Visits

OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission to Kazakhstan
From 21 to 26 June, the ODIHR/OSCE undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) in anticipation of a Human Rights Election Observation Mission (EOM) to parliamentary elections, which are due to take place on 19 September. During the visit the Head of EOM, Ambassador Robert Barry, and Deputy Head of the ODIHR Election Section, Nikolai Vulchanov, met with high-ranking officials from the Presidential Administration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Majilis, the Central Election Commission, as well as with political parties, the media, and civil society representatives. The results of the NAM have been finalized in a public report, which has been distributed within the Kazakhstani authorities, OSCE participating State representations in Kazakhstan, and available on the OSCE official website.

SECURITY MATTERS
Centre Sponsors Conference on Security and Regional Co-operation
From 14 to 15 June, the Centre, together with the Kazakhstani Institute for Strategic Studies (KISI), the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Almaty-based Centre for Foreign Policy Analysis, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Information, co-sponsored an annual conference on security issues and co-operation, held in Almaty. Leading experts from state institutions and civil society organizations, renowned international scholars, and diplomats participated in the event. During the conference, perspectives for regional co-operation in the Caspian and Central Asian region, geopolitics of these regional processes, the situation in Afghanistan, and security aspects of energy in the Caspian and Central Asian region, were discussed. Conference materials and recommendations elaborated by the experts will be published shortly and widely distributed.

MEDIA ISSUES
Second round of master classes for regional journalists
From 7 to 23 June, the Centre expanded its pilot project on master classes for young journalists to four other regional cities - Aktope, Kokshetau, Kostanay, and Uralsk. Following the evaluation of its pilot trainings in February this year, the Centre revised its program with more concentration on advanced know-how in information gathering, interview techniques, journalistic ethics, and on codes of conduct. The master classes went with notable success and will continue in other regional cities in October-November.

Centre supports young journalists in the regions
The Centre supported the second regional media forum for young journalists, held in Karaganda from 31 May to 3 June. This year, the forum focused on social journalism and the greater involvement of young journalists in discussions of topical social issues such as unemployment, public health, drug abuse, environmental hazards, and juvenile delinquency. The event involved approximately 100 young journalists, including those from school and university media faculties. Hopefully such events will contribute to the professional development of local media and stimulate greater interest of young people in the journalistic profession.

ECONOMIC ISSUES
Information campaign on the Land Code begins
On 6 June, the Centre, in co-operation with two major farmer organizations (the Union of Farmers of Kazakhstan and the Association of Farmers of Kazakhstan), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), and with the support of the Kazakhstani Agency on Management of Land Resources, administrations, launched an information campaign on the Land Code. This includes a series of workshops and farmers meetings throughout eight regions of the country. These activities constitute the third phase of the Land Code implementation project, which began in April 2004. Its focus is to explain the procedures that need to be followed in order to acquire formerly leased land plots. With this aim, a special brochure has also been worked out and distributed during the meeting.

GENDER PROGRAM
On 1 June, the Centre announced a competition among Kazakhstani journalists for the best essay on gender issues within the project “Overcoming gender stereotypes in the media”. The aim of the competition is to enhance public awareness of women's rights and the promotion of publications dealing with gender issues. Prior to the start of the competition, the Centre conducted a training session on gender equality for a group of journalists, who are to take part in the competition. The jury, which will also include representatives from the Centre, will announce the results of the competition in October 2004.

PENITENTIARY SYSTEM
Training for defence attorneys
From 24 to 27 June, the Centre in co-operation with the ODIHR/OSCE conducted first training session for 24 Kazakhstani defence attorneys. Practicing attorneys from the Russian Federation acted as instructors in this training. Several further training sessions are anticipated in the autumn. The aim of the programme is to educate a group of local attorneys who will be able to conduct further trainings to improve professionalism amongst defence lawyers. The programme is supported by the governments of Austria and Norway.

Penitentiary / conflict prevention training
From 21 to 26 June, the Centre and the ODIHR/OSCE, in co-operation with the Ministry of Justice and the Almaty-based NGO, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, conducted a six-day training session on conflict prevention in penitentiary institutions. The training included topics such as: 1) conflict prevention and management training included topics such as: 1) conflict prevention and management, 2) conflict prevention and management, 3) the work of a psychologist in penitentiary institutions. Participants included representatives from Ministry of Justice and its subsidiary body, the Police, and the Ministry of Justice and its subsidiary body, the Police, and the Penitentiary Department. The training was supported by the Government of Switzerland.

Upcoming events of the OSCE Centre in Almaty
19 July, Opening of OSCE Internet Café for the journalists in Taraz within the regional centre of Adil Soz NGO
21-23 July, Central Asia Workshop on “Income Generation through the Promotion of SME Development in the Tourism Sector”
27 July, Launch of the project on “Socio-economic adaptation of Oralmang women in the new living conditions (creation of a resource centre)”, Almaty
21 August, Meeting of the working group within the project “Creation of a Commission on the Chu and Talas rivers between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan”, Kyzyl-Kul, Kyrgyzstan