

OSCE

NEWSLETTER

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OSCE urged to continue to play full role in recovery of the Balkans

“To leave now would snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.” – Ashdown

By Keith Jinks

Despite the global community's pre-occupation with new challenges in the Middle East and the OSCE's recognition of the need to start shifting resources to the Caucasus and Central Asia, the participating States were recently urged by key leaders to stay the course in south-eastern Europe. They were warned that the post-conflict agenda in the region was still formidable and that there was no room for complacency if the impressive gains in democratic standards, human rights and the rule of law were to continue.

High Representative Lord “Paddy” Ashdown, 4 June

Addressing the Permanent Council in Vienna, Lord Ashdown, the High Representative and the European Union's Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), expressed serious concern about the risk of the country's being engulfed in an economic crisis.

Sweeping economic reforms were needed, he said, in particular to rein spending on the institutions of government, which included 11 duplicated structures for fewer than two million people.

“Sixty per cent of all government spending goes to government. No State can survive when it spends so much on governing itself and so little on its citizens,” he said.

While Lord Ashdown praised Bosnia and Herzegovina for the considerable progress it had made in the past seven years, he warned that this was not yet irreversible. He identified two key risks to continued achievements: the impatience of the international community, and the people's own lack of self-confidence in their ability to achieve change.

Inside Moldova: withdrawing the Red Army's arsenal

by Neil Brennan

“It's the real thing! The trains will start rolling soon!” Ambassador William Hill announced excitedly to his staff on 7 March. He had just returned from a meeting in Tiraspol, an hour's drive from the Chisinau office of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, where he had received news

continued on page two

Major Myron Hnatzuk, U.S. Army, and Lt. Col. John James Yugas, U.S. Marine Corps, seconded to the OSCE Mission, inspect a 152 mm artillery shell crate. The shells are part of the estimated 40,000 tonnes of ammunition at the Kolbasna base.



Credit: OSCE/Neil Brennan



Since his address to the Permanent Council a year ago, he said, the country's priorities had remained creating justice and creating jobs: "building confidence in the rule of law and underpinning an economy that can generate employment for its own population".

"I do not believe Bosnia and Herzegovina will move back into ethnic conflict, but I am seriously concerned about the economic crisis that lies ahead of us," he told the representatives of the 55 participating States.

Lord Ashdown emphasized the close co-operation between the Office of the High Representative and the 800-strong OSCE Mission to BiH. He praised the "sterling work" of the OSCE Mission in helping to complete the country's emergence from the post-conflict era, including playing a crucial role in moving the defence reform agenda forward.

He singled out the OSCE's current priority to promote a thorough reform of the education system, but added that he anticipated an equally challenging contribution by the Organization in the year

ahead: improving the Government's performance, especially at the local level, and making the country more "investor friendly".

"The OSCE is the unquestioned leader in creating civil society," he said. "It has incomparably the best network into the grassroots in some of the key areas needed to build civil society."

He urged the international community to remain committed to the country. "Stay with us. Finish the job," Lord Ashdown said. "To leave precipitately now would be to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory."

UN Special Representative Michael Steiner, 8 May

At an earlier meeting of the Permanent Council, Michael Steiner, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Kosovo, also issued a sharp warning. The UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), he said, had entered what was perhaps its most critical and delicate phase.

"Responsibilities have to be transferred gradually, so that society's institutions have the capacity to bear them," he told the participating States. "This makes local capacity-building and monitoring more important than ever." With its seasoned field presence, he added, "the OSCE is uniquely qualified to play the leading role in this critical process".

Mr. Steiner said the international community's priorities in Kosovo had not

changed: battling organized crime, which still poisoned the Balkans and threatened the security of Europe, consolidating the rule of law, and dismantling the parallel structures that undermined the rule of law.

"When you weigh the importance of

MAY/JUNE 2003

- OSCE urged to continue to play full role in recovery of the Balkans _____ 1
- Inside Moldova: Withdrawing the Red Army's arsenal _____ 1

REACT

- "Political will" holds key to mission staffing: Interview with Sean Hand _____ 7
- REACT facts and figures _____ 8
- Pre-mission training reaps rewards _____ 9
- A just-in-time staffing solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina _____ 11
- How a farming community in Wales rose to REACT _____ 12
- European Commission project and REACT share strong bond _____ 13

- Personal Envoy intensifies Central Asian-OSCE dialogue _____ 14
- Examining the economics of trafficking: Moving on from rhetoric to results _____ 14
- Roma and Sinti: Closing intentions-implementation gap _____ 16
- Freedom of the media and the Internet: Resisting the regulatory reflex _____ 18

REGULAR UPDATES

- High Commissioner on National Minorities _____ 19
- Parliamentary Assembly _____ 20
- From the Field _____ 22
- Press Profile _____ 23
- OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat _____ 24
- Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights _____ 27

Inside Moldova ...

of a long-awaited political breakthrough.

We were incredulous: Transnistrian objections had finally been lifted and the ammunition and remaining *materiel* of the Operative Group of Russian Forces (OGRF), formerly the Soviet 14th Army, could finally be withdrawn from Moldova.

It all started on 5 March, when the Transnistrian "Supreme Soviet" – the legislative body of the separatist region – issued a decree recommending that Transnistrian leader, Igor Smirnov, should "ensure" and "facili-

tate" withdrawal of the military stockpile. The Mission's initial reports to Vienna on the decree were sceptical, as experience had taught us to be.

But in his discussions in Tiraspol, the region's proclaimed capital, where the Mission has a branch office, Ambassador Hill would learn more details from the Transnistrian chief political negotiator, Valerii Anatolyevich Litkai: All political obstacles to the withdrawal of the ammunition had indeed been removed.

Although the Transnistrian announcement came on the heels of



Kosovo next to competing priorities farther afield, I urge you to remember the choice Europe faces directly,” the Special Representative said. “To put it starkly: Europe can either help us fill our prisons in Kosovo by supporting vital work in training police, developing the judiciary and developing technical forensic expertise. Or Kosovo will help fill prisons in Europe.”

That would clearly be a “bad bargain”, he said. “Instead, after the huge investment made already, we must continue our work to make Kosovo a beacon for the rule of law and, ultimately, an exporter of stability.”

He paid tribute to the OSCE’s invaluable contribution in undertaking the chal-

lenge of organizing the first three democratic elections in Kosovo’s history and its important role in the province’s international administration. The OSCE continued to take the lead in training the judiciary, police, new municipal assembly members, journalists and civil society leaders, apart from carrying out major programmes in the fight against trafficking in human beings.

“Together, over the past four years, we have built the forms of democratic self-government. Now we must fill these forms with the actual content of democratic life,” he said, pointing out that the activities of UNMIK, the OSCE and the European Union fit into a cohesive picture.

“We’ve come far,” he said. “Finishing the job means institutionalizing the standards. In Europe, no standard is more precious than tolerance and respect for diversity.”

Mr. Steiner, who recently announced his intention to wind up his assignment in Kosovo, said: “We must all remember that history’s judgment – and Europe’s security – depend on what we will leave behind once we have gone.”

Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Nebojsa Covic, 15 May

A similar appeal for continued support, this time for Serbia’s economic and

democratic reforms, was made to the OSCE’s participating States on 15 May by the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Dr. Nebojsa Covic. His address to the Permanent Council was an impassioned plea for international recognition of Serbia’s thorough transformation since the days of the Milosevic regime.



He cited the removal of legal obstacles to co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, progress in establishing civil control over the military-security services, and the new special court and prosecutor to fight organized crime.

“Serbia is aware of the evil that has come as a consequence of its hesitation in the fight against organized crime,” he

Inside Moldova ...

the EU-US ban on issuing visas to 17 members of the leadership in Tiraspol, Mr. Litskai told the Ambassador that the key ingredient in the decision to move forward was an economic deal: Russia’s energy supplier, Gazprom, had granted the Transdnestrian region partial relief on its huge gas bill.

While details of the \$100 million write-off would still need to be sorted out between the Transdnestrian region, Russia and the Republic of Moldova, the Transdnestrians allowed the trains to start moving on the presumption that the transaction would be completed in due course.

*continued on page four
(see Editor’s Note on page 6)*

Major Hnatzuk verifies the ammunition in a railcar to ensure they match the description of loading provided by the OGRF. The OGRF ammunition is a deadly mix of about 40,000 tonnes of shells, hand grenades, rockets, small arms ammunition and air bombs, some even of pre-World War II vintage. The former Soviet 14th Army had stored this arsenal at a base on the left bank of the Dniestr River, along with a vast array of traditional military equipment, in what was then part of the Soviet Union. After the 1992 conflict between Moldova and its Transdnestrian region, this area came under the control of the separatist leadership. In the battle plans of the former Soviet Union, the arsenal had been meant to support potential operations throughout south-eastern Europe.



said. But despite the impressive results achieved during the state of emergency [following Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic's assassination], "I regret to say that support offered to us by the world and Europe is not always equal".

What the young Serbian democracy needed was to establish a partnership with the international community such as the one, he said, it had enjoyed on all issues except for Kosovo.

Dr. Covic criticized the rate of progress in establishing secure conditions for the return of 230,000 Serbs who had fled from Kosovo, only a small percentage of whom were now back in their homes. He repeated Belgrade's concern about the "complex" security situation since the beginning of 2003 in southern

Serbia, near the towns of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, where peace and multi-ethnic institutions had earlier been established.

He acknowledged that, "given the depth of hatred, suspicion and fear on both sides [of the ethnic divide], it will take a very long time for a genuine multi-ethnic society to function, let alone flourish." Calling on the participating States to help, he said: "Your role in the process of reconciliation will be decisive."

Speaking to reporters after his address, he welcomed the support he had received from members of the Permanent Council for Serbia's efforts to strengthen democracy and the rule of law.

The Deputy Prime Minister stressed the continuing threat posed by organized

crime to the security and economy in the region and in the European Union, mainly due to illegal trafficking in narcotics, weapons and people, and money-laundering. "We must not allow criminals to manipulate patriotic feelings and to hide behind national flags," he said.

"The States within the region need the assistance of the international community in regard to co-operation, co-ordination and sharing of information to fight cross-border crime at a regional level," Dr. Covic said. "We expect the OSCE to provide assistance in resolving this problem."

Keith Jinks is Deputy Head of the Press and Public Information Section in the OSCE Secretariat.

Inside Moldova ...

Patrimony claim

The withdrawal process goes back to the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in 1999. In the Summit Declaration, the Russian Federation accepted a deadline for fulfilling its commitment to either remove or destroy all the holdings of the OGRF and to withdraw its armed forces from Moldova. The OSCE created a special voluntary fund through which interested participating States could support the operations. The OSCE Mission to Moldova was to facilitate the technical assistance and administer the fund.

By the end of 2001, all military equipment limited by the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe had either been destroyed or removed from the region. An enormous quantity of heavy tanks, guns, rocket systems and the like were either cut up, blown up or removed via rail. Throughout this process, the OSCE Mission was present, working side by side with Russian military colleagues to provide verification documentation and financial support.

OSCE/Mold. Mike Bruce



Sprawled over a field are 108T-64 tanks of the former Soviet 14th Army, which were demilitarized in 2001 by cutting the chassis and cannon barrels. All the equipment limited by the CFE Treaty would eventually be destroyed or removed from Moldova by the end of that year. The OSCE Mission to Moldova verified these activities.

However, the leadership of the Transnistrian region continued to demand compensation for what it referred to as the loss of its patrimony – its claimed "inheritance" from the breakup of the Soviet Union. The authorities in Tiraspol were quite adamant about the massive ammunition depot in Kolbasna, a small town in the north, on the Ukrainian border.

The delaying tactics employed were simple, including the posting of armed groups to prevent access to the depot. Brigades of elderly women were mobilized to block roads, airport runways and railheads.

By the time of the breakthrough in March, the Mission's military and political staff had been working hard towards breaking the deadlock at Kolbasna for more than two years. This entailed devising a number of strategies to support and facilitate the removal of the ammunition, including renting specialized destruction technologies to destroy some of the ammunition *in situ*. Despite numerous agreements, these plans were continually stymied by the political leadership of the unrecognized region. The leased equipment remains in storage at the airport in Chisinau under Moldovan military guard.

Surreal moment

With the decision of 5 March, however, the emphasis has – at least for the time being – shifted to withdrawal of the ammunition to Russia by train. On 8 March, the Mission received its first invitation to verify the loading of ammunition at the mil-



Lt. Col. Terje Skjoldsvik

The Mission's extensive plans included an ill-fated venture to lease specialized destruction technologies to destroy some of the ammunition in situ. Based on the Transnistrian authorities' assurances of co-operation, and with the support of OSCE participating States, the Mission arranged the import of a Donovan T-10 detonation chamber from the United States, and two specialized kilns for burning ammunition from the German firm, Luthe Technologies. The MEA-IB, the Luthe kiln shown above, was specially constructed for the work in Moldova.

itary depot in Kolbasna – a name that for us had become synonymous with inaccessibility and frustration. For some of us, it was a surreal moment. The Transnistrian military had placed roadblocks around the site almost exclusively to block the OSCE, and now we were being asked by Russian liaison officers to go around them and to get on with the job.

During the weeks following the decision, the members of our military mission made frequent trips to Kolbasna. They were thrilled to report that trains were being loaded quickly and were departing on schedule. Under the CFE Treaty, the trains were also being inspected on arrival in Russia by inspectors from a variety of countries, a process that completes the verification and allows the Russian Ministry of Defence to be reimbursed for some of the removal costs. On a few occasions, some of our people even stayed overnight in Kolbasna, just to make

certain that the invitation would not be revoked. Mission members quickly developed a professional and co-operative working arrangement with the base commander and his officers.

On 23 April, I had the opportunity to accompany our military staff during one of their verification rounds to determine whether there was anything more the OSCE might be able to do to help in the withdrawal process.

I started out in the morning with two American military officers. We soon passed through the Security Zone, the area monitored by peacekeepers which separates the Moldovan and Transnistrian military sectors. After entering the Transnistrian region, I was told we had to clear three more roadblocks controlled by Transnistrian military and other personnel. The irony was not lost on us as we ventured closer to the base: Here, in the middle of this pastoral landscape, we knew only too well that just on the other side of the fence, there was ammunition that was equivalent to the force detonated by the nuclear bomb at Hiroshima.

We were met in Kolbasna by the base commander, Lt. Col. Iurie Idrisov, who served as our escort officer for the day. After a series of strict controls (no lighters, cigarettes, radios or mobile phones), we made our way to the bunker area. It was comforting to see a fire hydrant before each bunker and to see berms – large artificial embankments – separating the bunkers.

At the railhead, we were met by a bright-red Kamaz fire truck, a permanent fixture when loading is under way. It was evident that professionalism and safety were paramount considerations in the operation.

The commander reminded us of the restrictions on taking photos in accordance with CFE Treaty inspection procedures. We then set about

looking over the 14 railcars, this time filled with 152-mm artillery rounds. Each one, along with its fuse and charge, was packed in a wooden crate, weighing over 80 kg. The OSCE had just delivered a small forklift to the site that day, easing the loading that had until then been done by hand.

As the loading staff – military personnel and local assistants – sweated in the hot sun, we worked our way

OSCE Mission to Moldova



The Kolbasna base has recently been reinforced with an extra 60 military personnel to support the gargantuan task of loading more than 40,000 tonnes of ammunition. The matériel is loaded onto a conveyor for removal, travelling up a ramp from inside the bunker onto a truck, and is then driven to the railhead. It is manually unloaded onto a platform and carried into a train wagon. The physical demands of the exercise place enormous constraints on the base commander's planning. To speed up the process, the OSCE Mission has provided personnel with practical tools ranging from two forklifts to proper gloves. Despite the enormity of the task, the commander and his troops were, at the time of writing, ahead of schedule.

through the train, verifying car numbers and contents. This train would carry some 730 tonnes, a load considered to be average. If no stoppages are incurred as a result of political or other objections, the rate of loading now being observed – one train every four

days – would see the operations completed by the end of the year.

It is a daunting task, and one made even more so by the harsh summer conditions in Moldova. Referring to the risks of heat exhaustion and sunstroke working in these conditions, Lt. Col. Idrisov said, “When the broiling sun hits this railhead and we are still loading full force, I will

certainly lose some men to this heat.”

As we ended our assignment and started back to the base headquarters, our conversation turned to life and interests outside work. It was not long before the commander suggested that we might one day go fishing with him at the local lake. “Of course,” he quickly added, “only after this big job ahead of us is done.”

Neil Brennan is Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, which has a total staff of ten, in addition to temporary secondments of military personnel to the Project Management Cell. For more information on the Mission, including its leadership role in helping solve the Transdnistrian issue, see:

www.osce.org/moldova

Editor’s Note: *As the OSCE Newsletter went to press at the end of June, the administration of the Transdnistrian region had reimposed its objections to the withdrawal of Russian military property, apparently due to a continued dispute with Russia over compensation. A report filed by Interfax quoted self-titled president, Igor Smirnov, as telling Head of Mission William Hill: “Until Russia fulfils its financial and economic obligations to pay compensation to the Transdnistrian Republic for the withdrawal of its military property, no trains will head east.”*

OSCE hosts historic first meeting to draft new constitution for Moldova

The first meeting of a newly-formed commission to draft a new constitution for Moldova took place in the OSCE Mission headquarters in Chisinau on 24 April. The constitution will be based on a federal model providing a settlement for the Transdnistrian dispute.

The formation of the commission is a turning point in the history of Moldova, as the two sides have agreed to a common project of national reunification for the first time since their armed conflict ended in 1992.

“We attach profound hope for the success of your efforts,” Ambassador William Hill, Head of the OSCE Mission, told the members of the Joint Constitutional Commission of the Republic of Moldova and the Transdnistrian region of Moldova.

Representatives of the three mediators in the long-standing dispute – the OSCE Mission, the Russian Federation and Ukraine – as well as the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman in Office, Ambassador Adriaan Jacobovits de Sezeged, were also present.

The commission was formed on the basis of a protocol agreed in the 18 March session of the negotiation process, which was subsequently endorsed by the Moldovan Parliament and the Transdnistrian “Supreme Soviet”, the legislative body of the unrecognized separatist region.

Under the agreement, the commission is to produce a draft text within six months. This will be followed by two months of public discussion and possible amendment. A nationwide referendum is to be held no later than 1 February 2004 on the draft of a new constitution. Nationwide elections for a new, united government should then be held no later than 25 February 2005.

Peace-enhancement force

Earlier, on a visit to Chisinau and Tiraspol on 2 April, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO), Netherlands Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, had urged Moldova’s President Vladimir Voronin and Foreign Minister Nicolae Dudau and the Transdnistrian leader Igor Smirnov to keep up the momentum in seeking

a political solution for the Moldovan/Transdnistrian issue.

The engagement of the OSCE and its partners should not end with agreement on the establishment of a constitutional commission, the CiO said. “The international community must also show its willingness to help implement a future agreement on a federalized Moldova, for instance, by establishing a multinational peace-enhancement force that should be as broadly based as possible.”

He said that a border-monitoring operation along the entire Moldovan/Ukrainian border, including the Transdnistrian section, would be another important element in increasing mutual confidence and, ultimately, in achieving stability and security in the country and the region. He noted that the OSCE had acquired substantial experience in this area.

Mr. de Hoop Scheffer expressed confidence that the Russian Federation would meet the deadlines laid down in the Istanbul and Porto Declarations for the withdrawal of Russian troops and ammunition.

“Political will” holds key to mission staffing

REACT marks second anniversary

The OSCE’s first Director for Human Resources, Sean Hand, was appointed in January 2001, following the participating States’ decision to bolster the Organization’s operational capability and integrate all staffing-related matters, including REACT, in a separate department. Prior to his OSCE assignment, Mr. Hand, an Irish national, was based in Paris, where he was serving as Chief of UNESCO’s Human Resources Development Division. In an interview with the OSCE Newsletter, he shared his views on the evolution of REACT.



OSCE/Alexander Nitzsche

Sean Hand, Director, Department of Human Resources

OSCE Newsletter: The “REACT concept” has become a byword in certain international circles. What exactly does it mean?

Sean Hand: In answering that, one has to look at what the OSCE does, what it is required to do and under which circumstances: on the one hand, the Organization has to be capable of responding to emergencies in its participating States by rapidly deploying civilian and police expertise and technical assistance teams; on the other hand, it must also address the normal, day-to-day needs in its field missions. Facilitating our recruitment in response to both these situations was behind the strategy of setting up REACT.

In designing the system, we developed 12 fields of expertise that are typical of the work that the OSCE carries out, ranging from democratization to military affairs. Under each field, we identified four levels of functional responsibility containing the specific skills, knowledge and experience required. So we came up with a matrix of 48 boxes, making the selection procedure extremely clear and transparent.

To address emergencies and “surge” situations, participating States pledge numbers of people who fit into each of these categories and can be sent out to the field quickly. For day-to-day recruitment, the system allows us to screen candidates using Web-based technology.

Fortunately, the occasions that call for rapid deployment are rare. However, it’s important for the OSCE to always be prepared. *Preparedness* is prime: to have available groups of experts who have already been screened and whose fieldwork skills have been ensured according to a common standard so that they are “deployable” at short notice.

A case of rapid deployment took place last year when the participating States agreed to strengthen the workforce in our Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje. We in fact deployed a large number of people at short notice. Early this year, the capabilities of the system were tried and tested once again when we expanded our border monitoring operations in Georgia for the second time.

REACT led to the creation of the Department of Human Resources, not the other way around. What was the background to this?

It is common consensus that an organization’s employees are its most precious resource and that, often enough, it’s these resources that receive the least attention.

The proposal to establish the Department was part of the decision [PC.DEC/364] to create REACT. The participating States realized that a unified human resources management structure would be crucial to boosting the OSCE’s rapid reaction capacity. Governments called for a restructuring of the OSCE Secretariat so that it would be “better prepared to meet the number of challenges likely to confront the Organization in the coming years”.

The new departmental set-up was aimed at ensuring that selection procedures would be more open and transparent, and that, once on board, the staff – whether contracted by the OSCE or seconded from Governments – would have their administrative needs properly and professionally met.

But how does one draw the best available people to a non-career organization?

Indeed, building the capability within the participating States and the OSCE to attract the highest quality personnel lies at the root of REACT. This is assured by the fact that experts will have been screened – and many will also have been given pre-mission training – by the nominating governments before their names are submitted to the OSCE.

It’s true that our experts are here for relatively short periods. However, I don’t like the expression “non-career”, because anything with the word “none” isn’t very positive. Our time here may be limited, but we’re in the OSCE very much for career purposes. I’d like to think that top-quality candidates who join the Organization end up doing interesting and challenging work so that when they leave, their term will have been time well spent, and that the experience they have gained will have been sufficiently rich and substantial to help them find another assignment at

REACT

home or in another international organization.

Is REACT actually a forerunner of IRMA [the OSCE's integrated resource management system]? How do you see REACT's role during the post-IRMA era?

In terms of introducing a modern, quality-oriented approach to the recruitment of staff for our missions, REACT was indeed a precursor of the sort of things IRMA is aiming for: to streamline procedures, to give responsibility and accountability to managers, to make reporting to the participating States much more open and transparent. Of course IRMA has a much wider

resource management agenda. It will make a significant difference in the way we manage not only our human resources but also our budget and finances.

With IRMA and REACT working in tandem, I think we will have even more enhanced capabilities in managing posts and staffing.

Is there anything about the REACT system that you wish could work better?

REACT relies on the nomination of individuals by participating States, after which the Secretariat screens them before their applications are sent to the field for the final selection. So it's

important for these three parties to have a smooth flow of communication, which is what the REACT system was designed to ensure.

You could have the most sophisticated Web-based system in operation – and indeed that is what REACT is – but if you don't have the political impetus from participating States to supply you with the experts you need, then no other technology can make the system better. So political commitment holds the key to the whole secondment system. Without it, there is just no way we can staff our missions.

www.osce.org/react

Rapid response: an OSCE commitment

“We recognize that the ability to deploy rapidly civilian and police expertise is essential to effective conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. We are committed to developing a capability within the participating States and the OSCE to set up Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams (REACT) that will be at the disposal of the OSCE. This will enable OSCE bodies and institutions, acting in accordance with their respective procedures, to offer experts quickly to OSCE participating States to provide assistance, in compliance with OSCE norms, in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. This rapidly deployable capability will cover a wide range of civilian expertise. It will give us the ability to address problems before they become crises and to deploy quickly the civilian component of a peacekeeping operation when needed. These Teams could also be used as surge capacity to assist the OSCE with the rapid deployment of large-scale or specialized operations. We expect REACT to develop and evolve, along with other OSCE capabilities, to meet the needs of the Organization.”

From the Charter for European Security, OSCE Istanbul Summit, November 1999

Facts and figures

Since the REACT programme was launched in April 2001, following the Permanent Council Decision of 30 June 2000, OSCE delegations have proposed numbers of personnel they would be prepared to provide in response to an emergency or surge situation that required rapid deployment.

These proposals are based on the 12 fields of expertise and four levels of professional competence specified in the *OSCE Staffing Matrix for Selection of Field Staff*, and indicate the estimated

response time: deployment within two weeks, four weeks or eight weeks of a vacancy announcement.

So far, participating States have proposed **2,184 individuals** – of which **574 are civilian police** – to respond to emergency or surge situations across the 12 fields of expertise.

The attention that the REACT programme has attracted has been significant, as indicated by the following statistics covering the six months following REACT's launch:

- ◆ There were nearly **4.8 million hits** on the Employment and Research page of the OSCE Web site, generated by some **110,000 visitors**.
- ◆ Announcements for seconded vacancy notices were viewed on **169,000 occasions**; this led to more than **2,500 applications** to participating States for seconded positions.
- ◆ Some **14,300 visitors** searched the REACT Web page for information.

REACT

So far, **eight participating States** have developed their own national Web sites for direct contact with their nationals; **31 are receiving applications** via the OSCE Web site; and **another two** have opted to use the OSCE Web site to indicate contact details on possibilities for secondment.

This leaves only **14 participating States** that are not processing applications from their nationals for seconded OSCE positions through Web-based forms and e-mail. However, since **11 of these 14 countries** do not traditionally propose candidates for secondment, the system's overall efficiency is not affected.

In its two years of existence, the REACT system has been used to publish **957 seconded vacancy notices** and to process more than **9,000 nominations** from participating States.

Considering that about **1,200 international staff**, most of whom have been

seconded by OSCE participating States, currently work in **18 OSCE field missions and activities**, it is obvious that the system has been of enormous benefit to the Organization: REACT is enabling the OSCE to sharpen the focus

of its recruiting efforts and to make the selection process for field positions more efficient, timely and transparent.

*Barrie Meyers, Senior Adviser,
Department of Human Resources*

OSCE Staffing Matrix for Selection of Field Staff

Field of expertise

Human rights
Rule of law
Democratization
Elections
Economic and environmental affairs
Press and public information
Media development
Political affairs
Administration and support
General staff/monitoring functions
Military affairs
Civilian police

Levels of professional competence

Senior management
Senior professional
Middle management
Professional

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Pre-mission training reaps rewards

By Miguel Ángel Panadero Alarcón

But somebody told us that rapid deployment forces were only for military personnel, not for civilians!" a participant in a recent pre-mission training course said as I was about to present the concept behind the OSCE's Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams programme.

"In the OSCE context, REACT was actually meant for civilians and for police," I explained, correcting the misconception. "Each time a new vacancy notice is posted on the OSCE Web site, that is REACT." The faces around me registered surprise. "REACT is far more than just a list of names kept by participating States," I continued. "It represents the continuous efforts of the Organization to strengthen its capability to identify precise staffing needs in the field and to deploy you to meet these needs rapidly. That's why every time you submit an application form, that is also

REACT. And this course? Well, we probably would not be here if it were not for REACT."

This exchange took place at a training event in Spain organized in May with the support of the OSCE Secretariat. I had been invited to present an introduction to the Organization, which is part of the package of "modules" that have been designed using the *Training Standards for Preparation of OSCE Mission Staff* as a guide. The publication of the *Standards* by the Secretariat's Training Section in November 2000 was a milestone in the development of the REACT programme shortly after its approval by the participating States.

By stressing to potential field personnel that REACT was not just a roster, I wanted to drive home the role of training as a key element of REACT – not the kind of training aimed at providing personnel with professional skills that they

should already have, but training to make sure that they are operationally ready and able to carry out their duties and responsibilities immediately upon arrival.

The broad range of training initiatives already being carried out in OSCE participating States at the beginning of 2000 served as a promising base on which to build a pre-mission training strategy. At that time, a questionnaire circulated by the REACT Task Force revealed that 40 per cent of the participating States had some form of pre-mission training in place, especially for peace-building operations.

However, the offerings were not standardized, were held irregularly and were not always open to candidates for OSCE field activities. In fact, only 16 participating States (out of which nine were members of the European Union) said that they organized some form of

REACT

training for future members of OSCE missions.

Looking back to that survey, the Organization has reason to be pleased with what has been achieved in just two years. Since REACT was launched, several hundred nationals of participating States have benefited from pre-mission training courses that have either been co-ordinated with the OSCE or supported by it with training materials and resource persons. Courses based on REACT training standards have ranged from distance-learning modules on the Internet to intensive one-month sessions.

Many of the participants in these courses have been among the more than a thousand new mission members deployed during the past two years to carry out OSCE field assignments. Quite a few who have not joined an OSCE mission have been assigned to field activities of partner organizations such as the United Nations or the European Union. Even those who have yet to be sent to a field operation play an important role in promoting a better understanding of the OSCE's guiding tenets and values.

The OSCE's *Training Standards* and the Organization's focus on supporting participating States as they implement the training dimension of REACT have combined to strengthen the programme's impact. In the Secretariat's survey carried out in 2002 to gauge the performance of REACT, the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as academic institutions with a long tradition in training for peace-building operations, gave high marks to the *Training Standards* for their accuracy in identifying the actual requirements for field work.

However, the OSCE cannot afford to rest on its laurels simply on the basis of its favourable track record in developing pre-mission training. Interesting challenges are still waiting to be tackled. For example:

- ◆ In tandem with partner organizations, we could develop easily transferrable training materials, thus reinforcing the common and complementary elements of our approach to pre-mission training without jeopardizing the specific needs of each organization.
- ◆ There is also scope for strengthening the Organization's capacity to enable

personnel to be better prepared for assignments in areas where English is not a working language.

- ◆ The Secretariat could help to enhance the mechanisms currently employed for disseminating information on training opportunities that are open to participants in countries other than their own. This is particularly crucial as these opportunities, which are either being offered at substantially reduced fees or are free, are not being sufficiently tapped.

Every bit of effort that the Organization can devote towards enhancing the REACT process is invaluable – not only because it contributes to strengthening the capability of the Organization to fulfil its role but also because the rewards are ultimately reaped by the nationals of OSCE's participating States.

Miguel Ángel Panadero Alarcón is a Training Officer in the OSCE Secretariat.

www.osce.org/react

Training standards for preparation of OSCE mission staff

Recommended curriculum

- ◆ Overview of traditional actors in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation activities, including the OSCE.
- ◆ Introduction to activities aimed at the rehabilitation of post-conflict societies, focusing on key human rights and democratization concepts, as well as gender analysis in connection with conflict management.
- ◆ Understanding of the implications of cultural diversity for working relationships and interaction with the host society.
- ◆ Knowledge of safety and security practices and procedures, including mine awareness, map-reading, handling of four-wheel drive vehicles and international standards in radio communication.
- ◆ Guidance on stress management and first aid.
- ◆ Strengthening of practical skills in field work, such as monitoring, communicating through interpreters, managing and negotiating in conflict situations, and basic management and reporting.



The OSCE's training standards aim to prepare mission candidates to "hit the ground running"

For more information on the Training Standards and links to international training centres, please see:
www.osce.org/training

A just-in-time staffing solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina

By John Ging

Why are we here? In some quarters, this question would probably be examined through profound soul-searching or philosophical debate. However, for an OSCE mission, the answer is simplicity itself. We exist to get the job done. Equally irrefutable is the fact that the only way we can increase the prospect of success is to deploy the right staff in good time.

As the longest-serving large mission in the OSCE – we started deploying large numbers of staff in early 1996 after 43 months of conflict – we in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been privileged to be part of a fascinating period in the evolution of the Organization. For many of us, REACT marks the watershed in this evolution.

During most of the years of our existence before the advent of REACT, we enjoyed the status conferred on us by being the Organization's only sizeable mission. The absence of a sophisticated administrative mechanism was compensated for by a high degree of political attention. However, this changed as other well-staffed missions were established elsewhere in south-eastern Europe. Suddenly, we no longer had sole rights to the spotlight and we became painfully aware of the shortcomings of the process we were relying on to provide us with seconded staff.

Just as we were struggling with the consequences of operating a personnel selection system that simply could not cope with the volume and dynamism of the challenges we were facing, along came the ambitious REACT project. We fully understood its rationale and enthusiastically welcomed it as the solution we urgently needed. Our hope was that the determination and political will would be there to see it through its implementation.

For our part, we committed our-



OSCE Mission to BiH

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, REACT has bolstered the OSCE Mission's operational capacity

selves to making it work. Looking back, we believe that the inclusive approach taken by the project team has been the key ingredient to its success. In fact, the process of implementation served as a blueprint for harnessing the collective capacity of the various – and sometimes disparate – elements of this Organization in a common cause. Much credit goes to the REACT Task Force under the leadership of Ambassador Victor Tomseth from the U.S. Delegation, who had the foresight, ability and resolve to lead the project to fruition.

Two years after its launch, we are enjoying the benefits of REACT. From a Mission perspective, it is delivering what it promised: a high-speed and transparent system for administering secondment applications. It has dramatically enhanced the Organization's operational capacity to process large numbers of applicants quickly. The use of the Internet to advertise vacancies has yielded significant and positive results by raising our profile among prospective applicants.

A final thought from Sarajevo as we reflect on REACT's success: We

should acknowledge the fact that REACT, on its own, cannot ensure that we will be equipped with the staff needed to get the job done. While REACT is an indispensable tool, it does not and cannot replace effective recruitment systems in participating States.

John Ging is Chief of Staff and Director of Planning of the OSCE Mission to BiH, which has a total staff of 800, making it the second largest of the Organization's field activities after Kosovo. More than 550 are national staff, with the remainder coming from about 30 of the OSCE's 55 participating States. (The number of seconded staff peaked in 1996-1997, averaging 1,500 and rising to 3,000 immediately before and after elections.) The Mission is comprised of a head office in Sarajevo, four regional centres based in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Mostar and Banja Luka, and 24 field offices covering the entire country. Each field office has a democratization officer, a human rights officer and an education officer, in addition to administrative staff, interpreters and drivers.

REACT

How a farming community in Wales rose to REACT

By Mike Upton

How could a gathering of OSCE participating States in Turkey affect not only the working practices of a department in the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) but also a farming community in mid-Wales?

The decision of the OSCE's Istanbul Summit in December 1999 to establish the REACT process set in motion a number of changes in the FCO's OSCE/Council of Europe Department in London.

Like many other participating States, we set up an application process that was entirely online, linking our FCO Web page to the OSCE application form. Initially, we shared a steep learning curve with applicants for field assignments.

The system now works reasonably well, and it helps to filter out the computer-illiterate. Using the REACT job matrix, we trawled our database and declared a good number of individuals as being available for deployment within eight weeks. Obviously, this exercise was useful, but it only provided a snapshot of likely candidates for nomination. As we all know, the pool of potential candidates for secondment ebb and flow on the tide of other commitments, so our number of experts on standby changes almost every day.

With this in mind, we have continued to improve our database, making it possible for us to log specific qualifications and movements of individuals more accurately. And we weed out those who are no longer interested. Databases lose their reliability by about 25 per cent every year, so it is important for us to keep updating this valuable working tool.

The Istanbul decision also obliged us to think through the new pre-deployment training requirements. It was

clear that we would need a national training solution to complement the selection and recruitment processes. Fortunately, the *Training Standards* guidelines produced by the OSCE Secretariat clearly described the ideal content and aims of a pre-deployment curriculum.

However, training without any practical exercises and an assessment phase would be pointless, since it is necessary to verify whether the candidates have acquired the essential skills to ensure

into the roles of a recalcitrant mayor, a vicious war criminal, members of a rioting mob and a corrupt chief of police. So, for the past nine months, our training courses have featured speakers using a language spoken by a minority in the UK, who also double as interpreters for the participants as they negotiate their way through a series of misadventures and crises.

This creative innovation may not have been part of the thinking behind the original REACT concept, but the



British candidates for secondment act out an emergency situation at Sennybridge, in the Welsh mountains

that they are operationally ready for mission work.

This led us to develop a scenario that transports potential field personnel into a conflict situation. The farming community in Breconshire, a county in mid-Wales whose gorgeous landscapes provide a neat backdrop for a local TV soap opera, rose superbly to the challenge. The scenery is reminiscent of the Balkans in mid-winter.

To enhance the realism, we gathered a cast of local characters who could slip

lessons learned have a direct relevance to the OSCE on the ground. In the end, it's all about improving the quality of candidates for deployment and making field operations as effective as possible.

Mike Upton is Head of the Operations Section, OSCE/Council of Europe Department, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Web site www.fco.gov.uk has a special section on the OSCE. General inquiries: osce.ops.fco@gtmet.gov.uk

European Commission project and REACT share strong bond

By Arno Truger

Well-trained civilian experts who are ready to be deployed at short notice are vital to the European Union's ability to undertake the full range of conflict prevention and crisis management tasks set out in the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy. Without this pool of sufficiently prepared personnel, the EU would not be able to support the peace-keeping missions and field activities of the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and other international organizations, including missions led by the EU itself.

In October 2001, the European Commission launched a pilot project establishing an informal EU-wide network of national bodies responsible for training civilian personnel. The aim is to promote co-operation on training in the EU, identify joint approaches to civilian training, develop training modules and organize harmonized EU training through pilot courses.

From the start, it was obvious that conflict-prevention and crisis-management tasks could not be handled by one organization alone; for its project to be successful, the EU would need to co-operate with key partners and build on the lessons they have learned.

The OSCE was among those consulted to ensure that the training modules of the EU project were compatible with other organizations' standards. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that the OSCE's REACT staffing

matrix and *Training Standards* played an important role in the design of the EU's strategy and the courses derived from it.

The project's strategy and course outlines were presented at a conference hosted by the Spanish EU Presidency in Madrid in May 2002, where they found wide support. Between January and July of this year, the EU Group on Training has been implementing 14 pilot training courses in nine EU member States to determine whether the courses form a sound basis for the development of common modules and standards for the EU.

The first of these, a pilot course covering general preparation for mission work, was organized by the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) at its headquarters in Stadt Schlaining outside Vienna. The OSCE agreed to provide trainers to support the course, in line with its traditional co-operation with the ASPR, notably in connection with the *Mission Preparation Training Programme* for the OSCE and the *Summer Academy on OSCE*.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot courses, the EU has sought the assistance of the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) in Hamburg. The OSCE had earlier commissioned CORE with a project to come up with



ASPR

EU candidates for secondment practise their skills in handling four-wheel-drive vehicles

reliable data on the relationship between the preparedness of seconded mission members (supply side) and mission requirements (demand side). The findings of the study are also expected to prove beneficial to the EU in enhancing its own strategy.

As the list of remaining pilot courses is pared down, the process will give way to analysis and discussions. This will be the goal of an international conference to be held in Rome on 21 and 22 October under the Italian Presidency of the EU. By drawing lessons from the project, the conference will be instrumental in assisting EU member States to shape an effective, standardized and well co-ordinated strategy on training.

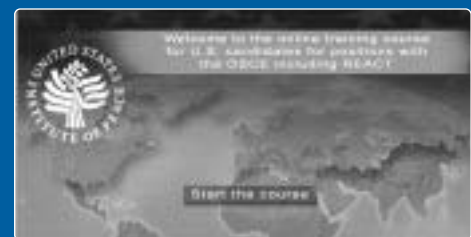
For more information on the *EC Project on Training for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management*, please see:

www.eutrainninggroup.net

Arno Truger is Director of the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

REACT and the United States: <http://react.usip.org>

The Web site of the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) features its innovative approach to pre-mission training: an online course to prepare U.S. candidates for OSCE assignments as part of REACT's implementation. The course contents are also accessible to the general public. Topics include the OSCE and its field activities, conflict-management skills and the countries currently hosting an OSCE operation.



Personal Envoy intensifies Central Asian-OSCE dialogue

Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari visited Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan from 18 to 29 May to hold an intense round of consultations on current OSCE-related issues with the countries' highest officials. He had meetings with, among others, Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev, Uzbek Prime Minister Utkir Sultanov and Tajik President Emomali Rahmonov.

This was President Ahtisaari's first comprehensive tour of the region as the Personal Envoy for Central Asia of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO), Netherlands Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. [An earlier visit to Tajikistan took place on 23 and 24 March.] His appointment, on 13 March, is an integral part of the Chairmanship's determined efforts to accelerate the positive developments in the region.

In all four countries, Mr. Ahtisaari urged the authorities, political leaders, and representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations to continue their dialogue and to take advantage of the Organization's wide range of

activities, aimed at bringing about greater stability and security.

Discussions focused on building strong institutions to underpin democratization, human rights, the rule of law, good governance and economic development. The fight against terrorism and measures to prevent and counter trafficking in drugs also figured prominently in the talks.

Regional co-operation and the benefits of good neighbourly relations were the overarching themes in his series of meetings.

The Personal Envoy said that better border management and the free movement of goods, capital, services and citizens would go a long way towards facilitating trade contacts, opening up investment opportunities and improving people-to-people relations. To discuss regional co-operation at the local level,



OSCE Centre in Bishkek

Personal Envoy Martti Ahtisaari with musicians at an official reception in Kyrgyzstan

President Ahtisaari had meetings with the Governors of Osh in Kyrgyzstan, Ferghana in Uzbekistan and Khujand in Tajikistan.

The Chairman-in-Office was also scheduled to visit Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan from 6 to 11 July.

Moving on from rhetoric to results

Examining the economics of trafficking

By Ivo Kersten

The national and international economic impact of trafficking in human beings, drugs and small arms and light weapons was the subject of intense discussions among the 400 participants in the 11th Meeting of the Economic Forum in Prague, from 20 to 23 May. The Netherlands OSCE Chairmanship had chosen the theme to fill the glaring gap in analysis relating to trafficking networks, legal and illegal financial transactions, transportation routes and

other linkages that affect the security of each and every OSCE participating State

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Netherlands Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, urged in his opening remarks that the gathering should not only debate the trafficking dilemma, but should also address "the economic push and pull factors" with result-oriented concrete measures. "We

have passed the stage of mere rhetoric," he said.

Mr. de Hoop Scheffer said his country would pursue its campaign to combat trafficking under its forthcoming presidencies of the Council of Europe and the European Union. A major initiative of the Organization is a new *OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings*, which will be submitted for adoption at the Organization's Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht in December [see

article on the *Action Plan* in the *OSCE Newsletter*, March 2003].

Representatives of governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society were encouraged by the participation of the private sector in the discussions. Several speakers welcomed the efforts of regional organizations, such as the OSCE – with its broad field presence in south-eastern Europe and other areas heavily affected by trafficking – to help tackle problems on the ground.

Important ally

“Governments cannot successfully wage the fight against trafficking by themselves,” said Ambassador Daan Everts, Personal Representative of the Netherlands Chairman-in-Office.

Without the private sector’s involvement, he said, international conventions, national legislation, and efforts directed towards training and awareness raising, were not sufficient.

He called the business sector “an important ally”, citing some of the self-regulating measures being undertaken by the transportation, banking and chemical sectors and by travel and employment agencies.

“They see what is happening right in front of them,” he said. “They know where the pain of victims of trafficking can be found and they too have a vested interest in keeping organized crime and trafficking activities out of their legal businesses.”

“What is needed in this [OSCE] region as in so many others is security for prosperity,” said Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. In his keynote speech, he stressed the mutually reinforcing social evils of organized crime and lack of development: “States characterized by these problems have little prospect of developing into prosperous democracies. In turn, the lack of development and the weakness of institutions provide the context in which organized crime and corruption thrive.”

Marcin Swiecicki, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, said that the call for poverty-reduction strategies was “widely voiced,

but still poorly defined”. He called attention to good governance – requiring the building of sound institutions and adequate human resources – as an essential factor in economic growth and development. A special session later discussed a *New Strategy Document* for the OSCE’s economic and environmental dimension, which includes a strengthening of the Organization’s work in fostering good governance.

A wealth of ideas and recommendations, ranging from simple and practical steps to specific policy measures, were presented by the Chairmanship, OSCE officials and international experts. Among the proposals brought forward were:

- Stepping up efforts to encourage governments to fulfil a minimum condition: the signing and ratification of the *UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols*.
- Building on effective public-private partnerships to counter drug trafficking (such as the co-operation between law enforcement agencies and chemical industries) and promoting self-regulation schemes (such as those practised by the transport and tourism sectors).
- Promoting the implementation and evaluation of a wide range of laws designed to combat trafficking that have already been put in place by many OSCE participating States.

- Installing an international hotline throughout the OSCE region, which would enable trafficking victims to call for help or to disclose information about criminal networks.
- Developing effective legislation to combat money laundering legislation throughout the OSCE area in accordance with UN standards and promote its implementation, along with the training of staff in financial institutions. (Several initiatives in this area are in progress under the OSCE’s economic dimension.)
- Setting up an OSCE-sponsored network of non-governmental organizations dealing with programmes for the prevention of trafficking and for the reintegration of victims into society.
- Establishing the post of a special representative on trafficking matters, who would promote the political commitment to the OSCE’s action measures and oversee their implementation.

In a simultaneous event, the results of the *Environment and Security Initiative*, focusing on south-eastern Europe and Central Asia, were presented both in Prague and to European ministers of environmental affairs meeting in Kiev, Ukraine. The Initiative was launched late last year by the OSCE, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme.



The role of the business sector in combating trafficking in all its forms was highlighted at the Economic Forum

The Economic Forum ended with a call from Ambassador Everts for continued commitment: “The challenge is to keep the fight against trafficking on the international political agenda, and a top priority for the OSCE participating

States and the Organization itself. The desired follow-up action against the blight of trafficking in human beings, drugs and small arms will require very diligent and hard work, starting tomorrow.”

Ivo Kersten is an Adviser in the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, which organizes the annual Economic Forum and its preparatory seminars.

Roma and Sinti issues: Closing the intentions-implementation gap

By Jens-Hagen Eschenbächer

It was an opening message that some 200 participants hardly expected to hear at a gathering aimed specifically at boosting preparations for an OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti. “Frankly, I do not believe in the merits of yet another action plan,” said Lalla Weiss in her keynote address at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti, which took place in Vienna under the aegis of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The prominent Sinti activist from the Netherlands was not alone in giving vent to the frustration felt by those who have been working so tirelessly to promote the rights of Roma communities and related groups.

In an interview, Nicolae Gheorghe, who has been serving as the OSCE’s Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues since 1999, explains what lies behind the prevailing sentiment.

“There is a growing gap between an almost restless activism on the international stage and the situation on the ground, where we are not seeing as much tangible progress as we would like,” he says. “Discrimination, racially and ethnically motivated violence, poor access to communal services, and lack of economic opportunities continue to drive many Roma away from their home countries to search for more security and a better life in the West.”

The Balkan wars and the enlargement of the European Union thrust cen-

tral and eastern Europe’s large and long-ignored Roma and Sinti minorities into the limelight. However, lack of proper co-ordination and well-designed strategies has meant that the generous assistance that has flowed in from a sympathetic donor community over the past decade has not had as much impact as it could have.

Mr. Gheorghe, the main organizer of the meeting, argues against an OSCE Action Plan that attempts to address the full spectrum of problems faced by

individuals and communities to play an active role in political life.

The OSCE, the first international organization to recognize the special problems of Roma, established the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues within the ODIHR in 1994.

A Roma from Romania, Mr. Gheorghe believes that international work in this field should enter a new phase. “It is time to pause, rethink current strategies and move away from approaches driven by emotional impulses and by the growing ‘market’ for high-visibility projects,” he says.

OSCE/Ayhan Evrensel



Nicolae Gheorghe, ODIHR Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, and Sinti leader Lalla Weiss

Two years ago, Mr. Gheorghe initiated the creation of an international contact group to improve the interaction between the main actors working on Roma-related issues.

“We need to sit down – governments, the OSCE, the European Union, the Council of Europe and others – and think about who should be doing what,” he continues. “The proposed OSCE Action Plan will be able to help in this process if it is well-co-ordinated and

avoids the trap of drawing up a comprehensive and over-ambitious wish-list.”

A working group has been set up in the Permanent Council to develop the Action Plan, chaired by Ambassador Liviu Bota, head of Romania’s Delegation to the OSCE. It is expected to be

adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council in December.

At the two-day preparatory meeting in Vienna, several participants said they hoped that Roma organizations would be closely involved in the process, possibly through a permanent representation in the working group or through an ad hoc consultative body. This would enable the voices of those directly

affected by the proposed measures to be given an adequate hearing.

The drafting of the OSCE Action Plan has presented the OSCE and its participating States with a unique opportunity to win over the sceptics by taking up the challenge presented by Ms. Weiss: to set “concrete, obtainable goals” that can ease the lives of millions of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area,

and to go beyond meetings “saying all kinds of beautiful things about Sinti and Roma”.

Jens-Hagen Eschenbächer is Spokesperson of the ODIHR and Head of its Public Affairs Unit. For more on the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti, please see: www.osce.org/odihr/cprsi

Background

There are an estimated 15 million Roma and Sinti around the world today, the majority of them in Europe. Also known as gypsies, they migrated from India between the 9th and the 14th centuries, dispersing across Europe and developing diverse communities, some with their own dialects. The language of the Roma, Romanes, is related to Hindi. Today, nomadism is not as central to the Roma culture as it used to be.

Roma have been persecuted throughout history and were victims of the Holocaust. Under the communist regimes in central and eastern Europe, they were at least provided with social security, some educational and employment opportunities, and protection from open discrimination. With the collapse of communism, their status was again set back. Many Roma were caught in the crossfire of violent conflicts result-

ing from the resurgence of nationalism in the region.

An OSCE report on the situation of Roma and Sinti, issued in March 2000, said: “Ten years after the iron curtain fell, Europe is at risk of being divided by new walls. Foremost among those persons being left outside Europe’s new security and prosperity are the Roma. In many countries, Roma have been decreed illegal residents on their own property, banished beyond municipal boundaries, and left outside the community of common concern. These are not isolated incidents, but widespread practices – sometimes systematic and on occasion systemic. To redress the long and hard experience of Roma requires, therefore, considerable attention, careful analysis, development of specific policies and commitment of adequate resources.”

The main issues

Political participation: The strong sense of ethnic and cultural identity of Roma has prevailed over any sense of national identity, wherever their country of residence is. As a result, they are not aware of the role of political participation as a means to influence their circumstances. The discrimination frequently experienced by the Roma has also alienated them from their countries’ political life.

Discrimination and racial violence: The widespread bias against Roma has seriously hindered their access to employment, education, housing and health care. In several countries, they have been targets of racial violence, including racially-motivated murder. Roma are often maltreated by the police.

Education: Romani children often encounter discrimination and rejection in public schools. It is not uncommon for them to be forced to go to schools for the mentally disabled.

Living conditions: Roma’s poor access to housing and health care has given rise to disease and malnutrition.

The Contact Point addresses these issues either through ODIHR programmes or by promoting the creation of local and national institutional mechanisms aimed at providing governments and groups with policy advice. Activities are co-ordinated with international and non-governmental organizations and draw the Roma’s close involvement.

Freedom of the media and the Internet: Resisting the regulatory reflex

By Christian Möller

How to ensure the free flow of information over a vast network of online resources while keeping out illegal content, was the focus of recent discussions among more than 25 experts from international organizations, the media, academia and specialized non-governmental organizations. The Conference on Freedom of the Media and the Internet, held on 13 and 14 June at Amsterdam's City Hall, was organized by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve

The Internet offers an unprecedented means for the global exchange of ideas and a free flow of information. In the OSCE region, it can even epitomize freedom of the media, just as the Serbian radio station B92 did in 1999, when it continued to disseminate its programmes on the Internet with help from the Dutch provider, XS4ALL.

The decentralized structure of the Internet would seem to guarantee unrestricted access to just about any existing material. Whenever an obstacle arises that threatens the free exchange of data, some computer experts — mostly young people — inevitably figure out how to circumvent it.

However, the ability to use the Internet's technical framework serves not only those trying to avoid the censors, but also the censors themselves. Indeed, in tandem with its growing usage, the relatively new and seemingly disorganized world of the Internet is being structured, regulated and rated. Governments, companies and copyright holders are just some of the many forces that attempt to restrict Internet users' access to content that they feel is unsuitable or inappropriate. Filtering and blocking, developing new instruments and lobbying for stricter legislation are among the methods employed.



Amsterdam's City Hall was the venue for the discussions on the Internet and freedom of the media

Hans Kleinsteuber, Professor of Political Science, Comparative Government and Journalism at Hamburg University, expressed serious concern about the growing number of laws and directives directed towards the Internet in a wide range of countries: "The tradition of censorship goes on in non-democratic States. In addition, there is censorship by hardware — often not by the State but by the industry. In the United States, copyright law is already used to limit the free use of the Internet. And I am concerned about the European Copyright Directive in this regard."

Tarlach McGonagle from the University of Amsterdam's Institute for Information Law, suggested that when it comes to the Internet, regulatory reflexes should be resisted in favour of reflection.

Sandy Starr from the online magazine, *Spiked*, added: "For the media to be free, decentralized networks should not be regulated, and it is a problem if people think that they should be. New

publishing and communications technologies force us to question the principles and assumptions that underlie the way we regulate speech and expression."

OSCE Media Representative Freimut Duve did not mince words. While he stressed that the criminal exploitation of the Internet should not be tolerated and that parties responsible for illegal content should be prosecuted, he insisted that "legislative and law enforcement activity must clearly target only illegal content and not the infrastructure of the Internet itself".

Mr. Duve said that, ultimately, the future freedom of the Internet could be guaranteed only through the distribution channels' clear commitment to the freedom of expression, together with a better understanding of the Internet's underlying technical infrastructure.

The Amsterdam Recommendations on Freedom of the Media and the Internet, issued by the OSCE Representative, cover a broad range of guidelines, with one overarching principle: no matter what technical vehicle is used to channel the work of journalists to the public — television, radio, newspapers or the Internet — the basic constitutional value of freedom of the media must remain unquestioned. "This principle, which is older than most of today's media, is one that all modern European societies are committed to," reads the preamble.

The *Amsterdam Recommendations* also make clear that "in a modern democratic and civil society, citizens themselves should make the decision on what they want to access on the Internet. The right to disseminate and to receive information is a basic human right. All mechanisms for filtering or blocking content are not acceptable".

Christian Möller is Project Assistant in the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

UPDATE

HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

Kyrgyzstan: HCNM supports integration and democratization. The High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, was in Kyrgyzstan from 14 to 17 April to meet government officials and representatives of minorities. His visit coincided with the completion of the constitutional reform process, undertaken by President Askar Akaev, and the initiation of a series of measures designed to strengthen the country's democratization process.

In his discussions with President Akaev, Foreign Minister Askar Aitmatov and other officials, Ambassador Ekeus stressed the need to integrate minorities into Kyrgyz society. Strengthening the representation of minorities in key sectors – including the police force – was identified as a potential area for further co-operation, as was minority education.

In his address to a roundtable in Osh on *Multilingual Education and Mother Tongue Education for National Minorities*, Ambassador Ekeus drew attention to the importance of developing the state language as a means of promoting integration and protecting the diversity of cultures and identities in Kyrgyzstan.

The High Commissioner also took the opportunity to personally monitor the fragile inter-ethnic situation in the Fergana Valley. He was struck by the complex set of issues that continued to cause friction, including border problems, religious extremism and underlying socio-economic factors.

Moscow: Issues concerning ethnic Russians examined. The High Commissioner visited Moscow from 14 to 16 May to update Foreign Minister Sergei Ivanov and other senior officials on his activities.

The status of ethnic Russians living outside the Russian Federation was one of the main concerns. Their situation, involving naturalization and immigration issues, had been affected by specific

actions of governments and various administrative changes.

Discussions also dealt with the use of minority languages by Russian speakers in some OSCE participating States, the question of dual citizenship for Russians in Turkmenistan, and the plight of the Meskhetians.

Latvia and Estonia: Language, education and naturalization are main themes. The High Commissioner visited Riga, Latvia, on 13 and 14 May to follow up on recommendations for the reform of secondary education. The Government plans to introduce Latvian as the language of instruction in all minority secondary schools, starting in September 2004.

The High Commissioner had cautioned that preparations under the transition phase should ensure that teaching Latvian as a second language followed proper standards. He warned that teaching the state language should not infringe on the Government's obligation to protect the right of minorities to obtain education in their mother tongue. Ambassador Ekeus stressed the need for dialogue among education authorities, parents and teachers on the rationale for the new plan.

High Commissioner Ekeus also pledged his support for Latvia's process of social integration. He informed the authorities that his Office had just received funds from the Swedish Government for a project to draft a manual for the State's language inspectors.

Social integration was also a major theme of the High Commissioner's visit to Estonia from 10 to 11 June. In Tallinn, he met Prime Minister Juhan Parts and other representatives of the new Government. Ambassador Ekeus was informed about the Government's intention to continue the implementation of the State Integration Programme.

On the issue of education reform, the

High Commissioner suggested that the Estonian Government draw up a transparent and target-oriented action plan with all the stakeholders. This would build confidence and ensure that teachers of the state language in minority schools and their teaching materials are up to standard. These measures are particularly important in regions such as Ida-Virumaa, in the northeast, which have high concentrations of Russophones. The High Commissioner offered to assist in managing the education reform process. As in Latvia, he expressed his willingness to provide language inspectors with training.

Noordwijk, Netherlands: HCNM meeting on minorities and media.

The High Commissioner hosted a meeting in Noordwijk, Netherlands, on the use of minority languages in the electronic media in the OSCE area. The event, on 9 and 10 June, was the latest in a series of consultations among independent experts and representatives of international organizations under a project initiated by the HCNM.

The project's overall aim is to encourage policies that do not hinder the use of minority languages in the media, and to foster a media culture that is responsive to all segments of society. The concept stemmed from the High Commissioner's concern that planned and existing legislation in a number of OSCE participating States posed serious constraints to the development of public and private radio and television broadcasting in non-state or official languages; this, he pointed out, could have a negative impact on linguistic minorities.

The project consists of three parts: clarifying state practices, examining how the international standards are interpreted and discussing the broader policy issues at an awareness-raising, inter-governmental meeting.

UPDATE

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Central Asia is focus of parliamentary forum

Improving the parliamentary dialogue on security-related issues in Central Asia was the goal of the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 7 to 9 June. The event drew together more than 90 parliamentarians from 30 OSCE participating States. Japan, Korea and Egypt, which are OSCE Partners for Co-operation, were also represented.

The gathering was addressed by Kazakhstan's President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, the speakers of the Senate and *Majilis* (parliament), the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for the Economy.

Speaking on the issue of terrorism, one of the biggest threats to security in the OSCE region, Bruce George, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) told the participants that it was not enough to react to terrorist acts; even more important was to understand and address terrorism's root causes.

He urged constant vigilance concerning methods used to combat terrorism. "Limitations in fundamental freedoms and human rights in exchange for greater security is not a sacrifice we should be willing to make," he said.

The PA President noted that Central Asia still faced formidable obstacles to its economic, social and political development. Emphasizing the close link between the economy and the environment, he stressed that parliamentary agendas should give greater priority to environmental issues, including the region's shrinking seas and polluted rivers and the dumping of radioactive waste.

He said that while the PA welcomed efforts to devote more attention to economic and environmental issues and other aspects of security in Central Asia, "they must not come at the expense of the human dimension, which encom-



PA President Bruce George (second from left) and the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev (third from left), open the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum

passes a wide variety of issues from free and fair elections to the fight against trafficking in human beings".

Parliamentary Working Group on Belarus visits Gomel and Minsk

Three members of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus – Uta Zapf (Germany), who chairs the Group, Urban Ahlin (Sweden) and Lord Ponsoby (United Kingdom) – visited Minsk and the city of Gomel from 25 to 28 May.

The visit was the first since the decision, taken by the Standing Committee of the OSCE PA in February 2003, to grant representatives of the Belarusian National Assembly a seat in the PA. Subjects under discussion included preparations for the parliamentary elections in 2004 and strategies to promote dialogue among members of the National Assembly, opposition forces within the National Assembly, opposition political parties and civil society representatives.

In Gomel, the parliamentarians met local government and civil society representatives and were briefed on the lingering effects of the Chernobyl disaster and on local political developments.

Giovanni Kessler leads OSCE election monitors in Armenia

The parliamentary elections in Armenia, held on 25 May, were observed by an OSCE PA delegation from six countries. The group was headed by Giovanni Kessler, member of the Italian Delegation to the PA, who served as Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and worked closely with the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Delivering the post-election statement on behalf of the OSCE, Mr. Kessler said that following a generally peaceful campaign, the delegation had observed an election which represented "an improvement in meeting international standards, despite a number of serious incidents and shortcomings during the electoral process". He regretted the lack of confidence shown by the voters in the electoral process.

European Parliament hosts conference on Stability Pact

The Fourth Parliamentary Conference on the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe took place in Brussels on 21

and 22 May, with 15 members of the OSCE PA from nine countries taking part. The Conference was hosted by the European Parliament and was organized under the auspices of the Parliamentary Troika (OSCE PA, Council of Europe PA and the European Parliament).

At the opening session, OSCE PA Vice-President Gert Weisskirchen (Germany) focused on the need to develop civil society and to strengthen regional co-operation as a solution to many of the problems in south-eastern Europe. PA President Bruce George, who will chair the Parliamentary Troika in 2004, emphasized the important role played by parliamentary action in the framework of the Stability Pact.

Bern Declaration seeks to promote SMEs in the OSCE area

More than 80 parliamentarians from 30 OSCE participating States adopted the *Bern Declaration on Promoting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises* (SMEs) in the OSCE area, following discussions in the Swiss parliament in Bern on 14 and 15 May. The Declaration calls on OSCE participating States to create legal and regulatory environments favourable to the development of SMEs, along with attractive taxation systems and guaranteed access to various facilities.

Drawing attention to the growing contribution of the OSCE PA to the Organization's economic dimension, OSCE PA President Bruce George said: "As parliamentarians, we are aware of the importance of SMEs in our economies. Our common focus is to urge policymakers to assess and co-ordinate their actions at local, national, and international level, when ensuring an environment that is conducive to entrepreneurship, as well as to develop policies that facilitate the start-up and growth of SMEs in the OSCE area."

The conference, which was also addressed by Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey, was chaired by PA Vice-President Barbara Haering.

OSCE PA officials visit Bulgaria

PA President Bruce George was in Sofia from 19 to 21 May at the invitation

of the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy and the Bulgarian Delegation to the OSCE PA. Bulgaria's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2004 was among the main topics of discussion. The PA President invited Bulgarian parliamentarians to be active during the Chairmanship and to serve as a link between the PA and the Chairman-in-Office.

Parliamentarians examine federalism solution in Moldova

A seminar on federalism took place in Moldova on 12 and 13 May, with Chisinau serving as the venue on the first day, and Tiraspol the next. The event was designed to contribute to current efforts to resolve the decade-old dispute revolving around the status of the Transdnestrian region through the creation of a federal state [see page 6].

"It is vital that at this critical moment for your country, the elected political leaders recognize their responsibilities," OSCE PA President Bruce George told parliamentarians from Moldova, representatives of the Transdnestrian Supreme Soviet and the chief negotiators from both parties. "This may include taking difficult decisions and making compromises in order to secure a better future for the country and its people."

The two sides learned about Europe's experience with the federalist model from Austrian, Belgian, German, Russian and Swiss parliamentarians.

The seminar was organized by the OSCE PA's Parliamentary Team on Moldova, in close co-operation with the OSCE Mission. It was chaired by Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen (MP, Finland), Vice-President of the OSCE PA, who is also Chair of the Parliamentary Team.

PA Expanded Bureau meets

The Expanded Bureau of the OSCE PA, which is composed of the President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Committee Officers, met at the Danish parliament on 24 and 25 April to discuss the General Committees' reports and draft resolutions preparatory to the PA's Annual Session in Rotterdam from 5 to 9 July.

Among other matters, the parliamentarians were informed about the ongoing work of the Assembly's Ad Hoc Committees dealing with issues in Abkhazia, Belarus, Kosovo and Moldova. Mr. George also announced that U.S. Congressman Steny Hoyer had agreed to continue as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability, which has been strengthened by several new members.

Washington to host PA's 14th Annual Session

At the PA's Expanded Bureau Meeting, PA Vice-President Alcee Hastings conveyed the offer of the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Delegation to the OSCE PA to host the 14th Annual Session of the OSCE PA in Washington, D.C., in July 2005. In 2004, it will meet in Edinburgh, United Kingdom.

Parliamentarians visit Skopje

Eleven OSCE Parliamentarians representing eight countries visited the OSCE Spillover Monitoring Mission to Skopje from 7 to 9 April. The delegation was led by Goran Lenmarker (Sweden), Chair of the First General Committee.

The group met the Head of Mission, Craig Jenness, and his staff, the Parliament's Delegation to the OSCE PA and parliamentarians from seven political parties. The group also visited the new EU protection force, Concordia. Nikola Popovski, President of the Parliament, described the progress in implementing the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which required the adoption of some 100 new laws. The talks dealt with the country's integration into the EU, NATO and other European structures.

In Kumanovo, the delegation visited the OSCE Field Office and met the city mayor. The parliamentarians also had discussions with the mayors of the towns of Lipkovo and Aracinovo, which were severely affected by the 2001 crisis.

The field visit was the tenth of its kind, following visits to OSCE field activities in Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Croatia and Albania.



FROM THE FIELD

Tajikistan's northern region tackles human trafficking problem

A four-month campaign, designed to raise people's awareness of the issues relating to human trafficking, came to an end in Tajikistan's northern region of Sughd on 1 July. Community leaders, schoolteachers, journalists, representatives of youth groups and key personnel dealing with migration were among the target groups of 18 seminars organized by the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe.

A study published in 2001 by the International Organization for Migration had estimated that in 2000, some 1,000 women and children were trafficked from Tajikistan, mainly to the Middle East and countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Thousands of Tajiks continue to seek employment abroad, putting them at risk as potential victims of trafficking.

One of the trainers, a prosecutor, told the press that trafficking in Tajikistan's countryside was widespread and mentioned cases of parents selling their own children for the equivalent of less than a dollar a night. "Human trafficking is not just a question of the sexual exploitation of women," he said. "There are several other ways it manifests itself – through forced pregnancies, trade in human organs and slave labour."

Serbian Ministry of Social Affairs assisted in fighting trafficking

A seminar was held in Belgrade on 2 June to support the efforts of the Serbian Ministry of Social Affairs in its fight against trafficking in human beings. Participants gained a better understanding of the root causes of human trafficking and its impact on Serbia and Montenegro.

Guided by the OSCE Mission's multi-disciplinary approach, the seminar focused on issues concerning the prevention of trafficking, the protection of the victims of crime and the prosecution of traffickers, including domestic and international legislation. Close co-operation was encouraged between the Serbian

Ministries of Social Affairs, Interior and Justice and the non-governmental sector. Social service providers were able to establish stronger ties with the police.

The seminar was organized in co-operation with the Serbian Ministry of Social Affairs and with the support of the Serbian Team to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.

OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje: Legal professionals trained

A seminar aimed at strengthening prosecutions and ensuring fair trials in trafficking-related cases took place in Struga on 6 and 7 June. Some 70 prosecutors and investigative judges as well as representatives of the Interior and Justice Ministries reviewed the legal and procedural aspects of trafficking cases and discussed practical issues related to crime detection, evidence gathering, witness protection and fair trial practices.

The seminar was organized by the Centre for Continuous Education of the Association of Judges and financed by the OSCE Mission.



OSCE/Netherlands Chairmanship

The fight against trafficking in human beings is high on the agenda of the Netherlands' OSCE Chairmanship in 2003

Agreement on witness protection signed in Albania

A memorandum of understanding establishing a Witness Protection Task Force was signed on 17 June by several government ministries and international agencies. The Task Force will provide witnesses with logistical and financial support and assist the Albanian Government in developing and carrying out legislation dealing with the issue.

The memorandum will remain in effect until such time as the proper legislative framework on witness protection is adopted and the national authorities take over the activities set out in the document. This was made possible by the Albanian Ministry of State and the OSCE Presence in Albania.

Commenting on the significance of the memorandum, Albanian Minister of State Blendi Klosi said: "Without adequate witness protection, it is very difficult to encourage witnesses to testify and to participate in the justice system. Their testimony is crucial to the fight against trafficking and organized crime; without it, prosecution cannot proceed."

Reforms proposed for Montenegro's anti-trafficking legislation

National and international legal experts met in Podgorica on 23 to 24 June to draw up recommendations for the reform of anti-trafficking provisions in Montenegro's criminal law.

The Ministry of Justice will take the experts' recommendations into account when finalizing the draft legislation.

The group discussed the draft Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code and adopted a set of proposals to ensure that Montenegro's legislation on human trafficking-related issues complies with international standards.

The meeting was organized by the OSCE Office in Podgorica, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe.



PRESS PROFILE

Excerpts from a recent selection of articles on the OSCE and its activities

OSCE FIELD AREAS

Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 14 April

Corruption in Armenia has spiralled out of control in recent years, according to a recent survey conducted by the international non-governmental organization, Regional Development/Transparency International ... An international working group has been set up under the auspices of the OSCE Office in Yerevan to help Armenia fight the problem. The group includes representatives of the World Bank, IMF, UNDP, the European Commission and various European embassies.

EurasiaNet.org, 23 April

The [Armenian Constitutional] court upheld [incumbent President Robert] Kocharian's election on appeal from Stepan Demirchian, the opposition candidate, who charged that government workers falsified results. Yet the court attached a recommendation to its decision, advocating a popular referendum within a year ... The court shared the concerns expressed by monitors from the Council of Europe and the OSCE about violations of electoral procedures.

AFP, 2 April

The freeing of [environmental activist Farid] Tukhbatullin was welcomed by the OSCE's Ashkhabad representative Paraschiva Badescu. The move might be linked to scrutiny Turkmenistan is likely to come under at a UN human rights conference currently under way in Geneva, she said. "Turkmenistan's nascent civil society watched Tukhbatullin's case with great alarm. We're pleased at his unexpected release," Badescu told AFP.

AP, 24 April

Turkmen authorities on Thursday handed over to U.S. officials an Ameri-

can citizen accused of involvement in an alleged assassination attempt against the leader of this tightly-controlled former Soviet republic, which opposition leaders and human rights advocates contend was fabricated to provide a pretense for a brutal crackdown ... The U.S. was co-sponsor of a request to the OSCE to investigate reported torture and mass arrests in Turkmenistan following the alleged assassination plot. The OSCE [RFOM] has labeled televised trials after the November 25 attack as "Stalinist".

Radio Free Europe, 23 April

[From an editorial, "Kazakhstan – Why there is no Democracy"] Kazakhstan's Justice Ministry shut down 12 opposition parties ... A law passed in June 2002 raised from 3,000 to 50,000 the minimum number of members a political party must have in order to be officially recognized and required all parties to re-register ... The OSCE has pressed for registration of parties and non-governmental groups in the last decade, but few OSCE officials are willing to endure the continual confrontation with governments in power required to keep advocating for opposition parties ... In practice, few Western diplomats have the stomach to return to these pledges [of the OSCE's 1990 Copenhagen Agreement]; by calling attention to them, some fear, they may open up the entire fragile OSCE consensus to a renegotiation which will cause such guarantees to become as watered down on paper as they are in real life.

BBC, 23 May

The Moldovan Government acknowledges the problem [of human trafficking] and has been working with the European security body, the OSCE, on drafting anti-trafficking legislation. William Hill, the OSCE's Ambassador to Moldova, says the phenomenon grew rapidly during the late 1990s. "By late

2001, it was clear that Moldova was the largest supplier State in all of Europe," he said. "A lot of the victims are lured into it by deceptive advertisements that promise them work. Typically, once they answer these ads, they are fooled, they go off with the traffickers and once they get into a foreign country their papers are taken away and essentially they become slaves."

OSCE IN GENERAL

AFP, 10 April

Three NGOs appealed Thursday to the OSCE to investigate reports of forced sterilization of Roma women in Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic ... [ODIHR Director] Christian Strohal said the OSCE would address the NGO appeals as soon as they were presented, as well as see to an "action plan" enabling the Roma to return to war-torn regions, to move freely across borders, and to participate in the electoral process.

AFP, 10 April

Billionaire U.S. financier George Soros criticized Thursday the Romanian Government for its human rights record and urged Europe's OSCE security organization to investigate. Soros told the OSCE in Vienna that Romania had made significant progress in complying with international rights standards over the last decade, but that the Social Democrat government had reversed that trend in the last two years.

Reuters, 26 May

The media watchdog of the largest Western security and rights organization asked the United States on Monday to explain why six French journalists were handcuffed, detained and deported from a Los Angeles airport. Freimut Duve ... wrote to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell for clarification of the incident ...



UPDATE

SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE SECRETARIAT

Vienna: OSCE-EU meeting of senior officials, 28 May

A meeting between senior officials of the OSCE and the European Union took place in Vienna on 28 May under the arrangements of the *Platform for Co-operative Security*.

The first of its kind, the meeting enabled the participants to engage in detailed discussions, complementing the regular dialogue that takes place in the field and at the political level.

The talks focused on broader strategic issues relating to the implementation of political decisions taken by the governing bodies of the OSCE and the EU. There was an exchange of information and concrete ideas on how activities can be jointly reinforced to increase their impact.

Also participating were representatives of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the OSCE Troika and the OSCE Task Force within the Netherlands' Foreign Ministry

Tehran: Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, 28 to 31 May

Secretary General Jan Kubis and the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Daan Everts, attended the 30th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers. The Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Abdelouahed Belkeziz, had invited the OSCE to attend the session as an observer.

The Secretary General and Ambassador Everts were received by the Foreign Minister of Iran, Kamal Kharrazi, and met other Iranian officials.

Ohrid: Conference on Border Security and Management, 22 and 23 May

The Secretary General took part in the Ohrid Regional Conference on Border Security and Management and

addressed its opening meeting on behalf of the Chairman-in-Office.

At a bilateral level, he met Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski and Foreign Minister Ilinka Mitreva, Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy and Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister Nebojsa Covic.

The Secretary General also visited the new headquarters of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and the police school in Idrizovo, where multi-ethnic police receive training by the Ministry of Interior and the OSCE. At the Mission's Field Office in Tetovo, he was briefed on the latest developments in the Organization's efforts to build confidence and strengthen institutions.

Vienna: Visit of Afghan delegation, 21 May

Following the Permanent Council's decision to grant Afghanistan the status of OSCE Partner for Co-operation, seven high-level diplomats from the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs took part in full-day briefings and discussions organized by the OSCE Secretariat's External Co-operation Section. The visit was part of the diplomats' three-week study tour of various international organizations. It was sponsored by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Strasbourg: Council of Europe Ministerial Meeting, 15 May

The Secretary General addressed the 112th meeting of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. He had bilateral meetings with Moldovan Foreign Minister Nicolae Dudau and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov.

Vienna: African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, 12 May

The Secretary General received a delegation headed by the Algerian Minister for Maghreb and African Affairs,

Abdelkader Messahel. The group was interested in exploring an exchange of information between the OSCE and the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, an institution of the African Union. The Centre, scheduled to be inaugurated this year, will assist African States in implementing their anti-terrorism commitments.

At the meeting, a proposal was made to establish working-level contacts with the OSCE's Action Against Terrorism Unit and to identify other areas of co-operation.

Vienna: Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan, 12 May

The Secretary General and the Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan, Joomart Otorbaev, discussed current OSCE-Kyrgyzstan co-operation, focusing on the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the proposed Police Training Programme. Mr. Otorbaev stressed the importance that his country placed on economic development, foreign investment, good governance and regional co-operation.

Vienna: OSCE-UN meeting of senior officials, Vienna, 8 May

The second OSCE-UN meeting of senior officials continued to strengthen relations between the two organizations by means of regular consultations. In December 2001, a delegation of senior officials from the OSCE Secretariat had visited New York for a first round of working-level talks at UN Headquarters, notably with the Departments of Political Affairs, Disarmament Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations.

Brussels: COSCE meeting, 7 May

At the invitation of the Greek Presidency of the European Union, Secretary General Jan Kubis visited Brussels, where he briefed the EU Working Group

on the OSCE and the Council of Europe (the “COSCE” meeting) and had a working lunch with the Troika ambassadors of the Political and Security Committee. He also met Pieter Feith, Deputy Director General responsible for the European security and defence policy of the Council of the European Union.

The discussions focused on the impact of EU enlargement on OSCE processes, the EU’s support for the OSCE management reforms and the need for closer co-operation with the EU in several areas, especially in south-eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus as well as in Moldova. Many of these topics were further discussed at the OSCE-EU meeting at the staff level in Vienna on 28 May.

The Secretary General also met the President of the International Crisis Group (ICG), Gareth Evans. They discussed activities in the field and their assessment of the situation in regions with an OSCE presence, as reflected in the ICG reports.

Vienna: Strengthening OSCE-UNECE co-operation, 29 April

Secretary General Jan Kubis and the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Brigita Schmognerova, met to discuss the co-operation between the two organizations. Topics covered the role of the UNECE in the preparation of the document outlining the OSCE’s economic and environmental strategy; the role of the UNECE in the preparatory sessions of the Economic Forum; the “Wider Europe” process launched by the UNECE last year, and a possible joint meeting. Also discussed was the drawing up of a memorandum of understanding and a catalogue of co-operative arrangements between the two organizations.

Vienna: UNODC-OSCE “stock-taking”, 24 April

Following the Secretary General’s meeting in February with Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa of the

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), a “stock-taking” meeting between the UNODC and the OSCE was held at the staff level in the OSCE. A number of joint concerns and priorities were identified as well as new forms of more structured co-operation.

Belgrade: Discussions on Serbia and Montenegro, 8 and 9 April

Secretary General Jan Kubis visited Belgrade at the invitation of the Government of Serbia and Montenegro. He had a series of high-level meetings with, among others, the President of the Parliament of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, Dragoljub Micunovic; Serbia and Montenegro’s Foreign Minister, Goran Svilanovic; Serbia’s Deputy Prime Minister, Nebojsa Covic; and Serbia’s Interior Minister, Dusan Mihajlovic.



Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Nebojsa Covic, and OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis

Discussions focused on the widely-praised close co-operation between the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro and the host country’s authorities, the state of emergency (since lifted), priority areas in which the OSCE was requested to provide further support and the situation in Kosovo.

On 9 April, the Secretary General took part in the Sixth Summit of the Heads of

State and Government of the South-East European Co-operation Process.

Rome: Consultations with Italian Government, 17 April

At the invitation of the Italian authorities, the Secretary General had meetings with senior officials in the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Interior Ministries.

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, issues related to the forthcoming Italian presidency of the European Union and co-operation with the OSCE were discussed with Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona, Director General for Multilateral Affairs, and former Secretary General of the OSCE.

At the Ministry of Defence, the Secretary General met with Deputy Chief of Staff, General Vincenzo Camporini, who confirmed Italy’s interest in working closely with the OSCE and in contributing to the Organization’s various activities, within the Secretariat and in the field.

At the Ministry of Interior, co-operation in police activities, training, crime prevention, the fight against organized crime and against trafficking in drugs and human beings were the

main topics of discussion between the Secretary General and the Deputy Head of Police, Giuseppe Procaccini.

New York: UN Security Council high-level meeting, 11 April

At the invitation of the Mexican presidency of the United Nations Security Council, the Secretary General attended a high-level meeting on *The Security*

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Council and Regional Organizations: Facing New Challenges to International Peace and Security.

The meeting focused on recent experiences of regional organizations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. Also discussed were ways of strengthening the international security system through improved co-

ordination between the UN and regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Secretary General also held bilateral meetings with Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary General of the Department for Political Affairs, and Hedi An-nabi, Assistant Secretary- General of the

Department for Peacekeeping Operations.

Co-operation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee was discussed at a meeting with its Chairman, Ambassador Inocencio Arias Llamas, including the work of the Group of Friends of the Chair, which contributes towards implementation of the OSCE's anti-terrorism commitments.

Brian Woo is first head of Action Against Terrorism Unit

Brian Woo, a career U.S. Foreign Service Officer with wide experience in managing counter-terrorism activities, has been appointed Head of the Secretariat's Action Against Terrorism Unit.

Established in 2002, the Unit supports and develops programmes aimed at bolstering the capacity of OSCE participating States to combat terrorism. Mr. Woo joins advisers Susanne Ringgaard-Pedersen (Denmark) and Harri Humaloja (Finland) in the Unit.

Prior to joining the OSCE on 16 April, Mr. Woo was Director of the U.S. State Department's Counter-Terrorism Programmes, Planning and Public Diplomacy Directorate.

"The challenges are similar, whether they are in Washington or here in the OSCE," he said. "Avoiding overlap in our bilateral and multilateral anti-terrorism efforts is a goal that we all share. At the same time, many countries continue to request or need help in strengthening border controls, countering the financing of terrorists and developing basic first-response capabilities for terrorist attacks."

He noted that an impressive list of counter-terrorism successes was recorded in 2002, including in OSCE countries. The number of terrorist attacks dropped significantly, by 44 per cent, from 355 registered globally in 2001; 717 people lost their lives, compared to 3,295 in 2001; and fewer than 2,000 were wounded by terrorists, down from 2,283.

However, Mr. Woo warned that



Brian Woo, Head of Action Against Terrorism Unit

these positive trends should not be cause for complacency. "September 11 provided the critical impetus for strengthening our global efforts against terrorism," he said. "Recent attacks in Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Chechnya demonstrate that we face an enduring threat – one that will require years, if not decades, of international resolve and action."

The big challenge still remaining was fulfilling our collective commitments under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373, Mr. Woo said. He noted that the OSCE's strong commitment was underscored by the *Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism* and the *Bishkek Programme of Action* as well as the initiatives of the Chairman-in-Office, such as the Informal Group of Friends of the Chair.

Recognizing the opportunities for strengthening co-operation in combating terrorism through the OSCE, Mr. Woo has been meeting with delegations to establish closer working ties

with participating States on anti-terrorism concerns. "The OSCE's importance to sub-regional, regional and global counter-terrorism is obvious," he said. "OSCE successes in conflict prevention, crisis management, democratization, human rights and strengthening the rule of law provide a solid basis for assisting States in strengthening anti-terrorism capacity."

In addition to serving as a senior staff member in the Secretary of State's Counter-Terrorism Office, Brian Woo has worked on other transnational problems, including action to combat narcotic drugs, AIDS/HIV, trafficking in human beings and money laundering.

His last overseas posting was as Consul-General and Principal Officer in Chengdu, China. In Washington, D.C., Mr. Woo also served as a Member of the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Council and as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. As Senior Fellow at the Henry L. Stimson Center for International and Strategic Policy, he joined other policy and arms control experts in recently recommending policy directions for the U.S. missile defence programme.

Mr. Woo, a native of Hawaii, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Hawaii and is a graduate of the Asia Pacific Center for Strategic Studies. He is a recipient of the Department of State's Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards.



UPDATE

OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Coming events

- 7 to 13 July.** Training workshop for NGO coalition members as part of the women's leadership and NGO coalition-building programme in Georgia
- 8 to 11 July.** Continuation of training-of-trainers workshops on prison reform in Armenia
- 14 and 15 July.** International roundtable on experiences and prospects for the reform of border services, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 14 to 20 July.** Training-of-trainers workshop for education programme on women's rights in Armenia
- 17 and 18 July.** Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Vienna

Recent events

- 7 July.** Workshop on the reform of the civil registration system in Belarus, Minsk
- 30 June to 5 July.** Visit to Kazakhstan on reform of election legislation
- 30 June.** Participation in the Meeting of the Stability Pact Anti-Trafficking Task Force Co-ordination Team, Vienna
- 27 to 30 June.** Civil Society Conference of South-Eastern Europe on Building Regional Partnerships and Networks, Kosovo
- 26 and 27 June.** Expert meeting on draft *National Referral Mechanism Handbook*, Warsaw
- 25 to 29 June.** European domestic election observer forum, Zagreb, Croatia
- 23 to 24 June.** Workshop on procedural and substantive aspects of the fight against trafficking in human beings, Podgorica, Serbia and Montenegro
- 22 to 24 June.** Workshop on cross-border co-operation on labour migration issues for Central Asia and the Russian Federation, Issyk-Kul', Kyrgyzstan
- 19 to 26 June.** Working meetings on the proposed concept for gender politics in Kazakhstan
- 19 and 20 June.** Workshop on the new Law on the State Prosecutor, Podgorica, Serbia and Montenegro
- 17 to 19 June.** Visit of the ODIHR Director to Georgia
- 9 to 25 June.** Training workshops for high-ranking police officials and NGOs on combating domestic violence, Tbilisi, Georgia, and Yerevan, Armenia
- 15 June.** Observation of re-run parliamentary elections in Armenia
- 9 June.** Workshop on Building the Capacities of National Structures for Developing Migration Indicators, Kyiv, Ukraine
- 8 June.** Observation of municipal elections in Moldova, second round
- 7 to 10 June.** Visit of the ODIHR Director to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan
- 2 June.** Roundtable meeting on co-operation of international organizations with the Judicial Training Institute, in Almaty, Kazakhstan

For more information on these and other activities of the ODIHR, please visit [osce.org/odihr](https://www.osce.org/odihr)



“The Bridge of Mostar” • Theseus Tempel, Volksgarten, Vienna • 17 July to 31 August

The multimedia presentation transports visitors to the Old Bridge of Mostar, inviting them to reflect on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s rich cultural heritage and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. An art installation with stones from the bridge, films and graphics trace the history of the bridge: its construction in the 16th century, its destruction in 1993 and the ongoing restoration work with the help of the international community.

The exhibition also features black and white photographs by national artist Ciril Ciro Raic, who has documented the bridge and its multicultural setting over the past 50 years. “The Bridge of Mostar” is sponsored by the Netherlands OSCE Chairmanship 2003, in co-operation with the Kunsthistorisches Museum and with the support of the Netherlands Embassy in Vienna.

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