

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: “first chapter in a new era”

Foreign Minister welcomes OSCE role in restoring confidence in democracy

The Foreign Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slobodan Casule, has welcomed the role the OSCE and other international partners are expected to play in restoring confidence in democracy in the country, when it holds parliamentary elections on 15 September.

Speaking to the Organization's 55-nation Permanent Council in Vienna on 25 July, the Minister described polling day as the “grand finale of an effort to defeat terrorism with political tools, which I am convinced the citizens of Macedonia will crown with triumph”.

At the invitation of the Government of

the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) will monitor and analyze the election process before, during and after polling day with one of the largest Election Observation Missions (EOM) ever deployed to an OSCE country.



Photo: Reuters/Anadolu Agency

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (right), with the outgoing President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Adrian Severin

Joschka Fischer: “Europe needs a strong OSCE”

Addressing some 300 OSCE parliamentary representatives gathered in Berlin from 6 to 10 July, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer underlined the vital role played by the OSCE in Europe and beyond, lauded its high standards and comprehensive approach, and called for a further strengthening of its instruments.

“Without the activities of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) we would not be here today, in the Parliament of a unified Germany, in the heart of an undivided, free Europe”, Foreign Minister Fischer told the 11th Annual Session of the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly. “The OSCE is exemplary for the patience that is required for successful international policy-making. Moreover, it represents the strength

and forcefulness of democratic ideals and inalienable human rights.”

He emphasized the importance of the democratically elected and active parliaments for the OSCE, an organization in which “we have set ourselves very ambitious goals: for human rights, minority rights, freedom of the media and free and fair elections”. To live up to these standards, he added, required constant effort and also critical evaluation.



Foreign Minister Slobodan Casule: The elections represent "the first chapter of a new era".

Nineteen election experts are already working out of the EOM's headquarters in the capital, Skopje, and 23 long-term observers in the regions were expected to have arrived by the end of August. About 750 short-term observers will be deployed throughout the country shortly before election day.

The Macedonian Foreign Minister reminded his audience that he had last addressed the OSCE in Vienna at the beginning of this year. "[Then] I spoke about the outcome of a crisis, of the necessity of avoiding another over the issue of borders, of our conviction in

Procedure. "And, we have gone even further – by passing the Amnesty Law as a tool for confidence-building", he said. Now, these elections represented the "first chapter of a new era" – confirmation that the country's "democratic and political institutions are vital and functioning".

The Minister also stressed the significance of the re-entry process of the Macedonian police force into sensitive regions, which has been done with the assistance of the OSCE and other partners. "[This has] generated stability and confidence and should accelerate and

political solutions as an answer to conflicts, of our dedication to reforms, of the positive changes that have occurred, the progress we are achieving each day, and the ways ahead", he recalled.

Since then important legislative changes, foreseen by the Ohrid Framework Agreement (which brought an end to armed conflict in August 2001), had been adopted, including the Parliamentary Rules of

facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons and normalization of living conditions", he said.

On the issue of the controversial special police forces in the country, the Foreign Minister recalled the commitment of the Macedonian Prime Minister, Ljubco Georgevski, to transform them into border control police units by the end of the year. "Our aim is to propose and lead a

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"The OSCE has long ceased to be a conference of governments, having become an international organization that deeply penetrates our societies", he said. "Where governments come upon their limits, parliaments can often act with greater independence. In its ten years of existence, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has been an impressive example of how impetus and support can be given to the work of the Organization", the Foreign Minister said. He also called for further utilizing the political potential of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Turning to the new challenges caused by the events of 11 September, Mr. Fischer stressed that, with the OSCE's comprehensive

political approach and its high standards, it was best placed to help destroy the breeding grounds of violence and hatred. "The field activities and institutions are one of the biggest strengths of the OSCE. They are an indispensable part of its sustained efforts to uphold the high standards that all have committed themselves to implementing in daily life", he said.

He also urged the parliamentarians to lobby their home countries to regard the OSCE as an instrument that makes a positive contribution and to strengthen it further. "In the future, a wider Europe needs a strong OSCE and an active Parliamentary Assembly", he concluded.

regional project on inter-border security where instead of overseeing each other, Macedonia and its neighbours will prevent organized crime in a joint effort, but mainly by building trust and protecting the rule of law", he said.

Significant improvement

The ODIHR Election Observation Mission is operating separately from the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, while maintaining close co-ordination and co-operation with it. For election day observation, the ODIHR will be joined by parliamentarians from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the

European Parliament. In addition, among the observers deployed shortly before election day will be 100 short-term observers seconded by the European Commission.

The ODIHR has observed all elections in the country since 1996, including the municipal elections in 2000, the presidential elections in 1999, and the last parliamentary elections in 1998. These were assessed by ODIHR as representing a significant improvement on previous elections.

The EOM will look at the campaign of the political parties, the work of the election administration, the media situation, and the legal framework as well as the voting, vote count and tabulation

of results. It is headed by Julian Peel Yates, who has extensive working experience in the country and in the region, including a period as Deputy Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje from 1995 to 1999 and another as Head of the ODIHR Office in Montenegro from 1999 to 2001.

On arrival in Skopje, Mr. Peel Yates said the forthcoming elections were an important step in closing the chapter of violence and instability the country witnessed last year.

"It is now the responsibility of all actors involved in the elections, including the authorities, political parties and the civil society at large, to ensure a democratic electoral process", he said.

Berlin Declaration sounds call to confront anti-terrorism challenges

'Confronting terrorism: a global challenge in the 21st century', was the theme of the 11th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA). More than 300 parliamentarians representing OSCE's 55 participating States unanimously adopted the Berlin Declaration, focusing on the political, economic and human rights aspects of tackling terrorism.

The parliamentarians also adopted several resolutions addressing issues of priority concern in the OSCE area, ranging from the situation in Belarus to education programmes for Roma. The five-day meeting was held this year from 6 to 10 July in Berlin's Reichstag building, seat of the German Federal Parliament.

A highlight of the session was the election of Bruce George, MP (United Kingdom) for a one-year term as the new President of the OSCE PA. He succeeds Adrian Severin, a former Foreign Minister of Romania, who served the Assembly for the past two years. Three new



Berlin's Reichstag building was the site of the OSCE PA's 11th Annual Session.

Vice-Presidents were elected and key positions in the three General Committees were filled.

The opening remarks were delivered by the Speaker of the German parliament, Wolfgang Thierse, followed by the German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fis-

cher, and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Antonio Martins da Cruz.

The Chairman-in-Office underlined the role of the OSCE and national assemblies in preventing and combating terrorism. "The first Winter Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly last February in

Vienna clearly revealed the pro-active role played by this central institution of the OSCE", he said. He later took questions from the floor.

Special action

The adopted resolutions spelled out recommendations for concrete action in a number of security and co-operation areas in Europe, which will be presented to the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in December. In particular, the Parliamentary Assembly:

→ urged the **Government of Belarus** to co-operate with the OSCE and its institutions, including the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group, in facilitating compliance with OSCE commitments;

→ urged the Government and the parliament of Moldova and the Transnistrian leadership to resume their

dialogue and to show political will in order to define mutually acceptable arrangements leading to a comprehensive settlement on the **status of Transnistria** within the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Moldova;

→ called upon the international community to remain actively engaged in **south-eastern Europe** while encouraging governments, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo, to undertake greater responsibility for public affairs and administration;

→ requested the OSCE participating States to take unequivocal responsibility for **combating the trafficking in human beings**, especially women and children, and to take appropriate counter-measures, including the adoption and implementation of appropriate legislation guarantee-

ing effective criminal prosecution;

→ unequivocally condemned the alarming escalation of **anti-Semitic violence** throughout the OSCE region and urged all States to make public statements recognizing violence against Jews and Jewish cultural properties as anti-Semitic, as well as to issue strong, public declarations condemning the depredations; and

→ recognized the urgent need to develop effective educational programmes addressing problems of **Roma and other groups traditionally identified as gypsies** and to create conditions that would enable them to participate more fully in society;

For more details on the Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly, please see page 23 and access www.osce.org/pa

Introducing: the Parliamentary Assembly's new President



Bruce George has been at the forefront of many OSCE PA activities over the past decade.

Bruce George, the new President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, is the Chairman of the House of Commons Defence Committee and has been a member of the NATO Parli-

amentary Assembly since 1982.

Since becoming a member of the OSCE PA at its first gathering in Budapest in 1992, he has served as the OSCE PA's Rapporteur, Chair of

the First Committee and Vice-President. In addition, he chaired the Assembly's Working Group on the Rules of Procedure and has been holding the post of Vice-Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability.

Over the past three years, he has been asked by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to lead several important OSCE election monitoring missions, notably in Albania, Georgia and Ukraine, as well as to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. He has chaired conferences organized by the OSCE including a meeting between the defence ministers, heads of the military and chairs of the defence committees of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. George was educated at the University of Wales and the University of Warwick, specializing in politics and government. He has authored eight books and written extensively on security and defence issues, including OSCE matters.

The PA's 11th Annual Session in Berlin also elected the following officers:

Vice-Presidents (elected for three-year terms):

Barbara Haering (Switzerland)
Ihor Ostash (Ukraine)
Gert Weisskirchen (Germany)

Committee Officers (elected for one-year terms):

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

Chair: Goran Lennmarker (Sweden)
Vice-Chair: Panyiotis Kammenos (Greece)
Rapporteur: Clifford Lincoln (Canada)

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

Chair: Oleg Bilorus (Ukraine)
Vice-Chair: Monika Griefahn (Germany)
Rapporteur: Leonid Ivanchenko (Russia)

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Chair: Elena Mizulina (Russia)
Vice-Chair: Svend Robinson (Canada)
Rapporteur: Nebahat Albayrak (Netherlands)

Mary Robinson: "War on terror is rolling back human rights"

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, told the OSCE on 19 July of her broad concern over a slipping of standards since the events of 11 September triggered a general campaign against global terrorism. Some States, she said, were branding previously permitted activities as conducive to terrorism.

Speaking to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, she urged the 55-nation security and human rights organization to continue providing leadership in addressing problems such as hostility to immigrants, anti-Semitism and the rise in anti-Islamic and anti-Arab sentiment, which was affecting all parts of Europe.

The High Commissioner said the OSCE had played a vital role in enhancing security for people in Europe and beyond with a concept of security which had human rights at its core: "In the aftermath of the terrible events of last September 11, as States seek effective ways to deal with the threat of terrorism, the OSCE has not wavered in asserting this linkage between



Mary Robinson: "The OSCE has not wavered in asserting [the] linkage between human rights and human security."

human rights and human security."

But the fight against terrorism had to be fought in full conformity with international human rights standards, she said. It was more important than ever that human rights were upheld and that violations were monitored, condemned and addressed.

She praised the OSCE for having backed up its human rights commitments with important practical work through its

field missions, the extensive technical assistance programmes of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Great achievement

"This has been of vital importance to all Europeans and most of all to the victims of human rights violations", Ms.

Robinson said. "In the end, protection cannot be effective unless it is linked with the development of national capacity, technical co-operation and other forms of direct assistance. The development of this part of the OSCE's programme has been one of its greatest achievements in recent years."

She singled out the regional activities of the OSCE, saying: "The Organization's field presences in Central Asia have been very active in promoting human rights and democratic reform as crucial elements in the promotion of a holistic concept of human security. The High Commission's co-operation with them has been very fruitful."

The US "war on terror" was encouraging some less democratic countries to roll back human rights in the name of security, she said, adding that countries accused of violating human rights had been using the crackdowns in the United States and Europe since 11 September as justification for their own abuses.

"We are finding the situation very serious", she said. "There is an erosion



OSCE Mission to Tajikistan

The young people of Tajikistan do their share to promote a "holistic concept of human security".

of civil liberties in the name of combating terrorism. When the issue is raised with them, they say, 'Well, look at what is happening in the US, at the number of people that are being held under immigration laws without a lawyer ... Look at what's happening in European countries, and at the harsh treatment of asylum seekers and immigrants.'"

Later at a press conference, the High Commissioner told reporters that she was getting reports from journalists, trade unionists and non-governmental organizations that suggest that some of the basic freedoms such as freedom of the press, were becoming blurred in the campaign against terrorism. Her office was compiling a report on these allegations which would be published in the near future.

Sannino: "Shared problems need shared solutions"

Outgoing Head of FRY Mission urges stronger regional approach

Ambassador Stefano Sannino addressed the Permanent Council for the last time on 25 July in his capacity as Head of the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). He told participating States that the Mission had made remarkable progress since starting "in a few hotel rooms in Belgrade" in January 2001 with a mandate focusing on institution-building and strengthening the rule of law. An Italian career diplomat with extensive experience in south-eastern Europe, Ambassador Sannino has assumed a new post in Brussels as diplomatic adviser to European Commission President Romano Prodi. In an interview with Richard Murphy, OSCE Spokesperson and Head of Press and Public Information, he reflected on his one-and-a-half years as Head of the Mission.

What distinguishes the OSCE from other international organizations?

We have, first of all, the flexibility and a certain capability to reply quickly to requests and demands, making use of human resources. The OSCE is not a particularly rich organization; we do not bring huge programmes of economic assistance. But we do come in with a substantial human presence – people who are capable of resolving certain situations. I think the OSCE is much more adaptable than some other organizations, and it also has a certain skill in using its resources and in linking with other local actors.

What weaknesses have you observed in the way the OSCE

operates and what changes would you like to see?

I would like to see a more consensual approach in working more closely with other international organizations, not only in the field, which very often happens, but also at the level of headquarters. Also, the Organization as such should be able to provide more guidance at regional level. We should bear in mind that all these regions, be it south-eastern Europe, the Caucasus or Central Asia, have shared problems that need to be approached in a shared way. We need to create a minimum connectivity among these countries; they are not islands separated from one another by a large ocean – they have common borders and their co-operation is crucial for solving certain issues or for fighting certain phenomena.



FRY President Vojislav Kostunica awards Ambassador Stefano Sannino with the “Yugoslav Star of the First Degree” for his “conscientious commitment to the normalization and successful development of FRY-OSCE co-operation, at the Federal Palace in Belgrade on 24 July.

Some commentators argue that the OSCE has outlived its usefulness. What is your view?

I don't think that is true. We have managed in several areas to play a very relevant role. Our Organization has this character of co-operative security, of working together with and considering its partners, including countries that still have difficulties on the path towards democratization or political stability. I cannot speak for everybody, but certainly as far as Yugoslavia is concerned, the role that we have played in southern Serbia in supporting the prevention of the conflict has been crucial.

How would you sum up what has been achieved by the Mission and what still lies ahead?

The initial phase of building the blocks of democracy in the FRY has been completed. But new challenges and responsibilities have emerged. I think these need a response in the form of a sort

of pact – with the Yugoslav authorities, civic society and the international community – to strengthen national institutions. As far as OSCE activities are concerned, we must increasingly focus on supporting domestic authorities to embed the framework of democracy.

The institutional framework exists, the rules of democratic governance have been set. Now the challenge for all of us is to work and assist the daily practice of democracy.

In the months ahead, I would like to see the development of a pact for justice, based on a co-ordinated approach between the judiciary, prosecutors and police; a pact on parliamentary reform, so that parliamentary procedure, parliamentary control, a code of conduct and election laws are brought into line with international standards; and a pact to fight all forms of crime and corruption, which means more than adopting relevant legislation, but also fostering respect for the State and its institutions.

The Mission to FRY is generally seen as a success story. To what do you attribute this?

I think it is essentially due to the fact that both the Mission and the authorities have tried to come up with a common political project, common ideas and concrete programmes developed together. The Yugoslav authorities very much wanted to have the support of the OSCE in the institution-building process. My strong personal belief is that we shouldn't act as a sort of controller or teacher, exporting a ready-made model to be imposed, but rather try to sit together, highlight the problems and try to find solutions together. I think this has been crucial for our success, as well as the role we have played in southern Serbia, which has been appreciated by all authorities. We have been perceived as a partner by both sides on the ground, building a reputation for the Mission that, in turn, has helped us in other areas.

What would you say to those who think that the Mission has been “too friendly”?

I would say that it is correct that I tried from the very beginning to work very closely with the country's authorities, to define a special relationship. This is in the Mission's mandate, but I emphasized this point. As I said earlier, I am not a schoolteacher and I think the country is mature enough that it does not need lessons in

democracy. I would add too that whatever the subject of discussion is, there are many ways to say things and to still make sure that the message is understood.

What advice would you give someone about to take over as head of an OSCE Mission?

Essentially, try not to go to the host country with any preconceived ideas. Try to make it clear that the Organiza-

tion is there to work with them and to create a partnership. As in every partnership, in difficult or in critical moments you can also tell your partner that maybe they are going in the wrong direction, that maybe they should take a different approach on certain issues. The enterprise should be a common one: at the end of the day, we all want to gain. It's a sort of win-win approach, there is no winner and no loser in this game.

The OSCE and Belgrade: “Working on the same task”

Yugoslav Foreign Ministry official urges further strengthening of democratic institutions

Sladjana Prica is the Director of the OSCE and Council of Europe Department in the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has worked closely with the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) since its establishment. To coincide with the transition in the Mission's leadership, Stella Ronner, the Mission's Spokesperson, asked for her views on the co-operation between the OSCE and her country, which she calls “the latecomer to the European family of democracies”.

What distinguishes the OSCE from other international organizations?

First of all, the way it developed. The OSCE established its norms, standards and principles over time, gradually responding to new needs, new problems and new challenges. Then there are its three dimensions, making it very different from others. There is the fact that 55 countries are on an equal footing, discussing politico-military issues; this is the only organization for collective security for countries that are not yet members of NATO. Because the participating States work on the basis of the principle of consensus, the so-called “small” and “big” or “important” and “not-so-important” discuss issues in a transparent way. There is also the involvement of civil society and

non-governmental organizations in discussions with representatives of governments – a rare occurrence in other organizations.

Still, you must have observed some weaknesses, especially during a very difficult period for your country.

Perhaps “weakness” is too strong a word, but I certainly see scope for improving the Organization's working methods to increase its effectiveness. I am thinking specifically about how field missions work. The 19 missions and field activities of the OSCE should not just be briefing the Permanent Council, they should also be playing a more active role on the basis of more decisive guidelines and instructions that they receive from the Council on very concrete issues. By not effectively and rapidly responding in



OSCE Mission to FRY

Director Sladjana Prica: “OSCE field missions should be playing a more active role.”

some recent crises – I am thinking of the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – the OSCE did not manage to play the part it could have played. Looking back at the history of the OSCE, or rather the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, during the crisis

in ex-Yugoslavia, unfortunately the Organization also did not play the role it could or should have played. Of course several institutions were later created, such as the long-term missions, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, and others. But this was a post-reaction.

So do you think the OSCE has overcome its usefulness?

I certainly do not think so, and not only because I am the Director of the OSCE Department! There are many reasons why I believe that the OSCE will continue to play a key role in fostering security and stability in all its three dimensions. Despite some difficulties in reacting promptly to conflicts, the Organization has always shown it is capable of facing new challenges and demonstrating a great capacity, flexibility and readiness to deal with them. Thanks to the ongoing discussions about its reform, the Organization might take on a bigger and more political role in the fight against terrorism.

Turning to the Mission to the FRY, what do you think are the reasons for its success?

What has distinguished this Mission from many others is its approach of co-operation with the host country. This was a very big help to a “latecomer” country to the European family of democracies. Participating in the OSCE started the important process of reintegration – after the democratic changes of October 2000 – into the international community where we belong. From the beginning we had expressed the need for help. The Mission was established on the basis of the Government’s invitation, and the Mission’s mandate was discussed and agreed on between the OSCE and FRY. This way of setting up a mission, namely through close co-operation and agreement between the OSCE and the host country, was something completely new: I would call it the first of a “second generation” of missions.

What would your advice be to the new Head of Mission?

We, and I personally, regret Ambassador Sannino’s departure very much. He was an excellent, very knowledgeable Head of Mission with a deep wish to understand the problems of a country in transition after a long period of isolation

and without well-established democratic institutions. My advice to the new Head would be to reject all prejudices, and to understand that we are all working on the same task. He or she should create a wide network of contacts and not remain in the fortress of the Mission or to limit contacts to those in power at the moment and to the official institutions; close attention should also be given to the further development of the country’s civil society.

Some observers have commented that the Mission has actually been too friendly and might have been more effective if it had been tougher on certain issues ...

The Head of Mission tried to establish good channels for co-operation, which was a clever decision. Many things have been achieved, and there is still a lot more to do. We do appreciate the understanding and the goodwill of the international community, even though we don’t expect them to be “friendly”. The critical look of the Permanent Council at some of the issues, such as the media laws, shows that this approach also laid out certain matters on the table very openly and frankly.

Gender awareness is generating change

Regional training programmes tap women to be catalysts for equal rights

By Sandra Conway

Through a built-in multiplier effect, a cluster of OSCE training projects are having a dramatic impact on the development of civil society in transition states and on the ability of women to mobilize themselves as a force for positive change. From Albania to Azerbaijan, the training programmes of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights are reaching out beyond urban centres and are sparking a region-wide growth of women’s movements.

Women have been among the hardest hit by the painful social, economic and cultural adjustments that many countries in the OSCE region have been undertaking in their pursuit of more open democratic and market structures.

Many have lost their once-secure jobs as a consequence of economic restructuring. A host of factors have significantly diminished their representation in political and public life. Domestic abuse has

been on the rise, along with discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. Moreover, scores of women still bear the physical and psychological scars as victims of the sexual violence that often accompanied conflict in post-Cold War Europe.

To accelerate the process of equalizing opportunities and human rights between women and men, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is implementing training



In Georgia, about 1,500 women have benefited from ODIHR's leadership programmes.

programmes that have been designed with a view to tapping core groups of women as catalysts for change. The programmes complement the ODIHR's activities geared towards "mainstreaming" gender issues into every facet of its work, whether the focus is promoting the rule of law, observing and monitoring elections, reforming prisons, developing civil society, or combating trafficking in human beings.

Tiina Ilsen, Gender Officer in the ODIHR, finds it difficult to imagine how a society could possibly succeed in stabilizing democratic systems without improving the situation of women in the private and professional spheres and ensuring that they enjoy the same rights as men.

"In simple terms, our work is all about helping bring about a shift in people's attitudes and encouraging women to occupy positions where they can influence policy and practice", she says.

ODIHR projects aim at training female politicians and candidates for public office in leadership and lobbying skills, improving women's understanding of the concept of human rights, educating them on the existing legal provisions that guarantee these rights, and making legal aid freely available. The ODIHR also reviews draft laws that aim to lift discriminatory practices against women.

Ms. Ilsen pays tribute to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have long been at the forefront of addressing gender issues. "Unfortunately, however, the activities of NGOs rarely achieve their potential impact because there is no network unifying all their scattered efforts", she adds. "Typically, programmes do not reach the women who need help the most, nor do activities go beyond urban centres."

Common platform

To address these shortcomings, the ODIHR has launched a number of initiatives especially to improve women's leadership and lobbying skills and to consolidate disparate women's groups into coalitions and networks. The goal is to build a common platform for more visible and eloquent women's movements.

The task revolves around training carefully selected women in gender awareness, women's rights and training methods. This creates a pool of trained women who are expected to disseminate their freshly acquired skills to wider groups and to train other women in turn.

This approach has shown remarkable results in Albania. Since their completion of the ODIHR training, 16 women have passed on their knowledge to more than a thousand women all across the country.

The ODIHR has been spearheading

the only gender-focused international initiative in Azerbaijan extending beyond Baku. Project activities, which originally covered 11 regions and reached some 1,500 women, have been expanding to reach countless more throughout the country.

In Kyrgyzstan, where more than 3,000 women have taken part in gender courses in the past two years, the programme has triggered the participants into action through greater involvement in politics and public service.

The programme in Georgia started with women from 11 regions who in turn reached more than 1,500 other women. Activities now encompass as many as 35 regions. The participants' enthusiasm for the life-changing impact of the training is captured in a book entitled *Women: Profiling the Situation in Georgia*, published by the Caucasus Women's Research and Consulting Network (CWN), which was created under the ODIHR's leadership training programme.

"There used to be an almost total lack of awareness of gender issues in Georgia", Nino Lilvashvili, the secretary of CWN, recalls, "but now women feel more empowered as individuals and as a group. They are talking with one another and developing strategies together to overcome problems and challenges specific to their regions in very practical ways."

Ms. Lilvashvili acknowledges that introducing change in a country such as Georgia that is steeped in tradition is a long-term effort that demands a long-term commitment.

"I come across women all the time who yearn to make a change for the better, and this assures us that we are travelling the right path", she says.

Such testimonials serve, in turn, to encourage Ms. Ilsen. "After all, women should not be content merely to be protected by legislation", she says. "They must do their part by developing a better perception of themselves and by taking more responsibility in translating this heightened awareness into their daily lives."

Sandra Conway is a Public Affairs Assistant in the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Co-operation on security: Charting an action-oriented course

By Ambassador Omur Orhun

The first half of 2002 has been a particularly busy and productive time for the OSCE's Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), an autonomous body reporting directly to the Ministerial Council. Not only has the Forum been at the forefront of the Organization's efforts to prevent and combat terrorism, it has also been able to take a more action-oriented stance in a number of key areas because of a shift in its working methods.

The Forum for Security Co-operation plays a central and concrete role in fulfilling the security mandate of the OSCE. It does so by promoting transparency and co-operation in matters dealing with a series of binding commitments on different politico-military aspects of security. It is used by participating States as a forum in the very real sense of the word: for discussion and consultation, negotiation and agreement, and review and monitoring.

The Vienna Document 1999, which outlines a comprehensive range of confidence- and security-building measures, and the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, are just two of the several major agreements concluded by the FSC in recent years. Another landmark agreement was the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, which emphasizes democratic governance of the armed forces and has assumed even more importance in the global fight against terrorism.

There is no doubt that the implementation of these agreements helps create an atmosphere of trust and goodwill among states and reduces the risk of conflict between them. At the same time, the Forum itself provides participating States with a sounding board for frank and open opinions during times of tension. The fact that there have been no major inter-state conflicts between OSCE participating



OSCE/Igor Nalik

Ambassador Omur Orhun: "The Forum for Security Co-operation has been at the forefront of the OSCE's efforts to prevent and combat terrorism."

States in recent years is a testament to the Forum's success.

The OSCE Foreign Ministers have recognized the invaluable role of the FSC's conflict-prevention tools in the post-11 September scenario. In their Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism, the Ministers gave the Forum a mandate to contribute to international efforts by securing full implementation of key agreements, focusing on the Code of Conduct and Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Ministers also asked the Forum to determine and decide on the relevance of its other agreements and to assess the need for new commitments.

Substantive work

Responding to the Ministers' call for action, the Forum laid out its tasks in a "road map", agreed in March, and immediately embarked on substantive work. On small arms, the FSC agreed to develop a set of guides on best practices dealing with import and export controls, regulation of

brokers, security procedures on stockpiles and other aspects. These guides will assist participating States in aiming their legislation at preventing weapons from being diverted to the illegal market, a conduit often used by terrorists.

As for the Code of Conduct, a follow-up conference will take place on 23 and 24 September to discuss how the agreement can be most effective in preventing and combating terrorism, as spelled out in the Code's commitments. The discussions are expected to focus on improved information-sharing on national and international efforts to fight terrorist activities.

The Forum has also brought terrorism experts from OSCE capitals to Vienna to explore what else could be done to address the politico-military dimension. The event, which was held on 14 and 15 May this year, generated a wealth of ideas and specific proposals, in keeping with the OSCE's concept of comprehensive and indivisible security.

Organizational reforms have further

reinigorated the FSC. The call of the Bucharest Ministerial Council for improved interaction between the Forum and the Permanent Council has been put into practice with the introduction of joint sessions and through strengthened cooperation between the Troikas of the two bodies. Recently, the Permanent Council agreed to seek the Forum's expert advice on the implementation of the document on small arms as part of the OSCE's work on conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Clearer course

There is a consensus among the OSCE Delegations that the decision to extend the

one-month Chairmanship of the FSC to four months has given the Forum more continuity and direction, and helps to chart a clearer course towards its future activities.

The Security Dialogue, a regular item on the FSC's discussion agenda, continues to be used by participating States as a platform on which initiatives that can contribute towards stability in Europe can be examined. Through the Security Dialogue, several States have shared information on planning their defence strategies and budgeting their military expenditures.

The Forum will not be resting on its laurels. In the next few months, it will turn its attention to a set of new initiatives, foremost among which is the preparation of an

organizational strategy to counter emerging threats to security in the 21st century. Traditional arms control and confidence-building, as well as the fight against terrorism, will also continue to be high priorities.

It will be a period marked by challenges. I have no doubt, however, that the incoming FSC Chairmanship of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will guide the Forum towards a successful Ministerial Council meeting in December.

Ambassador Omur Orhun, the Head of the Delegation of Turkey to the OSCE, was the Chairman of the FSC from May to August 2002.



THE OSCE, IRMA AND THE YELLOW LAPTOP

How a complete, portable toolbox will allow an OSCE member anywhere in the world to instantly access the Organization's information and knowledge base

By Michael von der Schulenburg

The OSCE is about to launch a major project that will change the way it does business. The project is called the Integrated Resource Management system – or more cheerfully, just “IRMA”. The idea is to develop an Organization-wide management system to assist OSCE managers in setting objectives, planning strategy, monitoring progress and administering the human, financial and material resources that are entrusted to them. A key element of this system is the use of budgets as a management tool.

As an organization that takes a unique, comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE is often called upon to react to breaking political developments and to implement operational programmes at short notice. About 85 per cent of its annual budget of 180 million euros is spent directly on field operations.

Within the past 12 months alone, the OSCE's response has involved organizing municipal elections in Kosovo,

implementing extended border controls in the Caucasus and establishing multi-ethnic policing in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Much of the success of these and similar operations depends on the ability and capacity of the Organization to launch them swiftly after their approval by the Permanent Council.

In order to ensure that the Organization can respond quickly to any task, and do so in an efficient and transparent manner, two key inputs are required: first, a clearly defined operational objective and its associated plan for delivery; and second, the often overlooked but no less essential guidance provided by a common operational, managerial and administrative system.

Best practice

These factors will guarantee the delivery of the Organization's political objectives and provide the embodiment of the Organization's strength and experience in a single model of best practice. Such a system will be built within a

framework of clearly assigned individual responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities throughout the Organization.

IRMA will provide the common managerial and administrative component of this process. It is a management tool that will enable OSCE managers, whether at the Secretariat, the Institutions or field operations, to do their job better and faster. It will support programme managers as they start up a new programme or field operation and conduct the day-to-day business of managing resources and information.

IRMA will be supported by a number of other initiatives such as an Organization-wide system for managing OSCE's records and documents electronically, improved communication links, including the establishment of an OSCE Intranet, and the outsourcing of many information technology functions and services.

To be able to access IRMA, all managers will need is a laptop computer – that is, our Yellow Laptop – and a tele-

phone line, which will connect it through the OSCE Intranet to the central system in Vienna. Once connected, the laptop will offer a full range of up-to-date administrative data indispensable to informed decision-making: OSCE regulations, expenditure authorizations, *curriculum vitae* of mission applicants, management reports, standard and pre-arranged contracts for equipment and service suppliers, and the necessary tools for developing budgets and for reporting on the status of implementation.

In short, the Yellow Laptop will offer easy-to-manage work processes and visual workflows that will facilitate the managerial tasks of recruiting, overseeing and paying staff, procuring goods and services, allocating assets and paying out expenditures in support of operational activities as approved by the Permanent Council. Once a new programme or field operation is decided upon, the newly assigned programme manager, usually the Head of Mission, simply needs to take such a Yellow Laptop to the mission. With the help of a Head of Administration, a programme or operation can be set up from any location such as a field office or a hotel room.

Accurate picture

As one only needs a computer and an Internet connection, the OSCE Secretariat and participating States will also have access, through the Yellow Laptop, to up-to-date information on the budget of a field operation that may be thousands of miles away from Vienna. IRMA will be capable of gathering similar information from other programmes and missions of the OSCE in order to provide an accurate, overall picture of the activities and resources of the Organization.

Programme managers, the Secretariat and participating States will have, virtually at their fingertips, information on all aspects of resource usage in a programme or field operation. Through the centrally managed approval of programme budgets and the issuance of expenditure authorizations, IRMA will give programme managers the flexibility to implement their budgets while ensuring strict budgetary discipline.

With the help of IRMA and the Yellow Laptop, the OSCE will be able to conduct its business much more effectively, efficiently and transparently. The costs of managerial and administrative

support will decrease, while the management of OSCE's human, financial and material resources will increase in quality and speed. This will give programme managers the managerial flexibility and free them from ponderous bureaucratic processes.

The overall aim is to give programme managers the time needed to concentrate on what really matters: the implementation of the field operation they have been entrusted with by the Permanent Council of the OSCE.

The IRMA programme has been gathering momentum. On 25 July, the Permanent Council agreed on its funding. Selection of a commercial partner to support the programme's development is well under way. Implementation is expected to start between October and January.

For additional details on IRMA and the Yellow Laptop, please contact Monique Ischi, IRMA Project Co-ordinator, at +43 1 515436 248 or by e-mail: misch@osce.org.

Michael von der Schulenburg is the OSCE's Director for Management and Finance.



FROM THE FIELD

Political entities contesting Kosovo elections reflect broad diversity

Preparations for the election of members of Kosovo's 30 municipal assemblies for four-year terms are gaining momentum. The Central Election Commission has approved a total of 68 entities as having met all the requirements for certification.

The final list of political entities that will contest the municipal elections on 26 October comprises 28 political parties, one coalition, 28 citizens' initiatives and 11 independent candidates. The diversity reflects a trend towards greater pluralism and increased grass-roots activism in the political landscape.

The printing of ballots is now under way, following a ballot lottery in which the political entities came together to draw numbers to determine the order they would appear on the ballot. Meanwhile, the OSCE's voter services operation has also been updating the electoral register through about 175 service locations.

Bosnia and Hercegovina to groom future leaders

An initiative to develop future leaders who can actively shape the future of Bosnia and Hercegovina (BiH) is set to start its second phase, after its launch earlier this year. The "Successor Gener-

ation Initiative", designed by the OSCE Mission to BiH, aims at providing training to a multi-ethnic group of 55 individuals below 30 years of age who have been identified as having the potential to become leaders in politics, business, education, media and non-governmental organizations.

The one-year programme includes two out-of-country visits of one week each. So far, participants from all over BiH have taken part in three training sessions and a study visit to the Council of Europe and other European institutions. Lectures and briefings have covered topics ranging from economic development and project management to public

speaking. The programme's next phase will give a number of participants the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in their chosen field of professional expertise.

Conference in Central Asia warns of exploitation of Islam

A clear line should be drawn between Islam and Islamic radicalism, said participants at an international conference on 'Islam and national security of newly independent states in Central Asia'. The conference, held on 24 and 25 June in Almaty, warned of the exploitation of Islam by certain groups to achieve their political goals.

Participants urged that while taking steps to combat terrorism and strengthen their security, Central Asian countries should ensure a fair balance between legitimate national security concerns and fundamental freedoms. The outgoing Head of the OSCE Centre in Almaty, Heinrich Haupt, said that

strengthening security should not be used as an excuse for human rights abuses. The conference was co-organized by the OSCE Centre, with funding from the British Government.

Campaign in Tajikistan supports torture victims

A two-week campaign against torture ended in Tajikistan on 9 July with a rock concert in Dushanbe which attracted about 2,000 people. Ten popular Tajik music bands called on the youth to come together and join in the fight against torture. Among the items distributed at the concert was a *Pocketbook of Victims of Torture*, prepared by the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan with the support of the Tajik authorities. The pocketbook, which was also presented to the press, contains both international and national legal provisions relating to torture and outlines practical advice to victims, such as how to seek recourse through United Nations bodies and institutions.

The campaign started on the UN Day in Support of Torture Victims, 26 June, with four days of training in human rights in the Rasht Valley. The training was part of a project of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for law enforcement personnel. The Mission also provided the media with assistance in producing a series of articles and a special television programme.

The OSCE currently has missions or other field activities in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo (Yugoslavia), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.



Tajikistan's top music bands call on the country's youth to join the campaign against torture.

OSCE/Martine Flahoud



CiO holds talks with Kyrgyz and Tajik leaders

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz, discussed the Organization's well-established co-operation with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan during his visit to Central Asia in early July.

His talks in Bishkek on 8 July with the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Askar Akaev, and other leaders focused on the situation in the country and the co-operation between Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE, particularly the Centre in Bishkek. Foreign Minister Askar Aitmatov and other high-ranking officials also took part in the discussions.

Two project proposals addressing the economic and environmental dimension were discussed: one on the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, the other on mobilizing resources for dealing with the radioactive waste dumps in Jalal-Abad province. The idea of establishing an OSCE higher education institution in Kyrgyzstan was explored and referred to a working group headed by the Kyrgyz Minister of Education.

Continuing on to Dushanbe on 9 July, the CiO met President Emomali Rakhmonov; the Chairman of the Upper Chamber of Parliament, Makhmadsaid Ubaidullaev; the Minister of Foreign Affairs Talbak Nazarov; and Said Abdullo Nuri, the Head of the Islamic Revival Party and former head of the United Tajik Opposition. General political, economic, media and human rights developments were the main focus of their discussions. Both sides stressed the excellent working relations between the host country and the OSCE Mission.

The recent situation in Afghanistan and its potential implications for Tajikistan were also on the agenda. The importance of concrete projects dealing with the economic and environmental dimension was stressed, including co-operation in water management as a confidence-building measure and the devel-

opment of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Special Adviser to the CiO on Central Asia, Herbert Salber, met representatives of political parties and the mass media at the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan. Political and media issues were the main focus of the meeting.

CiO and Russian Foreign Minister discuss joint efforts

The OSCE Chairman in Office and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Igor Ivanov, discussed the Organization's role in the fight against terrorism on 28 June in Moscow.

Addressing the reform process under way in the Organization, the two officials expressed the hope that it would lead to improved effectiveness and coherence and a re-balancing of the three dimensions of its work.

Both parties recognized the importance of the fulfilment of commitments entered into at the 1999 Istanbul Summit. They reviewed the prospects for progress in different regional conflicts, including the Transdniestrian issue in Moldova. Developments in Chechnya were touched upon. Further steps in efforts to overcome the impasse concerning the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus were also discussed.

CoE: Enlargement linked to Belarus' co-operation with OSCE

The historic moment when the Council of Europe would bring together all the democracies on the continent was drawing steadily nearer, its Secretary General, Walter Schwimmer, told the 55 par-

ticipating States of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna.

He reminded the Delegations, at their meeting on 18 July, that with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's progress towards Council of Europe membership, only two other applicants remained to be accepted. Outstanding questions over Monaco's application, in particular its relations with France, looked likely to be solved in the near future, he said.

"[But] the Council of Europe has on many occasions clearly signalled to its last applicant state – Belarus – that it should reinforce dialogue and co-operation with the European institutions, and

in particular with the OSCE, but to no avail", he added.

He said the Council was following the political developments in Belarus with growing concern.

"We are further concerned about the present state of relations between Belarus and the OSCE", he said.

"The Council of Europe urges the Belarusian authorities to dialogue and co-

operate with the OSCE in order to find a mutually acceptable solution to the abnormal situation with the Advisory and Monitoring Group as soon as possible. The latest actions against this Group are inconsistent with the Government's claim that it is interested in improving its relations with the European institutions."

Yugoslav Foreign Minister welcomes OSCE role in FRY reforms

"Fruitful and constructive" was how the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Goran Svilanovic, described the relationship between his country and the OSCE in



Council of Europe

Secretary General Walter Schwimmer of the Council of Europe



OSCE

Lord Ashdown urges OSCE to take lead in education in BiH

The current state of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) represented a serious obstacle to stability and security, Lord Ashdown told the OSCE Permanent Council on 4 July. The High Representative for BiH, who is also the European Union's Special Representative, said the situation was causing "a terrible haemorrhage of the young and talented" from the country.

"The OSCE has the necessary expertise, political clout and respect among government authorities and parliaments at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina to be able to lead and work with all partner organizations to provide the field dimension and political support necessary", he added. "No organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina other than the OSCE has the mandate and therefore is in a position to take the lead on education."

Robert Beecroft, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, said supporting the country's young people was a top priority and that the Mission was working hard to help young people make their voices heard. He said transferring responsibility from international organizations to the citizens remained of paramount importance. "However, this concept is still fragile and incomplete", he said. "Much will be affected by the choices voters make on October 5 [at the general elections]."

UN Special Representative Michael Steiner and the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Pascal Fieschi, address participating States.

an address to the Permanent Council on 20 June. "We particularly welcome the OSCE's ability to quickly adapt to new realities and to respond to new challenges in a meaningful way", he said.

Yugoslavia advocated the strengthening of co-operation among OSCE missions in the region, especially the two Missions in the FRY. "We strongly argue that issues such as refugees, internally displaced persons, missing persons, minority rights or suppression of organized crime are regional issues in their nature and cannot but be solved at the regional level", he said. "Rather than being overly ambitious, countries in the region should concentrate on areas such as the promotion of free trade, energy, transport and telecommunications and the suppression of organized crime."

UN Special Representative sees progress in Kosovo

Michael Steiner, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the UN Interim Administration for Kosovo (UNMIK), said in his first address to the OSCE Permanent Council, on 11 July, that things were improving in Kosovo, with the OSCE playing a key role in helping its people live in security and dignity.

Positive developments included the fact that 420,000 children were now in

school and 15,000 students were attending university. The provisional institutions of self-government were working. Mr. Steiner described the OSCE police training school as a success story. The policy of zero tolerance for crime and corruption was having a positive impact, as reflected in a sharp decline in the number of murders since 2000.

But progress was needed in three key areas, the Special Representative said: refugee returns, economic development and the rule of law. "If I had to pick one priority, it would be the rule of law – everything else depends on this", he said.



OSCE/Alban Brevard

Lord Ashdown (right) and Ambassador Robert Beecroft brief the Austrian-based international press on the latest developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

OSCE

NEWSLETTER



PRESS PROFILE

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

OSCE IN GENERAL

Novosti, 4 June

The OSCE, with its unique geographical list of participants, experience of partnership between the members and accumulated tools for dealing with security and co-operation issues, should be a key element of the new European security architecture, Vladimir Putin said in an interview with the Chinese newspaper *Renmin Ribao*. According to the Russian president, "Far from full use of this organization's potential was made in the past few years, regrettably, but now the OSCE is actively joining the global efforts under the UN aegis to combat international terrorism [and] works to broaden the confidence-building measures in the military-political sphere, and encourages co-operation between states in the economic, ecological and humanitarian spheres."

Die Presse, 20 June

[from an interview with the US Ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns]

Die Presse: There are critical voices among experts, saying that NATO will one day become something like a second OSCE, if it keeps expanding: huge, phlegmatic, toothless. Does this danger exist?

Burns: I do not like this description of the OSCE; we regard this Organization much more positively. Not to mention that there is no reason why NATO would become an OSCE. We are very different. NATO is a military alliance, a collective defence organization. We are there to prevent, to deter the eruption of a war, but also to run a war when it is necessary. The OSCE has totally different tasks.

International Herald Tribune, 5 June

[from an article entitled "Asians need a regional security net"] Any potential for an effective Asian version of NATO or the OSCE has been utopian for decades.

How long can this discrepancy last between East and West?

Washington Post, 24 June

Why shouldn't Arab states be pressed to commit themselves formally to guaranteeing basic political and religious rights and to the creation of an international mechanism, such as the former Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, to hold them accountable?

AFP, 9 July

The head of the OSCE, Antonio Martins da Cruz, said [during a visit to Tajikistan, which has a 1,350-kilometre border with Afghanistan]: "It has been suggested that Afghanistan could become a partner of the OSCE."

Financial Times, 23 July

[At a press presentation of a joint report by the OSCE, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNICEF on human trafficking in south-eastern Europe] Gerard Stoudmann, director of the OSCE human rights office, said [on 22 July] there were "probably more slaves today in many European capitals than ... since the end of the eighteenth century when slavery was still customary" ... Mr. Stoudmann also blamed the international presence in Kosovo and Bosnia. "If you have 50 brothels in Pristina, Kosovo, it is not because Albanian Kosovars are particularly vicious, it is because you have a number of Nato battalions stationed there", he said.

Der Spiegel, 4 July

An OSCE report, published together with UNICEF and UNHCHR, said that the human trafficking groups transport their victims to Western Europe through Serbia, Bosnia, [the former Yugoslav Republic of] Macedonia and Kosovo ... The estimated number of trafficked persons to Western

Europe is 500,000 to 700,000. Precise figures are not available, since the authorities only record about 35 per cent of human trafficking cases.

Franfurter Rundschau, 25 June

[reporting on the opening of the German Foreign Ministry's Centre for International Peace Operations] The Centre will make civilian experts and specialists available for the operations of the UN, the OSCE and the EU. One of its first tasks will be the recruitment of election observers for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

AFP, 19 June

Sweden has signed the international Open Skies Treaty that allows it to carry out observation flights for arms control surveillance ... The treaty requires each of the 27 signatories to accept a certain number of military observation flights each year by other members over their entire national territory. It was originally only open to NATO and former Warsaw Pact members but is now open to all 55 members of the OSCE.

OSCE MISSION AREAS

Reuters, 5 June

The Roma minority in Bosnia is among the worst-treated in Europe and most do not even have access to education and health services, the OSCE said ... "Their economic, social and legal status are all weak and there are very few indications of potential improvements unless both short- and long-term actions are taken". [Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina] Robert Beecroft told a news conference.

AFP, 8 July

A former Norwegian foreign minister told the UN war crimes court ... that after he confronted Slobodan Milosevic with reports of ethnic Albanians fleeing

Kosovo in 1999, the former Yugoslav president "...told me they were just picnicking, they were on a trip and I said how strange that you should picnic with all your belongings on a tractor". Knut Vollebaek met with Milosevic in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE in 1999.

AP, 29 July

[on local elections in southern Serbia] The OSCE noted ... that overcrowding in remote polling stations and contentious voter registers in one of the three municipalities were the main "shortcomings", but stressed that the general atmosphere of the vote was "democratic and calm". Stefano Sannino, the OSCE's chief in Belgrade, called the elections a "fresh start on the road to multi-ethnicity" and urged "wise political leadership" from local officials.

Radio Free Europe, 14 June

A visit by Rolf Ekeus, High Commissioner on National Minorities at the OSCE, has refocused attention on the plight of the Crimean Tatars ... Since 1989, 260,000 of the original exiles and their descendants have resettled in Crimea. They now make up 12 per cent of the population and although they have made significant inroads in gaining some rights and local representation, Crimean Tatars continue to exist

on the margins of society – one of the reasons prompting a visit to the region [in June] by Rolf Ekeus.

AP, 24 July

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko dismissed European criticism of his Government and rebuffed claims of arms sales to Iraq, saying he would make no changes to the country's politics which have made him a pariah in the West. Lukashenko lashed out at a recent resolution by the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, criticizing Belarus for the alleged arms sales.

Novosti, 17 July

Moldova's President Vladimir Voronin supports the country's integration plan, proposed to Chisinau and Tiraspol at a meeting held early in July in Kiev with the participation of representatives from Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE ... "The country's integration plan, proposed by the OSCE, is likely to come into the century's history. This is the first plan, which will not draw the line between two opposing parties, but unite them, settle the conflicts, establish historically-tested forms of a possible state constitution", the President states.

Interfax, 28 June

Ambassador Jorma Inki, head of the OSCE mission in Chechnya, believes

that the mission must stay in that Russian internal republic for at least a few more years until civil institutions are formed and the humanitarian situation is fully under control ... Inki stressed that the international community should send more resources to Chechnya. The OSCE group is the sole international structure permanently represented in Chechnya, he said.

Die Presse, 6-7 July

The Special Adviser to the OSCE Chairmanship on Central Asia, Herbert Salber, warned against looking at Central Asia only through the glasses of prejudice. He said the states and governments in the region had to be seen by the West as equal and serious partners. He named the topic of corruption as an example of Western prejudice.

Washington Post, 22 July

[President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev's] ... faction in parliament hastily passed a law on political parties this month that will make it virtually impossible for opponents to register political parties. The law requires a party to have 50,000 registered members spread across the entire country. The US criticized the law, and the OSCE denounced it, saying the measure "could mean the abolition of political parties".

www.osce.org/photos

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OSCE

NEWSLETTER

UPDATE

OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

ELECTIONS

ODIHR Director visits Skopje ahead of parliamentary elections

Gerard Stoudmann, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 3 and 4 July to discuss preparations for the deployment of a large-scale observation mission to monitor the parliamentary elections on 15 September. "We hope that the massive presence of international observers before and during election day will contribute to a proper conduct of these crucial elections and increase public confidence in the vote", remarked Ambassador Stoudmann. "But of course it is for the Government, the authorities and the political parties to ensure a fair electoral process."

The ODIHR plans to deploy a reinforced election observation mission – larger in size and with a longer-term mandate than previous missions. (See related story, page 1.)

Parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic meet international standards

The ODIHR observed the parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic on 14 and 15 June and concluded that the elections met international standards and commitments. The new election administration system that had been instituted after the previous parliamentary elections had brought about a high level of public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the election administration.

Technical preparations were carried out efficiently, including training for election officials. For the first time, voting by Czech citizens outside the country was permitted; however, very few took advantage of the opportunity. While there



Julian Peel Yates (left), Head of the ODIHR's Election Observation Mission for the Macedonian parliamentary elections, is introduced to the press by ODIHR Director Gerard Stoudmann (centre) and ODIHR Spokesperson Jens Eschenbaecher.

were relatively few election-related complaints and appeals, the ODIHR noted that the law and its application may not provide complainants with timely and effective remedies.

The ODIHR Election Observation Mission, headed by Peter Eicher (US), was established in Prague on 16 May. It was composed of eight election experts and long-term observers from seven participating States.

ODIHR prepares observation of autumn elections

In June, the ODIHR sent needs assessment missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia and Slovakia to prepare for the observation of scheduled elections. For the general elections on 5 October in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ODIHR plans to deploy a standard election observation mission at the beginning of September. The parliamentary elections in Slovakia on 20 and 21 September and the parliamentary elections in Latvia on 5 October will be observed by missions with staffing limited to long-term observers, and no observation of polling stations on election day.

Final election observation reports: new releases

In June, the ODIHR published final reports on the parliamentary elections in Hungary on 7 and 21 April, and the municipal elections in Montenegro/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 15 May. Both reports are available on: www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports



DEMOCRATIZATION

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan hold roundtables on gender equality

The ODIHR organized roundtables on gender equality in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in late May and early June. The discussions were held in support of current efforts in both countries to adopt legislation on equal rights and opportunities.

The meeting in Uzbekistan highlighted the need for adequate enforcement strategies with a special focus on areas where inequalities are most

evident, such as in employment. The OSCE Centre in Tashkent and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) co-organized the event.

The roundtable in Kazakhstan, jointly organized by the ODIHR, the OSCE Centre in Almaty, the UNDP and the National Commission on Women and the Family, was in response to a request by the Government for technical advice on the draft law on equal rights. Participants developed a number of concrete recommendations on how to improve the draft further, and to bring other relevant legislation into conformity with the objectives of the new law.

Project in Kazakhstan to focus on women in politics

An ODIHR workshop in Almaty in June has developed the framework of a two-year project that will provide non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with the technical support, training and financial assistance they need to promote women's involvement in public life. The workshop followed an agreement in December 2001 between the Government of Kazakhstan and NGOs on a long-term strategy to strengthen the role of women in politics.

International experts meet on migration and terrorism

A high-level international meeting on combating terrorism through the sharing of information on migration matters was co-organized by the ODIHR, the International Organization for Migration and the Czech Government in Prague from 3 to 5 June. The meeting explored how States can improve co-operation mechanisms to control their borders more effectively and prevent terrorists and organized crime groups from crossing borders without impeding trade flows and the free movement of people.

"Clearly there are some people who do not want to let into our countries for reasons of safety and security of our citizens, but we also do not want to erect new iron curtains", said Steven Wagenseil, Deputy Director of the ODIHR. "In order to meet the twin goals of controlling borders while simultaneously ensuring freedom of movement, we need to talk to

each other, keep information channels open and develop common approaches to the collection and sharing of information."

More than 50 high-ranking officials and international experts examined existing international co-operation mechanisms in the European Union, North America and Central Europe. The participants discussed the application of these combined experiences in the Commonwealth of Independent States, which are increasingly under strain as their borders are located on one of the main migration routes to Europe and are in close proximity to the current conflict in Afghanistan.

Chief of Azerbaijani border service visits Poland

The ODIHR continued its successful assistance programme aimed at the reform of the Azerbaijani border service by organizing the visit to Poland of General Elchin Guliyev, Commandant-in-Chief, in mid-May. Practical issues of bilateral co-operation were discussed with the Polish border service, which has successfully undergone its own reform process. The delegation also visited the Warsaw airport, the Polish border guard training centre in Ketrzyn, and a checkpoint on the Polish-Russian border.

The visit resulted in the signing of a protocol on information exchange between the two border services. It was also agreed that a group of 15 border officials from Azerbaijan would be trained at the training centre in Ketrzyn.

Meeting in Baku discusses religious freedom and combating extremism

The need to ensure religious freedom in the fight against extremism was stressed at an OSCE meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 17 and 18 June. Participants discussed the role of religious education in countering religious extremism, registration requirements for religious communities, and conscientious objection to military service. A topical issue that was raised was the wearing of headscarves in passport photographs, which has recently elicited considerable controversy in Azerbaijan and other European participating States.

The meeting drew together more than

40 representatives of state institutions, NGOs, religious communities and academia. It was jointly organized by the OSCE Office in Baku and the ODIHR, in co-operation with the Azerbaijan State Committee on Working with Religious Associations.

ODIHR and BBC launch radio show in Georgia

A new series of ODIHR-sponsored radio discussion shows to raise awareness of human rights was launched in Georgia in June, with the first programme focusing on the growth of religious intolerance and the draft law on religious organizations. Produced jointly with the BBC World Service, the shows are aimed at increasing the public's understanding of such issues as the rights of detainees, fair trial standards, religious freedom, the role of ombudsman institutions, trafficking in human beings and gender equality.



ROMA & SINTI

Roundtable aimed at preventing housing-related conflicts

A roundtable on preventing conflicts and tensions related to housing for Roma and Sinti was organized by the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues in co-operation with a senior delegation of the Slovak Government and the Council of Europe. The roundtable, held in Presov, Slovakia, on 7 and 8 June, was part of a continuing series of activities initiated by the ODIHR to assist States in managing housing-related issues in municipalities with large Roma populations.

Some 50 mayors, local officials, government representatives and international experts discussed strategies to tackle the numerous challenges arising from the emergence of ghetto-like residential areas with a high concentration of Roma inhabitants in several municipalities across Central and south-eastern Europe. Topics covered the segregation of Roma neighbourhoods, the lack of basic infrastructure, unresolved property

rights and the unclear administrative status of settlements.

Roma participation in Czech elections assessed

As part of its programme to advance the political rights of Roma, the Contact Point assessed the level of participation of Roma voters in the parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic on 14 and 15 June. A documentation visit and discussions with representatives of Roma political parties and NGOs, as well as with local councillors and officials of Roma origin, served as the basis of the assessment, which was reflected in the ODIHR Election Observation Mission's final report. As a follow-up measure, the Con-

tact Point plans to support electoral training for Roma voters in the light of the local elections in the autumn.

Campaign targets Roma voters in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Contact Point, in co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, has started a programme to strengthen the participation of Roma voters in the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 5 October. As an initial step, an awareness-raising campaign has been launched with a view to increasing the level of registration of specific categories of voters, such as first-time voters, women, and voters without regular identification documents. Future activities

include carrying out a voter-education campaign and forming a Roma monitoring team to assess the participation of Roma populations in the elections.

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OSCE Agenda

9 to 19 September, Warsaw. OSCE human dimension implementation meeting. Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and OSCE Chairmanship

23 and 24 September, Vienna. Review of implementation of Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Forum for Security Co-operation

2 to 4 October, Madrid, Spain. OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Standing Committee meeting and OSCE parliamentary conference on the Mediterranean: Ensuring peace, democracy and prosperity in the region. OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

10 and 11 October, Baku, Azerbaijan. Conference on religious freedom and combating terrorism. ODIHR and Azerbaijan State Committee for the Work with Religious Associations

28 and 29 October, Vienna. Meeting on community policing and minorities. ODIHR and OSCE Chairmanship

For more details, please visit: www.osce.org/events

Schedule of elections to be observed by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

	Type of election	Date
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	parliamentary	15 September
Slovakia	parliamentary	20-21 September
Republic of Serbia/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY)	presidential	29 September
Latvia	parliamentary	5 October
Bosnia and Herzegovina	general	5 October
Republic of Montenegro/FRY	parliamentary, municipal (Podgorica)	6 October
Republic of Montenegro/FRY	presidential	October *
FRY/Serbia and Montenegro	parliamentary	Autumn*

*to be confirmed

For further information, please consult: www.osce/odih/elections

Visit the OSCE website: www.osce.org

OSCE

NEWSLETTER

UPDATE

HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

Crimean Tatars focus of visit to Ukraine

The High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, visited Ukraine from 10 to 12 June. During his visit he was particularly interested in the situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) following the parliamentary elections at national and regional levels, held in March. The High Commissioner travelled to Simferopol to meet with high-level members of the ARC (including its Parliament and the Prime Minister), leading members of the Crimean Tatar *Mezhlis* (representative body), and the main political parties in the ARC. He noted that as a result of the elections, Crimean Tatars now have increased political representation at various levels of government in the region.

He was also impressed by the Ukrainian Government's efforts to promote the integration of Crimean Tatars, including means to assist in naturalization, programmes to counter the poor socio-economic situation of returnees and the creation of a special consultative forum in the Office of the President to consult on Crimean Tatar issues. At the same time, Mr. Ekeus noted the need for further work on these issues with the Ukrainian authorities and international organizations. The High Commissioner also discussed Tatar participation in public life and property issues.

Crimea was the main issue on the agenda of his meetings in Kyiv with senior officials including the Speaker of the Parliament and Foreign Minister Anatolii Zlenko.

Shuttle diplomacy on 'Status Law' continues

In June, the High Commissioner sought to accelerate the process of resolving outstanding issues in relation to the Act on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries.

In Budapest, he met with members of the incoming Government on 24 June to



Courtesy of UNHCR/B. N. Hajdu

Children of Crimean Tatar returnees in front of a restored school near Simferopol.

discuss their views on the Act. He received assurances from senior officials, including Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs, that the Government was committed to finding a solution to the issue which would, among other things, be acceptable to neighbouring countries and in line with international standards. Ambassador Ekeus stressed the importance that he attached to high-level discussions to improve mutual understanding over the issue and the use of joint (bilateral) commissions to resolve outstanding differences.

The High Commissioner repeated this point when he visited Bratislava on 27 June to meet with senior Slovak officials, including Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan. He encouraged the Slovak authorities to raise the issue in bilateral discussions and work towards a mutually acceptable solution. He expressed his understanding for the view that the Status Law discussion was time-sensitive and

had a bearing on domestic as well as bilateral relations.

The High Commissioner visited Bucharest on 10 and 11 July to gauge the latest views of the Romanian Government on this issue, particularly in the context of the Memorandum of Understanding between Hungary and Romania which was signed by Prime Ministers Viktor Orban and Adrian Nastase on 22 December 2001. During his visit – which included meetings with President Ion Iliescu, Prime Minister Nastase and Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana – Ambassador Ekeus was also informed about inter-ethnic relations in Romania, and the views of the Romanian Government concerning ethnic Romanian and Romanian-speaking minorities in neighboring countries.

Plight of Meskhetians raised in Moscow meetings

During a visit to Moscow on 17 and 18 June, the High Commissioner dis-

cussed a range of issues concerning inter-ethnic relations in the Russian Federation and in states with sizeable Russian minorities. Particular attention was focused on the Meskhetian community in Russia, especially the estimated 20,000 Meskhetians who live in Krasnodor Krai in the south of the country. The High Commissioner has raised some concerns in the past about the plight of Meskhetians who were deported from Georgia by Stalin in the 1940s.

Some Meskhetians have expressed an interest to return, others would like to stay. The High Commissioner noted that repatriation should be facilitated under guarantees of security; at the same time, the integration of Meskhetians living in Russia should also be promoted. Mr. Ekeus noted that in order to encourage integration, a number of issues would have to be addressed including migration, intolerance, citizenship, property rights and security. He stated his intention to work with the Russian and Georgian authorities to address this complex issue and also highlighted the importance of involving representatives of the Meskhetian community in the process of dialogue.

High Commissioner highlights "rapid pro-action"

In a speech to a Wilton Park conference on 'Creating conditions for peace', which took place near London on 1 July,

Ambassador Ekeus spoke about the importance of both short-term crisis management and long-term inter-ethnic integration as vital elements of conflict prevention and social harmony. The full text of the speech can be accessed on www.osce.org/hcnm

During his visit to London, the High Commissioner also had meetings with officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

High Commissioner reviews themes of first year in office

During the 11th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Berlin, Rolf Ekeus reviewed some of the themes and issues that have defined his first year in office. Mr. Ekeus, who assumed the post of High Commissioner on National Minorities on 1 July 2001, highlighted the importance of diminishing the risk of violent conflict and terrorism.

He placed special emphasis on the need to stem the tide of extreme nationalism and recalled commitments made by OSCE participating States at the meeting of the Council of Ministers in Rome in December 1993 to combat aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Mr. Ekeus stressed that "action can and must be taken across the OSCE area to combat intolerance, hate and prejudice against people of other cultures and

faiths". He recommended a renewed emphasis on anti-discrimination legislation and practice.

In his address, he emphasized that protecting national minorities was the responsibility of the State having jurisdiction with regard to the persons concerned. He also underlined the importance of integrating diversity; in other words, achieving social harmony in multi-ethnic states by avoiding either forced assimilation or separation. The damage of population transfers was cited as a recurrent issue that the High Commissioner was confronted with. He said: "In a number of countries, I feel as though I am engaged, with others, in mopping up after the failed policies of dictatorial regimes that have felt that nationalities issues could be solved through literally removing the problem."

On the margins of the PA session, the High Commissioner met with representatives of the German Foreign Ministry.

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UPDATE

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Special speakers address General Committees

During their meetings from 7 to 9 July in Berlin, the three General Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly (PA) considered reports and draft resolutions dealing with the Annual Session's theme of countering terrorism. High-level officials from the host country were featured speakers. The

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security was addressed by the Secretary of State for Defence, Brigitte Schulte; the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment by the Minister of Economy, Werner Mueller; and the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions by the former President of

the Federal Republic of Germany, Richard von Weizsäcker.

At the meeting of the Standing Committee preceding the formal opening of the Session, the heads of OSCE PA delegations voted to postpone the decision on the seating of the delegation from Belarus. The members of the delegation, were, however, invited to remain as observers.

OSCE

NEWSLETTER



Awarding of the OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy (left to right): Gert Weisskirchen, MP (Germany), awardee Pavel Sheremet, outgoing PA President Adrian Severin, awardee Friedrich Orter, and OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve

Treasurer and PA Secretary General present reports

The OSCE PA Treasurer, Senator Jerry Grafstein (Canada), presented his report as well as the proposed budget for 2002-2003. He emphasized that the Assembly was functioning within the overall guidelines of the budget approved by the Standing Committee. The Treasurer had met with KPMG, the Assembly's external auditors, and was pleased to hear their independent view that the finances of the Assembly were extremely well managed by the International Secretariat.

The OSCE PA Secretary General, R. Spencer Oliver, gave an overview of the International Secretariat's activities. He reported that the Assembly was undergoing continued dynamic growth and that the International Secretariat was functioning well and efficiently in support of the Assembly's expanded activities and within the budget allocated by the Standing Committee.

Belarusian and Austrian journalists share journalism award

The Seventh OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy was presented to Pavel Sheremet (Belarus) and Friedrich Orter (Austria) at a special ceremony during the PA's Annual Session in Berlin. The two journalists were recognized for their promotion of OSCE principles on human rights, democracy and the unimpeded flow of information (see *OSCE Newsletter*, May 2002).

Presentations were made by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, and the Chairman of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, Gert Weisskirchen. Both have been closely involved in the establishment and promotion of the annual award.

The outgoing PA President, Adrian Severin, said that by honouring Mr. Orter and Mr. Sheremet, the Parliamentary

Assembly was sending a clear signal to all citizens and participating OSCE States that respect for the freedom of the media was indispensable to democracy. He thanked the donors of the \$20,000 award, which was shared between the two journalists: Bertelsmann AG of Germany, the Bonnier Group of Sweden, Southam/Hollinger Inc. of Canada, Schibsted ASA of Norway and the George & Thelma Paraskevaidis Foundation of Cyprus.

Romanian MP represents PA at OSCE-Thailand Conference

Mihai Stanisoara, the Head of the Romanian Delegation to the OSCE PA, took part in the OSCE-Thailand Conference on the Human Dimension of Security, held in Bangkok on 20 and 21 June. He delivered an address on the role of parliamentarians in promoting international human rights norms in the fight against terrorism.

Parliamentarians discuss joint activities in the field

Representatives of the OSCE PA's International Secretariat took part in the meeting of the OSCE heads of missions in Vienna on 2 and 3 July. PA Deputy Secretary General Pentti Vaananen and the PA Programme Officers, Paul

LeGendre and Tina Schoen, briefed the heads of the Assembly's meetings and the parliamentarians' field activities. They discussed co-operation on various projects including future field visits, election monitoring missions and activities of the Assembly's Ad Hoc Committees.

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UPDATE

REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

UNESCO Institute for Education turns 50

On 14 June, Freimut Duve, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, took part in a conference in Hamburg commemorating 50 years of the UNESCO Institute for Education. In his remarks, the Representative noted that UNESCO's contribution to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication, was highly relevant to the world's present problems and the difficult challenges ahead. "After the terrible events of 11 September, UNESCO's mission to promote cultural dialogue and mutual understanding has become more important than ever", Mr. Duve said.

Speaking on the Internet takes shape

Speaking to the OSCE Permanent Council on 20 June, Freimut Duve focused on the strategy of his Office regarding the Internet. He said that despite a small amount of illegal and intolerable content on the Internet, the benefits outweighed the risks so far, and not only statistically. The Internet itself was a unique infrastructure for the free flow of information, which was essential in democratic societies. Thus, denying access to the Internet or over-regulating its contents was not acceptable.

He continued: "Combating terrorism must not be used as a justification for censorship of any media including the Internet. Once more, I would like to stress that there is no excuse or exculpation for acts of terror, hatred or child

abuse. But the fight against crime and terror cannot be won by the bowdlerization or suppression of the Internet or, for that matter, any other media. The free flow of information, ideas and knowledge is one of the most important ways to strengthen tolerance and peace."

The Office of the Representative will organize a workshop on the Internet in Vienna this autumn, to be followed by a larger conference in 2003, and will formulate some practical guidelines. An OSCE handbook on the Internet will be published and an Internet Café Project is being planned for some countries.

Charges dropped against Tajik journalist

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has welcomed the dropping of criminal charges against Tajik journalist, Dododjon Atovulloyev, by the authorities. The founder of the newspaper *Charogi Ruz*, who had been living abroad for years, would now be able to return to Tajikistan. In a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, Mr. Duve said: "I am confident that your Government will make Mr. Atovulloyev's return possible and that his safety will be guaranteed. Any future journalistic work Mr. Atovulloyev is endeavouring ... should be encouraged and supported in line with the OSCE media standards and commitments your country has undertaken to follow as a participating State."

Duve appeals to Putin on environmental journalist's case

Freimut Duve made several interventions in early July on the case of Grigory

Pasko, a Russian environmental journalist who is in prison for treason. On 25 June, the Russian Supreme Court's military division had upheld the verdict.

In a letter on 2 July, Mr. Duve appealed to the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, to pardon Mr. Pasko. The OSCE Representative said that the G-8 Summit had led to a new quality of global economic and ecological trans-border responsibility. He wrote: "Now the Russian Federation is one of the global powers responsible for the state of our planet, including its ecological health. The Russian journalist, Mr. Pasko, demonstrated not only courage but also a great personal responsibility to draw the attention of the public to the dangerous dumping of nuclear waste – an ecological scandal that may affect the Eastern Asian ocean region for many years to come."

Freimut Duve also raised Mr. Pasko's case at the meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council on 4 July and again in a letter addressed to the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, on 15 July.

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OSCE

NEWSLETTER

UPDATE

SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE SECRETARIAT

Central Asia is high on SG's agenda

The OSCE was invited as an observer to the **First Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)**. At the invitation of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, Secretary General Jan Kubis attended the event, which was held on 4 June in Almaty. Herbert Salber, Special Adviser to the Portuguese OSCE Chairmanship on Central Asia, also took part. The Secretary General had separate discussions with President Nazarbayev and with President Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan on expanding co-operation between the OSCE and the two countries.

The Secretary-General visited **Tajikistan and Uzbekistan** from 16 to 19 June. On a visit to Dushanbe from 16 to 18 June, he had meetings with President Emomali Rakhmonov, Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov and several political leaders, including Said Abdullo Nuri, the leader of the Islamic Revival Party. His talks with the Tajik leadership and the opposition stressed the importance of Tajikistan's determination to continue its democratic reforms and economic reconstruction. He issued an appeal to the international community to support the country's efforts.

While in Dushanbe, Mr. Kubis addressed an international conference on the **'Lessons of the Tajik peace process for Afghanistan'** on 17 June. It was held on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the signing of the General Peace Accord, which ended the five-year civil war.

After a brief visit to the **OSCE's field office in Khujand, Tajikistan**, the Sec-

retary General proceeded to **Tashkent**, where he met with Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov and his first Deputy Minister, Sadyk Safaev. They discussed concerns common to Uzbekistan and the OSCE and agreed that regional co-operation was essential to security and stability in the region. Mr. Kamilov referred to the newly established Central Asian Co-operation Organization and pointed to the need for neighbouring countries to work more closely in the area of security and in the fight against terrorism and religious extremism.



Secretary General Jan Kubis meets the new Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Slovenia, Ambassador Ernest Petric, on 9 July.

Activities in Vienna

The Secretary General took part in a seminar on **'Central Asia's first decade of independence: promises and problems'** at the invitation of the United Nations International Peace Academy and the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna. The three-day discussions from 4 to 6 July in Vienna, which included Central Asian participants, was the third in a series of events focusing on peace operations and co-operation between the United Nations and regional organizations. The concluding event will take place in Paris in October.

The Secretary General took part in a conference on **'International security and the fight against terrorism'** at the invitation of Austria's Minister of Defence. The conference took place from 13 to 15 June within the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, with contributions from countries participating in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue.

The Secretary General opened the annual meeting of **OSCE Heads of Missions**, which was held on 2 and 3 July. Among other matters, he informed the Heads about the ongoing discussions on the Organization's reform process. He also called attention to the need to focus the debate on priorities in 2003 on policy and programmes instead of devoting it exclusively to financial aspects.

The OSCE Secretariat's Section for External Co-operation hosted a delegation from the Secretariat of the **Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)** on 8 July. Headed by Manane Bakhtit, Director of Political Affairs, the visit was aimed at learning more about OSCE structures and negotiating bodies and exploring avenues for further contacts and co-operation.

The Secretary General and the OIC delegation reviewed the activities of OSCE participating States in the OIC, noting the calls to strengthen ties between the two organizations. The OIC identified potential areas for expanded co-operation: action to combat and prevent terrorism; the dialogue of civilizations, cultures and religions; economic and environmental issues; small arms and light weapons; and techniques in mission preparedness. The visitors also expressed interest in OSCE activities in Central Asia and in the Caucasus.

The **European Union's Political and Security Committee** ambassadors of the current and incoming EU presidency, accompanied by high-level representatives of the **Council Secretariat** and the **European Commission**, visited Vienna on 10 July. The Secretary General had individual meetings with Pieter Feith, Deputy Director-General, European Security and Defence Policy, Council Secretariat, and Lodewyk Briet, Common Foreign and Security Policy Directorate, European Commission.

Their talks were devoted to sharpening the focus of OSCE co-operation with the EU and EC, including the

exchange of information and consultations on operational matters. Practical co-operation on the ground was also discussed, especially in south-eastern Europe and Central Asia. Special emphasis was placed on the co-operation in police-related activities and the streamlining of international efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the OSCE's role in the areas of rule of law and education.

On 15 July, Mr. Kubis met Erhard Busek, Co-ordinator of the **Southeast European Co-operative Initiative (SECI)** and Special Co-ordinator of the **Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe**. Their discussions dealt with

preparations for the meeting that is being convened by the OSCE Secretary General on 6 September on the role and contribution of sub-regional groups in preventing and countering terrorism and other new security challenges. The SECI and the Stability Pact have been invited to attend.

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Combating corruption in OSCE countries

'Co-ordinating regional efforts to increase transparency and facilitate business' was debated at a seminar on 11 and 12 July in Bucharest as a follow up to the Ninth OSCE Economic Forum on 'good governance and transparency', held in May 2001, in Prague. Some 100 participants identified the major constraints to the development of the private sector in former centrally planned economies, evaluated "best practices" to remove these constraints and recommended action to facilitate regional co-operation and integration.

Marcin Swiecicki, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, described the synergy between the promotion of market-oriented reforms, good governance and the rule of law, and the fight against corruption in developing the business sector. "In the framework of ongoing reforms in transition countries, corruption in certain areas should be automatically eliminated", he said. "Direct agreements between market partners eliminate some avenues for corruption."

His views were supported by Romania's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Millnea Motoc, who called attention to

the adoption of free market principles as a prerequisite for sustainable economic development and integration into the global economy.

Two working groups examined the many complex aspects of corruption. The participants recognized that the misconduct of civil servants came at a high price: corruption was detrimental to growth and development since it discouraged domestic and foreign investment. Corruption also had a negative impact on the well-being of the population, exacerbating poverty and social inequities. Corruption and criminal activities often went hand-in-hand. Corruption sometimes placed democracy in jeopardy and threatened collective security.

The participants agreed that the fight against corruption involved several agents and that the ideal approach should be comprehensive, long-term and pragmatic. They encouraged the adoption of codes of good conduct in the private sector as well as in government. The role of civil society, international conventions and institutions in fostering high-quality governance was emphasized.

OSCE response

The working groups urged that in addressing corruption, OSCE field activities should continue promoting the adoption of legislation aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, enhancing the role of civil society, and guaranteeing the freedom and the professionalism of the media.

The introduction of innovative institutions should be encouraged, as in the case of an OSCE field presence that is supporting the creation of a mechanism to resolve disputes dealing with commercial matters. In another case, the Head of an OSCE field presence was chairing an international task force to elaborate an anti-corruption strategy. In these examples, the OSCE was working closely with the authorities of the host countries, responding to specific requests and supporting a constructive dialogue between the key actors.

The seminar was organized by Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the support of the Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities.



“Kosovola” depicts interweaving multi-ethnic lives

The daily lives of four young Kosovars – two Albanians and two Serbs – take centre stage in “Kosovola”, a documentary film which is currently being shown throughout the province. Set in the municipalities of Mitrovica/Mitrovice and Gračanica, the 60-minute film seeks to encourage viewers to re-evaluate their perceptions of other communities by drawing attention away from stereotypes to commonly shared human

emotions, experiences and hopes.

After each showing, viewers are invited to discuss their reactions to the film. The free screenings are hosted by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) in co-operation with Springbok Film (Netherlands) and other partners. The project was financed by the Catholic Relief Services, Cordaid, the European Cultural Foundation, OMiK, Pax Christi, Press Now and War Child Netherlands. For more about the film, visit: www.kosovo-a.net



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