

Admission to and suspension from the CSCE/OSCE

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Admission to and suspension from the CSCE/OSCE

After the fall of Communism, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was expanded to include those European States and former Soviet Republics which accepted all the commitments and responsibilities of the CSCE. Since Albania's application, there are two conditions which applicant countries are required, in practice, to meet: they must accept, in a written declaration which takes the form of a letter of accession, all the commitments set out in the Final Act of the CSCE, and they must invite into their territory a delegation of rapporteurs responsible for assessing the implementation of those commitments. Following admission by the Ministerial Council, the representative of the State in question travels to the Finnish and French capitals in order to sign the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter in the places where they are deposited. This retrospective signing of two separate documents, when the CSCE *acquis* and the OSCE *acquis* form a single whole, is often criticised by lawyers, but, in fact, its value is purely symbolic.

In 1992, following the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), the question of suspending membership status arose in the case of the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) which, though consisting only of Serbia and Montenegro, claimed to be the sole successor to the former SFRY. The attacks committed by that State on the independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, using the Serbian-controlled Yugoslav National Army, constituted a flagrant and persistent violation of the CSCE commitments. The decision to suspend Yugoslavia was taken on 8 July, by means of the exceptional procedure of 'consensus minus one', and was to have applied to the Helsinki Summit and subsequent meetings until 13 October 1992. However, the suspension of Serbia and Montenegro was to continue for eight years before that country was finally admitted to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in November 2000.