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer), München 2012, p. 83–98.

7 Kai Hebel, "Die 'Brückenbauer'? Großbritannien als transatlantischer Vermittler in der KSZE 1972–1978", in: Peter/Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt*, p. 99–120.

establishment of a permanent secretariat and the manner of cooperation with third countries and international organisations.⁸ It was precisely against the background of this new step in its development that the subsequent Vienna Follow-up Meeting took on particular significance for EPC. While it had previously been an ad hoc “negotiating sub-system”,⁹ its institutionalisation also increased its claim to political participation and an enhanced status, especially vis-à-vis the East.

How did the EC countries attempt to live up to this claim and implement their CSCE policies in a field where alliance solidarity, European identity and national interests existed in a state of tension? This question will be explored below with a focus on the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.

2 The Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting, 1986–1989

2.1 Preparations

The preparations for the Vienna Follow-up Meeting on the part of its Western participants served primarily for the formulation of goals and the agreement on a tactical approach rather than on reaching conclusions on points of substance. “A fundamental unity of purpose and leeway in individual proposals”, is how Ekkehard Eickhoff, the head of the West German delegation, summed up the general approach.¹⁰ Already at this stage, familiar national interests came to the fore. The United States once again saw the meeting as an opportunity to criticise the USSR’s human rights record and to press Moscow to make progress on humanitarian matters. Accordingly, Washington advocated an extensive phase of implementation criticism and a set end to the conference on 1 August 1987, the anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. West Germany, on the other hand, pursued a broader approach aimed at progress in all three baskets and the further expansion of the conference system. To this end, as the political director of the West German foreign ministry, Gerold von Braunmühl, put it, it was important to “integrate our ideas into the starting positions of EPC and NATO for Vienna and at the same time to mould the political declarations of the Western bodies in our favour”.¹¹

8 Schriffterlass Schilling vom 10.7.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, Berlin-Boston 2017, II, Dok. 189, p. 997–998.

9 Alting von Geusau, *The Nine and Détente*, p. 18.

10 Eickhoff an Auswärtiges Amt (AA), 16.9.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, II, Dok. 244, p. 1298–1299. Previously untranslated German language sources were translated by the author.

11 Aufzeichnung Braunmühl vom 18.3.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, I, Dok. 75, p. 430.

It was therefore hardly surprising that Germany introduced a comprehensive strategy paper, first in EPC and then in NATO, which formed the basis for the West's further coordination. In addition to taking stock of the situation, the paper identified four main areas in which further agreements were to be reached:

- “improvement of the code of conduct contained in the CSCE framework;
- intensification of the dialogue on security and stability including arms control with regard to the balance of conventional forces;
- development of East-West cooperation in Basket 2: economics, science and technology, environment;
- development of the contents of Basket 3: the human dimension, cultural identity, information, education.”¹²

In the course of discussions over the summer of 1986, the EC member states succeeded in asserting themselves in the NATO circle on important procedural issues, such as not aiming for a fixed end date for the conference.¹³ A compromise was also reached with the United States on the duration of the implementation debate, which was to be concluded at the beginning of February 1987 before entering the proposal phase.

In addition to procedural issues, substantive issues and possible proposals were also discussed during the preparatory phase. The United States, for instance, floated the idea of admitting “Helsinki monitors” in the participating states. Denmark endeavoured to set up a “semi-permanent body” to discuss issues relating to human contacts and family reunification. Greece, for its part, announced that it would propose a further meeting in Vienna on the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Netherlands wished to arrange a meeting of experts on tourism, while Turkey sought stronger protections for migrant workers.¹⁴ All proposals were initially only declarations of intent, but they showed in what material terms the Western participants intended to fill out the general guidelines.

2.2 *The Conference*

Indeed, there was at first no need for concrete proposals, the initial stage being traditionally given over to a critical survey of the implementation of CSCE agreements in the member states. In parallel, until December 1986, the EPC

12 “CSCE Process and Vienna Follow-up Meeting (General Remarks)” (Fernschreiben Nr. 255 Coreu aus Bonn), Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PA-AA), B 28, Zwischenarchiv (ZA), Bd. 158449.

13 Eickhoff an AA, 16.9.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, II, Dok. 244, p. 1298.

14 Eickhoff an AA, 16.9.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, II, Dok. 244, p. 1296–1300 (cit. p. 1299).

delegations in Vienna were engaged in consultations on the first packages of proposals for Baskets II and III, though no final discussion at the NATO level took place at this stage. What and how many proposals the West would table, and when and by whom they would be tabled, therefore remained an open question at first.¹⁵

Unlike the West, the Warsaw Pact states began to make proposals even during the implementation debate, the most striking of which was the Kremlin's surprising proposal to discuss humanitarian issues in Moscow as part of a conference on human contacts, information, culture and education.¹⁶ The actual proposal phase, including for EPC, only began in February 1987. 154 proposals were on the table by the summer, although only a small number of them actually became relevant. The Western camp was responsible for a total of 30 proposals. The EPC group focussed on Basket II. The proposals, particularly in the area of trade but also on science and the environment, were tabled jointly.¹⁷

However, the EPC's main interest was in its so-called "flagship" proposal (WT.19) in the humanitarian field. It was formally registered on 4 February 1987. This proposal provided for a mechanism aimed primarily at improved monitoring of compliance with humanitarian obligations, thereby increasing the pressure to fulfil them. This was achieved, first, by an obligation to provide information on questions of human rights and fundamental freedoms (including those of "private individuals" and "private groups"), second, by the obligation to settle individual humanitarian cases bilaterally upon request, third, by establishing of a notification procedure to keep the other participating states informed and, fourth, by the right of each participating state to request special meetings of the 35 "within the shortest possible time" "to discuss and resolve specific situations or cases". In addition to this strengthened monitoring mechanism, the group was in favour of launching "continuous action" through a series of meetings that would culminate in a major "conference on

15 Eickhoff an AA, 20.12.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, II, Dok. 374, p. 1947–1957.

16 CSCE/WT.2, Vorschlag der UdSSR bezüglich der Einberufung einer Konferenz von Vertretern der KSZE-Teilnehmerstaaten über die Entwicklung der humanitären Zusammenarbeit, 10.12.1986, PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 153445.

17 Vorschläge zur Einberufung einer Ost-West-Wirtschaftskonferenz (CSCE/WT.58, 18.02.1987, von den USA unterstützt), zum Umweltschutz (CSCE/WT.89, 27.02.1987, co-sponsored by the USA), zur Biotechnologie (CSCE/WT.116, 13.03.1987, co-sponsored by Iceland, Canada, Norway, Hungary and the USA) sowie zur Reaktorsicherheit (CSCE/WT.E.8, 09.04.1987, EPCZ without Italy and Luxembourg), PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 153446 and 153448. See also Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West Relations* (Austrian Institute for International Affairs Series), Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford 1991, p. 102, p. 200 (panel II).

the human dimension of the CSCE".¹⁸ Although the time and place of this conference remained open, the French foreign minister, Jean-Bernard Raimond, had already announced that his government would convene a meeting in Paris to mark the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of Man.¹⁹

A look at the individual elements of this key Western proposal shows that its elaboration was exclusively the work of the EPC group. Consequently, it was planned to introduce it as a proposal by the Twelve and not as a "Western" proposal in Vienna. Naturally, this approach caused annoyance among the NATO partners, who felt excluded from having a say. The EPC approach was criticised for contradicting the usual consensus-building practices and weakening Western cohesion in the key area of human rights. Despite these concerns, however, the other NATO partners soon agreed to support the proposal without making any changes. The EPC group finally agreed to explicitly mention them as co-sponsors in the CSCE plenary sessions while "clearly emphasising the identity of the Twelve in the authorship of the proposal".²⁰ This was finally achieved by naming the "member states of the European Community" followed by the United States, Canada, Iceland, Norway and Turkey as co-sponsors in the proposal's opening sentence.

The other Western proposals were presented in varying constellations. In Basket I, for example, only Belgium, the UK, Canada, the Netherlands, Spain and the USA were responsible for a text on terrorism.²¹ Among the plethora of proposals for Basket III, it is worth mentioning the text on facilitating travel submitted by Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Turkey, the United States and West Germany.²² The different levels of support that characterised these proposals naturally reflected the national priorities that existed within the EPC group. Germany, for example, submitted a total of eight proposals to facilitate humanitarian contacts. It was particularly striking that a total of seven proposals were submitted jointly by Western and Eastern group members, an absolute novelty in the history of the CSCE.²³

Concrete work on texts subsequently proved difficult, as the EPC states initially felt unable to enter into negotiations on their own "flagship" proposal (WT.19). Differences of opinion persisted, particularly with regard to the precise implementation of the individual measures, but also on the issue of the

18 CSCE/WT.19, Vorschlag über die menschliche Dimension der Schlussakte von Helsinki, 4.2.1987, PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 153445.

19 Eickhoff an AA, 12.3.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, Berlin-Boston 2019, I, Dok. 92, p. 521, annot. 11.

20 Eickhoff an AA, 28.1.1987 (Drahtbericht Nr. 84), PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 153428.

21 CSCE/WT.116, 13.3.1987, PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 153446.

22 CSCE/WT/E.5, 3.3.1987, PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 153448.

23 Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting*, p. 102.

human rights conference. It was not until a year later, after a long internal coordination process, that the group presented a non-paper on 19 February 1988 to concretise the four procedural proposals of WT.19.²⁴ However, this did not settle all disagreements, which principally concerned the question of whether each participating state should be given the right to convene ad hoc meetings of the 35 on individual humanitarian cases, a point on which the Netherlands was particularly insistent. A Belgian compromise formula discussed in the twelve-member group, on the other hand, envisaged agreeing on three or four fixed dates per year instead of an unlimited number of meetings. The disagreement within the EPC group remained unresolved for the time being, so that the coordinator for Basket I – the head of the Austrian delegation, Rudolf Torovsky – was asked to defer the non-paper until further notice. In the meantime, the EPC political committee in Brussels was working flat out to revise the document.²⁵ Cooperation between the EC partners proved difficult due to Franco-American differences in the talks on a mandate for negotiations on conventional arms control (CAC). The French, who were not part of NATO's military command structure and feared for their defence independence, were vehemently opposed to bloc-to-bloc negotiations, preferring negotiations within the CSCE. However, a CSCE setting was categorically rejected by Washington, as this would give the non-aligned CSCE states a say in military matters.²⁶ NATO was only able to find a solution at the Ministerial Council in Reykjavik in June 1987. The compromise was that negotiations on conventional disarmament, though formally embedded in the CSCE framework, should be conducted independently between the two military alliances and without any other participating state having the right to object.²⁷ The Western proposal on military security (CAC and confidence-building measures) was then presented on 10 July 1987.²⁸

Another factor that strongly influenced the EPC countries' coordination and approach in Vienna was the question of how to deal with Mikhail Gorbachev's reform policy. The momentum with which the Kremlin leader pushed ahead with his project to transform the USSR unfolded in parallel with the Vienna Follow-up Meeting and also presented the EPC group with the task of rethinking its negotiating concept. The speech given by Hans-Dietrich Genscher at the

24 Non-paper, 19.2.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, I, Dok. 92, p. 519, annot. 8.

25 Vermerk "Sonder-PK zur Menschlichen Dimension der KSZE am 15.3.1988", PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 133568; Aufzeichnung Richthofen vom 21.3.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, I, Dok. 92, p. 516–522.

26 Aufzeichnung Hartmann, 10.10.1986, in: *AAPD 1986*, II, Dok. 279, p. 1452–1455.

27 Holik an AA, 11.6.1987, in: *AAPD 1987*, Berlin-Boston 2018, I, Dok. 174, p. 868, annot. 40.

28 CSCE/WT.129, 10.7.1987, PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 153446.

World Economic Forum in Davos on 1 February 1987, just three months after the opening of the Follow-up Meeting, is a good example of this. Genscher emphasised the opportunities that would arise for the West from the change in Soviet policy and warned against simply sitting “with folded arms” and waiting “to see what Gorbachev will do for us”. Instead, Genscher appealed: “Our motto can only be: Let’s take Gorbachev seriously, let’s take him at his word!”²⁹

Genscher’s speech also caused quite a stir in Vienna. As the reactions showed, the EPC and NATO were divided into a majority that wanted to wait in Vienna until Gorbachev’s reform announcements were followed by concrete steps, and a smaller group of countries, led by West Germany, which considered it possible to conduct negotiations in a manner honouring Moscow’s willingness to reform.³⁰ At a meeting of EPC foreign ministers in Konstanz on 5/6 March 1988, Genscher suggested holding an “in-depth discussion on human rights issues” in the EPC in light of the changed situation in Eastern Europe, which in turn might make it easier for the East to agree to the CAC negotiations.³¹ However, this approach met with resistance and exposed Bonn to the suspicion that it was forcing a conclusion of the conference at the expense of Western room for manoeuvre in negotiations on the humanitarian dimension.³²

Finally, there was a great need for coordination within the Western group on the question of how to react to the Soviet proposal for a human rights conference in Moscow. Reactions in the Western camp ranged from tentative to openly hostile. The US government, recognising that the Kremlin had put itself in a *demandeur* position with its proposal, began an intensive human rights dialogue with Moscow, focusing on cases of emigration, the release of further prisoners, a reform of Soviet criminal law and religious freedom.³³ On the other hand, Margaret Thatcher, the British prime minister, categorically rejected Moscow as a conference venue, while France, for its part, was not prepared to abandon its own proposed conference in favour of the Soviet capital.³⁴

At a further meeting in Brussels on 22 March 1988, the EPC foreign ministers approved a compromise, which they also communicated to Torovsky, on their February non-paper. They reaffirmed the goal of the Twelve to create a mechanism that would enable each participating state to raise individual human

29 Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamts der Bundesregierung 1987, Bonn 1987, p. 97.

30 Eickhoff an AA, 4.3.1987, in: *AAPD 1987*, I, Dok. 65, p. 305–308.

31 Vermerk über das informelle Treffen der EPZ-Außenminister am 5./6.3.1988 in Konstanz, in: *AAPD 1988*, I, Dok. 92, p. 517, annot. 5.

32 Aufzeichnung Richthofen vom 21.3.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, I, Dok. 92, p. 516–522.

33 Anatoly Adamishin/Richard Schifter, *Human Rights, Perestroika, and the End of the Cold War*, Washington DC 2009, p. 161–181.

34 Aufzeichnung Richthofen vom 21.3.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, I, Dok. 92, p. 520.

rights cases in the group of 35. However, the format in which this was to take place – whether as ad hoc conferences or as part of a set number of meetings – was a point deliberately omitted. The EPC group also left all options open with regard to the Moscow human rights conference, arguing instead that the aim in Vienna should be to agree on a mandate for the conference in the first place. The number of conferences and their locations were to be finalised only later. But even this formulation went too far for the UK, which entered a reservation in the EPC group.³⁵

2.3 *The “Endgame”*

In the summer of 1988, with the final stages of negotiations looming, further difficulties of coordination between EPC and NATO arose. On 13 May 1988 the coordinators of the neutral and non-aligned (N+N) states drew up a first full draft of a concluding document.³⁶ Yet it soon became apparent that the time before the sixth period of sessions was scheduled to end on 27 June would not suffice. In spite of progress in many matters, some key points remained unresolved. Within the Western group of states the United States, Canada, Iceland, Norway and Turkey wanted to include further humanitarian improvements in the texts of Baskets II and III even at this late moment. These new requests for amendments in turn divided the EPC states. While some, in particular West Germany and France, did not want to jeopardise the N+N draft, others supported the demands – for instance, for an emphasis on the role of “persons and institutions” in environmental matters – so that the EPC group was repeatedly forced to give in.³⁷

In this situation, Genscher and his French counterpart Raimond travelled to Vienna in person to lobby for an early conclusion at the plenary session on 1 July. In so doing, they referred to the guideline that the European Council had set at its meeting three days earlier in Hanover, namely that a successful conclusion in Vienna would open the door to negotiations on conventional disarmament, and argued in favour of continuing the work on the text over the summer.³⁸ This push did indeed at first enable further progress to be made on the text. However, this momentum fizzled out again in the course of the autumn. As far as the EPC and NATO were concerned, this was due to two

35 Fernschreiben Nr. 221 (Coreu) vom 17.3.1988 und Vermerk Haak vom 25.3.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, I, Dok. 92, p. 516, annot. 3.

36 On the N+N's full draft see Aufzeichnung Richthofen, 16.5.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, I, Dok. 153, p. 835–840.

37 Eickhoff an AA, 30.6.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, I, Dok. 195, p. 1055–1077.

38 Eickhoff an AA, 2.7.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, II, Dok. 196, p. 1059–1064.

problems. First, there was the Franco-American controversy over the link between the planned disarmament conference and the CSCE. At the Franco-German summit in Bonn on 4 November 1988, François Mitterrand, the French president, suddenly announced that Paris still insisted on a "Conference of 35".³⁹ This abrupt change of policy also put the brakes on the Vienna negotiations shortly before their conclusion and once again called the EPC consensus into question. Only by further changes of a fairly cosmetic nature, intended underscore the link between the CRC and the CSCE, was Paris persuaded to yield.⁴⁰

Far more threatening was, second, transatlantic opposition to the Moscow Human Rights Conference. For weeks, the American delegation in Vienna withheld its agreement while Washington continued to negotiate directly with Moscow over Soviet concessions. Until the 1988 Christmas break, Warren Zimmermann, the leader of the US delegation, was unable to offer the prospect of a decision by Washington, further and further postponing final discussion of the N+N's full draft. Although the West made a show of outward unity, internally the US government's approach divided NATO and the EPC group into a transatlantic and a continental European camp. Washington's position was supported by Canada and the UK but rejected by the other EPC states.⁴¹ The view in Bonn in particular was that by going it alone, the United States was jeopardising what had already been achieved, not least in the humanitarian field. "The last drop squeezed out of a lemon changes neither the quantity nor the quality of the juice already extracted", Detlev Graf zu Rantzau, the new head of the Bonn delegation, reproached his American and British colleagues.⁴² The conflict came to head at a meeting of the EPC heads of delegation in Vienna on 28 December 1988. In view of Moscow's preliminary efforts, the time had now come, Rantzau argued

for the states of the European Community to call the attention of their American allies to their own positions and to remind them that, as far as they were concerned, the conditions for a swift conclusion to the VFM with a substantial and balanced outcome were in place. It was unacceptable for the countries of the European Community, disregarding their

39 Gespräch Kohl mit Mitterrand und Rocard, 4.11.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, II, Dok. 313, p. 1661; Aufzeichnung Buerstedde, 11.11.1988, in: *Ibid.*, Dok. 320, p. 1686–1688; Pfeffer an AA, 28.11.1988, in: *Ibid.*, Dok. 343, p. 1797–1800.

40 Hartmann an AA, 5.11.1988 and 6.11.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, II, Dok. 358, p. 1860, annot. 20.

41 Rantzau an AA, 23.12.1988, in: *AAPD 1988*, II, Dok. 372, p. 1911–1917.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 1915.

own interests, to be kept silently waiting for the as yet uncertain conclusion of American-Soviet contacts, [a conclusion] which could scarcely bring any qualitative change to the highly satisfactory conclusion to the VFM that already lies within reach; yet by waiting any longer we ran the risk of losing what we have already gained.⁴³

And indeed, the disagreement was resolved in early January 1989. Following further talks between American and Soviet negotiators, George Shultz, the US Secretary of State, confirmed in a letter to his Soviet counterpart, Edvard Shevardnadze, that his government acknowledged the progress made in the Kremlin's human rights policy and agreed to holding a conference in Moscow.⁴⁴ Once a precise mandate for entering into arms control talks had been completed, the delegates passed the Vienna Concluding Document on 15 January 1989, only a few days before a new administration took office in the United States.⁴⁵

3 Conclusion

Since 1970, EPC provided a forum in which EC member states could coordinate their foreign policy in both its substantive and operative dimensions. Yet EPC did not constitute a homogeneous political bloc. On the contrary, its role at the third CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna was marked by a laborious process of negotiation in Brussels and Vienna. Further, no less difficult coordination took place within the NATO bodies, in which EPC diplomacy was confronted not only by the United States and Canada but also by the non-EPC countries Iceland, Norway and Turkey, which repeatedly felt sidelined by the unity of the EPC group. The EPC group showed itself to be a unified organisation, particularly in the area of Basket II, where it put forward joint proposals. In the humanitarian field, EPC was responsible for a proposal that served as its "flagship". In addition, the EPC countries, in varying constellations, acted as co-sponsors to numerous other proposals.

All those involved took care to ensure that due consideration was given to their respective national interests. As the examples of the CRC mandate and the Moscow human rights conference illustrate, differences in content

43 Rantzau an AA, 28.12.1988 (Drahtbericht Nr. 2020), PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 153431.

44 The letter is reprinted in Adamishin/Schifter, *Human Rights*, p. 178–179. See also Rantzau an AA, 4.1.1988 (Drahtbericht Nr. 22), PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 158552.

45 Rantzau an AA, 15.1.1989 (Drahtberichte Nr. 91 und Nr. 92), PA-AA, B 28, ZA, Bd. 158552.

and negotiating tactics repeatedly paralysed the West, both within the NATO framework and in the EPC. The question of how to react to Gorbachev's reform policy also deprived the West of momentum in its negotiations. Finally, the bilateralism between Washington and Moscow on human rights and arms control issues emphasised the overriding role of superpower relations, a factor which the EPC group's political cooperation had to take into account.

Nevertheless, the Vienna Follow-up Meeting was a milestone in the development of EPC as well as in the CSCE process. In particular, the twelve succeeded in opening a new chapter in the CSCE with the "human dimension" mechanism developed in their proposal WT.19. With the Maastricht Treaty approved by the European Council on 11 December 1991, EPC was finally transferred to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and thus placed on a new footing. A platform for harmonising the foreign policy of the EC member states became the foreign policy instrument of the European Union. In a separate declaration on this chapter of the CFSP, the states named the areas in which they found cooperation to be particularly desirable. At the top of the list was the CSCE process.⁴⁶

46 Runderlass Bettzuege, 16.12.1991, in: *AAPD 1991*, Berlin-Boston 2022, II, Dok. 431, p. 1729–1735. See also "Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council, 26./27.6.1992 in Lisbon", in: *Bulletin of the European Communities*, vol. 25 (1992), no. 6, Brussels 1992, p. 21–22.

Divergent Neutral Strategies

The N+N and the Issue of Disarmament

Kai Habel

1 Introduction

The neutral and non-aligned states (the N+N, or NNAs) represented a third group of countries that had chosen, within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), not to be incorporated into one of the two antagonistic blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. This group, which could be described as a loose coalition, emerged during the CSCE negotiations in Geneva (1973–1975) and did not extend beyond the Helsinki process. The most important and active N+N states were the four neutrals – Austria, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland – and the non-aligned Yugoslavia. Besides these five countries, the group was composed of four smaller states or microstates, namely Cyprus, Malta, Liechtenstein and San Marino. It should be noted that not all neutral European countries were part of the group; for instance, Ireland and the Holy See, which participated in the CSCE, were not members of the N+N. The N+N took on an ambiguous role during the CSCE negotiations because they were both negotiators who made propositions to defend their national interests and mediators who helped the two blocs to find compromises. Accordingly, the N+N are often described as “intermediaries” or “bridge-builders”.¹

There is not much doubt that, by mediating between Eastern and Western positions that were often diametrically opposed and hence mutually unacceptable, the N+N contributed significantly to the success of the CSCE. The N+N were remarkably active on procedural issues such as setting the agenda or determining the structure of the negotiations – for example, by creating the concept of “baskets”.² They also proposed the creation of informal working groups that would prove especially productive; they acted as coordinators of the talks; and, apart from these tasks of mediation or administration, they drafted joint proposals, depending on the topic.³

1 Thomas Fischer, *Keeping the Process Alive: The N+N and the CSCE Follow-Up from Helsinki to Vienna (1975–1986)*, Zurich 2012, p. 13.

2 Thomas Fischer, *Neutral Power in the CSCE*. Baden-Baden 2009, p. 18.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 365–369.

Efraim Karsh argues that the N+N fulfilled “indispensable functions [that were] instrumental on more than one occasion in keeping the delicate edifice of the CSCE resilient to the pressures of East-West differences.”⁴ Adrian Hyde-Price considers the group to have “served as a partial buffer in the military confrontation between the blocs, and some of these countries actively contributed diplomatically and politically to easing East-West tensions and establishing a modus vivendi between the two sides.”⁵ According to Jussi Hanhimäki,

the neutrals acted as midwives to détente. From the late 1960s onwards, Austria, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland were influential players within the late Cold War context, pulling above their weight in a process that gave rise to a growing set of so-called Helsinki networks that, in the long term, undermined the totalitarian systems of Eastern Europe.⁶

Stefan Lehne and Hanspeter Neuhold, who were both part of the Austrian delegation in Vienna, explain that “the contributions of the NNAs to the success of the CSCE process have [...] exceeded their material power potential.”⁷ The importance of the N+N throughout the Helsinki process is thus rarely challenged.

In the first two Follow-up Meetings in Belgrade (1977–1978) and Madrid (1980–1983), which were held in extremely tense international contexts, the N+N are seen as the intermediaries that prevented the whole process from falling apart. Yet there is no such consensus regarding the third Follow-up Meeting, held in Vienna (1986–1989). From the outset, it was uncertain whether the N+N would play the same crucial role as before. It was felt, as Thomas Fischer has put it, that “the role of neutral mediators was no longer needed in the CSCE at the Vienna meeting to the same degree as before.”⁸ One reason why their influence was challenged is that, since Mikhail Gorbachev came to power

4 Efraim Karsh, *Neutrality and Small States*, London-New York 1988, p. 130.

5 Adrian Hyde-Price, “Geopolitics and the Concept of Neutrality in Contemporary Europe”, in: Heinz Gärtner (ed.), *Engaged Neutrality. An Evolved Approach to the Cold War*, Lanham 2017, p. 121–142, on p. 121.

6 Jussi M. Hanhimäki, “Non-aligned to What? European Neutrality and the Cold War”, in: Sandra Bott/Jussi M. Hanhimäki/Janick Schaufelbuehl/Marco Wyss (eds.), *Neutrality and Neutralism in the Global Cold War. Between or Within the Blocs?* London 2016, p. 17–32, on p. 28.

7 Stefan Lehne/Hanspeter Neuhold, “The Role of the Neutral and Non-Aligned Countries at the Vienna Meeting”, in: Arie Bloed/Pieter Van Dijk (eds.), *The Human Dimension of the Helsinki Process. The Vienna Follow-Up Meeting and its Aftermath*, Dordrecht-Boston-London 1991, p. 30–53, on p. 35.

8 Fischer, *Keeping the Process Alive*, p. 148.

in the Soviet Union in 1985, relations between the superpowers had become increasingly relaxed, thereby reducing the necessity and relevance of a mediator. In Vienna, the two blocs could negotiate directly with each other more easily than before.⁹

Another reason why the N+N lost influence was that dissension within the group grew, especially with regard to military issues, thereby reducing the scope for common positions or joint proposals. The topic that created the most significant divisions among the N+N in Vienna was that of conventional disarmament and the states' eventual participation in the negotiations that were to take place after the conclusion of the third Follow-up Meeting. The N+N had divergent views on this question and hence could not agree on whether or not to take part in future negotiations on disarmament.

The paper will endeavour to explain why this subject was so contentious for the N+N and how they eventually managed to find a common ground. This specific issue is worth examining because it touches upon the very understanding of neutrality: the possible involvement of the N+N in disarmament talks raises the questions of what it means to be neutral and what the most appropriate diplomatic strategies are for a neutral state.

2 The N+N and Conventional Disarmament

The CSCE had addressed the issue of disarmament from its inception, even if no concrete measures were discussed. On this subject, the Helsinki Final Act stipulates that “the participating States recognize the interest of all of them in efforts aimed at lessening military confrontation and promoting disarmament.”¹⁰ It was then decided, in the course of the second follow-up meeting in Madrid, that conferences on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBM) and on Disarmament in Europe (CDE) would be held in Stockholm to undertake “new, effective and concrete actions designed to make progress in strengthening confidence and security and in achieving disarmament.”¹¹ The first stage, which took place from 1984 to 1986, consisted in the negotiation of a set of confidence- and

⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁰ Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe Final Act, 1 August 1975, p. 13, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/c/39501.pdf>, accessed 16.8.2023.

¹¹ Concluding Document of the Madrid Meeting 1980 of Representatives of the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, held on the Basis of the Provisions of the Final Act Relating to the Follow-Up to the Conference, 6 September 1983, p. 8, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/d/40871.pdf>, p. 9, accessed 23.10.2024.

security-building measures; nonetheless, the Stockholm document reaffirms that the participating states were “determined to achieve progress in disarmament”.¹² Despite these expressions of goodwill, concrete disarmament measures had not yet been negotiated in the framework of the CSCE. A big step forward would be taken in Vienna, where the mandate for negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe would be decided.

Yet here was the point of contention: the N+N states disagreed on whether they should participate in these negotiations or not. All N+N were proponents of confidence- and security-building measures, which appeared to them as effective means of guaranteeing European security and thus their own safety. Disarmament, however, was a completely different issue, chiefly because neutral states considered their military capabilities to be purely defensive and

therefore representing a threat to any country. Consequently, disarming neutral states would not improve European security. It would be meaningless at best, but it might even jeopardise the balance of power within the continent by weakening states that had no territorial ambitions. As possessors of armies, the N+N believed their neutrality to rely on their capacity to defend it against potential aggressors. Following this logic, disarmament would involve nothing less than undermining both their neutral status and their national security.

Yet the choice whether or not to participate in disarmament talks had to take into account another crucial element: the risk of potentially disastrous diplomatic isolation. The CSCE and the rule of unanimity had offered the N+N a remarkable opportunity to exert real influence on the international stage. Participation in the Helsinki process in itself represented an outstanding diplomatic success for the neutral and non-aligned states. Therefore, the N+N were understandably wary of being excluded from negotiations on disarmament, which would have left them unable to influence the discussions. Given the importance of the topic, this alarming possibility left the N+N states with a choice between two unsatisfactory solutions: they could either participate in future negotiations on disarmament and risk being compelled to reduce their military capabilities, or they could preserve their freedom of action with regard to conventional forces at the cost of some diplomatic alienation.

Caught between undesirable alternatives, most of the N+N were uncertain how to address this dilemma. In this atmosphere of indecision, two countries

12 Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe Convened in Accordance with the Relevant Provisions of the Concluding Document of the Madrid Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe, 19 September 1986, p. 17, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/d/41238.pdf>, accessed 25.6.2023.

stood out from the rest, having chosen different and conflicting solutions: whereas Sweden wanted the N+N to be part of the negotiations on disarmament, Switzerland was absolutely opposed to such a possibility.¹³ Even before the start of the Vienna meeting, the Swiss were concerned by the growing importance of the military dimension within the CSCE, evidenced by the successful holding of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (1984–1986).¹⁴ The Swiss thought that this development was problematic mainly for two reasons. First, since the N+N were not major military powers and had geopolitical situations and national interests that were too divergent from each other in terms of security, they did not have much bargaining power on military issues. The Swiss were therefore afraid that the N+N would become less and less influential in a CSCE centred around military questions. Second, they feared that the expansion of military discussions would take place at the expense of other issues, resulting in the formation of a critical imbalance between the three baskets. Since one of the unique features that explained the success of the CSCE was the grouping of military, economic and humanitarian issues under a single negotiation forum that allowed for the conception of “linkage strategies” – for example, making a concession on financial cooperation in exchange for a concession from the other side on, say, confidence-building measures – an unbalanced development might undermine the CSCE’s distinctiveness and effectiveness.

As for the other N+N, Finland and Yugoslavia more or less agreed with Sweden. The Finns stated clearly to their partners that the CDE mandate, which provided a unique opportunity to negotiate military security issues on an equal footing with the two alliances and their members, had to be expanded to include disarmament.¹⁵ The Yugoslavs were particularly concerned that the group should formulate a common position as soon as possible in order not to be sidelined by the two military alliances. In an informal working paper shared with their N+N partners, they argued:

13 Commentaires au texte du contre-projet suédois, 23.4.1987, Swiss Federal Archives, Bern, Aktenmaterial zur KSZE-Konferenz in Wien (1985–1987), E5812#2009/67#138*, 76.

14 Rapport final de la délégation suisse à la CDE de Stockholm, 24.11.1986, Swiss Federal Archives, Bern, KSZE: Folgekonferenz in Wien (1986–1988), E2200.49#1996/380#93*, 370.3.

15 Möte med NN-staternas utrikesministrar i Brioni, Jugoslavien, den 23–24 oktober 1986, 27.10.1986, Swedish National Archives, Täby, DU Utlandsmyndighet Repr. arkiv, ESK/OSSE Wien, 1920 års, dossiersystem F1:19, HP 79 NN.

Neutral and non-aligned countries could well find themselves on the margin of events, i.e. they could be faced with a *fait accompli* should they fail to make adequate preparations in good time. This practically means that elaboration of their own, joint concept should commence at once.¹⁶

The Austrians were less convinced than the Swedes, Finns and Yugoslavs, but they did not think that a categorical N+N withdrawal would make sense. In an internal working document, the Austrian foreign ministry wrote:

The fundamental interest in cutting conventional armaments in Europe and in the participation of the N+N in a negotiation process to that end is contrasted by a realistic assessment of their own military and political weight and by an awareness of the enormous complexity of the matter. A possible solution is seen by some in a negotiating structure divided into 'concentric circles'. According to this, the actual reduction negotiations would take place first in a subsidiary body of the CDE limited to the member states of the military alliances, in which the N+N could participate as observers. In parallel, negotiations on CSBM would continue among all 35 states.¹⁷

Austria followed a nuanced, pragmatic approach to the issue. Instead of defining a strict objective, it adopted a flexible attitude, well aware of the fact that the structure of the future negotiations on disarmament would ultimately be determined by the superpowers and their respective allies. The Austrian position was therefore to support the extension of the CDE mandate to cover the reduction of conventional armaments and its participation in the negotiations; if this solution should prove too ambitious, the delegation would promote the creation of a dual negotiation structure within the CSCE framework or, at worst, the establishment of an "intermediate phase" consisting in the continuation of CSBM talks in the CDE along with the postponement of the discussions on the disarmament mandate to the next follow-up meeting.¹⁸ Yet

16 Informal working paper (Yugoslavia), 20.11.1986, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 803.00/233-11.7/86.

17 Wiener Folgetreffen (WFT), 4.9.1986, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 801.04/41-11.7/86 (translated).

18 Zur Zukunft der KVAE, 4.9.1986, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 801.04/41-11.7/86 (translated).

the Austrians decided for tactical reasons to remain vague about their intentions until the two blocs' stances became clearer, as explained in another foreign ministry internal document:

In order not to prejudice a later mediating role, Austria will not present its own proposal for a new CDE mandate in the initial phase of the Vienna follow-up meeting, but will await the development of the positions of the military allies and seek to bring about a coordinated position in the N+N framework.¹⁹

As for the smaller N+N, Cyprus and Malta supported the Swedish-Finnish-Yugoslavian line, while San Marino was relatively passive.²⁰ Liechtenstein avoided taking a firm stance, but leant toward the Swiss point of view. Despite Liechtenstein's tacit support and the veiled flexibility of the Austrian position, the Swiss were clearly isolated among the N+N on the major issue of disarmament. It should be noted that, during the opening debate, the N+N states, with the exception of Switzerland, supported the start of disarmament talks in the framework of the CDE.²¹

In a delegation report written in April 1987, half a year after the start of the Vienna negotiations, the Swiss expressed serious pessimism over the situation, stating unambiguously that their position could not be reconciled with that of other N+N countries.²² Moreover, the report disclosed the existence of tensions among the group, caused by the failure to find a compromise: "These three months of interminable discussions between the N+N have resulted in a deterioration of the atmosphere within the group."²³ These tensions were especially apparent when, on 23 March 1987, Sweden presented its N+N partners with a draft position paper that provided for the involvement of non-military alliance states in disarmament negotiations. Dissatisfied with the draft, the

19 Drittes KSZE-Folgetreffen Wien, österreichische Linie, 8.7.1986, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 803.00/74-11.7/86.

20 NN-diskussion om militära frågor, 1.1987, Swedish National Archives, Täby, DU Utlandsmyndighet Repr. arkiv, ESK/OSSE Wien, 1920 års, dossiersystem F1:19, HP 79 NN.

21 Wiener Folgetreffen, Stand vom 14. November 1986, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 803.00/223-11.7/86.

22 Rapport de la délégation suisse sur la deuxième session de la réunion de Vienne sur les suites de la CSCE, 27 janvier-10 avril 1987, 4.5.1987, Swiss Federal Archives, Bern, KSZE: Folgekonferenz in Wien (1986-1988), E2200.49#1996/380#93*, 370.26.

23 Ibid. (translated).

Swiss wrote: "The essential elements that we value have been excluded. [...] Elements that are unacceptable to us have been introduced."²⁴

Yet if the Swiss were not in a fundamentally weak negotiating position, they had the other participating states to thank for it. Most NATO countries were reluctant to involve the N+N in disarmament talks, while the Warsaw Pact was satisfied with a negotiation format limited to the members of the two military alliances.²⁵ In fact, the Western bloc was also divided on the issue of disarmament: whereas the United States wanted to negotiate as directly as possible with the Soviet bloc, the French were in favour of involving all 35 CSCE participating states in the talks.²⁶ One of the twelve founding members of NATO, under President Charles de Gaulle France had decided to withdraw from the organisation's integrated military structure in 1966; therefore, with regard to conventional armaments, French diplomacy supported a negotiation format in which it would be able to counterbalance its isolation within the North Atlantic Alliance by bringing in neutral and non-aligned states. As for the Warsaw Pact countries, although they had initially suggested that they endorsed the participation of all 35 CSCE members, it was becoming gradually clear that a negotiation structure limited to the 23 alliance members was perfectly acceptable to them.²⁷ In sum, even if the Swiss were isolated within the N+N, their position was strengthened by the superpowers' willingness to negotiate from alliance to alliance.

3 The Limassol and Bern Meetings

Two important meetings took place at the level of foreign ministers in May 1987 that would contribute to and coincide with a shift in the position of the N+N: the first was held in Limassol on 16 and 17 May, the second in Bern on May 26.

The Limassol meeting gathered the foreign ministers and state secretaries of the N+N in order to review the progress of the CSCE negotiations. It should first be noted that the participating countries appeared disunited with regard

24 Commentaires au texte du contre-projet suédois, 23.4.1987, Swiss Federal Archives, Bern, Aktenmaterial zur KSZE-Konferenz in Wien (1985-1987), E5812#2009/67#138*, 76 (translated).

25 Sammanträde 1987-04-27 om ESK: s uppföljningsmöte i Wien, 27.4.1987, Swedish National Archives, Täby, Delegationsarkiv, ESK Wien, 1920 års, dossiersystem F1:1, HP 79 A.

26 Frankreich und die KSZE, 16.9.1987, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 801.04/33-II.7/87.

27 Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffen: Militärische Sicherheit, 23.6.1987, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 801.04/24-II.7/87.

to the level of cohesion that was required among them. Sweden, Yugoslavia and Cyprus insisted on the importance of a “smooth cooperation”, arguing that the N+N would not be able to play their role as mediators successfully without a common position. Switzerland expressed its reservations, asserting that differences of opinion within the group should not be dramatised because the N+N was “neither a bloc nor an alliance”, implying that no “alliance discipline” was demanded.²⁸ In addition, the Swiss claimed that in view of the sudden improvement of East-West relations, the CSCE negotiations represented a “sideshow” (*Nebenschauplatz*) in which the N+N needed to understand that they had little influence.²⁹

After these preliminary remarks, the participants delved into the heated issue of negotiations on disarmament.³⁰ Sweden, Yugoslavia and Cyprus declared that a disarmament forum had to be established within the framework of the CSCE, mainly because of two reasons: first, the Madrid mandate and the Stockholm document both stipulated this extension; second, there existed a “functional link” between confidence-building measures and conventional disarmament that justified a joint negotiation. Switzerland expressed its reservations but recognised all the same that the creation of a completely distinct negotiation forum was undesirable. As a consequence of Switzerland’s isolation among the N+N, its position had evolved to resemble the aforementioned Austrian “concentric circles” solution.

Switzerland proposed the institution of a “link” between the CSCE and the future negotiations that would take place between the Warsaw Pact and NATO states. The arguments in favor of an intermediate solution were the following: informal meetings between the 23 alliance members had been set up in Vienna on the initiative of France, which wanted the negotiations on disarmament to be incorporated into the CSCE; by contrast, the United States was in favor of establishing a separate 23-state forum that would be unrelated to the Helsinki process; the N+N had to take advantage of this disagreement to advocate for a third way, which would consist in the institution of a relatively autonomous disarmament forum connected to the CSCE framework. The “link” between the two settings would have to be conceived in a way that would enable the N+N not only to be informed of the progress of the discussions but also to be directly consulted about the negotiations. The N+N could also think of a

28 KSZE: N+N-Treffen auf Aussenministerebene in Limassol (Zypern), 16./17. Mai 1987, 21.5.1987, Swiss Federal Archives, Bern, KSZE: Treffen, Vorschläge etc. der Schweiz + N+N (1985–1988), E2200.49#1996/380#92*, 370.25.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

means of contributing to the implementation of the 23-state forum, for example by providing their services throughout the verification phase.

The N+N partners expressed interest in the idea of an intermediate solution. Even if much remained to be done, the seeds of a compromise were starting to grow. A second meeting took place in Bern between the State Secretaries of the four main neutral partners – Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland – on 26 May. It addressed the most important and contentious topic: how to integrate the issue of conventional disarmament into the CSCE framework. The Swiss again argued in favor of the intermediate solution and the creation of an “institutional link.” Both Austria and Finland suggested waiting before proposing an institutional link, arguing that it was preferable to be patient in the present situation. They wanted first to observe how the alliance members would structure their talks in Vienna. Furthermore, Austria wanted to wait for the results of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, which had resumed in March 1986 (and would ultimately lead to the signing of the INF Treaty on 8 December 1987). Although it had been continuously playing for time, Switzerland responded that a wait-and-see attitude would be a tactical mistake that would eventually result in the interests of the N+N being ignored.³¹

The debates within the N+N concerning conventional disarmament were approaching a turning point. In June 1987, all the N+N countries seemed to have accepted the idea of an intermediary solution, even if there was still no concrete design of the so-called “link”.³² This agreement can be explained by the fact that, in the Western camp, the United States and France had reached a compromise at the NATO meeting of foreign ministers held in Reykjavik on 11 and 12 June. The allies had agreed to support a dual negotiation structure in which disarmament would be discussed among the 23 alliance members within the CSCE framework.³³

After months of discussions, the N+N finally came to an agreement and in March 1988 drafted a “non-paper on military issues” that reflected their common position.³⁴ The non-paper devised a dual negotiation structure

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- 31 Treffen der Staatssekretäre der vier neutralen Staaten am 26. Mai 1987 in Bern, 3.6.1987, Swiss Federal Archives, KSZE: Treffen, Vorschläge etc. der Schweiz + N+N (1985–1988), E2200.49#1996/380#92*, 370.25.
- 32 Réunion CSCE de Vienne, rapport de mi-session, 23.6.1987, Swiss Federal Archives, Bern, KSZE: Folgekonferenz in Wien (1986–1988), E2200.49#1996/380#93*, 370.26.
- 33 Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffen: Militärische Sicherheit, 23.6.1987, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol, GZ 80L04/24–II.7/87.
- 34 Rapport intermédiaire de la délégation suisse sur la 6ème session de la Réunion de Vienne sur les suites de la CSCE, 10.6.1988, Swiss Federal Archives, Bern, KSZE: Folgekonferenz in Wien (1986–1988), E2200.49#1996/380#93*, 370.26.

consisting of negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures gathering all 35 CSCE participants on the one hand and another set of negotiations on disarmament involving exclusively the 23 alliance members on the other, the two settings being connected by the institutional link. Specifically, this link would consist of meetings “to Exchange Views and Information Concerning the Course of the Negotiation”; at least two of which had to take place in the course of each round of the negotiation. The contentious issue of conventional disarmament had found a solution among the N+N, and the compromise that they had devised in accordance with the military alliances’ wishes would ultimately prove acceptable all the participating states and integrated in the Vienna concluding document.

4 Conclusion

The Vienna Follow-up Meeting witnessed the division of the N+N on the issue of disarmament and its place in the CSCE process. The N+N were facing a dilemma to which different countries gave different answers. They were forced to make a choice between two unsatisfactory solutions: either getting involved in disarmament talks but being bound by the obligations that would result from these negotiations, or remaining unrestricted in respect to military policy but being excluded from crucial negotiations in Europe. In other words, the N+N were worried about *diplomatic isolation* on the one hand and *the loss of military independence* on the other. Faced with this choice of evils, the N+N countries had divergent views on which was the greater. The dilemma faced by the N+N was all the more important given that neutral states need to continuously prove that their neutrality is credible by maintaining adequate defence capabilities while ensuring international support through an active diplomacy.

As the meeting progressed and the positions held by the two alliances became clear, the group managed to find a compromise that would be acceptable to all participating states. Regardless of their initial disunity, all the N+N countries were ultimately satisfied with the compromise solution that they had devised. Switzerland, which had been isolated within the group on the matter, avoided possible involvement in disarmament measures that would have jeopardised its military sovereignty. Although they had initially pushed for direct participation in the negotiations, Sweden, Yugoslavia and Finland were finally satisfied that disarmament was incorporated in the CSCE framework and that the N+N obtained the right to ask questions and make comments during the meetings to exchange views and information. As for Austria, it welcomed an

intermediate solution that it had envisaged even before the start of the negotiations in Vienna.

Even if Switzerland was isolated within the N+N on the topic of disarmament, its negotiating position was not weak since it was in agreement with most of the military alliances' members, including the US and the Soviet Union, which preferred to negotiate face-to-face without the involvement of potential troublemakers. Because of its disunity, the N+N group was never in a position to challenge the two blocs' will with regard to this complex issue. It was only when it became clear that disarmament would be discussed among the 23 alliance members within the CSCE framework that the N+N managed to formulate a common position.

East German Intelligence Perspectives on the CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna

Simon Graham

1 Introduction¹

On 7 May 1986 the Main Intelligence Directorate (Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung, HVA), the foreign intelligence service of the East German Ministry for State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, MfS or “Stasi”) said of the impending Third Follow-up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that “the interests of important CSCE participating states are not only so different but also their tactics have become so offensive that tangible results would be difficult to achieve”. Consequently, participating states must prepare “for a time when CSCE conferences will end controversially, without agreement”.² This assessment tallies with the broader objective of the MfS for CSCE meetings, namely to place East Germany on an equal diplomatic footing with West Germany while spoiling attempts to increase scrutiny of East Germany’s human rights record.³ It was primarily produced from the intelligence gathered by more than a dozen HVA officers embedded in the East German delegation over the course of the CSCE.⁴ Douglas Selvage and Walter Süß have explained the function of these officers and shown us how they influenced the delegation on behalf of the MfS.⁵

Yet we know that the Vienna Meeting did produce tangible results. It not only produced the Vienna Mechanism for implementing the human dimension of the CSCE but also saw extensive agreement between European states over issues as diverse as conventional armed forces, human rights protections, education, migration, technology and the environment.⁶ Thus, we may well

1 Note: previously untranslated German language sources were translated by the author.

2 Aufklärung über das KSZE-Folgetreffen in Wien, BArch, MfS, HVA 41, 206/86, Bl. 167.

3 Oliver Bange, “The Stasi Confronts Western Strategies for Transformation, 1966–1975”, in: Jonathan Haslam/Karina Urbach (eds.), *Secret Intelligence in the European States System, 1918–1989*, Stanford 2014, p. 189–196.

4 Douglas Selvage/Walter Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess. MfS zwischen SED und KGB (1972–1989)*, Göttingen 2019, p. 83–89.

5 Ibid.

6 Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Concluding Document of the Third Follow-up Meeting, Vienna, 4 November 1986 to 19 January 1989, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 19 January 1989, p. 1–81.

ask: why did the HVA get its forecast for the Vienna Meeting so wrong and how were its assessments shaped by diplomatic and strategic change in Eastern Europe? I answer these questions in what follows by drawing on sources from the Stasi Records Archive and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe Documentation Centre in Prague, among others. I also relate these sources to those used in the ground-breaking work of Douglas Selvage and Walter Süß, the difference being that, where Selvage and Süß predominately focus on the role, activities and influence of the MfS at the CSCE, I try to relate the activities and influence of the MfS to the CSCE's diplomatic context.⁷ However, it is critical to recognise that this chapter only begins the process of qualifying the nature and quantifying the scale of what was a much larger effort by the Stasi to influence the international order through espionage against the CSCE.

East Berlin approached the CSCE Third Follow-up Meeting in Vienna well aware of the growing distance between East Germany's negotiating positions and those of the Soviet Union.⁸ This was a product of the growing divide between the "New Thinking" of the Soviet general secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, on foreign policy and mutual security, and the general secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED), Erich Honecker's, adversarial "two camps" approach to Western Europe. Odd Arne Westad shows that Gorbachev found significant support for his New Thinking in the foreign ministries of Romania, Poland and Hungary, which all presented plans at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting for bridging Europe's East-West divide.⁹ In contrast, the East German delegation, along with the Soviet delegation, initially took a more combative approach to the meeting. But whereas the Soviet position moderated over time as New Thinking filtered through to the delegation in Vienna, the East German delegation largely avoided constructive dialogue.¹⁰ It was in this context that the HVA issued the dire prediction that the Vienna Follow-up Meeting may well "end in dispute, without agreement".¹¹ However, as the meeting progressed, the prediction became increasingly difficult to sustain and by the time it ended on 19 January 1989 the HVA had

7 Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 515–658.

8 Hermann Wentker, *Außenpolitik in engen Grenzen. Die DDR im internationalen System 1949–1989*, München 2007, p. 477–500.

9 Romania ultimately proved to be among the most intractable attendees at the meeting, along with East Germany. Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War. A World History*, New York 2017, p. 389–391.

10 Ibid.

11 Aufklärung über das KSZE-Folgetreffen in Wien, BArch, MfS, HVA 41, 206/86, Bl. 167.

significantly adjusted its guidance.¹² Thus, on 24 February 1989 the HVA declared that “the final document adopted at this meeting continued the CSCE process substantially in all areas and [...] has unequivocally demonstrated its central role in shaping West-East relations”.¹³ This stands in stark contrast to the HVA’s initial predictions for the meeting, despite the report’s internal audience and its purpose of legitimising compromise over the extent of human rights reforms in the Eastern Bloc.¹⁴

2 The HVA, “New Thinking” and the Vienna Meeting

Throughout this chapter, I suggest that the dramatic change in the HVA’s analysis of the prospects of the Vienna Meeting was less a result of deft diplomatic wrangling at the meeting than a product of the seismic shifts in the foreign policies of Eastern Bloc states, precipitated by Gorbachev’s New Thinking and his willingness to foster pan-European relations.¹⁵ Consequently, I see halting East German recognition of the successes of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting and the associated changes in security, border and German-German policy as one part of a much larger constellation of changes in the strategic landscape of Central Europe. This is not to detract from the important normalising function of the CSCE but rather to highlight the relationship between “pull” factors like the CSCE and substantial “push” factors in the form of liberalisation and democratisation in the Eastern Bloc.

For example, Alexis Heraclides argues that Soviet delegates at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting were committed to the position that changes in the Soviet Union were driven by Gorbachev’s reforms rather than Western pressure.¹⁶

12 Oliver Bange, “Transformation by Linkage? Arms Control, Human Rights and the Rift Between Moscow and East Berlin in the Late 1980s”, in: Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War*, New York 2019, p. 305–329, on p. 309.

13 Der Verlauf und die Ergebnisse des Wiener-Folgetreffens aus BRD-Sicht, BArch, MfS, HVA 761, 83/89, Bl. 175

14 Aufklärung über das KSZE-Folgetreffen in Wien, BArch, MfS, HVA 41, 206/86, Bl. 167; Der Verlauf und die Ergebnisse des Wiener-Folgetreffens aus BRD-Sicht, BArch, MfS, HVA 761, 83/89, Bl. 175.

15 Angela Romano, “The EC and the Socialist World. The Ascent of a Key Player in Cold War Europe”, in: Ulrich Krotz/Kiran Klaus Patel/Federico Romero (eds.), *Europe’s Cold War Relations. The EC Towards a Global Role*, London 2020, p. 51–70, on p. 61; Westad, *The Cold War*, p. 389–391; Sylvia Woodby, *Gorbachev and the Decline of Ideology in Soviet Foreign Policy*, Boulder 1989, p. 118.

16 Alexis Heraclides, *Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Human Dimension 1972–1992*, London 1993, p. 83.

This position that the West was not (and could not) be the instigator of change in the Soviet Union is not surprising in and of itself. Rather, what is interesting is the fact that Soviet delegates eventually came publicly to recognise the centrality of New Thinking in Moscow's renewed willingness to engage with CSCE processes on a "trust but verify" basis, and to make and support proposals across the so-called Iron Curtain.¹⁷ Indeed, on 5 September 1986 the Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, is recorded as having told Pierre Aubert, his Swiss counterpart, that in conversation with Gorbachev, he had praised the CSCE process to date as "very constructive" and occurring "in an atmosphere of 'benevolent openness'".¹⁸

However, Hans-Heinrich Wrede, a member of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany at the Vienna meeting, rightly cautions against overstating the impact of Gorbachev's agenda, especially in the early stages of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.¹⁹ Unlike the Hungarian and Polish delegations, the East German delegation was staunchly opposed to the kind of openness and East-West engagement that Shevardnadze and Gorbachev had begun to support. Indeed, the growing diversity in positions among the Warsaw Pact states arguably contributed to the East German government's interest in intelligence from the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. Such intelligence, it was hoped, would help both in understanding relations between reformers and hardliners in Moscow and in addressing East Germany's perennial problem of how to relate to West Germany.²⁰

Nevertheless, the East German delegation still showed deference to the Soviet delegation's position when considering whether to support East-West

17 J. Simon Rofe, "Trust between Adversaries and Allies: President George H. W. Bush, Trust and the End of the Cold War", in: Christian Ostermann/Martin Klimke/Reinhild Kreis (eds.), *Trust, But Verify. The Politics of Uncertainty and the Transformation of the Cold War Order, 1969–1991*, Stanford 2016, p. 53–55.

18 Conversation between the Head of the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, Pierre Aubert, and Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Shevardnadze, Memorandum of Conversation, 5–6 September 1986, Moscow, Swiss Federal Archives, Bern, Beziehungen der Schweiz zum Empfangsstaat (1985–1988), CH-BAR#E2200.157-04#1997/151#45*, <https://dodis.ch/54262>, accessed 21.11.2021, p. 10.

19 Hans-Heinrich Wrede, "Die Weiterentwicklung des KSZE-Prozesses. Das Folgetreffen in Wien", in: Wolfgang Wagner et al. (eds.), *Die Internationale Politik 1987–1988*, Berlin 2015, p. 111–122, on p. 115.

20 Ziele für das KSZE-Folgetreffen, BArch, MfS, HVA, ZAIG 5342, Bl. 6; Walter Süß, "Die Wiener KSZE-Folgekonferenz und der Handlungsspielraum des DDR-Sicherheitsapparates 1989", in: Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer), München 2012, p. 219–232, on p. 220–221, p. 227.

proposals – at least until the latter moderated its position in mid-1988. For example, on 24 April 1987 the HVA distributed a classified report entitled “Western Assessments of the Second Round of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting” to high-ranking members of the Stasi and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, addressing discussions which took place at the CSCE from January 27, 1987 until April 10, 1987.²¹ This report synthesised intelligence from three sources, two of whom had access to the internal discussions of the West German delegation, having infiltrated the West German foreign intelligence service (Bundesnachrichtendienst, BND), and one who was briefly in attendance at the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting.²² In the report, it is argued that the states of the Warsaw Pact “found themselves in a better tactical position overall” than they had been in when the meeting began in late 1986 and attributed this to taking a more active role in making “proposals covering the entire range of the CSCE process”. Yet the report also reveals that Moscow had less control over the pace of reforms in the East than Shevardnadze and Gorbachev appreciated.²³

The HVA was wary not only of runaway reforms in Moscow but also of cracks emerging between the Warsaw Pact delegations because this disunity could then be exploited by the Western delegations to force further concessions. This prioritisation of ideas of unity and solidarity by the Stasi and the ruling SED in the mid-1980s is well-established in the broader literature on East German political development.²⁴ However, it is significant that we see this kind of thought also guiding the analysis of intelligence provided by sources close to the Vienna Follow-up Meeting because it helps us to understand why East German policymakers were so critical of their allies’ efforts to engage with the CSCE process despite Moscow’s growing acceptance of a diversity of positions among Pact members. For example, in HVA’s report of 24 April 1987 Hungary

21 Westliche Wertungen zur 2. Runde des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, HVA 46, 150/87, Bl. 31–37.

22 Sources include: xv378/68 Gerald, xv381/69 Harry, xv/3690/74 Florian, in: Douglas Selvage/Walter Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess. MfS zwischen SED und KGB (1972–1989) – Tabellenanhang*, Göttingen 2019, p. 83.

23 Westliche Wertungen zur 2. Runde des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, HVA 46, 150/87, Bl. 31–32

24 Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, *End Game. The 1989 Revolution in East Germany*, Oxford 2022, p. 29–31; Esther von Richthofen, *Bringing Culture to the Masses. Control, Compromise and Participation in the GDR*, Oxford 2009, p. 189–191; A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided. From the Wall to Reunification*, Princeton 2020, p. 122–123; Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 515–531.

and Romania are singled out for criticism, the former for its engagement with the West and the latter for resisting close coordination with Moscow.²⁵

This is consistent with the pattern of HVA reporting on the CSCE process, where the service's strongest criticisms tended to be reserved for their allies. The accusation of schism against the Hungarian delegation was especially strongly prosecuted because of the Hungarian Basket III proposals on cross-border tourism and travel echoed those of West Germany.²⁶ The HVA report argues that "what is striking and unparalleled in [the Hungarian delegation's proposals] is the clarity in its explicit linkage to important Western concerns".²⁷ Furthermore, the report notes that "Hungarian support for the Western proposal for the protection of national minorities" made it "the first Warsaw Pact state in the history of the CSCE to have joined a Western human rights proposal as a co-contributor".²⁸ Arguably, domestic concern in Hungary over discrimination against the Hungarian minority in Romania (Székely Land) was the primary motivation for the East-West consensus.²⁹ Yet this "remarkable step" by Hungary was interpreted and firmly criticised by the HVA as a West German attempt "to use CSCE tools to solve an internal bloc problem". The HVA's critique that the CSCE was being appropriated by some Warsaw Pact states to circumvent Pact processes and take unilateral action to the detriment of other members also formed a trope in the HVA's analysis of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.³⁰

3 Seeing Opposition on All Sides

In mid-1987 the HVA drew on unnamed sources within the Italian government to access the Italian delegation's assessment of how the CSCE process was progressing and found that internal division was not unique to the delegations

25 Westliche Wertungen zur 2. Runde des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, HVA 46, 150/87, Bl. 33.

26 Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West Relations*, London 2019, p. 135–167.

27 Westliche Wertungen zur 2. Runde des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, HVA 46, 150/87, Bl. 36.

28 See the article by Willi Schrenk in this volume.

29 Andrea Brait/Michael Gehler, "The CSCE Vienna Follow-up Meeting and Alois Mock, 1986–1989", in: Helmut Wohnout et al. (eds.), *Christian Democracy and the Fall of Communism*, Leuven 2019, p. 75–92, on p. 84.

30 Selvae/Stüß, *Staatsicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 540–569 and p. 611–618.

from Warsaw Pact states. There was in fact greater division among Western states than East Berlin had initially appreciated.³¹ Similarly, during the fourth round of talks at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting (September to December 1987), the HVA sought to highlight how the West German delegation was displeased with the “tactic of unlimited procrastination” that some NATO members – namely the United States, Canada, Britain and the Netherlands – were pursuing in the negotiations.³² Instead, the West German delegation argued that “the West has nothing to gain from” attempting to maximise the symbolic concessions extracted from East Germany and should instead focus on gradual but tangible improvements in human rights.³³

This kind of division was also identified in relation to Western military force reduction targets and there was supposedly “complete agreement in rejecting isolated American reductions”.³⁴ Overall, the analysis is helpful not only because it highlights the changing priorities of *both* the Eastern and Western “camps” but also enables us to find points of interconnection and agreement across strategic alliances. Indeed, the CSCE Vienna Follow-up Meeting was arguably one of the key forums for this kind of trust and confidence building.³⁵ It had the effect of eroding established loyalties to Washington D.C. and incentivising autonomy from Moscow while highlighting the viability of alternative structures and relationships (such as the N+N group) based on common geographies and histories, if not ideologies.³⁶ This was precisely the point being made by a representative of the Italian foreign ministry in writing that

the CSCE remains, in the current bipolar system, the best example of polyphonic dynamism in the international arena. As a result of this, medium powers, like Italy, have the possibility to play a proactive role, and therefore also a political one, of considerable importance.³⁷

31 Westliche Wertungen zur 2. Runde des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, HVA 46, 150/87, Bl. 34.

32 Westliche Wertungen zum Stand und zu den Perspektiven des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, HVA 50, 388/87, Bl. 259. Also see: BRD-Wertungen zum Stand und zu den Perspektiven des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, HVA/MD, SIRA-TDB 12, SA8750333; Die Haltung der BRD-Regierung zum Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffen, BArch, MfS, HVA/MD, SIRA-TDB 12, SA8750328 (System der Informationsrecherche der HVA (SIRA)).

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Marie-France Desjardins, *Rethinking Confidence-Building Measures. Obstacles to Agreement and the Risks of Overselling the Process*, London 2014, p. 15–18.

36 Kii-Jong Hong, *The CSCE Security Regime Formation. An Asian Perspective*, London 1997, p. 84–85.

37 Bilancio dei progressi della CSCE, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, East-West Relations, 24 November 1987, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Istituto Luigi Sturzo, Archivio Giulio Andreotti, NATO Series, Box 172, Subseries 1, Folder 085, p. 5.

However, a polyphonic Europe was not what the HVA or the East German government wanted to see. This kind of alternative, and the freedoms and associations that it implied, constituted the so-called “internationalisation of opposition” that the Stasi had so fiercely opposed from 1975 on. Consequently, it was not without reason that calls of this kind, which internationalised questions of human rights, were met with alarm by the HVA analysts. This fear was compounded by the HVA’s belief that “the outcome of the Vienna meeting could not be predicted with certainty”.³⁸

The fears came to a head in the first half of 1988. On 18 January 1988 the Central Information Group issued a report entitled “Assessment of the actual political-ideological attacks by the NATO states against the European socialist states against the background of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting”.³⁹ This report was widely circulated throughout the upper echelons of the Stasi and SED bureaucracies and also dispatched to Moscow for consideration by the Committee for State Security (Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti, KGB).⁴⁰ It is significant because it provides a summary of the thinking that underpinned the largely hostile approach of the MfS to the first half of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. The administration saw the CSCE process as having been used by Western European states as a “framework” to “polemicise against” and interfere with the internal policies of Warsaw Pact, particularly in relation to the control of political dissent.⁴¹

Moreover, the Stasi report suggested that Western demands around human rights amounted to blackmail because they had become “a prerequisite for further comprehensive steps towards [military] disarmament and an essential yardstick for the results of the regional détente process”. This assessment was coupled with the prediction that the West could use the tactic “in further negotiations as a lever to enforce its own demands and to deepen differences of opinion between the states of the Warsaw Treaty”. Discrediting Gorbachev’s New Thinking, along with his ideas of Glasnost and Perestroika, was

38 Westliche Wertungen zum Stand und zu den Perspektiven des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, HVA 50, 388/87, Bl. 260–261; Ergebnisse der KSZE in Wien, BArch, MfS, BdL/Doc., 8932, Bl. 1–18. Also see: Bewertung des KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, ZAIG, 4883, Bl. 1–45; Ergebnisse der KSZE in Wien, BArch, MfS, BdL/Doc. 8937, Bl. 1–2, BRD-Wertungen zum Stand und zu den Perspektiven des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, HVA/MD, SIRA-TDB 12, SA8750333; Die Haltung der BRD-Regierung zum Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffen, BArch, MfS, HVA/MD, SIRA-TDB 12, SA8750328 (SIRA).

39 Gegnerische Angriffe während des Wiener Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, ZAIG 6053, 20/88, Bl. 3–12.

40 Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 84.

41 Gegnerische Angriffe während des Wiener Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, ZAIG 6053, 20/88, Bl. 3–4.

supposedly central to the Western effort to drive a wedge between Pact members.⁴² However, we must not uncritically accept the Stasi's assessment that there was significant Western opposition to Gorbachev's reforms. Threaded throughout the Group's extensive treatment of the issue is the hypothesis that Western attempts at "measuring" Gorbachev's reforms "against bourgeois ideas of democracy and values" were intended to exacerbate activism by Helsinki groups and erode unity among Pact members.⁴³ The report suggests that evidence for this hypothesis could be found in attempts by unnamed politicians from NATO countries to meet with dissidents during official visits to socialist countries and efforts to promote the "intensification of such encounters on a 'private' level".⁴⁴ Yet the tone of the Stasi analysis is particularly conspiratorial and pays little attention to alternative explanations for Western criticism, which in fact was more concerned with the lack of implementation of Gorbachev's reforms.

Arguably, the strongest explanation of Western hesitancy to endorse Gorbachev's reforms in early 1988, despite his personal popularity among Western audiences, was not a Machiavellian effort to sow division amongst Warsaw Pact states but rather suspicion that Gorbachev's reforms were temporary and, in part, designed to neutralise a key area of Western advantage in international forums including the CSCE.⁴⁵ Jussi Hanhimäki makes the compelling argument that human rights were a central part of reinvention of the Western liberalism that emerged from the Helsinki Process in the late 1970s and became a defining feature of Western criticism of the Soviet alliance in the 1980s.⁴⁶ The decline in Soviet interest was matched across the Eastern Bloc, but where Gorbachev sought to reinvigorate human rights discourse through the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, Honecker and the SED steadfastly refused to entertain such questions.⁴⁷

42 Rofe, "Trust between Adversaries and Allies", in: Ostermann/Klimke/Kreis (eds.), *Trust, But Verify*, p. 53–55; Westad, *The Cold War*, p. 389–391.

43 Akira Iriye/Petra Goedde, "Introduction: Human Rights as History", in: Akira Iriye/Petra Goedde/William Hitchcock (eds.), *The Human Rights Revolution. An International History*, New York 2012, p. 3–26, on p. 9; Gegnerische Angriffe während des Wiener Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, ZAIG 6053, 20/88, Bl. 4.

44 Gegnerische Angriffe während des Wiener Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, ZAIG 6053, 20/88, Bl. 6.

45 Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, Chapel Hill 2009, p. 317.

46 See the article by Jussi Hanhimäki in this volume.

47 Gegnerische Angriffe während des Wiener Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, ZAIG 6053, 20/88, Bl. 6.

Human rights increasingly became a focal point for “cross-bloc initiatives” as the Vienna Follow-up Meeting progressed, reflecting the convergence of Western interests since the mid-1970s and Gorbachev’s program of reforms in the mid-1980s.⁴⁸ However, Stasi observers largely interpreted human rights discourse through the lens of a wider Western plot to use agreement with Soviet-aligned states to sow division among Warsaw Pact members. For example, the Central Information Group’s report of 18 January 1988 report argues that Hungary had shown considerable interest in working with Western states on proposals related to the human dimension of the CSCE in solidarity with the Hungarian minority in Romania.⁴⁹ Yet this was understood to reflect Western efforts to exacerbate and internationalise differences between Pact members. Such an interpretation helps to explain why members of the Western delegations accused the East German delegation of having an “inflexible attitude” towards negotiations – the East German delegation saw themselves as playing the role of “brakeman” in relation first and foremost to the more reform-minded Pact members like Hungary and Poland but to also the West. This interpretation also accounts for the growing isolation of East Germany at the CSCE, even among its allies – an isolation of which East Berlin was all too aware.⁵⁰

4 East German Pressure Points in Vienna

Pressure on East Germany from its allies, particularly the Soviet Union, rather than from its adversaries in the West, and the associated need to limit reputational damage within the Soviet alliance, were arguably the decisive factors in efforts by the MfS to construct a façade of receptiveness to the CSCE meeting.⁵¹ However, to understand this development in the East German approach to the CSCE we need to understand the changes occurring in Moscow during 1988. Throughout that year, tensions increased between the Soviet delegation in Vienna and the reform-minded foreign minister, Shevardnadze, in Moscow, with the former taking far more conservative positions than the latter.⁵² For

48 Ibid., Bl. 6–9.

49 Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 642–643; Gegnerische Angriffe während des Wiener Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, ZAIG 6053, 20/88, Bl. 9.

50 Ibid.

51 Ziele für das KSZE-Folgetreffen, BArch, MfS, HVA, ZAIG 5342, Bl. 6–10; Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 647–658.

52 Harm Hazewinkel, “Paris, Copenhagen, and Moscow”, in: Arie Bloed/Pieter van Dijk, *The Human Dimension of the Helsinki Process. The Vienna Follow-up Meeting and Its Aftermath*, Leiden 2021, p. 128–132.

example, in a conversation between George Shultz, the US Secretary of State, and Shevardnadze on 21 April 1988, Shevardnadze betrayed his frustration with the delegation, complaining that “We tell them one thing [...] They do something different”.⁵³

Heraclides helps to explain these tensions – between Moscow and the Soviet delegation in Vienna on the one hand and among Warsaw Pact members on the other – by arguing that from early 1987 on, the alliance was divided into two factions. The East German, Czechoslovak, Bulgarian and Romanian delegations were resistant to domestic political reforms, including the freedom of movement proposals in Basket III, whereas the Hungarian and Polish delegates begrudgingly recognised the need for modest reforms and expressed willingness to negotiate.⁵⁴ The position of the Soviet delegation shifted from that of the former “hardliner” faction towards that of the latter “moderate” faction as the Vienna Meeting progressed – but without ever quite matching, despite Shevardnadze’s and Gorbachev’s private endorsement.⁵⁵ This was a consequence of the pace of reform at the highest echelons of the Soviet Politburo eclipsing that occurring both among the rank and file in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in East Berlin, Prague, Sofia and Bucharest. Wrede describes this change in the Soviet Politburo as “a much-noticed about-face”, which led to Shevardnadze consistently holding, in his communications with the foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact states, that “respect for human rights was a pillar of the international security system” to which the Soviet Union was committed.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Sarah Snyder sees the changing Soviet position at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting as a key barometer of the larger reforms that Gorbachev was pursuing in Moscow.⁵⁷

Simultaneously with the “about-face” over human rights that had occurred in Moscow, a less dramatic change seems to have been underway in East Berlin. Where Moscow proactively sought the measured extension of human

53 “Conversation between US Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Shevardnadze”, Memorandum of Conversation: The Secretary’s Initial Meeting with Shevardnadze, 21 April 1988, Moscow, The National Security Archive, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB251/7.pdf>, accessed 21.11.2023, p. 9–10.

54 Heraclides, *Security and Cooperation in Europe*, p. 92.

55 “Conversation between US Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Shevardnadze”, Memorandum of Conversation: The Secretary’s Initial Meeting with Shevardnadze, 21 April 1988, Moscow, The National Security Archive, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB251/7.pdf>, accessed 21.11.2023, p. 9–10.

56 Wrede, *Die Weiterentwicklung des KSZE-Prozesses*, p. 113.

57 Snyder, Sarah B., “Principles Overwhelming Tanks: Human Rights and the End of the Cold War”, in: Akira Iriye/Petra Goedde/William Hitchcock (eds.), *The Human Rights Revolution. An International History*, Oxford 2012, p. 265–284, on p. 265.

rights – evident in the Soviet proposal for the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE – the change in East Germany was predominately reactive.⁵⁸ It was a reluctant response to changes being driven by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze from SED figures like Egon Krenz and Wolfgang Herger designed to prop up one-party rule against internal criticism rather than a rethinking of the place of human rights in East German politics and diplomacy.⁵⁹ Thus, from late 1988 on, Stasi commentary on the Vienna Follow-up Meeting increasingly treated Basket III concessions as a *fait accompli* and prescriptive comments were focused on how to increase East German influence over the kind and extent of the concessions being made.⁶⁰

For example, on 26 September 1988 the HVA produced a summary of the outcome of the sixth round of talks at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, concluding that they had reduced “contentious negotiations [freedom of movement] to core political problems” and thereby restricted the opportunity for Western delegations to criticise East Germany, albeit without succeeding in halting the negotiations altogether.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the report predicts that “decisions about the Human Dimension Conference, including the Soviet proposal to host it in Moscow, were likely to be particularly difficult”.⁶² The difficulty was attributed to the Soviet “about-face” and Moscow’s inability to secure “a unified line within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty”, which meant that “East Germany felt compelled to modify its behaviour”. This HVA analysis supports the argument that a lesser, unwilling “about-face” over human rights in general, if not freedom of movement in particular, was occurring in East Berlin in the wake of Gorbachev’s reforms.

The HVA believed that East Germany had been forced into a “defensive position” at the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting by the (expected) criticism of the Western delegations on the one hand and, on the other, the (unexpected)

58 Sandra Gubin, “Between Regimes and Realism – Transnational Agenda Setting. Soviet Compliance with CSCE Human Rights Norms”, in: *Human Rights Quarterly* 17 (1995), issue 2, p. 278–302, on p. 297–300; Yuliya von Saal, “Die Folgen des KSZE-Prozesses in der Sowjetunion der Perestroika. Der KSZE-Faktor in der Eigendynamik des Wertewandels”, in: Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer), München 2012, p. 296–303.

59 Charles Maier, *Dissolution. The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany*, London 1999, p. 3–51; Daniel Chirot, “What Happened in Eastern Europe in 1989?”, in: Vladimir Tismaneanu (ed.), *The Revolutions of 1989*, London 2005, p. 19–50.

60 Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 621–646.

61 Der Stand und die Perspektiven des KSZE-Folgetreffens in Wien aus BRD-Sicht, BArch, MfS, HVA 53, 418/88, Bl. 5–6.

62 Ibid., Bl. 7.

willingness of the Soviet Union to make concessions.⁶³ East Berlin was particularly concerned that these concessions might extend to the humanitarian cases of East Germans who had been prevented from emigrating to West Germany.⁶⁴ This helps to explain why the HVA officers embedded within the East German delegation were tasked with “making every effort to limit the active role of Helsinki groups” in criticising East Germany on the sidelines of the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting.⁶⁵ The objective of these measures was to thwart what Wrede describes as the campaign of “discussion and discrete diplomacy to raise human rights violations with the delegation from East Germany”.⁶⁶ However, the measures of August–September 1988 were assessed by the HVA as having been relatively ineffective, providing East Germany only with “a little breathing room” in the face of “sustained and massive criticism from the West”.⁶⁷

Four months later, on 15 December 1988, the efficacy of the East German government’s measures was reviewed in a report produced by the Central Information Group and distributed to the office of Erich Honecker, the Ministry of National Defence (Ministerium für Nationale Verteidigung, MfNV) and the KGB in Moscow.⁶⁸ The report argues that NATO sought “long-term, controllable and evolutionary processes that neither exceeded the tolerance of the Soviet Union nor provided conservative forces in Warsaw Pact states with pretexts for limiting the internal reforms”. The report also explains that the Vienna Follow-up Meeting had become an important forum for critiquing East Germany’s human rights record and that the exploitation of this function of the meeting was “one of the most important successes of their [the West’s] CSCE policy”.⁶⁹ This analysis highlights the fear within the MfS that the CSCE Meeting might cause the proliferation of Helsinki groups in East Germany

63 Ibid.

64 Selvae/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 611–618, p. 632–635; Der Stand und die Perspektiven des KSZE-Folgetreffens in Wien aus BRD-Sicht, BArch, MfS, HVA 53, 418/88, Bl. 8; Die Position der DDR beim Wiener Folgetreffen, BArch, MfS, ZAIG, 4246, Bl. 2–4; Arie Bloed, “Institutional Aspects of the Helsinki Process After the Follow-up Meeting of Vienna”, in: *Netherlands International Law Review* 36 (1989), issue 3, p. 360.

65 Der Stand und die Perspektiven des KSZE-Folgetreffens in Wien aus BRD-Sicht, BArch, MfS, HVA 53, 418/88, Bl. 8.

66 David H. Shumaker, *Gorbachev and the German question. Soviet–West German relations, 1985–1990*, London 1995, p. 53–62; Wrede, *Die Weiterentwicklung des KSZE-Prozesses*, p. 113.

67 Der Stand und die Perspektiven des KSZE-Folgetreffens in Wien aus BRD-Sicht, BArch, MfS, HVA 53, 418/88, Bl. 8.

68 Einschätzung über aktuelle politisch-ideologische Angriffsrichtungen der NATO gegen die Warschauer Vertragsstaaten, insbesondere die DDR, vor dem Hintergrund des KSZE-Folgetreffens in Wien, BArch, MfS, ZAIG 6067, 540/88, Bl. 3–13.

69 Ibid., Bl. 4–5.

and is particularly noteworthy because the report directly connects this illusory threat to internal security threat to the Soviet Union's commitment to "maximalist positions" on human rights.⁷⁰ It was in this context that the report delivered an ominous warning to both Honecker and the leadership of the East German security apparatus that "the progress of the CSCE process will also force the East German leadership to revise its positions".⁷¹

5 Conclusion

The Vienna Follow-up Meeting ended on 19 January 1989, only a month after the report by the Central Information Group warned that East Germany's leaders could not resist the CSCE process in perpetuity, especially given the concerted pressure from Moscow to sign the Concluding Document.⁷² The effect of the meeting's Concluding Document was quickly felt in the Soviet Union, with the HVA concluding that the Vienna Follow-up Meeting had accelerated "the opening of the media to debates on sometimes sensitive domestic political and historical topics in the course of Perestroika and Glasnost [and] also led to a liberalisation of the information system as a whole".⁷³ More broadly, the HVA argued that the Vienna Follow-up Meeting had ensured that the CSCE had established a "central role in shaping West-East relations" and, pointedly, that this "would not have been possible without the reform policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's general secretary, M. Gorbachev".⁷⁴ Thus,

70 Christiane Olivo, *Creating a Democratic Civil Society in Eastern Germany. The Case of the Citizen Movements and Alliance 90*, New York 2001, p. 61–90; Peter Voss/Christiane Gern/Karl-Dieter Opp, *Origins of a Spontaneous Revolution. East Germany, 1989*, Ann Arbor 1995, p. 19–20, p. 60–71; Douglas Selvage, "The Limits of Repression. Soviet Bloc Security Services vs. Transnational Helsinki Networks, 1976–1986", in: Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War, Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights 1972–1990*, New York-Oxford 2019, p. 207–229, on p. 210–211; Einschätzung über aktuelle politisch-ideologische Angriffsrichtungen der NATO gegen die Warschauer Vertragsstaaten, insbesondere die DDR, vor dem Hintergrund des KSZE-Folgetreffens in Wien, BArch, MfS, ZAIG 6067, 540/88, Bl. 5.

71 Einschätzung über aktuelle politisch-ideologische Angriffsrichtungen der NATO gegen die Warschauer Vertragsstaaten, insbesondere die DDR, vor dem Hintergrund des KSZE-Folgetreffens in Wien, BArch, MfS, ZAIG 6067, 540/88, Bl. 5.

72 Süß, *Die Wiener KSZE-Folgekonferenz*, p. 220–227.

73 Ergebnisse des KSZE-Folgetreffens für die Sowjetunion, BArch, MfS, HVA 761, 163/89, Bl. 5.

74 Der Verlauf und die Ergebnisse des Wiener-Folgetreffens aus BRD-Sicht, BArch, MfS, HVA 761, 83/89, Bl. 175–177.

Wrede's observation of a Soviet "about-face" is far more than a retroactive label – it can be found in contemporary East German analysis.

However, even more significant is the fact that the HVA analysis departs from much of the negative commentary of Vienna Follow-up Meeting in 1986–88 in concluding that "the numerous new, substantial texts for the specification of human rights and human contacts will benefit the people in both German states".⁷⁵ This rhetorical shift is corroborated by the wide-ranging speech of Erich Mielke, East German minister for state security, to the college of the Ministry of State Security in late 1989, in which he acknowledged that Gorbachev's reforms and the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting would necessitate controlled, measured change in East Germany.⁷⁶ Arguably, the HVA got its forecast of 7 May 1986 for the Vienna Meeting so wrong because it at first underestimated the magnitude of the diplomatic opportunities that Gorbachev's New Thinking created in Europe and reacted too slowly to the strategic realignment precipitated by that diplomacy. It was not until the end of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting on 19 January 1989 that the HVA fully recognised the implications of the changes that occurred throughout the meeting in Vienna and adjusted its guidance to the SED accordingly. This was not quite the "about-face" that took place in Moscow during 1986–87. However, the Vienna Follow-up Meeting did lead the Honecker government and the HVA to the cynical realisation that both institutions needed to distract from East Germany's poor human rights record more effectively in international forums like the CSCE or risk significant reputational damage within the Soviet alliance, not to mention among Western and N+N states.⁷⁷

75 Ibid.

76 Ziele für das KSZE-Folgetreffen, BArch, MfS, ZAIG, 5342, Bl. 1–64.

77 Auftritt der DDR in der KSZE, BArch, MfS, ZAIG, 5351, Bl. 40–52; Die DDR und internationale Organisationen, BArch, MfS, Bdl./Dok. 5299 and Bl. 1–3; Bewertung des KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, MfS, ZAIG, 4883, Bl. 1–45.

A German-German Conflict in a Multilateral Framework

The Debate on Compulsory Currency Exchange at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting

Willi Schrenk

The Federal Republic of Germany considered the Vienna Concluding Document a resounding foreign policy success. Detlev Graf zu Rantzau, the second leader of the West German delegation, went so far as to describe the outcomes of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting as “a development unprecedented in Europe’s post-war history” and as “in every regard satisfactory to the Federal Republic of Germany”.¹ The German Democratic Republic, by contrast, was most dissatisfied with the Concluding Document. In the meeting’s final months, the East Germans found themselves under increasing pressure from both East and West. The more liberal policies pursued by the Soviet Union under Gorbachev meant that old certainties no longer applied within the Warsaw Pact. Instead, East Germany, together with Romania, gradually found itself in an isolated position within the Eastern alliance.² In the last days of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, it found itself compelled, under Soviet pressure, to accede to two demands which it had previously been alone among the participating states in blocking: the abolition of the compulsory currency exchange at the inner-German border and the legalisation of the activities of so-called “Helsinki groups” in the CSCE states.³

The present chapter examines one of the most hotly-fought disputes between the two German states at the meeting, that concerning the abolition of the compulsory exchange of a specified minimum amount of currency on entry to the GDR. This debate was of great importance to both German states

1 “Botschafter Graf zu Rantzau, Wien (KSZE-Delegation), an das Auswärtige Amt, Delegationsbericht Nr. 505”, in: *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD)* 1989, München 2020, I, Dok. 7, p. 29–36, on p. 29. Previously untranslated German language sources were translated by the author.

2 On the isolation of the GDR during the Vienna Follow-up Conference see Benno-Eide Siebs, *Die Außenpolitik der DDR 1976–1989. Strategien und Grenzen*, Paderborn-München-Wien-Zürich 1999, p. 351–353.

3 On the Helsinki and human rights groups in the CSCE process see e.g. Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War. A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network*, New York 2011.

and reflects their general approach to the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. The present analysis is concerned particularly with the strategies and other factors that determined the course of negotiations and their ultimate outcome.

1 The History of Compulsory Currency Exchange Prior to the Vienna Follow-up Meeting

Compulsory currency exchange (CCE) for visitors to East Germany from the “non-socialist economic area” was introduced in December 1964. From that time on, travellers from West Germany, West Berlin and other Western states were obliged by law to exchange a fixed sum of Deutschmarks (DM) into East German marks (Ostmark) at a rate of one to one, which corresponded neither to the rates offered by West German bureaux de change nor to the respective currencies’ real value. The minimum sum to be exchanged was adjusted over the years, as were the shifting exemptions for old-age pensioners and minors, who were permitted to exchange smaller sums or none at all. Since 1989 the standard sum had been fixed at DM 25.⁴ From 1 August 1984 the daily rate was lowered to DM 15 for pensioners, with under-14s fully exempt from CCE.⁵

From the very beginning, CCE on crossing the East German border was a contentious issue between the German states, with the Federal Republic regarding it as a major obstacle to contact between people in East and West. This was particularly true for West Germans who had relatives in the GDR and especially in divided Berlin, but also in other regions along the inner-German border, as every visit to East Germany meant a financial burden. From the perspective of the GDR, the compulsory purchase of Ostmark at high rates was an important source of hard currency, since the money could not be exchanged back into Deutschmarks when returning to the West. In the 1980s, income from the minimum exchange rate averaged around DM 300 million per annum. Another purpose of this rule was to protect the GDR economy from unofficial foreign currency trading in the Federal Republic, particularly in West Berlin. Although the introduction of Ostmarks cheaply bought in West Berlin into the GDR was prohibited, it was frequently practised and allowed visitors

4 Gesetzblatt der DDR 1964, II, Nr. 114 vom 28.11.1964; Gesetzblatt der DDR 1973, I, Nr. 51 vom 06.11.1973; Gesetzblatt der DDR 1974, I, Nr. 54 vom 05.11.1974; Gesetzblatt der DDR 1974, I, Nr. 61 vom 10.12.1974; Gesetzblatt der DDR 1980, I, Nr. 29 vom 09.10.1980.

5 This was part of a series of humanitarian concessions to which the GDR had committed itself in return for the granting of a loan of just under a billion marks by the Federal Republic. See “Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Premierministerin Thatcher in Berlin (West) vom 25.09.1987”, in: *AAPD 1987*, München 2018, II, Dok. 269, p. 1359–1360.

from the West to buy subsidised products in the GDR for a fraction of their value in West Germany. One Deutschmark usually bought four to eight Ostmarks, sometimes even more. In 1987 alone, the damage to the GDR economy from this practice was estimated at DM 500 to 600 million. The Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) assumed that abolishing or lowering CCE rates would exacerbate this problem.⁶ In addition to its economic benefits, the GDR also regarded CCE an effective means of distancing itself from West Germany. It was not in the interests of the party leadership to bring people in East and West too close together.⁷

Even if comparable regulations also applied in other Warsaw Pact states, the debate about abolishing CCE at the Vienna Follow-up Conference must be seen as a specifically German-German problem fundamentally linked to the division of Germany. Due to family ties between the two Germanies, significantly more visitors from the West travelled to the GDR than to other Eastern states. In this respect, the negotiations in Vienna addressed a fairly commonplace problem for many people in the two German states that did not exist elsewhere in the Eastern bloc.

2 The Negotiations on Compulsory Currency Exchange

The debate on the abolition of CCE was based on two proposals tabled at the Follow-up Meeting in late February and early March 1987. The first, headed “Foreign travel and family visits” (WT.93), was tabled by Austria and Switzerland in Basket III⁸ and suggested the abolition of minimum exchange rates not overall but only for family visits. The second proposal (WT.101) was supported by a broad alliance of the states of the European Community, Canada, the United States, Norway and Switzerland. It was located in Basket II and contained demands for the promotion of tourism, including that “All requirements for tourists to exchange certain amounts of money into the national currency shall be abolished.”⁹ The negotiations on the abolition of CCE were thus conducted in two baskets (something which applied only to few debates at the Follow-up Meeting) and their outcome was ultimately enshrined in

6 Douglas Selvage/Walter Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess. MfS zwischen SED und KGB (1972–1989)*, Göttingen 2019, p. 644–647.

7 See e.g. Siebs, *Die Außenpolitik der DDR 1976–1989*, p. 128.

8 CSCE/WT.93 vom 27.2.1987, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PA-AA), B 28, Zwischenarchiv (ZA) (Referat 212), Bd. 153446.

9 CSCE/WT.101 vom 03.03.1987, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), Bd. 153446.

two passages of the Vienna Concluding Document. Neither proposal directly addressed the German-German dimension of abolishing CCE.¹⁰

As would become apparent in the further course of the meeting, the inclusion of the proposal in Basket III by neutral states had considerable tactical advantages for West Germany. Foreign ministry documents also indicate that there had been previous agreements between the Federal Republic and the neutral states. Looking back in the summer of 1988, the West German delegation reported that it had succeeded in persuading the neutral states to “submit additional proposals in this area (see WT.93), which also took account of concerns relating to Germany-Germany policy.”¹¹ In an assessment of the Concluding Document, Detlev Graf zu Rantzau, the second head of the West German delegation, stated that the “quality of the VCD [Vienna Concluding Document] in the area of human rights and Basket III was undoubtedly due to the fact that Western neutrals fully shared our understanding of human rights.”¹² In this connection, Rantzau explicitly mentioned the neutral proposal on CCE.¹³

Both proposals were initially rejected by the Warsaw Pact states and by the GDR in particular. The East German diplomats repeatedly stated that no agreement on the abolition or reduction of CCE could be reached in Vienna. In support of this line, they argued that CCE was a specifically German-German problem that should not be dealt with at the multilateral level of the CSCE.¹⁴ Within the Warsaw Pact, however, there were few objections to an agreement on CCE being included in the Vienna Concluding Document. Instead, the Soviet Union pressed for compromises with the West in the area of human rights early on in order to achieve progress in disarmament in return, a line initially supported by Hungary and Poland. As early as 1987, the GDR had reason to worry about being isolated within its own alliance.¹⁵

10 The West German diplomat Hans-Heinrich Wrede, in the short chapter on the debate on CCE in his memoirs of the Follow-up Meeting, only dealt with proposal WT.93, thereby bolstering the interpretation of the conflict something other than an explicitly German-German problem. Hans-Heinrich Wrede, *KSZE in Wien. Kursbestimmung für Europas Zukunft*, Köln 1990, p. 109–112.

11 Delegationsbericht 400 (A) vom 29.06.1988, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), Bd. 153444.

12 Botschafter Graf zu Rantzau an das Auswärtige Amt, in: *AAPD 1989*, p. 92.

13 Ibid. p. 90.

14 Zum Vorschlag WT 93, Österreich/Schweden vom 27.2.1987 über Auslandsreisen zu Familienbesuchen, PA-AA, M 21/286995; Standpunkt der sozialistischen Staaten zu den NATO/EG-Vorschlägen WT 101, 105, 115, 117, 118 vom 17.03.1987, PA-AA, M 21/286995.

15 For example, the GDR delegation wrote in a report to East Berlin on 28 September 1987 that its allies had “apparently [...] no problems” with an agreement to abolish CCE. This willingness of the USSR and other WVO states to agree to Western proposals in the humanitarian field jeopardised the “substantial interests” of the GDR; Ergebnisse Abstimmung

Overall, West Germany was unable to make any significant progress on the issue of CCE until May 1988, when the follow-up conference gained considerable momentum with the first draft of a Concluding Document, drawn up by the N+N.¹⁶ Although it found its stance confirmed by the adoption of a phrasing based on proposal WT.93 in the full draft, the Federal Republic doubted that the agreement would be included in the Vienna final document “in view of the fierce resistance announced by the GDR”.¹⁷ Instead, Bonn expected to be able to use the discussion of the issue in Vienna as leverage in bilateral negotiations with East Berlin.¹⁸ The GDR, by contrast, found itself increasingly isolated in the following months. From the summer of 1988, only Romania continued to support its position.¹⁹ Until the end of the Follow-up Meeting, these two states, as conservative hardliners, consistently opposed the policies of the more liberal Warsaw Pact states.²⁰

At a meeting between the German delegations in July 1988, the East German diplomats declared that, though they were isolated on this issue, no concessions could be made. Instead, they indicated that they wanted to negotiate this matter directly with Bonn in order to prevent a debate in Vienna. As a result of this threat, the Federal Republic adopted a new strategy, henceforth arguing that the original proposal on CCE had been tabled not by itself but rather by neutral states. Moreover, many Western states were in favour of abolishing CCE, which was why the issue, contrary to East German assertions, could not be treated as a specifically German-German problem. Bonn had recognised that the Federal Republic’s chances of success in this bilateral debate were significantly higher in Vienna than in direct talks with East Berlin.²¹

This negotiating strategy proved to be extremely effective over the following months. However, its success was possible only due to the lack of support the GDR received from its allies. In this debate, as in others, the Soviet Union simply ignored the interests of the GDR. Hannsgerd Protsch, for example, who had supported the East German delegation in the area of Basket III since April 1988 and who worked for the Ministry for State Security (MfS) under the code

Staaten Warschauer Vertrages zu Österr.-Schweizer non-paper Korb III, Teil menschliche Kontakte vom 28.09.1987, PA-AA M 21/289595.

16 On the N+N’s full proposal: CSCE/WT.137 vom 13.05.1988, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), Bd. 158445; Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting*, p. 118–119.

17 Delegationsbericht Nr. 373 vom 13.05.1988, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), Bd. 153444.

18 Ibid.

19 Anlage Nr. 1 zur Vorlage für das Politbüro des ZK der SED vom 16. Juni 1988. Informationen zum gegenwärtigen Stand des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens, BArch, DP 1/6124.

20 See e.g. Siebs, *Die Außenpolitik der DDR 1976–1989*, p. 352.

21 Delegationsbericht Nr. 412 (I) vom 22.7.1988, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), Bd. 153444.

name “Paul”, reported to his case officer on 11 August 1988 that the GDR would ultimately have to agree to all demands in order not to jeopardise progress on conventional disarmament. The Soviet delegation had already informed him confidentially that it too would agree to the abolition of the minimum exchange rate if doing so was necessary to achieve its objectives in military matters,²² leaving Protsch to conclude that “it [was] all over” in the negotiations on Basket III.²³

The final months of the conference were marked by tough negotiations in the few areas that remained unresolved. However, while more and more agreements were reached, the GDR blocked agreements on CCE and on legalising the activities of Helsinki groups until shortly before the end of the conference. It was not until December 1988 that the East German foreign minister, Oskar Fischer, suggested that his government cease to block progress on the two contentious issues, as the GDR was in danger of being the only participant to prevent the successful conclusion of the Follow-up Meeting. He also stressed, however, that national legislation should take precedence and that the provisions should not be implemented.²⁴ This was intended at least to limit the damage to the international reputation of the East German state, since its responsibility for the failure of the Follow-up Conference would have meant a severe loss of face.

Unlike their East German colleagues, the West German delegation expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the final weeks of the Follow-up Meeting. In an assessment of Basket III in the N+N’s revised full draft of 3 January 1989, the delegation wrote that the section was “unreservedly acceptable” and stressed “that the GDR’s efforts to eliminate the text on minimum exchange [...] have failed”.²⁵ This also applied to the corresponding phrasing in Basket II.²⁶

The GDR’s resistance to the inclusion of a commitment to abolishing CCE in the Vienna Concluding Document finally ended with the visit of the leader of the Soviet delegation, Yuri Kashlev, to East Berlin on 5 January 1989. Kashlev had the task of obtaining the agreement of the general secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, Erich Honecker, to the final document. Under pressure from the Soviet Union, Honecker finally consented, but asked Kashlev to

22 Selvae/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 622–623.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 623.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 641–642.

25 Delegationsbericht Nr. 484 vom 03.01.1989, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), Bd. 153431.

26 Delegationsbericht Nr. 492 vom 04.01.1989, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), Bd. 153432.

inform Gorbachev that neither the abolition of the minimum exchange rate nor the legalisation of Helsinki groups in the GDR would be implemented *de facto*.²⁷

In a final attempt to bend the new resolutions in its favour, the East German delegation sparked a dispute within the German translation group in Vienna on 11 January 1989 by trying to obtain a weaker translation from the English. The GDR wished to see the English verb “consider” translated as *prüfen* (“examine”) instead of the stronger *in Erwägung ziehen* (“take into consideration”). However, this attempt was prevented by referring a German-English dictionary produced in East Germany, which did not support that country’s desired translation.²⁸

Ultimately, the negotiations ended with a commitment to the abolition of CCE being included in two places in the Concluding Document. Under the heading “Co-operation in other areas” in the section “Co-operation in the field of economics, of science and technology and of the environment”, the document pledged its signatories to “consider in a positive spirit the progressive phasing out, for foreign tourists, of minimum exchange requirements” and to “allow the reconversion of legally acquired local currency”. In addition, in the provisions for “Human Contacts” in the “Co-operation in Humanitarian and Other Fields” section, that the participating states agreed to

consider the scope for gradually reducing and eventually eliminating any requirement which might exist for travellers to obtain local currency in excess of actual expenditure, giving priority to persons travelling for the purpose of family meetings. They will accord such persons the opportunity in practice to bring in or to take out with them personal possessions or gifts.²⁹

27 Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 644–647; Peter Steglich/Günter Leuschner, *KSZE – Fossil oder Hoffnung?*, Berlin 1996, p. 194–196.

28 Delegationsbericht Nr. 504 (B) vom 16.01.1989, PA-AA, B 28, ZA (Referat 212), Bd. 153432. It was at this point that, according to Peter Steglich, the conversation “at last turned embarrassing” for “the long-suffering East German diplomats in the Hofburg”; Steglich/Leuschner, *KSZE*, p. 197; Wrede, *KSZE in Wien*, p. 111.

29 Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting 1986 of representatives of the participating states of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held on the basis of the provisions of the final act relating to the follow-up to the conference. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/7/40881.pdf>, accessed 22.10.2024, p. 21, p. 26.

3 The Debate after the Vienna Follow-up Meeting

As Kashlev had already been told, the SED leadership was not prepared to comply with the new agreements by abolishing CCE after the end of the Follow-up Meeting. Its argument was based on the premise that the laws of the sovereign participating states always took precedence over the documents of the CSCE. As a report on the results of the Follow-up Conference declared,

Of decisive importance is the statement in the Vienna Concluding Document that each state determines its own internal order and that the implementation of the provisions of the Vienna Meeting takes place within the framework of its laws, regulations, practices and policies. This confirms the principle that the implementation of the provisions of the Vienna Concluding Document in national legislation will be carried out by the free sovereign decision of the participating states.³⁰

In fact, however, the Concluding Document stipulated that the participating states should “ensure that their laws, regulations, practices and policies conform with their obligations under international law and are brought into harmony with the provisions of the Declaration on Principles and other CSCE commitments.”³¹ The GDR’s interpretation thus deliberately ignored parts of the agreements reached in Vienna. It used this argument to counter any future criticism from the West that the Concluding Document had not been implemented.

Moreover, the SED’s decision to amend the passage on CCE when publishing the Vienna Concluding Document in *Neues Deutschland*, the party’s mouthpiece and the GDR’s largest-circulation daily newspaper, also attracted a strong international response. Large parts of the final document were published in the issue of 21 January 1989. However, the original wording on CCE, “consider”, was rendered as *prüfen* (“examine”), the translation unsuccessfully demanded by the GDR in Vienna.³² In response to West German criticism the GDR had published a manipulated version of the Concluding Document, the head of

30 Anlage Nr. 3 zum Protokoll Nr. 4 der Sitzung des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 24.1.1989, Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnisse des Treffens der Außenminister der KSZE-Staaten zum Abschluss des Wiener Folgetreffens, BArch, DY 30/44286.

31 Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting, p. 4; Selvage/Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*, p. 645–646.

32 *Neues Deutschland*, 21./22.01.1989. The participating states had pledged themselves to publication in the Vienna Concluding Document.

the East German delegation, Peter Steglich, replied – in a conversation with an employee of the permanent mission of the Federal Republic in the GDR, undersecretary (Ministerialrat) Ernst-Jörg von Studnitz – that his delegation had agreed to the version used in Vienna only so as not to block the conclusion of the meeting. However, the GDR was still convinced that “consider” could also be translated as *prüfen*. Ultimately, “the text published in Neues Deutschland was the GDR’s version of the Concluding Document.”³³ The GDR’s awkward manoeuvring over this matter was a result of its difficult situation. Since implementation of the Vienna agreements was out of the question, it felt it had no choice but to resort to this transparent stratagem. In his memoirs of the Follow-up Meeting, the deputy head of the GDR delegation, Hans Voß, described this behaviour as “not only unique in the history of the CSCE” but also as a “great folly”.³⁴

4 Conclusion

The analysis of the negotiations on a possible abolition of CCE at the inner-German border at the Vienna Follow-up Conference, which ultimately ended with the adoption of this demand in the Concluding Document, has revealed several aspects that characterised this debate throughout. For example, the tactically advantageous cooperation between West Germany and the neutrals was a constant influence felt throughout the conference, from the tabling of proposal WT.93 to the protection of West German interests in the various neutral non-papers and finally the Concluding Document. Analysis of the relevant archival sources leads to the conclusion that this proposal, or at least its more precise elaboration, originated not with the neutrals but rather in a West German initiative. Cooperation with the neutral states allowed the Bonn delegation to conduct negotiations on the abolition of CCE without being accused of pursuing its immediate national interest or adopting a strident tone vis-à-vis its Eastern counterpart.

33 Vermerk über ein Gespräch des Genossen Steglich, Abteilungsleiter im Bereich G/P, mit Herrn von Studnitz, Ministerialrat in der Ständigen Vertretung der BRD in der DDR, am 27. Januar 1989, PA-AA, M 21/286895.

34 Hans Voß, “Konstruktivität und Dilemma der DDR-Außenpolitik. Ein Bericht des stellvertretenden Delegationsleiters der DDR über das Wiener Folgetreffen des KSZE (1986–1989)”, in: 1999. *Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts* 8 (1993), issue 1, p. 91–99, on p. 98.

This attitude on the part of the West German diplomats, which they sustained throughout the Follow-up Meeting, also played a significant part in their success. The delegation avoided confrontation and polemics as far as possible. As a result, it left little room for attack from the East German diplomats, who were unable to exclude the debate on CCE from the Follow-up Meeting by accusing it of being a bilateral issue unfit for discussion in a multilateral forum. While both delegations were aware of the German-German dimension of the issue, the question of its treatment as a specifically German-German problem was another feature of this debate. The East German diplomats always addressed this fact openly, while the West German delegation would deny it at certain times, thereby guarding itself against criticism that it was turning the CSCE into a venue for *querelles allemandes*.

The success of this strategy was due not least to the GDR's increasing isolation. In the course of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, its support within the Eastern alliance dwindled ever further, reaching the point of conflict between the GDR and its most important ally, the Soviet Union. Moreover, the SED found itself compelled to agree to more and more Western demands as the conference went on. With gritted teeth, it had to follow the new, more liberal course on which Gorbachev led Soviet foreign policy.

Four theses emerge from the present study. First, West Germany achieved a bilateral success within a multilateral framework. In Vienna, the Federal Republic succeeded in solving a bilateral problem in its favour by making it part of the multilateral CSCE process. By contrast, it would hardly have been possible to persuade the GDR to agree to a corresponding agreement in a bilateral setting. Moreover, Bonn benefited from the GDR's isolation within the Eastern alliance. Second, West Germany successfully deployed a strategy of conflict avoidance. Its delegation in Vienna practised restraint and avoided confrontation. This tactful approach towards the GDR on the part of the Federal Republic's diplomats and the efficient use of informal agreements with the Western and neutral states offered the East German delegation very little room for attack. This was important in maintaining the appearance that German-German disputes would not be discussed in Vienna, as the GDR repeatedly tried to exclude the debate from the multilateral conference as a bilateral conflict. Third, East Germany was isolated from its allies. Due to its increasing isolation within the Warsaw Pact, the GDR came under pressure from both East and West, which ultimately led to its agreeing to previously unacceptable concessions in the humanitarian field. Of fundamental importance for this change was Gorbachev's reform policy and the resulting rapprochement between the USSR and the West. At the end of the Vienna Follow-up Conference, the GDR had formally to agree to the abolition of CCE in order not to be the only participant

to block the end of the conference.³⁵ Fourth, West Germany's cooperation with the neutral states was strategically adept. This gave its delegation tactical advantages over the GDR, which were highly relevant to the outcome of the Follow-up Meeting. The role of the N+N in supporting negotiation proposals bearing the Western imprint, not least by tabling proposals itself, was an important factor in the West's success.

It should also be stressed that this development was a novelty in relations between the two Germanies. In an assessment of the "Effects of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting on German-German Relations", an employee of the West German Federal Chancellery wrote on 15 February 1989 that whereas "the standard of human facilitation achieved in bilateral relations with the GDR generally" had previously "exceeded the CSCE's stipulations", "now, for the first time, the CSCE standard in various areas exceeds what has been achieved at the bilateral level".³⁶

35 On the disintegration of the Eastern alliance in Vienna see Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West relations*, Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford 1991, p. 76–78.

36 Auswirkungen des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens auf die innerdeutschen Beziehungen vom 15.02.21989, BArch, B 136/20201.

Human Rights, the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, and Political Transformation in the Eastern Bloc

The Case of Poland

Wanda Jarząbek

1 Introduction

After the Second World War, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were placed into the USSR's sphere of influence, which had drastic consequences for the conditions under which these societies had to function. Undemocratic political systems led to the restriction of human rights and the freedom of political and economic activity. Accordingly, more freedom and the restoration of democracy were among the principal demands of the anti-Communist opposition. In some countries, as in Poland, these aims also included the restoration of independence. In the late 1960s, a growing interest in economic as well as social contacts could be observed on both sides of the Iron Curtain. There was also a greater willingness to talk about slowing down the arms race and taking confidence-building measures to reduce the threat of armed conflict.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was a product of this *détente*. After the Helsinki Final Act (1975), all states participating in the conference recognised the results as meeting their expectations to some extent. The formula for the talks worked well, no one felt the loser (which would have been psychologically disastrous), and everyone found reasons to continue the dialogue. There were also critics of Helsinki – including, for example, some of the political émigrés from Eastern bloc countries living the West, among them many Poles – who held that the CSCE was a confirmation of the existing division into blocs in Europe and thus a *de facto* recognition of the USSR's right to its sphere of influence.¹ This, they believed, perpetuated both the bloc system and the Communist regimes, making their liquidation more difficult. This view was shared by those observers of public life who considered Communism a criminal ideology by its very nature, directed against human rights and freedom, and feared that the CSCE would contribute to the gradual legitimisation of Communism as a political system of equal standing to democracy and to a renewed recognition of the USSR's sphere of influence.

1 Wanda Jarząbek, *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa wobec polityki wschodniej Republiki Federalnej Niemiec w latach 1966–1976*, Warszawa 2011, p. 440–443.

Although the CSCE seemingly confirmed the political status quo in Europe, the Final Act did in fact contain the potential to undermine Communist system. Much, however, depended on whether there would be the will to apply its provisions and whether the circumstances in which to do so would arise. Some effects of the Final Act were difficult to forecast, such as its impact on social activism in East and West.² The human rights issues of the time were multi-dimensional. In this chapter, I will concentrate on the question of the political rights negotiated at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, especially their impact on the events of 1989 and the transition to democracy.³

2 The Problem of Human Rights In Poland before the Vienna Follow-up Meeting

The authorities of the People's Republic of Poland soon discovered that the provisions of the Final Act regarding the observance of basic human rights could be applied in practice. They were aware of a continuing lack of public support, even if some people were satisfied with the situation. Opposition to the Communist system had been a continuous phenomenon in Poland since 1944. The wave of protests in 1976 had mostly economic grounds but took place at nearly the same time as the protests against changes to the constitution, which would have enshrined the alliance with the USSR, the leading role of the Communist Party and special rights of the state in education and the activities of social organisations. Many participants in the protests were arrested, many lost their jobs. Various groups supporting the arrested emerged, as did groups demanding respect for civil and human rights. Independent trade unions were also formed. After the signing of the Final Act, some of the organisations ceased to operate clandestinely, others remained underground.⁴ Some organisations began at that time, though not on a wide scale and not universally, to refer to the stipulations of the Helsinki Final Act: to freedom of

2 Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism*, Princeton 2001; Sara B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War. A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network*, Cambridge-New York 2011.

3 Essential research for this article was done within the framework of the National Science Centre (Poland) project DEC-2022/45/B/HS3/00603.

4 Andrzej Anusz/Łukasz Perzyna, *Konfederacja. Rzecz o KPN*, Warszawa 2009; Andrzej Friszke, *Opozycja polityczna w PRL 1945–1980*, London 1994; Paweł Sasanka, *Czerwiec 1976. Geneza, przebieg, konsekwencje*, Warszawa 2006; Grzegorz Waligóra, *Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela 1977–1981*, Warszawa 2006; Paweł Zaremba, *Młodopolacy*, Gdańsk 2000.

thought, the free exchange of ideas, the right to build social organisations. The question of political rights now came to be of great interest.

Standing up for human rights, however, was selective. A good example is the reaction of Western European countries to the anti-government protests in Poland in 1976, whose participants were treated brutally by the authorities. Yet the problem of freedom of expression and protest, including the persecution of those involved in the protests, were not the subject of discussions between Western European politicians and the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland. Western interventions were limited to issues affecting their citizens, such as mixed marriages and visas for journalists. The issues of the freedom to express political views or support for the Polish anti-communist opposition activists were not raised at all initially and only tentatively later. The exception among Western countries was the United States, and its policy indeed made a difference.⁵ Reports of human rights violations began to appear in the press and in 1977, after the wave of repression against the political opposition and striking workers in Poland, a hearing was held in the US Congress.⁶ Soon the Polish opposition realised that the Final Act could be used to inform people in the West about the true nature of "real socialism". The creation of groups with names that included "Helsinki" – e.g. the Helsinki Commission in Poland as late as 1978 – was due to the fact that this name was recognisable in the West. The Belgrade Follow-up Meeting (1977–1978) had become a forum for discussing human rights violations, and the Polish opposition wanted to use the upcoming Madrid Follow-up Meeting (1980–1983) to provide more examples of human rights violations in Poland. The so-called Madrid Report could not be presented by one of its authors, Zbigniew Romaszewski of the Helsinki Commission, as the Communist authorities would not issue him a passport, but it was translated into English and sent to the delegations attending the conference.⁷

5 Breck Walker, "Neither Shy or Demagogic' – The Carter Administration Goes to Belgrade", in: Vladislav Bilandžić/Dietmar Dahlmann/Milan Kosanović (eds.), *From Helsinki to Belgrade. The First cscE Follow-up Meeting in Belgrade 1977/78*, Belgrade 2008, p. 207–230; Wanda Jarząbek, "Basket 111 provisions in the policies of France and the Federal Republic of Germany toward the Polish People's Republic (1975–1980): A Comparative Approach", in: Jakub Tyszkiewicz (ed.), *Human Rights and Political Dissent in Central Europe. Between the Helsinki Accords and the Fall of the Berlin Wall*, London-New York 2022, p. 39–52.

6 Wanda Jarząbek, *Hope and Reality: Poland and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1964–1989* (Cold War International History Project Working Paper Series Vol. 56), Washington 2008, p. 45–46.

7 *Raport o przestrzeganiu praw człowieka w Polsce*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo 3 maja 1980. Przyg. Komisja Helsińska, translation: The Helsinki Committee, *Prologue to Gdansk. Report on the Observation of the Human and Civil Rights in the Polish People's Republic*, New York 1980.

After the rise of the Solidarity (Solidarność) trade union it turned out that the readiness to rise up was much greater than assumed, and observers began to believe that change in Poland might challenge the existing equilibrium in East-West relations. For this reason, at the government level, the first question concerned Solidarity's willingness to compromise, whether it was ready, in exchange for a certain degree of liberalisation – increasing the scope of freedom of speech, expanding the right of association – to accept the so-called political realities. This meant accepting the membership of Poland and other countries in the sphere of influence of the USSR, which was a Communist, totalitarian state. and this, in turn, meant asking whether Solidarity understood that the protection of human rights had therefore also to be limited, especially when it came to demands that implied domestic political change.⁸ Solidarity's activities aroused great sympathy in Western societies, which was also of significance for the authorities of these countries. The imposition of martial law in Poland by the Communist authorities in December 1981 was aimed primarily at ending the growing movement, which publicised the problem of human rights violations in the Eastern bloc – including political, civil and labour rights – and demanded the democratisation of the political system. The situation was also dangerous for the USSR because it threatened the functioning of the Eastern bloc. After the end of martial law in July 1983, the domestic situation, including the economy, remained difficult.⁹

The authorities tried to stop uncontrolled social activism. They agreed to register various organisations but did not give permission for the re-registration of Solidarity (it had been a legal organisation since September 1980, signalling a break with the monopoly for groups allied with the Communist Party). In 1984, only one trade union centre, Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych (OPZZ), was legalised and took over Solidarity's assets, e.g. its offices and equipment. An amendment to the Trade Union Act essentially eliminated the pluralism of trade unions. Some activists returned to clandestine activity, but Solidarity cadres were quite weakened, as one of the ways to get rid of

8 Helen Sjusren, *The United States, Western Europe and the Polish Crisis. International Relations in the Second Cold War*, Houndmills-Basingstoke 2003; the question of ability to self-limitation becomes a topic in L. Wałęsa's talks with French politicians: Jarząbek, *Basket III*, p. 45–46.

9 Gunter Dehnert, "Entspannung gegen das Volk – Sanktionen für das Volk? Die Solidarność nach Ausrufung des Kriegsrechts und die Nachfolgekonzferenz von Madrid", in: Matthias Peter/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE in Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer), München 2012, p. 249–266, on p. 249.

people who might challenge the system was to persuade them to leave Poland. Activists often received proposals to do while they were still interned.

The repressiveness of the state increased compared to the 1970s. Under a 1985 amendment to Poland's penal code, summary courts could bring defendants to trial 48 hours after arrest and could hand down prison sentences of up to three years. Defendants were not permitted to choose their own defence counsel but were assigned one by the court. In 1986 alone, some 400 people were sentenced in this way for their political activities.¹⁰ The number of secret service officers grew, peaking in 1988. The authorities began to violate the secrecy of correspondence on a large scale. Previously, compared to other Eastern bloc countries, Poland had been quite liberal. Now a significant proportion of letters arrived with clear signs of having been opened and bearing the stamp "Item arrived damaged". It was made mandatory to pack parcels to be sent abroad at the post office, supervised by a customs officer. The wiretapping of telephone conversations became widespread, and militia were entitled to search private residences without a court order. Censorship increased, and academic freedom was severely curtailed by a law passed in 1982.

In contrast, especially after 1986, so-called "second circulation" or underground publications could in principle be sold at places of worship and universities without much harassment from the authorities. By contrast, foreign radio broadcasts, primarily Radio Free Europe and Voice of America, were jammed in order to minimise access to alternative sources of knowledge about the world and, above all, about events in Poland, Polish history and literature. Although the issuing of passports was formally liberalised, in practice there was even greater control than before. Some academics and people working in certain industries were not given permission to travel for fear that they would remain abroad. Workers' rights and human rights were violated on a wide scale, generally much more than in the period between 1956 and 1980. Also, it could be observed that the authorities were unwilling to cooperate with various organisations. For example, the authorities did not agree to a visit to Poland by a representative of the UN in 1983 to investigate the state of human rights and did not cooperate with the International Labour Organization. Foreign correspondents were frequently warned by Polish officials not to contact opposition figures. Surveillance of foreign correspondents by the secret service also increased, not least by means of an obligation to hire Polish staff as technical assistants.

10 According to the data passed by the Polish opposition to the US Congress and included to its Annual Report for 1986.

Information on violations of the Helsinki Final Act regularly featured in reports sent back to Western countries, especially the United States. Warsaw's diplomacy followed the reports and publications on these issues, but there was little readiness to change course.¹¹ Talks with American officers made it clear that the US was not going to stop speaking about violations or the individuals concerned (the "naming names" strategy), as this approach had proved its usefulness.¹²

3 The Authorities of the Polish People's Republic and the Vienna Follow-up Meeting

According to the routine existing in the Warsaw Pact, preparations for the upcoming meeting in Vienna took place within the bloc's structures, including a meeting of the Warsaw Pact countries' experts on the CSCE on 30 July 1986 and followed by a meeting of deputy foreign ministers on 2 September, both in Warsaw. These meetings made it clear that the individual countries wanted to present their own initiatives, not those coming from Moscow – even if they conflicted with the interests of other countries in the bloc (especially, but not exclusively, in the area of the human rights).¹³ Some were aimed at the bloc's organisation, i.e. the Hungarian proposal to lay the groundwork for better contacts within the Eastern bloc and to remove border barriers. Hungary wanted minorities issues to be dealt more extensively; Bulgaria was opposed. So was Poland, due primarily to the question of the German minority.¹⁴ In bilateral consultation before the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, Polish diplomats tried to prevent the West German side from discussing this question during the conference. Yet as Ekkehard Eickhoff, the leader of the German delegation, made clear, domestic considerations made it impossible not to raise this question, though he promised to do so in such a way as "not to attack Poland".¹⁵ For its

11 Notatka w sprawie XX raportu prezydenta USA wraz z fragmentami raportu, 24.06.1986, Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (AMSZ), DSiP, z. 26/93, w. 1.

12 Notatka informacyjna, 16.07.1986, AMSZ, DSiP, z. 26/93, w. 1.

13 Notatka informacyjna o naradzie ministrów spraw zagranicznych UW, 5.09.1986, AMSZ, DSiP, z. 26/93, w. 1.

14 In the case of Poland, this related to the growing number of citizens who declared themselves as belonging to the German minority. According to the government, many were simply looking for legal grounds to emigrate because of the poor economic situation and standard of living.

15 Quoted according to the Polish note from this conversation, Notatka informacyjna o konsultacjach z MSZ RFN, 27.08.1986, AMSZ, DSiP, z. 26/93, w. 1.

part, the Polish side regarded the way in which the questions of the German minority in Poland (which it described as an “alleged” minority) and family reunification were reported by the West German delegation as not objective, and the Polish foreign minister summoned the West German ambassador in Warsaw to voice his government’s displeasure.¹⁶

As restrictions on human rights were severe at the time, both in Poland and the USSR, neither country wanted the implementation of the Final Act in the area of human rights and the structures to become the subject of intense talks. They preferred other topics – including confidence-building measures and disarmament – to dominate the meeting. These tactics had already been used at the Belgrade and Madrid Follow up-Conferences.¹⁷ It was believed that the Western countries wanted to focus on human rights and were not in a hurry to push for progress in other areas because they believed that time was working in their favour and that the situation in the countries of the bloc would evolve towards concessions in this area.¹⁸

The Vienna talks were still ongoing when strikes began in Poland in the spring of 1988. Despite the dire economic situation, the government, misreading the collective mood, did not expect large-scale protests. This time the strikes were often organised by a younger generation of activists not always affiliated with Solidarity.¹⁹ The protesters now also included students from several Polish universities. Although Solidarity remained the strongest opposition force, it was not the only one. Environmental and pacifist movements also sprang up, and some Solidarity activists, dissatisfied with what they felt to be the excessively cautious stance of the union’s leadership, founded *Solidarność Walcząca* (Fighting Solidarity). The USSR entered into talks with some opposition activists in Poland, which was regarded as a form of pressure on the Polish government as well as on Solidarity as a whole. The Polish government itself then made attempts to talk not only with the striking workers but also with other anti-Communist opposition groups. The first meetings took place in August 1988, and a Round Table was planned for autumn before being postponed to February 1989. The question of more profound reforms became very pressing.

16 Notatka informacyjna T. Olechowskiego, 8.12.1986, AMSZ, DSiP, z. 26/93, w. 1.

17 Notatka informacyjna o naradzie ministrów spraw zagranicznych UW, 5.09.1986, AMSZ, DSiP, z. 26/93, w. 1.

18 Notatka informacyjna o przebiegu i rezultatach III sesji spotkania wiedeńskiego KBWE oraz rozmów 23 państw UW i NATO w sprawie broni konwencjonalnej, 3.08.1987, AMSZ, DSiP, z. 26/93, w. 1.

19 On the changes in Poland: Antoni Dudek, *Reglamentowana rewolucja. Rozkład dyktatury komunistycznej w Polsce 1988–1990*, Kraków 2004.

Nearly at the same time, the Eastern bloc countries agreed to accept the Final Document of the Vienna Follow-up Conference and with it an expanded catalogue of commitments on the flow of information and civil liberties. According to the Polish report, the Soviet Union – under widespread pressure, including from within the bloc – finally agreed to change its stance on the flow of information. In Poland, the flow of information was no longer a very important question for the authorities, as access to alternative sources of information had recently increased and, being difficult to suppress, was accepted as an existing fact. Yet the law remained a barrier for independent publishers and was sometimes enforced, and state media remained closed to dissident voices. A big problem for the Polish authorities was the pluralism of organisations in general and, after the legalisation of Solidarity, of trade unions in particular.

Various Polish ministries were consulted on the act's final draft, which met with little enthusiasm from the director of the investigation Department in the ministry of the interior, who was opined that the activities of the Polish delegation as well as those of other Eastern bloc countries had been "not optimal", for instance in accepting a definition of human rights that matched the "Western" model of democracy. What is interesting is that the director of Department I (intelligence) had no remarks to make on the draft document.²⁰ He probably was able to understand the spirit of the times. The foreign ministry found the changes to be necessary, perceiving them as a symbol of the ongoing rapprochement between East and West in the field of human rights as well as signalling agreement in the fields of disarmament and trade.²¹

The Polish delegation stressed the importance of creating a new mechanism for cooperation in the field of human rights protection and the expansion of the range of problems to be observed and evaluated. Another point concerned the scheduling of meetings, for example a meeting on the mandatory exchange of information and more meetings on human rights, which later took place in Paris, Copenhagen and Moscow. Much attention was paid to details concerning easing the flow of information. That included, among other things, the removal of legal restrictions on tuning into Western radio stations, an end to jamming broadcasts (which the Polish authorities had already stopped doing earlier) at the beginning of 1989, and the permission for more live broadcasts on television from other countries, which was to promote freedom of expression and to make the role of censorship more difficult. The

20 Exchange of views between ministries, Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archiwum IPN), MSW II 1820.

21 Notatka informacyjna: Spotkanie wiedeńskie, T. Olechowski, 25.01.1989, AMSZ, z. 29, w. 174, t. 2109.

Polish foreign minister, in an evaluation note on the results of Vienna, wrote that the arrangements were favourable from the point of view of Poland, creating a good climate for internal reform. It was hoped that they made it possible to reactivate relations with the West. The next step was to prepare a list of tasks for the government to be carried out in connection with the adoption of the Final Document.²²

With regard to the problems related to principle VII and Basket III discussed in this chapter, the issue of Poland's accession to multilateral agreements on human rights needs to be examined first of all. Among the models considered by the government were the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Conventions on the Prohibition of Hostage-taking and on Refugees. The ministries involved recommended revising existing legislation to align with the Final Act, including the right to a lawyer from the moment of arrest in case of provisions on criminal proceedings, to transfer all rights related to detentions to the common judiciary (any special proceedings), to limit the application of the death penalty and to review provisions on the rights of national minorities. Work on a new law of association was ongoing at that time in Poland, albeit slowly, and it was recommended that it should include, among other points, the possibility to create organisations devoted to human rights. The security services stressed that the Final Act's stipulations should include changes in passport regulations, guarantees for the secrecy of correspondence and other communications, and a prohibition on confiscating foreign printed material.²³

At a meeting on 20 February 1989, the Polish government adopted guidelines on how to implement the Final Act's provisions. These guidelines provided for several important changes in domestic legislation, including a reformed press law, the liberalisation of the rules for allotting paper to non-state publishers (a de facto legalisation of the so called "second circulation" press) and the lifting of restrictions on books and journals imported from abroad. In the case of Poland, this was of great importance even for books in Polish, since Polish émigrés of various factions had established several publishing houses in Western countries and these publications could not previously be legally sold in Poland. There were no plans to abolish censorship, but its role was to be limited to matters relating to state and military secrets. Also liberalised was the ownership of what were then the latest means of communication. It was no

22 Wnioski i zobowiązania wynikające dla Polski z Dokumentu Końcowego Spotkania Wiedeńskiego KBWE, 08.02.1989, AMSZ, z. 29, w.174, t. 2109.

23 Ibid.

longer necessary to obtain permission to own satellite dishes or fax machines, although their owners were subject to registration.²⁴

The determination of the West (including neutral countries) to put pressure on the USSR with regard to human rights had visibly increased during the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. But this was already a different USSR and a different Eastern bloc – it was losing the arms race, sinking into economic crisis, unable to modernise its economies by own efforts and in debt to Western countries. If the bloc was not yet on the edge of disintegration, its Communist elites certainly recognised the need for internal reforms if they were to retain power. Social processes that had long been unfolding in certain Warsaw Pact countries – especially in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia – soon came to fruition, leading to a rejection of the Communist system in favour of democracy.

4 Conclusion

Transformation in the Eastern bloc countries was not the result solely of the CSCE. Many factors contributed to the ultimate collapse of the bloc, including, first and foremost, the economic inefficiency of USSR, the fact that Moscow lost the arms race and was forced to change its policy. But domestic conditions in the various countries of the bloc, their political and cultural traditions, were also very important. The Soviet bloc was not a monolith. The countries whose political and cultural traditions differed from those of the USSR – above all Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland – and in which people still remembered a time before Communism were less inclined to believe official propaganda, not least because they also had increasing access to other information. Communism failed to gain sufficient social legitimacy in these states, where a strong tendency to reject Communism manifested itself in, among other things, the emergence of a fairly well-organised opposition. It should not be forgotten that the initial goal of the CSCE had not been regime change in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of existing spheres of influence but rather rapprochement between the blocs. Might rapprochement itself have led to regime change, to democratisation, to the abolition of spheres of influence, which (incidentally) many politicians did not consider to be bad in themselves? This seems unlikely, which is why anti-Communist social activity and protests should not be downplayed. They played a very important role in forcing the authorities to liberalise or to some degree deviate from certain regulations in the post-1945 period.

24 Notatka informacyjna o kierunkach realizacji przez Polskę postanowień spotkania wiedeńskiego KBWE w dziedzinie informacji, 15.03.1989, AMSZ, z. 29, w.174, t. 2109.

Public protests showed an unwillingness to continue with real socialism and a desire to change it or to reject it altogether. Social protests also changed Western attitudes toward the bloc and influenced politicians' decisions. The CSCE might have become a tool for top-down change in the East-West system, but it seems that it became primarily a tool for bottom-up changes by creating better conditions for opposition movements. Economic decline, growing social discontent and the weakening of the Communist authorities were ultimately seized upon by Western political elites and contributed, among other factors, to the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the USSR.

The significance of the CSCE process for the political transition was that it created a catalogue of human rights commitments which implicitly supported the activities of anti-system groups in the Eastern bloc. Their emergence and activities provided Western politicians with arguments to raise when discussing problems of access to information, the right to express political views and dissatisfaction, and the expansion of political rights with Eastern bloc governments. The Vienna Follow-up Meeting preceded the so-called Autumn of Nations and the disintegration of the Eastern bloc. The proximity of these events may influence assessments of the Follow-up Meeting's significance to their unfolding. This influence cannot be completely negated, but nor should it be overstated, especially in case of Poland. The struggle against the Communist system had been ongoing since its inception and was supported by the Catholic Church, which enjoyed great authority. Communism was widely regarded as a tool of Russian expansionism in its new guise, rejected by much of the population as promoting alien values and an unattractive economic system.

Due to a combination of several factors, the CSCE became a facilitator and, in a sense, an accelerator of anti-Communist processes in the Eastern bloc, but I do not think that it can be regarded as having initiated them. But the commitments contained in the Helsinki Final Act and the Vienna Final Concluding Document, including the projected next steps (implemented in Paris and Copenhagen), were important for the democratisation of domestic life in countries that had liberated themselves from Soviet domination and for the spread of new human rights standards throughout the European continent.

The Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting and Czechoslovakia

Miroslav Kunštát

1 Introduction

A synthesis of the foreign policy of Communist Czechoslovakia in the period from 1985 to 1990 – the years of so-called perestroika and its cautious Czechoslovak adaptation – has yet to be written.¹ However, studies of individual aspects, together with the published memoirs of some of the key actors involved, confirm that the years directly preceding the collapse of the Communist regimes witnessed a widening scope for individual Warsaw Pact countries to set their own policies and priorities.² In the Czechoslovak case, this is evident both in bilateral relations with certain neighbouring states, especially in the West (West Germany, Austria),³ and in important multilateral forums – including, from 1986 to 1989, the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting. This amended, rather low-key approach, in tandem with a palpable generational shift and the increasing professionalisation of the Czechoslovak foreign service (the previous foreign minister, Bohuslav Chňoupek, was replaced by the pragmatic career diplomat Jaromír Johanes in October 1988), is also reflected in Communist Czechoslovakia's last official outline of its foreign policy, dating from the end of May 1989.⁴

- 1 Unfortunately, the relevant archive holdings from this period (especially in the Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí České republiky [Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in Prague, AMZV Prague]) have been only partially inventoried and therefore are available only to a limited extent. Previously untranslated sources in this text were translated.
- 2 The penultimate Communist prime minister, Lubomír Štrougal, mentions, for example, the repeated demands (ignored by the Soviet side until 1990) made by Gustáv Husák, the Czechoslovak president and general secretary of the KSČ, to Mikhail Gorbachev, finally to withdraw Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia in accordance with the Moscow Memorandum of August 1968 because the situation in the country had long been “consolidated”; see Lubomír Štrougal, *Paměti a úvahy* [Memories and Reflections], Praha 2009, p. 281–283.
- 3 Miroslav Kunštát/Tomáš Vilímek, “Die deutsch-tschechoslowakischen Beziehungen im Zeichen der Perestroika”, in: Edita Ivaničková/Miloš Řezník/Volker Zimmermann (eds.), *Das Jahr 1989 im deutsch-tschechisch-slowakischen Kontext*, Essen 2013, p. 117–150; Miroslav Kunštát, “Die Tschechoslowakei und Österreich vor dem Umbruch 1989/90”, in: Andrea Brait/Michael Gehler (eds.), *Grenzöffnung 1989. Innen- und Außenperspektiven und die Folgen für Österreich*, Wien et al. 2014, p. 367–384.
- 4 Fond Porady kolegia ministra [Consultations of the College of Ministers], AMZV Prague, Sign. v/7-KM 1953–89, Inv. No. 914, 917. See Jindřich Dejmek, *Diplomacie Československa. Nástin*

The Czechoslovak leadership wanted to shift the existing *modus vivendi* between East and West towards a new quality of relations based on closer cooperation, particularly – and despite continuing systemic competition – in the areas of trade, science and technology. At the Vienna Meeting, however, the Czechoslovak delegation took a particularly cautious and defensive approach to the issues of the so-called Third Basket (i.e. humanitarian issues), which is not surprising given the systematic human rights violations in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 1980s. Yet under pressure from the West, including some neutral states – and, as negotiations proceeded, also from the Soviet Union and some other socialist states (Poland, Hungary) – it was prepared to make compromises in this area at the end of the Vienna Meeting. However, the multi-stage consultation and control mechanism on the human dimension agreed in Vienna led to its activation in the case of Czechoslovakia immediately after the conclusion of the Vienna Meeting, in response to the behaviour of the Czechoslovak police and authorities towards the demonstrators on Wenceslas Square in Prague during the so-called “Palach Week” (15–21 January 1989). The police cracked down very harshly at the time, arresting up to 1,000 people, including the dissident and later president, Václav Havel. The Netherlands, France, the United States, Sweden and Austria deployed the first stage of the mechanism in the run-up to the subsequent Paris Conference on the Human Dimension (May/June 1989).⁵ These immediate consequences of the Vienna Meeting also indicate that the relationship between perestroika-era Czechoslovakia and this phase of the Helsinki Process was necessarily ambivalent. The following brief analysis outlines which priorities the Czechoslovak delegation tried to push through during the Vienna Meeting within the framework of its negotiating mandate, how it reacted to the development of the negotiations in individual areas (“baskets”) and which compromise solutions it was ultimately prepared to accept.

dějiny ministerstva zahraničních věcí a diplomacie 1918–1992 [Czechoslovak Diplomacy. An outline of the history of the foreign ministry and the foreign service], VOL. I, Praha 2012, p. 224–229.

5 The demonstrations took place on the twentieth anniversary of the self-immolation of the student Jan Palach as a desperate protest against the Soviet occupation. See: Jana Starek, “Das Ringen um die Einhaltung der Menschenrechte in der Tschechoslowakei und die solidarische Haltung Österreichs zur Zeit der Folgetreffen der Konferenz für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit (KSZE)”, in: Hildegard Schmoller/Miroslav Kunštát/Monika Březinová (eds.), *Vom 20. Jahrhundert ins neue Jahrtausend. Österreich und die Tschechoslowakei/Tschechien 1986–2016*, Wien 2022, p. 21–58, on p. 46–47.

2 Official Czechoslovak Diplomacy at the Vienna Meeting – a Difficult Mission

The most important priorities of the Czechoslovak government in the CSCE process in the second half of the 1980s were formulated in the directive “Orientation of Czechoslovak foreign policy and important contact formats”. Revised each year, it was drawn up by the foreign ministry, subsequently approved by the presidium of the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Komunistická strana Československa, KSČ) and finally by the government.⁶ In January 1984, this guideline still contained rigid and strongly defensive phrasings expressive of a deep wariness. For example, it proposed “significantly to reduce” political relations with countries – particularly the West Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy – that had agreed to the deployment of medium-range missiles on their territory. The CSCE mechanism itself received a positive assessment because it “is currently – alongside the UN bodies – the only functioning international forum for the continuation of dialogue between East and West”. In the run-up to the planned CSCE meeting of experts on human rights and fundamental freedoms in Ottawa (June 1984), the elaboration of a detailed “socialist conception of human rights protection” and the active struggle against the “bourgeois view of and Western approach to” this issue were called for.⁷ The supposed danger of “ideological diversion” was also raised in connection with the planned CSCE Cultural Forum in Budapest (October/November 1985). Against the background of the concept of a “common European culture”, Western states were accused of creating the conditions for the disruption of Europe’s political realities and of fomenting “political-ideological diversion” in the socialist states.⁸ However, this rather wary stance was not consistently maintained. Around the same time, in January 1985, government officials in Prague were gratified to note that their Western counterparts at bilateral meetings or in multilateral forums supposedly no longer raised “confrontational issues, including the traditional “disregard” for human rights in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and in the socialist countries”, instead speaking out in favour of dialogue. However, the same directive (1985) repeatedly warned that the West would not abandon a

6 Zaměření československé zahraniční politiky a hlavní stykové akce [Orientation of Czechoslovak foreign policy and important contact formats], AMZV Prague, ZPO-T, 1984, 1985–86, 1987–1989, Inv. No. 4–7.

7 Zaměření československé zahraniční politiky a hlavní stykové akce v roce 1984 [Orientation of Czechoslovak foreign policy and important contact formats in 1984], AMZV Prague, ZPO-T, 1984, 1985–86, 1987–1989, Inv. No. 4.

8 Ibid., Inv. No. 5–6.

“policy of differentiation towards the countries of the socialist community” in order to drive a wedge between the individual socialist countries and the USSR.⁹ In the following two years, however, the concept of a “policy of differentiation” was also adopted by Prague and applied to Western countries, with the directive calling for the expansion of cooperation with social democratic and socialist parties in particular and explicitly referring to “useful contacts with representatives of progressive forces, including the SPD [Social Democratic Party of Germany]”. Gradually, Prague also adopted the vocabulary of Soviet perestroika and repeatedly emphasised that “the innovative approach of the Soviet Communists [...] is also inspiring for our activities.” In connection with the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact countries in Bucharest in October 1986, however, it was noted that the mutual coordination of the positions of the member states in the run-up to the Vienna Meeting was not easy, with Prague criticising the positions of Hungary and Romania in particular.¹⁰

The most important topics presented by the Czechoslovak delegation in the individual rounds of the Vienna Meeting negotiations or relating specifically to Czechoslovakia (especially as the subject of criticism from Western countries in the context of the implementation debates in the Third Basket) can be summarised in the following points:

1. In the area of the First Basket (military and security issues), the main issue was the “Czechoslovak initiative to create a zone of trust, cooperation and good neighbourly relations along the line of contact between the Warsaw Pact and NATO”. This project was based on the earlier or parallel initiatives of the East German ruling party, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), and the SPD, i.e. the proposal for a chemical weapons-free zone in Europe (to which the GDR subsequently added a nuclear weapons-free corridor in Central Europe), later also supported by the KSČ and hence by Czechoslovakia. On the fringes of the disarmament conference in Geneva, there were repeated – albeit ultimately unsuccessful – consultations between the official delegations of the two Germanies and of Czechoslovakia on this topic from 1988 onwards. As late as 1989, this initiative – as an “unequivocal peace offensive” – was mentioned at almost every meeting of Czechoslovak and East German

9 Ibid., Inv. No. 6.

10 Vyhodnocení “Zaměření československé zahraniční politiky a hlavních stykových akcí v roce 1986” [Evaluation of the “Orientation of Czechoslovak foreign policy and important contact formats in 1986”], n.d., probably January 1987, AMZV Prague, ZPO-T, 1984, 1985–86, 1987–1989, Inv. No. 7.

politicians. It was intended to symbolise the harmony between the two states not only in Geneva and Vienna but also after the conclusion of the Vienna Meeting, for instance during Erich Honecker's visit to Prague in May 1989. However, the "Czechoslovak Initiative" was fully elaborated and approved by the presidium of the CC of the KSČ and by the government only after the conclusion of the Vienna Meeting in February 1989. From today's perspective, the terminology used seems more striking than the concrete measures proposed. The Prague government regarded the initiative not only as "Czechoslovakia's concrete contribution to the realisation of the idea of a common European home" but as nothing less than "the building block of a common European identity" in need of further cultivation.¹¹

2. In the area of the Second Basket, Czechoslovakia sought support for its prestige project, the "CSCE Economic Forum", which it intended to hold in Prague. The evaluation report for 1987 states that the Czechoslovak delegation in Vienna was confronted with attempts "to impede progress in the military, security and economic fields by making concessions in the humanitarian dimension."¹² Prague then tried to "shift" a substantial part of the issues that were uncomfortable for Czechoslovakia (persecution of dissidents, restriction of religious freedom, etc.) to a conference on humanitarian cooperation in Moscow proposed by the Soviet Union. However, West Germany also sought to organise the Economic Forum, with Chancellor Helmut Kohl having already proposed the convening of a CSCE economic conference in May 1986 at the Interparliamentary Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.¹³

Given the strength of West Germany's negotiating position at the Vienna Meeting, it is not surprising that Bonn ended up being chosen as the venue for the Economic Forum. Prague's attempts to find a compromise solution with the

11 Ibid., Inv. No. 7. See also the minutes of the conversation between Miloš Jakeš and Erich Honecker on 3 May 1989 in Prague, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BArch), Büro Erich Honecker, DY/30/2439; Dokumenty k československé zahraniční politice [Documents on Czechoslovak Foreign Policy], vol. 36 (1989), p. 360–369.

12 Vyhodnocení "Zaměření československé zahraniční politiky a hlavních stykových akcí v roce 1987" [Evaluation of the "Orientation of Czechoslovak foreign policy and important contact formats in 1987"], n.d., probably January 1988, AMZV Prague, ZPO-T, Inv. No. 7.

13 Helmut Kohl, "Rede zur Eröffnung der VI. Interparlamentarischen KSZE-Konferenz am 26.5.1986 in Bonn", in: *Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamts der Bundesregierung 1986*, Bonn 1986, p. 496–501, on p. 501. See also Ralf Roloff, *Auf dem Weg zur Neuordnung Europas. Die Regierungen Kohl/Genscher und die KSZE-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1986 bis 1992*, Vierow b. Greifswald 1995, p. 179–186.

West German government (i.e. to hold at least part of the forum in Prague) were unsuccessful. In Prague's view, despite the Soviet Union's support for the Czechoslovak proposals, the decisive factor was American ingratitude. According to the Czechoslovak ambassador in Vienna, Marek Venuta, the United States suspected the Prague initiative of being a clandestine attempt to "facilitate the transfer of cutting-edge Western technology to the socialist states."¹⁴

3. Negotiations on the Third Basket were particularly difficult for the Czechoslovak delegation. Western criticism of human and civil rights violations in Czechoslovakia – and thus of repeated breaches of the CSCE Final Act – was justified and, above all, well-founded. The Prague regime hoped that the West would be content with cosmetic changes and for a long time blocked even those passages of the Concluding Document (or even some Soviet compromise proposals) that other socialist states had ultimately agreed to, particularly in the area of controlling the right to religious freedom. It was only after an urgent telephone conversation between the Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, and his Czechoslovak counterpart Bohuslav Chňoupek on 19 May 1988 that Prague changed its position.¹⁵ On the question of religious freedom, Prague stubbornly rejected formulations "that would give the Vatican the exclusive right to appoint bishops or other religious personnel" and demanded a direct link between the rights of religious communities and the need to comply with the constitutional framework. In the course of negotiations on this issue, Czechoslovakia became completely isolated, but in the end agreed to a compromise text that also took into account national legislation.¹⁶

A new element in the Czechoslovak proposals in negotiations at the Vienna Meeting was the postulate of "people's diplomacy", which was striking from a domestic policy perspective in particular. The mass organisations of the Czechoslovak National Front, including its four nominally non-communist

14 Vyhodnocení "Zaměření československé zahraniční politiky a hlavních stykových akcí v roce 1987", AMZV Prague, ZPO-T, Inv. No. 7. See also Information from the Czechoslovak ambassador in Vienna, Marek Venuta, for the foreign minister's consultation on the fourth round of negotiations at the VFM, Vienna, 31 March 1988, AMZV Prague, ZPO-T, Inv. No. 18.

15 Information on the telephone conversation between Bohuslav Chňoupek and Eduard Shevardnadze, AMZV Prague, ZPO-T, Inv. No. 7, Inv. No. 18; On the personal relationship between Chňoupek and Shevardnadze, see also Bohuš Chňoupek, *Memoáre in claris* [Memoirs in claris], Bratislava 1998, p. 87–90.

16 Informace o 5. kole jednání Vídeňské následné schůzky pro kolegium ministra zahraničí, 05.04.1988 [Information on the fifth round of negotiations of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting for the College of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 05.04.1988], AMZV Prague, Porady kolegia 1953–1989 [Consultations of the College 1953–1989], Sign. KM-020/88.

member parties, were to be invited to participate in shaping Czechoslovak foreign policy, especially in European affairs, using contacts with their “natural partners” in the West. In the case of the Christian-orientated Czechoslovak People’s Party, for example, this would have meant reviving contacts with the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) and the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU) as well as its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), contacts which had been tentatively established at the time of the Prague Spring of 1968.¹⁷

During the negotiations in the Third Basket, Prague criticised pro foro interno the poor and sometimes completely lacking coordination between the individual Warsaw Pact states. These states indeed did not act as a monolithic bloc in Vienna, as had been the case in earlier phases of the CSCE process. Informal mechanisms, such as the meetings of the heads of delegation and ambassadors of the Warsaw Pact states in Austria, rather served the purpose of exchanging information. A degree of closer coordination did exist, above all between Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and the GDR. There was mutual support, particularly in the area of East-West travel (family visits, family reunification, abolition of exit visas, compulsory currency exchange for Western visitors to socialist states, etc.). However, there were also differences in the countries’ approaches to this issue. While Czechoslovakia wanted to facilitate travel opportunities for its citizens to the “capitalist West” as quickly as possible, the GDR took a different line. The GDR observed the measures introduced by Prague at the beginning of 1988 – the private foreign currency accounts of Czechoslovak citizens could also be used, de facto without restriction, for individual travel to other Western countries from 1 April 1988 – with some concern. There were also complaints about the lack of information.¹⁸

3 The Vienna Meeting and the Czechoslovak Dissidents

The Vienna Follow-up Meeting provided several impulses and suggestions for the unofficial human rights organisations and initiatives in the Communist

17 Zaměření československé zahraniční politiky a hlavní stykové akce v roce 1988 [Orientation of Czechoslovak foreign policy and important contact formats in 1988], AMZV Prague, Porady kolegia 1953–1989, Inv. No. 18.

18 See here the information “Valuta-Konten für die CSSR-Bürger” (for internal circulation only), 21 January 1988, BArch, DC 900, Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst (ADN), No. 2204001; internal party statement by Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski to Politburo member and Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED Günter Mittag, 27 January 1988, SAPMO-BArch, Büro Günter Mittag, DY/30/3196.

states of Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia, the most prominent such group was Charter 77, founded in 1977. Since the humanitarian dimension was to become an important part of the Follow-up Meeting's agenda, Czechoslovak human rights campaigners (including Václav Havel, Václav Benda, Jaroslav Šabata and Jiří Dienstbier) had already been involved, in the run-up to the Vienna Meeting, in drafting the "Milan Appeal". This appeal, formulated as a "suggestion package" for the Vienna Meeting, was adopted at the International Peace Forum in Milan in May 1986. The Prague Supplement to the Milan Appeal identified a certain crisis in the Helsinki process (including its "hegemonisation" by the two major powers) and called for the formation of a cross-bloc "European democratic community" in the spirit of the earlier "Prague Appeal of Charter 77". This included an explicit appreciation of the new party programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), particularly its foreign policy articles.¹⁹

Charter 77 also sent a moderately optimistic message of greeting to the opening of the Vienna Meeting,²⁰ in line with documents drawn up in parallel by other Czechoslovak exile organisations. A joint Czechoslovak-Polish memorandum was drafted on the occasion by The Council of Free Czechoslovakia, together with the Polish "government-in-exile". Eighteen Czech and Slovak groups sent another petition to Vienna, demanding that Charter 77 be "upgraded" to an independent control and monitoring body of the CSCE in the field of human rights, etc.²¹ The letter of 25 September 1987 from Charter 77 spokespersons Jan Litomiský, Libuše Šilhánová and Jan Vohryzek to the delegates of the Vienna Meeting acknowledged the interest in and commitment to human rights issues on the part of several delegations and the consideration already given to the numerous proposals made by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including the Charter 77 signatories. Charter 77 supported the Soviet proposal to organise an international forum on humanitarian issues

19 Blanka Císařovská/Vilém Prečan, *Charta 77 – Dokumenty 1977–1989* [Charter 77 – Documents 1977–1989], Vol. 2, Praha 2007, doc. D333, p. 768–774. On the "Prague Appeal of Charter 77" see also Tomáš Vilímek, *Solidarita napříč hranicemi. Opozice v ČSSR a NDR po roce 1968* [Solidarity across the border. The post-1968 opposition in Czechoslovakia and the GDR], Praha 2010, p. 226–240.

20 Ibid., doc. D352, p. 805–806.

21 *Americké listy* 46 (1986); *Nový domov* 37 (1986), issue 24. See "Rada svobodného Československa a československé organizace na vídeňském zasedání KBSE v Evropě" [Council of Free Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak Organisations at the Vienna CSCE Meeting in Europe], in: *Rada svobodného Československa* [Council of Free Czechoslovakia], Toronto 1990, p. 142–145; Francis D. Raška, *Fighting Communism from Afar. The Council of Free Czechoslovakia*, Boulder, CO 2008, p. 173–175.

and aspects in Moscow – subject, of course, to the forum being open to NGOs (including Soviet ones) “that are seriously concerned with these issues”.²²

Charter 77 also sent the Czechoslovak government and the Vienna Meeting delegations very specific and detailed proposals on various parts of the Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting, including a proposal for the improved protection of minorities drawn up by *Výbor pro ochranu práv maďarské menšiny* (Committee for the Protection of the Rights of the Hungarian Minority) with the participation of Charter 77.²³ In their “Call for Solidarity with the Romanian People” (2 January 1988), Stanislav Devátý, Miloš Hájek and Bohumír Janát (the Charter 77 spokespersons at the time) appealed to the Vienna Meeting delegates and the European public to draw attention to the catastrophic social and political situation of the Romanian people under Nicolae Ceaușescu’s regime.²⁴ However, repeated direct and indirect references to the Vienna Meeting appear in other documents of Charter 77 and other citizens’ initiatives as a topical reference and legitimising motif, e.g. in the extensive declaration of 1 December 1988 on the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations (UN) Charter of Human Rights.²⁵ A letter of 17 January 1989 to the states and delegations participating in the Vienna Meeting drew attention to the extreme contrast between the provisions of the Concluding Document adopted close to that date and the demonstrations in Prague that were being forcibly suppressed by the police – demonstrations which, as already mentioned, marked the twentieth anniversary of the self-immolation of the Prague student Jan Palach. Human rights activists such as Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra and Václav Havel were arrested in the course of these events.²⁶ On 10 February 1989, Charter 77 and the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee formulated a joint statement on the Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting, highlighting the contradiction between the official statements of the Czechoslovak delegation (the “constructive” speech by the foreign minister, Jaromír Johanes) and the previous practice of the Czechoslovak authorities. Yet the statement also proclaimed a fundamental willingness to cooperate and participate in the implementation of the CSCE decisions, including with organs of the Czechoslovak state.²⁷

22 Císařovská/Prečan, *Charta 77*, doc. D414, p. 922–923.

23 Ibid., doc. D.435, p. 962–964; *Listy* 18 (1988), issue 1, p. 82–83.

24 Císařovská/Prečan, *Charta 77*, doc. D422, p. 971–972; Vilém Prečan, *Charta 77. 1977–1989. Od morální k demokratické revoluci* [Charter 77. From moral to democratic revolution], Scheinfeld-Schwarzenberg-Bratislava 1990, p. 331–332.

25 Císařovská/Prečan, *Charta 77*, doc. D504, p. 1054–1056.

26 Ibid., doc. D515, p. 1068–1070.

27 Ibid., doc. D521, p. 1080–1081; Československý helsinský výbor [Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee], *Stanoviska a dokumenty* [Statements and Documents], Vol.1, Praha 1992, p. 5–8.

In connection with subsequent attempts (after the “bad” experiences with the aforementioned mass demonstrations in Prague) to place further legal restrictions on freedom of assembly, other documents and related initiatives were produced that referred to the resolutions of the Vienna Meeting and the specific articles of the Vienna Final Document (especially Article 13). These included the joint letter of Charter 77, České děti (Czech Children), Demokratická iniciativa (Democratic Initiative, which had already been founded as a “political party” in 1988), Polsko-československá Solidarita (Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity) and others to the governments participating in the Vienna Meeting.²⁸ The contradiction between the existing practice of Czechoslovak human rights policy and the commitments made in Vienna was analysed in more detail in the joint letter of 5 May 1989 from three Czechoslovak human rights organisations to the participants of the Paris CSCE conference on the humanitarian dimension.²⁹ However, the authorities prevented the participation of Czechoslovak NGO representatives Zdeněk Jičínský, Radim Palouš and Michael Dymáček in the first session of the conference.³⁰ Until the start of the “Velvet Revolution” in the second half of November 1989, the Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting and other CSCE decisions in the humanitarian field were constantly invoked both by active critics of the regime and by increasingly vocal citizens from the so-called “grey zone” as well as in society at large.

4 Conclusion

At least outwardly, the Prague regime repeatedly expressed satisfaction with the results of the Vienna Meeting and with the “further deepening of the Helsinki process, in which Czechoslovakia sees a reliable guarantee for security and cooperation in Europe”, as Johanes, for instance, put it in October 1989. He even conceded that in the area of human rights and humanitarian issues it would be necessary to make “the necessary adjustments to our legal system”, to facilitate travel abroad and to draft a new law on religious freedom and religious communities.³¹ The shortcomings in this area were to be monitored by the newly established Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for

28 Císařovská/Prečan, *Charta 77*, doc. D524, p. 1085–1086.

29 *Ibid.*, doc. D 551, p. 1119–1121.

30 Jiří Dienstbier, *Lidská dimenze měřená v Paříži* [Human dimension measured in Paris], in: *Lidové noviny 2* (1989), issue 6, p. 1.

31 Vystoupení ministra zahraničních věcí ČSSR Jaromíra Johanese na výboru ministrů zahraničních věcí členských států Varšavské smlouvy, Varšava 26. října 1989 [Statement by ČSSR Foreign Minister Jaromír Johanes to the Committee of Foreign Ministers

Human Rights and Humanitarian Cooperation, headed by Zdeněk Dienstbier, a respected professor of medicine at the University of Prague. The Committee was to become something of an informal “ombudsman’s office” in matters of human rights. A broader public was also to be represented in the new Czechoslovak Committee for European Security and Cooperation.³²

A demonstration in Prague by opposition citizens’ groups was announced for 10 December 1989, UN Human Rights Day, this time approved by the relevant authorities. How far the Communist regime was prepared to retreat is difficult to assess in retrospect. The “Velvet Revolution” in Czechoslovakia, which began on 17 November 1989, led to a radical change in the political and economic system, leaving the reforms and cosmetic improvements promised by the KSČ pushed to the sidelines.

Yet the Helsinki process did not at first come to a standstill. On the contrary, it accelerated in many respects, and the new democratic Czechoslovakia played an active role in this process. This phase of the CSCE’s history was successfully concluded in Paris (18–21 November 1990) with the signing of the Treaty on the Reduction of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Joint Declaration on the End of the Cold War by twenty-two states. At the end of the meeting, the Paris Charter for a New Europe was signed. While Czechoslovakia had been one of the much-criticised outsiders during the Vienna Meeting in 1986–89, Prague even became the seat of its secretariat after the signing of the Charter for a New Europe and the establishment of a permanent Committee of Senior Officials. Later, after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (1 January 1993), the indifferent attitude of the new Czech government under Prime Minister Václav Klaus led to the CSCE Secretariat being relocated to Vienna. The small Prague office of the CSCE’s successor organisation, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), still houses the organisation’s documentation centre and archive (OSCE Documentation Centre Prague, DCiP), which is freely accessible to researchers.

of the Warsaw Pact Member States, Warsaw 26 October 1989], AMZV Prague, ZPO-T, Inv. No. 34.

32 Výsledky vídeňské následné schůzky KBSE. Informační materiál pro předsednictvo úv KSČ, 1. února 1989 [Results of the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting. Information material for the Presidium of the Central Committee of the KSČ, 1 February 1989], AMZV Prague, ZPO-T, Inv. No. 18.

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The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) served as an important negotiating forum beyond the confines of the Cold War. This volume focuses on the Vienna Follow-up Meeting (1986–1989), covering prominent issues, such as military security and human rights, as well as less explored topics, including culture and the environment. The book contextualises the Meeting within the CSCE process and global political events, presenting diverse perspectives, retrospectives, and outlooks. It offers insights into the latest scholarship on this important but largely under-researched diplomatic negotiation. Many contributions utilise previously unpublished and unresearched files, along with diplomats' memoirs, interviews with contemporary witnesses, and media reports.

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