1. Introduction
The year 1992 might become a period of great importance in the history of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. After the revolutionary developments in the Central and Eastern European states, the CSCE has already been the subject of a major development. From the traditional ‘debating club’, the CSCE has moved towards a more operational grouping. In this context reference may be made to the different ‘mechanisms’ which have been established in the CSCE framework: an emergency mechanism (established in Berlin in June 1991), a mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes (Valletta, February 1991), a mechanism for unusual military activities (Vienna, November 1990) and a mechanism for the human dimension of the CSCE (Vienna, January 1989 and further developed in Copenhagen, 1990 and Moscow, 1991). Also due to several existing or imminent crises (e.g. Yugoslavia, Nagorny Karabakh, the general situation in the republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States), the CSCE is urged to respond to these challenges by choosing new ways and means in order to contribute to solving major political problems. A challenge for which it is not well equipped so far, as evidenced by the experiences of the CSCE involvement in the Yugoslav crisis in 1991. However, the CSCE is prudently looking for new ways and the Helsinki Follow-up Meeting (FUM) — which according to the schedule will be concluded with a summit meeting on 9 and 10 July — might become a major phase in this development, in particular in the security area. For the first time in the history of the CSCE the delegations now seriously consider the possibility of establishing separate CSCE peace-keeping forces, probably in close co-operation with the NATO. Moreover, the transformation of the CSCE into a regional organization in the terms of chapter VIII of the UN Charter is being investigated. All this means that — if the delegations succeed in achieving a substantive consensus on the main issues — the CSCE may be transformed into a more important actor in the area of security than ever before.

Some of the major developments in the context of the CSCE process in the first months of 1992 will be described below.

2. ‘Membership’
The number of States participating in the CSCE has grown considerably in the first months of this year. At the second meeting of the Council of Ministers of the CSCE in Prague on 30 and 31 January 1992 ten members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) were admitted to the CSCE. These States were: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirgistan, Moldova, Tajikistan,
Turkmenistan, the Ukraine and Uzbekistan. (The Russian Federation, being considered the successor of the former USSR, kept the seat which was occupied by the USSR until its dissolution at the end of 1991.) In this way the number of States participating in the CSCE increased to 48. Less than two months later, the next increase of the number of CSCE participating States occurred. At the extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers which preceded the opening of the Helsinki Follow-up Meeting on 24 March 1992, the Caucasian republic Georgia — which refrained from joining the CIS — was admitted to the CSCE. At the same meeting the republics of Croatia and Slovenia were admitted as participating States of the CSCE. In this way the number of CSCE States rose to 51. In the course of the FUM the number of CSCE States further increased to 52, when Bosnia-Herzegovina was admitted to the CSCE on 29 April.¹

On the other hand, a decrease in the number of CSCE States was also threatened, when a number of participating States sought the exclusion of Yugoslavia from the CSCE ranks. Due to the resistance of other CSCE States, in particular Russia and Romania, a compromise had to be achieved which boiled down to the exclusion of Yugoslavia from the formal decision-making process in the CSCE on matters relating to the Yugoslav crisis (see below).

Although the CSCE is undoubtedly developing in the direction of a 'normal' international organization, it has not yet achieved that stage. Therefore, from a formal point of view, one may not (yet) speak of "Member States" of the CSCE, the official denomination being "participating States". Nevertheless, it may be noted that the term "members" is even sometimes slipping into recent official CSCE documents.

3. Prague Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the CSCE
The second meeting of the Council of Ministers of the CSCE took place in Prague on 30 and 31 January 1992. Besides the admittance of ten CIS republics to the CSCE ranks, important decisions were taken in the field of security issues and the field of the human dimension of the CSCE. It was explicitly decided that the CSCE's "comprehensive concept of security and stability" has to be maintained. This means that the CSCE States stuck to the inter-linkage between the three baskets of the CSCE process (political and security issues, economic and environmental issues, and human rights).

Human dimension
The Prague meeting took an important decision in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE which constituted a deviation from the fundamental principle of consensus: "The Council decided, in order to develop further the CSCE's capability to safeguard human rights, democracy and the rule of law through peaceful means, that appropriate action may be taken by the Council or the Committee of Senior Officials, if necessary in the absence of the consent of the State concerned, in cases of clear, gross and uncorrected violations of..."

¹. The decision to admit Bosnia-Herzegovina was taken by the Committee of Senior Officials at its tenth meeting in Helsinki on 29 April 1992. This decision was to be formally confirmed at the next session of the CSCE Council.