



# *Cooperative Security Initiative (CSI)*

... before it's too late



FES Regionalbüro für  
Zusammenarbeit und  
Frieden in Europa  
FES Regional Office for  
Cooperation and Peace  
in Europe



## **ABOUT >** *Why Cooperate?*

### **Why Cooperate?**

Europe is divided. This is not just about Russia versus the West, it is also about deep divisions between Turkey and the European Union, Great Britain and the EU, divisions in the Western Balkans, and within states.

European security is broken. Whereas war in Europe was “unthinkable” just a few years ago, there is a hot conflict in eastern Ukraine, and protracted conflicts in other parts of the OSCE area. There are also serious internal tensions within some European countries.

Divisions and distrust between Russia and the West create the risk of military incidents, accidents and escalation, and an arms race. At the same time, the safety nets of arms control agreements and confidence-building measures are being cut away. There are fundamentally different narratives on both sides about how we got into such a situation – so soon after what was supposed to have been a new era of democracy, peace and unity after the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, both sides seem to be convinced that they are right, that it is the responsibility of the other to change its ways first, and that time is on their side.

Many seem to think that, even if flawed, the status quo is acceptable. But the current situation is potentially dangerous and unsustainable. History shows that a continuation along this trajectory could lead to war.

Indeed, Europe has experienced similar situations in the past – with devastating consequences. And each time, after major wars, a security order had to be rebuilt: in 1815, 1919 and 1945. In a nuclear age, that is not a risk that leaders can afford to take.

While tensions are rising within and between states, new threats and challenges make cooperation even more necessary. Money, people, information and communications as well as trade and illicit activity flow across borders more freely than in the past. Climate change, environmental degradation as well as rapid advances in technology are also changing the eco-system of international affairs. This creates both opportunities and challenges that, in an inter-connected world, states need to address together.

But are organizations and rules, created in the 20th century, capable of dealing with these 21st century realities?

Cooperation is essential: both to improve inter-state relations at a time when states are increasingly concerned about defending their sovereignty, and to deal with transnational threats that defy borders. It is in the security interest of states, and us all, to work together -- before it's too late.



**ABOUT** > *Questions for a Safer Future*

### **Cause for alarm?**

1. What could trigger new violent conflicts in Europe today?
2. Is there a risk of a nuclear exchange?
3. To what extent is a cooperative security framework in Europe contingent on a resolution of the crisis in and around Ukraine?
4. Can your country protect its sovereignty and security without the help of others?

10. Should Russia be part of the European security system? Why?
11. Should the United States be part of the European security system? Why?

### **How to enhance cooperation?**

12. How to get along with neighbours (and other states) that you do not trust?
13. How to communicate in ways that improve respect and enhance cooperation?

### **What can be done differently?**

5. What steps could be taken to de-escalate and de-militarize tensions in Europe in order to prevent possible war?
6. Are new rules and agreements needed to deal with contemporary threats and challenges to security?
7. What are the challenges on which states need to work together, because they cannot be addressed on their own?
8. To what extent are shared values, including democracy and the rule of law, essential for cooperation?
9. Should your country strengthen its military potential and pursue national security interests regardless of the reaction of others?

14. How should our common European space be managed in terms of economic and environmental security?
15. What are the benefits of cooperative security to great powers and smaller states?
16. What is your vision for European security in the next 5 to 10 years?
17. What should your country do to contribute to cooperative security?
18. What can you do to contribute to cooperative security?



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## **ABOUT > What is CSI?**

### **What is the CSI?**

The Cooperative Security Initiative (CSI) is designed to generate ideas and shift momentum in favor of cooperative security and multilateralism through the OSCE in order to build a safer Europe.

### **Who takes part?**

The initiative is composed of 18 experts from all OSCE regions, headed by a Chair. Experts have been chosen in their personal capacity, based on their expertise in issues of European security and their demonstrated interest in cooperative security, as well as their institutional affiliation and networks. While care has been taken to finding a geographical balance, experts do not represent their countries per se.

### **Who is behind it?**

The CSI is conceptualized and carried out by two think tanks: The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe (based in Vienna) and GLOBSEC (based in Bratislava). The Initiative was launched at the GLOBSEC Forum in June 2019, with the support of Slovakia's Chairmanship of the OSCE. OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger has endorsed the Initiative, and has offered Secretariat support.

### **Who is the audience?**

The Initiative is designed to engage an audience beyond the group of experts, including through social media, meetings hosted by think tanks, parliamentarians as well as senior officials of OSCE participating States. The Initiative will use innovative approaches – based around guiding questions – to generate debate and promote cooperative security.

### **Outputs/Deliverables**

The CSI will produce an output around a limited set of questions in time for the OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Bratislava on 5 and 6 December 2019. A final product designed to enhanced cooperative security and encourage effective multilateralism for a safer future in Europe will be produced in time for the GLOBSEC Forum in spring 2020. Outreach events are planned for 2020.

### **Funding**

The Initiative is financed through voluntary contributions – either of the co-organizers or from OSCE participating States.