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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is the institution of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) responsible for promoting human rights and democratic principles in its participating States. The ODIHR's role is to assist States in the fulfilment of their 'human dimension' commitments to the OSCE. In practice, the ODIHR has four main tasks.

Firstly, it organizes election observation missions to assess whether presidential, parliamentary, and sometimes local elections or referendums in participating States are held in accordance with OSCE commitments and it provides technical election assistance to States.

Next, it develops and implements projects in participating States to promote human rights and democracy. These range from human rights awareness programmes to training police officers, assisting ombudsman offices and reviewing election legislation.

Thirdly, the Office organizes conferences and meetings to bring together State delegations, members of OSCE institutions and field missions, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations to discuss the state of human rights and the rule of law within the OSCE region and how best to further promote it.

Finally, in accordance with its mandate, the Office contributes to monitoring the implementation of OSCE human rights commitments by participating States.

As a result of rapidly growing demands for its services, the ODIHR has nearly doubled in size in the last year and currently operates with almost fifty local and international staff.

2. JANUARY - JUNE 1999 IN BRIEF

While the crisis in Kosovo has dominated the first half of 1999, the ODIHR has nonetheless expanded the level of assistance it offers to participating States.

With five new Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) signed at the end of last year between the ODIHR and states in Central Asia and the Caucasus, the focus on these two geographical areas has continued. Around 30 new projects are being implemented in these regions, in addition to a number of other projects in Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Latvia and Ukraine. The ODIHR has increased the breadth of its work, branching out into producing television programmes, providing increased technical election assistance to States, developing activities relating to Roma and Sinti, and running training workshops on 'women in politics' and on trafficking of people. In addition, the ODIHR has observed four elections since the start of the year.

Meanwhile OSCE participating States have continued to endorse the work of the ODIHR, seconding election observers for observation missions and staff to the Office itself in Warsaw,

providing continued financial backing through voluntary contributions, and participating in meetings on the implementation of human rights commitments in the OSCE region.

The Norwegian Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, although facing probably the toughest challenge of a chairmanship since the end of the Cold War, has worked actively and closely with the ODIHR to promote human rights and to encourage participating States to ensure their commitments to the OSCE are fulfilled.

In line with the ODIHR's belief that the international community should endeavour to speak with one voice on human rights issues, co-operation with other organizations and institutions has also increased significantly. The European Commission and the ODIHR signed an agreement on a joint programme for advancing human rights and democratization in Central Asia and the EC contributed 380 000 Euros to the programme of 15 technical assistance projects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. They are also working towards the development of a framework agreement on co-operation which would include the regular exchange of information, the conducting of joint needs assessment missions in the field, consultation on programmes and projects and the promotion of joint projects, as well as the joint funding of projects.

The United Nations Development Programme, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Council of Europe are just a few of the other major organizations the ODIHR works with on a regular basis, both in the field and at headquarters. At the same time, the office is promoting sustainable grassroots level initiatives in the field by working with non-governmental organizations and local lawyers, journalists and human rights activists on projects and around election time.

Co-ordination with OSCE Missions has also been a priority, with the Missions and field offices playing a fundamental role in the realization of ODIHR projects and assisting in preparations for election observations in a number of countries. A Human Dimension Seminar organized by the ODIHR in April brought together OSCE Missions, institutions and other organizations to discuss the role of human rights in field missions.

The ODIHR contributed to the launch of the OSCE's Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), by assisting with organizational aspects, helping define the human rights mandate, developing human rights training, and providing forward-planning for elections. An ODIHR Adviser was named as the KVM's Director of Human Rights.

Placing human rights and democracy building at the very centre of the OSCE's work has become a key goal of the ODIHR. As the crisis in Kosovo has shown, respect for human rights lies at the heart of security considerations in Europe.

3. ELECTION OBSERVATION

The ODIHR continues to organize election observation missions at the invitation of participating States. A standard election observation operation begins with a needs assessment mission, some months in advance of the election, to gauge the political situation,

election legislation and conditions for an observation mission. Next a core team and long-term observers arrive in the country, usually two months before election day, to commence the long-term observation exercises, including monitoring the media coverage and following the entire progress of the campaign. For election day itself a large number of short-term observers are deployed throughout the country to observe polling station proceedings, the count and aggregation of results. The mission generally produces a preliminary statement outlining their assessment of the elections a day later. Finally a full report of the election and the ODIHR's recommendations for future improvements is published within a month.

The ODIHR often works alongside and in co-operation with election observers from other organizations and OSCE institutions, in particular the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. In addition the Council of Europe and other organizations often send observers. The ODIHR encourages all organizations involved in an election observation to co-ordinate their efforts and to produce a joint statement of their findings and recommendations, in order to increase the impact of such reports.

Election Observations January - June 1999

Kazakstan / 10 January

The ODIHR deployed a limited mission to assess the 10 January presidential election in Kazakstan. Following amendments to the constitution of Kazakstan in October 1998, the early date set for the election and an ODIHR needs assessment mission in November, the ODIHR decided not to send a full observation mission to the country because the pre-election conditions clearly and substantially failed to meet OSCE commitments. The ODIHR's concerns included a refusal by the Kazakstan authorities to register two candidates because of minor administrative convictions.

Instead, an assessment mission of 15 experts was deployed from 13 December 1998 to 15 January 1999 to give a general evaluation of the election. The mission, headed by Judy Thompson (seconded by Canada), released a preliminary statement the day after the election, reiterating that the election process fell far short of the standards to which the Republic of Kazakstan is committed as an OSCE participating State. Areas of particular concern included infringements on the rights of citizens to seek public office, the duration of the election campaign, obstacles to the freedom of association and assembly, access to the media and the legislative framework.

Subsequently, the ODIHR was approached by the Kazak authorities with a commitment to improve election-related legislation and to implement the ODIHR's recommendations.

Estonia / 7 March

A needs assessment team was dispatched to Estonia on 3 February to begin the preparations for the 7 March Riigikogu (parliamentary) election. The election observation mission, headed by Ambassador Michael Wygant (seconded by the USA) found the election was conducted in a transparent manner, with the confidence of political parties and the public. The media, in general, gave full and balanced coverage to the election campaign and the competing political parties, while election day proceedings were well organized and polling was carried out efficiently and in accordance with electoral provisions.

The election observation mission, in its final report, recommended that the Estonian parliament review recent election law amendments that appear to strengthen language requirements for electoral candidates.

Belarus / 4 April

The ODIHR did not observe the election for local council deputies, held in Belarus on 4 April, because it considered that the election process, under the existing legal framework, would not be in conformity with OSCE commitments.

However an ODIHR expert provided support to the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group (AMG) in Belarus, which conducted a limited political assessment of the election. The ODIHR also supported the AMG in organizing training for domestic election observers. The training was conducted at regional and national levels, for representatives from non-governmental organizations, political parties and the administration, and took place in all six regions of the country from December 1998 to March 1999.

Slovakia / 15 and 29 May

An ODIHR needs assessment mission took place in Bratislava from 13 to 16 April to assess the preparations for the presidential election, held on 15 May. An ODIHR election observation mission, headed by Ms. Siri Skare (seconded by the Government of Norway) was established on 19 April and observed the first round of the Slovak presidential elections on 15 May and the second round on 29 May. Observers visited approximately 450 polling stations.

The mission found that the election was held in accordance with the electoral provisions, and was administered efficiently and in accordance with OSCE commitments. The observation mission also concluded that the election law created equal campaign conditions for all candidates and provided clear rules regarding campaigning in the media. However the provisions related to the campaign silence period were violated. The ODIHR election observation mission welcomed the Central Election Commission decision to accredit two domestic observer groups, thus increasing the transparency of the process.

Armenia / 30 May

A full election observation mission for the 30 May parliamentary election in Armenia was launched on 19 April, under the leadership of Mr. Nikolai Vulchanov, ODIHR Election Adviser. Twenty five long-term observers and core team members and 168 short-term observers were deployed. The short-term observers were headed by Ms. Tone Tinggaard, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

On election day observers visited some 700 polling stations. The observation mission concluded that, in general, the 1999 parliamentary elections were an important step towards compliance with OSCE commitments. While improvements were made to the electoral framework and environment in Armenia, the observation mission called for further improvements.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to election observation, the ODIHR has expanded its technical assistance in the field of elections, in particular as part of the Memoranda of Understanding between the Office and governments in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Technical assistance projects include reviewing election legislation, training election officials in good election practices, training domestic election observers and promoting voter education.

To promote democratization the ODIHR also implements technical assistance projects in a number of specific areas. These include a) improving the rule of law and bringing national legislation into line with OSCE commitments, b) developing effective ombudsman/national human rights institutions, c) improving freedom of movement and provisions for refugees and internally displaced persons, d) promoting civil society and public awareness of human rights, e) advancing equal rights for women and men, f) improving measures to prevent torture and ill-treatment and g) providing human rights training for judiciaries, police and border guards.

Central Asia

ODIHR visit to Central Asia

From 6 to 17 May the ODIHR Director, Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, led a joint delegation of international organizations to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan and Uzbekistan.

The goals of the visit included an evaluation of the overall state of democratization and conditions for upcoming elections, an assessment of the implementation of projects in the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) signed with the ODIHR, and the launching of the European Commission/ODIHR Joint Programme for Advancing Human Rights and Democratization in Central Asia.

The delegation was composed of representatives from the ODIHR, the European Commission, UNHCR, the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights

(OHCHR), the Constitutional and Legislative Policy Institute (COLPI) of the Open Society Institute, and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. A smaller delegation also visited Turkmenistan on 17 May.

The delegation met with the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the Foreign Ministers of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan and Uzbekistan and the Speakers of Parliaments, Chairs of Central Election Commissions and representatives of political parties and non-governmental organizations.

In Kazakstan and Uzbekistan, where elections are scheduled before the end of 1999, the delegation underscored the importance of creating conditions conducive to a free and fair electoral process, in line with OSCE commitments. Both countries have requested ODIHR assistance in reviewing their election laws.

The delegation also assessed the first projects undertaken under the new Memoranda of Understanding with Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan. They found that several projects are off to a promising start. In Uzbekistan, where an MOU has been in place since 1997, several new projects were agreed, and the government reviewed its pledge to co-operate and expand democratization activities.

In each country, the delegation relied heavily on the support of the OSCE Office or Centre. The centres will be deeply involved in implementing MOU projects.

Election Assistance Strategy Meeting

The OSCE/ODIHR hosted a two day meeting in Warsaw on electoral assistance strategy to countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus on 24 and 25 February 1999. The meeting brought together 30 representatives of international organizations and agencies involved in election related activities in Central Asia and the Caucasus, in preparation for the six national elections scheduled for later this year.

On the agenda was a comparative analysis of the election situation in countries of the two regions, identification of the specific needs of each region and the further development and streamlining of joint projects and co-operation in electoral assistance in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Participants included the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and heads of OSCE missions and field activities in Central Asia and the Caucasus, representatives from the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme, United States Agency for International Development and a number of election organizations, such as Electoral Reform International Service, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the United Nations Mission of Observers to Tajikistan, the National Democratic Institute and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (Foundation).

The meeting provided a useful forum for information sharing and for shaping a co-ordinated strategy for future election assistance initiatives. It was suggested that a set of criteria should be developed to measure the effectiveness of election assistance and observation programmes and that the existing mechanisms for co-ordinating activities in the field, currently employed in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, should be expanded to other Central Asian and Caucasus countries, through the OSCE Missions and other organizations. A clearer definition of responsibilities and specific election-related activities of each organization in the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus was also produced, along with recommendations.

Kazakhstan voter education

The ODIHR and BBC World Service visited Kazakhstan during March to discuss the production and broadcast of a television programme to promote voter education.

Kazakhstan freedom of religion

An ODIHR expert on freedom of religion attended a roundtable in Kazakhstan on 13 March. The roundtable, organized by the Almaty Helsinki Committee and the Presidential Human Rights Commission, was convened in response to concerns about a new proposed law on freedom of religious confession and religious organizations. At the meeting, the government announced its intention to withdraw and rework the controversial draft law and to engage in improved dialogue with religious communities and non-governmental organizations.

Women in Politics training

Twenty five participants from government and non-governmental organizations from across Kazakhstan attended a 'Women in Politics' workshop held in Almaty from 3-8 May. The workshop project is part of the ODIHR Memorandum of Understanding with Kazakhstan, and was organized in conjunction with the OSCE Centre in Almaty. The workshop was designed to assist women from government and NGOs with presentation, campaigning, lobbying and training skills. Each participant is now required to run at least one follow-up workshop by the end of July.

The event was opened by Mrs Samarkova, head of the National Commission on Women and Family Affairs under the President of Kazakhstan, and by Ambassador Schoening of the OSCE Centre. Two trainers from the Active Learning Centre in the United Kingdom, ran the workshop, evaluated as 'excellent' by the participants. The project is funded through voluntary contributions from the United Kingdom and the European Commission.

Kyrgyzstan election assistance

A joint ODIHR- Electoral Reform International field visit to Bishkek took place in April. The trip initiated a project to train domestic election observers, as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding between the ODIHR and Kyrgyzstan. The project was funded by a voluntary contribution from the USA.

Tajikistan needs assessment mission

An ODIHR needs assessment mission visited Tajikistan from 2 - 5 March. The mission, headed by ODIHR Deputy Director, Peter Eicher, was joined by representatives of the UNDP, the European Commission and the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan. Following meetings with senior officials from a number of ministries and government agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, media representatives and international organizations, the mission has helped to develop specific election and democratization project proposals for inclusion in an MOU to be signed with the Government of Tajikistan during 1999.

From 21 to 28 May the ODIHR and the UN conducted the first of a number of joint assessment missions to Tajikistan. The aim of the mission was to assess and encourage preparations for the upcoming elections.

Tajikistan election assistance

Also in Tajikistan, together with UNDP and IFES, the ODIHR organized a workshop on the development of election legislation in Dushanbe from 26 to 28 May. The aim of the seminar was to provide international expertise and assistance to the Tajik authorities during the initial phase of the elaboration of a new election code.

Uzbekistan NGO Law

During March, the ODIHR reviewed a draft Uzbek law on non-governmental organizations. Comments were presented to the Parliament of Uzbekistan on 19 March and the law passed its second reading on 15 April.

Uzbekistan human rights radio programmes

On 18 March the first programme in a series of 12 radio documentaries on basic human rights was broadcast in Uzbekistan. The programmes, in the Uzbek language, were produced in co-operation with the BBC World Service in 1998, but broadcast was delayed by the closure of one of the BBC's frequencies by the Uzbek authorities. They are due for broadcast during 1999 and were funded by a voluntary contribution from the United Kingdom.

Uzbek border guard training.

The ODIHR project on human rights training for the border service of the Republic of Uzbekistan, entered its second phase from 23 to 29 May 1999, when a training course was held at the Polish Border Guards Academy, in Ketrzyn, Poland.

Seven border officials from Uzbekistan received training on issues relating to existing laws on border control and entry/exit from Uzbekistan and their conformity with relevant OSCE commitments and other internationally accepted standards. Support in reviewing the curriculum of the Uzbek Border Guards School is foreseen as phase three of the project. This project was funded by a United Kingdom voluntary contribution.

Central Asia civil society assistance

In Kyrgyzstan the first two in a series of meetings between government officials and representatives of civil society, were held in Bishkek on 8 May and in Osh, South Kyrgyzstan, on 27 May. These meetings, organized under the Memorandum of Understanding signed last December, follow a series of five meetings organized in 1998. The project aims at furthering dialogue on human rights issues between representatives of the government and civil society. The first meeting was moderated by the Head of the ODIHR Election Section, Hrair Balian, and both meetings discussed the draft election code and a future ODIHR project to train domestic election observers.

In Uzbekistan, a similar project began with a meeting in Bukhara on 9 April on the subject of non-governmental organization and government partnership. In addition, representatives of Uzbek NGOs were sent to Bishkek for a meeting with their Kyrgyz counterparts from 12 - 14 April to facilitate contacts between Karalkapak and Bishkek based NGOs. Meanwhile, in Kazakhstan the first in a series of such meetings took place on 9 May, focusing on issues relating to women's rights, Chinese refugees and the establishment of an ombudsman. The meetings were organized for the ODIHR by the OSCE Centres in Bishkek and Almaty and the OSCE Central Asia Liaison Office. These projects are funded by voluntary contributions from the United Kingdom and the European Commission.

Caucasus

Caucasus needs assessment mission

A needs assessment mission was deployed in the Caucasus from 15 January to 1 February to explore the requirements and conditions for implementing the MOU projects in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The mission met high-level government representatives in the region, including Ministries of Foreign Affairs and members of Central Election Commissions, as well as representatives of partner organizations on the ground.

Armenia election official training

During March, the ODIHR reviewed the new election code of Armenia and provided extensive comments and recommendations to amend the code. During April, an ODIHR technical assistance team in Yerevan assisted the Central Election Committee (CEC) in devising a training programme for election officials at regional level. The team prepared a

training manual for election officials based on a number of recommendations presented to the CEC.

The training programme itself was carried out in Armenia during May. The technical election assistance team, which organized and conducted the training, worked independently of the OSCE election observation mission also present in Armenia during the election campaign and the project was implemented as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between Armenia and the ODIHR.

Armenian television programmes

The first in a series of six television programmes on human rights was broadcast in Armenia on 14 April. The programme, on the rights of disabled people and was produced in the Armenian language. The second programme in the series, on the rights of detainees was broadcast on 19 May. The series, made in agreement with the Armenian Government as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the ODIHR, focuses on the human rights of vulnerable groups in Armenia. Future programmes include the rights of women, refugees, soldiers and prisoners. All programmes are produced by local television crews, in close consultation with local and international non-governmental organizations. This project is funded by a Norwegian voluntary contribution.

Azerbaijan election assistance

The ODIHR assisted in the review of election legislation in Azerbaijan by providing comments on a preliminary draft Central Election Commission law, which was forwarded to the office in February by the executive authorities and main political parties. The current law has been particularly controversial.

In addition, the assessment mission to the country in January established contacts with the Central Election Commission and devised a training programme for election administrators. This will involve producing a training manual and conducting training workshops and will be implemented in time for the as yet unannounced election date. It is funded by a voluntary contribution from Norway.

Azerbaijan BBC workshop

The BBC World Service and the ODIHR organized a workshop for journalists in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 2 to 5 March. The event was attended by representatives from the ODIHR and the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media. Conducted by experts from the BBC World Service's Caucasus Division, it focused on issues of libel and slander, journalists' legal rights and responsibilities, and the role of the media. The workshop brought together more than 60 representatives of television, radio and press from different political platforms, and the initiative was welcomed by all involved.

Georgia public defender assistance

An ODIHR expert was sent to Tbilisi in May to train the staff of the public defender's office in administering and investigating individual human rights complaints. He will help establish a good working relationship between the Office of the Public Defender and the Constitutional Court of Georgia and will help introduce mechanisms for the public defender and Georgian Parliament to hold regular consultations to discuss human rights recommendations relevant to the lawmaking process.

The expert will also provide assistance in introducing mechanisms for the investigation of human rights complaints made to the public defender's office from regions of Georgia remote from the capital, Tbilisi, in part through contacts with local administrative bodies. In addition the expert will work to raise the awareness of the Supreme Court, General Prosecutor, Ministry of Internal Affairs and other law enforcement bodies on the mandate and competence of the public defender and will suggest ways for them to establish a good working relationship.

Other regions

Albania Voter Registry Project

The ODIHR's long-running civil/voter registry pilot project has successfully been completed. The project arose as a result of three consecutive observation missions of electoral events in Albania, which determined that the voter registers were particularly inaccurate. The ODIHR considered that a substantial improvement in the registers could best be achieved through improvement in the methodology for maintaining and updating them. The objective of the project was threefold: to analyse the existing voter registers in Albania, to test a methodology for generating computerised civil/voter registers in six pilot locations, and to produce recommendations for a nation-wide civil registration exercise.

The first stage began in October 1997, when a network of interviewers was set up to collect the personal data of citizens in the pilot project locations. An Albanian company, INTECH Sh.p.k, was contracted to create software for registration and the data from the interviews was entered in the database. Following this any discrepancies between the ODIHR database and existing civil/voter registers were researched and corrections made where appropriate. Training was then conducted on the use of the database and the computers and registers were installed in the six pilot locations. Aftercare of the databases will be conducted by the OSCE Presence in Albania. The project was funded through voluntary contributions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and from the US State Department.

The project was successfully completed in May and a final report produced in June. This should provide the necessary methodology and lessons to allow the Albanian authorities to launch civil/voter registration databases nation wide.

Albania prison service assistance

During Spring 1999, an ODIHR expert was involved in a project to advise the Albanian authorities on a training programme for prison personnel. Among the initiatives discussed was the development of a horticulture/agriculture project for prisons and the partnership of Albanian prisons with prisons in the United Kingdom.

Albania law school

During March the ODIHR launched, with the support of the OSCE Presence in Albania, an assistance programme for the law faculty of the University of Shkodra in the North of Albania. An international expert arrived at the law faculty on 7 March to teach a course on international human rights law and develop course material. The programme aimed to establish human rights law on the curriculum and to develop local teaching capacities. The project was completed in May and a set of course materials, based on the course, is due to be published in the Albanian language. The project was funded by a voluntary contribution from the United Kingdom.

The ODIHR expert in Albania also conducted a seminar on 27 April for 40 lawyers, judges and students on the European Court of Human Rights and other issues relevant to Albania, such as the death penalty, property rights, the rights of detainees and the right to a fair trial.

Croatia prison assistance

An ODIHR expert began assistance to Croatia in the establishment of a training college for prison personnel. The expert is advising the Croatian authorities on issues relating to the development of such a college, such as curriculum development and the training of trainers. Members of the Croatian prison service were also trained in an English prison college in preparation for their tasks at the new Croatian college. The opening of this college is planned for Autumn 1999.

Community policing in Moldova

The ODIHR participated in an assessment mission to Moldova, from 23 to 26 February, to explore possible reform of the police force. The Mission was organized by the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute (COLPI), and also included representatives from the Soros Foundation in Moldova, the Association for European Law Enforcement Co-operation and the OSCE Mission to Moldova.

The assessment mission's purpose was to assess the ways in which the police could be reformed and improved, to try to improve its public image and support it in fighting crime. In particular the need for an improvement in relations, interaction and co-operation between the

police and the public was emphasized. The participants concluded that the Moldovan authorities showed considerable interest in a police reform programme and that joint project preparation could go ahead.

Police training in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

In reaction to the refugee crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the ODIHR, together with COLPI (Soros Foundation), the UNHCR, the OHCHR, and the Macedonian Ministry of the Interior, conducted a two day training seminar with police commanders on subjects such as stress management, human rights, use of force and the role of international organizations. The seminar took place from 25 – 26 May in Ohrid, Macedonia, and was attended by more than 20 senior police officers. The participants greatly appreciated the chance to discuss issues related to the refugee crisis systematically and in a calm atmosphere. A follow-up training seminar is planned for the beginning of July.

Action against trafficking

The ODIHR appointed a new Adviser on Trafficking Issues in April, who is currently preparing a series of reports and recommendations for projects to be undertaken by the ODIHR and other OSCE institutions in 2000. The Adviser is funded through a voluntary contribution from the United States. In addition, the ODIHR supported, through a voluntary contribution from the UK, a national Conference on Action against Trafficking in Poland on 13 - 14 May.

Torture prevention awareness campaign

During June 1999 the ODIHR organized an advertising campaign to raise awareness of the problem of torture and impunity of torturers. Following the recommendation of its Expert Panel on the Prevention of Torture to conduct activities related to the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June, the ODIHR contracted an advertising agency in Warsaw to design a hard-hitting one-page newspaper advertisement. In co-operation with the OSCE missions and field presences in Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Ukraine, the advertisements were placed in daily and weekly national newspapers throughout those countries.

In addition, an expert on torture prevention was sent to Tajikistan to conduct a series of press events, presentations and meetings on the issue during the week of 26 June. All torture prevention activities were funded by a voluntary contribution from the Government of the United Kingdom.

Roma/Sinti

The ODIHR has been joined by Mr. Nicolae Gheorghe as the new Roma and Sinti Adviser. He has taken over the work of the ODIHR focal point for Roma and Sinti and has started work on a wide range of projects for the remainder of 1999.

Mr. Gheorghe is currently working on a report on "Monitoring the effectiveness of policies on Roma and Sinti" in preparation for the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti to take place in Vienna on 6 September, and a report on "Roma in a situation of crisis: Roma of Kosovo".

In preparation for the latter, the Adviser travelled to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia during May and June to begin documentation of the situation of Roma refugees in the refugee camps. He is also working on a Roma and Sinti homepage on the Internet and a training seminar for young Roma leaders.

The Adviser has also embarked on a series of meetings in European capitals with various organizations engaged in policy making on Roma issues in order to promote partnership and synergy. In addition he is meeting NGOs to start developing networks and common projects.

Prior to the Adviser's arrival and following a request from Ambassador Troni, Head of the OSCE Spillover Mission to Skopje in January this year, the ODIHR provided funding for the purchase and distribution of 375 copies of a Roma/Macedonian dictionary for Roma students in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It is hoped the dictionaries will advance Roma rights, both culturally and by improving understanding between the Roma and Macedonian communities.

5. HUMAN DIMENSION MEETINGS

Human Dimension Seminar

A Human Dimension Seminar on "Human Rights: the Role of Field Missions" was held in Warsaw from 27 to 30 April. The Seminar was organized by the ODIHR and was attended by delegations from OSCE participating States, international organizations, members of OSCE missions and field offices, and non-governmental organizations.

The Seminar was opened by Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, Head of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission Ambassador William Walker, and Deputy High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ian Martin. The Seminar was closed by Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Janne Haaland Matlary.

The importance of field missions in the protection and promotion of human rights was emphasized, and four essential guidelines emerged for field operations in the area of human rights. They were: that the responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights lies, first and foremost, with participating States; that human rights are an integral part of all field missions; that human rights are an integral part of long term security and stability building; and that the successful implementation of human dimension issues is linked to an overall integrated and consistent approach.

In addition, a new Grassroots Democracy Programme was launched by the ODIHR, to provide support for small-scale human rights and democracy projects in countries where there

is an OSCE field presence. Missions and field offices will be able to put forward small projects for support and funding by the ODIHR.

The rapporteurs' report and consolidated summary of the Seminar is available from the ODIHR or on the ODIHR website at www.osce.odihr.org.

Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings

Freedom of Religion

The first Supplementary Human Dimension Implementation Meeting took place in Vienna on 22 March on freedom of religion. The meeting, organized by the Norwegian Chairman-in-Office, with assistance from the ODIHR, brought together a wide variety of non-governmental organizations, government representatives and religious groups to discuss religious dialogue and conflict prevention, and religious pluralism and limitations on freedom of religion. The ODIHR Advisory Panel on Freedom of Religion, members of which met just prior to the Supplementary Meeting, presented proposals for further activities.

Participants at the meeting reiterated the importance of the issue of freedom of religion for the OSCE. Issues highlighted at the meeting fed directly into the discussion of the OSCE Expert Panel on Freedom of Religion, which subsequently further developed ideas for projects and on-going support by the Panel for the work of the ODIHR in 1999. The meeting also provided useful lessons on necessary improvements in the format of the supplementary human dimension meetings.

Gender Issues

A Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Gender Issues was held in Vienna on 14 June. Following the experiences of the first supplementary meeting, the format for this meeting was significantly revised. Participants were encouraged to engage in more informal direct dialogue and a more focused agenda allowed more constructive discussion and recommendations.

6 ...AND FOR THE REST OF 1999...

For the second half of 1999, the ODIHR will focus its priorities on continuing the implementation of projects contained in the MOUs signed with Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia last year, and with Uzbekistan in 1997. In addition, the ODIHR expects to sign an MOU with Tajikistan and hopes that the ongoing discussions with Turkmenistan on MOU projects can be finalized so that its implementation of human rights and democratization activities can take place in the entire region of Central Asia.

In identifying, implementing and assessing projects, the ODIHR will continue its co-ordination with OSCE Missions in the field. The ODIHR has also introduced a Grassroots Democracy Project designed to provide support and funding for small human rights and democratization activities originated and implemented by OSCE Missions.

Through its Monitoring Unit, the ODIHR will continue to build an enhanced system for effective early warning of human rights concerns as well as for improved ad hoc and regular reporting to support the work of the Chairman-in-Office and the activities of the ODIHR.

The second half of 1999 is expected to be challenging for the ODIHR Election Section. Upcoming elections are scheduled in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Croatia, Ukraine, Georgia, the Russian Federation, and in several Central Asian countries.

On 6 September 1999 the third and final Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting of 1999 will be held on Roma and Sinti issues. The new Roma and Sinti Adviser of the ODIHR will be central to this event, which will bring together government delegations and NGO representatives for active discussion to place Roma and Sinti issues high on the OSCE agenda.

The autumn will also see the 1999 Review Conference and Summit. The Review Conference will be in Vienna from 20 September to 1 October, with a final part in Istanbul from 8 – 10 November, followed by the Summit of OSCE Heads of States on 18 – 19 November, also in Istanbul. The ODIHR is working to facilitate NGO participation to both events, and will amongst other issues be responsible for NGO registration. These meetings will provide the opportunity to highlight human rights issues at the OSCE's most senior level, and to set the agenda for OSCE activities in this field into the twenty-first century.

APPENDIX 1:

MOU PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION CALENDAR

Caucasus

Armenia

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Registration of Permanent Residents Project	To assist in developing a population registration system that conforms to international standards on freedom of choice of residence, equality and non-discrimination, to train officials in implementation of new laws, and to ensure public awareness of new laws. Timeframe: First workshop scheduled for 8-9 July, 1999

Public Awareness Project on Human Rights	Production and broadcast of six TV programmes and advertisements explaining basic rights according to national and international law in Armenian language. Local co-ordinator contracted, core group established. NGOs are being consulted during the script-writing process. Timeframe: April and May – Production and broadcast of first two programmes (detainees and handicapped). June – December - four remaining programmes to be produced and broadcast with two month intervals.
Review of Election Legislation	Election Code approved on 5 February by National Assembly without being submitted to ODIHR despite formal steps undertaken by ODIHR.
Training of Electoral Officials	Assessment mission to Armenia in January established contacts with the Central Election Commission and devised training programme. March 22 – April 13 – Two Experts in country to assist CEC in producing Regulations. May – Training. PROJECT COMPLETED

Azerbaijan

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Review of Election Legislation	Timeframe: January - Assessment mission to Azerbaijan established contacts with authorities and political parties and acquired relevant material; February - Executive authorities and main political parties of Azerbaijan forwarded a preliminary draft CEC law for ODIHR comments. Roundtable with political parties and other relevant international organizations in Baku before the second parliamentary reading of the CEC Law, pending invitation from Azeri authorities.
Training of Election Administrators	Assessment mission to Azerbaijan in January established contacts with the Central Election Commission and devised training programme. Timeframe conditional on date of election. Phase I – production of a training manual, Phase II - training workshops.
Citizenship and Registration Programme	To assist in developing a population registration system that conforms to international standards on freedom of choice of residence, equality and non-discrimination, to train officials in implementation of new laws, and to ensure public awareness of new laws. Timeframe: April 1999 – experts identified, June 1999 – relevant government agencies requested to produce information on current practices
Public Awareness Project on Human Rights	Production and broadcast of radio programmes explaining basic rights according to national and international law in Azeri language in co-operation with BBC World Service. Timeframe: August – December 1999
Development of National Law Enforcement Focal Point	To advice on procedures and standards for exchanging information and conducting joint investigations, and to give training in international investigative practices and human rights. Timeframe: Expert visit planned for June 1999
Workshop on Law and Journalism (non-MoU related)	Two workshops for over 60 Azeri journalists explained principles of legal and ethical journalism. Project co-organised with the BBC World Service. Office of OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media participated. Timeframe: 2-6 March 1999 COMPLETED Report available

Georgia

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Technical Assistance to Public Defender of Georgia	Second expert to assist the public defender's office in investigating individual human rights complains, to stay in Tbilisi from 6 June – 6 August 1999.
Public Awareness Project on Human Rights	Production of radio programmes in Georgian on various human rights issues to raise the awareness of the general public. Production to be done locally in co-operation with local actors. Timeframe: June – December 1999
Training Programme on Registration of Residents	To assist in developing a population registration system that conforms to international standards on freedom of choice of residence, equality and non-discrimination, to train officials in implementation of new laws, and to ensure public awareness of new laws. Timeframe: First workshop scheduled for 1 st week of July 1999
Civic Diplomacy Project	To increase human contacts between Georgians, Abkhazians and South Ossetians by organizing consultations on issues of common concern. Timeframe: Implementation conditional to situation in Abkhazia.
Election Assistance: Training of District Level Election Administrators	Assessment mission to Georgia in January established contacts with the Central Election Commission and devised training programme. Timeframe: March: authorities request ODIHR to expand the project to include law-enforcement agencies. Project expansion under consideration. August – October 1999, Phase I – production of a training manual, Phase II - training workshops.

Central Asia

Kazakstan

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Voter Education by Electronic Media	Production and broadcast of a TV programme to promote voter education in co-operation with the BBC World Service. Timeframe: March 1999 - Field visit to Almaty took place to discuss the project with CEC and potential TV makers. April – June 1999 – Phase one: preparation and selection of TV scripts. April – September 1999 – Production of 10 TV ads.
Training for Local Workshops on “Women in Politics”	To increase the participation of women in political life, and to train and produce trainers of women in politics. Phase I completed 8 May 1999. Evaluation received. Proposals from participants for follow-up workshops due by 10 June. Follow-up workshops to be completed by 31 July 1999.
Civil Society Assistance	To develop a dialogue on human rights issues between Government officials and representatives of civil society. Four meetings planned (3 in Almaty, 1 in Astana). Timeframe: 2-3 July 1999: First meeting: Prevention of torture. August – December 1999: remaining three meetings.
Legislative Reform Assistance	To assist in reviewing domestic laws and bringing them into conformity with Kazakstan's obligations under human rights treaties, and to lay the foundation for mechanisms to monitor implementation of domestic laws. Expert is working on the report. Timeframe: Early 1999 – Summer 1999

International Election Standards	To assist the Ministry of Justice and Central Election Commission in the implementation of a fair and transparent election appeals procedure. Expert identified. Timeframe: Autumn 1999
Assistance in Establishing an Ombudsman Office	To generate an exchange of views on the requirements for a national ombudsman institutions and to provide technical assistance for the creation and functioning of an effective and independent office. Expert identified. Roundtable in summer in Astana. Timeframe: End of July 1999

Kyrgyzstan

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Training for Local Workshops “Women in Politics”	To increase the participation of women in political life, and to train and produce trainers of women in politics. Phase I confirmed for 26 June to 2 July 1999. Deadline for follow-up workshop proposals: 26 July 1999. Deadline for participants to complete follow-up workshops: 30 September 1999.
Civil Society Assistance	To develop a dialogue on human rights issues between Government officials and representatives of civil society. Four meetings, both in Bishkek and in different regions of Kyrgyzstan. Timeframe: 8 May - first meeting held in Bishkek: draft election code; 27 May – second meeting held in Osh (south Kyrgyzstan): draft election code; Late August – third meeting in Bishkek: national human rights institutions; October: Fourth meeting
Legislative Reform Assistance	To assist in reviewing domestic laws and bringing them into conformity with Kyrgyzstan’s obligations under human rights treaties, and to lay the foundation for mechanisms to monitor implementation of domestic laws. Expert is working on the report. Timeframe: Early 1999 – Summer 1999
Election Assistance	To train domestic non-governmental election observers. Timeframe: Autumn 1999 – February 2000
International Election Standards	To assist the Ministry of Justice and Central Election Commission in the implementation of a fair and transparent election appeals procedures. Expert identified. Timeframe: Spring 1999 – Autumn 1999
Assistance to the Kyrgyzstan Commission on Human Rights	To assist the Commission in developing an organisational structure and internal procedures, and to train Commission members on international standards. Expert visit in May in progress. Timeframe: Late Spring 1999 – Late Autumn 1999
Registration of Permanent residents	To assist in developing a population registration systems that conforms to international standards on freedom of choice of residence, equality and non-discrimination, to train officials in implementation of new laws, and to ensure public awareness of new laws. Timeframe: April 1999: experts identified; May 1999: local partners identified; First workshop to be held in September 1999.

Uzbekistan

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Election Assistance	To provide training for political parties to enhance their participation in the electoral process. Workshop. Timeframe: pending until receiving firm guarantees from the Uzbek authorities that the workshop would be conducted in the pluralistic manner.
Civil Society Assistance	To facilitate discussions on human rights issues between local Government officials and representatives of civil society. Four meetings to take place in regions outside Tashkent. (Non-MOU addition: representatives of Uzbek NGOs have been sent to Bishkek for meeting with counterparts 12 - 14 April). Timeframe: 9 April - first meeting held in Bukhara; June – December 1999- remaining meetings
Border Officials Training, Phase II	To familiarise Uzbek senior border guards with international human rights standards. To review laws related to border control for conformity with international standards and to assist in establishing an on-going human rights training program. Timeframe: COMPLETED in May 1999 at the Polish Border Guards Academy
Co-operation with the Ombudsman of Uzbekistan	To enhance the newly established Ombudsman office by training and organise study tours and to assist with developing a national human rights plan. Timeframe: on hold until appointment of the Deputy Ombudsman
Human Rights Education on radio "Dignity of Man" (non-MoU related)	Series of 12 radio documentaries in Uzbek language explaining basic human rights, prepared in co-operation with the BBC World Service. Timeframe: production completed, weekly broadcasts commenced 18 March
Review of NGO law (non-MOU related)	Expert prepared comments on draft NGO law which were presented to Parliament on 19 March.

NON-MOU PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Albania

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Ombudsman Assistance	To assist in developing a national ombudsman ("People's Advocate"). Law passed, OSCE comments taken into account. Next steps pending appointment of Ombudsman.
Prison Service Training	To assist in upgrading the functioning of the prison system through training for prison services employees in human rights standards and improving prisoner treatment and security. Timeframe: continuing from 1998 - Autumn 1999
Assistance to Shkodra Law School	To assist in the development of a human rights course at Shkodra Law Faculty and to despatch an expert to co-teach human rights. COMPLETED. Report available.
Election Assistance	To devise methodology and recommendations for nation-wide civic/voter registration based on six pilot projects. COMPLETED

Belarus

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
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Election Assistance	To train domestic election observers in co-operation with AMG. Timeframe: December 1998 – March 1999 COMPLETED
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Bosnia and Herzegovina

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Combating violence against women	To develop and disseminate information and advocacy materials on violence against women, for women, through a variety of media. Initial focus on Zenica-Doboj region. NGO partner: Medica. Timeframe: starts June 1999

Croatia

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Prison Service Training	To assist in upgrading the functioning of the prison system through assistance for the development of a Training College for Prison Service Employees and through improving prisoner treatment and security. Timeframe: Spring 1999 - Summer 1999 regular expert visits. Study visit of Croatian officials to British Prison Training College in June. The Croatian authorities plan the opening of the College for Autumn 1999.

Estonia

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Language Training	Estonian language training to promote integration of widows and divorcees of ex-Soviet Military Officers. Training COMPLETED: participants now sit language exams. Phase I evaluation received 29 April 1999. Final evaluation due 30 June 1999.

Latvia

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Text book on Human Rights Law	To provide knowledge on international human rights conceptions, standards and implementation mechanisms in Latvian language. The text book is prepared by experienced Latvian scholars and the project is supervised by the OSCE Mission to Latvia. Timeframe: January – December 1999

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Training for Police protecting Refugee Camps	To train police commanders in stress management, human rights in the refugee context and to assess further training strategies. Timeframe: First training workshop held on 26-27 May, second planned for 22-23 June 1999.

Poland

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
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Action against Trafficking in	Co-finance for a national conference on Action against Trafficking. COMPLETED
Action against Trafficking in Training	Training workshops to raise awareness and co-ordinate activity on action against trafficking in six border regions of Poland. Final workshop design, incorporating suggestions from conference, to be submitted by 31 May 1999. Training starts in six border regions from September 1999. Timeframe: September - December 1999

Ukraine

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Ombudsman Assistance	To provide assistance to the newly created office, including in particular on monitoring gender issues, and in developing a dialogue with local human rights organizations. Timeframe: June - December 1999
National Council for the Prevention of Trafficking	To advise and assist local actors in the creation of a National Council to monitor and combat trafficking in human beings. Timeframe: ongoing Inaugural Meeting June 14, 1999
Election Assistance	To assist the Ministry of Justice and the Central Election Commission in the implementation of a fair and transparent election appeals procedure in accordance with international standards. Recommendations for improving the election law have been distributed. Conference – end of June. Timeframe: Spring - Autumn 1999

Regional

Name of project	Status/plan of implementation
Ombudsman Internet Homepage	To provide information and to promote contacts and communication among ombudsmen, human rights commissioners, and NGOs and create the possibility for collecting and presenting information in a cost effective way. Follow-up of 1998 Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw. Timeframe: Summer 1999 - Winter 1999
Meeting of Young Roma Leaders	To assess key developments which impact on the rights of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE region and to elaborate an inventory of basic requirements for successful training of young Roma leaders, in particular for establishment of national training associations. Timeframe: Autumn 1999 (after the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti Issues)

APPENDIX 2: ODIHR ORGANIGRAM