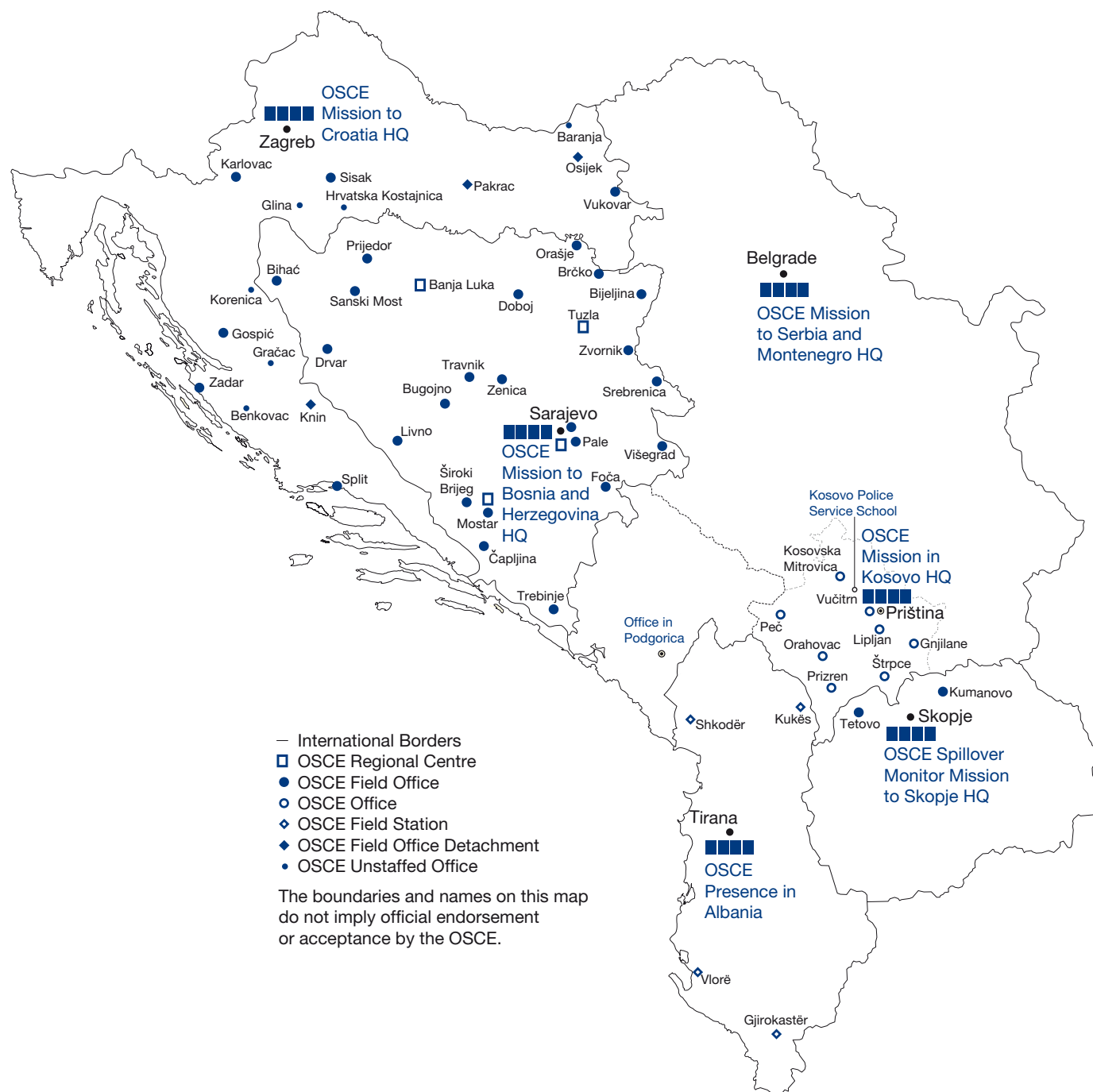


Field operations

OSCE/Steven Weinburg



South-eastern Europe



Presence in Albania

The OSCE Presence assists Albania in consolidating its democratic institutions by working to promote the rule of law and human rights. Its mandated activities include legislative and judicial reform, including property, regional administration and electoral reform; parliamentary capacity-building; anti-trafficking and anti-corruption activities; support for independent media; good

governance and civil society strengthening projects; and police assistance. Since its establishment in 1997, it has made a considerable contribution to the stabilization and democratization of the country.

The Presence also has a field network to promote OSCE goals nationwide. The four field stations and a liaison office in Tirana covering the capital region are involved

in local project development and management in the context of the Presence's mandated activities.

Assisting the preparation and monitoring of the 3 July parliamentary elections was an important part of the Presence's work during the year, in particular facilitating the political agreement on new electoral zones and supporting the improvement of the voter lists. Other

main areas of work included launching a property registration project, supporting new areas of reform under the newly elected Assembly, continued work towards higher standards in the judiciary, beginning the process of making the Civil Society Development Centres independent, carrying out court observation and assisting on media legislation.

Politico-military dimension activities

Strengthening cross-border co-operation.

In pursuing the tasks assigned to it in *The Way Forward Document* agreed to at the Ohrid Conference on Border Security and Management in May 2003, the Presence continued to support the cross-border co-operation process between Albania's border authorities and those of its neighbours. Joint border co-operation meetings brought together Albanian border police and customs officials with their counterparts from the Kosovo Police Service, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR). The meetings helped to exchange information on cross-border trends to improve border management and combat the threat posed by cross-border organized crime. The Presence facilitates these meetings at local, regional and national level.

Assisting the border police. To help the border police improve the management of Albania's borders, the Presence provided several forms of assistance. After transferring radio communications infrastructure to the border police in 2004, the Presence progressed with the handover through the donation of hand-held radios, base stations and mobile radios. This will have a substantial impact in extending and enhancing the communications network nationwide. Because the regular and constant supply of electricity is problematic throughout Albania, particularly in the outlying regions of the country, the Presence donated eight solar power generators

as a backup system for key border crossing points so that computers, faxes, communications equipment and passport scanners can be operated at all times. In addition, together with the British Council, the Presence launched a Second Language (English) Training Project to improve the foreign language proficiency of the border police.

Economic and environmental dimension activities

Supporting the integration of marginalized groups in economic life.

Lindita Dashi starts a business

Lindita Dashi, a 20-year-old from the village of Shtoj in the Shkodra region, simply did not have the money to buy the equipment needed for her planned stationery and computer services business. Then she learned from local television of a competition offering financial support of up to €800 for the best business ideas. Lindita Dashi was one of 44 winners, 32 of whom were women, in the OSCE-supported project to boost economic development by creating more jobs in the rural north, the country's poorest region. "More than anything else, what made me decide to start a business was my desire to escape the walls of my house," she said. "Thanks to the training I have received from the GTZ and the OSCE on how to run a business, I believe my shop will be successful."

The Economic Development Programme of the GTZ and the Diber Vision Programme supported the project.

the successful conclusion of the 3rd Youth Entrepreneurship Seminar in January 2005, the Presence, in co-operation with the German development agency, GTZ, launched a grant programme to fund business start-ups for unemployed youth in the impoverished area of northern Albania. Forty-four business plans were approved in the fields of electromechanical services, computer training, hairdressing, handicrafts, agricultural production and veterinary services.

Strengthening local businesses. In co-operation with Albanian consultants and the Albanian Chamber of Commerce and



Twenty-year-old Lindita Dashi serves clients in her shop where she offers stationery and computer services.

OSCE/Nathalie Tagwerker



Children in the city of Kruja collect garbage as part of activities sponsored by the Presence to mark Clean Cities and Car-Free Day on 22 September.

OSCE/Edmond Democllari



Children on bicycles in the city of Durres underline the importance of a healthy environment.

Industry, the Presence organized seminars throughout all 12 regions to inform businesses engaged in importing and exporting about the effects and obligations of Albania's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Promoting self-regulation of the tourism industry. The Presence worked with the Albanian tourism industry, the Albanian travel, tourism and hotels associations, and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports towards the adoption of a Code of Ethics in line with the WTO Global Code of Ethics. As part of an international effort from the OSCE, UNICEF and the GTZ, the Code of Ethics includes the Code of Conduct against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism.

Implementing environmental legislation. Together with the Regional Environmental Centre, the Presence supported the Ministry of Environment in its efforts to raise public awareness of local government units on environmental issues and the existing environmental legal framework. Workshops were held in 10 municipalities with more than 300 participants.

Promoting environmental awareness. To promote a more responsible attitude towards the environment among the public, the Presence and the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration organized a European Car-Free Day in six major Albanian cities. Activities on this day included banning vehicle traffic from city

centres, cleaning public spaces, campaigning on the health risks of improperly disposed of hospital waste, organizing bicycle tours and TV debates. More than 20 environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and a large number of pupils from secondary and high schools participated in the events.

Promoting transparency at the local level. The Presence developed a multi-year municipal support programme focused on good governance and access to information for citizens. The first of a series of projects was launched with the Municipality of Tirana to help it gauge public information and the perception of the work of the municipal authorities in the public eye.

Human dimension activities

ELECTORAL REFORM AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Improving elections. With support from the Presence, the Albanian Assembly approved amendments to the Electoral Code in January in preparation for the parliamentary elections on 3 July. This marked the end of an electoral reform process begun in July 2004, which saw important improvements to the provisions on the establishment and functioning of the electoral administration, campaign financing and compilation of voter lists. A new system of centralized ballot counting was instituted. The Presence also facilitated political agreement on the division of electoral constituencies.

One of the most contentious issues in Albanian elections has been the accuracy of the voter lists. With financial backing from the European Union, the Presence provided extensive technical assistance, training and equipment to the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization and the Central Election Commission to improve the voter lists in line with ODIHR recommendations. As a result, the voter lists were significantly better than in previous elections and consequently became much less politically controversial. Through another project, the Presence assisted the participation of 8,000 blind voters in the elections for the first time.

Strengthening the Albanian Assembly. Through its ongoing parliamentary capacity-building project begun in 2001, the Presence supported the Albanian Assembly in implementing its new Rules of Procedure. It also helped the Assembly develop programmes for further reforms designed to improve the effectiveness of its committees, support staff and services. With the Presence's assistance, the Assembly was able to reduce the time it took to prepare and publish the transcripts of its plenary sittings from several years to only one day. Important initiatives were launched under the new legislature to open the Assembly to the general public and increase the amount of information made publicly available.

Strengthening civil society. In 2005, the network of Civil Society Development Centres established by the Presence in 2001 continued to stimulate civil society and



A voter casts her ballot during parliamentary elections on 3 July.

citizens' participation in the local decision-making process. More than 4,150 individuals received training and consultancy services through the Centres, representing an increase of 30 per cent compared to 2004. As part of an outsourcing strategy funded by the European Commission, the Presence began switching from a supervisory role of the network to an advisory role. Full Albanian ownership and management is expected at the end of 2006.

Fostering civil society participation in decision-making. Working closely with the Government and Albanian NGOs focusing on disability issues, the Presence assisted with the development of a *National Strategy on People with Disabilities* and a National Action Plan. For the first time, a donor conference gave governmental and non-governmental institutions an opportunity to present a joint project portfolio reflecting the priorities of the Strategy.

Working for gender equality and women's rights. The Presence and UNDP

continued to promote gender equality in Albania by empowering and assisting the National Committee for Gender Equality. The Presence provided expertise in the review process of the existing Gender Equality Law and continued to support the Women's Counselling Centre for victims of domestic violence opened in 2004 in the north-eastern city of Kukes. In 2005, the centre provided consultancy and services to more than 350 women in this poor and underdeveloped area of the country. In addition, the Presence supported the efforts of the Citizens' Advocacy Office, an Albanian NGO, to get a law approved on preventing domestic violence.

RULE OF LAW AND LEGAL REFORM

Advancing solutions on property. Disputes over land ownership and property rights in Albania continue to impede economic development, constitute 50 per cent of court cases and sometimes even lead to violence. After assisting the drafting

of a property restitution law in 2004, the Presence supported the day-to-day work of the State Committee on Restitution and Compensation of Property and its local-level commissions through training of staff, helping to draft the secondary legislation, and raising public awareness by publishing and distributing information materials across the country. The Presence also began implementing the first registration of immovable property in the municipalities of Vlora and Burrel as a necessary step in creating a system to secure property rights.

Increasing transparency in the courts and raising trial standards. The Presence published its Interim Report for the Fair Trial Development Project in February, primarily focusing on the Tirana District Court and the First Instance Court for Serious Crimes. The High Council of Justice asked Albanian courts to take the report into consideration. The Presence continued its analysis of the trial process throughout the rest of the year, expanding the observations outside Tirana. In addition to following criminal cases, the Presence also focused on procedural rights during pre-trial investigations, in particular concerning detention of suspects. The Presence has continued to assist the Serious Crimes Courts through donations and capacity-building initiatives.

Supporting legal reform. The Presence supported a number of legal reform initiatives. After the adoption of the Law on the Protection of Witnesses and Justice Collaborators in 2004, the Presence continued supporting the Albanian authorities on witness protection by providing technical assistance on drafting the secondary legislation and amending the Criminal Procedure Code. The Presence also launched a project on transparency in legislative drafting designed to bring more public scrutiny and input into the drafting process.

Strengthening civil service protections. The first comprehensive publication of the Civil Service Commission, an independent state institution, was funded by the Presence. The publication includes the Civil Service Commission's 2004 decisions and serves as a useful source of information for civil servants working in central- and local-level state institutions. It also is a

guide for state employees who seek protection against violations of their rights by higher officials.

Documenting constitutional history.

The Presence has funded the transcription and publishing of the debates held by the *ad hoc* parliamentary committee responsible for drafting the 1998 Constitution. This publication is an important piece of legislative history and will improve the understanding and proper implementation of the Constitution.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Fighting human trafficking and illegal migration.

Together with the UNHCR, IOM and the Ministry of Interior, the Presence continued a pre-screening project launched in 2004 with funding from the European Union. The initiative is designed to ensure that asylum-seekers, victims of human trafficking and irregular migrants are treated according to international standards and that Albania maintains a suitable referral system. A total of 940 border guards were trained through this project. The Presence appointed six pre-screening officers to work with the police directorates covering all border areas and organized an important study visit for senior border and migration police officers to border crossing points in EU and non-EU member states to learn about different methods and the latest techniques of cross-border co-operation.

Teaching human rights. The Presence helped 26 teachers from all over Albania, including remote areas, make human rights education part of their everyday work. The project teaches 10- to 12-year-old students nationwide about human rights. It was launched through an initiative of the Slovenian Chairmanship-in-Office in co-operation with the Ministry of Education.

Supporting the People's Advocate.

Building on a long-established relationship, the Presence continued providing support to the office of the People's Advocate. It organized a study visit to the Polish Ombudsman's Office and funded a book on workers' rights, following the successful National Conference on Worker's Rights organized by the Presence and the People's Advocate in 2004.

Improving the juvenile justice system.

In close co-operation with the Magistrates School of Albania, the Presence organized a series of training courses for judges, prosecutors, defence lawyers, social workers, psychologists and judicial police officers dealing with juvenile justice cases. More than 150 professionals participated in the seminars.

Advocating Roma rights.

The Presence led an international donor co-ordination group on Roma issues to support and monitor the implementation of the *National Strategy for the Improvement of Roma Living Conditions*. In addition, it participated in the ODIHR initiative, *Roma, use your ballot wisely*, which aims at improving voter registration among Roma.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Improving media legislation. Following a request by the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Media, the Presence provided technical assistance on various pieces of legislation, including bills on print media and defamation. As part of a legislative working group, the Presence contributed to drafting a law on introducing experimental digital broadcasting in co-operation with the Council of Europe and the Albanian National Council of Radio and Television, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the European Commission and the European Radio Communications Office.

Strengthening national media institutions.

The Presence continued to support the National Council of Radio and Television as it prepares the draft allotment plan for terrestrial digital video broadcasting. The plan is to be submitted to the European Radio Communications Office.

Promoting self-regulation mechanisms.

Together with local media organizations and in co-operation with USAID, the Presence continued to work towards the creation of a Council on Media Ethics. The Presence promoted updating the existing media code of ethics through roundtables and meetings with the main media stakeholders in the country.



Reuters journalist Benet Koleka during a training session with a reporter of the local TV station, Teuta TV, in Durres.

Raising professional standards. As part of a project on *Training Local Media on Professional Standards and Promoting Transparency by Using the Access to Information Law*, the Presence organized training for 12 local television stations around the country. The initiative was funded by the Dutch organization, *Press Now*. The Presence also assisted the Tirana School of Journalism in developing its curriculum and long-term strategy.

Head of Presence:
Ambassador Pavel Vacek
Revised budget: €3,658,300
www.osce.org/albania

Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The pace of reform accelerated in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2005, and the Mission continued to work toward consolidating peace, democracy and stability in the country. Bosnia and Herzegovina made particularly significant steps in

defence reform, unifying into a single state-level framework the Armed Forces and the Defence Ministry.

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina lent active support and expertise in the politico-military dimension activities to the

implementation of the first regional moratorium on the export of small arms and light weapons. In the economic and environmental sphere, it assisted municipalities to reform their administrations, enhancing their efficiency, transparency

and responsiveness. Finally, in the human dimension, it focused on ensuring refugee rights to a viable return throughout the region, social housing and promoting social protection.

Politico-military dimension activities

Supporting defence reform. As the year 2005 came to a close, Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities took their most significant step forward in defence reform by adopting legislation that is key to successful completion of the reform of the country's defence structures.

The Mission, together with NATO, actively participated in working groups and consultations with national experts to support these reforms, which should lead to the creation of a single professional military force controlled by the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, abolish the entity ministries of defence and entity armies, and end obligatory military service – all remarkable changes ten years after the end of armed conflict within the country. In consultations with parliamentarians and defence sector leaders, the Mission ensured that relevant legislation and standard operating procedures took account of proper democratic civilian control of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Democratic control of the Armed Forces. Together with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the NATO Tailored Co-operation Programme, the Mission prepared a programme of bilateral visits between parliamentarians from Bosnia and Herzegovina and from countries that share similar-sized armed forces and comparable reform and stabilization challenges. The purpose of these visits was to learn from the experiences of peer countries on how best to create an effective parliamentary oversight mechanism that protects both the civilians and the soldiers of the country.



By destroying excess heavy weapons by the deadline stipulated, Republika Srpska has met its obligations towards the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control.

Continued support to fulfilling OSCE politico-military commitments.

With technical and functional support from the Mission, Bosnia and Herzegovina was able to improve its fulfilment of OSCE politico-military commitments, including drafting and signing its annual Information Exchange Document, and continuing co-operation with the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Article IV to implement Article IV provisions of the Dayton Peace Accords. Bosnia and Herzegovina also established an Arms Control Branch within the Ministry of Defence, and created a co-ordination body to bring together military and state intelligence agencies.

A particular achievement to which the Mission lent active support and expertise was the first regional *Moratorium*

on Exportation of Small Arms and Light Weapons signed in July 2004. The implementation of the Moratorium was successfully completed in July 2005 and has contributed to the end of legal export of military weapons from the country.

In co-operation with the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the UN Development Programme, the Mission continued to support the destruction of small arms and light weapons. More than 30,000 small arms and light weapons from the country were destroyed in 2005. The destroyed materials belonged to a surplus of weapons from the armies of the country's two entities, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation and Republika Srpska, generated after the reduction of personnel and equipment modernization measures. By the end of 2005, the small arms and

light weapons surplus from the Republika Srpska Army – which was estimated at the beginning of the year to be 26,690 pieces – was completely destroyed. The surplus belonging to the Federation Armed Forces – around 45,000 arms – is pending destruction.

Economic and environmental dimension activities

Promoting the economy and good environmental practices. Within its broader civil society work, the Mission supported partnerships between youth groups, municipal administrations, development agencies, business associations and employment institutions dealing with the promotion of entrepreneurship. More than 500 young citizens participated in entrepreneurship training events, exchange visits, and job fairs promoting better employment opportunities for youth. Additionally, in 20 rural and underdeveloped municipalities, the Mission, through its Community Development Project, helped citizen groups to improve their dialogue with the authorities and start joint work on employment and infrastructure projects.

To promote better environmental practices, the Mission has supported a number of projects whose goal is to improve the environment. In Banovici, near Tuzla, citizens planted 200 trees as a part of the project, *Lungs of the Town*. This activity was the result of a partnership among local citizens' groups, including a youth group, schools, police, a forestry company and the municipal administration.

Public administration reform. As part of its efforts to foster democratic governance and increase the involvement of citizens in the democratic life of the country, the Mission devoted considerable attention to assisting municipalities to reform their administrations, to make them more efficient, more transparent and more responsive to the people they serve.

Improving human resource management. To meet the need for advanced human resource management systems and to address the problems of oversized administrations and poorly qualified staff,

the Mission advised municipalities on how to conduct a basic organizational review to identify optimum structure and staffing. The development of merit-based recruitment procedures also enabled municipalities to improve the quality of their staff. As a result of these initiatives, several municipalities were able to reduce their administrative costs in 2005 by up to 35 per cent of their total budget, while at the same time increasing efficiency. The Mission developed a Human Resource Management Manual to support this process and to assist municipalities in introducing new human resource management practices. Together with a number of partner municipalities, the Mission designed a basic software package to replace paper-based personnel registry systems. In 2005, 20 pilot municipalities received this software.

Improving financial management. The Mission assisted municipal authorities in implementing timely and realistic budget planning and transparent reporting frameworks based on a multi-year approach. Although the municipal elections of October 2004 led to a delay in the adoption of the 2005 budget, 60 per cent of the municipalities where the Mission works adopted their budget plans for 2005 within the legal deadline. In order to further support budgetary management, the Mission partnered with USAID and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). The two organizations funded a Government Accountability Project to develop a budget and finance guide, which will be a reference document for municipal officials, councillors and citizens. It will be made available to all the country's municipalities. The Mission also assisted more than 30 municipalities to decrease their debts, with outstanding liabilities being reduced by more than €4.5 million.

In an effort to strengthen internal control, the Mission worked together with 20 municipalities to develop a Guide to Internal Control. This reference document explains how to conduct a risk assessment and develop controls to mitigate risks. Throughout 2005, several municipalities adopted rulebooks to improve control and oversight in areas such as cash management and control over municipal assets.

Human dimension activities

HUMAN RIGHTS

Supporting the regional return process.

In close collaboration with the European Commission, the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) and the OSCE Missions to Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro, the Mission continued to support effective state action to ensure refugees' rights to a viable return to the region. To this end, the Mission engaged closely with the relevant BiH authorities in completing their National Roadmap on Return. The Roadmap emphasizes the sustainability of the process and includes meaningful access to property rights, health insurance, social assistance, information and utilities.

From property restitution to securing social housing. With 93 per cent of claimed habitable properties repossessed by their pre-war tenants, the property law implementation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina is nearing closure. Reflecting this transition, the Mission focused on the examination of the right to adequate housing, particularly for the most vulnerable persons in society. As a part of this effort, the Mission has advocated that the responsible governmental authorities throughout the country establish a harmonized, rights-based social housing policy.

Promoting social protection. The Mission has focused increasingly on the rights to social protection and adequate housing to ensure that economic and social reforms conducted as part of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper are human rights-compliant. In December, the Mission finalized a report to government officials assessing the realization of the right to social assistance. The Mission also developed a plan to work with governmental authorities at all levels, and with members of civil society, to implement the report's recommendations.

One of the recommendations states, for example, that social protection laws should be amended to guarantee that the decision-making process for granting social assistance ensures *de facto* equality in terms of access to and enjoyment of this right and prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination.



Mr. Sejdic speaks to the media at a Roma Day event on 8 April.

Regularization of Roma informal settlements

The Roma community is struggling to overcome prejudice and integrate into society. One of its greatest hurdles is to regularize the ownership of land traditionally settled by the community.

“Our biggest problem and challenge today is housing,” said Dervo Sejdic, the President of the Roma Association from Gorica. “We are happy to say that now we have a permanent settlement with adequate housing for our community in Gorica.”

The 30-household Gorica Roma settlement, which had resided on the same lands for decades, is the only regularized Roma settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina to date. In 2000, the Roma community applied to the municipality of Sarajevo to recognize their tenure to the land, owned in part by the municipality and in part by a state-owned enterprise. With the OSCE’s assistance in overcoming a number of legal, political and financial challenges, ownership was transferred to Roma residents in 2002.

In 2005, the OSCE identified the problems within the civil registration system that prevent Roma from formalizing their legal status in two reports aimed at supporting local governmental authorities and Roma community advocates in resolving these problems in their own communities.

ings as well as provide further guidance for practitioners.

Monitoring domestic war crimes

prosecutions. After nearly a decade of monitoring war crimes trials in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Mission issued a report on domestic war crimes prosecutions in February. The report drew attention to the numbers, nature and importance of war crimes cases handled in the domestic courts. It noted procedural gaps and other obstacles that hindered the fair and efficient adjudication of these cases. In accordance with the agreement of the OSCE Permanent Council, the Mission expanded its trial-monitoring programme to cover all cases transferred from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to domestic courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, the assistance with and encouragement of regional dialogue among practitioners and at the political level has addressed obstacles to the effective prosecution of war criminals and adherence to fair trial standards.

Combating trafficking in human beings.

The Mission continued to support the country’s Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings through the secondment of a staff member and expert advice. Such technical assistance included assistance in the creation of the country’s National Referral Mechanism providing uniform procedures for the treatment and handling of trafficking victims. Further support to efforts to combat trafficking included involving the Mission’s trial monitors in identifying procedural gaps that effectively prevent the enforcement of international standards during trials of traffickers across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

DEMOCRATIZATION

Promoting transparent and accountable government.

In March, the Mission launched its *UGOVOR* Project, which is based on the principle that efficient and effective local government requires a commitment by both citizens and municipalities to work together. This commitment represents a “contract”, or “ugovor” in each of the three official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which municipalities are obliged to work with and for citizens to

Another recommendation provides that laws regulating social assistance should explicitly state that such assistance shall be allocated based upon a demonstration of need and that among those who qualify, the most deprived groups should receive priority.

Additionally, local authorities have benefited from the Mission’s technical advice and support in preparing policy and in legislative and budget reforms designed to improve access to social services. Such efforts are focused on the promotion of reform that is human rights-compliant, thus ensuring its sustainability.

Ensuring the necessary restructuring of Ombudsman institutions.

Throughout 2005, the Mission focused on consolidating and reforming the existing Ombudsman structures into a single new state-level institution. Based on the standards set out by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, governmental authorities have undergone legislative reforms creating a unified and effective leadership structure appointed through open and transparent procedures. Such efforts are part of the Mission’s goals of ensuring that domestic institutions to redress human rights violations are available to the general public. The Mission also monitors the extent to which Bosnia and Herzegovina’s authorities comply with the decisions of such bodies.

Human rights of Roma. In co-operation with international partner agencies and Roma non-governmental organizations, the Mission promoted equality and integration for Roma communities by supporting the Government’s preparation of a Bosnia and Herzegovina *Strategy for Roma*. Using its field presence, the Mission’s advocacy efforts focused on securing the land tenure of informal Roma settlements.

RULE OF LAW

Monitoring criminal law reform. The Mission identified several practical issues and problems facing the courts through its state-wide trial monitoring activities and its organization, together with the Conflict Prevention Centre and the Missions to Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro, of regional meetings of judges, prosecutors and lawyers. To clarify these issues, a team of legal advisers proposed forty amendments to the existing Criminal Procedure Code to the relevant State institutions. These included amendments regulating detention provisions and measures to ensure the presence of the accused during the criminal procedure. Additionally, public reports on specific human rights concerns related to plea agreements and instructions on the rights of defendants will serve as an advocacy tool for greater respect for human rights within criminal proceed-



In March, the Mission launched its UGOVOR project, which promotes transparent and accountable government.



The UGOVOR project is based on the principle that efficient and effective local government requires a commitment by both citizens and municipalities to work together.



Raising public awareness is the biggest challenge in implementing the Freedom of Information Act in Zenica.

achieve common goals. More than 80 of Bosnia and Herzegovina's 140 municipalities currently participate in UGOVOR. Municipalities work on issues such as the implementation of the Freedom of Access to Information Act, reform of regulatory frameworks and the development of partnerships with citizens.

Zenica rises to the challenge: the UGOVOR commitment. Raising public awareness is the biggest challenge in implementing the Freedom of Information Act in Zenica as part of the UGOVOR Project module. A joint municipal-civil society survey in July revealed that 65 per cent of people in Zenica did not know

about the Act, which guarantees citizens free access to information held by public institutions. Zenica has risen to this challenge by establishing mechanisms to implement the Act, organizing training for key individuals and informing the public about the law through public forums and radio shows. The municipality also created the position of information officer, a well-functioning information centre open to the public, an office where taxpayers can make enquiries and obtain documents, a published guide explaining information access to the public, and an indexed register containing facts, figures and data about public institutions. These steps are complemented by an ongoing effort to raise awareness among civil society to use this right. As a result, Zenica is now one of the most advanced municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of the Act's implementation, and is a good example of municipal officials taking the initiative to establish partnerships, provide training, raise awareness and generally improve relationships with citizens.

Complementing UGOVOR, the Mission launched a *Beacon Scheme*, an initiative designed to raise standards in municipal government by recognizing and rewarding excellence. Launched in September, the year's key themes are effective strategic planning, getting closer to citizens and promoting local economic development. Municipalities are required to demonstrate a willingness to share best practices with others in order to achieve *Beacon* status, receive small monetary incentives and participate in an exchange visit to a *Beacon* Municipality in the United Kingdom.

Within the framework of its parliamentary support programme, the Mission has assisted the State Parliament to restructure its secretariat, establish a legal service, more fully appreciate the implications of media reporting of its work and create a set of common rules for drafting legislation. Additionally, with the support of USAID, the Mission will implement a two-year comprehensive legislative strengthening programme aimed at enhancing the institutional capacity of the State Parliament.

Improving legislation and regulatory frameworks. The Mission continued

The Mission held four conferences on *Raising Debate – An Education System that Works for All*, to facilitate citizen involvement in education policy development



Mirela Miskovic-Treit

close co-operation with international partners including the Council of Europe and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and both entity governments by providing legal and technical assistance for the development of new laws on local self-government. In Republika Srpska, after the adoption of such a law, the Mission advised the majority of municipalities on how to harmonize their municipal acts with the provisions of the new legislation. In the Federation, the adoption process was still ongoing at the end of 2005 and the Mission participated actively in finalizing the bill which was put into the initial stages of parliamentary procedure at the end of 2005. In addition, over 40 municipalities and all ten cantons in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation received assistance in revising their Rules of Procedure, harmonizing them with the overall legislative and constitutional framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Promoting better communication and partnership. The Mission has been working with municipalities to improve internal communication, as well as communication and co-operation between municipalities and citizens. Through its Media Governance Programme, the Mission focused on

The Mission organized a three-day workshop for the Croat and Bosniac curricula student councils of the Stolac secondary school as part of ongoing confidence-building efforts in the area of “two schools under one roof”. The students, who confirmed that they had never talked to each other before, agreed to work together in trying to resolve some of their common problems and promote reconciliation.

improving this relationship by capitalizing on the role of media support. With a public outreach initiative, which targeted 13 municipalities, the Mission helped develop the ability of municipalities to use the media for public information purposes.

Strengthening civil society. Widespread public apathy reinforced by the perceived unwillingness of authorities to listen and respond to citizen requests remained a major challenge for the development of civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Mission worked to develop an informed and active citizenry capable of engaging in dialogue with authorities on issues of public concern. Through the Mission’s Citizen Outreach and Participation Initiative, funded by the UK Government, 60 joint citizen-municipal initiatives were designed and implemented. In order to increase the level of consultation between citizens and government, the Mission trained 100 representatives of civil society organizations and municipal administrations in the use of public opinion research techniques in policy development, and supported 30 municipal level surveys on the quality of existing services and proposals for better policies.

EDUCATION

Providing political support for sustainable reform. The Mission’s Education Programme focused on assisting the authorities at all levels to comply with domestic and international obligations and commitments as well as on encouraging citizens to become active in education reform. During the spring, the Mission organized a series of regional education forums, *Raising Debate*, attended by more than 1,000 participants across the country.

Participants highlighted the need for stronger state-level standards and structures and called upon ministries to remove politics from classrooms and to approach reform in a pro-active manner.

The Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, concerned by the lack of progress in this vital area, highlighted the need for genuine education reform and issued a strong statement opposing segregation and discrimination in schools at a meeting in Sarajevo on 6 and 7 October. It also called upon the authorities to establish a strong mechanism at the State level to co-ordinate reform priorities and to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina honours international education commitments.

Encouraging civic involvement in the education reform process. The Mission supported the establishment of school civic groups, such as parent, teacher and student councils as well as student unions, in order to build their capacities to lobby for reform and accountable management at the school and university level. In many instances, these activities promoted support for greater access to schools for all students and increased co-operation in difficult areas such as the Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva cantons. The Mission also encouraged citizens to take more responsibility in an effort to overcome the most difficult barriers to true educational reform, which include such sensitive issues as “two schools under one roof” – that is, schools sharing the same facilities in which the students and pupils are separated by ethnicity – and the national group of subjects – that is, differing versions of history, geography, and literature taught separately according to ethnicity within the same country.

Monitoring legislative reform. The Mission continued to monitor the implementation of laws and by-laws. Education field staff focused on monitoring the implementation of primary and secondary education laws and by-laws, with particular attention to the election of school board members and the functioning of school boards. The Mission also set up referral mechanisms and Regional Education Working Groups in an effort to contribute to local ownership and domestic mechanisms capable

of dealing with violations of education legislation and the right to education.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Withdrawal from the Election Commission. In 2005, Bosnia and Herzegovina completed a very important transition in its administration of elections. It constituted an all-national Election Commission. As a logical conclusion to years of substantial involvement by the Mission and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in shaping the country’s post-war electoral structures and procedures, the Head and Deputy Head of the Mission, together with the Senior Deputy High Representative, withdrew from membership on the Election Commission on 30 June. At the request of the members of the Commission, however, representatives from the Mission and OHR will retain an advisory presence until the 2006 general elections, in line with the Mission’s mandate.

The Mission continued its support for the work of the Election Commission, primarily focusing on the implementation of the Law on Political Party Financing, electoral legislation changes and improvements to the voter registration system. The Mission will monitor the Election Commission’s audits of the major political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina and provide technical support and expertise to the Election Commission as it prepares for the elections in 2006.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador Douglas Davidson
Revised budget: €17,583,300
www.oscebih.org

Mission to Croatia

In 2005, the Mission developed and deepened a dialogue with the Government initiated in previous years. Prime Minister Ivo Sanader's visit to Mission headquarters in June gave new impetus to this partnership which was also strengthened by the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Minister of Culture and

the Justice Minister in the Mission's morning meetings, where the Mission's daily work is discussed.

The enhanced contact with authorities increased both the understanding of the Mission's work and raised its profile among the Government and Croatian citizens. It contributed to the Government's acceptance of the Mission as a useful aid in

the necessary transformation of the country.

The European Union Council of Ministers' decision on 3 October to open accession talks with Croatia marked a major milestone for the country. Earlier that same day, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) reported that Croatia had co-oper-

ated fully with the Tribunal during recent weeks. As a result, the first Tribunal case was passed to an entirely domestic judiciary, a major step on the country's road to normalization. Commenting on the decisions, Prime Minister Sanader said, "It has been fully acknowledged that Croatia is a mature democracy."

Human dimension activities

REFUGEE RETURN

The return of refugees to Croatia remained a major challenge for the Government in 2005 and continued to lie at the heart of the Mission's activities. The Mission worked with the Government to enable those refugees who wished to return to Croatia to do so under adequate conditions. By the end of the year, Croatian authorities had registered as returned some 118,000 of the 300,000 Croatian Serbs displaced by the 1991-1995 armed conflict.

To facilitate these returns, the European Commission, the UNHCR and the Mission organized a Trilateral Ministerial Conference, gathering authorities from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro. The conference, held in Sarajevo in January, set the stage for a co-ordinated regional approach to resolve remaining refugee issues by the end of 2006. The process assumes that only political will and the agreement of the three Governments will resolve the refugee issue. During the conference, the three Governments signed a declaration that foresees the adoption of road maps with concrete benchmarks and financial commitments to be fulfilled at the national level. The Mission and its international partners assisted the Government in drafting a list of tasks for Croatia's road map.

The Government continued and almost completed its efforts to repossess properties that once belonged to Croatian Serbs but were occupied during and after the

OSCE/Krunoslav Rac



Ethnic Serb Mile Stekovic and his wife and two children successfully returned to their pre-war home in the village of Grabova near Petrinja in 1998. The Stekovic's stayed with neighbours while they reconstructed their war-destroyed house. Mile earned money by producing alcohol and selling fire-wood. With the money he bought two cows, took out a loan for four more cows and steadily enlarged his herd. He now owns 30 cows.

OSCE/Krunoslav Rac



Elderly ethnic Serb discusses the daily problem she encounters as a returnee with Magdalena Spalinska, Return and Integration Officer with OSCE Field Office Sisak, on 22 November.

war. At the end of 2005, only some 300 out of a total of 19,500 private residential properties remained occupied, down from 1,500 cases at the end of 2004. Two-thirds of the remaining occupied properties are located in Dalmatia, with the majority concentrated in the Knin, Benkovac and Obrovac municipalities.

The Government also moved ahead with the reconstruction of housing. It has committed to processing the more than 6,500 remaining reconstruction claims in the first half of 2006. By the end of 2006, it aims to resolve the more than 12,000 appeals pending after claims were initially

rejected. Croatian Serb applicants have been the main beneficiaries of the State reconstruction programme for residential property, accounting for approximately 70 per cent of the 8,200 houses and flats reconstructed in 2005.

Despite the Mission's efforts, one category of refugees and displaced persons remains largely without adequate access to housing – those who once lived in socially owned housing in urban areas but have lost their former occupancy/tenancy rights. The Croatian Parliament and the Government adopted two housing schemes in 2000/2002 and 2003, but the implementa-

Public awareness campaign on return and reconciliation

"...where there is a place for everybody ... Croatia is home to all its citizens"



In December, the Mission and the Croatian government, the UNHCR and the EC Delegation, launched a Public Awareness Campaign on return and reconciliation. The campaign targets Serb refugees and displaced persons in neighbouring countries and Serb returnees in Croatia. The campaign encourages refugees and displaced persons to consider whether to come back to their home country. It also promotes tolerance and reconciliation among the majority population and aims to foster a welcoming atmosphere by strengthening government and local community commitment to facilitate return and integration.

Between 1 and 15 December, major public and private media broadcast a television spot and radio jingle promoting the campaign in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro. More than 450 billboards displayed the above slogan in the three countries. (For more information on this campaign, visit www.povratak.hr.)

Ruzica Bjedov gets her flat back

In August 1995, during Operation Storm, Ruzica Bjedov lived in an Occupancy/Tenancy Right flat in Knin. Soon after, members of the militia threw her out of the apartment. In September, she fled the country; her flat was illegally occupied.

When she returned to Knin in 2001, she could not move back into her flat. She was forced to live in poor and inappropriate housing conditions. In January 2004, Ms. Bjedov applied for help under a Croatian Law on Areas of Special State Concern in order to recuperate her flat.

The Head of the OSCE Mission, Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, visited Ms. Bjedov in July 2005 to learn about her case. To speed up its resolution, he wrote a letter to the Mayor of Knin and contacted the Government office for refugee issues.

In November, under the Law on Areas of Special State Concern, Ms. Bjedov received an apartment in the same building where she had lost her flat.

"I am very happy with my new apartment which is even more beautiful than the one I used to live in," she said.

tion of these schemes has been extremely slow. By the end of 2005, only a few dozens apartments had been provided to this group.

RULE OF LAW

The Mission and the Ministry of Justice worked to improve the efficiency of the judiciary, viewed by Croatian citizens as one of the least responsive of Croatia's state institutions. The judiciary's main problem was a sizeable case backlog at all court levels. Several legislative proposals to reform the judiciary were drafted in 2005 and are expected to be adopted in 2006.

In September, the Ministry of Justice issued a judicial reform strategy that specified measures to reduce delays in court proceedings. Underscoring the importance and urgency of the reform effort, the European Court of Human Rights issued a number of judgments in autumn that found that Croatians' right to a fair trial in a reasonable time and to access to court had been violated.

The Mission continued to monitor war crimes trials in 2005. Domestic war crime prosecution gathered pace in the second half of the year. Some *in absentia* trials took place during the year, illustrating the need to step up inter-state co-operation between judicial authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro. To reflect this need, the Mission organized a ministerial conference in Brijuni in June to give impetus to judicial co-operation in the region. The Ministries of Justice of the three countries, together with judges and prosecutors, identified legal obstacles to the transfer of defend-

Transfer of the first ICTY trial to Croatia

In mid-September, the Tribunal's Referral Bench transferred the indictment against Mirko Norac and Rahim Ademi to Croatia as part of the Tribunal's completion strategy and prospective closure. Norac and Ademi were indicted for war crimes against Serb civilians and soldiers outside of combat during a 1993 Croatian military operation in south-western Croatia. They are accused of individual responsibility and of responsibility for the acts of their subordinates.

The transfer to the Croatian Chief State Attorney from the Tribunal formally concluded in November. The Referral Bench allowed the transfer after finding that the Croatian judiciary was capable of holding a fair trial. Factors contributing to this decision included an adequate legal framework; witness protection; inter-state co-operation; no application of the death penalty; and an OSCE monitoring mechanism. As noted by the Ministry of Justice, the Norac/Ademi case is the first such transfer to an entirely domestic judiciary. The case has been assigned to the Zagreb County Court, one of the four "special war crimes courts" in Croatia.

Early in 2005, the ICTY Chief Prosecutor and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office signed an agreement to monitor the conduct of transferred war crimes trials to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro, considering the OSCE Missions' extensive experience in monitoring domestic war crimes trials. The Mission to Croatia has monitored within its mandate virtually all war crimes trials, giving it a unique expertise about how such trials are handled in Croatia.

ants of the three nationalities and their criminal cases among the three countries.

Conference participants agreed that, given current legislation in the three countries, the only avenue for co-operation was the sharing of criminal files and evidence through mutual legal assistance. At the practical level, inter-state judicial co-operation between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro continued to show improvements in specific cases. A notable example in this regard is the in-court testimony by multiple witnesses from Serbia and Montenegro at the re-trial in the Split county court in Croatia of the Lora case, in which the Croatian Army is accused of committing war crimes against Serb prisoners in Lora military prison. Upon returning to their country, these witnesses commented positively to the media on their experience testifying in the Croatian court and encouraged other witnesses to come forward.

Promoting minority rights. The Mission continued work with the Government to implement some of the mechanisms of the Constitutional Law on National Minorities that entered into force in 2002. Minorities have yet to reach adequate representation in the state administration, the judiciary,

the executive bodies and the administration of self-government units. As a step forward, Parliament adopted a new Law on Civil Service and amendments to the Law on Local and Regional Self-Government in the second half of the year.

The Mission also focused on strengthening the capacities of the Councils of National Minorities. Together with the Government office on National Minorities, the Office organized a series of conferences on the functioning of these councils in Rijeka, Osijek and Split. It plans to organize a concluding conference at national level in spring 2006. The Mission also organized training on minorities and media in Knin, Split and Zadar, aiming to strengthen the Councils' public relations capacities to better explain their functions and roles to the public.

Electoral legislation reform. The Mission continued to advocate comprehensive reform of electoral legislation. In the past, the Mission and the ODIHR recommended creating a permanent body to prepare and conduct elections, improve transparency in campaign financing and voters' lists, and to streamline the conduct of out-of-country voting. Local elections in May brought to light problems with the

functioning of local governmental bodies, political deal-making and manipulation. One key difficulty was whether to calculate the percentage of minority representation in the assemblies of local and regional self-government units on the basis of the updated voters' lists or on the 2001 census. The problems raised awareness among the authorities and the public of the need for electoral reform.

The first concrete moves on such reform included the submission to Parliament of two draft laws – one on the direct election of mayors and prefects and the other establishing a permanent State Election Commission. Once in place, the Commission will relieve the judiciary of its present burden of supervising the elections in addition to its regular duties and will also look into the legality of keeping, and the regularity of updating, voters' lists.

Media freedom. The development of Croatia's media continued to be a central activity of the Mission. It repeatedly stressed the importance of finding adequate solutions to shield public media from political interference. Punitive sanctions issued in 2005 against journalists working for the public broadcaster could be interpreted as a sign of such pressure. The Government did not meet its year-end deadline to amend the Law on Croatian Radio and Television (HRT). The Mission will continue to work with the Government for a revision in the Law in line with proposals made by the Council of Europe, the EC Delegation and the Mission, which call for improved mechanisms to avoid political interference in the work of the public broadcaster.

The ICTY indictment for contempt of court of journalists who had published the identity and testimony of a protected witness triggered a public media debate on the need to strike a balance between media freedom, responsibility and the observance of the rule of law.

There was positive development in libel legislation in 2005. In November, the Ministry of Justice drafted amendments to the criminal code to fully decriminalize libel, which the Mission and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media had



Momcilo Rusic (right), President of Split-based Prosvjeta Serb Cultural Association and of the County Level Serb Council of National Minorities, speaks to Marija Ibrisimovic, Senior Programme and Administration Assistant at the Mission's Field Office in Split, about the repeated vandal attacks against the Association's offices in Split.

been advocating. The amendments will be submitted to Parliament for approval.

DEMOCRATIZATION

In this field, the Mission focused in 2005 on helping consolidate the legislative framework for the civil society sector. A key activity in this context was the support and advice given to Croatia's main national institutions dealing with NGOs and civil society, the *National Foundation for Civil Society Development* and the *Government Office for Associations*. The Mission helped these institutions set up their own strategies and assisted them with programme development and the building of internal capacity to fulfil their mandates. Together with other international partners, the Mission also acted as a bridge between central government institutions and local NGOs.

Covering good governance and civil society issues, the Mission developed several projects in the area of return and reintegration, rule of law, media and police. In total, a total of 87 projects costing some €1.15 million were developed and initiated.

Police development. In line with the Interior Ministry's 2004 road map, the Mission continued to work with the Ministry on police reform. One of the most important elements of the reform is the development of a fully transparent human resource management system for police and civilian staff. The Mission and German police experts facilitated a human resource management workshop in June.

Another focus area was assistance to the Croatian Police in the area of community policing. The Mission provided expert training and advice for the training programme of so-called community policing "contact officers", a major part of the police reform. More than 400 officers were deployed in 2005 and it is envisaged that the number of trained officers will reach 700 by March 2006. It also implemented a project to educate school children about the work of the police in the Zadar area in September, aiming to increase acceptance of the new concept of community policing.



OSCE/Krumoslav Rac

Contact police officers Ivan Cvijetovic and Marin Buble help a citizen in the town of Zadar on 1 December.

Gender issues. In October, the Mission held a conference on trafficking in human beings in support of the work done by the Croatian Government office dealing with human rights. The conference, which aimed at presenting mechanisms for combating trafficking in persons and to define a road map for future action, was also attended by the OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

The Mission developed several projects with a focus on gender. One such project, financed through extra-budgetary contributions by the Italian Foreign Ministry, featured the slogan "women can do it". It focused on encouraging women to participate in the political and civic life of Croatia.

Head of Mission:
Until 30.04.2005,
Ambassador Peter Semneby,
since then:
Ambassador Jorge Fuentes
Monzonis Villalonga
Revised budget: €9,218,800
www.osce.org/croatia

Mission in Kosovo

2005 marked the acceleration of the pace of transfer of administrative responsibilities to Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and the start of future status talks.

As a distinct component of the UN Mission in Kosovo

(UNMIK), the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, in co-operation with its partners, strives to assist the consolidation of democratic developments and politically mature institutions. The Mission aims to address these needs, as set out in the *Standards*

for Kosovo, as well as respond to new opportunities.

The Mission focused on promoting the rule of law and democratic reforms, in particular within local government, and on advocating for basic human rights and freedoms. Its international

collaborators and Kosovo's PISG are essential partners in realizing this agenda, to help Kosovo progress to a stable future, based on peace and tolerance between the different communities.

Politico-military dimension activities

POLICE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Kosovo Police Service (KPS) took on responsibilities for operational policing at an accelerated pace in 2005. The majority of police stations and regional command functions were turned over to newly promoted KPS officers. In view of these positive steps to greater local ownership, the Mission shifted its focus to the process of transition within the Mission-run Kosovo Police Service School and to the design of a legal framework for the KPS.

Over the year, the School trained a further 673 new KPS Officers, bringing the total number of basic recruits who have successfully completed the training to 7,600. Of these, 15 per cent are women and 16 per cent represent minority communities.

Creating a legal framework for Kosovo's police service. A democratic police service must be founded on a sound legal framework, which fully embraces the principles of accountability and transparency and is community-based. As it prepares for executive authority for policing in Kosovo, the KPS still requires such a framework. In 2005, the Mission, together with experts from UNMIK, the PISG and other organizations, helped develop a bill on Kosovo's police.

Support in public safety education and development. An important feature of the Regulation on the KPS, adopted on 20 December and designed as the legal and ethical framework for the police service, is the planned creation of the Kosovo Academy of Public Safety, Education and

Development in 2006. This institution will be established as an independent entity within the PISG, overseen by a Board to ensure minimum education and development standards. More than 14,000 students from various public safety groups (police officers, correctional officers, customs officers and emergency services management personnel) benefited from educational and training services at the School in 2005.

In direct response to the March 2004 riots in Kosovo, the School hosted courses on handling civil disturbances. The programme is based on the Danish "Force Mobile" tactics, which help police build capacity to deal with such situations, including through extracting violent protestors, preventing aggression against others and destruction of property. In 2005, more than 1,200 officers took part in this course.

Creating a police inspectorate. The Mission has prepared the groundwork for a police inspectorate, an independent oversight mechanism that will scrutinize the efficiency and effectiveness of police stations and departments and will have the authority to investigate all allegations of serious misconduct by KPS officers of all ranks. This institution, based on the principles of accountability and transparency that anchors democratic policing, will be unique in the Balkans. In 2005, the Mission designed the first phase of the project, a comprehensive capacity-building programme on inspection and investigation procedures.

Organized crime initiatives. In support of the Organized Crime Training Network of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the Mission hosted the first of three organized-crime and drug-enforcement

Community-based policing

An important Police School initiative seeks to empower community involvement in policing. The Mission, together with international and local partners, founded the Kosovo Community-Based Policing Steering Group, an overseeing, co-ordinating and supporting body for community-based policing, crime prevention and community safety activities. This Group drafted the Kosovo Community Safety Strategy to facilitate the full participation of all members of society in making Kosovo a safer place for all.

On a more local level, the Mission continues to create forums of vivid interaction and involvement through its Community Safety Action Teams Programme. Community safety initiatives are currently supported in 16 Kosovo municipalities. These Teams address community concerns to help reduce crime, while increasing safety and security. The Mission worked with KPS Officers, local government representatives, community members and Community Policing Trainers to widen and deepen partnership in communities.

OSCE/Ljubomir Korek



A core principle of community policing is creating a partnership between the police and local communities, especially with young people.

training programmes in south-eastern Europe, together with experts from Interpol and Europol. The Network's establishment will provide organized crime operational managers with improved skills and techniques based on European and international standards and norms. It will also facilitate relationships among police investigators of the region and link them to other international partners involved in combating organized crime.

Specialized training courses for KPS officers

While basic police training has been the key priority of the School, it has increasingly focused on management and leadership as well as specialized and expert training courses, such as on criminal investigation skills, surveillance, forensics and combating organized crime. KPS officers were also trained in modern techniques to deal with domestic violence, awareness of human trafficking and community policing.

Human dimension activities

HUMAN RIGHTS

Capacity-building. OSCE human rights advisers were assigned to support the office of the PISG Prime Minister to develop institutional mechanisms for ensuring gender equality, minority and general human rights protection. These efforts culminated in a decision by the Prime Minister to establish human rights units in each ministry.

The Mission also continued its human rights experts programme in 17 municipalities throughout Kosovo/Serbia and Montenegro. The programme's main aim is to build long-term and self-sustaining human rights capacity within municipal administrations, through continuous advice and training provided to municipal officials. Responsibilities of this programme are being handed over to municipal authorities. The Mission provided a consultant to the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration to help mainstream human rights issues in civil servant training activities, ensuring the self-sustainability of human rights capacity building within Kosovo's civil service.

OSCE/Labomir Korček



Kosovo's young people are the best promoters of inter-ethnic tolerance. The OSCE Mission implements a number of projects such as Human Rights Clubs and Youth Assemblies.

The Mission's capacity-building programme used workshops and seminars to train public officials on human rights and to help them incorporate a human rights-compliant methodology in their daily work. The Mission worked with human rights youth clubs for secondary school students, enabling them to develop a critical understanding of human rights through an informed debate. It introduced a human rights education project in all sixth grade civic education classes in Kosovo, in consultation with the PISG Ministry of Science, Education and Technology.

Monitoring the justice system. The Mission continued to monitor the Kosovo justice system. On the criminal law side, a comprehensive report on the response of the judiciary to the March 2004 riots was published in December 2005. The report identified a number of concerns, such as difficulties in gathering evidence due to the displacement of injured parties or witness intimidation, delays in proceedings, inadequate charging and tendency towards lenient sentences.

On the civil law side, the Mission monitored a wide range of proceedings involving family law, labour law, and contract law issues, paying particular attention to property disputes. It highlighted a specific issue regarding the appointment of temporary representatives in property disputes involving minorities as respondent parties. Soon after this, some judges began to correct these practices in accordance with the rule of law.

Property rights protection. Property issues are frequently at the core of the underlying tensions in post-conflict societies such as Kosovo. Taking this into account, the Mission worked in partnership with local and international authorities towards the establishment of a functioning property rights system. The Mission's activities in this regard were three-fold. First, the Mission co-ordinated with the PISG on property rights activities of the Standards Implementation Process. Second, the Mission monitored administrative and judicial authorities regarding the right to property, with particular focus on establishing effective mechanisms to resolve outstanding conflict-related disputes. Finally, the Mission provided expert advice to the Government in the field of property-related legal reform and helped with the development of a comprehensive strategy on property rights and returns.

Illegal occupation – it's not a solution

The Mission and the PISG Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning ran a multi-media public awareness campaign tackling illegal occupation of residential property. Calling for respect of property rights, the campaign emphasized that illegal occupation, a widespread problem throughout Kosovo, is not a viable or legitimate solution to housing needs. The campaign focused on the impact of illegal occupation on principles of human rights and rule of law, including the need to strengthen legislation and that all property disputes will be resolved and judicial decisions implemented.



These stickers supporting the notion that illegal occupation is not acceptable were placed across Kosovo to help discourage potential future illegal occupation from occurring.

Combating trafficking in human beings.

The Kosovo Action Plan on Anti-Trafficking, drafted with the Mission's support, was launched by the PISG in August. With local non-governmental organizations as implementing partners, the Mission focused

its work on internal victims of trafficking in human beings.

The Mission ran awareness-raising programmes on trafficking-related issues and gender-based violence throughout Kosovo. Technical assistance through advice and consultancy was provided to the PISG and NGOs to facilitate co-ordination between the different partners and strengthen co-operation in trafficking prevention, victims' assistance and implementation of a referral mechanism.

The Mission supported training of relevant NGO partners on the existing framework and mechanisms to assist and support victims of domestic violence, on how to handle the specific circumstances of victims of gender-based violence or trafficking, and on appropriate psychological and/or medical techniques to treat victims. The Mission also continued to support shelters for victims, including children, in need of short-term safe housing. It helped design dating- and domestic-violence training intended to prevent domestic violence, especially by youth.

Advising the office of the PISG Prime Minister on gender issues

A key activity under the Mission's good governance programme is its support for the Advisory Office on Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunity and Gender and the Office on Gender Equality in the Office of the PISG Prime Minister. Representing an important entry point for the Mission's institution-building work within the central institutions, the Offices assist the Prime Minister in carrying out the transfer of powers from UNMIK on human rights as well as on ethnic minority and gender issues. Support was also provided on a wide range of other human rights topics to the Prime Minister's Office, such as implementation of laws; government strategy and policy; public participation; standards implementation; and anti-discrimination.

DEMOCRATIZATION

Supporting central governance institutions. Building on previous achievements, the Assembly Support Initiative, the primary avenue of support to central

governmental institutions set up in 2001 by the Mission and international partners, stepped up its efforts to help integrate the PISG Assembly of Kosovo into regional mechanisms of parliamentary co-operation. In June, the Mission co-organized a meeting of parliaments from south-eastern Europe in Prishtine/Pristina to discuss parliamentary oversight of government, which was the first of its kind.

The Mission also provided a tailor-made assistance package for the PISG Prime Minister and senior cabinet members. This "Executive Menu" incorporated technical briefings on budget and strategy develop-

Helping improve officials' negotiation skills

To encourage constructive dialogue, the Mission facilitated a comprehensive support programme to develop the negotiating skills of decision-makers and government officials through training in the fields of communication, leadership and teamwork. One session targeted members of the technical working groups of the Prishtine/Pristina-Belgrade dialogue. Further sessions were held for Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb political leaders in preparation for future status talks. They explored negotiation theory, undertook practical skills-building exercises, and produced a handbook on drafting components of a status settlement.



OSCE/Labomir Kotek

Quick and effective provision of services should be the goal of every administration. Malisheve/Malisevo municipality created a "one-stop-shop" where citizens can obtain full information on services.

ment issues and included working visits to Vienna and Brussels.

Supporting citizen participation and dialogue. To support the development and consolidation of a proactive and vigi-

lant civil society, the Mission worked to strengthen civic networks and to build the capacity of communities to lobby for their concerns and constructively participate in decision- and policy-making processes. Through active participation, civic groups learned how to influence policy development and effectively represent citizens' interests.

A group of particular concern to the Mission is youth, and efforts were made to increase their understanding of principles of a modern democratic society, emphasizing tolerance and respect for diversity. In co-operation with the PISG Ministry of

Promoting interaction between civil society and local governments

In the Peje/Pec region, a *Civic Bridge* was supported by the Mission to help develop working relations between municipal government and its population. *Civic Bridge* Steering Groups were established to identify and address issues of concern at the municipal level, such as quality of health care, primary and secondary education or collection of property taxes. Their work was aided by young activists who examined these issues for their adherence to municipal legislation, quality of services provided and transparency in decision-making and execution.

"The goal of the *Civic Bridge* is to establish a mechanism that would ensure effective practice of democratic principles and allow the citizens to influence municipal decision-making processes," said Adem Lushaj of the Association of Independent Intellectuals from Decan/Decani, a local NGO involved in *Civic Bridge*.

As a result, municipal officials learned about the benefits of participatory policy-making while citizens developed their capacity to monitor and advise governments.

Culture, Youth and Sports and the Kosovo Youth Network, the Mission sponsored discussion and policy forums to develop recommendations and contributions for the Kosovo Youth Action Plan.

Strengthening local governance. The Mission increased its support to the reform processes at both central and local levels. It provided expertise to the Steering Board for Local Governance Reform and

the Working Group on Legislation, and co-chaired the Working Group on Capacity-Building.

In June, the Mission and the PISG Ministry for Local Government Administration organized an international conference on local governance reform, drawing on experiences of local governance practitioners and experts from south-eastern Europe. The forum discussed the democratic functioning of municipal institutions, multi-ethnic communities and experiences both within and outside of Kosovo, as well as economic sustainability.

As part of the reform agenda, three pilot municipal units were formed in September. Working closely with the appointed Provisional Assembly members, the Mission conducted capacity-building sessions designed to acquaint the members with the applicable law and democratic principles. These efforts aimed at ensuring a smooth transition to a decentralized model of local governance and encouraging a more effective and representative body.

RULE OF LAW

Supporting Kosovo's legal community.

The Mission successfully ran several capacity-building projects, including judicial/bar examination training; training courses for legal aid NGOs; continuing legal education courses for members of the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates; and specific training sessions for legal practitioners. Almost all Kosovo judges and prosecutors have participated in at least one of the more than 50 training sessions of the Mission's *Continuous Legal Education Programme*. The Mission also supported the Kosovo Judicial Institute in conducting a three-month *Pilot Initial Legal Education Programme* for approximately 60 candidates for judicial positions throughout Kosovo.

Supporting the development of human rights-compliant legislation.

The Mission reviewed more than 40 draft regulations and bills for compliance with human rights and rule of law principles in 2005. This included the draft regulation on legal aid, the bill on Kosovo's civil service, the bill on courts, the bill establishing the Ko-

OSCE



Judges from the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates speak to newly licensed lawyers after they successfully completed OSCE-supported practical training in legal skills such as advocacy and legal writing.

sovo Judicial Institute, the bill on languages, the draft regulation on the Ombuds-person institution, the bill on emergency preparedness and the bill on parliamentary investigation committees. The Mission also issued a report on alternative dispute resolution in civil disputes and criminal law, and works with the Office of the Prime Minister on drafting a bill on mediation.

With the greater transfer of authority and accountability to local institutions, the Mission looked at how the PISG executes legislation passed by the Kosovo Assembly. Analysis showed that the subsidiary legislation that would give force to the laws was not being drafted. Recommendations from the Mission to ensure that rights were not violated included additional parliamentary oversight over the executive branch.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Building sustainable media. The Mission's efforts in this field resulted in significant improvements in institutional and legislative frameworks governing media operations. It facilitated the establishment of the Kosovo Press Council, a self-regulatory body for the print media. The Kosovo Media Institute, a mid-career training facility for media professionals, is expected to open its doors in January 2006. The Mission also assisted the Kosovo PISG in the drafting of defamation legislation.

Two institutions established by the Mission have taken further steps towards long-term stability and sustainability: Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK) is expected to soon gain legal character from the Assembly of Kosovo, and the institution of the Temporary Media Commissioner has begun its transition to become the Independent Media Commission.

To promote a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities of police and journalists and to enhance their profes-

Radio programmes for the Roma community

The Mission provided financial support for a series of Roma language programmes on Radio Prizren to address issues relevant to this community. They encouraged Roma participation in civic life and promoted the community's integration into society.

"Through the guests coming to the Roma programme, this show has touched the main issues of concern relevant to the Roma community such as lack of education, social barriers, public use of the Roma language and promotion of equity. The Roma community and local institutions have developed a better understanding of these issues and how to address them for the benefit of our community and society as a whole," said Nexhip Menkshe, editor and journalist of the Radio Prizren Roma programme.

Sign language news for the hearing-impaired in Kosovo

There are an estimated 15,000 hearing-impaired persons living in Kosovo, half of whom are of school age. In 2005, RTK began broadcasting news in sign language, an important development, supported by the Mission and the Kosovo Association of the Deaf. The initiative aimed at allowing an often-neglected group to participate more fully in public life. The programming also raised awareness among the general public about this vulnerable group and, as an unexpected benefit, fostered the standardization



In order to help deaf and hearing-impaired people in Kosovo, the OSCE Mission sponsored a programme that is broadcast on both the Albanian- and Serbian-language shows of Radio Television Kosovo.

sional relationship, the Mission developed guidelines for each side to deal with the other. The quick reference tool informs police about the rights and proper treatment of journalists and outlines for journalists their responsibilities in dealing with the police.

ELECTIONS

Throughout the year, the Mission focused on two major challenges: building electoral capacities and increasing local ownership of and confidence in the electoral framework.

To allow for a seamless transition to the local elections authority, the Central Election Commission (CEC) and its operational arm, the CEC Secretariat, the Mission continued to pass on its electoral know-how and operational responsibilities to these institutions. Local owner-

ship is decisive as the CEC is meant to become the body responsible for managing all operational and technical aspects for future elections in Kosovo. To ensure efficient operations and credible election results, the Mission provided support and expertise in all election operation areas, including tasks run by the Mission in the last elections. In addition, the Mission has worked on building the capacities of the CEC Secretariat on responsibilities such as compiling the voters' list, Out-of-Kosovo voting and running the count and results centre.

The CEC and the Mission also established an Election Forum to deal with possible changes to the electoral framework for municipal elections, planned for late 2006. The Forum, comprised of political party, minority community and civil society representatives, discussed key issues such as the introduction of an open list electoral system and securing equitable gender representation on ballots and in municipal assemblies. They also looked at districting, considering dividing electoral zones into smaller areas.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

During 2005, activities of the Mission's Youth Support Initiative got underway concentrating on assisting reform efforts at the University of Prishtine/Pristina and institutional support for improving Kosovo's education and training systems as well as on increasing youth participation in decision-making.

The Mission leads the international community's efforts to modernize the governing structure of the University of Prishtine/Pristina and to streamline its management system. It sits on the panel of experts responsible for monitoring and advising the "officer-in-charge" of the university until a new rector is elected. Support at this level involves fostering depoliticization of the University's executive bodies and introducing political pluralism in student union groups, by helping organize transparent and democratic elections of these bodies. The Mission also strengthened the University's management capabilities and conducted a needs assessment to identify potential areas for improve-

ment in the budget process to ensure the University's financial autonomy.

The Mission supported the PISG in strengthening its institutional response to the needs of young people. The PISG Kosovo Assembly's Education Committee benefited from an expert who helped develop an education and training strategy looking at future sustainable economic development. The PISG Ministry of Education, Science and Technology endorsed this "Vision and Roadmap" as a key source for a pre-University education strategy.

The Mission supported Kosovo's first festival on lifelong learning, a concept encompassing formal, non-formal and informal education. The event, organized by an inter-ministerial working group, brought together private and public education and training providers to present a broad range of opportunities in Kosovo. Through this activity, the Mission aimed to encourage the PISG and the Assembly of Kosovo to develop effective public-private strategies and policies for lifelong learning that help bridge the gap between formal education and the labour market.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador Werner Wnendt
Revised budget: €34,147,300
www.osce.org/kosovo

Mission to Serbia and Montenegro

The Mission achieved a number of successes in 2005 in areas that represented important challenges for the country and its two constituent republics. Throughout the year, the staff of the Mission's headquarters in Belgrade, Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Office in Podgorica, Montenegro (Serbia and

Montenegro), its presence in southern Serbia and the law enforcement training centres in both republics continued to support democratic reform.

Much of the day-to-day effort of the Mission centred on supporting ongoing reforms, including the advancement of human

and minority rights, the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, the fight against corruption and organized crime as well as strengthening the capacity of Serbia's legal staff to conduct domestic war crimes trials in accordance with international standards.

The EU and the State Union opened negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement, providing a positive impetus for further reforms in 2006 that will help Serbia and Montenegro join Euro-Atlantic institutions in the future.

Politico-military dimension activities

Conflict prevention in southern Serbia.

The Mission's conflict prevention activities focused on the ethnic Serbian and Albanian communities in southern Serbia. They aimed at giving the ethnic Albanian community a stake in the work of their local authorities, building trust between the various ethnic communities, and creating local judicial and security structures that work for everyone in the municipalities.

The Mission continued assisting the authorities in implementing the 2001 peace agreement aimed at re-integrating the ethnic Albanian community. To improve the work of the Government-appointed South Serbia Co-ordination Body, the Mission supported the establishment of eight working groups. Each of these working groups addresses specific issues, such as security, education, health and economic development. Each brings together representatives of the relevant central government ministries, local community and political leaders, and representatives of the local administration. President Boris Tadic and Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica attended the re-launching of the Co-ordination Body, reaffirming their commitment to reducing tension and promoting socio-economic development in the region.

To better inform the public about these issues, the Mission provided training and technical assistance to local broadcasters that developed multi-lingual programmes. Students from minority communities were offered specialized training courses that allowed them to work for the local authorities, the judiciary and municipal assemblies.



Expert Roger Mansson from Sweden delivers advanced ballistic training to seven specialists from the Criminal Technical Centre in Serbia and three from the Centre in Montenegro in Davnilovgrad in June, a course organized by the OSCE.

Reforming the police services. In Montenegro, a new Law on Police was adopted in April, initiating a process of modernization. The Serbian Law on Police was adopted in November after the Mission and the Council of Europe each provided expert comments on the bill. Police education and development programmes introduced modern curricula and targeted different levels of serving officers. Courses in trainer development were handed over to national trainers, who assumed increased responsibility for police training and professional development in both republics. The Mission supported the transformation of the Sremska Kamenica Police High School into a basic, entry-level police training facility. Professional police

training is seen as critical for the sustainable reform of the police in both republics. Compliance with recognized international standards, especially with regard to more effective safeguards of citizens' rights, is the focus of this work.

The Mission continued to co-ordinate international support to 10 community policing pilot sites in Serbia, providing direct assistance to three sites in the south of Serbia. In co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior and other international organizations, the Mission also co-ordinated the preparation of national community policing plans in both republics. The Mission helped organize roundtables throughout Serbia, which resulted in the

development of guidelines to enhance co-operation and communication between police and the media.

To enhance the capacity of the border police services to combat human trafficking and trans-national organized crime, the Mission organized specialized training seminars, provided technical equipment and assisted in the development of the integrated border management strategy.

Continuing the fight against corruption.

As part of Serbia and Montenegro's efforts to make the country more attractive to private entrepreneurs and foreign investors, reforms aimed at fighting corruption are crucial. The Mission supported the drafting process and the implementation of the anti-corruption legislation in the fields of public procurement, prevention of conflict of interest, financing political parties, establishing a supreme audit institution and an independent and specialized anti-corruption body. The Mission also continued to support the work of the Serbian Government's Anti-Corruption Council as an institution. The Mission has urged the Serbian and Montenegrin governments to incorporate international standards of the UN's Convention against Corruption into their legislation.

Combating organized crime. The Mission monitored a number of high-profile trials in Serbia and Montenegro. The assassination of the Assistant Head of the Criminal Investigation Directorate, Slavoljub Scekic, in Podgorica, was a tragic reminder of the need to reinforce efforts to combat organized crime.

The Serbian Prosecution Service and the Italian anti-Mafia Directorate have established an example of effective international co-operation in the combat against organized crime. Their work includes the organization of training seminars conducted in Italy for organized crime prosecutors and investigators.

Co-operation was enhanced regionally by support to the South Eastern European Prosecutors network and internationally through work with the International Association of Prosecutors. The Mission took a lead role in supporting legislative



The OSCE handed over its project designed to strengthen laboratory examinations and crime scene investigations in the Serbian Ministry of the Interior's Criminal Technical Centre in Nis to local authorities in September.

development and the use of current laws in the field of asset seizure and forfeiture and promoted the fight against cyber crime.

The Mission provided expert assistance with the drafting and implementation of witness protection laws in Serbia and Montenegro. In Serbia, the legal framework was improved with the adoption of a Criminal Code introducing new types of crime such as financing of terrorism and smuggling of human beings.

War crimes. The Mission worked to build the capacity of the judiciary to prosecute and try war crimes, through providing expertise in drafting legislation and assisting in a national outreach campaign. The Mission monitored several trials in Serbia to assess their compliance with international standards. It furthered and facilitated inter-state judicial co-operation in war crimes proceedings together with the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Mission to Croatia and the OSCE Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Centre.

Serbia and Montenegro's international obligation to co-operate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was a recurrent theme of the Mission's information strategy in the

country. Without full co-operation, the State Union cannot advance on its path towards integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. A number of indicted police and military officers voluntarily surrendered to the court in The Hague, marking a step forward.

The future of Serbia will depend on how it deals with the horrors committed in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. To stimulate frank discussions amongst students, the Mission has teamed up with the NGO, *European Movement*, in Serbia and the Students Union to stage six panel discussions in major centres in Serbia in late 2005 and early 2006.



The Mission's war crimes trial monitors attended the transfer of bodies of Kosovo Albanians exhumed from the Batajnica mass graves outside Belgrade to their families in Kosovo on 26 May.

Civilian control of the Armed Forces.

Democratic control and a clear legal framework for army, police and security agencies are preconditions for strengthening democracy and the rule of law in Serbia and Montenegro. The Mission organized activities that aimed at strengthening the democratic principles pertinent to the functioning of the security sector. These included promoting legislative changes by supporting Parliament and the Armed Forces in drafting relevant pieces of legislation.

Economic and environmental dimension activities

Improving the business climate. The Mission promoted a stronger partnership between local authorities, the business community and various local representatives of the international community in order to promote economic and business development.



Worker produces office supplies in the OSCE-created Business Incubator Centre in Knjazevac, Serbia, which opened in May.

To foster small- and medium-sized enterprises, the Mission supported a number of entrepreneurship training seminars for socially vulnerable groups such as the Roma community. Together with other international organizations, the Mission also helped in the creation of a Business Incubator Centre in Knjazevac. Six more of these Centres are under development, including one for the Roma community in Valjevo. These centres, which are located in municipalities with a comparably high rate of unemployment, provide workspace, coaching, and support services to early-stage businesses.

To contribute to energy security, the Mission launched its *3E Programme* – Energy, Economy, Environment. The Programme aims at fostering the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency and helps create a regional energy market.

In Montenegro, the Mission participated in a number of initiatives to raise environmental awareness among youth and promote eco-tourism as a job-generating economic activity.

Human dimension activities

Assisting refugee return. High officials from Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia as well as representatives of the UNHCR, the European Commission delegations and the OSCE Missions to these countries held a regional ministerial conference on refugees in Sarajevo in January. The meeting stimulated a regional inter-governmental dialogue on

outstanding refugee issues. At the event, the three countries adopted a Declaration of Principles to be adhered to while developing a list of tasks. Together with a set of measurable indicators of success they should form “road maps” to resolve remaining issues by the end of 2006. The Mission is also working on a project with local NGOs to provide legal advice and support to refugees currently living in Serbia.

Supporting independence of the judiciary. To foster an independent judiciary that meets international standards, the Mission supports a greater functional autonomy of prosecutors. In Serbia and Montenegro, structural reform remains essential. The Laws on Judges and on the Public Prosecutors’ Office must be brought into conformity with international law.

In Serbia, the Mission provided support to the Judges’ Association, the Public Prosecutors’ Association and the Judicial Training Centre. Assistance included the

training of judges in issues relating to war crimes, organized crime and exchange programmes with other European associations.

Assisting prison reform. The Mission helps the authorities of both republics reform the prison system to enforce the State Union’s commitment to international conventions on the treatment of prisoners and to reach conformity with international human rights standards.

In Serbia, the Mission helped draft legislation on penal sanctions. A major step in the reform of prison administration, the new law introduced alternative sanctions and formalized the creation of Serbia’s first prison warden training centre.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Based on expertise provided by the Mission, Serbia adopted the law on the *Protector of the Citizens* (Ombudsman). The new institution, similar to the Office of the

“If I were the Prime Minister of Serbia...”

For the second year running, the Mission organized an essay competition for high school students on the topic “If I were the Prime Minister of Serbia...” The competition, which forms part of the Mission’s efforts to foster political awareness among young people, was held in May. The jury, which comprised prominent journalists and human rights defenders of Serbia and Montenegro, awarded the three students whose essays represented best their original thoughts and ideas on political leadership and democracy.

Winner Nikola Jovanovic from Nis wrote: “The war on the territory of former Yugoslavia, in which Serbia took an active part, led to material destruction, killing and crime for which individuals, who were often at the very top of our country’s political and public life, are responsible. The time has now come for this to change, and for the present generation to face the heavy heritage and try its utmost to bring the country into the European family.”

Another winner, Ljubisa Bojanic from Kraljevo, wrote: “As a nation, we frittered away the 20th century with unnecessary political experiments and difficult wars, and this century is a chance for us to do something positive ... When I get this position to be the head of the Serbian Government, I will show that it is possible to realize the dream of a European Serbia.”

More than 1,000 students from 100 high schools participated in the competition. The awards included publication of the winners’ essays in the national daily newspaper, *Danas*, a study visit to the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna and a generous contribution to the schools’ libraries.



Winner Nikola Jovanovic from Nis reads his essay to the Serbian Parliament on 24 June.

Ombudsman in the Republic of Montenegro, can investigate complaints lodged by citizens against the public administration for mal-administration, discrimination or other violations of human rights.

In Montenegro, the Ombudsman received assistance in launching an extensive public information drive.

Through its human rights monitoring and information management activities, the Mission also responded to regular requests from the authorities, organizations and individuals to assess and comment on the human rights policies and practices of government and other public bodies or operators.

Supporting parliamentary and local self-government. The Mission continued organizing training seminars for local municipal staff on the provisions of the Serbian Law on Local Self-Government. The programme also included training on effective management strategies and negotiation skills and on the promotion of gender equality at all levels of government. The Office in Podgorica supported the implementation of the new Laws on Local Self-Government in Montenegro, focusing on promoting citizens' participation through the Citizen Information and Education Centres' activities and training workshops.

Protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. The Mission focused on providing training for members of the National Minority Councils on subjects such as public advocacy, consultation processes, team management and leadership skills.

A specific beneficiary was the Roma community, which faces particularly grave socio-economic problems, including high levels of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty. The Serbian Government signed up to the *Decade for Roma Inclusion*, committing itself to improve the socio-economic situation of Roma in Serbia. The National Strategy for the Integration of Roma, supported by the Mission and adopted by the Roma National Council in April, remains to be adopted by the Government. The assistance included a comprehensive train-

ing programme for members of working groups on the issue, aimed at transforming the strategy into concrete action plans and project proposals.

In Montenegro, the Mission assisted the creation of the Roma Scholarship Foundation to provide scholarships for Roma university and secondary school students.

The fight against human trafficking. The Mission introduced and implemented the concept of National Referral Mechanisms in Serbia and Montenegro. These have enabled the state to fulfil its international commitments and to protect victims' human rights as a key element in the successful fight against trafficking in human beings.

The Mission also devoted special attention to workshops at the local level in both republics for police officers, prosecutors, investigative and other judges, bringing together participants from all the institutions relevant to a successful prosecution.

To maintain an adequate overview of the field situation and to be able to fine-tune its programmes, the Mission also monitored approximately a dozen human trafficking court cases.

Supporting media development. The Mission's engagement helped strengthen the operation of broadcasting regulatory authorities in both republics. Developments in Serbia included the appointment of the members of the Broadcasting Agency Council by Parliament, the adoption of the Broadcasting Development Strategy, the deletion of prison sentences for the offences of libel and insult in the recently adopted Criminal Code and a commitment to address the issue of media ownership transparency and media concentration.

The Mission closely monitored developments in the privatization of municipal print and broadcast media outlets. It will assist the Broadcasting Council of Serbia in the upcoming tendering and licensing procedure for broadcast media. The Mission continued to play an active role in the further transformation of Radio TV Serbia and Radio TV Crne Gore (Montenegro) into genuine public service broadcasters,

Reaching out to local communities

Throughout the year, the Mission continued its successful "outreach programme", which consists of regular visits by the Head of Mission and his staff to different communities in Serbia and Montenegro. The visits serve as opportunities to meet local government officials and representatives of the media, civil society, religious groups and police. They also help the Mission staff to familiarize themselves with the situation on the ground and outline the projects under implementation.

In 2005, such visits took place to Kladovo, Novi Pazar and Knjazevac.



Kladovo power station, photographed during an outreach visit to eastern Serbia by the Head of Mission and his staff.

advising on their internal systematization and organizational transformation.

In an effort to ensure its full implementation, the Mission assisted in a public information campaign and prepared seminars to explain the provisions and mechanisms of the Law on Free Access to Information. This experience was used in the Mission's assistance in the drafting of Montenegro's Law on Freedom of Information.

In addition, the Mission supported the training of journalists in critical fields, such as reporting on corruption, organized crime, the judiciary, the police, the parliament and the environment.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador Maurizio Massari
Revised budget: €9,324,000
Website: www.osce.org/sam

Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

The Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje witnessed two major achievements of its host country in 2005, each of which brought with it a complete agenda for future action. The first accomplishment was the fulfilment of all legislative requirements set forth by the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the accord that ended the violent conflict of 2001. This included a law aimed at regulating the use of community flags and symbols and the final law on territorial organization that fixed new municipal

boundaries and launched the decentralization process. The Mission provided support in the implementation of these legislative reforms.

Perhaps the most significant step in the implementation agenda was the transfer of power and competencies to municipal governments on 1 July. The Mission worked with the municipalities and the central Government to ease this process through the facilitation of capacity-building initiatives and public awareness campaigns. The first phase of decentrali-

zation started shortly after the 27 March local elections. The elections were held based on new boundaries, and with the knowledge that the local officials elected would have enhanced competencies. The polls, although critically assessed by the ODIHR, have *de facto* kick-started the transfer of competencies to the Local Self Government Units. The Mission lent its support to the Government in order to devise a unified electoral code that would include recommendations from the ODIHR.

The second major achievement of 2005 was the positive opinion from the European Commission regarding the country's application for EU membership. This, too, brought with it obligations for further reforms, particularly in the judiciary, the police service, the public administration and election systems.

The recommendations for reforms in these areas coincided with the priorities of the Mission and its overall focus on enhancing the rule of law in all aspects of society.

Equitable representation

One of the key obligations of the OSCE resulting from the Ohrid Framework Agreement was to assist the country in its efforts to achieve equitable representation in the police service.

When the Mission began its support to the Police Academy and the training of new recruits in 2001, the police service included only 3.8 per cent ethnic Albanians and a negligible amount of other minorities. In September 2005, figures stood at just over 15 per cent ethnic Albanians and nearly 4.5 per cent other minorities.

In co-operation with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Mission also provided assistance with legislative reforms designed to improve the level of equitable representation in other public institutions.

OSCE/Maria Dotsenko



Police officers focus on instruction provided by OSCE police trainers during one of many thematic courses held in Skopje.

border police underwent training that included extensive work on management and communication. Their expanded mandate allows them to contact and communicate with residents in border areas, making for greater co-operation with those citizens and more effective control of the border.

Increasing co-operation between police and citizens has always been part of the Mission's work with the Ministry of Interior. This year, these efforts had a special focus on young citizens. The Mission implemented two large-scale activities that brought police officers into classrooms to work with primary schoolchildren on public safety issues and understanding the role of the police. As with all of the Mission's work with police, the emphasis was on building capacity within the police services to maintain the programmes or implement similar activities in the future.

Capacity-building activities essential to the implementation of police reform also continued in other areas, such as management, decision-making, human rights and ethics. Much of the specialized training concentrated on skills related to combating organized crime. Courses covered topics such as surveillance techniques, witness protection and techniques to identify and prevent trafficking in human beings. Most of the training took place at the Police Academy at Idrizovo, where local trainers assumed the lead on all basic training. The Mission continued to provide assistance with curriculum development and delivery of specialized and advanced training.

OSCE/Mirvete Mustafa



Children in the ethnically mixed town of Struga celebrate their victory in an football tournament organized for them by their local policemen with support from the OSCE.

Politico-military dimension activities

Bringing police services closer to citizens. Thanks to the provision of specific training by the Police Academy assisted by the Mission, the newly formed Border Police completed its transfer from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Interior. This critical step means that the entire territory is under the administration of the police, as in other European countries. The military no longer has security obligations within the country. For the first time,

Confidence-building and community policing come together

Citizen Advisory Groups started out as a mechanism to encourage communities to engage with their local police and as a method for community police trainers to demonstrate techniques of community policing. However, it soon became clear that these Groups also had potential as confidence-building mechanisms in the communities that participated.

The Mission has now initiated more than 70 Advisory Groups in a variety of communities, from mountain villages to neighbourhoods in the capital city. All function as forums for discussing local issues, sharing information and developing communication with local authorities and police. Some have taken it even further, by implementing projects such as installing street signs, launching a campaign against the theft of metal road signs and guard-rails and implementing projects to deal with waste disposal or problems with feral dogs.

“The Citizen Advisory Groups are not just about developing trust and better communication between citizens and police, but also about encouraging co-operation among the citizens themselves,” said the Head of Mission, Ambassador Carlos Pais.

The Mission was pleased to see the increased engagement of local government officials with the Advisory Groups, either through frequent consultation with the groups or direct participation. Members of the Groups are able to see the impact they can have in their communities through this kind of civic participation.

Engaging communities to build confidence. One of the key strengths of this Mission is its presence in the field and its grassroots contacts with communities. Such outreach capacity has allowed for effective early-warning and confidence-building initiatives. It proved particularly useful in managing a security incident in Kondovo, on the outskirts of the capital, as well as a number of isolated incidents involving police forces in remote areas. The Mission’s confidence-building monitors and community police trainers maintained regular visits, communicated with the concerned citizens, and liaised with local authorities throughout the periods of in-

Ismailaki Asani helps stop unregulated woodcutting in his village

Ismailaki Asani stands in a field littered with stumps near his village, Merovo. It was not too long ago when this whole countryside was covered in forest. “The people in our village have always cut the wood, but just enough to heat our homes throughout the winter ... but then groups started to come from other areas, they didn’t have licenses, and they would cut down everything, the young trees, the old ones ... and then haul it away to sell,” he explains.

There are many villages that suffer from such unregulated woodcutting. However, Merovo residents have succeeded in stopping the destruction of their forest by working as a community with their local police.



Ismailaki Asani crouches next to a stump near his village, Merovo.

“We tried to talk to the men coming in, but they continued to clear everything they could. We tried to dig trenches to stop their tractors and trucks, but the ground here is too rocky. Then we organized a Citizen Advisory Group, and together with our local police and the OSCE, we organized a new system of patrolling. That stopped it,” Ismailaki Asani said.

Now Ismailaki Asani and his neighbours are looking at ways to co-operate with the Public Forestry Company to replant trees in spring 2006 to repair some of the damage. He says the entire village will help.

creased tension. This contact eased public fears and contributed to calm reactions at all levels. Once the situation returned to normal, the Mission resumed its work with the local government and local police to engage residents in Citizen Advisory Groups as a way to improve relationships within the community.

The Mission complemented its monitoring activities with a number of projects aimed at improving community co-operation with government institutions and relations between ethnic communities. Several incidents in and around schools highlighted the need for specific work to reduce inter-ethnic tension among young people and engage them in constructive activities. A variety of activities conducted in co-operation with local authorities and civil society partners in the education sector reduced inter-ethnic mistrust in mixed schools. Seventy-four different seminars, camps and courses were organized for young people. These were aimed at encouraging contact and confidence among the participants as well as at developing skills such as leadership, communication and entrepreneurship.



Young people from different backgrounds experience scouting together during a camp sponsored by the OSCE Mission.

Economic and environmental dimension activities

Helping local government take on new responsibilities. Given that decentralization is a recent process in the country, there is a need for information, communication and transparency at all levels. Timed to coincide with the official handover of competencies to local government, the Mission launched a handbook for municipal officials which was designed to assist them with every aspect of their new roles. The handbook, produced in

co-operation with the *Association of Units of Local Self Government*, was distributed to all 85 municipalities. Reinforcing the content in the handbook, the Mission supported several information campaigns targeting citizens as well as municipal officials. The most challenging part of the decentralization for municipalities was the assumption of additional financial responsibilities. These included the collection of taxes and other revenue, expenditures for communal services and economic development. The Mission organized intensive training for municipal officials in financial management. Over 250 local finance officers or administrators took part in these courses. In addition to providing technical training on financing, the Mission supported efforts to improve municipalities' general financial practices and potential.

One good practice the Mission continued to sponsor was the Municipal Gender Equity Commissions. These had originally been launched in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the *Union of Women's Organizations*. The decentralization process solidified the place of the Commissions within the municipalities. They ensure that women are given a voice in all major issues such as economic development, financial priorities and infrastructure development. Ten Commissions are now functioning throughout the country, implementing initiatives. In Veles, for example, the Commission identified a need for shelters for battered women. The municipality sponsored the establishment of four such shelters.

Preserving the environment and securing a future. For a number of communities in the north-western part of the country, environmental protection has become a matter of survival. Illegal woodcutting, which has been increasing steadily since 2001, became a critical problem this year, particularly in the Shar mountains that border both Albania and Kosovo/Serbia and Montenegro and the Crna Gora mountains north of Skopje. As the Mission's confidence-building monitors observed, the problem had grown beyond an issue of respect for rule of law and for the environment. The long-term effects of deforestation pose a serious

threat to mountain villages. The problem is also a source of tension between those communities affected and those cutting the forests. The Mission encouraged co-operation among central and local authorities, forest police, local uniformed officers and citizens. The Tetovo field station hosted a series of meetings on the topic to facilitate communication among all those responsible and to set up systems for sharing information in the field. Local judges and public prosecutors were also included in the meetings.

To prevent environmental issues from becoming divisive in the future, the Mission worked with the First Children's Embassy to encourage young people to be active in promoting economic development while preserving the environment. This activity was supported by the office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. Sixty high school students participated in a week-long training workshop in the summer, learning skills related to entrepreneurship, business development and environmental protection. This was the first activity of this kind. More are planned for 2006, as a way to prepare young people to contribute to the country's economic growth while not damaging its ecological heritage.

Human dimension activities

Increasing transparency and efficiency in the judiciary. Judicial reform was a top priority for the Mission, which supported the Government's legal and structural changes. The most significant of these reforms was a set of Constitutional amendments proposed by the Ministry of Justice as the first major step in the Government's *National Reform Strategy to Reform the Judiciary*. At the request of the Ministry, the Mission provided expert comments on the proposed amendments and, in co-operation with the Judges' Association, organized a series of public discussion forums. Professionals from all areas of the legal profession were encouraged to give feedback on the proposals.

While the legislative changes were underway, the Mission began supporting an activity initiated by a local advocacy

group, the *Council for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency*, to promote transparency and access to information in the courts. The project was conducted in several locations, with the most advanced in the Kavadarci Basic Court. This project launched an online database containing case lists, trial schedules, profiles of judges and information for the public on practical procedures. Courts in Tetovo, Skopje, Stip and Strumica produced annual reports of their work and held public presentations to inform citizens of their activities.

The Mission also conducted a variety of targeted training programmes for judges, prosecutors and lawyers on issues such as international human rights law, organized crime and witness protection procedures.

Institutionalizing anti-trafficking mechanisms. In accordance with the recommendations in the OSCE's *Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*, the Mission helped the Government to establish a National Referral Mechanism under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The Mechanism is implemented through a National Co-ordination Office that will co-ordinate assistance to victims, improve identification mechanisms for potential victims and lobby for legal reforms that will increase the protection available to victims of trafficking. Assistance from the Mission came in the form of an initial assessment and adaptation of the National Referral Mechanism manual for local needs as well as other forms of technical assistance to the Ministry during the set-up phase. Now, the Mechanism will assist the country in fulfilling its obligations regarding human rights protection of victims of trafficking.

Promoting the protection of human rights. The Ombudsman institution was established in 1997 to protect the rights of citizens. To meet requirements set out in the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the Law on the Ombudsman was changed to include regional offices for Deputy Ombudsmen, thereby expanding the institution's capacity to accept cases from across the country. The Deputy Ombudsmen for the regional offices were appointed this year. With additional support from the Canadian International Development Agency

and the Italian Government, the Mission played a crucial role in helping to establish the regional offices and publicize their role to the general population. The new offices have already begun receiving human rights cases and investigating citizen complaints.

Kaldmaa/Jasminka Dimitrovska



The Ombudsman Regional Office in Bitola opens with support from the OSCE Mission.

While the Ombudsman institutions give citizens a mechanism through which they can defend their civil liberties, there is still a need to further inform especially the young population about their rights and what they can expect from state institutions. As part of the Chairmanship-initiated project for instituting human rights education for primary school children in all OSCE member states, the Mission launched a pilot project with the Ministry of Education entitled *Our Rights*. Twelve schools chosen from towns across the country participate in this programme. Teachers were trained in the programme's interactive human rights curriculum for fifth- and sixth-grade children and began implementing it in their classrooms this autumn.

Supporting viability, diversity and responsibility in the media market. The passage of a new Law on Broadcasting Activity this year was an important step towards securing both a viable private media market and an independent public broadcaster. The Mission played a key role in the development of this law, working closely with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the Stability

Pact to provide expertise and interpretation of relevant European directives. The Mission facilitated discussion between lawmakers and representatives of local organizations in the field of media. Relying on the experience of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Mission also assisted with comments and suggestions on proposed amendments. The new law granted more independence and power to the regulatory authority, allowing it to enforce rule of law in the broadcast market. It also liberalized the licensing regime allowing private broadcasters to more easily use new technology and reach more diverse audiences. Finally, the law established a truly independent governance system for the public broadcaster, which already provides programming in all six constitutional languages.

E-society crosses all pillars

E-society, otherwise known as the information society, refers to the integration of information technology such as the Internet, wireless communication and others into all aspects of social and political life.

Because it covers such a broad area, the Mission's E-society project touched on nearly all aspects of the Mission's work. It was implemented with the local organization, *Metamorphosis*, and supported by the office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

At the international conference that launched the project in Skopje, a senior advisor to the Representative on Freedom of the Media pointed out that new information technology opens up vast opportunities for free, transparent communication and collaboration among various stakeholders in society, including government, business and citizens.

A series of four smaller conferences were held in towns throughout the country. The first on cyber crime brought together police, prosecutors and others for discussions on ways of dealing with crime on the Internet. The ones on E-education and E-media covered topics such as encouraging multi-culturalism and breaking down boundaries through online communication. An E-government event addressed mayors and other municipal officials on ways to use the Internet to improve transparency and engage citizens in decision-making.

Because of its multi-lingual and multi-ethnic character, the public broadcaster has a key role to play in promoting diversity and identity. Therefore, the Mission continued support for its modernization and professional improvement through training activities and some technical support. This year's training focused on production management both for radio and for television to ensure that such capacity is in place before the restructuring promised in the new Law on Broadcast Activity.

The Mission also supported training for future media professionals by contributing to the *Macedonian Institute for the Media's* one-year journalism diploma course. This intensive diploma programme is internationally recognized and sets new standards for journalism and for training in the field. Particular attention was paid to including a diverse group of students that will be capable of reporting in minority languages in the future.

Since professional journalism requires reliable official sources, the Mission also continued its push for the passage of a Law on Free Access to Information, a draft of which has already been prepared by the Ministry of Justice. Teaming up with the Delegation of the European Commission, the Mission supported an initiative by the local organization, *ProMedia*, both to initiate public debate on the urgent need for the law and to prepare public institutions through training on the new responsibilities they will have once the law is passed.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador Carlos Pais
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