

Political Dimension

MEDIA ISSUES

On 9 March, the Centre and the EC/EU conducted a round table in Astana on the **draft media law**. During this roundtable, the latest analysis made by international media NGO, "Article XIX", was presented to governmental authorities and domestic media NGOs, with Article 19 taking part in the event and giving greater context to the report's findings. Participants of the round table both local and international, received another opportunity to discuss fault lines of the new legislation and pass their final recommendations to the parliamentary deputies before they approved the draft law. The media law was approved by the Senate on 18 March and passed to the President for his signature.

In February, the Centre held two **pilot master classes for young journalists** in Atyrau (Western Kazakhstan) and Karaganda (North-Central Kazakhstan). During the trainings, more than thirty journalists between the ages of 18-25 honed their journalism skills and gained advanced know-how in information gathering, interview techniques, journalistic ethics, and codes of conduct.



Journalist Master-Class in Karaganda

The trainings were given by the experienced American journalist, former New York Times editor, Mr

"It was very interesting to learn the differences in the structure and functioning of our journalism and in other countries. It might be worth using some of their methods and share our experience..."

From the evaluation reports of the master-class participants.

Christopher Wren. Kazakhstan Ministry of Information officials also attended the classes and expressed their high estimation. Based on an evaluation of the results, the Centre has decided to expand the project nationwide and envisages conducting 10-15 further

such trainings later this year in all regions of Kazakhstan.

The Centre also collaborated on a **professional internship project** for young local journalists, in conjunction with the British and Polish Embassies in Kazakhstan and the Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity Foundation. Within the scope of this project, the young journalists were sent for two week professional internships with leading mass media outlets in Warsaw, Poland. To create synergies, the Centre drew its proposed candidates from among the best participants in the regional master classes, described above.

SECURITY MATTERS

In line with the current pilot **Police Project**, the Centre sent a team of two Kazakhstani police officials to the UK on 7-13 March. It was expected that the participants would gain greater insight into international practices with regard to criminal investigation techniques and methodology and also study systems that would be appropriate for Kazakhstan to further their criminal investigative capacities against international organized crime, narcotics trading, and terrorist activity. This visit will be followed up with a study trip to Spain in April, after which the Kazakhstani authorities intend to delineate a new system of criminal information gathering and analysis for large-scale international policing issues. The Centre is also exploring a Community Police component, which is to be launched concurrently in April.

Given the significance of the issues of terrorism to the Central Asian region and Kazakhstan, the Centre has sponsored the attendance of two Kazakhstani participants to a workshop on "**Human Rights while Countering Terrorism**", which took place in Copenhagen from 15-16 March. The workshop was interesting for its double focus on terrorism problems and challenges to human rights observation. During the event, the Kazakhstani participants gained practical experience, learned about best international practices from leading experts in this sphere, and participated in developing recommendations with regard to protection of human rights during counter-terrorism actions. This workshop was organized by the OSCE/ODIHR, in conjunction with De Paul University International Human Rights Law Institute, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ELECTORAL PROCESSES

In order to further the participation of Kazakhstani political parties in OSCE activities and to provide them with greater insight into **OSCE/ODIHR election observation** missions on the eve of parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan, the Centre organized two study trips for party representatives to act as international election observers. All registered political parties were equally given an opportunity to appoint one of their members to join OSCE/ODIHR teams of short term observers. As a result of application procedure, the first team of short term observers was sent for the Russian presidential elections from 9-16 March, while the second team of observers monitored the Georgian parliamentary elections from 23-31 March. The overall impressions of the Kazakhstani observers were very favourable and they expressed satisfaction at being able to see how elections proceed in other OSCE participating States. They were also very interested in the observation criteria and expressed their belief that a better understanding of these will lead to greater transparency in Kazakhstan's own electoral processes.

Economic and Ecological Dimension

MARKET ECONOMY EDUCATION PROMOTED

From 29-30 March, a representative of the Centre accompanied the Kazakhstani delegation (Ministry of Education, Agency for Civil Services, Almaty City Administration, State University and NGOs) to the seminar 'Professional Skills Needed for Development a Market Economy' held in Bishkek and gave its assistance in preparing two lead speakers. This was the third preparatory seminar to the 12th OSCE Economic Forum to be held in Prague in June.

ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Two events were conducted to discuss a recently proposed draft law "On Ecological Information", initiated by the Committee on Agrarian Issues of the Mazhilis of the Parliament. First, was a workshop initiated by the Centre aimed at **preparing recommendations from the civil society** for parliamentary discussions was conducted in close co-operation with the Forum of Environmental NGOs on 13 February in Almaty. Representatives of NGOs, independent legal experts, international organizations and representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Committee on Agrarian Issues and Committee on Environmental Protection of the Mazhilis participated in the discussion. The participants worked out a set of recommendations concluding that the draft law might limit an access to information. Later, the draft law was withdrawn from the parliamentary discussion.

Secondly, as a follow-up, the Center provided support for carrying out an assessment of gaps and inconsistencies of current subordinate regulations and mechanisms on access to information in Kazakhstan with regard to the **principles of the Aarhus Convention**. The data collection, its analysis, and preparation of recommendations will be performed by a group of independent experts. The assessment and recommendations will be disseminated to the all stakeholders for further discussion in May 2004.



WATER MANAGEMENT

On 26-27 March in Almaty, the Centre organized the fourth meeting on the creation of a bilateral Kazakhstani-Kyrgyz commission on interstate use of water facilities on the Chu and Talas rivers. The project has been running since late 2002 in close co-operation with the governments of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, UNECE,

UNESCAP. It is financially supported by the governments of Estonia, Sweden, and the UK. Delegates discussed national positions on the fourth draft version of the regulations of the joint commission; the second version of the recommendations on the expense calculation mechanism, and shared financing for repair and maintenance of interstate water facilities as well as a draft program for public participation in river basins resource management and organization of information dissemination on the project.

Human Dimension

JUDICIARY DEVELOPMENT

On 23-28 February the Centre and the OSCE/ODIHR held a training workshop for practicing attorneys and law professors on legal skill development in Almaty. 28 legal professionals from around Kazakhstan were selected from among more than 50 applicants based on their trial and/or legal teaching experience and participated in the training.

PENITENTIARY SYSTEM

The second session of a working group on the public monitoring of places of detention was held in Astana on 20 February. The working group was set up after a conference organized by the Centre and the OSCE/ODIHR last year, and has been tasked with developing a concept and mechanism for introducing **public monitoring of places of detention** in Kazakhstan. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Head of the Criminal executive committee, and representatives of the Presidential Administration, the Constitutional Council, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the Prosecutors Office. Representatives of leading human rights NGOs, including the Helsinki Committee and the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, as well as scientists also participated.

As a step in **improving understanding of and co-operation with penitentiary institutions**, the Centre staff visited a youth prison in Almaty on 13 February. The visit, which was the first in a series of similar activities, will serve to further improve understanding among prison management of the role that OSCE can play, and at the same time serve as a valuable tool to identify areas where OSCE activities should be concentrated. The youth colony in Almaty is one of four colonies for underage boys in Kazakhstan and is specialized in drug and alcohol dependency treatment.

On 14 March, the Centre accompanied the ODIHR Head of Rule of Law Section on a field visit to the Law College for Prison Staff in Pavlodar, where **'street law' classes**, performed by students for their peers and for convicts in one of the prisons of Pavlodar Oblast, were attended. The OSCE/ODIHR and the Centre have been involved in the development of the law college, currently the only higher education institution preparing prison personnel. This co-operation has targeted the development of interactive teaching methods to increase the professionalism of prison staff.

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

On 5-6 March, the Centre organized a round table discussion on improving guarantees for observance of the **rights and freedoms during legal proceedings**. The round table focused on how to improve the forensic expertise system and on prospects for independent forensic expertise in Kazakhstan. This round table contributed to the recently launched efforts by Kazakhstan to create a state concept on improving the forensic system, which will guide future legislative reforms in this field. Members of the working group expect the concept paper, with incorporated round table recommendations, to be adopted by May 2004.



On 10 March, a pilot training on the **rights of children** to confidentiality was organised in Taraz. The round table was run together with the NGO Taraz Initiative Centre. This NGO had conducted a monitoring of Taraz media publications regarding juvenile delinquents, where results indicated that journalists frequently violate children's rights in their articles by publishing the names of young offenders. The same problem has been also noted in public presentations made by members of the city commissions regarding children. In order to deal with this problem, a four-hour training workshop for members of the city commission on the rights of children, key law enforcement personnel (school inspectors, press-service staff), and local journalists from both print and electronic media outlets was organized. During the training, international standards and national legislation were highlighted.

EDUCATION RELATED ACTIVITIES

On 23 February, the Centre was invited to give a lecture at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek for students currently attending in the OSCE Master Pilot Course. The topic of the lecture was "The OSCE and Central Asia". Presentations on activities of field missions in Central Asia are an integral part of the Academy's program. Aside from the scope of the activities of the Centre, its mandate and structure, the lecture also covered the special role of the Centre in regional co-operation and in international development work.



The Center provided the OSCE Academy in Bishkek with the package of literature published during the implementation of Centre projects in the fields of economic development, environmental issues, human rights, topical political and media problems. This was in addition to the regular Centre program of **literature donation** to the local educational institutions, libraries, public resource centers, media and legal NGOs. In total, by the end of March, up to 15 university and public libraries, NGOs and information resource centres have already received packages of literature with recent publications issued by the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media (RFOM), OSCE/ODIHR, and local partner organizations within the implemented projects of the Centre.



Upcoming events of the OSCE Centre in Almaty

- 18-24 April, Third study tour for Kazakhstani police officials to Spain within the project "Creation of the core of operational information analysis system in Kazakhstani police"
- 23 April, Project "Promotion of the implementation of the new Land Code of RK", Almaty
- 26 April-14 May, Training of trainers "Community Policing" within the Centre Police project, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- 26-27 April, Training for the journalists "Overcoming Gender Stereotypes in Mass Media", Almaty
- 29-30 April, Public Hearing "Liquidation of oil overflows in the Caspian Sea: reality and solutions", Atyrau
- 29-30 April, International conference "Humanization of Criminal Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan: achievements and perspectives"
- May, Opening of two Internet-Cafes for regional journalists and journalism students in Taraz and Pavlodar within the regional offices of "Adil Soz" NGO
- May-June, Opening together with "ECHO" NGO Civic Consulting Centers in Almaty, Aktobe, Karagandy, Taldykorgan, and Oskemen
- May, Creation of web site "Women of the Silk Road"
- 7-25 June, Master-Classes for Young Journalists in Aktobe, Kokshetau, Kostanay, and Oral
- 11 June, Workshop "Improving practical regulations on implementation of the Aarhus Convention, in particular on access to information in the Republic of Kazakhstan"

Latest and Upcoming Publications

- Spreading the Word on the Internet*, RFOM/OSCE, Vienna 2003 (available in the Centre library)
- The Impact of Media Concentration on Professional Journalism*, RFOM/OSCE, Vienna 2003 (available in the Centre library)

Later this year, The Kazakh translation of the classical political philosophy book by John Locke 'Two Treatises of Government' will be published together with "Zerde" public foundation