

MANAGING ETHNICITY:
The OSCE and Transnational Networks in Romania

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Executive Summary

It would be an exaggeration to say that Eastern Europe was ever awash with violent ethnic conflict. Nonetheless, communism's demise did contribute to about a dozen ethnic conflicts, and by the early 1990s numerous crisis points emerged. Yugoslavia was undeniably the worst case scenario, but ethnic tensions had reached a dangerous level in several other states, including Romania, Latvia, and Estonia. As these problems unfolded, some scholars predicted that the West would simply leave Eastern Europe and its problems to itself. Fortunately, this did not happen, and throughout the 1990s, European regional organizations, in particular, made the prevention and management of ethnic conflict a priority. Given both the continued need to prevent ethnic-based conflicts and the dearth of research on ethnic cooperation, it is worthwhile recalling how the West responded to this new security threat. Which organizations led these efforts? What strategies were used? Most importantly, what were the effects of these initiatives?

My research contends that ethnic disputes in Eastern Europe were shaped fundamentally by a transnational network of public and private organizations that worked in complementary, reinforcing ways to manage ethnic conflicts. It would be simplistic and empirically incorrect to assert that international factors alone explain the changes associated with ethnic relations in Eastern Europe, and this is not the argument that I make. Instead, I contend that while domestic politics within Eastern European countries were casually important to the timing of accommodating policies and the international community's influence had to coincide with the preferences of domestic elites, transnational involvement was, nonetheless, crucial. The involvement of regional organizations, governments, and NGOs was important for putting -- and keeping - ethnic conflict management and minority rights on domestic agendas.

Introduction¹

It would be an exaggeration to say that Eastern Europe was ever awash with violent ethnic conflict. Nonetheless, communism's demise did contribute to about a dozen ethnic conflicts, and by the early 1990s numerous crisis points emerged.² Yugoslavia was undeniably the worst case scenario, but ethnic tensions had reached a dangerous level in several other states, including Romania, Latvia, and Estonia. As these problems unfolded, some scholars predicted that the West would simply leave Eastern Europe and its problems to itself. Fortunately, this did not happen, and throughout the 1990s, European regional organizations, in particular, made the prevention and management of ethnic conflict a priority. Given both the continued need to prevent ethnic-based conflicts and the dearth of research on ethnic cooperation, it is worthwhile recalling how the West responded to this new security threat.³ Which organizations led these efforts? What strategies were used? Most importantly, what were the effects of these initiatives?

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¹ This working paper is based on a book manuscript titled: Taming Ethnicity: Transnational Networks and Ethnic Cooperation in Eastern Europe. The book looks at the strategies and effect of transnational actors in post-Dayton Bosnia, Latvia, and Romania in the 1990s.

² Ted Robert Gurr, Peoples versus States (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2000), pp. 44-48.

³ There are fewer than 500 books indexed in English on ethnic cooperation or ethnic peace, while there are almost 2,000 books indexed in English on ethnic war or ethnic conflict. Similar trends and discrepancies exist for journals and newspaper articles and other scholarship in other languages.

involvement of regional organizations, governments, and NGOs was important for putting -- and keeping - ethnic conflict management and minority rights on domestic agendas. It defined the parameters of how local actors responded to ethnic problems, providing what Robert Keohane and Stanley Hoffman describe as “templates of choice” for the management of interethnic relations.⁴

This working paper focuses specifically on the spearheading initiatives of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on January 1, 1995 and the effects of transnational involvement on Romania.⁵ This research is based on primary and secondary research; in 2004, I gathered original documents from the institutional headquarters for the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.⁶ I also conducted dozens of unstructured interviews from 2000-2004 in Europe and the US.⁷ This paper first reviews the existing literature that looks at ethnic politics in Eastern Europe; it then explains why transnational efforts coalesced around the OSCE. The final section summarizes the interviews I conducted from June-August 2004, discussing some of the effects of transnational involvement in Romania.⁸

⁴ Robert Keohane and Stanley Hoffmann, "Conclusion: Structures, Strategies, and Institutional Roles," in Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye, and Stanley Hoffmann, After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-1991.

⁵ On January 1, 1995 the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Unless I am referencing a specific date, I refer to this organization as the OSCE.

⁶ Primary sources related to the European Union were gathered in Brussels at the European Commission library and interviews were conducted in March 2004. Primary sources related to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe were gathered in Prague, at the OSCE's Documentation and Information Center, June-August 2004.

⁷ The interviews in Bosnia took place in September 2000, July 2001, and June 2002; in Romania in June 2004; and in Latvia in July 2004.

⁸ In the conflict prevention literature, bottom up strategies are also known as Track II diplomacy. See Joseph Montville, ed., Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies (Lanham: Lexington Books, 1990).

I. Explaining Ethnic Cooperation in Eastern Europe

There is no cohesive body of literature on the topic of ethnic cooperation and most research, in fact, focuses on understanding the causes and effects of ethnic conflict. Recently, scholars attempting to rectify the grave predictions of the early 1990s with the record of ethnic peace in Eastern Europe have relied on three explanations. The most common argument singles out the European Union and its use of conditionality to change the behavior of Eastern European states.⁹

The argument is that the European Union's so-called Copenhagen Criteria, adopted in June 1993, provided transitioning states with both the *carrot* of aid and future membership and the *stick* of being deprived of both. If states did not resolve interethnic conflicts peacefully and undertake initiatives to protect and preserve minority rights, the EU would deny them financial assistance and bar them from entering the EU.

This argument fails to convince for two main reasons. First, although "respect for and the protection of minority rights" was, indeed, a criterion identified to assess Central and Eastern European States' progress, specific policies to achieve these outcomes were never developed further into EU law. Moreover, the diversity of policies among EU countries in this area prevented this transnational actor from developing a unified voice when it came to ethnic politics and minority rights. Second, despite the adoption of criteria in 1993, the EU did not start to

⁹ See, for example, Aneta Borislavora Spendzharova, "Bringing Europe In? The Impact of EU Conditionality on Bulgarian and Romanian Politics," Southeast European Politics, IV, No. 2-3 (2003), pp. 141-156; Frank Schimmelfenning, Sfehan Engert, and Heiko Knobel, "Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Importance of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia, and Turkey," Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe, 41, 3 (2003) pp. 495-518; Judith Kelly, "Membership, Management and Enforcement" Unpublished paper presented at 2002 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA 29 August-1 September; James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse, "Monitoring the Monitors: EU Enlargement, conditionality and Minority Protection in the CEEC," Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe, 1 (2003); Heather Grabbe, "How does Europeanization Affect CEE Governance" Conditionality, Diffusion and Diversity," Journal of Europe Public Policy 8, 6 (2001) pp. 1013-1031; and Bruno de Witt, "Politics versus Law in the EU's Approach to Ethnic Minorities," in Jan Zielonka, ed., Europe Unbound. Enlarging and Restructuring the Borders of the EU (New York: Rutledge Press, 2002).

monitor these issues closely or independently until 1997; research on the relationship between accommodating policies and conditionality suggests that there is not a correlation between EU monitoring reports and minority rights protection legislation in Eastern European states.¹⁰

Quite a number of European academics, in particular, have instead focused on the conflict prevention activities of the OSCE. This research concludes that the work of the OSCE, specifically in the area of democratization and human rights, has had a significant effect on the prevention and management of ethnic conflict throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.¹¹ Thus, the OSCE deserves a place of at least equal status with other regional organizations when evaluating the role of multilateral institutions in ethnic conflict prevention because it was the primary area for the development of a minority rights regime.¹² A few of these studies discuss the OSCE's democracy promotion activities, its standard setting behavior, and in-country missions, but most of this research centers on the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and Max van der Stoep's behavior as a "normative entrepreneur."¹³

¹⁰ James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse, "Monitoring the Monitors: EU Enlargement Conditionality and Minority Protection in the CEECs, Issue 1/2003.

¹¹ Zellner edited volume; Gregory Flynn and Henry Farrell, "Piecing Together the Democratic Peace: The CSCE, Norms, and the "Construction" of Security in the Post-Cold War Europe," International Organization 53, 3 (Summer 1999) pp 505-535' Michael R. Lucas, ed., The CSCE in the 1990s: Constructing European Security and Cooperation (Hamburg: University of Hamburg, 1993).

¹² See P. Terrence Hopmann, "Regional Security. Institutions and Intervention in Internal Conflicts: The OSCE's Experience in Eurasia," in Sean Kay, Victor Papacosma and James Sperling, eds., Limiting Institutions? The Challenge of Eurasian Security. While there are scores of articles on the OSCE, there are also a few good books. See, for example, Walter Kemp, ed., Quiet Diplomacy in Action: The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (The Hague: Kluwer Law, date); Jonathan Cohen, Conflict Prevention in the OSCE: an Assessment of Capacities (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 1999). There are a few books that look just at the CSCE/OSCE. See, for example, Walter Kemp; Cohen. See also Hans-Joachim Heintze, "Bilateral Agreements and Their Role in Settling Ethnic Conflicts," in Ulrich Schneckener and Stefan Wolf, eds., Managing and Settling Ethnic Conflicts. Perspectives on Successes and Failures in Europe, Africa, and Asia (London: Hurst & Company, 2004).

¹³ Steven R. Ratner, "Does International Law Matter in Preventing Ethnic Conflict," Journal of International Law and Politics Vol. 32 No. 3 (Spring 2000).

These claims about the OSCE's importance, however, do not go unchallenged; scholars like Judith Kelly demonstrate that many of the recommendations made by the HCNM have fallen on deaf ears and, in fact, it is the EU's support of the OSCE and the HCNM's recommendations that ultimately influences Eastern European leaders' behavior. Others merely dismiss the activities of the OSCE on a variety of grounds. In a sentence, the organization lacks teeth and the resources necessary to provide either the carrots or the sticks that might affect leaders' calculus.

A third body of research that addresses the dearth of violent conflicts in Eastern Europe discusses the role played by the international community in promoting democracy in the post-communist region. The argument made is that the management of ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe is a byproduct of successful democracy promotion activities. It is certainly true that in the 1990s, intergovernmental organizations like the UN, the EU, and the OSCE, and nongovernmental organizations, including most notably the Soros foundations, sought to forge stability in ethnically mixed countries through democracy promotion.¹⁴

The problem with these arguments is two-fold. First, it is difficult to both obtain reliable data on the huge array of actors that were involved in democracy promotion activities and discern which of these actors were interested specifically in ethnic conflict management. Interviews with officers from The German Marshall Fund and The Open Society Institute reinforce this point.¹⁵ Although international NGOs may not have had an explicit program in ethnic conflict management or minority rights, they were, without a doubt, interested in preventing ethnic violence and promoting stability, and they assumed that engagement in other

¹⁴ On this relationship and strategy, see Anita Inder Singh, Democracy, Ethnic Diversity and Security in Post-Communist Europe (Westport: Praeger, 2001)

¹⁵ Interviews with Ginsburg, Marianna, Senior Program Officer, Environmental Partnerships, The German Marshall Fund, Washington, DC, June 23, 2003; Rolett, Jonas, Director for the Eastern Europe/Former Soviet Union Project, The Soros Foundation, Washington, DC, June 24, 2003.

areas of civil society indirectly worked toward this goal. Research by Jack Snyder and Edward Mansfield on the possible connections between democratization and ethnic conflict also undermine arguments made about democracy promotion and ethnic peace. Thus, a focus on democracy promotion alone does not go far in explaining the evolution of ethnic politics in Eastern Europe.

While each of these explanations offers insight into the evolution of ethnic politics in this region, the views from Eastern Europe and the perspectives of policy makers, NGO representatives, and academics involved closely in the transformation of this region and specifically ethnic conflict management points to a far more complex reality. Interviews with representatives of intergovernmental organizations in the West and East, politicians and NGO representatives, specifically in post-Dayton Bosnia, Latvia and Romania, evoke a picture of numerous governmental and nongovernmental organizations, working collaboratively and supporting each others efforts.

When I asked which “international actor was most important in influencing ethnic relations”, a variety of answers was given. A representative of Latvia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs put it this way when I asked him to be specific about the international actor that had been the most influential in affecting ethnic relation in Latvia in the 1990s:

At the time, and when I was working in the President’s office, I did not distinguish among all the international actors; like most Latvians, I lumped representatives and officials into one group: the West. Basically, Latvians knew that the West, whether it was represented by the HCNM, by an official from the EU or the Council of Europe, or by foreign ambassadors, wanted Latvia to change its policies toward its Russian population. Who said what and when was not really that important.¹⁶

¹⁶ Interview with Armands Gutmanis, Under Secretary of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, and former advisor in the State President’s Office, 12 July 2004, Riga, Latvia.

The point is that while most academic research seeks to identify the relationships between specific organizations and ethnic politics in Eastern Europe, this approach inherently ignores the influence of other actors and, more significantly, it overlooks the synergy among international actors that seek the same outcome. The problem with existing explanations is not that they are wrong so much as they are incomplete because of their focus on bilateral relationships and strategies in isolation without acknowledging how interdependent the actors and their policies were in the area of ethnic conflict management.¹⁷ When I asked a representative of the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minority how he would describe the relationships among the international actors interested in ethnic conflict prevention in the 1990s, he put it this way: Transnational actors, united by the same goals and guided by similar principles, have created a vector of activities that all flows in the same direction.¹⁸ In my words, the management of ethnic politics in Eastern Europe was significantly shaped by a transnational network of public and private actors that relied on complex array of modalities to influence governments from above and below. What is striking about this transnational network is how similarly governmental and nongovernmental organizations approached ethnic conflict prevention, and how the unique competencies of network members evolved into overlapping strategies and decentralized governance in this issue area.

¹⁷ Some do recognize the complementary mechanisms of different actors; see, for example: Gaetano Pentassuglia, "On the Models of Minority Rights Supervision in Europe and How They Affect a Changing Concept of Sovereignty," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues* Vol. 1 (2001/02). For comments on changes within NATO from the perspective of a NATO Assistant Security General for Political Affairs, see Klaus-Peter Klaiber's comments in "A Cooperative NATO in a Cooperative Europe." *Romanian Journal of International Affairs*, 4 1998, pp. 306-310.

¹⁸ Interview with Falk Lange, Legal advisor, OSCE's High Commission for National Minorities, The Hague, March 2004.

II. The OSCE as a “Linking Pin” Organization

At other points in history, instability caused by ethnic conflict had either inspired the creation of new institutions or, as in the post-WWII period, caused the international community to opt for more indirect ways of mediating ethnic conflicts. Because of the unique international environment at the Cold War’s end and the close collaboration among transnational actors already involved in Eastern Europe, ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe inspired a response of different sort, one that reflected not only the trust between Western democracies but also the *power shift* that had taken place between states, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs¹⁹ Thus, even as transnational actors recognized the shortcomings of their policies and their neglect of ethnic issues, they did not reject the fundamental assumption that involvement in Eastern Europe should remain multilateral. And just like other challenges and opportunities in the region, the prevention and management of ethnic conflict would not rely on a single approach; instead, ethnic conflict management would be addressed through multilateralism and multilayered strategies.

The United States, for one, was eager for other countries to assume a leadership position in the prevention and management of ethnic conflicts in Europe. Not only was the US less vulnerable to the direct effects of instability in the East, but it was eager for its Western allies to assume more of the burden for the provision of security in Europe so that it could concentrate on neglected domestic needs and other international concerns.²⁰

Distracted by the Gulf War and events in the Middle East the Clinton administration made “tenacious diplomacy,” which included supporting institutions of collective security, rather

¹⁹ For more on these relationships, see Jessica T. Mathews, “Power Shift” *Foreign Affairs* 76, 1 (January/February 1997) , pp. 50-54; see also Anne M. Slaughter, “The Real New World Order,” pp. 183-197.

²⁰ On the amount of money spent by Europe and the U.S. on defense and international assistance, see “Relations between the European Communities and the United States.” Commission of the European Communities SEC (93) 538 def. April 6 4 1993. See also Elizabeth Pond, chapter 4 on US interests in NATO expansion.

than relying on U.S. military power, a leading principle guiding its foreign policy.²¹ The only way to respond to ethnic violence, without an unacceptable loss of American soldiers' lives or the death of NATO, which was inevitable if the United States stayed out the Yugoslav conflict completely, was to work with other governments and nongovernmental actors on somewhat equal terms.²² Some European leaders believed that Europe should and could take the leading role in ethnic conflict management. In June of 1991, for example, as fighting broke out in Slovenia, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister declared that "It is the hour of Europe" and "If anybody can achieve things it is the European Community."²³

Although no one country or any single organization was willing or able to take responsibility for preventing and managing ethnic conflicts, a certain consensus had emerged on the leading role of the OSCE in this area. Throughout the 1990s, the OSCE was the "linking-pin" organization, not because it possessed the most resources but because it occupied a central position, connecting constituent organizations. Simply put, the OSCE was the node through which this transnational network was loosely joined, involving itself directly and indirectly in ethnopolitical disputes throughout Eastern Europe.²⁴

²¹ Only a few of the State Department Dispatches from 1990-1993 focused on Eastern Europe and still fewer mentioned the problems of ethnicity. Even in documents specifically about the region and its problems, for example, "Central and Eastern Europe: A Year Later" talk about the connections between Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the problems in this region. See US Department of State Dispatch, Vol., 2, NO. 20 May 20, 1991. On "tenacious diplomacy" see Secretary of State Designate Warren Christopher's remarks at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, U.S. Department of State, 93/01/13 Statement at Senate Confirmation Hearing.

²² Pond, p. 59.

²³ Jacques Poos' comments in *The Times* (London) June 29, 1991 p. 24; cited in Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p. 201.

²⁴ On the concept of a linking pin, see Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss, "Pluralizing Global Governance," pp. 34-36. This part of the research is based on CSCE/OSCE primary sources and interviews with OSCE officials. Some of these officials were involved in ethnic issues in the 1990s while others currently work for the OSCE and provided me with their opinions on OSCE behavior and policies in Eastern Europe. These interviews were conducted in the Hague (the seat of the High Commission on National Minorities) in Prague (OSCE) and in Vienna March-August 2004.

Since 1990, if not before, the OSCE had distinguished itself as the most forward thinking and proactive organization when it came to ethnic disputes and minority rights.²⁵ It was, as Jonathan Thornberry puts it, “the first in line” when it came to meeting the challenges of ethnic conflict.”²⁶ The Copenhagen Report on the Human Dimension contained a codification of minority rights that was, in qualitative terms, the most far reaching international instrument. Together, the Copenhagen Document and the Treaty of Paris prompted other regional organizations, including the European Union, the Council of Europe, and NATO to pay more attention to minority issues, adopting OSCE principles their own. OSCE documents were also important because of their unabashed support for democratic pluralism and human and minority rights, not only as worthy goals in and of themselves but as instruments for promoting stability and inter-ethnic peace between and within states. This unique normative framework is the basis for all of its practical activities.²⁷

The OSCE’s attention to minority issues in the post-Cold War was as important as its own historical development during in Cold War. Its origins and inclusive membership allowed the OSCE to become what all other intergovernmental organizations aspired to be: the bridge between the West and the East. When the Warsaw Pact dissolved, its former members looked hopefully to the only regional security organization that they had membership in; a month later, in July of 1990, NATO members similarly looked to the OSCE -- as its link with its former enemies. While NATO affirmed its desire for a future role in Europe’s security, it underscored

²⁵ John Packer, “On the Content of Minority Rights,” in J. Raikka, ed., Do We Need Minority Rights? (Netherlands: Kluwer Law International, 1996) pp 121-178.

²⁶ Patrick Thornberry, “An Unfinished Story of Minority Rights,” in Anna-Maria Biro and Petra Kovacs, Diversity in Action. Local Public Management of Multi-Ethnic Communities in Central and Eastern Europe (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2001) p. 57. See also, Arie Bloed and Peter van Dijk, “Bilateral Treaties: A new Landmark in Minority Protection,” in Bloed and van Dijk Protection of Minority Rights through Bilateral Treaties. The Case of Central and Eastern Europe (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1999), pp 1-15.

²⁷ Wolfgang Zellner, “The OSCE: Uniquely Qualified for a Conflict-Prevention Role,” in Paul van Tongeren, Hans Van de Veen, and Juliette Verhoeven, eds., Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002) p 15.

its support for the OSCE; which “should become more prominent in Europe’s future, bringing together the countries of Europe and North America.”²⁸ It also pointed out that the OSCE played a central role in expanding the network of cooperative relationships across Europe” providing a framework within which a range of institutions will develop closer relations with the states of Central and Eastern Europe.²⁹

In June of 1991, as NATO contemplated its future relationship with the East, it continued to look to the OSCE, partially because its members realized that this more inclusive organization was less likely to be construed as a threat to either the Soviet Union or the United States. While the Bush administration was in favor of strengthening the OSCE, it wanted to do so without weakening NATO, as a weaker NATO would mean less US influence in Europe.³⁰ These factors, along with its substantive work in the area of human rights made the OSCE the most logical and suitable organization to deal with sensitive internal issues associated with ethnicity.

A third reason this emerging transnational network started to coalesce around the OSCE were the principles that had underpinned the oft mentioned “CSCE process” which started in the 1970s. In the post-Cold War Era, terms like *complex security*, *cooperative engagement*, *preventative diplomacy*, and *human security* were alternately used to characterize the emerging security environment. Despite important differences between them, what these terms shared were notions of *common*, *cooperative*, and *collective*; that is, that states need to work together to secure shared goals and provide security by modifying their own behavior.

²⁸ “London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance,” July 6, 1990.

²⁹ “Partnership with the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe,” Statement issued by the North Atlantic Council Meeting in Ministerial Session,” Copenhagen 7 June 1991.

³⁰ Francis T. Miko, “American Perspectives on the Helsinki Review Conference and the Future Role of the CSCE,” in Lucas, eds., 61-71.

Not surprisingly, these were the principles upon which the OSCE's based its notion of *comprehensive security* since the 1970s.³¹ That is, that security between states is rooted in cooperation, it is indivisible, and it is both possible and necessary to enhance the security of others while securing one's own security. During the Cold War, the OSCE's unique approach to security translated into transparency in interstate affairs, an emphasis on mutual consent, and state accountability.³²

By 1993, the OSCE was the natural focal point for a transnational network focused on ethnic conflict prevention and management because of the newly created offices within the institution that focused, first and foremost, on ethnic conflict and national minorities. OSCE statements made after 1990 emphasized the organization's general approach to preventing ethnic violence; it would counter instability by eliminating the roots causes of tension; respecting human rights, including those of national minorities; building democratic institutions, and fostering economic and social progress.³³

The OSCE hoped to implement these goals largely through the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) based in the Netherlands. Given the office's mandate – to provide “early warning” and where appropriate, “early action” in regard to tensions involving national minorities, its autonomy from the OSCE structure, and its leadership under Max van der Stoep, its first High Commissioner, the office quickly became the hub of information and action involving ethnic conflicts in the former Eastern bloc.

³¹ See Oana C. Popa, *Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Security in Southeast Europe. A Multi-Dimensional Perspective*, NATO Final Report, March 1999.

³² Janie Leatherman, *From the Cold War to Democratic Peace. Third Parties, Peaceful Change and the OSCE* pp 1-23.

³³ See, for example, the "Second Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE," 5 June-29 July 1990, Copenhagen and "Prague Document on the Further Development of CSCE Institutions and Structures. Declaration on Non-Proliferation and Arms Transfer," January 1992. Available online at: <http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999>

The HCNM became operational in January 1993 and within his first few months, the High Commissioner had paid several visits to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to deal with allegations of discrimination against the Russian-speaking minorities and to Slovakia, Romania and Hungary to discuss problems associated with the Hungarian and Slovak minorities.³⁴ By the year's end, van der Stoel had also paid visits to the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia and Albania to focus on the Albanian minority.

With his frequent visits to the region and focus on ethnic conflict, this OSCE office developed, as one of its former officers explained, much needed regional and field expertise in the former Soviet bloc and it established a certain functional expertise when it came to ethnic conflict prevention and national minorities.³⁵ European Union officials corroborate what Max van der Stoel and other HCNM officials claim – that until the mid-1990s at least, the HCNM's office was the source of information on ethnic disputes and national minorities in the East.

The HCNM was not the only component of the OSCE to focus on ethnic conflict prevention; other institutions directly or indirectly were involved in preventing or managing ethnic disputes. In 1992, for example, the OSCE established in-country missions of long duration. Considered more intrusive, these missions were carried out for least six months and their scope and reach were much broader than the activities of the HCNM. Like the high commission's office, the primary function of missions is to provide member states and the Conflict Prevention Center (CPC) in Vienna with up-to-date information on potential and ongoing crisis situations.

³⁴ Annual Report 1993 on CSCE Activities, Section 3. High Commission on National Minorities.

³⁵ Interview with Walter Kemp, Senior OSCE Adviser and HCNM Political Officer 1999-2003, 30 June 2004, Vienna, Austria..

However, the more high profile missions differ in a few ways from the “quiet diplomacy” of the high commissioner. Missions are usually visible in the country’s capital and are operational throughout the country, and while they are designed to meet the unique needs of the situation on the ground, they are often charged with broader tasks of working closely with local actors, facilitating discussions, and creating conditions for effective conflict resolution.³⁶ The mission makes frequent, regular reports to the Chairman in Office (CIO) and this information is then passed on to the Conflict Prevention Center, which acts as the hub of the OSCE’s communications network, circulating relevant information to the member states.³⁷

Through design and by default, the OSCE’s institutional development facilitated its spearheading efforts, assuring that it would work with governments, intergovernmental organizations, and international and local NGOs.³⁸ From the beginning, OSCE leaders made the provision of information a priority, realizing that that more and better information was crucial to improving transparency between states and, thus, necessary for stability and peace. The 1975 Helsinki Final Act devotes almost five pages to a discussion of the importance of information and information exchange:

“*Conscious* of the need for an ever wider knowledge and understanding of various aspects of life in other participating States, *Acknowledging* the contribution of this process to the growth of confidence between peoples”³⁹

³⁶ On missions, see Diana Chigas, with Elizabeth McClintock and Christopher Kamp, “Preventive Diplomacy and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe: Creating Incentives for Dialogue and Cooperation,” pp 52-63; P. Terrence Hopmann, “Regional Security, Institutions and Intervention in Internal Conflicts: The OSCE Experience in Eurasia, in Sean Kay, Victor Papacosman and James Sperling, eds., Limiting Institutions? The Challenges of Eurasian Security (Manchester University Press, 2003), paper prepared for delivery at the annual convention of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, 24-27 March 2002.

³⁷ OSCE Structures and Institutions SEC.GAL/94/02 6 June 2002.

³⁸ For forms of cooperation with various organizations and in specific countries, see “Co-operation with International Organizations and Institutions: Selected Documents and Catalogue of Forms of Co-operation,” COOP_DRF.DOC/04.11.94.

³⁹ Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe Final Act, Helsinki 1975, see particularly pages 47-51.

Providing early warning and, where necessary, early actions in situations involving inter or intra-state ethnic disputes required the OSCE to reach out to other organizations involved in the former Eastern bloc.

At the beginning of 1992, the OSCE invited the Council of Europe, the European Community, NATO, OECD, EBRD, EIB and other European and transatlantic organizations to provide the CSCE Secretariat with information relevant to CSCE activities.⁴⁰ Agreements to exchange information and relevant documents were looked at as the “first concrete step towards increased contacts and cooperation.”⁴¹ At subsequent Helsinki Follow-Up Meetings, with representatives of these organizations present, the idea of interlocking institutions was born. In this new security framework, governments and intergovernmental organizations would work closely together, harmonizing their activities. This new framework, however, would only be successful if institutions concentrated their respective strengths and maintained the objectives which they are best suited to pursue.⁴²

Although relations with the Council of Europe were complicated initially because of misunderstandings of each other’s positions, mutual fears of encroachment of each other’s authority, and disagreement over which organization should play a leading role in certain arrangements, this did not last long. Out of necessity but also because of negotiation, CoE and OSCE relations improved substantially during 1992-93, with both organizations confirming that

⁴⁰ Second Meeting of the Council, Prague Document on Further Development of CSCE Institutions and Structures, 30-31 January, Prague 1992, Chapter IX, Para 43-44; CSCE Communication NO. 124 Prague, 3 April 1992

⁴¹ “Exchange of Information and Documents,” CS/Journal No. 3, Annex 2, 10 January 1992

⁴² Niels Moller-Gulland, “The Forum for Security Co-operation and Related Security Issues,” in Michael R. Lucas.,ed , The CSCE in the 1990s: Constructing European Security and Cooperation, p. 32. See also Helsinki Follow-up Meeting CSCE/HM-P, De.2, Helsinki 20 March 1992.

future cooperation would be aimed at creating structures that prevented unnecessary overlapping and duplication and, at the same time, achieve the synergy effects that can result from innovative forms of coordination.⁴³

Throughout 1992-93, the OSCE engaged in similar discussions with the United Nations, focused specifically on improved cooperation, information exchanges, and coordination were ongoing between the OSCE and the United Nations.⁴⁴ By 1993, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and OSCE were holding tripartite high level meetings and each had representatives at the meetings of the other two organizations. In 1996, this body was enlarged to include the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the UNHCR, and representatives of a few international NGOs.⁴⁵ The same year and again in 1997, the OSCE explained its evolving comprehensive security model; the OSCE's Platform for Cooperative Security relied fundamentally on deepening relations with other regional and nongovernmental organizations, including the EU, NATO and several international NGOs.⁴⁶

In the 1990s Europe was not lacking in governments, regional organizations, or nongovernmental organizations that were interested in preventing ethnic conflicts and promoting minority rights. Yet, in the labyrinth of actors, the OSCE was the only organization with the mandate, membership, and motivation to be at the forefront of transnational efforts to manage ethnic conflicts. The OSCE framework, as the Secretary General of NATO confirmed

⁴³ Thomas M. Buchbbaum, "The CSCE and International Organizations: Expanding Cooperation with the Council of Europe," in Michale R. Lucas. Ed., pp. 125-142

⁴⁴ See the Helsinki Summit Declaration, Helsinki 9-10 June 1992, Chapter IV and Third Meeting of the Council, Stockholm, 14-15 December 1992, Chapter VIII; Fourth Meeting of the Council, Roman, 30 November – 1 December 1993, Chapter VI contained in Co-operation with International Organizations and Institutions: Selected Documents and Catalogue of Forms of Co-operation," COOP_DR.DOC/-4.11.94.

⁴⁵ Annual report 2000 on Interaction Between Organizations and Institutions in the OSCE Area, document number/reference.

⁴⁶ Annual report 200 on Interaction Between Organizations and Institutions in the OSCE Area, OSCE

in 2000, “remains the sole organization capable of setting standards of security behavior, preventive diplomacy, democracy building and for addressing the myriad of minority issues in Europe.”⁴⁷

Yet, given the limitations of the OSCE, the need to respond quickly and uniquely to each potential crisis, transnational responses were inherently multileveled and multilayered. Governmental and nongovernmental organizations pooled their resources, exchanged information, and regularly supported each other’s activities and goals, making their own decisions contingent on the decisions of other actors. Put differently, by the mid-1990s the problems associated interethnic conflict, in the context of Europe’s thick institutional environment and history of trust, meant that a transnational network of public and private actors coalesced around the OSCE’s leadership to prevent and manage ethnic-based conflict.

III. Transnational Effects in Romania

Evaluating the effects of this transnational network on conflict prevention and the management of inter-ethnic relations is not an easy task.⁴⁸ It has almost become commonplace to state that the results of conflict prevention are impossible to measure because who knows whether violence would have broken out if this or that measure had not been taken place.⁴⁹ To make matters more complicated, transnational networks seek changes in the short-term, but they are ultimately engaged in a long-term incremental process of changing behavior and perceptions, and often this process is neither linear nor quantifiable.

⁴⁷ Secretary General Intervention at OSCE Permanent Council,” PC.DEL/668-00 2 November 2000.

⁴⁸ On evaluations, see Risse, Sikkink and Ropp, pp. 11-35.

⁴⁹ Robert Zaagman, "Conflict Prevention in the Baltic States," JEMI, Summer 1999.

Research on other kinds of networks suggests that there are several ways of evaluating influence, and the absence of ethnic violence is only one way of demonstrating a relationship between external actors and ethnic politics.⁵⁰ One way to measure effectiveness is to look at the objectives of the transnational actors; in this case, all sought to prevent ethnic violence, but they were also interested in changes in foreign policy, such as the conclusion of bilateral treaties and specific changes in domestic policy, including the establishment of legislation and governmental bodies to preserve and protect minority rights.

Since 1990, every Eastern European country has shifted their foreign policy; uniformly they have sought membership in European regional organizations and adopted European standards associated with minority protection. Most importantly, these states have developed a variety of domestic mechanisms to channel and manage ethnic conflicts and protect minority rights. The existence of such mechanisms certainly does not translate into their implementation, or the genuine socialization of new norms, but domestic legislation and national monitoring bodies do make it more difficult for states to reject or ignore international and regional agreements.

The following section, based on interviews conducted during the summer of 2004, explains how Romanian and international representatives working in Romania approximate the influence of transnational actors on interethnic politics in the 1990s. What emerges is a picture of the international community as a multi-leveled, multifaceted instrument that relied on a variety of overlapping strategies to help avert violence and manage ethnic relations through reinforced messages and a series of interlocking carrots and sticks.

⁵⁰ Mendelson and Glenn, pp. 9-11.

In 1990-91, there were almost as many similarities as differences between Illiescu's Romania and Milosevic's Yugoslavia. Both countries were ruled by former communists who were struggling for legitimacy. Both had large concentrations of ethnic minorities that they blamed for the country's problems. However, the most significant resemblance was the decision by both of these governments to use "forces of a paramilitary nature against those who opposed their policies."⁵¹ With Yugoslavia's implosion, eyes naturally turned to the situation of the more than two million ethnic Hungarians living in the seven countries that ring the country. Events in Romania were particularly troubling because it was home to the largest Hungarian population, almost all were concentrated in the region of Transylvania, and violent clashes in 1990 appeared to be laying the foundation for an intensification of ethnic conflict between Hungarians and Romanians that had both inter-state and intra-state dimensions.

Within a few years Westerners, including President Clinton, who were grappling with the diversity of outcomes in the region were referring to Romania as a model for inter-ethnic relations and accommodation. Even those who take issue with such claims asserted that by 2000, interethnic relations in Romania had changed significantly; they were, put simply, more cooperative than conflictual.⁵²

While dynamics of domestic politics were casually important to the timing of accommodating policies, transnational involvement is crucial for understanding the content and form accommodation assumed. Romanian politicians, NGO activists and academics all maintained that only transnational involvement and the pressure and incentives coming from the

⁵¹ Gabriel Andreescu, "Pages from the Romanian-Hungarian Reconciliation, 1989-1999: The Role of Civic Organizations, in Lucian Nastasa and Levente Salat, eds., Interethnic Relations in Post-Communist Romania. Proceedings of the Conference "The Romanian Model of Ethnic Relations. The Last Ten Years, The Next Ten Years," Bucharest, July 7-8 2000 (Cluj: Ethnocultural Diversity in Romania Series, 2000

⁵² This statement is supported by opinion polls taken in Romania by the Ethnocultural Diversity Center in Cluj, Romania. See Appendix 1, Table 1 from the Barometer of Ethnic Relations, November 2001. See also the views of various political leaders and experts from Romania and the U.S. in Nastasa and Salat, eds.

international community can explain why the Romanian government adopted conciliatory policies toward its minorities. While I explained to Toni Niculescu of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania that some academics in the West believed that the international community had not played such an important role in shaping ethnic relations in Romania and instead claimed that changes were merely a function of domestic politics, he replied in this way:

It doesn't surprise me that some members of the international community do not think they are important, while those of us sitting in Romania know that they were. In fact, there is no contradiction here; big, important actors never realize how important they are in shaping the domestic and foreign policies of smaller, weaker states. Just like Elephants, they do not know their weight.⁵³

Put differently, transnational involvement not only made Romanians understand what the West expected of them when it came to ethnic issues but it also helped Romanians know what specifically they needed to do and how they should go about doing it. The Romanian government needed to establish a legal framework to protect minorities and create monitoring mechanisms to ensure that this legislation was being implemented. Civil society also needed to be strengthened so that local actors could hold the government accountable for its behavior.⁵⁴

Gabriel Andreescu, Director, Romanian Helsinki Committee, divides Romanian politics in the 1990s into three phases; others did the same without, however, recognizing that they had done so. In the first phase, from roughly 1990-1992, there were several transnational organizations active in Romania, providing considerable guidance and support to local NGOs like the Romanian Helsinki Committee. Renata Weber, Director of the Open Society Foundation in Bucharest and former dissident, claims that from the very beginning international actors

⁵³ Toni, Niculescu, Executive Vice President, Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, Department for European Integration, Bucharest, June 11 2004.

⁵⁴ Robert Keohane and Stanley Hoffmann, "Conclusion: Structures, Strategies, and Institutional Roles," in Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye, and Stanley Hoffmann, After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-1991 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

played an important role in promoting positive changes in Romania, particularly in mediating disputes between Romanians and Hungarians.⁵⁵ Yet, as almost everyone I interviewed stated or implied, the influence of transnational actors was neither constant nor uniform; that is, an actor's influence depended on the year, the leadership in Romania, and the effectiveness of the strategies the transnational actor employed. Representatives from the Council of Europe had visited Romania in the early 1990s to discuss human rights legislation, but in this early phase, they were unprepared and somewhat unwilling to broach minority issues.

Others noted the role of the Project on Ethnic Relations (PER), a US NGO based in Princeton, New Jersey, which had been active in Romania during the communist period. According to Gabor Adam, an officer at the Open Society Institute in Cluj, this organization may have been the first international group to get government and minority groups' leaders together to talk; this group, in his opinion, helped to create a culture of discussion in Romania.⁵⁶ More importantly, many of the talks PER held in the mid-1990s were outside of Romania and included prominent Westerners, which helped bolster the legitimacy of such talks in Romania.

Istvan Hortvan, a sociologist at the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, agrees with those who are more critical of the international community's involvement in this first stage. He believes that the international community did not involved enough in ethnic issues during these years and when it did, it often sent the wrong messages to both the Romanians and Hungarians. Dan Oprescu explains that during this period, Romania was looking to the former Yugoslavia and Slovakia, trying to create a Bucharest, Bratislava, and Belgrade axis against Hungary, and the West did little to dissuade Romania from engaging in this kind of diplomacy. In essence,

⁵⁵ Interview with Renata Weber, June 2004.

⁵⁶ Interview with Gabor Adam, Cluj, Romania June 2004.

many believe that transnational actors focused on promoting changes in the northern part of Eastern Europe and ignored Romania.

In the second phase, from about 1993-96, several actors, including the OSCE and the Council of Europe appear to have played an important role in *pushing*, as Horvath puts it, “the idea of minority rights” and getting politicians to think seriously about minority problems. Domestic politics certainly shaped the government’s relations with its Hungarian population, but as Andreescu and others repeatedly pointed out, this would not have happened without the push from the West. Every single person I interviewed agreed that without the pressures and incentives coming from transnational organizations, Romanians would not have adopted minority-friendly legislation or established monitoring bodies.

In 1993, only after the Iliescu government declared integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions a priority did the government set up the Council of National Minorities, which ostensibly provided a forum for countries’ national minorities to come together to provide recommendations to the President. Toni Nica noted that by 1994, the West was providing Romania with different but reinforcing signs of what it wanted and expected countries in Eastern Europe to do to resolve their ethnic issues. Although the specifics were not clear and there was not always a consensus among the transnational actors, most seemed to agree that by this point a single message was coming from the West: Any substantive integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions required the peaceful resolution of border disputes and internal ethnic conflicts.

Once the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was adopted in 1995 and the Council set up a monitoring system, which included shadow reports from NGOs, the CoE became an important transnational actor in the eyes of government officials. While CoE’s rulings were not so important in and of themselves,

Romanians generally saw the Council as a first step toward other Euro-Atlantic clubs. Visits from the CoE representatives were not contentious, and reports were written in a fairly neutral way. But they did state clearly the problems in Romania and the issues that the government needed to address. These reports pushed Romanian politicians into responding, even if they were only articulating problems that they had not previously acknowledged. In this way, the CoE helped define areas of concern, but as Weber and others point out, local NGOs were a crucial part of this formula, providing up-to-date information on the government's behavior.

Horvath, Weber and others note that during this second period the High Commission on National Minorities played a crucial and symbolic role. His visits to Transylvania were followed closely by ethnic Hungarians, and Max van der Stoel was considered the "Father of Minorities" in Transylvania. The difference between van der Stoel and other representatives of the West was van der Stoel's personality, his professionalism, and obvious commitment to resolving minority problems. In a sense, he was the West's point person; Romanians recognized him and generally knew why he was doing in Romania; other representatives were not as closely tied to specific issues.

Given van der Stoel's stature and level of activism, Romanian government officials believed that his opinions would be crucial to their future access into Euro-Atlantic organizations. Even if they did not follow the HCNM's Recommendations, they still needed to respond in some way. Max van der Stoel himself admitted that while many of his recommendations in Romania were not immediately acted upon, most eventually were and they served to influence the way Romanians addressed ethnic problems.⁵⁷ NGOs representatives' active in the early 1990s said that they felt that van der Stoel was perhaps the most important actor in the mid-1990s because he was, at some points, their only line of communication with

⁵⁷ Interview with Max van der Stoel, the Hague, Netherlands, 19 July 2004,

government officials. Renata Weber explained that when she had concerns about the government's behavior, she voiced them to van der Stoep, knowing full well that he would eventually raise these issues with Romanian politicians.

Perhaps surprisingly many noted the importance of the PER during this period and particularly before the 1996 elections in getting Romanian politicians who otherwise would not have talked to each other to sit down together. Nate Bluhm was a U.S. Embassy Information Officer and helped establish the US consulate in Cluj in 1994; claims that PER provided many in the US with crucial information on what happening in Romania, and through their important connections to the US, this NGO was able to influence Romanian and Hungarian intellectuals.⁵⁸ While Bluhm and others representing the US government recognize Romania's interest in integrating into Euro-Atlantic institutions by the mid-1990s, they never accord international-level variables the role Romanians did; instead they underscore bottom up activities, neighborhood contacts, moderate politicians and churches that, in their mind, all encouraged inter-ethnic harmony.

The third phase of Romanian politics, from roughly 1996 until 2000, included a wide variety of transnational actors. Interviews suggest that, in no particular order, NATO, the OSCE, specifically the HCNM, the EU and PER played a role in managing ethnic relations in Romania. As Iulian Chifu, Director of the Center for the Prevention of Conflict and Early Warning put it, the influence of international actors at this stage depended on the particular "pull" of the moment, or the country's proximity to membership in a regional organization.⁵⁹ Consequently, while the Council of Europe was important in 1992-93, by 1995-96 it was NATO, and after 1997, with NATO membership no longer the primary goal, it became the EU. The difference,

⁵⁸ Email correspondence with Nate Bluhm, July 26, 2004.

⁵⁹ Interview with Iulian Chifu, Director, Center for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning, Bucharest, Romania, June 10 2004.

however, in this third period is the “pull” rather than the “push” of the international community. Toni Nica put it this way; international influence went from obvious to palpable. Naturally, this does not mean that the government always followed international dictates, but it usually meant that international suggestions or recommendations contributed to inter-policy debates, and trickled down, manifesting themselves in a variety of ways.

By late 1996, Romania had signed a bilateral treaty with Hungary and after the November election, the Democratic Convention of Romania invited the Hungarian Alliance of Hungarians in Romania to become part of the governing coalition, demonstrating that, at least in some ways, ethnic relations were moving forward. Some are convinced that this would never have happened if not for the lure of membership into Euro-Atlantic institutions, because by 1996, membership into NATO and, to a lesser degree, the European Union were distinct possibilities rather than a foolish dream for Romanians.

Sorting out which organization was the most influential is difficult, if not impossible. Toni Nica noted that during this period NATO and the OSCE were important but one still should not ignore the influence of the OSCE; although OSCE political commitments were not legally binding, OSCE standards ended up in Romania’s binding bilateral treaties with its neighbors; thus, the OSCE’s influence should not be downplayed.

Most agree that is difficult but actually unimportant to sort out which membership was most important because, by this point, the West was acting with one voice and it was obvious that states to resolve ethnic conflicts peacefully and to protect minority rights. Like others, Horvath is cautious about overstating NATO’s influence, because he believes that in this area NATO deferred to the HCNM, just as other organizations did, because the HCNM was considered the expert institution and knew best the situation on the ground.

Weber notes that by 1996, with NATO's July 1997 "enlargement meeting" on the horizon, Romanian leaders were intent on proving why they should be admitted this exclusive club. While many Romanians believed that the HCNM's opinion would be the most important, others thought that Romania's entry into NATO was largely in the hands of officials at the US embassy. While many acknowledged the central role played by the office of the HCNM, this does not mean, however, that the High Commissioner's activities were always looked upon favorably by the ethnic Hungarians. Several Hungarians, especially in Transylvania noted with disappointment some of the actions of the HCNM and the international community.

By the late 1990s, and as ethnic violence no longer seemed like a possibility, international actors, like the HCNM, adopted different and often contradictory positions. In fact, according to Salat Levente, Vice Rector of Babes-Bolyai, the HCNM's activities related to the Babes-Bolyai University fell short indeed.⁶⁰ The message the HCNM delivered, which has caused problems ever since in Transylvania, is that if ethnic conflicts are not violent, the international community will not pay attention.

Consequently, rather than create universal standards related to minority rights, the HCNM was haphazard and incoherent. In his mind, part of the reason the HCNM did not take on the changes in the Babes-Bolyai University, helping it regain its status as an independent Hungarian university, was because of the US government's opposition to it. The painful logic of ethnic cooperation, particularly from the perspective of minority groups, is that if you work issues out with the government, the international community will not take notice or support your cause.

⁶⁰ Salat Levente, Associate Professor and Vice Rector, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, formerly Director, Open Society Foundation, June 9, 2004.

During the last period of the 1990s several Romanians and internationals emphasized the important role played by international and local NGOs, including groups like The Open Society Institute Romania (OSI-Romania), PER, Pro Demokratia, and Pro Europe League. Like other countries in the region, NGOs now dot Romania's landscape, particularly in the Transylvania region. Their ability to affect interethnic cooperation is open for debate. What is not debated, however, is that local NGOs are funded almost entirely from Western foundations, international NGOs, or governmental bodies from Western Europe and North America.

In approximating their influence, Gabor Adam, who works for Romania's Open Society Institute, is only comfortable saying that since there are scores of what are known as "service delivery" NGOs, which fill in where the government cannot, they are helping to empower individuals and rebuild communities. There was, in fact, a stark difference of opinion on how important Romania's Open Society Institute was to the management of ethnic disputes. Michael Mates, for example, of the US Consulate in Cluj points to the Open Society Institute directly in his explanation of the positive changes in Romania; OSI, he claims, has and continues to empower people and local organizations to do what would not have been done otherwise.⁶¹

This must, in some way, affect interethnic tensions. In Mates' mind, if Cluj's civil society was as strong as Timisoara's, ethnic issues would not be as salient throughout the 1990s. Salat, a former OSI officer, disagrees; civil society has not, in his mind, played an important role in managing ethnic differences. While Salat admits that international NGOs like the Open Society Institute have made significant long-term investments in Romanians, and a professional NGO sector has emerged, but it is too difficult to measure the impact of civil society development on

⁶¹ Michael Mates, Officer in Charge, U.S. Information Office, Cluj, Romania, June 8, 2004

ethnic cooperation. More, many of these actors, in his opinion, are largely self-serving and opportunistic.

IV. Concluding Remarks

Romania may not be, as President Clinton suggested in 1999, a model of inter-ethnic relations and accommodation but certainly by 2000, interethnic relations in this Balkan country had changed significantly and for the better. Fieldwork and interviews in Romania, alongside primary and secondary research allow for, at a minimum, three conclusions.

First, transnational actors played an important role in shaping ethnic relations directly and indirectly. Conditionality, third-party mediation, standards, democracy promotion and regionalism were explicit strategies employed by transnational actors to mediate ethnic tensions in Romania. However, engaging local actors, emphasizing transparency, encouraging economic development, and empowering individuals are ways transnational actors have indirectly promoted ethnic cooperation between Romanians and Hungarians.

Second, exacting casualty is difficult if not impossible. Untangling the effect of a single transnational actor's strategy was daunting at first, but it became increasingly unimportant as my research progressed in Romania and elsewhere. What I encountered in Romania was similar to what I found in Latvia and Bosnia; transnational actors regularly collaborate and make their own decisions based on the behavior and decisions of other organizations. That is, transnational actors are interdependent. Transnational organizations involved in Romania and in ethnic issues also clearly understood and appreciated the resources and capabilities of other transnational organizations, and operated with each other as relative equals. In my wording, relationships were not hierarchical but instead were flat, and no one actor dictated to the others.

Finally, despite a temptation to exaggerate the influence of international-level variables, domestic leadership was ultimately important to the timing of accommodating ethnic policies and behavior. When leaders adopted pro-Western policies, regardless of their motivations, transnational actors were more effective in shaping governmental decisions and the activities in civil society.