

With Russia Excluded from OSCE, OECD, The Platforms of Cooperation and Diplomacy are in Crisis

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Most certainly, Russia's final irreversible decision to suspend its membership and future participation in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly on July 3, on the eve of U.S. Independence Day, marked another significant chapter in its shifting geopolitical relations with United States and Europe.

As global situation heightens, particularly over security in Europe, Central EurAsia and the former Soviet space, Russia has also engaged in transforming not only economic relations but also paying attention to its security.



Over the past three decades, Russia became a member of many global bodies, participating actively at the United Nations. It spearheads the formation of the Greater Eurasia Union, the informal association BRICS—a group of states comprising Brazil, India, China and South Africa—and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Ukraine, which shares common geographical borders with Russia, and has primary ambitions of moving up to the global stage, has attempted joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union. These systematic steps angered the Russian President and the Kremlin

administration, the Executive Cabinet, the Federation Council and the State Duma, resulting into Russia undertaking “special military operation” in Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin, however, stressed that Moscow had no plans to occupy Ukrainian territories.

As the United States and European sanctions broadened due to the “special military operation”, largely directed at “demilitarization” and “denazification” in Ukraine, Russia was ultimately expelled from most of foreign organizations including the Council of Europe.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has also announced it had suspended Russia and Belarus from any participation in that organization. The OECD is one of the world’s major multilateral economic bodies with a membership of mostly of the rich, highly developed countries. The exclusion of Russia and Belarus will mean both countries are barred from participating in negotiations on issues including taxation, international business regulation and trade.

We can establish the fact that Russia and Belarus are not official members of the Paris-based group. But, Russia’s accession into the OECD was postponed after the country annexed Crimea in 2014 and was terminated because of Russian aggression against Ukraine. The group announced a plan “to develop proposals to further strengthen support to the democratically elected government of Ukraine, including to support recovery and reconstruction”.

Remarkable, during these past few years, Russia also exited from a number of international organizations. The simple interpretations and far reaching implications are that, as the world undergoes evolutionary process, Russia, emerging out of Soviet era setting, has broadly been restructuring its architecture and status. It emphasizes its national interest, sovereignty and better lives for its citizens while exercising its legitimate roles in the global system.

Noticeably, Russia continues to seek a profound respectable position and lately plays the role of an advocate for multipolar order, and consistently opposes conservative western-style rules-based order and hegemony. Reports monitored by this author indicated that Russia has already exited, the historic fall of the Soviet era, from international organizations, including

Russia’s upper and lower houses of parliament, the Federation Council and the State Duma, have expectedly decided to suspend Moscow’s participation in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly. That said of the withdrawal from the OSCE, Russia still reserves the right to return if conditions are improved for its delegation, according to several interviews conducted with parliament members by local Russian media Izvestia in late June 2024, just before the final suspension.

Prominent Russian Senators have spoken:

- Vladimir Dzhubarov, first deputy chairman of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs, pointed out that since 2022, Russia has faced increasing obstacles from the organization, such as its delegation members being denied entry visas and the right to speak.
- Konstantin Kosachev, member of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs, noted that “the OSCE was conceived as a platform for comparing positions and trying to align them, if possible.” “The OSCE has

recently stopped addressing general issues, becoming a vehicle for the collective West to impose its views on all others. It's not us that have changed but the organization; it has been changed from within and actually destroyed. It certainly makes no sense for Russia to work in an organization that no longer is a platform for comparing and harmonizing positions," the senator stated. "If and when the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly creates normal conditions for our work, if and when we receive guarantees and the principle of consensus is established in the organization, the decision may be reviewed," Kosachev added.

- Alexey Fenenko, professor with the Department of International Security at Moscow State University's Faculty of World Politics, believes that things are heading towards Russia's gradual withdrawal from the OSCE. "Following Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's high-profile statement in 2004 that the OSCE in its current shape does not suit us, Russia has been trying to promote various reforms of the organization. But this did not work out at all," the expert explained. "In fact, we have to deal with a new version of the Russia-NATO Council. I think that it's only a matter of time before Russia decides to pull out of it," Fenenko added.

In spite of the marked outrages, the Federation Council (the upper chamber) and the State Duma (the lower house) unanimously voted to adopt the Russian Federal Assembly's motion to suspend the Russian delegation's participation in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA) and stop paying dues to the organization.

"The Russian senators and State Duma members consider it sensible and justified to suspend the participation of the delegation of the Russian Federal Assembly in the OSCE PA and the payment of contributions to the OSCE PA budget. During the suspension period, any actions to amend the rules of procedure of the assembly with the aim of prejudicing the Russian delegation will be considered legally null and void," the document states.

The parliamentarians also believe that the leadership of the OSCE PA and its members have ignored repeated appeals to return to an equal interparliamentary dialogue, the statement says. "Despite the Russian delegation's repeated appeals and proposals, the priorities of the OSCE PA leadership indicate that at present, instead of creating conditions for a constructive exchange of views and the formation of a unifying agenda, this platform is being used as a politicized tool to deliberately implement an anti-Russian course, and also to intentionally distort what is going on in Ukraine," the senators and MPs state.

The MPs emphasize that biased discriminatory approaches, double standards and total Russophobia, as well as an unwillingness to engage in substantive discussion, testify to the extreme degradation of the OSCE PA as a mechanism for interparliamentary co-operation. In addition, they draw attention to the fact that for many years the Parliamentary Assembly has ignored the problems related to the violation of the rights of national minorities in Ukraine and the Baltic States, the freedom of communication and education in one's native language, has not paid attention to the blasphemous glorification of the Nazis and their accomplices, the harassment and murder of journalists who voice a position different from that of Brussels and Washington.

The parliamentarians also emphasize that the Russian delegation to the OSCE PA has, under

spurious pretexts, “repeatedly been deprived of the opportunity to continue dialogue and to participate fully and equally in the work of the plenary sessions and governing bodies of the OSCE PA.” Romania’s demonstrative refusal to issue visas to members of the Russian delegation to participate in the annual session of the OSCE PA in Bucharest in 2024 was “the last point in the emerging deadlock,” as it has demonstrated that “confrontational tendencies and intolerance have taken over the common sense, spirit and values of this organization,” the statement reads.

Early July 2024, Russian President Vladimir Putin participated in the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Astana, Kazakhstan. Twenty-four documents were adopted at the summit. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the leaders of several international organizations were invited, including CIS Secretary General Sergey Lebedev and Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Imangali Tasmagambetov. The topic of the meeting is “Strengthening multilateral dialogue – the pursuit of sustainable peace and development.” Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko expected Belarus would be formally granted full-fledged membership. Minsk filed a bid to join the SCO in 2022, but started to participate in the organization’s work as early as in 2009. The SCO was founded on June 15, 2001, in Shanghai. Initially the organization included Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, in 2017 they were joined by India and Pakistan. Tehran applied to join in 2008 and became a full-fledged member of the organization in July 2023.

The OSCE has a comprehensive approach to security that encompasses politico-military, economic and environmental, and human aspects. It therefore addresses a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental activities.

It has a secretariat and currently headed by Helga Maria Schmid, who was appointed to the post of Secretary General of the OSCE in December 2020 for a three-year term and then extended until September 2024. OSCE also has specialized institutions with specific functions. But what is important here is that all 57 participating States enjoy equal status, and decisions are taken by consensus on a politically, but not legally binding basis.

The fall of the Soviet Union required a change of role for the CSCE. And Russia, after Soviet’s collapse, renewed its membership in According the records researched by this author, Then Soviet Union was admitted on 25 June 1973. Along the line, members of OSCE have criticized the organization for being in a position where Russia, and sometimes Belarus, can veto all OSCE decisions, Moscow has, for a number of years, not allowed the approval of the organization’s budget, the organization of official OSCE events or the extension of missions. In November 2023, they vetoed the appointment of Estonia as chairman from 2024.

The OSCE Mission to Georgia was established in November 1992 with its headquarters in the capital Tbilisi. The Mission’s mandate expired on 31 December 2008. Between these dates it was powerless to control the outbreak of the August 2008 Russo-Georgian war.

The objective of the mission to Moldova is to facilitate a comprehensive and lasting political settlement of the Transnistria conflict in all its aspects, strengthening the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognised borders with a special status for Transnistria.[15]

OSCE promoted a 5+2 format as a diplomatic negotiation platform, which began in 2005, suspended by Russia and Transnistria in 2006 until it started again in 2012, before making slow progress over the next ten years. The process stopped following the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine as two of the parties were then at war with each other. In December 2022 Russia blocked the renewal of the annual mandate by limiting it to a six month period, repeated again in June 2023 to another six month period.

OSCE involvement in Ukraine. It has deployed its Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine at the request of Ukraine's government. The mission has received mixed reviews. While some observers have applauded its function as the "eyes and ears of the international community", others have accused the mission of bias towards either Russia or Ukraine.

OSCE has had so many disagreements with Russia, especially since the Ukraine crisis began on 24 February 2022 to de-nazify and de-militarize that former Soviet republic. It has protested the detention of four staff members in Donetsk and Luhansk, without specifying who had detained them. Further, two Ukrainian OSCE staffers were sentenced to 13 years of prison by a court in the Luhansk People's Republic for "alleged high treason and espionage for the United States."

The Russian delegation was not invited to the 29th OSCE Ministerial Council held in December 2022 where the delegates considered the ramifications and regional security challenges created by Russia's continued 'special military operation' against Ukraine. There were calls to assess the reparations that Russia should be accountable for.

Since the start of its conflict with Ukraine, Russia has seized €2.7 million worth of armored vehicles that were previously part of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. According to a letter that was sent by Russian OSCE representatives to OSCE Secretary-General Helga Schmid in January 2023, 71 trucks and cars were brought to the Luhansk People's Republic and the Donetsk People's Republic as "evidence" and criminal proceedings were initiated against former OSCE personnel for espionage.

As a regional security-oriented intergovernmental organization comprising member states in Europe, North America, and Asia, its mandate includes issues such as arms control, the promotion of human rights, freedom of the press, and free and fair elections. It employs around 3,460 people, mostly in its field operations but also in its secretariat in Vienna, Austria, and its institutions. It has observer status at the United Nations.

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