

OSCE Meeting on Training and Recruitment

4 and 5 November 2004

Summary

Purpose of the Meeting

The OSCE Secretariat hosted this workshop 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 on the demand-side of seconded mission personnel.

The recently approved 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 was the first of its kind in order 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 I

“Pre-mission training in OSCE participating States: Challenges and way forward”

The Rapporteur for Working Group I, reviewing the proceedings of that Working Group, provided an overview of its objectives and the priorities identified by its participants.

First, the Rapporteur summarized the discussion that took place regarding major obstacles and shortcomings in organizing pre-mission training courses, as well as the proposals made by WG’s participants on how to overcome them. These included:

- the difficulties in identifying training personnel and a request to the OSCE to maintain a roster of trainers;
- the possibility of increasing e-mail contact as a group on issues concerning training personnel; and
- the dissemination of training course information through the OSCE website to facilitate wide-spread reach of existing training possibilities.

He also noted the need for the OSCE to continue advocating the necessity of preparing civilian staff for mission duty and he remarked upon the difficulty of ensuring that pre-mission training courses delivered what they were intended to. He stated that the WG’s participants agreed that the *Training Standards for Preparation of OSCE Mission Staff* remained a good foundation document although it needed to be publicized more. He reported that the WG's participants had stressed the need for basic survival and security issues to be addressed in pre-mission training courses and that they believed that project management techniques should also be included in such training courses. The participants had also noted the need to prepare individuals to deal with conflicting interests and priorities and to increase people's readiness to be realistic in terms of achieving objectives. The Rapporteur also noted the importance of examining trainees' attitude and stated that both the behaviour and skills of a trainee needed to be considered. In that context, it was suggested that the individual and their development should be given due consideration during pre-mission training courses.

Regarding the issue of recognition for pre-mission training courses, he reported that the issue had been the cause of a lively discussion. While it was evident to the WG’s participants that common quality standards could be beneficial, he reported that they also alerted of the risks inherent in such a recognition process. For example, the workload that such a labour-intensive process could bring to the Secretariat if it was to be done on a large scale, or the impact that a rushed introduction of such standards could have in States where pre-mission training programmes were not yet fully established.

In conclusion, he noted the following: the *Training Standards for Preparation of OSCE Mission Staff* remain a good foundation for preparing staff for field assignments but efforts to ensure their wide-spread distribution and put into practice should continue, and that while a manual on best training practices would be beneficial, the political implications of course recognition needed to be looked into further. *The Chairperson* noted that progress remained to be made and that the OSCE Training Section would develop a set of course quality standards that could provide a basis for course recognition in the future

Working Group II

“Linking training and recruitment”

The Rapporteur for Working Group II reported that a constructive discussion had taken place in WG II. Addressing the challenges which confronted national recruiters, he reported that participants had discussed the current OSCE system of recruitment and had noted that some States had technical difficulties with the application process of the system, particularly for seconded positions. It was noted that assistance would be provided in such cases.

Regarding the content of OSCE vacancy notices, a tendency towards increasingly specialized posts was noted. In addition, participants had observed that some participating States had difficulties with the deadlines indicated in the vacancy notices, noting that some candidates applied at the last moment and that gave little time for pre-screening procedures; which, in turn, resulted in 45% of candidates being below the required standard. The Rapporteur reported that some participating States were setting shorter deadlines in that regard and that the Secretariat would consider introducing a period of grace following the deadline.

Regarding the issue of gender balance, it was observed that there was a good balance in field operations in such areas as human rights, democratization and media affairs, but that this was not the case in general monitoring functions and in police-related work. That situation was also reflected in the incoming applications. Noting that the problem was a historical one which required time to resolve, the Rapporteur reported that some participating States were trying to address the issue.

In addition, he noted that geographical balance was also a point of concern both in relation to the post-table and short-service agreements. He stated that difficulties arose due to the lack of candidates from under-represented States and he noted that the issue needed to be addressed. Noting the Staff Regulations, he agreed that no specific post should be tied to a specific State.

Addressing the issue of whether pre-mission training courses were a suitable mechanism for identifying candidates or if a Junior Professional Programme/Internship Programme

should also be used, the Rapporteur agreed that pre-mission training courses were helpful in identifying potential secondees and that training over an extended period of time was useful for assessing candidates' personalities.. He also stated that the technical problems concerning OSCE application forms would be addressed. Noting the recommendation of having a reserve pool of trained individuals who were ready for deployment, it had been suggested that training could compensate for a lack of field experience. It was also highlighted, however, that not all positions required field experience.

Regarding the possibility of an Internship Programme, he noted that some States wished to see an Organizational-wide approach to the issue and that view was mirrored by the missions which were very satisfied with the performance of their interns and which wished to continue taking them on. *The Rapporteur* stated that efforts would be made to try to link all internship programmes into one so that it would make screening easier. He reported that the Secretariat would distribute a position paper on internship programmes.

Discussion on findings of the Working Groups

The Chairperson welcomed the opportunity for the exchange of information and sought recommendations on how to address the one third or so of new mission members who arrived in the missions unprepared. *One participant* responded to the question and stated that the OSCE had not made any significant difference in Kosovo in the previous five years and he wondered if anything different should be done. *Another participant* wondered if the training added any value and if the one third of untrained staff was the result of a lack of communication or information. *One participant* stated that there was a need to ensure that adequate training was provided especially given concerns about litigation. Noting that the success of a mission depended on many factors, *another participant* felt that there was not necessarily a link between the level of training and the mission's success. He noted, however, that training was an asset and that it should be taken into account during recruitment. *One participant* noted the difficulties of assessing certain training courses during the recruitment process and that some form of recognition was required in order to evaluate such courses when they were listed on a curriculum vitae.

The Rapporteur noted the value of working with trained mission members and stressed that all mission members should have basic safety and security training for legal and publicity reasons. He stated that it would generate very bad publicity if the Organization sent untrained staff into dangerous areas. He noted that when a person had a military or police background it was easier to assess their level of basic training and recommended that as a minimum requirement staff should receive basic safety and security training. *One participant* believed that recruitment had to be improved but noted the difficulties which arose when there was no way for young professionals to get the practical experience they required. In addition, he noted the usefulness of a points scheme for evaluating qualifications. *The Chairperson* noted the general agreement on the provision of basic safety and security training for new mission members. In that context, he noted the psychological effects which the riots in Kosovo in March 2004 had on some mission

members. *The Rapporteur for WG I* noted the challenges presented by the proliferation of training courses with regard to recognition. *One participant* stated that the importance of basic safety and security training was obvious. *The Chairperson* noted that OSCE training went beyond the provision of just safety and security training, but added that some candidates did not even have that level of basic training. *Another participant* cautioned against creating the impression that all that was required was security training. Stating that there was a need to be more ambitious than that, he wondered how training standards could be translated into concrete action in the field. He stated that finding the right trainers for courses was a challenge in itself. *The Chairperson*, remarking on the exchange of training personnel, noted that there was a limited pool of trainers. *One participant* enumerated a number of possibilities in response to the question of how to integrate experience into training. He outlined that training personnel should have field experience and he noted the importance of the dissemination of information on the availability of such personnel. Regarding trainees who have no experience, he suggested that their retrospective post-fieldwork experience could be gathered in the form of feedback. He noted that the Secretariat could gather such feedback from field operations and distribute it among the training centers. He also noted that research in field operations would help identify training requirements. *The Chairperson* noted that the Training Section could be contacted by training personnel in search of potential training facilitators currently assigned to field missions.

One participant noted that in the national German pool of trainees, trainees were interviewed even if they had received training elsewhere. *Another participant* wondered how recruitment personnel in field operations valued the intellectual resources that went into the design of training courses. In that context, he wondered how a person's experience could be evaluated through pre-mission training. *One participant* stated that training could complement other experiences and stated that it was very important to learn more about what training courses consisted of when dealing with people of modest experience. *Another participant* believed that it was advantageous if an individual had specialized training even if that was not the equivalent of having field experience. *One participant* differentiated between basic training courses and specialized ones which dealt with the application of professional skills in field conditions. He noted the importance of how to implement such skills in the field. *The Chairperson* noted the importance of how a professional becomes operational in a difficult field environment. He encouraged participating States to send nominees to such specialized training courses.

One participant noted the use of international transfer credits in academic courses in European universities and believed that a similar credit transfer system could be used in crisis management training. In that context, he stated that the core skills and requirements should be identifiable regardless of the background of the training. He acknowledged, however, the difficulties in comparing crisis management courses with university courses. *The Chairperson* noted the usefulness of the exchange of such ideas. *An OSCE Training Officer*, noting that many trainees had good technical skills but had difficulties with interpersonal relations, believed that training in interpersonal, multi-cultural and management issues was also important. *The Chairperson* noted the prominence of such topics in the OSCE General Orientation Programme and that the Training Section tried to

address those issues prior to the trainee's departure to the field operation. He noted that the issue of management skills could be addressed more and he wondered how the link between training and recruitment could be strengthened. *The OSCE Recruitment Officer* believed that training courses could not substitute experience and, in that context, suggested that there should be a Junior Professional Programme / Internship Programme. *One participant* stated that training was a good opportunity to assess a trainee's qualifications but noted that criteria were required, such as the personal attributes of the trainee, their inter-cultural and language skills and so on. He believed that the Secretariat should outline such criteria and that trainees should be informed prior to a training course that such assessment would take place. *Another delegation* believed that the assessment of people for skills which could not be recorded in a curriculum vitae was the primary benefit of assessment-based training. He noted that States that did not provide pre-mission training courses also put forward candidates with no experience.

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: there was a need for the Training Section's website to be updated and that information on all training courses and activities in the OSCE area should be included on it with a possible breakdown of the information according to geographic and professional categories; the development of a twice yearly newsletter which would act as a best-practice guide on pre-mission training; and the controversial issue of training course recognition needed further discussion. Regarding recognition, he reported that work would continue on training course quality standards and that in time there could be a move towards recognition. He noted the availability of the Training Section's advice in that regard.

In addition, he noted that the Training Section was prepared to provide support in advocating the promotion of pre-mission training amongst national authorities and that the Training Section encouraged all States to provide basic pre-mission training. *The Chairperson* noted the need for increased dialogue with the OSCE's partner organizations on such issues as shared standards and shared course recognition. He also noted that there were a number of States where there were a host of different recruitment actors and that increased interaction between those actors would improve the recruitment process. He noted the intention of having the Training Meeting on an annual basis, anticipating that the next meeting would take place in mid-October of 2005. In that context, he stated that there was a need to address the issue of training for police and election staff. He also informed participants that an e-group would be formed in order to maintain contact.