

Interview with Catherine Lalumière: the Council of Europe and the CSCE (Paris, 17 May 2006)

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[Étienne Deschamps] What about the CSCE?

[Catherine Lalumière] The CSCE was involved, and it met in Paris from autumn ... it was in autumn 1990 that the CSCE met in Paris, and, I remember, at the time, I moved heaven and earth to ensure the Council of Europe could attend. And that is what happened. The aim of this meeting in Paris was precisely to think about a new architecture for Europe, and I saw the Council of Europe, at the very least, as one of the creators of this architecture. So it was in attendance, with the right to speak — I remember speaking — and it received strong support — now this makes me smile — from President Bush Senior who, hearing about our efforts for democracy, human rights, etc., applauded. Strong support from the United States for the activities of the Council of Europe in this new Europe, in this new European configuration.

But, during this whole period, the CSCE played its role, and I was very keen — the CSCE had the same intention — for it to work in cooperation with the Council of Europe. Council of Europe–CSCE, we had the same goals. The geographical scope of the CSCE was wider than that of the Council of Europe, especially at the time; the scope of its powers was also wider than that of the Council of Europe, as the CSCE was responsible for military and economic issues, which did not fall within the remit of the Council of Europe. So there was no confusion between the two, but, within our field of legal and political powers — powers vis-à-vis the governments — we had more precise instruments — the European Convention on Human Rights and all the Conventions of the Council of Europe — which enabled us to be involved in practical issues with new partner countries, something that the CSCE was not able to do.

So we had fewer partners than the CSCE, a more limited range of powers, but more precise and more ambitious legal and political instruments. So our activities were complementary.