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I. Introduction

The reporting period (October 1995 – October 1996) was marked by an expansion of OSCE operations. The Budapest Ministerial decision on OSCE involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina posed the greatest challenge ever confronted by the CSCE/OSCE. It tested the degree of preparedness of the Organization to take on the most complex tasks in the post-Cold War multi-institutional set-up.

Thus far, the track record of the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly the job done in the context of elections in that country, testifies that the Organization can cope with the most difficult challenges of our day. Elections supervised by the OSCE were a major step in the post-conflict rehabilitation of the country.

The OSCE has assisted the parties to the Dayton Agreement in their negotiations on arms control and confidence-building measures and has helped with the implementation and verification of the resulting accords. The negotiations on confidence-building measures ended with a comprehensive agreement; the arms control talks were crowned with the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control.

The OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya continued to operate under most arduous conditions. Headway was made with the conclusion of an agreement and OSCE involvement continues to be welcomed.

An addition to the OSCE operational inventory was the OSCE Mission to Croatia launched – at the invitation of the Croatian Government – by a decision in April of the Permanent Council. The Mission, making use of the expertise available to the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and co-operating closely with – among others – the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), the Council of Europe, the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM), the UN Special Envoy for Regional Issues, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and relevant NGOs, is assisting the Croatian authorities and interested individuals, groups and organizations in the field of the protection of human rights and of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

All other OSCE missions in the field remained active, with the exception of the Mission to Kosovo, Sanjak and Vojvodina, which is still dormant in the absence of agreement by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) that it should resume its operations. The missions are continuing to make important contributions to stability in the OSCE area. Despite excellent track records recognized by all concerned, none of the missions has yet completely fulfilled its mandate and been disbanded.

In the absence of a political agreement it proved impossible to launch an OSCE Nagorno-Karabakh peacekeeping operation. However, the ceasefire has been holding for more than two years now and talks are continuing.

The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) has been pursuing his discreet diplomacy in the OSCE area. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human

Rights (ODIHR) has stepped up its activities in the human dimension, co-operating closely with other international organizations and, in the case of election monitoring, with parliamentarians.

The OSCE is taking follow-up steps in connection with the Pact on Stability in Europe. Exercising the OSCE's repository function, the Secretariat has established a register of agreements deposited with the OSCE pursuant to the Pact. The OSCE stands ready to provide assistance in resuming the work of regional tables.

The speedy integration of recently admitted participating States (RAPS) remained high on the OSCE list of priorities. Through educational and training seminars and workshops organized by OSCE institutions in this category of States, the message is being sent that the OSCE cares.

The OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia has been in operation for over a year now. In May the Permanent Council, having reviewed its operation, decided to extend its mandate by two years and increase its personnel strength. The Troika visit to the region in September generated further political support for the democratization programmes under way there.

The Organization maintained regular contacts with other international organizations, with NGOs, and with States partners for co-operation. In its contacts with other international organizations, the OSCE has continued to explore ways of avoiding duplication of effort, through mutually enhancing co-operation based on the principle of comparative advantages.

Fully aware of the potential of NGOs, the OSCE has conducted a study on ways of increasing their involvement and taken steps to implement recommendations arising from the study.

In the wake of the Budapest Summit, the OSCE's Mediterranean effort has been stepped up. Regular contacts with the Mediterranean partners for co-operation were maintained at various levels through a special contact group. Regional seminars and a special meeting on terrorism were held. Significant input to the OSCE operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was made by partners for co-operation Japan and Korea and by some Mediterranean partners for co-operation.

Under the Swiss Chairmanship, the OSCE continued its quest for new approaches to conflict prevention and crisis management and to the military aspects of security. The discussion on a common and comprehensive security model for Europe for the twenty-first century intensified and deepened.

The OSCE's tasks and operations have increased significantly in the course of 1996. The involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone has led to almost a doubling of the OSCE budget. However, the OSCE remains a low-cost, unbureaucratic and lean-staffed organization. Proposals for restructuring the Secretariat, in order to ensure more effective operations, have been submitted to the participating States for discussion.

II. Activities of the OSCE

1. Political Consultations and Negotiations

Throughout the reporting period a major issue was the security model discussion. The Permanent Council (PC) continued to play its central role as a forum for consultations as well as for enhancing the operational strength of the Organization. It provided political guidance for missions in the field and, responding to rapidly changing realities, decided new initiatives.

With the PC playing its full role, the frequency of Senior Council meetings was reduced.

As a contribution to the security model discussion, the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) engaged in a debate on a framework for arms control – which would serve also as a basis for its own future agenda. As part of its regular activities, the FSC paid increased attention to the implementation of confidence- and security-building measures. The Secretariat, through the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), supported the FSC in these activities.

2. Early Warning, Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management

2.1. Missions of Long Duration

Eleven OSCE missions of long duration and other field activities have been serving as an effective tool of early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management. These activities are based on mandates – elaborated by the participating States – which take into consideration the specific features of the situation in the host country. Their tasks vary from, for example, assisting the host country in the process of democratic transformation, to stabilizing post-conflict situations, by helping in the process of national reconciliation.

Despite the great diversity of situations, OSCE missions of long duration perform an early-warning task and enable the Organization to take prompt action in order to defuse tensions and find lasting solutions in some areas of major concern to the international community.

2.1.1. Mission of Long Duration in Kosovo, Sanjak and Vojvodina

The Mission continued to be non-operational as the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) has made the Mission's reactivation conditional on the country's return to the OSCE.

Nevertheless, given the OSCE's commitments and concerns *vis-à-vis* those regions, it was possible to find other ways of monitoring the situation there.

The Mission's reporting has been partly replaced by analyses from OSCE participating States. Information conveyed to an ad hoc working group is submitted weekly to the PC.

The situation in Kosovo continues to arouse particular concern. However, one encouraging development was the agreement on educational matters between the Serbian central authorities and ethnic Albanian political leaders in Kosovo, which allows the return of ethnic Albanian pupils and teachers to the State educational system.

2.1.2. Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

Since the conclusion of the General Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Dayton Agreement) and of an agreement on mutual recognition between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), and given the continuing presence of United Nations Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) on the northern and western borders of the host country, the Mission's border-monitoring role has further diminished. Within the framework of its mandate, the priorities of which were adjusted during the year, the Mission has continued to monitor the situation, both internally and externally, also in the context of regional stability, security and co-operation.

The Mission has co-operated closely with the United Nations, other international organizations and with NGOs in co-ordinating efforts to assist the host State with the development of its democratic institutions. Together with the United Nations, it organized an international workshop entitled "An Agenda for Preventive Diplomacy", which was held in Skopje in the autumn of 1996.

The Mission has continued to support the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities. In May 1996 it organized a marathon team relay linking the cities of Skopje and Tetovo, which drew teams from all parts of the community.

2.1.3. Mission to Georgia

The Mission sought further ways of carrying out its primary task – facilitating a settlement of the South Ossetian conflict. The Head of Mission (HoM) was one of the five parties to the "Memorandum to Enhance Security and Confidence-Building Measures" signed at the Kremlin in the presence of Presidents Yeltsin and Shevardnadze on 16 May 1996. On 23 July the HoM and three other Mission members took part in the first meeting since July 1995 of the Joint Control Commission (JCC), established in 1994 to find practical solutions to the problems arising from the conflict.

Further impetus towards a political settlement was given by a meeting between President Shevardnadze and the South Ossetian leader Chibirov, held on 27 August in

Vladikavkaz, where both sides committed themselves to proceed on the road to a comprehensive settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

The next step will be negotiations on the future status of South Ossetia, conducted by high-ranking representatives of the parties concerned. The consent of the South Ossetian leadership to the opening in Tskhinvali of a branch office of the OSCE Mission is considered to be an encouraging sign.

The Mission's main tasks were threefold: first, to help preserve the ceasefire through daily monitoring visits to the checkpoints of the peacekeeping forces in the conflict zones; second, to act as intermediary between President Shevardnadze and the South Ossetian leader Chibirov and keep the negotiating efforts alive; and third, to facilitate a Georgian-Ossetian information flow through informal contacts, such as a round table in Tskhinvali attended by journalists from the opposing sides, and exchanges of media material.

Another element of the overall conflict settlement effort – the Mission's economic initiative, aimed at the revival of a normal economic fabric within South Ossetia and between it and adjacent areas – gained pace after February 1996, with extensive visits by several international experts who examined the prospects in various sectors. As regards the refugee dimension of the conflict, in July the HoM presented senior officials on both sides with proposals for facilitating the return of Ossetian refugees to Georgia's Borjomi area; the paper in question was subsequently introduced into the framework of the JCC.

In Georgia's other conflict zone, Abkhazia, the Mission continues to be active on human rights, with members visiting the area almost monthly. Both sides seem to consider such visits a useful means of bringing about greater co-operation as regards access to detained persons and the investigation of alleged human rights violations. In June 1996, for the first time, Mission members visited Abkhaz prisoners held by Georgia and Georgian prisoners held by the Abkhaz side. The opening of a human rights office in Sukhumi (due to be inaugurated on 10 December 1996), under United Nations auspices and with OSCE support, was decided by the UN Security Council on 22 October 1996.

Thanks in part to the support of the Council of Europe to OSCE efforts in the field, there was a considerable increase in the Mission's activities in the sphere of human rights, where Georgia has generally continued to make good progress. Mission interaction with the Georgian judiciary and Ministry of the Interior rose markedly. Staff of the Mission's Human Rights Office made numerous visits to persons held in detention facilities, and Mission members regularly attended trials with political connotations in Tbilisi. Through ODIHR seminars, expertise was made available in areas such as prison reform, human rights NGOs capacity-building and ombudsman law. The number and regularity of the Mission's contacts with local NGOs concerned with human rights and democracy-building rose appreciably.

The Mission managed to slightly increase its delivery of humanitarian aid and intensify support of the distribution to those refugee populations outside the Abkhazia conflict zone whose situation was judged to be most severe. With regard to South Ossetia, the Mission is recognized as a co-ordinator of international humanitarian aid efforts.

2.1.4. Mission to Estonia

At the beginning of 1996, the Mission followed closely the work being done on a new local election law; for this purpose, it was represented at the meetings of the Parliamentary committee drafting the law. The Mission has also monitored the citizenship examinations, which began during December 1995 pursuant to Estonia's Citizenship Law.

Throughout 1996, the Mission monitored the progress of the residence permit processing, which in the second half of the year reached the residence permit and aliens' passport issuing stage.

The Mission continued to concern itself with issues relating to Estonian language training for russophone inhabitants, such training being a major prerequisite for genuine integration, and helped to channel foreign aid into language training projects.

During 1996 the Mission followed and supported round tables in Estonia where representatives of different sections of the population discuss broad topics, including cultural and educational issues.

2.1.5. Mission to Moldova

Progress was achieved in the negotiations on a settlement of relations between the Republic of Moldova and its eastern part. The parties concerned, with the support of the mediators (the OSCE Mission, the Russian Federation and Ukraine), prepared a "Memorandum on the Principles of Settlement of Relations between Moldova and Trans-Dniestra". This document determines basic aspects of a special status for the eastern part of Moldova and deals with possible guarantees for implementing the agreements on a final settlement. The signing of the Memorandum is expected to take place after the presidential elections in late 1996.

Within the framework of these negotiations, specific problems regarding the relationship between the two sides, Moldova and the eastern part of Moldova, were discussed. The Mission, together with the other mediators, participated in both the elaboration and the implementation of the resulting agreements.

New "Principles of Co-operation with the Joint Control Commission" (JCC) were signed in January 1996. This document lays the foundations for more active involvement of the Mission in the JCC's activities.

Military units from the Russian Federation's Operational Group in the eastern part of Moldova were used in the rotation of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in June. The Moldovan side opposed the move, alleging that it was a violation of the 1992 Russian-Moldovan agreement and considered it a threat to the implementation of the 1994 agreement on the withdrawal of Russian troops (the former 14th Army).

The Mission reported regularly about the long-term implementation of the relevant provisions of the Budapest Document 1994 and monitored the situation of military forces in the region.

As regards the human dimension, the Mission investigated the conditions in Moldova's penitentiaries, where humanitarian aid is urgently needed, and followed the "Ilascu group" case (Ilie Ilascu and five other men were sentenced to death by the authorities of the eastern part of Moldova for an alleged politically motivated assassination in 1993).

2.1.6. Mission to Latvia

The Mission monitored the implementation of the 1994 Citizenship Law and the 1995 Law on Non-Citizens. It continued to co-operate closely with the Naturalization Board. With the approval of the Board's director, Mission members monitored the conduct of naturalization examinations, which they concluded were being administered in a fair manner.

The Mission continued its dialogue with the Citizenship and Immigration Department on the implementation of the Law on Non-Citizens. Also, the Mission played the role of third-party facilitator – in relation to the troop withdrawal agreements of April 1994 – with regard to the retired military personnel from the Russian Federation remaining in Latvia.

2.1.7. Mission to Tajikistan

During 1996 the three field offices that were taken over from UNHCR on 1 October 1995 proved very useful in monitoring the human rights situation of returned Tajik refugees. In addition, thanks to a wider interpretation of their mandate, they successfully addressed some other very difficult issues of human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as the independence of political parties, freedom of the press, the independence of the judiciary and the penitentiary system. The Mission co-operated closely with the ODIHR, UNHCR, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and the United Nations Military Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), as well international organizations such as the ICRC.

On 22 February, the Permanent Council (PC) approved OSCE involvement – including financial support – for the establishment of an ombudsman office, foreseen in a draft presidential decree which had been under discussion for almost a year. Although the Tajik Government eventually decided otherwise, the OSCE Mission has expressed its readiness to assist the Government, whenever necessary, in creating an independent institution which will serve to strengthen human rights and democracy.

From 24 to 26 April the OSCE Department for Chairman-in-Office Support held a Regional Seminar on Confidence-Building. The Seminar – the first of its kind to be held in Tajikistan – brought delegations from each of the five Central Asian countries together with senior OSCE representatives, delegations from other OSCE participating States and representatives of international and local NGOs.

The Mission continued to follow the inter-Tajik talks taking place under the chairmanship of the United Nations.

2.1.8. Mission to Sarajevo

Early in 1996 the Mission to Sarajevo was expanded and reorganized into a section of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

2.1.9. Mission to Ukraine

During the period January to June, the Mission focused on constitutional issues, primarily the elaboration and adoption of a Crimean constitution. A round table, organized by the HCNM and the Mission in Noordwijk, Netherlands, on 13 and 14 March, had a positive impact on the constitutional debate in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Constitution, adopted on 28 June 1996, recognizes an "Autonomous Republic of Crimea" with its own constitution, a provision that is important for continuing political stability in Crimea. Moreover, the Noordwijk round table initiated a process whereby the Ukrainian Parliament, on 4 April 1996, adopted a partial constitution for Crimea, partial in the sense that some twenty critical articles in the document must still be correlated with Ukrainian law.

After the January-June period, the Mission shifted its focus to issues affecting deported peoples, particularly Tatars. A number of reports were produced, and the Mission organized a seminar in Kyiv on Ukrainian citizenship issues as they relate to Tatars and other former deportees from Crimea.

Attended by senior Ukrainian and Crimean officials, Tatar leaders and foreign experts, the seminar resulted in a number of commitments that should help to mitigate the citizenship problem in the near term. Also, it may stimulate renewed legislative and political activity that could resolve the problem definitively within a reasonable time.

In order to maximize the use of resources and experience, the Mission to Ukraine is working closely with the HCNM and increasing its co-operation with bodies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNHCR.

2.1.10. Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina was established on 8 December 1995 at the fifth meeting of the Ministerial Council. The Hungarian Chairman-in-Office appointed Ambassador Robert Frowick of the United States as Head of Mission.

With an authorized staff of 233 members and with dozens of international personnel supporting it (mainly from the ECMM and Civil Military Co-operation/Implementation Force (CIMIC/IFOR)), the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is so far the biggest OSCE field mission.

The OSCE and its Mission were given the task of supervising the preparation and conduct of free and fair elections and monitoring the human rights situation. Furthermore, the OSCE is to be involved in facilitating the monitoring of arms control and confidence- and security-building arrangements.

Elections. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has assisted the parties in creating the conditions required for holding elections: a politically neutral environment, the right to

vote in secret without fear of intimidation, freedom of expression and of the media, freedom of association and freedom of movement.

The Provisional Elections Commission (PEC), set up pursuant to the Dayton Agreement, had its first meeting on 1 February 1996, and the basic rules and regulations for elections were adopted on 22 February. A Free Elections Radio Network (FERN) was launched with the assistance of the Swiss Government, in order to provide at least one channel of communication to which all political parties would have equal access; FERN became operational on 15 July. The Open Media Network television station started broadcasting in September.

The elections provided for in the Dayton Document were to take place six to nine months after the Agreement had been signed. On 25 June, the Chairman-in-Office concluded that there was no convincing alternative to the holding of Presidential and Parliamentary elections, which took place on 14 September. In August, the PC decided that the also-envisaged municipal elections should be postponed until November because of widespread violation of the PEC rules and regulations. In October, these elections were postponed again and should take place as early as possible in 1997.

More than 1,200 election supervisors from OSCE participating States assisted the authorities. Nearly 900 international observers co-ordinated by Mr. van Thijn, the Co-ordinator of International Monitoring (CIM), monitored, on 14 September, the elections which, on 29 September, the PEC certified had taken place in accordance with internationally accepted standards of eligibility, access, participation, and transparency.

Human rights. Thanks to the establishment of field offices and the appointment of observers, the Mission was able to report on human rights violations and the human rights situation in general, with particular emphasis on election-related human rights such as freedom of movement, freedom of expression and freedom of association. Also, it assisted in establishing contacts between local human rights organizations. Special attention was paid to the development of inter-ethnic contacts and dialogue among intellectuals, religious leaders, journalists, women and youth.

Regional stabilization. An agreement between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska on confidence- and security-building measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina was concluded on 26 January under the chairmanship of Ambassador Gyarmati, a Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office; The implementation of the agreement started on 1 March 1996. An agreement designed to assist the parties in achieving balanced and stable defence force levels at the lowest numbers consistent with their respective security needs was reached on 14 June under Ambassador Eide, also a Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office.

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has worked in close co-operation with other international actors, including the EMM, IFOR, the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the International Ombudsman, the Human Rights Chamber, the Office of the CIM, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

The Federation Ombudsmen. After the establishment of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 1995, the old Mission (the OSCE Mission to Sarajevo) was integrated into the new one, which took over responsibility for supporting – politically and

logistically – the three Federation Ombudsmen who represent the three major ethnic groups. An Ombudsmen Liaison Unit has been set up within the Human Rights Branch of the new Mission.

The Ombudsmen have concentrated on questions of property rights, citizenship and freedom of movement, endeavouring to create conditions which will allow people to return to their homes. Also, they have touched upon problems related to misapplication of the Amnesty Law. Furthermore, through the media, they keep the public informed about their work and simultaneously educate it about human rights.

The Ombudsmen Liaison Unit has been seeking non-OSCE sources of funding so as to enable the Ombudsmen to work more effectively and to extend their activities into new areas.

The Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission, established pursuant to the Dayton Agreement, is a national body which will have an international character for the first five years of its existence. It consists of a Human Rights Chamber and a Human Rights Ombudsman. The Commission as a whole started its work officially on 27 March 1996.

Human Rights Ombudsperson. The Hungarian Chairman-in-Office appointed Ms. Gret Haller of Switzerland as the OSCE Human Rights Ombudsperson for Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 1995. She took up her duties on a permanent basis in mid-February. The Human Rights Ombudsperson will serve for a non-renewable term of five years.

The Human Rights Chamber. The Human Rights Chamber consists of 14 members. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has appointed eight members, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has appointed four, and Republika Srpska has appointed two. The Council of Europe has elected Professor Peter Germer of Denmark as President of the Chamber. The term of the Human Rights Chamber is five years; its present term started on 15 March 1996.

2.1.11. Mission to Croatia

In the light of a report on an OSCE fact-finding Mission to Croatia (October 1995), and a report of a Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on his visit to that country (February 1996), the PC decided on 17 April 1996 to establish a long-term OSCE mission, at the invitation of the Croatian Government.

The main task of the Mission is to provide assistance and expertise to the Croatian authorities at all levels – and also to interested individuals, groups and organizations – in the field of protection of human rights and of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. In order to promote reconciliation, the rule of law and conformity with the highest internationally recognized standards, the Mission will in this context also assist with, and advise on, the implementation of legislation and monitor the development and functioning of democratic institutions, processes and mechanisms.

In carrying out its tasks, the Mission will co-operate with the HCNM and the ODIHR, other international institutions and organizations (notably the Council of Europe), the ECMM, the Special Envoy for Regional Issues, UNHCR, the ICRC and relevant NGOs. The PC highlighted the need for the Mission to co-operate closely with UNTAES.

The OSCE Mission to Croatia became operational on 5 July 1996, when Ambassador Albertus J.A.M. Nooij and a number of other Mission members took up their duties in Zagreb. In conformity with the PC's decision, field offices were opened in Vukovar and Knin in August.

2.2. Other OSCE Field Activities

2.2.1. OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya

Together with the Mission in Bosnia, it is OSCE's operation which attracts most public exposure. The Head of the Assistance Group is Ambassador Tim Guldemann of Switzerland who started his work on 4 January 1996.

The AG has been successful as a facilitator of contacts between the conflicting parties, playing a major role in bringing about the Moscow agreement and the two Nasran protocols. The Moscow cease-fire agreement recognized the merits of OSCE involvement by including the words "with the mediation of the OSCE Mission".

2.2.2. Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference

The Personal Representative had monthly meetings with the authorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the political and military leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh. In co-operation with his field assistants, he prepared special reports, mostly on questions connected with confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs).

As regards CSBMs aimed at stabilizing the cease-fire, the Personal Representative, in co-operation with the Parties, introduced a "mechanism of crisis monitoring" for the verification of allegations about cease-fire violations. A similar mechanism is to be elaborated to enable the Chairman-in-Office and the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference to get involved in the verification process.

The Chairman-in-Office, accompanied by representatives of the Minsk Group, visited the region in February 1996 and put forward a "package deal proposal" that has become the framework for further negotiations.

The Chairman-in-Office appointed Mr. Andrzej Kasprzyk of Poland as his new Acting Personal Representative; Mr. Kasprzyk took up his duties in July 1996.

2.3. OSCE Assistance in the Implementation of Bilateral Agreements

2.3.1. The OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners

The Joint Commission on Military Pensioners continued to meet regularly. All sides noted a marked decrease in the number of complaints brought to the Commission's attention.

2.3.2. The OSCE Representative to the Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners

The Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners, tasked with the review of applications for residence permits by former career officers of foreign nationality, had managed to deal with the bulk of the applications by 12 July 1996 (the closing date fixed by the Estonian National Assembly) and relayed its recommendations to the Estonian Government.

The Government has in the meantime identified some 4,000 problem cases which are to be reconsidered for final decision within 6 months. This work, together with some 1,000 additional cases not yet reviewed, will occupy the Commission until the beginning of 1997.

2.3.3. The OSCE Representative to the Joint Committee on the Skrunda Radar Station

The OSCE Representative and Alternate Representative, appointed by the Chairman-in-Office on 6 April 1995, carried out in 1996 two periodic inspections in a businesslike and co-operative atmosphere.

2.3.4. Sanctions Co-ordinator and Sanctions Assistance Missions (SAMs)

The adoption of resolutions 1021 and 1022 on 22 November 1995 by the United Nations Security Council has considerably reduced the operational responsibilities of the SAMs in the neighbouring countries of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and of the EU/OSCE Sanctions Co-ordinator's Office in Brussels.

As a consequence, the number of customs officers and other experts serving the SAMs in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Romania has substantially declined. As to the SAM in Ukraine, the Government requested that it be temporarily withdrawn on the understanding that the legal framework for a possible future presence of the SAM would remain in force.

With reference to the provisions of resolution 1022, the Permanent Council of the OSCE decided to extend the mandate of the SAMs and the EU/OSCE Sanctions Co-ordinator

until 30 September 1996. In the light of subsequent developments, however, the Permanent Council did not decide to extend the mandate further.

On 1 October 1996 the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1074 which terminates with immediate effect the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Republika Srpska. As a result, the EU/OSCE Sanctions Assistance Missions are winding up their activities. The Sanctions Assistance Mission Committee (SAMCOMM) will continue to operate, however, for the purpose of co-ordinating some 8000 ongoing investigations of suspected violations of sanctions and managing the Customs and Fiscal Assistance Office and the International Customs Observer Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3. The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)

It has long been accepted in the OSCE that stability and security are largely determined by the success or failure of States' policies *vis-à-vis* their national minorities. In recognition of the important contribution of the HCNM to the defusing of inter-ethnic tensions, his mandate was extended in the fall of 1995 for a second three-year term.

During the reporting period, the High Commissioner was again involved in minority questions in a number of OSCE participating States. Inter-ethnic relations were his main concern. The issues discussed covered a broad range among them, differences between national and regional authorities, prospects for the return of persons belonging to national minorities to areas they had previously inhabited and problems related to the possibility of obtaining citizenship. Also opportunities for members of minorities to secure education in their mother tongue and to use their native language were often discussed.

3.1. Croatia

The purpose of the HCNM's first visit to Croatia, from 14 to 17 December 1995, was to acquaint himself with the situation of national minorities within the specific context of the return of refugees and displaced persons. He had talks with a number of senior officials in Zagreb, including Mr. Kofi Annan, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General; Mr. B. Suk Min, Chief of Mission, United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation (UNCRO); Mr. Pierre Jambor, Chief of the UNHCR Mission to Croatia; and Mr. J.M. Rodriguez Cordon, Acting Head of the ECMM.

The HCNM visited a refugee camp near the Bosnian border at Kupljensko, as well as Knin, in the Krajina, and there had meetings with the local authorities, with the military authorities and with the ECMM Team-Knin.

From 4 to 8 February 1996 the High Commissioner paid his second visit to Croatia, with meetings in Zagreb and Osijek, to familiarize himself with the special situation in the Croatian territories of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium.

He met with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Ministers of Justice and the Interior, the Presidential advisor on Humanitarian Affairs and a number of Parliamentarians, including some of Serbian and other non-Croat ethnic origin. He also met UNHCR and UNTAES representatives.

The HCNM paid his third visit to Croatia from 9 to 13 June 1996. Prior to visiting Zagreb, the HCNM travelled to Vukovar and a number of neighbouring villages in eastern Slavonia. He also went to Osijek, the administrative centre of the region, which is also the seat of the Croat office for liaison with UNTAES.

3.2. Estonia

The HCNM continued his involvement in Estonia, concentrating mainly on the question of citizenship, the issuing of aliens' passports and language requirements.

He discussed these issues during his visit from 30 November to 1 December 1995, and from 7 to 9 May 1996, when he met with President Lennart Meri, the Foreign Minister and the Vice-President of the Parliament. In talks with the Director of the Citizenship and Migration Board, the High Commissioner indicated that, upon his recommendation, the Swiss Government would provide funds for computer equipment to help the Board with its task of registering applications for temporary residence permits and aliens' passports.

3.3. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The HCNM visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in March 1996, following his earlier visits there in March and May 1995. His attention was now focused on the prevailing political situation and the latest developments in inter-ethnic relations. Particular importance was attributed to the question of Albanian language education, including ways of improving opportunities for Albanians to enjoy higher education in their mother tongue within the framework of national legislation.

3.4. Hungary

The HCNM continued to direct attention to the situation of the Slovak minority in Hungary and was supported in his activities by a team of three experts. In addition to meetings in Budapest, the experts visited one of the largest and oldest Slovak settlements in Hungary, Bekescaba, in the southern part of the country.

The team of experts again accompanied the High Commissioner on a trip to Hungary from 20 to 22 May.

In the summer of 1996 the HCNM had several meetings with Hungarian Foreign Minister Kovacs in connection with the draft Basic Treaty between Hungary and Romania which was eventually finalized in August 1996.

3.5. Kazakstan

Late in 1995 and on into 1996, the HCNM continued to follow developments in Kazakhstan. A seminar on inter-ethnic relations was held in February 1996. Entitled "Building Harmonious Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Newly Independent States - the Instance of Kazakhstan", the seminar was co-organized by the HCNM, the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, the Administration of the President of Kazakhstan and the Foreign Ministry. Discussion centred on four key themes: the relevance of international legal norms for domestic policy-making on minority issues and inter-ethnic relations; the development and implementation of language policy in a multilingual State; the role of State bodies in local minority affairs; and the need for effective dialogue between minority representatives and State authorities.

3.6. Kyrgyzstan

In April 1996 the HCNM turned his attention to the inter-ethnic situation in Southern Kyrgyzstan. After meetings with officials in Osh and Djalal-Abad, he subsequently visited Bishkek to share his impressions with Government officials.

3.7. Latvia

The HCNM continued his activities in Latvia, visiting the country in January 1996 to pursue further questions connected with the naturalization process. He had meetings with the Latvian authorities, as well as representatives of political parties and of the Russian speaking community. On 16 May 1996 the High Commissioner took part in a seminar in Riga aimed at promoting dialogue between the government and residents belonging to minorities. This seminar was organized by the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies with the support of the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations and the Soros Foundation in Latvia.

3.8. Romania

During his visit of 28 August to 1 September 1995 in Romania, the High Commissioner focused his attention on the new Law on Education, adopted on 29 June 1995. In a public statement, he referred to clarifications he had received from the government on several issues, such as the freedom of parents to choose a school or class for their children, the fact that the law did allow the existence of private denominational schools, and the possibility that these schools might receive State support. Also, the possibility of minorities contributing to Romanian history textbooks was mentioned.

He subsequently recommended that the passing of regulations on the implementation of the law be speeded up in an effort to avoid confusion, and that thought be given to the possibility of revising the law, perhaps in early 1997, to overcome unforeseen weaknesses that might lead to over-regulation in the initial period of application.

3.9. Slovakia

The HCNM continued his efforts to improve relations between the Slovak Government and the sizeable Hungarian minority in Slovakia.

Linguistic issues were tackled during the High Commissioner's visit in January 1996. The HCNM visited Slovakia again from 22 to 24 May 1996, accompanied by a team of experts, and met with two Deputy Prime Ministers and a number of Ministers. The HCNM had the opportunity to discuss the situation of Hungarian-language schools with representatives of the Hungarian minority.

3.10. Ukraine

A further round table meeting on the political, economic and legal problems dividing the Ukrainian authorities and the Crimean parliament was held in Noordwijk (the Netherlands) from 14 to 17 March 1996. Organized by the HCNM in collaboration with the OSCE Mission to Ukraine and the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, the meeting was attended by high-level representatives from Crimea and Kyiv. The debates led to the formulation of some new concrete approaches, hopefully useful for bridging the remaining differences.

On 2 April 1996, the HCNM took part in the UNDP-sponsored Donor Conference on the deported people of Crimea, in Geneva. He then spent two days in Kyiv focusing on constitutional matters.

4. The Human Dimension: Activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

In 1996 new tasks assigned to the OSCE under the Dayton Accords added to the normal workload of the ODIHR. The three main roles for the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina were: supervision of the electoral process, monitoring of human rights, and provision of assistance to the Parties to facilitate arms-control and confidence-building measures.

The ODIHR's support for the OSCE Mission in Bosnia lay in providing assistance with elections; assistance to the ombudspersons; and assistance in the process of creating modern legislation.

4.1. Election Monitoring

In accordance with a new framework for election monitoring, the ODIHR focuses its efforts on the periods prior to and following elections in participating States. This allows the experts to make thorough enquiries into the situation as regards the political rights of citizens.

The ODIHR has been very active in arranging and sponsoring various activities since November 1995 in relation to elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This work has involved the organization of the initial Election Assessment Missions, the drafting of new electoral

codes for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the training of new members of the OSCE Mission, as well as sending observers to the elections themselves.

In 1996, the ODIHR observed the parliamentary elections in Russia (December 1995) and Albania (May and June 1996); the local elections in Romania (June), the presidential elections in Russia (June) and Armenia; the parliamentary elections in Lithuania (October); the presidential elections in Bulgaria (October) and Moldova (November); and the presidential and parliamentary elections in Romania (November).

4.2. Integrating the Human Dimension in the Work of the Permanent Council

The procedures decided upon at the Budapest Summit in 1994 suggested a significant change in the way the OSCE will deal with Human Dimension issues in the future. More emphasis is to be given to integrating the Human Dimension into the work of the Permanent Council.

The Director and staff members of the ODIHR have regularly attended Permanent Council meetings and provided delegations with monthly information on its activities. As a consequence, there has been a regular exchange of ideas between the Office and the Permanent Council.

4.3. Seminars, Symposia, Meetings

4.3.1. *Rule of Law and Democratic Institution Building.* The Third Annual Warsaw Judicial Symposium, held from 10 to 14 June, involved jurists and ministry officials from across Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. It offered participants an opportunity to learn about new legal trends and techniques to improve the administration of justice in their countries.

4.3.2. *Professional Training Programme for Russian Judges,* 10-13 July, Orel, Russia. This training workshop, entitled "The Role of Regional Courts in the Implementation of International Human Rights Commitments", was the second phase of the Professional Training Project designed by the Programme for Co-ordinated Legal Support. The principal objective of the workshop was to determine the feasibility of using regional courts to implement a national training project which has been developed by the Supreme Court of Russia and the ODIHR.

4.3.3. *Training Programme for Belarus Government Migration Officials,* 15-19 July, Warsaw. This event was organized in co-operation with UNHCR. The agenda, prepared with the assistance of the Polish Migration and Refugee Affairs Office of the Ministry of the Interior, provided Belarus officials with a substantive review of the new legal and organizational policies that guide Polish refugee and migration affairs.

4.3.4. *Training Project for the Georgian Ministry of Justice and Georgian Prosecutor General,* 6-8 September. The programme focused on prison reform and management and

reviewed the application of international standards to the Georgian penal system and the practical implications of penal reform.

4.3.5. *Seminar on Human Rights and International Standards of the Judiciary*, 28-30 May, Dushanbe. This programme, involving the participation of all courts and other bodies and representatives of the justice sector from throughout the country, was the first project of its kind in Tajikistan. The objective was to stimulate discussion on the practical implementation of international legal standards and to examine ways in which those standards could serve as an effective guarantee of fair legal process and as a basis for the fight against organized trans-national crime.

4.3.6. *Workshop on Human rights in Prisons*, 16-19 February, Erevan. This workshop focused on such topics as "The Purpose of Prison", "Prisoners and the Outside World" and "European Conventions on Human Rights in Prison".

4.3.7. *Round table on Legal Aspects of the Ombudsman Institution*, 11-12 March, Tbilisi, Georgia. A follow-up to the ODIHR's recent evaluation of the draft constitutional law on the Ombudsman of Georgia, this round table was primarily designed to encourage the Georgian parties involved to discuss selected legal issues.

Human Dimension Seminars

4.3.8. *Constitutional, Legal and Administrative Aspects of the Freedom of Religion*, 16-19 April, Warsaw. The main theme of the Seminar was freedom of religion, in its relationship to State and church bodies as well as religious communities and organizations. Delegations reported on efforts, notably in the new democracies, to incorporate OSCE standards into their constitutions.

4.4. Training Programmes for NGOs

- Round Tables on Women's Issues, Kyrgyzstan (September) and Uzbekistan (October)
- Capacity Building and Communication for NGO Leadership – Training Workshops in Lithuania and Georgia (May), in Armenia and Azerbaijan (both in July) and in Moldova (October).
- The Role of Education in Strengthening Civil Society: Workshop in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (11-13 September) and in Estonia (29-31 October).

4.5. Media

Bearing in mind that the development of independent media is one of the primary prerequisites for the functioning of a civil society, the ODIHR has given close attention to observing media campaigns before and during elections, heightening awareness of Human Dimension issues, especially media-relevant issues, through seminars and workshops, and collecting and disseminating information on the implementation of OSCE commitments with

relation to the media. The ODIHR has also organized regional conferences and meetings of journalists.

The Seminar on Conflict in the Trans-Caucasus and the Role of Mass Media, 22-26 April, Batumi, Georgia, was organized by the OSCE Mission to Georgia, the Council of Europe and the Black Sea Press Agency. Twenty-five media professionals from the regions of conflict attended the conference. Participants discussed the possibility of establishing contacts and channels for future communications among themselves. They also turned their attention to the role, responsibilities, ethics and influence of journalistic work on the peace-building process in their countries.

A meeting on Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia and the Role of the Media, held in June, in Croatia, was organized within the framework of the ODIHR assistance programme for the rehabilitation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Journalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia discussed obstacles to independent and professional journalism, including such problems as the restricted availability of newsprint, penalties for advertisers and high taxes.

4.6. Mission Support

The ODIHR continued to advise the Chairman-in-Office on the formulation of mandates before the creation of missions, often sending experts to take part in exploratory visits. It has also organized training courses for new members on the Human Dimension, on monitoring and on reporting techniques. It regularly informs missions of its activities and supplies them with human rights documentation.

4.7. Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues

Co-operation with the OSCE participating States. To obtain direct insight into the situation of the Roma minority in each participating State, the CPRSI circulated a questionnaire in order to collect comprehensive information about the Roma populations in individual States.

Co-operation with international organizations. The ODIHR Co-ordinator of the Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues participated from 15 to 21 May in the fact-finding mission on the situation of Roma organized by the Council of Europe. In addition, the ODIHR co-operated closely, in this context, with the European Commission and UNHCR.

Co-operation with Romani organizations. Regular consultations are held on Roma and Sinti issues and on the current activities of the CPRSI. The Standing Conference for Co-operation and Co-ordination of Romani Associations in Europe is an important partner in all current activities of the CPRSI.

Activities to combat violence and discrimination. A workshop on violence against Roma and Sinti was organized in January 1996 in Warsaw, and was followed by several consultations on this problem with Romani associations. The CPRSI prepared a report on violence and

discrimination against Roma in Europe and discussed it with the representatives of interested governments.

Increasing awareness of Roma and Sinti Issues. In September 1996 a seminar on attitudes towards the Roma in the media, organized jointly by the Project on Ethnic Relations and the CPRSI, was held in Prague.

4.8. CIS Migration Conference

Increasingly aware of the scale and complexity of the problem of migration in CIS countries, UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – together with the OSCE – organized a Conference on this subject in June 1996. A joint Secretariat staffed by the three organizations had been established in 1995 to deal with preparations for the Conference and to provide relevant information for the international community.

The Conference brought together all the CIS countries and other interested States, and it helped to encourage discussions on humanitarian issues.

The Conference has achieved several objectives starting from its preparatory phase, through intensive work carried out by the participating States in two rounds of sub-regional meetings and two meetings of experts.

5. Security Co-operation

5.1. The Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting

The sixth Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (1996 AIAM) of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) took place in Vienna from 4 to 6 March 1996. The participation of numerous experts from capitals offered the opportunity to discuss suggestions for improvement of the existing Vienna Document 94 and other FSC agreements, such as the Code of Conduct and the Global Exchange of Military Information.

Up to 1 August 1996 the following decisions on improvement / further development of existing CSBMs have been taken:

- Establishment of a common five-year period for air base visits
- Definition of the role of the Conflict Prevention Centre within the OSCE network
- Extension of the time frame for submission of Defence Planning Information to 3 months

5.2. Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

The FSC, recalling the importance of an early entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, decided that there should be a regular exchange of information on the status of ratification of the CWC and ensuing legislation.

5.3. Code of Conduct

The Implementation of the Code of Conduct was reviewed during the AIAM 96. As a consequence, the introduction of a separate ad hoc annual review meeting is under consideration. Two seminars (December 1995 and May 1996) organized by the Netherlands and Germany, respectively, bore testimony to the substantial progress made in implementing the Code in a number of OSCE participating States.

5.4. Global Exchange of Military Information

OSCE participating States successfully conducted their Global Exchange of Military Information on 30 April 1996. The exchange was preceded by a workshop on automated data exchange with an encouraging number of participants.

5.5. A Framework for Arms Control

Working Group B of the FSC established an informal working group to discuss the future framework for arms control as a contribution to the elaboration of a security model for the twenty-first century. The framework, adopted in September, is to be finalized before Lisbon and adopted at the Summit itself.

5.6. CSBM summary

In 1996 a number of the CSBMs mentioned in the Vienna Document 94 have already been successfully carried out by OSCE participating States. They include:

- 4 air base visits
- 66 evaluation visits
- 21 inspections
- 2 demonstrations of new types of major weapon and equipment systems
- 4 visits to military facilities
- 7 observations of military activities

6. Other Activities

6.1. Integration of recently admitted participating States.

6.1.1. In 1996, the most notable of OSCE's activities in this field was the **Troika visit** to the countries of Central Asia, which took place from 9 to 13 September. The goals of the visit, the first of this format ever, were manifold: to promote more active participation in the OSCE of the countries concerned and better understanding of the OSCE's possibilities and constraints, to identify security concerns, to establish the role that the OSCE can play through preventive diplomacy, and to increase public awareness of Central Asian participation in the OSCE. In all countries the Troika delegation was received at the highest level and had positive exchanges of views on further integration into the Organization of the States in the area.

6.1.2. As part of its programme of seminars and other meetings in Central Asia, the OSCE organized a symposium in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 23 April and a seminar in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from 24 to 26 April. This two-city event, planned by the Department for Chairman-in-Office Support of the OSCE Secretariat, was organized jointly with the authorities of the host States. The OSCE Central Asian Liaison Office in Tashkent and the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan were also actively involved. The meetings were opened by the Prime Ministers of the two host States and attended by over 100 participants from the OSCE community. There was also wide participation by representatives of international organizations, international and local NGOs and the media. Members of opposition parties were likewise able to take part in the Dushanbe seminar.

The symposium in Tashkent, entitled "*OSCE Comprehensive Security and Regional Challenges*" generated lively discussions on a broad range of issues of particular interest to the OSCE and its Central Asian members.

The Dushanbe *Seminar on Confidence Building* was the first major OSCE event to be organized in Tajikistan. Discussions covered a broad range of issues, including problems of conflict prevention, regional economic and environmental co-operation and solidarity, democratic institutions, human rights and the rule of law.

6.1.3. A *Seminar on National Human Rights Legislation* was held from 11 to 13 September 1996 in Tashkent. This Seminar was attended by the Troika delegation and focused on legal issues related to the protection of human rights.

6.1.4. In Tajikistan, the OSCE, through its mission in the field, participated in the preparation of a *Workshop on Small and Medium-sized Business in the Leninabad region*. The workshop was co-organized with the UNDP and the Tajik Centre for Entrepreneurship and Management. Held in Khojand, on 9 and 10 August 1996, it brought together more than 50 business leaders and several international organizations to discuss and assess the economic situation in Leninabad Oblast, the most industrialized region of the country.

6.1.5. The **OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia**, operational since July 1995, has established contacts with representatives of all Central Asian States at various levels in fulfilment of its mandate. It has disseminated information about the OSCE and assisted in the organization of OSCE-related regional events. In recognition of its important role, the office's mandate has now been extended for a two-year term.

6.2. The Economic Dimension

6.2.1. The first **OSCE Economic Dimension Implementation Review Meeting** (22 and 23 January, Geneva) took stock of what had been achieved during the period 1990-1995 in relation to the OSCE's commitments in the areas of economics, the environment and science and technology. The Chairman's Summary of the meeting's conclusions was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Economic Forum.

6.2.2. The **Fourth Meeting of the Economic Forum** (27-29 March, Prague) addressed the social aspects and political risks of the transition process and the role of economic confidence-building in promoting security. The meeting highlighted a wide range of social and economic elements of security relevant to the discussion on a common and comprehensive security model for the twenty-first century.

On the eve of the Economic Forum, participants from the business community discussed the idea of establishing a privately initiated and financed "European Business Council", a body expressing the views of the private sector which could act as a recognized interlocutor of the OSCE.

6.2.3. A framework for private sector development, industrial co-operation and direct investments in the CIS countries was the subject of a **Seminar** organized in Minsk (24-26 September) in close co-operation with the UN/ECE, OECD and the Executive Secretariat of the CIS. This meeting was part of the 1996 seminar programme associated with the Economic Dimension of the OSCE and designed to promote economic confidence for both domestic and foreign investors.

6.3. Press and Public Information

6.3.1. Press

The Secretariat continued to keep the press and the general public aware of the activities of the OSCE, thereby also supporting accordingly the Chairman-in-Office.

The number of press releases and press briefings has risen significantly. High profile events like OSCE election monitoring, or the activities of the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the Assistance Group to Chechnya, have generated considerable press interest.

The practice of inviting journalists to visit OSCE missions (for example in Moldova and Tajikistan) has met with a favourable response.

6.3.2. Public Information

A major initiative was the creation of an OSCE web site. With the co-operation of all OSCE bodies and institutions, and effective technical assistance from the Prague Office, this site became operational in October 1996. It provides the Internet users with OSCE information in an immediate, straight-forward and digestible manner.

A new, visually striking and user-friendly "image brochure" was introduced, giving the reader a colourful and informative overview of the history and activities of the Organisation.

The marked increase in requests for public information and archival material from both the Vienna Secretariat and the Prague Office suggests that there is a growing interest in the activities of the OSCE.

Circulation of the monthly Newsletter has increased to above 1,500 and efforts have been made to improve its presentation and broaden the scope of its coverage. A bi-monthly Russian synopsis of the Newsletter has also gone into regular production with the co-operation of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations.

6.3.3. Publications

A second issue of the OSCE Handbook, prepared by the Department for Chairman-in-Office Support, provided the reader also in 1996 with comprehensive factual information on the institutions, activities and mechanisms of the OSCE. A Russian version of the handbook was also produced.

A compilation of articles on the OSCE in 1995, entitled "The OSCE in 1995: the Year in Print", was prepared by the Department for Chairman-in-Office Support. A further publication from the same source was entitled "From CSCE to OSCE", a collection of statements and speeches of the then Secretary General Dr. Wilhelm Höynck.

As in the past, four issues of the ODIHR Bulletin were published. The "Roma and Sinti Issues Newsletter" began a second year of circulation. The ODIHR also launched a new publication this year, entitled "Central Asian and Transcaucasian Newsletter".

III. The Parliamentary Assembly

Established in accordance with the call of Heads of State or Government at the Paris Summit in 1990, the Parliamentary Assembly has increased its role, particularly through dialogue between parliamentarians and governments on OSCE issues. Its declarations and resolutions deal with current matters. The Annual Assembly Session in Stockholm, last July, met in plenary and in three committees corresponding to the three main OSCE baskets. The dominant subjects were the security model for the twenty-first century and the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Assembly adopted recommendations made by the three General Committees for inclusion in the final Stockholm Declaration. Two supplementary resolutions on Turkey and the former Yugoslavia were also adopted. The Assembly also considered a text on a "Code of Conduct on Politico-Democratic Aspects of Co-operation" prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee chaired by Professor Rita Süßmuth, President of the German Bundestag. It was decided to forward "The Code of Conduct" to the Lisbon Summit. The Assembly established an annual Prize for Journalism and Democracy that was awarded to the Polish journalist, Mr. Adam Michnik. At the Stockholm session, Mr. Javier Ruperez, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Spanish Parliament, was elected as the new President of the Assembly.

The Assembly provided a vital link between the OSCE and members of the national Parliaments of the participating States. It has become a tradition that reports of the Committees and decisions of the Assembly are transmitted to the Ministerial Council for consideration, while senior OSCE officials and experts brief the Parliamentarians on the latest OSCE developments. The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Javier Ruperez, reported on the results of the Stockholm Session to the Permanent Council in Vienna in July and participated in the Troika meeting last September.

Another major contribution by the Assembly to the development of representative democracy during the past twelve months was its election monitoring programme. Almost three hundred parliamentary observers monitored elections in Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakstan, Latvia, Russia (twice – parliamentary and presidential elections), and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Assembly closely co-operated with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the ODIHR.

The Assembly sent missions to the Baltic States and the Central Asian countries, headed by its then President, Mr. Frank Swaelen, and to Georgia and Armenia, headed by the newly elected President, Mr. Javier Ruperez. As a result, an intensive programme of seminars has been developed for the Central Asian and Transcaucasian countries.

An international internship programme, at the Headquarters of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Copenhagen, has been extremely beneficial to graduate students from OSCE countries and has considerably enhanced the research and language capabilities of the Assembly's International Secretariat. During the past year, interns from over a dozen OSCE countries compiled briefing materials for election monitoring teams, helped delegations during their missions and assisted at seminars and Assembly Sessions.

IV. Relations with International Organizations and Institutions

Inter-institutional co-operation in preventive diplomacy and post-conflict rehabilitation expanded.

The Secretary General attended the second meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, chaired by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at United Nations Headquarters in New York, on 15 and 16 February 1996. The discussions concentrated on improving co-operation, information exchange, the enhancement of consultations and on possibilities for joint operations.

In the framework of the enhanced interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations, co-operation and co-ordination between the OSCE and the United Nations are intensifying, particularly in the fields of conflict prevention and crisis management. Continuing political support was afforded by the Security Council to OSCE efforts to find a solution in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The OSCE participated as an observer in United Nations-led negotiations to settle the conflict in Tajikistan and was invited to the UN-sponsored talks on Abkhazia. The United Nations received regular information on OSCE field activities based on mission reporting from Moldova, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, and Chechnya.

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Dayton Agreement) involves an unprecedentedly wide range of international organizations, with the OSCE in the forefront. During its first meeting in Sarajevo in January 1996, the OSCE Troika discussed with IFOR commanding officers plans for co-operation between the military and the civil implementation organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to provide a co-ordinated response to the challenges of post-conflict peace-building.

Trilateral contacts between the OSCE, the United Nations and the Council of Europe continued, as did direct contacts between OSCE institutions and UN offices, agencies and programmes. In December 1995, representatives of the UN Office in Geneva, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the International Committee of the Red Cross discussed with OSCE representatives prospects for co-operation in the field. Further OSCE-UN-CoE meetings are planned.

An OSCE - CoE "2+2" meeting was held in Strasbourg on 23 January 1996.

On 11 July 1996, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Daniel Tarschys, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of contacts between the Council of Europe and the OSCE Missions and the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

The OSCE Secretary General, addressing Ministers' Delegates at the Council of Europe on 15 October, spoke of the increasing need for complementarity in order to avoid overlapping and contradictions and maximize the use of resources.

V. Relations with partners for co-operation (PCs)

Co-operation and interaction of the OSCE with its PCs Japan and the Republic of Korea and its Mediterranean PCs Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia, increased further.

Another Mediterranean Seminar was held in Tel Aviv, Israel, from 2 to 4 June 1996. The topic was "The OSCE as a Platform for Dialogue and the Fostering of Norms of Behaviour". In addition to representatives from 31 of the OSCE's participating States, the seminar was attended by representatives from Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia.

The participants stressed that dialogue should be increasingly based on common values and a shared definition of security, leading to principles which all States in the region can subscribe to.

Further discussions on how to enhance dialogue and co-operation between the OSCE and its Mediterranean PCs continued in the Mediterranean Contact Group (MPC) in Vienna, focusing on topics such as confidence-building measures, the application of OSCE principles in the Mediterranean region and the adoption of co-operative strategies for dealing with common concerns like organized crime, drug trafficking and natural disasters.

An MPC meeting on "Risks and Challenges to European Security: the Mediterranean Dimension" was held on 1 and 2 July in Vienna. The participants identified issues of common concern in connection with the spread of terrorism and discussed possible avenues of international co-operation in tackling this scourge.

VI. Contacts with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

The Organization continued to refine its patterns of co-operation with NGOs, in line with the recommendations made in the "Study on Enhancement of NGO Participation" released by the Secretary General in September 1995 in response to the request made in the Budapest Document.

Within the OSCE Secretariat, an NGO Liaison Officer has been appointed by the Secretary General to focus on relations with NGOs dealing with issues other than human dimension ones. On 6 May 1996, an expert consultation about "Integrating Conflict Management with Humanitarian and Development Programmes" took place.

As recommended in the "Study on Enhancement of NGO Participation", the number of NGOs invited to participate in regional meetings has increased. The addresses of relevant NGOs have been entered into the general distribution list of the Prague Office.

In addition to the Secretariat in Vienna, the Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights (ODIHR) played a full role in liaising with NGOs.

On 20 and 21 March 1996, in Washington D.C., ODIHR representatives had a meeting with NGOs on the CIS Migration Conference. On 4-9 May, the ODIHR and the OSCE Mission to Georgia organized a training workshop for NGOs in Tbilisi on "Capacity Building and Communication for NGO Leadership". On 7 May, representatives of Slovak NGOs visited the ODIHR for a briefing on its activities. In June, the ODIHR and "Women's Rights Poland" organized a round table in Warsaw on women's issues.

Contacts with NGOs formed an essential part of the HCNM's preventive diplomacy missions to OSCE States, during which he focused on the role of NGOs as possible sources of information.

OSCE Missions maintained links with NGOs relevant to their respective mandates. In particular, the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya and the OSCE Missions to Moldova, Georgia, Estonia and Skopje have established fruitful working relations with a number of NGOs.

Possible new avenues of co-operation are currently being discussed, including the enlisting of NGO representatives as members of OSCE missions and NGO involvement in the training of mission members.

VII. Administration and Finance

The main activities relating to Finance, Personnel, Information Systems, Legal Matters and other Administrative Tasks are described below.

1. Finance

1.1. Financial Regulations

Financial Regulations were approved by the Permanent Council on 27 June 1996.

1.2. Budgeting

The Budget for 1996 was approved by the Permanent Council on 19 December 1995. It was initially established at a level of ATS 310.1 million. Shortly afterwards the Permanent Council approved a budget for OSCE tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina at a level of ATS 244.9 million. This budget was revised on 27 June 1996. Thanks to savings in the budget, it proved possible to include additional funds for the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina amounting to about ATS 40 million.

The 1996 Budget was further increased to include provisions for internal auditing, the Review Conference and the Mission to Croatia. The budgets for Sanctions Assistance Missions and the Sanctions Co-ordinator were reduced. The total Budget for 1996 is currently (1 November 1996) established at a level of ATS 546.1 million.

1.3. Accounting

The accounts for 1995 were submitted to the External Auditors on 18 March 1996. The report of the External Auditors included an unqualified audit opinion certifying that

- the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the OSCE as at 31 December 1995, and the results of the operations then ended;
- they were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
- transactions were in accordance with the approved financial procedures and legislative authority.

The audited financial statements for 1995 were submitted to the delegations of the participating States on 26 June 1996.

1.4. Cash Management

The cash flow of the OSCE improved significantly in 1996 thanks to the establishment, on 11 January 1996, of the Voluntary Fund to support OSCE Action for Peace, Democracy and Stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The cash flow into the Fund has increased gradually. As at 15 October 1996 a total amount of ATS 493.8 million had been contributed in cash to the Fund. Of this amount ATS 272.3 million had been spent, leaving a balance of ATS 221.5 million.

New bank accounts were opened in Moscow and in various locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2. Personnel

2.1. Staff Regulations

The Informal Financial Committee, assisted by the Secretariat, has been considering the Draft Staff Regulations, which were submitted by the Secretary General to delegations in April 1995.

2.2. Internal Procedures

Organizational Directives concerning recruitment (OD 8) and the selection and appointment of seconded staff (OD 9) were issued on 15 March 1996.

2.3. Recruitment

Recruitment activities were intensified during the first half of 1996 owing to the need to fill temporary positions established in the Secretariat to support the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3. Information Systems

3.1. Operational Matters

The resources of the OSCE's information systems were dedicated primarily to support the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, while at the same time providing the necessary infrastructure for an enhanced level of computerization in the Secretariat.

The Finance System has so far been successfully installed in the Missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Georgia.

3.2. New Developments

All OSCE institutions and some missions were connected to the Internet.

The development of an OSCE-wide information systems strategy, planned for the first half of 1996, had to be deferred owing to work requirements related to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This task has now been relaunched.

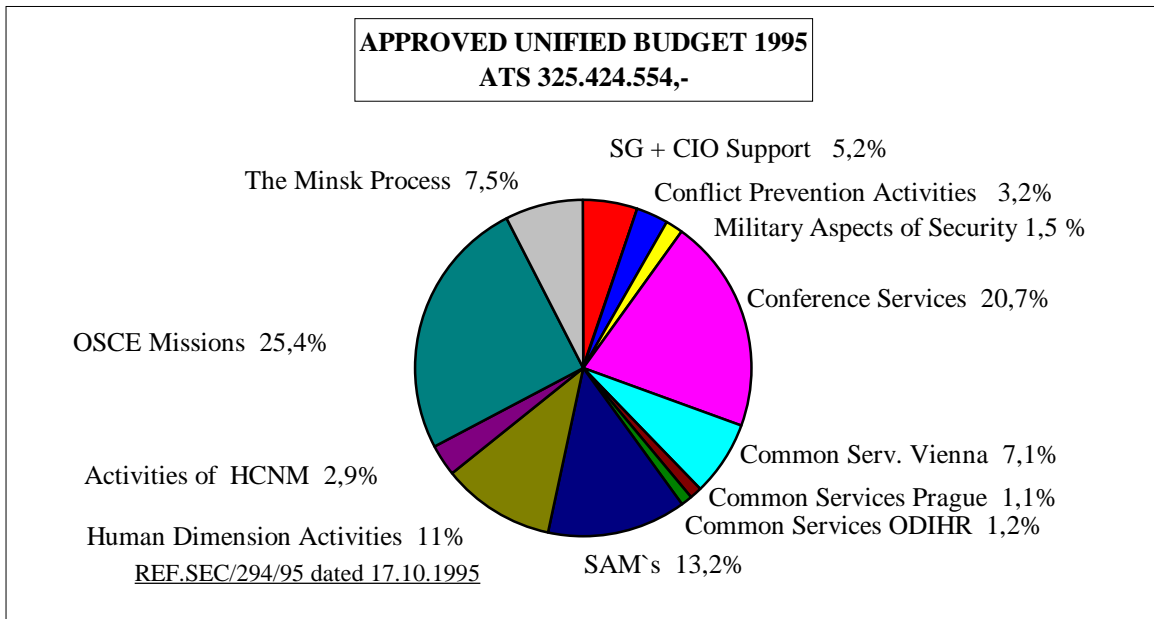
4. Legal Matters

Legal assistance was required and provided throughout the period of the Report in many areas, notably Staff Regulations and employment questions, Financial Regulations, Contracting, Insurance matters, Memoranda of Understanding and other international instruments, privileges and immunities and social security.

5. Other Administrative Activities

The High Level Planning Group was moved by the end of 1995 to new offices in the Secretariat at 1010 Vienna, Kärntner Ring 5-7. Also, additional office space had to be rented in the same premises to accommodate the staff employed pursuant to Annex 1 B of the Peace Agreement concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Annex 1



Annex 2

