

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR AMBITION: UKRAINE'S OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP

MATTHEW ROJANSKY

Ukraine's 2013 chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) presents Kyiv with a major opportunity to advance an agenda that benefits the entire Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. Ukraine must make the most of this unparalleled opportunity and demonstrate its ability to lead and inspire others to achieve real progress on difficult problems.

Key Themes

- Ukraine will face unique challenges during its chairmanship stemming from its domestic politics, strained relations with some OSCE participating states, and persistent negative perceptions of its record on citizens' rights.
- Putting forward a complacent, status quo agenda or hindering the work of OSCE institutions or missions in any area will cede the spotlight to Ukraine's critics at home and abroad.
- Ukraine will face predictably unpredictable crises, such as heightened tension between Moldova and the separatist region of Transnistria, expanded fighting in the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, and economic and political instability in Belarus.
- Kyiv should focus its agenda on a small handful of opportunities in each of the OSCE's security dimensions—political-military, economic, and human security—that directly reinforce the vision of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community.
- Success will require Ukraine to focus on building trust among OSCE participating states.
- Ukraine must leverage the resources of its own top diplomats and respected international experts while coordinating closely with both outgoing and incoming OSCE chairs.

Recommendations for the Ukrainian Chairmanship

Prioritize Transnistria conflict resolution. Ukraine is a guarantor of the 5+2 process that seeks a negotiated settlement to the conflict between Moldova and Transnistria as well as Moldova's largest neighbor. Kyiv is thus in a unique position to lobby all the stakeholders to embrace a common strategic framework. Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich should call upon counterparts from other OSCE participating states to lend their support.

Balance energy security and environmental impacts. Ukraine should put forward an energy security initiative that balances the present urgent need for an early warning mechanism for energy issues under the OSCE umbrella with the linked challenges of energy efficiency and environmental protection. Kyiv should emphasize the long-term security implications of the region's energy practices, including their impact on the environment and human development.

Begin a process of historical reconciliation. Tensions over historical memory drive conflicts throughout the OSCE region. Kyiv should spearhead an OSCE-wide historical reconciliation initiative that begins with a clear demonstration that it supports the process within Ukraine as well as with its neighbors, drawing on the successful experience of other OSCE participating states.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matthew Rojansky is the deputy director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Carnegie Endowment. His work focuses on relations among the United States, NATO, and the states of the former Soviet Union, with a particular concentration on Ukraine and its neighborhood.

CONTACT

Scott Toussaint
Government Affairs Manager
(202) 939-2307
stoussaint@ceip.org

Charita Law
Media Manager
(202) 939-2241
claw@ceip.org

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