



2nd OSCE Meeting on Training and Recruitment

13 and 14 October 2005

Summary

Purpose of the Meeting

The OSCE Secretariat hosted this meeting in order to take stock of the increasing number of pre-mission training activities in OSCE participating States on the one hand and to address the challenge of identifying suitable candidates on demand for OSCE assignments on the other. The meeting served to provide a platform for exchange, mutual information and forward planning of all relevant stakeholders such as Ministries of Foreign Affairs/OSCE Delegations, national Recruitment/Training Agencies on the supply-side and the Secretariat and Missions/Institutions on the demand-side of seconded mission personnel.

The current OSCE Training Strategy 2005-2007 (PC.DEC/627, SEC/GAL/118/04/Rev.5), stipulates an increased support by the OSCE Training Section to relevant pre-mission training programmes and Training Institutions in participating States to be co-ordinated through annual meetings with Delegations and training/recruitment experts from participating States. This meeting, building upon last years meeting held in November, aimed to maximize the support of the OSCE Secretariat for pre-mission training programmes, to facilitate co-operation among participating States in the field of pre-mission training and preparation and to keep recruitment experts in participating States abreast of ever-changing profiles of OSCE field staff.

Below are the main issues discussed at the meeting as well as summaries and recommendations of the two working groups and the conclusion of the Chairperson.

Working Group on Recruitment

“The challenge of staffing OSCE field operations”

The Rapporteur for Working Group II reported that constructive discussions had taken place in Working Group II. The group was advised that the areas in which seconded personnel are working has changed since 1999. The current trend towards increasingly specialized posts had continued within all areas of the OSCE.

Addressing the challenges faced by the participating states discussions, it was noted that generally the technical processing of applications was working well and many of the problems faced in the past had been eliminated. The Secretariat offered to look into the possibility of offering a solution to the pS who had specific requests for a dual email account.

With regard to deadlines for applications, nominating authorities were reminded to submit applications as early as possible in order to accelerate the recruitment process.

With regard to candidates not having accurate information on allowances applicable in the various posts, it was decided that the Secretariat will advertise when BLA's are not available i.e. when seconding to ODIHR, HCNM and the Secretariat. The remuneration applicable will then be more clear to the candidates prior to their being nominated.

Regarding the issue of pre-screening of candidates by the pS, the Rapporteur stated that professional experience is considered very relevant and it should be noted that internships are not regarded as professional experience. Language requirements should also be adhered to as no consideration can be given to a candidate who does not meet this requirement. It was noted that the pS are required to check both the health status of the candidate as well as confirm the validity of university qualifications.

The Rapporteur noted that the working group discussed the possibility of requiring candidates to have passed an internationally recognized language test. He reported that this was an advantage to the Secretariat if such certification is stated in an application however it is necessary that the pS check this certification.

The group also discussed mission specific requirements and it was reiterated that information should be given to candidates on health insurance, the non family duty concept and time should be taken to explain the consequences of adhering to these concepts.

The Rapporteur also noted that difficulties have been experienced in identifying suitable police experts. This is due to current competition with other international organizations (who tend to pay a much higher rate) and also understanding national security obligations will not always allow deployment of key personnel.

It was noted that where a pS chooses to lobby for a candidate, they should take the opportunity to use the field on page 7 of the application form to outline their interest or through other correspondence to the Secretariat.

It was noted that discussions are currently underway regarding extending the length of the secondment period to 12 months, however this is pending agreement of pS. And finally it

was noted that discussions are taking place regarding a JPO programme to provide traineeships opportunities for under-represented countries.

Working Group on Training

“Establishing the foundations for a revised set of standards for preparation of future members of OSCE field operations”

Using the results of the surveys presented in the plenary prior to the working groups as a starting point, *the Rapporteur for Working Group I* reported that the Training Standards for preparation of OSCE Mission Staff would be under revision to more accurately reflect the needs of the participating States in preparing a qualified pool of candidates to second to the OSCE. *The Rapporteur* discussed the principles upon which the training standards are based and opened the discussion regarding curriculum, methodologies of training and potential challenges in the implementation of the standards. It was noted that the current standards are too broad to guide the preparation of future members of short-term specialized operations such as election observation missions.

The opportunities of distance learning compared to classroom or “in-person” training were discussed as a supplement to current in-person training. Technological challenges were discussed along with appropriate topics that may be addressed with distance learning options.

It was noted that a modular approach should be offered to address the varying needs of the participating States with special attention paid to managerial skills and best practices of the OSCE. Specialization courses could be offered in functional areas as a complement to the OSCE’s focus on generic preparation by exploiting and benefiting from the many outside providers and partners in training cooperation.

The Rapporteur addressed the advantages and disadvantages of the various types of training available. *Several participants* of the working group reported on current programs that they were currently offering using web-based training.

It was noted that a stronger emphasis should be placed on regional awareness of mission members in pre-mission training by participating States. *One participant* noted that gender issues are not adequately addressed in pre-mission training.

The Rapporteur asked the group for their input and recommendations on how to best design a more comprehensive and function specific pre-mission training programme. *One participant* noted that project management skills are indeed needed, but that training should be more specifically geared towards analysis and application in conflict alleviation and conflict prevention areas. *One participant* noted that report writing skills are needed. *One participant* noted that as the structure of longer operating missions shift that training needs are shifting internally to management skill sets. The reaction to the structure changes is too slow and the changing training needs are not being addressed quickly enough in pre-mission training. *The Rapporteur* noted that the speed and channeling of deploying mission members does not often allow for the rapidly changing needs to be addressed in a timely fashion and

perhaps we could focus on using internal resources and in-house expertise to address these needs.

One participant noted that national training centres need assistance to keep abreast of the changes. It was proposed to allow for field visits by national training teams who could then report back to keep the participating States informed of the updated needs. It was also noted that the participating States are training their pools of candidates not only for possible OSCE deployment but also to EU projects, etc.

One participant noted that training does continue in the field, however the training offered in missions is linked to operational need and not staff development needs.

The Rapporteur asked the group if the skills needed were considered universal or are they considered highly specialized. He asked the group how to approach distance learning opportunities and he asked the training centres and partners in training what their needs were and how could the OSCE Secretariat better support them.

Plenary discussion following the working groups

The Chairperson welcomed the opportunity for the exchange of information and sought recommendations on how to improve on this forum and asked for comments on whether the current meeting linking the training and recruitment areas was beneficial for the participants.

General comments made included:

- that the meeting combining both training and recruitment was beneficial as these areas are interlinked
 - the criteria and standards for recruiting should be more defined and in future more time should be allocated for recruitment procedures
 - the participants enjoyed having the opportunity to meet members of other pS and training institutions and look forward to increased co-operation.
 - distance learning is a practical learning tool which is of definite benefit especially if included together with face to face learning opportunities.
 - future meetings should be scheduled to give the opportunity for participants to attend both working groups
 - it would be beneficial to receive a more detailed agenda (i.e including discussion points) earlier
 - whilst the survey and results proved to be interesting, it would have been appreciated to receive the information prior to the meeting
 - it was useful to hear what areas of training are the priority
 - gender equality should be included in the training and gender issues should be more prominent in this meeting
 - training institutions should take more time to speak with missions to hear which skills are necessary
 - regional training activities benefit smaller missions, and help capacity building of national staff
 - there should be more psychological testing and briefings prior to deployment
 - feedback on candidates would be useful for future nominations
 - interesting to hear from missions and to get feedback on current secondees
 - received some good ideas from the survey
 - missed having the opportunity to meet with ODIHR representatives
 - give training institutions the list of training focal points
-

Conclusion by the Chairperson

Concluding the Chairperson noted the fruitful nature of the ideas and suggestions made during the discussions. He summarized the conclusions of the Meeting, highlighting the following points: the Meeting on Training and Recruitment would continue on an annual basis; it was learnt that the two working groups should be held consecutively rather than on a parallel basis and due to this in future the meeting will be held over two full days; he understood that advance notice had been insufficient and explained that this was due to the late completion of the survey and subsequent delay in the analysis of results; he noted in future the agenda will be provided well in advance and the opportunity will be given to participants to propose topics for discussion. He concluded by noting that the Secretariat will once again produce a summary of the meeting including speeches, presentations and summaries of the working groups on CD Rom.

Training Institutions of pS were encouraged to forward information of their training activities to the OSCE Training Section so that they can be included in the pre-mission training events calendar accessible through the OSCE website. The Chairperson confirmed that the Training Section will continue exploring how the use of the OSCE website can be further enhanced to facilitate access to pre-mission training information to the general public. And on a final note, the Chairperson announced the vacancy notice for a seconded Training Officer (Gender Issues) at the Secretariat and that he looked forward to receiving nominations from participating States.
