

# Report of the Chairman-in-Office

*“On 1 January, I assumed with optimism my responsibilities as Chairman-in-Office. We wanted to demonstrate that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) remained instrumental in bridging the great European divide of the Cold War. We wanted to highlight that the body of commitments, norms and principles that bind the participating States continue to offer an up-to-date vision for collective security.*

*To this end, we worked hard with the participating States to address the conflicts that persist in the OSCE area. We also engaged with them on thematic issues related to all three dimensions. I visited the OSCE regions extensively: North America and the Russian Federation several times, the South Caucasus in January, June and October, the Western Balkans in February and again in April, Moldova and Ukraine in June, Central Asia in March and November. In addition, international and European gatherings offered welcome opportunities to further dialogue with colleagues from various capitals as well as with partner organizations. I was also pleased to receive the numerous visitors who came to look me up at home in Brussels.*

*Detailed description of the work accomplished follows. In the course of 2006, new concrete steps were taken in combating organized crime, in promoting dialogue on transport and energy security issues and in fighting sexual exploitation of children, to name but a few. The Ljubljana mandate on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE was also completed. On the other hand, resolution of the protracted conflicts remained elusive. In this regard, let me simply reiterate that the blueprints for solutions are there, ready, available and on the table. Political will alone is missing. Vision and responsibility on the part of the leaders is required more than ever.*

*It is the responsibility of the participating States of the OSCE to continue obstinately to seek relief for the populations who suffer from the conflicts.”*

2006  
Chairman-in-Office  
Karel De Gucht

## Addressing conflicts

### Nagorno-Karabakh

The Chairman-in-Office announced that bringing about solutions to protracted conflicts was one of his key objectives for 2006. This clearly included the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

His first international visit as Chairman-in-Office was to Armenia and Azerbaijan on 24 and 25 January amid hopeful signs of a settlement. Elections were not planned in either of the two countries for 2006, leading to the belief that negotiators would have a freer hand to explore solutions.

The Chairman assisted the sides in their high-level meetings in Rambouillet (February), Vilnius (May), Bucharest (June) and Minsk (November). A meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Ministers for Foreign Affairs was hosted by the Chairman in Brussels on 14 November. No opportunity was missed to encourage the parties to come closer to an agreement on the basic principles of a settlement. The Chairman was in constant touch with the Minsk Group Co-chairmen, whom he occasionally summoned to Brussels. Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, his Personal Representative, assisted him.

At the OSCE Ministerial Council in Brussels, participating States recognized the progress accomplished, urged the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to redouble their efforts and finalize the basic principles that had taken shape in the course of the year

and pledged that the OSCE would continue to play its facilitating role as an honest broker.

In the meanwhile, the Personal Representative of the Chairman and his office continued monitoring the front line with the aim of keeping tensions under control. Ceasefire violations occurred throughout the year, at times even threatening the personal security of the monitoring teams. The situation came to a head in July when monitoring had to be suspended after a shooting incident.



Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht

Belgia/Benoit Doppagne



OSCE/David Swalley

OSCE vehicles carrying experts during an OSCE-led mission in October to assess the environmental impact of fires in and around Nagorno-Karabakh



OSCE

Experts examine a map during the Environmental Assessment Mission.

All through the year, the search continued for confidence-building measures and opportunities for grass-root contacts between the sides.

In the summer, fires erupted in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region, threatening human health and security and destroying the livelihood of the inhabitants. Damages straddled both sides of the line of contact, which made co-operation indispensable.

The Personal Representative conducted a short-term monitoring mission from 3 to 5 July. He confirmed the significant spread of the fires and suggested that a broader assessment be conducted.

Upon the request of Azerbaijan, the Chairman initiated an international Environmental Assessment Mission with the mandate to assess the impact of the fires and to make recommendations for an environmental operation. The terms of reference of the mission were agreed on 25 September. The mission, backed by United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 285, included experts from the UN, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU) as well as local experts from both sides of the line of contact. The eleven-day mission set off to the fire-affected

areas on 3 October, led by Bernard Snoy, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. The report, presented to the Chairman in November and shared with the participating States, made recommendations for fire and water management measures and is presently being considered for further follow-up. The mission marked an important step in the process of confidence building in the region, involving local communities and shaping a joint understanding of the issues at hand.

As foreseen by the UN General Assembly Resolution, the Chairman transmitted the report to the UN Secretary-General for distribution among the member States of the General Assembly.

### Moldova

In his efforts to intensify the search for a lasting solution to the issue of Transnistria, the Chairman kept in constant touch with his counterparts in Moldova, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. He made sure that the formal negotiations, which had resumed in a new format in December 2005 after a long breakdown, would continue. The new '5+2' format added the EU and the United States of America as observers to the two parties and the three mediators (the OSCE, Ukraine and the Russian

### The High-Level Planning Group

Established in 1994 at the Budapest Summit of the CSCE, the forerunner of the OSCE, the High-Level Planning Group was tasked with making plans for a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force once the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference is resolved. It liaises with the Co-chairmen of the Minsk Group as well as with the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office.

As hopes grew for a settlement during the year, the Planning Group intensified its activities. It conducted a reconnaissance mission, which started in December 2005 in Armenia and Azerbaijan and ended in January 2006 with a visit to the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The mission generated updated information on the operational, logistical and financial aspects of a possible peacekeeping mission.

The High-Level Planning Group continued to liaise with other international organizations and training institutes. It was expanded in 2006 with the hiring of an additional Personnel/Training Officer.

Federation). They met on 26 and 27 January in Chisinau and on 27 and 28 February in Tiraspol.

The implementation of a new joint customs regime between Moldova and Ukraine based on their Declaration of 30 December 2005, requiring companies in Transnistria to register with the central authorities in Chisinau, created a new situation on the ground. The registration requirement met with a blank refusal by Transnistria despite the Chairman's calls for an implementation in good faith. No further '5+2' talks could be held in 2006.

To prepare for a major visit to the region, the Chairman sent his Special Envoy, Senator Pierre Chevalier, to visit Chisinau and Tiraspol in mid-April and chaired a meeting of the mediators and observers in Brussels in May. It allowed him to take stock of the stalled negotiations and to identify new issues which could become relevant for an overall political settlement. From 30 May to 1 June he visited Chisinau and Tiraspol. He underlined the usefulness of the new transparent management of the Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border and stressed once again the OSCE's basic position: a negotiated, peaceful settlement, respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova and with a special status for the Transnistrian region. He suggested economic initiatives likely to increase confidence and goodwill. He also referred to the problem created by the continued presence of Russian military and suggested the positive effects that could be expected from an enlarged peacekeeping force under an international mandate.

The Chairman's Special Envoy subsequently travelled repeatedly to the capitals. The participants in the '5+2' negotiations were presented with a package of written suggestions on behalf of the Chairmanship on a new peacekeeping mission under an international mandate, elements for a statute for Transnistria within the Republic of Moldova and socio-economic elements of a settlement process. However, it soon became clear that not all the participants were ready to pursue these ideas.

During the special meeting of the Permanent Council on 28 September, the Chairman devoted specific attention to the unresolved conflicts. He emphasized that all the elements of a political solution were on the table, and called for the political will to move ahead. He urged all sides to show responsibility and vision.

The Chairman's Representatives took part in meetings in Odesa on 25 October aimed at reviving the formal '5+2' talks. On 16 November, the Chairman called and chaired another informal meeting of the mediators and observers to discuss resumption of the settlement process and transformation of the peacekeeping format. The latter received added attention in a follow-up meeting held on 6 December in Brussels on the margins of the Ministerial Council. At the Council itself, it unfortunately proved impossible to get participating States to agree a Ministerial Statement.

## Georgia

The Chairman-in-Office also focused this year on the conflict in South Ossetia, with initiatives aimed at helping the parties



The Chairman-in-Office (centre) poses with officers of the trilateral peacekeeping forces during a visit to their headquarters in Bender on 1 June.

resume negotiations and engage in a genuine settlement process.

The year witnessed substantial disagreements, not least on the appropriate format for the talks. With the failed December 2005 meeting in mind the Chairman, in close co-ordination with the Mission to Georgia, put forward proposals to reinvigorate existing formats including the Joint Control Commission (JCC) and the 'Authorized Delegations' format. He suggested a JCC meeting in Vienna in February, but it failed. The Chairman also put forward other formulas for high-level or expert meetings during the course of the year.

A debate within the Georgian parliament about peacekeeping forces in South Ossetia raised tensions in February, and the Chairman called for restraint from all sides. On 16 and 17 February, his Special Envoy visited Tbilisi.

In the aftermath, it appeared possible to move forward on an *Economic Rehabilitation Programme* for the zone of conflict and



The Chairman-in-Office (left) visits a hospital in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict on 23 June as part of an OSCE-led needs assessment study in preparation for an *Economic Rehabilitation Programme*.

adjacent areas. Meeting in Tskhinvali from 11 to 13 May, the JCC approved a package of socio-economic projects based on the report of an OSCE needs assessment study carried out in 2005 and 2006 by international, Georgian and South Ossetian experts. The solid collaboration between the sides made this undertaking a most helpful confidence-building measure. The projects will address basic needs such as potable water, electricity, gas, schools, health, roads, youth centres, agriculture, business and finance. They will make a difference in the living conditions of the local population. Their financing was secured through a donor conference held on 14 June in Brussels with the participation of all members of the JCC. Pledges from the participating States and from the European Commission amounted to more than €10 million.

On 22 and 23 June, the Chairman travelled to the region for a new attempt to jumpstart the settlement process. He proposed a top-level meeting between the sides or a JCC meeting at senior political level in Brussels, assistance in drafting the consolidated text of a peace plan and visits by Belgian constitutional experts to make recommendations on the status of South Ossetia within Georgia.

On the ground, tensions remained high, with repeated violations of the 1992 *Sochi Agreement* and other demilitarization agreements and with little or no progress at JCC meetings. The conflict became exacerbated by the closure of the Russian/Georgian border crossing at Zemo Lars/Verchny Lars in July. The Chairman called for restraint and demanded that the border crossing point be reopened quickly. The situation came to a head in late September, when four Russian officers were charged with



Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 2 October as he mediates a dispute about Russian nationals detained in Georgia.

espionage and detained in Tbilisi. The Chairman mediated successfully and travelled to Tbilisi in early October. He received care of the prisoners and ensured their safe transfer to the Russian Government. His Special Envoy then travelled to the region and to Moscow to find a way out of the increasingly acrimonious situation.

The Chairman attempted, on the margins of the Ministerial Council, to get the settlement process back on track. Although the Ministers failed to agree a formal statement, useful ideas were generated for addressing the issue in the period ahead.

### OSCE Mission in Kosovo

An essential part of the UN Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE runs its largest field operation here, employing about 1,000 people. The Mission provides assistance to central institutions like the Parliament, the Ministries, the media board and the police, as well as to local government and communities. The Chairman anticipated that the definition of a future status of Kosovo would impact on this substantial field presence and worked hard to engage with the international community, in particular the Contact Group Members, to generate co-ordination and consultations on the structure of the future international presence. He visited Kosovo early on, from 15 to 17 February.

The OSCE, EU, CoE and other interested international bodies participated throughout the year in the informal steering group on future arrangements set up by the UN Mission. This group played an instrumental role in identifying issues related to the redistribution of responsibilities after the anticipated winding down of the UN Mission. The OSCE Mission established regional centres and municipal teams to ensure a presence in all Kosovo municipalities, a move that was greeted unanimously by the international community as a very useful contribution to the future civilian presence.

The Chairman kept in close touch with UN Special Envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari as the UN-led negotiations on the future status of Kosovo proceeded. These consultations helped define the contribution that the OSCE could offer. Naturally, the OSCE showed readiness to assist Kosovo in developing fully democratic institutions and, as regards future status, to provide help with implementation.

The Special Envoy briefed participating States directly and extensively on these developments on three occasions: once informally in May and twice in the Permanent Council, in March and in November.

### **The Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Article IV, Annex 1B, Dayton Peace Accords**

The Personal Representative is mandated to assist the Parties in the implementation of measures agreed under Article IV of Annex 1B of the *Dayton Peace Agreement* relating to Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the destruction of excess heavy military equipment, the conduct of mutual inspections of military assets and the exchange of information. Broadly speaking, the Personal Representative's role is to broker political consensus and ensure smooth implementation of the *Agreement*.

The five Parties (the Entities and the States of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia – initially with Montenegro) held three regular meetings. In Florence, Italy, they also conducted the *5th Review Conference*, celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the signing of the *Agreement* and completing the annual information exchange.

The reconciliation between the new law establishing a single Defence Ministry in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the *Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control* was completed on 10 March. The five Parties agreed that the Entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska) would transfer their rights, obligations and responsibilities to the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On 10 October, subsequent to the independence of Montenegro, the Parties and the Personal Representative, meeting in Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina, welcomed a delegation from Montenegro which was accepted as a new Party to the *Agreement*. The Parties asked the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro to allocate between them the authorized level of holding of military armament applicable to the former State Union.

The accession of Montenegro will no doubt contribute to regional stability, strengthen neighbourly relations and encourage further co-operation in the Western Balkans.

## **Strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE, the Ljubljana mandate**

Implementation of the 2005 Ljubljana Ministerial Council Decision No 17, on *Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE*, was one of the year's greatest challenges. That Decision set out a roadmap for the efforts aimed at reforming the OSCE.

Its first operative paragraph tasked the Permanent Council with work on eleven areas: rules of procedure, consultative process, OSCE conferences, budgetary and extra-budgetary financing, role of the Secretary General, functioning of the Secretariat, effectiveness of OSCE institutions and field operations, legal status and programme planning, professionalism of OSCE personnel and thematic missions. It was part of the Chairman's declared intentions to fully implement the roadmap by the end of the year. No efforts to this effect were spared. A specific working group under the Permanent Council was set up. Intense work led to a 6 November report on progress achieved and suggestions for actions by the Ministers. From that point, the working group negotiated draft decisions for adoption by the Ministerial Council in December.

As it turned out, quite a number of the objectives were reached. On 1 November, a consolidated set of Rules of Procedures was adopted, updating the 1973 *Blue Book* of the Helsinki process. The Ministerial Council established a three-committee structure, corresponding to the three dimensions, under the Permanent Council. It also approved non-binding guidelines for the organization of conferences and launched negotiations on a convention giving the Organization legal status. Ministers endorsed the principle of Performance Based Programme Budgeting as well as measures to increase the efficiency of executive structures and to allow more continuity in the management of the OSCE's

human and financial resources. This solid package of decisions, the implementation of which will be kept under review, should increase the Organization's capacity to deal more effectively with the challenges it faces today.

The second operative paragraph of the Ljubljana Decision tasked the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) with submitting, for discussion, to the Ministerial Council, a report on how existing commitments are implemented, whether supplementary commitments should be adopted, how to strengthen and further its election-related activities, and how to improve the effectiveness of its assistance to participating States. The ODIHR engaged with participating States on the preparation of its report to Ministers. It conducted bilateral consultations, gathered written information by means of detailed questionnaires and engaged in two open informal discussions with participating States. Its report, entitled *Common Responsibility—Commitments and Implementation* and distributed on 10 November, represents an exhaustive and highly informative assessment of the state of the human dimension of security in the OSCE region.

The Ministerial Council recognized the importance of this contribution and reiterated its encouragement to consider making better use of institutions such as the ODIHR to implement commitments. The Ministerial Council tasked the Permanent Council to address the implementation challenges, asked for further advice on the suggestions in the report relating to new commitments and welcomed the suggestions of further efforts to increase the effectiveness of the ODIHR's assistance to participating States. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment of the participating States to achieve democratic elections, including by inviting observers, and emphasized the importance of participating in election observation activities. At the initiative of the Chairman, they agreed that the ODIHR should put into practice the improvements and recommendations concerning election-

related activities, including as contained in the report, and that it would regularly report on this for review by the Permanent Council as appropriate.

Decision No 19 of the Ministerial Council reflects how the two operative paragraphs of the Ljubljana mandate were fulfilled. Work will now focus on this Decision and those related to it.

### The Brussels Ministerial Council

- Decision No.1: Extension of the Mandate of the Director of the ODIHR
- Decision No.2: Accession of Montenegro to the OSCE
- Decision No.3: Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
- Decision No.4: OSCE Senior Council
- Decision No.5: Organized Crime
- Decision No.6: Further Measures to prevent the Criminal Use of Lost/Stolen Passports and other Travel Documents
- Decision No.7: Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes
- Decision No.8: Further Efforts to Implement the OSCE Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition
- Decision No.9: Combating the Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons by Air
- Decision No.10: Supporting National Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)
- Decision No.11: Future Transport Dialogue in the OSCE
- Decision No.12: Energy Security Dialogue in the OSCE
- Decision No.13: Combating Intolerance and Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding
- Decision No.14: Enhancing Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, including for Labour Exploitation, through a Comprehensive and Proactive Approach
- Decision No.15: Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children
- Decision No.16: Legal Status and Privileges and Immunities of the OSCE
- Decision No.17: Improvement of the Consultative Process
- Decision No.18: Further Strengthening the Effectiveness of OSCE Executive Structures
- Decision No.19: Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE
- Decision No.20: Future OSCE Chairmanship
- Decision No.21: Time and Place of the next Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
- Rules of Procedure of the OSCE
- Statement on Nagorno-Karabakh
- Ministerial Statement on the Presence of OMIK
- Brussels Declaration on Criminal Justice Systems
- Brussels Ministerial Statement on Supporting and Promoting the International Legal Framework against Terrorism
- Ministerial Statement on Migration

## Across dimensions, thematic achievements

### Politico-military dimension

The Chairman underlined the importance of a well-functioning politico-military dimension in his opening statement on 12 January and seized opportunities throughout the year to produce constructive debates and concrete results in relevant areas.

The *High-Level Seminar on Military Doctrine* on 14 and 15 February, jointly organized by the Chairmanship and the Forum for Security Co-operation, was the first high-level OSCE meeting on the subject in five years. Broadly attended by Chiefs of Defence and their deputies, the seminar centred on doctrinal and technological changes among the OSCE's military, their impact on military structures and activities, and their implications for security and defence policies. The Chairmanship was able to encourage substantive opening contributions by engaging with speakers and moderators before and during the event. The *Seminar* con-

cluded that the spectrum of security threats had dramatically expanded and become more diffuse, and that the OSCE, while still having a responsibility to address old-style threats by means of military confidence- and security-building measures, was, with its multi-dimensional approach, in a favourable position to address the newer diffuse threats. This would entail an approach increasingly integrating civilian and military components. The *Seminar* generated topics for follow-up in line with the Chairman's guidelines for the politico-military dimension, and offered several avenues for further discussion.

A second extraordinary event was the *Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) five-year Review Conference* held from 30 May to 2 June. Acting on the widespread expectation that this conference would decide on some core OSCE issues and hence influence the outcome of the Ministerial Council later in the year, the Chairmanship brought delegations together for consultations before the beginning of the meeting. As it turned out, the exchange was rich, but could not be consolidated into agreement on a joint final declaration.

The fourth *Annual Security Review Conference* was held on 27 and 28 June. The agenda, prepared by the Chairmanship in consultation with participating States, centred on the management of the full conflict cycle, including issues of soft security (policing), hard security (military) and institution building. In the opening session, the Chairmanship stressed the suitability of the OSCE to address the multi-faceted notion of security that has evolved over the last 30 years. In the first working session, participants acknowledged the role of policing in achieving and maintaining security and stability. They generally agreed that the OSCE should continue to support institution and capacity building in the areas of policing and law enforcement in participating States requesting such assistance. The second working

session examined the challenges in the security environment, with a focus on the findings of the *Military Doctrine Seminar*. The view emerged that more attention may have to be paid to post-conflict situations in the training of military personnel, and the development of an OSCE post-conflict doctrine was proposed. The last working session reflected on lessons to be learned from how international organizations and States had actually dealt with the conflict cycle.

Terrorism remained high on the OSCE security agenda during the Belgian Chairmanship. Two concrete and results-driven seminars were held in Vienna. The expert workshop in March on enhancing legal co-operation in criminal matters, in particular

### **Organized Crime and Criminal Justice**

Organized crime and weak criminal justice systems have been recognized for a number of years as insidious threats to stability and security. The Istanbul 1999 *European Charter for Security*, the Maastricht *Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century* and the Decisions taken at the 2005 Ljubljana Ministerial testify to this. As a matter of priority, the Belgian Chairmanship proposed intensifying the OSCE's work in this field.

The Chairmanship's engagement was twofold. First, it promoted international co-operation in the fight against cross-border organized crime, particularly the ratification and implementation of international legal instruments. Second, it supported the build-up of the capacity of national criminal justice systems, recognizing that sound democratically controlled systems are in the long term the best rampart against organized crime. It stresses that police, prosecutors, the judiciary and penitentiary institutions must work together within a coherent and balanced structure and that the OSCE has experience in supporting national capacity building in those areas.

Between February and July, the Chairmanship organized five meetings on organized crime for participating States and representatives from other international organizations, such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the CoE. These meetings highlighted the importance of pursuing the ongoing international political and legal efforts and underscored the linchpin role of criminal justice systems in providing stability and security.

In addition, the Chairmanship organized two technical seminars, one in March on the implementation of the UN *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and another in April on the use of risk and threat assessment as a policy tool.

The annual *Human Dimension Seminar* in May focused on the roles and responsibilities of the judiciary, the prosecution and defence as well as the police. One of the conclusions was that the criminal justice system is a chain that is only as strong as its weakest link, and therefore demanded renewed attention. In a side event, the OSCE Missions in South-eastern Europe shared their experiences in supporting host governments with building up their criminal justice systems.

In the autumn, the Chairmanship initiated political negotiations that resulted in a Ministerial Council Decision on *Organized Crime* and in the Brussels *Declaration on Criminal Justice Systems*. The Decision lays down the framework for future work of the OSCE in this area. Participating States agreed that they and the OSCE would renew efforts on international co-operation and on building up criminal justice systems. They agreed to focus on strengthening the implementation of existing commitments and on a well-planned and integrated approach to the administration of criminal justice. A Task Force set up by the Secretary General with financing from Belgium will ensure that these issues receive the necessary attention.

The Brussels *Declaration on Criminal Justice Systems*, a companion document to the Decision, renews the commitment of the participating States to core values and commitments ensuring the proper administration of criminal justice. It is a user-friendly document designed to inspire self-examination and dialogue. It can also serve as a guide to practitioners and field workers as they engage governments and civil society on the subject of running criminal justice systems democratically.

Finally, as a practical matter, the Chairmanship financially supported the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's project of producing Criminal Justice Assessment Toolkits designed to help conduct assessments, identify areas of technical assistance and assist in training. The toolkit project testifies to the shared vision of leading UN agencies and the OSCE, according to which the rule of law and institution building in the area of criminal justice need to be addressed in an integrated and comprehensive way.

related to terrorism, was an occasion to learn about legal tools developed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to expedite requests for inter-governmental assistance in prosecuting cross-border criminal activities. The joint OSCE/CoE workshop in October centred on fighting incitement and related terrorist activities, and highlighted the contribution of the relevant CoE Convention.

The working group on non-military aspects of security set up by the Chairmanship attended to the implementation of earlier decisions, namely on travel document security and on container security. It also negotiated new documents. The Ministerial Council adopted a Statement on *Supporting and Promoting the International Legal Framework against Terrorism*, a Decision on *Further Measures to prevent the Criminal Use of Lost/Stolen Passports and other Travel Documents* and a Decision on *Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes*.

The Chairman made a point of highlighting the work of the OSCE in the area of policing. It was an important item on the agenda of the *Annual Security Review Conference*. During country visits, the Chairman stressed the contribution that well-functioning police services operating under democratic control make to overall security and stability. He proposed and organized a first OSCE *Conference of the Chiefs of Police*, which met in Brussels on 24 November, bringing together high-level representatives of the police forces of the 56 participating States and of the 11 Partners for Co-operation. The Conference concluded that more co-operation is required among national police services to tackle pervasive threats, such as cross-border organized crime. It provided a unique opportunity for networking and bilateral contacts among States rarely meeting in this format. The Chairman expressed the sincere hope that the emphasis placed in 2006 on the OSCE's potential role in the area of policing would lead to increased support by the participating States. He encouraged the inclusion of at least part of the police assistance programmes of the OSCE field presences in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in the unified budget of the Organization, to ensure more regular and coherent financing. The budget for 2007 reflects this approach.

Implementation of the *Border Security and Management Concept*, approved at the 2005 Ministerial Council in Ljubljana, was launched in 2006. Participating States agreed to nominate focal points for border issues in their national administrations. With the support of the Chairmanship, a conference on lessons learned in cross-border co-operation was held in October. It was the first OSCE-wide conference on border issues, the 2004 OSCE-



Police chiefs from more than 50 OSCE countries met in Brussels in November and agreed to intensify international police co-operation to better fight organized crime and improve security.

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hosted meeting on border security and management having been held at the inter-agency level. Also, the OSCE border unit conducted a first in-depth evaluation mission to the Tajik-Afghan border, with a view to defining project proposals for 2007.

In September and October, the OSCE organized two workshops on trafficking in illicit drugs in close co-operation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. On this occasion, the Chairman voiced concern that the OSCE should be supportive of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in its activities, and not develop initiatives that might duplicate or confuse operations on the ground.

Though the Forum for Security Co-operation operates independently of the Chairmanship, the Chairman actively supported its work, taking a particular interest in the discussions on confidence- and security-building measures. He was supportive of the special day devoted in September to the *Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security*. Also, pursuing a priority the Belgian Chairmanship of the Forum had set in the autumn of 2005, he affirmed the role of the OSCE in supporting implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this respect, the Chairmanship gave full support to the special Forum day on 8 November devoted to this matter.

In July, the Chairman addressed the *Small Arms and Light Weapons Plan of Action Review Conference* at the UN in New York. He promoted the adoption of a Ministerial Council Decision on *Combating the Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons by Air*. The Forum will devote a special day to this subject in 2007.



## Regional Co-operation in South-eastern Europe

During the turbulence in South-eastern Europe in the 1990s, the OSCE deployed a substantial field presence to the region, one of whose tasks was to address issues with a regional dimension. The Chairmanship focused in 2006 on contributing to the progress of three essential regional processes:

- The *Ohrid Process* was launched in 2003 in Ohrid (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Under the initiative of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the OSCE, the *Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe* and the EU, six countries of South-eastern Europe adopted a *Way Forward Document*, committing to effective civilian management of the new borders. The Chairmanship strongly supported the continuation of the OSCE's facilitation efforts and technical assistance, ensuring the extension of the work programme through 2007.
- The *Sarajevo Process* was launched in that city in 2005. Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and (then) Serbia and Montenegro adopted a joint Declaration committing to a comprehensive regional solution by the end of 2006 for the thousands of wartime displaced persons and refugees. The OSCE, the EU and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees are facilitating the process. The Chairmanship did its utmost to overcome blockages, encouraging accelerated implementation of housing programmes in Croatia and improved financing of measures proposed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Despite strong urging on the part of the Chairmanship and the other *Process* facilitators, the Ministers of the three countries failed to meet the deadline. Work continues.
- The *Palic Process* was launched in 2004 by the OSCE. It brings together the judicial authorities of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and (now) Montenegro with the aim of enhancing inter-state co-operation in addressing war crimes investigations, prosecutions and trials. Issues include the recognition of the validity of testimonies and the protection of witnesses. The Belgian Chairman-in-Office proposed a regional conference of Ministers of Justice to deal with legal modifications such as extradition of nationals. However, this conference could not meet before the end of 2006. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte called for political attention to this matter in her address to the Permanent Council on 7 September. The Chairmanship initiated steps in this direction.

## Economic and environmental dimension

In our interdependent world, economic and environmental threats may put human security at risk. The OSCE has the tools to deal with them. The Chairmanship encouraged participating States and OSCE structures to explore further the Organization's potential to enhance co-operation and dialogue on these issues.

As is tradition, the main event in the second dimension was the *Economic Forum*, renamed the *Economic and Environmental Forum* in 2006 to better reflect the Organization's environmental work. For the first time, the *14th Forum* was held in two separate sessions, the first in Vienna on 23 and 24 January and the second in Prague from 22 to 24 May. Preparatory conferences in November 2005 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and in March in Baku, Azerbaijan preceded the *Forum*.

Participating States identified transport as the *Forum's* central theme, giving it a double focus. The first part of the *Forum* dealt with the link between transport development and regional co-operation and stability. The second part was dedicated to transport security.

The *Forum* generated political will in favour of more trade and transport development in the OSCE area.

The OSCE will provide support to international conventions and technical standards within the framework of its co-operation with the UN Economic Commission for Europe. Important transport projects such as the *Trans-European Motorways and Trans-European Railways Projects' Master Plan* as well as the

Eurasian transport links require a significant mobilization of people and other resources. The OSCE will continue to assist with raising awareness and encouraging adequate decision-making. Capacity-building activities will be co-organized with OSCE economic and environmental officers in the field to support the implementation of relevant legal instruments.

Participating States also pledged to enhance co-operation amongst themselves and with relevant international organizations on transport-related matters. Commitments will be reviewed regularly.

Special attention was given to the needs of landlocked developing countries. The OSCE reflected on how to support the implementation of the UN *Almaty Programme of Action*, which sets out commitments and actions to improve transit potential for developing States with no direct access to the sea. The government of Tajikistan offered to host an OSCE conference on the development of trans-Asian and Eurasian transit transport through Central Asia until the year 2015.

The *Forum* reaffirmed the importance of good governance and emphasized the need for OSCE activities intended to enhance business and investment climates. It also encouraged the organization of roundtables with local business communities to improve transparency and to address corruption issues.

In zones of conflict, a lack of co-operation between the sides hampers transport. The *Forum* considered approaching transport not only as a benefit arising from a settlement but also as a confidence-building tool in its own right. The *Economic Rehabilitation*



The opening of the 14th Economic Forum in Vienna on 23 January

*Programme* in the Georgia-Ossetian zone of conflict along with adjacent areas is a prime example of such a confidence-building effort in transport and infrastructure development. The OSCE launched the programme with a donor conference hosted by the government of Belgium in Brussels on 14 June.

The *Forum* also discussed the possibility of transport development harming the environment and explored ways and means to address this risk. It was agreed that OSCE participating States should concentrate on adopting and implementing legislation related to the illegal transport of hazardous waste.

To follow up on the *Forum* and to fine-tune the OSCE's commitments, the Economic and Environmental sub-committee of the Permanent Council held further discussions and consultations.

The Ministerial Council Decision set the framework for future transport dialogue within the OSCE. As a result of the Decision, the OSCE will hold the transit transport conference offered by Tajikistan in Dushanbe in the second half of 2007.

In addition to the *Forum's* activities in the field of transport, the OSCE held conferences, workshops and training courses aimed at exchanging best practices and capacity building in the field of transport:

- a workshop on *Urban Transport Security* on 4 and 5 May in Vienna, which examined the lessons to be learned from the Madrid train and the London Underground bombings.
- a workshop with the International Labour Organization in Antwerp, Belgium, from 4 to 6 October, which addressed security in maritime ports, including measures to secure containers.
- a workshop on transport, security and environment in Tonsberg, Norway, from 16 to 18 October, which focused on protecting coastlines from the shipwreck of oil-laden cargoes.
- two seminars with the UN Economic Commission for Europe on the *International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods*, the first in Moscow in October and the second in Belgrade in December.

Furthermore, in 2006, increased attention was given to the challenges posed by environmental risks and threats. Participating States decided to dedicate the next *Economic and Environ-*

*mental Forum* to land degradation, soil contamination and water management.

The first Preparatory Conference took place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in November. The meeting, which had a strong Central Asian focus, produced food-for-thought papers that will serve as a basis for the meetings of the 2007 *Forum*.

In summer, extensive fires in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region caused environmental and economic damage and threatened human health and security. The OSCE Chairman followed through on the agreement brokered between the parties, and an OSCE-led expert team conducted an Environmental Assessment Mission in the area in October. The report's recommendations could serve as a basis for an environmental operation. The OSCE stands ready to assist Armenia and Azerbaijan further in this undertaking.

Participating and Partner States as well as key partner organizations pursued co-operative work on labour migration, as decided at the end of 2005. The OSCE, the International Labour Organization and the International Organization for Migration



Participants at an OSCE workshop on transport, security and the environment examine a floating boom used to contain oil spills at the Norwegian Coastal Administration's Department of Emergency Response in Horten on 17 October.

published a *Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies in Countries of Origin and Destination*. It was promoted at a special event on the margins of the *Prague Economic Forum*. Workshops were also held to introduce the *Handbook* in the OSCE region.

A full report on 2006 activities in the field of migration was presented to the Ministerial Council. In a statement, the participating States welcomed the report, confirmed the importance of migration-related issues and pledged to give them further attention. Concretely, the OSCE will contribute to the *Global Forum on Migration and Development*, the first session of which will be hosted by Belgium in July 2007.

The Chairmanship held a special event on public-private partnerships in combating trafficking in human beings on 16 November in Vienna. Participants discussed the economic causes for human trafficking and identified the responsibilities of and opportunities for the private sector in fighting it.

The OSCE published the *Best-Practice Guide for a Positive Business and Investment Climate*, financed by the Chairmanship and by a number of participating States. It was formally presented at the *14th Economic Forum* in Prague. To promote the guide, a first workshop was held in Kiev, Ukraine.

Overall, the Chairmanship strengthened the OSCE's work in the economic and environmental dimension. The *Forum* process was reinvigorated by splitting it into two parts and by focusing its work on political dialogue.

The Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee convened 17 times, including two special sessions, one in October to launch the *2007 Economic and Environmental Forum* process and another in November to review OSCE commitments to combat terrorist financing. The Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) reported to the Permanent Council in January, March and October, which gave participating States the opportunity to guide the work of his Office.

### **Securing energy supplies**

When, at the start of the year, gas deliveries between at least two participating States were interrupted, the OSCE faced for the first time a concrete case where the supply of energy was at risk. The Chairman reacted immediately. On 3 January he emphasized the need for predictable and reliable supplies and the merits of diversification, smart route choice and efficient use, drawing upon the principles of the *OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension* adopted in 2003. He called for the resumption of dialogue and reiterated the possibility of holding an OSCE conference on energy security.

In order to prepare for this, the Chairman tasked the OCEEA with a technical information mission, gathering and analyzing relevant information and making suggestions for renewed international dialogue on this topic within the OSCE. The Co-ordinator consulted with competent international organizations and with government officials from participating States. He regularly updated the Permanent Council and its Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee on his findings. By September, key aspects of energy security had emerged, which could be dealt with through dialogue in the OSCE and which could be discussed most usefully by an OSCE energy security conference.

On 12 September, the Chairmanship convened a special session of the Permanent Council to exchange views with Ambassador Arne Walther, Secretary General of the International Energy Forum, which, like the OSCE, comprises producer, transit and consumer countries and promotes a global consensus-oriented approach to the issue of energy security, although it is wider in geographic scope. The OSCE could borrow from this experience to shape its own region-specific energy security dialogue.

Next, the Chairmanship, the Energy Charter Secretariat and the International Energy Agency co-organized a conference, opened by the Chairman in Brussels on 25 October, to examine the role of governments and international organizations in promoting energy security. It highlighted the strategic importance of inter-governmental dialogue to establish energy security in the OSCE area.

The need for concerted international approaches to tackle the issue of energy security was high on the international agenda in 2006 and was a key discussion item at the Group of Eight (G8) Summit held in St. Petersburg in July. These discussions made it obvious that the OSCE, as a platform for political dialogue comprising producer, transit and consumer countries, has a role to play in addressing the concerns of participating States and in promoting regional responses.

As a result, the OSCE Ministers adopted a Decision on *Energy Security Dialogue* in the region. While reiterating the 2003 strategy, they also expressed support for the principles and objectives aimed at strengthening energy security as agreed at the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg. They also tasked the Permanent Council and the OSCE Secretariat with pursuing dialogue on the issue of security of energy supplies.

## Human dimension

During 2006, OSCE human dimension activities covered a broad range of themes. To stimulate the engagement of delegations in human dimension activities, the Chairmanship launched in 2006 a Working Group on Human Protection and Non-Discrimination. It also ensured that all human dimension activities integrated the promotion of equal treatment of women and men.

From the start of his term of office, the Chairman acknowledged the great value of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights defenders. He met representatives to share objectives and listened to their concerns on 13 January, as part of the inaugural events of the Chairmanship. When travelling in the OSCE region during the course of the year, he made a point of meeting each time with civil society representatives to discuss OSCE and human dimension issues.

The first *Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting* was devoted to *Human Rights Defenders and National Human Rights Institutions: Legislative, State and Non-State Aspects*. It highlighted the practical and political challenges faced by human rights defenders in the OSCE region and underlined the importance of their work. From the meeting emerged the suggestion of a Ministerial Decision to better ensure the protection of Human Rights Defenders. However, consensus on such a proposal at the Ministerial Council proved elusive, much to the Chairmanship's regret. To help give adequate attention to the needs and difficulties encountered in the field, the ODIHR appointed a Focal Point on Human Rights Defenders within its existing structure, an initiative that received wide support from participating States.

The Chairman also focused on combating intolerance and discrimination and promoting mutual respect and understand-

ing, following up on a 2005 Ministerial Decision that the OSCE dedicate 2006 to implementing important political commitments made in preceding years. Together with the ODIHR, the Chairman organized three *Tolerance Implementation Meetings*. The topics were: *Inter-Cultural, Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Understanding* (Almaty, 12 and 13 June), *Education to promote Mutual Respect and Understanding and to Teach about the Holocaust* (Dubrovnik, 23 and 24 October) and *Addressing the Hate Crimes Data Deficit* (Vienna, 9 and 10 November). These were highly successful events allowing specific focus and encouraging action to correct obvious shortcomings.

The Chairmanship held a Holocaust Remembrance Event in Brussels on 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp and the date designated by the UN as an annual International Day of Commemoration to honour Holocaust victims. The Chairman's Personal Representative on Tolerance, focusing more particularly on anti-Semitism, participated.

At its 2005 Ministerial Council, the OSCE demonstrated its support for the *Alliance of Civilizations* initiative, launched that year by Spain and Turkey and endorsed by the UN. With a view to contributing to a coherent approach to this global issue, the Chairman and the Secretary General delivered an OSCE contribution to the UN Secretary-General in New York in June, highlighting the conceptual framework, tools and the wide range of existing activities of the OSCE designed to stimulate mutual respect and acceptance among people of diverse backgrounds.

The three Personal Representatives reappointed by the Chairman as part of the overall fight against intolerance and discrimination pursued their activities, co-ordinating the implementation of political commitments by participating States through country visits and participation in relevant meetings.

### Searching for common ground: the cartoon controversy

As violent protests erupted over controversial cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed in several newspapers in the OSCE region, the Chairman urged all sides to respect the media's basic right to freedom of expression, while also reminding the media that this freedom goes hand in hand with responsibility toward society. He made clear that States should not attempt to influence the content of media releases even when they occasionally might want to disagree with that content. He called for an open meeting where all participating and Partner States and institutions would jointly search for the common ground that momentarily seemed to have disappeared.

The meeting took place on 16 February and helped reassert freedom of expression as a fundamental cornerstone of democratic societies, while also highlighting the media's responsibility to foster rather than disrupt dialogue, mutual respect and understanding. The meeting produced a Perception Paper, including recommendations which the Chairman followed up on. He invited the Co-chairpersons of the *Alliance of Civilizations* to address the Permanent Council. The *Tolerance Implementation Meeting* in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on *Inter-Cultural, Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Understanding* was held at a high level. Cartoonists from Muslim countries were invited as guest speakers to present their work during the *Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Protection of Journalists and Access to Information* (Vienna, 13 and 14 July).

Throughout the year the discussions revolved around the necessary role of independent and free media, the importance of self-regulation and the adoption of voluntary professional standards by journalists to avoid media content that generates violence. Although the issues remained conceptually difficult, the Ministerial Council Decision on *Combating Intolerance and Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding* clarified a number of aspects and tasked the Representative on Freedom of the Media with a review of best practices to avoid the recurrence of cartoon incidents.

### Building responsible, free media: the twinning initiative

Free media are essential to ensure democratic transparency and accountability. If they are to assume this role properly, they must possess the requisite resources and professionalism. Otherwise, journalism faces challenges to its credibility. Insufficient resources and lack of training may make media vulnerable to manipulation by interest groups or even State authorities.

The Representative on Freedom of the Media responded to this problem by initiating co-operation projects involving both media and State authorities. The projects were designed to build capacity and to call attention to the relationship between government and the media. Several OSCE field operations also supported media development, setting up locally co-ordinated training programmes for journalists and technicians. Because these projects appeared small-scale and limited, the Chairman sought ways to expand them and to increase their impact by directly involving a number of well-established and powerful media organizations.

The Chairman organized a media-twinning visit to Brussels in the week of 23 October for 14 journalists from across the OSCE to stimulate peer-to-peer exchanges with international media organizations established in Belgium. By 'twinning' similar media organizations, journalists could provide support, share experiences and build capacity in a direct professional-to-professional relationship. The discussions highlighted the potential of sector-driven study visits, training seminars and staff exchanges, which would allow media professionals to directly address reporting and editing skills, technical competence issues, media management, self regulation and voluntary professional standards. A twinning programme would require only limited involvement of a supporting and facilitating institution. In the present case, the existing structures of the OSCE could fulfil this 'matchmaking role'.

Delegations agreed on a Permanent Council Decision underlining the importance of media twinning and tasking the Representative on Freedom of the Media to encourage it.

The Brussels Ministerial Council adopted a Decision on *Combating Intolerance and Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding*. While reiterating and strengthening existing obligations, the Decision requires work be done to improve the equality of opportunities, engage with youth, heed public discourse and highlight the role of free media. It also decided to convene in 2007 a High-Level Conference on *Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding* to follow up on the 2005 Cordoba Conference.

The Chairman devoted considerable attention to media-related issues. Together with the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Chairmanship organized a second *Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Protection of Journalists and Access to Information*. This meeting examined a number of issues: protection of journalists and of their sources, limitations to access to information in the name of national security interests, restrictive laws on freedom of expression and the possible contribution of the media to the promotion of mutual respect and understanding. The Chairman financed the creation of a Database on Access to Information, currently being compiled by the Office of the Representative, which will provide a comprehensive review of laws and practices concerning access to information by the media in participating States.

General democratization issues and parliamentary democracy figured high on the agenda of the Chairmanship. To secure the OSCE's considerable institutional memory in the key field of democratization, the Chairmanship and the ODIHR launched a lessons learned exercise. The ODIHR consulted with democratization experts of field operations and institutions on how to preserve the knowledge built up over the years. This effort culminated in the third *Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting* entitled *Strengthening Democracy through Effective Represent-*

*ation*. The discussions were a first step in the development of effective methodologies and explored ways of consolidating and, where possible, expanding OSCE activities to strengthen political parties, assist with parliamentary reform and increase legislative transparency.

To draw attention to the unfortunate exponential rise in the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography in the OSCE geographic area, the Chairman, together with the United States of America and France, co-sponsored a proposal for a Ministerial Council Decision on *Sexual Exploitation of Children*, clarifying definitions and formulating much-needed policy steps. The proposal received broad support among participating States, who



Representatives of travel and tourism businesses in Montenegro sign a Code of Conduct in Becici on 15 September to prevent the sexual exploitation of children.

OSCE

agreed on a detailed and innovative Ministerial Council Decision. Thus, the political foundation was laid for participating States and OSCE executive structures to address sexual exploitation of children as one of the newest priorities within the human dimension of the OSCE.

As is tradition, the yearly *Human Dimension Implementation Meeting* took place in Warsaw in the two first weeks of October. It reviewed OSCE activities in the human dimension sphere, assessed results and considered how participating States respected their commitments. It also produced a broad range of

recommendations aimed at improving implementation of OSCE norms and values.

In May, the Chairman co-organized with the ODIHR a three-day *Human Dimension Seminar on Upholding the Rule of Law and Due Process in Criminal Justice Systems*. For more detail, see the box on organized crime (page 14).

The Chairman also devoted considerable work to the election-related activities of the ODIHR. For more detail, see the section on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. (page 12).

## Permanent Council



King Albert II of Belgium (left) with Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrugge of Belgium, Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council in 2006, at the Hofburg in Vienna on 28 September

OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev

As the standing body of the OSCE between Ministerial meetings, the Permanent Council handles the bulk of political issues as well as the Organization's day-to-day business. It met 57 times and received no fewer than 27 High Guests of Honour. On 28 September, His Majesty King Albert II paid a highly appreciated visit to the OSCE.

The Chairman organized the work in a format pre-figuring the three-committee structure reflecting the three OSCE security dimensions. It would later be adopted by the Brussels Ministerial. Besides the Economic and Environmental Subcommittee, he created a group on non-military aspects of security and one on human protection and non-discrimination. Issues that cut across dimensions were apportioned within this structure. The working group on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE set up under the Slovenian Chairmanship continued to function separately in order to accomplish the workload mandated by the relevant Ljubljana decision.

The Permanent Council dealt with political issues that concerned all participating States. It considered how they implement OSCE commitments and how they contribute to the resolution of conflicts. Regular reports from Heads of Institutions, field operations

and the Chairman's Personal Representatives were particularly helpful in this regard. In some cases, the Permanent Council took concrete action, as was the case with the cartoon crisis. For more detail, see the box on the cartoon controversy (page 19).

Difficult decisions in the course of the year concerned the extension of the mandate of the Director of the ODIHR, Ambassador Christian Strohal, the negotiation of the mandate of the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, the correction of dysfunctions in the OSCE Human Trafficking Mechanism and the tailor-made capacity-building programme for the Georgian Border Police.

On the other hand, in June the Permanent Council was pleased to welcome the accession of Montenegro as the 56th participating State.

The Permanent Council also travelled in 2006, thereby ensuring that the realities of the field were taken into account in the diplomatic work at the Vienna headquarters. Ambassadors visited Serbia and Montenegro in March, Georgia in July and Moldova in November.

## Montenegro

On 21 May, under international scrutiny, the Republic of Montenegro organized a referendum on its independence in conformity with the constitutional *Charter of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro* of 2003. In the name of the EU, Ambassador Miroslav Lajcak mediated the rules for the referendum among the different political parties. In particular, he helped establish a special majority requirement of 55 per cent of participating voters with a minimum turnout of 50 per cent. The ODIHR organized an extensive observation of the referendum process.

On 3 June, Montenegro proclaimed its independence. It turned to the OSCE as the first international organization to which it wanted to accede. The Chairman welcomed this vote of confidence in the OSCE and the norms and values it represents. He ensured swift passage of the Ministerial Decision, which was adopted after little more than two weeks on 21 June. The mandate of the new Mission covers all three OSCE dimensions, testifying to the commitment of the Montenegrin authorities to pursue vigorous reforms.

The final step of the accession process took place in Helsinki on 1 September when the Prime Minister of Montenegro signed the *Helsinki Final Act*.



Miodrag Vlahovic, Foreign Minister of Montenegro, at the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna on 18 July

OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev

## Guest speakers at the PC in 2006

12 January:	Chairman-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, <b>Karel De Gucht</b>
2 February:	Personal Representative of EU Secretary-General/High Representative on Montenegrin dialogue, Ambassador <b>Miroslav Lajcak</b>
2 February (Special PC):	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, <b>Ursula Plassnik</b>
9 February:	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia, <b>Gela Bezhuashvili</b>
2 March:	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, <b>Vartan Oskanian</b>
9 March:	Head of the EU Border Assistance Mission on the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, Brigadier-General <b>Ferenc Banfi</b>
15 March (Special PC):	Minister of Counter-Narcotics of Afghanistan, <b>Habibullah Qaderi</b>
16 March:	High Representative – EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. <b>Christian Schwarz-Schilling</b>
21 March (Special PC):	President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, <b>Alcee L. Hastings</b>
27 March (Special PC):	Prime Minister of Georgia, <b>Zurab Nogaideli</b>
28 March (Special PC):	UN Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, President <b>Martti Ahtisaari</b>
27 April:	EU Special Representative for Moldova, <b>Adriaan Jacobovits de Szeged</b>
4 May:	Ukrainian Deputy Minister for Emergency Situations and for the Protection of the Population from the Consequences of the Chernobyl Catastrophe, <b>Volodymyr Kholosha</b>
4 May:	Co-chairmen of the UN High-Level Group for the <i>Alliance of Civilizations</i> , <b>Federico Mayor</b> and <b>Mehmet Aydin</b>
11 May:	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro, <b>Vuk Draskovic</b>
16 May (Special PC):	First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, <b>Rakhat Aliyev</b>
18 May:	Personal Representative of the EU Secretary General/High Representative on Montenegrin Dialogue, <b>Miroslav Lajcak</b>
18 July:	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, <b>Miodrag Vlahovic</b>
7 September:	Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, <b>Carla del Ponte</b>
12 September (Special PC):	Secretary General of the International Energy Forum, Ambassador <b>Arne Walthers</b>
14 September:	NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General <b>James L. Jones</b>
26 September (Special PC):	Secretary of State of Kazakhstan and Deputy Chairman of the State Commission on Development and Concretization of the Programme of Democratic Reforms, <b>Oralbai Abdykarimov</b>
28 September (Special PC):	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, <b>Karel De Gucht</b> in the presence of the King of the Belgians, His Majesty <b>Albert II</b>
27 October (Special PC):	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, <b>Kassymzhomart Tokaev</b>
27 October (Special PC):	Prime Minister of Georgia, <b>Zurab Nogaideli</b>
14 November:	President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, <b>Goran Lenmarker</b>
15 November (Special PC):	UN Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, President <b>Martti Ahtisaari</b>
17 November (Special PC):	General Director of the Directorate General for Enlargement of the European Commission, <b>Michael Leigh</b>