



Medienmitteilung | Veröffentlicht am 7. September 2026

From Geneva to Helsinki and beyond: significance of the OSCE’s founding legacy and its future at the heart of the third Chair conference

BERN, 3 September 2026 – Fifty-one years after the Helsinki Final Act was adopted, the Swiss OSCE Chairpersonship and Dodis Research centre (Swiss Diplomatic Documents) brought together political leaders, diplomats, historians and experts in Bern to reflect on the origins of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the relevance of its founding principles for European security today and tomorrow.

The high-level segment of the Chairpersonship’s conference, «From Geneva to Helsinki: Founding Process and Core Purpose of the OSCE», was held today at the University of Bern as part of the conference of the International Committee of Editors of Diplomatic Documents (ICEDD). The event is the third of [four thematic conferences](#) organized by the Swiss OSCE Chairpersonship in 2026.

The discussions, drawing on the expertise of the Dodis research centre, revisited the diplomatic process that led from the preparatory consultations in Geneva to the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. The conference explored the broader significance of the Helsinki Final Act, principles its enduring continued relevance of the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security. Against the backdrop of today’s security challenges, participants also looked beyond the historical record, exploring how the Helsinki legacy continues to influence diplomacy, dialogue and co-operation in a changing European security landscape.

OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, underlined that the history of the Helsinki Process offers lessons that remain highly relevant in today’s fractured geopolitical environment: «Co-operation does not require agreement. It requires the willingness to keep talking despite disagreement. The Helsinki Final Act was not signed between friends. It was signed between adversaries. We do not know what European security will look like in five or ten years. Nor do we know when the next opportunity for diplomacy will come. But we can make sure that, when it comes, there is still a table around which everyone can sit. That is not nostalgia for Helsinki. It is preparation for what comes next».

OSCE Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu highlighted the continued importance of the Organization’s founding purpose: «Globally and in Europe, we have reached once again a critical juncture. The geopolitical landscape has changed. But one thing has not changed, and will not change. Geography. That is why, fifty years ago, countries recognized the need for an inclusive security platform - the OSCE. We still need that platform today, and we will need it for the years to come,» said OSCE Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu.

Prof. Dr. Sacha Zala, Director of Dodis, presented the largest [joint edition](#) of diplomatic documents on the origins of the CSCE/OSCE, bringing together primary sources from 15 countries and two international organizations.

This forward-looking dimension is central to the Swiss Chairpersonship, which has placed at the heart of its priorities the Helsinki Principles for lasting peace, inclusive multilateral diplomacy, anticipating technologies, democracy and human rights, as well as the OSCE’s ability to act.

Press release of the OSCE:

<https://www.osce.org/chairpersonship/667317>

