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AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

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A - 1010 VIENNA, KÄRNTNER RING 5 - 7

TEL.: +43-1 514 36-0, FAX: +43-1 514 36-96, E-MAIL: pm-dga@osce.org

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I. Introduction

The Seventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council held in Oslo on 2 and 3 December 1998 discussed the challenges to security in the OSCE area, and the OSCE's contribution to meeting them. The participating States stressed the need for the international community to develop co-ordinated responses to such challenges. Having assessed the progress achieved in the work on a Document-Charter on European Security, the Ministerial Council noted that emphasis had been placed on the "practical development of OSCE instruments for action, including co-operation with other organizations and institutions". The Council emphasized the importance of the development of the OSCE Platform for Co-operative Security as an instrument for enhancing European solidarity and partnership.

December 1998 marked the end of the Chairmanship of Bronisław Geremek, Foreign Minister of Poland, who was succeeded by Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk. Furthermore, the Oslo Ministerial Council in December 1998 decided that Austria would exercise the function of the Chairmanship in 2000.

The reporting period also saw the appointment of a new Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Ján Kubiš of the Slovak Republic, who took over from Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona of Italy.

During the reporting period the OSCE considerably expanded its operations, strengthening its role as a primary instrument for early warning and prevention of conflict, conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation. In 1999, the Organization was called upon to assume a number of new and vital tasks: in Central Asia, in the Caucasus and in south-eastern Europe, an area that has remained one of the most immediate concerns of the international community. In particular, Kosovo has been the greatest challenge the OSCE has faced so far.

Early in 1999, the Organization finished the building up of the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), numerically the largest operation it has ever mounted, and was then forced to withdraw it because of the deterioration of the security situation.

After the withdrawal of the KVM, the OSCE continued to fulfil its mandate by helping humanitarian organizations dealing with the refugee crisis and by preparing the deployment of a new OSCE Mission in Kosovo. The KVM staff assisted the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international organizations.

Following the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of resolution 1244 on 1 July 1999, the decision was taken to establish an OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OSCE MIK), as a distinct component within the overall framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The OSCE Mission has taken, within this overall framework, the leading role in matters relating to institution- and democracy-building and human rights. It has a number of responsibilities that are unprecedented in the context of the OSCE, such as training a new police service and judicial and administrative personnel, as well as providing a framework for media regulation and monitoring. The objective is, as the Mission's mandate states, to bring about "mutual respect and reconciliation among all ethnic groups in Kosovo and of establishing a viable multi-ethnic society where the rights of each citizen are fully and equally respected".

In Kosovo, the OSCE is developing an innovative and close relationship with the United Nations, as OSCE MIK forms an organic part of UNMIK. The OSCE also interacts

closely with its other major partners, the Council of Europe and the UNHCR as well as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) through KFOR.

OSCE MIK is itself important, but Kosovo cannot be isolated from the entire region. Much has already been done by the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia, and also in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The OSCE and other international organizations are now focusing on the development of a regional approach.

Already, the progressive measures for arms control and regional stability provided for in Annex 1-B of the Dayton Agreement are being dealt with under the auspices of the OSCE. The goal is to establish a regional balance in and around the former Yugoslavia.

The OSCE has a vital role working across borders in south-eastern Europe within the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The Pact was adopted and placed under the auspices of the OSCE by the Cologne Ministerial Conference, convened by the European Union on 10 June 1999.

In order to achieve the objectives set out in the Stability Pact, the OSCE, on 1 July 1999, decided to work for the compliance of its participating States with the provisions of the Stability Pact; to contribute the expertise of OSCE institutions and instruments to the proceedings of the South Eastern Europe Regional Table and to the working tables; and to work closely with other international organizations, including financial institutions and regional bodies. In October 1999, Mr. Van der Stoep, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, was selected to head Working Table 1 on human rights and democratization. Ambassador Robert L. Barry, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been tasked by the Chairman-in-Office with developing ideas on the regional role of the Organization, and on OSCE's contribution to the Stability Pact.

The OSCE's commitment to work in other regions continues unabated.

In the course of the reporting period, co-operation with the Central Asian participating States was high on the agenda of the Organization, reflecting also the interest of those States in the OSCE. An expression of the joint will to strengthen relations was the visits by high level representatives of the Central Asian States to the Permanent Council in Vienna. The decision to establish OSCE centres in Almaty, Ashgabad, and Bishkek, which began operating in January 1999, resulted in the consolidation of the presence of the OSCE in the region. Their mandates can be summed up broadly as promoting the realization of OSCE principles and fulfilment of its commitments as well as encouraging the co-operation of the Central Asian participating States within the OSCE framework.

As a follow-up to the "Decision on Central Asia" of the Ministerial Council in Oslo, Ambassador Wilhelm Höynck (former OSCE Secretary General), was appointed the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office to work out a plan for concept to further integrate the countries of Central Asia and to enhance the OSCE's activities in that region. In his report to the Permanent Council of 15 July 1999, he underlined the need for a regional dimension, while taking into account the individual needs of and the differences between the various countries. The Chairman-in-Office visited the Central Asian participating States in September and October 1999 with a view to continuing discussions on a more active involvement of the OSCE in the region.

In Tajikistan, the OSCE, as a political and moral guarantor of the implementation of the General Agreement for Peace, is actively contributing, together with the United Nations, to the peace process.

In other parts of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, the OSCE supports democratization and the development of civil societies. In the Caucasus, the OSCE has expanded its field presence by the establishment of an OSCE office in Armenia. This Office, which is expected to be operational by the end of November 1999, will promote the realization of OSCE principles and the fulfillment of its commitments as well as the co-operation of the Republic of Armenia. During the visit of the Chairman-in-Office on 17 and 18 September 1999 to Azerbaijan, an agreement in principle was reached to open an OSCE Office in Baku. The modalities of the OSCE presence are currently being discussed.

The year 1999 brought important changes to the OSCE operation in Ukraine with the closure of the OSCE Mission on 30 April. A new form of co-operation between the OSCE and the Government of Ukraine has since developed with the appointment of an OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, based in Kiev. The new form of co-operation foresees the planning and implementation of projects that may cover all aspects of OSCE activities.

In Belarus, the Organization has been indispensable in bringing the government and opposition together to initiate and pursue a dialogue on issues relating to the building of democratic institutions and civil society.

In 1999, the scope of co-operation with other international organizations has expanded. The Organization has been attempting to implement the principle of complementarity between the various organizations involved in the field and is increasingly called upon to involve itself in conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Early planning and consultations prior to deployment of OSCE Missions also include other international organizations. Recently the Council of Europe, UNHCR and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) were involved in early planning and consultations at the OSCE Secretariat prior to the deployment of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

Council of Europe secondments are another important development, initially to the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission and now to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, enabling the Organization to take advantage of the Council of Europe's expertise in a number of fields.

Other specific operations, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the OSCE co-operates with the Stabilization Force (SFOR) and the Office of the High Representative (OHR), or in Albania, where the OSCE provides a co-ordinating framework within which other international organizations can perform in their respective areas of competence, show that states and international institutions and organizations recognize the need for a synergy of efforts.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well have been playing an ever more active role in European security. For the Organization, NGOs are an important source of information on developments, particularly in human rights, but also in environment, economy, and security matters. Simultaneously, the OSCE, through its commitment to the development of civil societies, provides support to such organizations working at the grass roots on a wide variety of issues.

Increased co-ordination with the United Nations marked the reporting period. A United Nations regional organizations working level meeting on conflict prevention took place at United Nations Headquarters in December 1998 as a follow-up to the Secretary-General of the United Nations' meeting with the heads of regional organizations in July 1998. Its purpose was to further develop modalities of co-operation in conflict prevention.

Underlining the vitality of the OSCE's links with the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council for the first time on 20 July 1999. The United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Louise Frechette attended the OSCE Permanent Council on 7 October 1999 to discuss the ongoing co-operation in Kosovo.

Relations with the OSCE's partners for co-operation, Japan and the Republic of Korea, and the Mediterranean partners for co-operation (MPCs) were developed further, with Japan contributing significantly to the OSCE's endeavours in south-eastern Europe, especially in Kosovo. Jordan, which became the newest MPC in May 1998, offered to host the next Mediterranean Seminar to be held in December 1999, thus indicating its interest in the OSCE-MPC dialogue.

Another important question for the Organization is its operational development. While maintaining the concept of flexibility and the emphasis on activities in the field, the Kosovo experience and the new challenges in south-eastern Europe and elsewhere have underscored the need to strengthen the operational capabilities of the OSCE. The process of enabling the Secretariat to cope with the new tasks had already begun, with the implementation of the Permanent Council decision on the operational capacities of the Secretariat at the end of 1998. This decision resulted, *inter alia*, in the division of the Secretariat into two departments, the Conflict Prevention Centre and the Department of Administration and Operations, and the establishment of an External Co-operation Section in the Conflict Prevention Centre.

To ensure the Secretariat's preparedness for the establishment of new missions and to initiate and co-ordinate preparations and planning for specific missions at short notice, an internal ad-hoc Co-ordination and Planning Group, bringing together different services that could be involved in the build-up of a new mission, has been set up and has met regularly during the reporting period. A "situation room" has been established, which provides communication with the missions 24 hours a day and seven days a week while serving as a permanent link between them and the Secretariat and as a source of information for delegations of OSCE participating States. Other strengthening measures taken include the development of an Information System Strategic Plan and a Strategy for Capacity-Building through Training, as well as the proposed normalization of employment conditions for the OSCE staff.

The nature of the tasks to be performed, and the number of personnel in the field seconded by participating States for short periods of time underscore the need for adequate preparation of staff members for their tasks. As a result, the Secretariat has been developing induction training for new mission members. Missions also benefit from follow-up training for mission members with specific tasks such as human rights monitoring or democratization. Also training is a promising area for co-operation with other international organizations.

Another priority of the Organization in 1999 was gender equality. Following an Additional Human Dimension Implementation Meeting on Gender Issues, held in Vienna in

June 1999, and reflecting the recommendations of the meeting, the Chairman-in-Office requested the Secretariat, in co-operation with the other institutions of the OSCE, to develop an Action Plan for Gender Issues. The plan describes the tasks related to the implementation of the OSCE's obligations and sets a time-frame for the goals. It assigns responsibilities to the different actors of the OSCE and determines the resources needed to carry out the work. A Directive on the Professional Working Environment in the OSCE, developed to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination, has also been produced and came into force in June.

Particular attention was given during the reporting period by a variety of actors within the OSCE to Roma and Sinti issues. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities elaborated a report assessing the situation of the Roma population in several countries, in particular in Central Europe. The report resulted in a number of recommendations, that underlined the importance of measures to combat discrimination. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) appointed an adviser on Roma and Sinti issues who has engaged in numerous activities, including organizing a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti Issues in Vienna in September.

The ODIHR also continued to engage in its regular activities of implementing projects and programmes to enhance human rights and democracy in participating States. Among its priorities in 1999 can be noted the implementation of five Memoranda of Understanding signed with States in Central Asia and the Caucasus at the end of 1998, which have paved the way for around 30 new projects in these countries.

A further contribution to strengthening democratic institutions in the OSCE area was undertaken by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly through her visits to twelve OSCE field missions and all OSCE institutions, as well as several high-level bilateral visits. The Parliamentary Assembly also co-organized the second parliamentary conference on "Sub-regional Economic Co-operation faced with New Challenges" held in Nantes, France in October.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media presented in March his first yearbook entitled "Yearbook 1998/99: Freedom and Responsibility" which described the activities of the Representative and his Office and also provided a forum for authors from different countries to discuss their views on freedom of expression. Among the other activities pursued by the Representative during the reporting period can be noted a special focus on the media situation in Belarus, the Central Asian States, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

II. Activities of the OSCE

1. Early Warning, Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation

1.1 OSCE Missions and other OSCE Field Activities

1.1.1 OSCE Presence in Albania

The OSCE Presence in Albania is mandated to provide advice and assistance to the Government of Albania in the fields of democratization, the rule of law, the media, human rights and the development of civil society. In addition, the Presence has developed a high-profile role in seeking to defuse political tension and to foster the conditions for

dialogue and compromise. This role of ad hoc political brokerage was particularly prominent during the events of September 1998, when the Presence was instrumental in persuading the Democratic Party leadership to end the two days of civil unrest that followed the assassination of one of its deputies, Azem Hajdari. The Presence devoted considerable effort throughout much of 1999 to the finding of possible solutions to the impasse that developed between Government and Opposition subsequent to the Hajdari murder investigation, and to trying to create the conditions for the Democratic Party to return to parliament (which it finally did in July 1999).

The same period also saw the Presence develop its other principal mandated role of providing a flexible co-ordinating framework for international assistance to Albania, and for monitoring progress in the implementation of the Government's reform and economic development programmes. This aspect of the Presence's work has been considerably enhanced since the end of last year by the creation of the Friends of Albania (FoA), an informal and open-ended grouping of interested donor countries and international organizations, which meets regularly in Tirana under OSCE Head of Presence chairmanship, and has met three times at international level under joint chairmanship of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO) and the European Union. As a result of these meetings, the FoA group has rapidly become the principal forum for international donor co-ordination and international monitoring of economic and political reform in Albania.

Much of the past year in Albania has inevitably been dominated by the Kosovo crisis and the pressures that the refugee emergency placed on Albania's still fragile democracy and social and governmental infrastructures. When the crisis occurred, the OSCE Presence, in its well-established role of support for the Albanian Government and facilitator for international assistance efforts, found itself in a unique position to respond to the Government's request for help in establishing mechanisms to handle the influx of refugees and co-ordinate national and international relief efforts. It was greatly helped by its network of field officers in the prefectures, and former staff of the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) who were temporarily seconded to Albania to support the relief effort.

The Presence has also sought to ensure that the ongoing tasks of democratization and promotion of the rule of law and of civil society have not been lost sight of in the crisis. As the crisis has receded and staff have been able to return to their regular tasks, these activities have again become central to the Presence's activities. As secretariat to the local FoA, Presence staff have also remained active throughout the period, monitoring progress by the government in achieving its stated reform objectives. The Presence considers maintaining activities in the areas of the environment, human rights, parliamentary observation, NGO development, local government decentralization and legal reform an important element of its assistance to Albania throughout the crisis. It has been equally vital to bring some of Albania's more serious problems, particularly in the area of law and order and in the fight against corruption, once again to the centre of national and international attention since the crisis ended.

The Presence in Albania currently employs 120 people, of whom 55 hold international and 65 local posts. Roughly two-thirds are located at the Presence's nine field offices (FOs) outside Tirana. It was proposed that the Presence should establish field offices in all 12 prefectures during 1999, by reallocating and relocating existing border monitoring resources. This would give the Presence the same degree of coverage it briefly enjoyed, using the additional resources of the former KVM, during the refugee crisis.

Political Brokerage. In addition to its high profile work of political brokerage during the events of September 1998, the Presence was also actively involved in the last months of 1998 in encouraging maximum participation in the Constitutional referendum to overcome the negative effects of the Democratic Party's appeal to its supporters to boycott the vote. Once the Referendum was over, in December 1998 the political climate improved, with the new Prime Minister making conciliatory gestures and the Presence at the same time strongly encouraging a resumption of dialogue. A student strike offered the opportunity for a direct meeting between Prime Minister Pandeli Majko and the Democratic Party leader, Sali Berisha. The Presence had helped to resolve the stalemate over the strike and was credited with having paved the way for this first Socialist-Democratic party encounter. More confidence-building steps followed, including a soccer match between the Government and the Opposition, refereed at the request of both parties by the Head of Presence, and televised live on State and private television.

During the month of January this momentum failed and a return to more confrontational politics became noticeable. Although six former functionaries of the Democratic Party, who had been arrested following the 1997 riots, were released from jail and put under house arrest, as had been urged by the Presence, and the Hajdari murder case began to be more professionally investigated with the assistance and advice of a Norwegian prosecutor provided by the OSCE, there still appeared little willingness on the part of the Democratic Party leadership to return to Parliament, despite calls to the contrary from within the Party.

In March 1999, the Kosovo crisis took precedence more and more over domestic issues, though even an event of such magnitude failed to unify the two main parties with a common platform. The Kosovo crisis, however, emphasized the degree to which the Democratic Party's policy of non-co-operation had isolated and marginalized it at a time when Albania was very much at the centre of world attention, and Government leaders were playing host to numerous visiting world leaders. Once the crisis began to recede at the end of June 1999, the Democratic Party leadership, responding to pressures from within the Party from various countries, international parliamentary bodies and the OSCE Presence, took the decision to abandon its boycott, and returned to Parliament on 21 July.

Parliamentary Observation. As part of the follow-up to the 1998 declaration of the first Tri-Parliamentary Mission to Albania, consisting of the parliamentary assemblies of the OSCE, Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Parliament, the OSCE Presence initiated and organized a systematic study of parliamentary practice and procedure. The results of this study are presented in the form of reports circulated on a periodic basis to OSCE participating States, the parliamentary assemblies of the OSCE, CoE and the European Parliament, and the Albanian Parliament itself. The Parliamentary Observation Officer of the Presence has also been closely involved, in support of the Head of Presence, in issues connected with the return to Parliament of the Democratic Party. In addition, by means of regular contact with members of parliament of all political parties, the Parliamentary Observation Officer also contributes to the political reporting of the Head of Presence and Political Officer. A number of embassies, the CoE and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) have agreed to participate in the Presence's parliamentary observation effort.

Rule of Law, Judiciary and Human Rights. The Legal Counselor's Office (LCO), established within the Presence in 1998, serves as a legal think-tank which provides rapid analyses of legal conflict situations, directs the OSCE's Human Rights Alert Programme, monitors judicial processes and criminal cases and implements the constitutional law

programmes of the Administrative Centre for the Co-ordination of Assistance and Public Participation (ACCAPP). The LCO also helps to co-ordinate national and international legal assistance efforts, and provides technical legal assistance to Albanian institutions on a variety of other projects. The LCO works in close co-operation with international partners, in particular the Council of Europe.

In the area of legislation, the LCO has been active in assisting Albanian legislative authorities in the drafting and reviewing of various items of draft legislation. During 1999, the Presence has provided written analyses and input in the drafting of, among others, the Laws on State Secrets, a law defining presidential emergency and wartime powers, and documents of the State Police, the Office of the Prosecutor and the Civil Service. The LCO has also provided direct technical legal assistance on issues of human rights, bankruptcy and expropriation legislation, as well as other issues.

In its judicial monitoring role, the LCO has monitored criminal proceedings in a number of politically sensitive cases arising out of the civil disturbances of 1997 and 1998. The LCO has also closely followed the Hajdari murder investigation and, as part of its assistance to the Head of Presence's conciliation efforts, has commented, together with representatives from the CoE, on a draft law resulting from the Hajdari investigation proposed by the Democratic Party. The LCO has also provided technical assistance to the OSCE-sponsored Norwegian prosecutor and his Norwegian and Swedish successors in their work to assist the General Prosecutor in his investigations into the Hajdari murder and to develop a programme of technical and material assistance to the Albanian General Prosecutor's Office.

As part of its work of co-ordinating legal development efforts, in early 1999 the LCO monitored and provided technical assistance to help ensure a fair and impartial process for judges required by law to sit for a one-time judicial competency examination. This was successfully carried out in May. The LCO also drafted a comprehensive assistance programme for the development of the Law Faculty of the University of Tirana. The LCO has also played a central role in co-ordinating efforts to establish an 'Ombudsman' institution (People's Advocate) in Albania, and in advising on enabling legislation and implementation procedures. In the specific area of human rights legal development, the LCO, in conjunction with ODIHR, appointed a lawyer specializing in human rights to the Shkodra Law Faculty to teach a basic course on human rights. This programme is to be repeated in the autumn of 1999.

In addition to its Rule of Law work, the LCO also took over at the beginning of 1999 the continuing projects of the Administrative Centre for the Co-ordination of Assistance and Public Participation (ACCAPP) relating to the new Albanian Constitution. These projects include publishing educational and historical materials on the Constitution and the constitutional process; educating the public on the substance of the new Constitution; and assisting in the process of conforming new and existing legislation to the new Constitution.

Human Rights Alert Programme (HRAP). The HRAP was established at the beginning of 1999 within the LCO to help combat human rights violations in Albania. Through HRAP, the Presence investigates and reports on alleged human rights violations and individual complaints regarding the functioning of the state administration. Priority is given to cases of alleged politically motivated violations, cases related to police and prisons, and cases involving court judgements against the State administration that have not been enforced. As part of its longer term efforts to develop local capacity for responsible human

rights monitoring, HRAP is also working to establish, a centre for individual complaints and legal assistance, which will be administered by an Albanian non-governmental organization (NGO) and will receive administrative, legal and logistical assistance from the HRAP.

Co-ordinating Framework: Friends of Albania. In accordance with the clearing house function in its mandate, the Presence seeks to provide a flexible co-ordinating framework, in concert with the Albanian Government, in which the embassies of OSCE participating States, bilateral assistance missions and representatives of international organizations and others can play their part in support of a coherent strategy for international assistance. Co-ordination meetings on a wide range of issues regularly take place at the headquarters of the OSCE Presence in Tirana to review progress and to identify problems in donor/government implementation of programmes and projects. The Presence also provides assistance to reinforce the Government's donor co-ordination capacity, in particular that of the Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Trade, through the work of its Liaison Officer to the Ministry (LOMECT), a post which was created in 1999.

Since October 1998, the Presence's activities have also been strongly supported by the local and international Friends of Albania (FoA) groups. Set up in the aftermath of serious rioting in Tirana, the FoA bring together representatives of all those participating States and international organizations active in providing financial support, technical assistance and other forms of aid to help Albania realize its potential. The local group, which meets in Tirana under the chairmanship of the OSCE Head of Presence, is engaged in a regular exchange of information to facilitate and co-ordinate international efforts, while at the same time encouraging and monitoring those of the Government in tackling a number of key political and economic reform issues.

Improvements in the public order situation and the fight against corruption have been identified by the local and international FoA groups as a prerequisite for the future political and economic development of the country. The issue was first highlighted at the Second International Meeting of the FoA held in Vienna in February 1999, and more prominently in the conclusions of the Third International FoA Meeting in Brussels in July. These conclusions have had considerable resonance on the domestic political scene, and succeeded in putting law and order issues high on the government and party political agenda for the rest of the year.

Economic and Environmental Issues. At the end of January 1999, the Presence created a new position of Economic and Environment Officer (EEO). This Officer works in close co-operation with the Liaison Officer to the Albanian Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Trade (LOMECT) and with other members of the Presence, and its Field Offices, in providing an overview of developments in both the economic and environmental fields; in assisting national and international initiatives in these areas; and in developing and co-ordinating Presence and FO support for environmental and small projects in collaboration with local NGOs and private initiatives.

Concerning the environment, the EEO has been working closely with the Albanian National Environmental Agency (NEA) to raise public awareness of environmental issues and to strengthen the effectiveness of environmental NGOs. In April 1999, the Presence organized, jointly with the NEA, the first meeting of the Albanian Environmental Forum, which unites 40 NGOs from throughout Albania. The inaugural meeting of the Forum agreed on the establishment of an Environmental Platform to co-ordinate the activities of

Government and environmental NGOs in Albania and to attract increased resources for the implementation of environmental programmes.

The Presence's Liaison Officer to the Albanian Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Trade (LOMECT), in addition to his regular donor co-ordination function in support of the Ministry, and work in support of the Head of Presence in the latter's role as Chairman of the local Friends of Albania group, has assisted with mediation between the Government and the domestic and foreign business communities on a number of contentious issues. On the recommendation of the Presence, the Albanian Government agreed to set up a joint forum of members of the Government and of the Union of Albanian Business Organizations to discuss legislative and other matters affecting the business climate. Through the efforts of LOMECT, the Presence also co-sponsored, part financed and generated publicity for a trade fair held in Tirana in June 1999 to encourage local purchase of refugee-related products by international relief agencies and humanitarian NGOs.

Local Government, Electoral Process and Voter Registration. In order to assist the Government of Albania and Albanian local government organs in the process of local government decentralization, the post of Liaison Officer for Local Government (LOLG) was established in February 1999. The Liaison Officer has three main objectives: to provide co-ordination and assistance in the process of decentralization and the strengthening of local government; to help intensify dialogue and co-operation between local and central government; and to facilitate the co-ordination of international donor and expert activities in the field of local government.

In addition, the Liaison Officer is also responsible for assistance and co-ordination of donor support to the Government of Albania in preparation for local government elections to be held in the year 2000. Preparations are underway for a round table to devise a national and international strategy for those elections. The Presence's Liaison Officer has also supported the electoral process by providing aftercare for the OSCE/ODIHR Civil/Voter Registration Pilot Project, on which a final report was submitted to the Prime Minister and relevant ministries in July 1999. The Presence's support for the pilot project has included efforts to secure donor funding for its possible expansion to a nation-wide level in preparation for next year's local government elections.

Media Development, Press and Information. The OSCE Presence, together with other organizations, including the Council of Europe and the Albanian Media Institute, plays a role in monitoring the media and providing advice on media development. In this context, the Presence has sponsored several meetings and seminars, focusing in particular on the law on the electronic media, passed by Parliament in September 1998. Throughout the Kosovo crisis, the Press Office played a major role in dealing with the national and international media and providing them with up-to-date and accurate information on the situation at the Albanian/Kosovo border and on the refugee influx. The OSCE Presence was regarded as one of the most reliable sources during this period, and was quoted regularly by the national and international press.

NGO Support. As part of its task of strengthening civil society in Albania, the Presence's NGO Unit has been very much involved in facilitating the development of NGO networks in the OSCE's priority fields of democratization, human rights and the media, and in selecting, training and assisting NGOs with specific, clearly defined goals related to the Presence's mandate. In February 1999, the Presence sponsored the Tirana NGO Forum, whose aim was to strengthen the Albanian NGO movement by encouraging a dialogue and a

spirit of co-operation between them. The Presence, in conjunction with the Albanian Civil Society Foundation, has since embarked on a programme of training seminars in various parts of the country to educate NGOs on their roles and ways of making them more effective. In October 1999, the Presence organized for the first time in Albania a conference for NGOs on the challenges facing women in rural society. The Presence's NGO Unit also played an important co-ordinating role between Albanian and International NGOs involved in the relief effort. The Presence NGO Officer is currently engaged in a project to establish NGO Resource Centres in Tirana, and in due course to five other locations around Albania, and in related projects to promote interface with NGO networks elsewhere in the Balkans.

Security. In addition to being responsible for Presence and staff security matters, and temporarily heading the Information Cell in the Emergency Management Group (EMG), the Presence's Military Liaison and Security Officer (MLSO) has also been involved, on behalf of OSCE/ODIHR and the Human Rights Alert Programme, in gathering information on the number of 'death-row' prisoners in pre-trial police cells awaiting appeal, and reporting on their conditions of detention. As a result of OSCE's intervention, all death-row prisoners in pre-trial cells were transferred to ordinary prisons in April 1999. The MLSO also assisted in the implementation of the UNDP sponsored Gramsh weapons collection initiative, and in preparatory work for the establishment of a disposal facility for unexploded ordnance in Albania.

Presence Activities Related to the Kosovo Crisis. For some three months from the end of March until mid-June this year, Albania became the place of refuge for as many as 470,000 Kosovo refugees or almost 15 per cent of its native population. When it became clear, within the first few days of the emergency, that Albania was having difficulties establishing procedures and an operational plan to handle the influx of refugees, the OSCE Presence, at the request of the Government and working jointly with UNHCR, lent its support, advice and personnel for the setting up of the Emergency Management Group within the Prime Minister's Office to oversee and facilitate national and international relief efforts. In addition, some 70 KVM members, known as the OSCE/KVM Refugee Task Force (KVM-RTF), were assigned to the Presence to provide support for the refugee relief work of UNHCR and the Albanian authorities.

As the emergency developed and the international relief effort increased to meet the challenge, the role of the Presence evolved within its broadly defined remit to facilitate and assist co-operation between Government and the lead international players. In Tirana, members of the OSCE Presence and KVM Refugee Task Force (KVM-RFT) staffed the Information Cell of the EMG, which acted both as a clearing house for information within the Group itself, and as a source of information on the status of the emergency for other Albanian and international partners. With the help of the KVM-RTF's mobile teams and the OSCE Presence's existing network of Field Offices, the Presence was also able to assist in liaison between the EMG and local Government and prefectures throughout Albania, by monitoring and assisting in the local relief efforts, identifying difficulties and needs, and reporting back rapidly to the EMG. In addition, through its network of Field Offices and KVM teams, OSCE provided logistical and ad hoc support wherever possible, using its staff and vehicles to supplement the efforts of the local prefectures and international agencies, to deliver aid and facilitate communications.

The Presence continued to assist in both the emergency management and repatriation exercises until early July when the KVM-RTF teams were withdrawn from Albania, and the

last of the OSCE staff that had been seconded to the EMG returned to the Presence, having been replaced by Albanian Government and UNHCR staff.

OSCE Field Offices. The role of the Presence's field officers and border monitors (staffed by up to 40 international monitors supplied by 14 OSCE countries) was particularly important during the emergency, both in monitoring the refugee situation at the borders and in the camps, and in assisting in the management of aid and reporting on needs.

The border monitoring offices, mandated to monitor the Albanian border (primarily with Kosovo but also with Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), reported extensively on the worsening situation in Kosovo, and they were ideally placed to observe and report on the refugee influxes and the subsequent outflow between March and August 1999. Often working in rugged, dangerous and testing conditions, they proved to be a major success, and deserve every credit for their efforts. It is sad to record that after all the border monitoring teams had gone through, on the day the fighting in Kosovo ceased an ambush near Bajram Curri, by persons unknown, took the lives of a local OSCE employee and a local contractor working with OSCE.

Following the end of NATO air action in June 1999 and a Security Council resolution establishing an International Administration under United Nations auspices in Kosovo, the requirement for border monitoring has diminished. The larger border monitoring offices have now shifted their focus from border monitoring to conventional office work in towns, while two smaller border monitoring offices have been merged with offices in nearby towns.

1.1.2 OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The activities of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) over the past year focused on developing an election law for BiH, on supervising the implementation of election results, on widening the Mission's democratization activities, on monitoring the human rights situation and on implementing the confidence-building measures and arms control agreements embodied in the General Framework Agreement for Peace. A draft of the election law has been completed, and presented to the Council of Europe and the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board for review. It is expected that the draft law will come before the BiH Parliament this fall, and that it will be in force for the next general elections in October 2000.

The Mission also contributed to elaborating a vision of the OSCE's regional role within the context of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Part of this task involved developing a strategy for improving co-ordination between the various OSCE field activities in the region, with a view to enhancing the Organization's ability to contribute to the Stability Pact implementation process. In the first part of the year, the activities of the Mission were affected by the conflict in the neighbouring Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, although the situation has normalized somewhat with the end of the conflict. In the immediate aftermath of the crisis, the Mission has been advocating a region-wide approach to building peace, stability and democracy throughout south-eastern Europe.

Elections. The Provisional Election Commission (PEC) of the OSCE continued to operate in 1999 as the body for regulating the conduct of elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 24 June 1999, the PEC decided to postpone the municipal elections, originally scheduled for November 1999, until 8 April 2000, because of a combination of political, administrative and legal reasons. The Mission also decided that the PEC should regulate the conduct and implementation of the results of the next municipal elections.

In the period prior to the announcement of the postponement of the municipal elections, the Election Department of the Mission worked on the preparation of municipal elections for November 1999. As this was to be the last election fully administered and supervised by the OSCE, the main focus was on preparing staff and resources for an efficient, effective, and sustainable hand-over of electoral responsibilities to BiH institutions.

The Mission thus focused on providing formal and operational training for selected national staff members to allow them to take over roles of greater responsibility in election administration in BiH. The newly nationalized positions included that of associate director general for elections, a legal advisor and the directors of voter registration and programme development. A larger group of Bosnian staff members participated in a certified study program through the University of Essex in the United Kingdom.

The successful implementation of a transition strategy in 1999 would allow the Mission to significantly reduce its role in the conduct of future elections in BiH. This new role would, however, preserve the authority of the Mission to intervene and, if necessary, sanction BiH authorities.

In April 1999 the OSCE and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) entered into a joint venture concerning the drafting of the new election law. The OSCE established a secretariat, which worked in conjunction with the existing provisional election commission secretariat to draft the election law. The draft law was completed on 28 July 1999 and presented to the High Representative. It would then be introduced to the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the autumn.

Throughout 1999, the PEC updated its rules and regulations to be consistent with the draft election law. In the final months of 1999 it would make final amendments to the rules and regulations in order to comply with the draft of the election law. The PEC also continued to enforce domestic laws that prohibited active-duty military, police officials and judges from being politically active.

In 1999, for the first time, local election commissions developed their own plans for the implementation of ongoing voter registration programmes in local government offices.

OSCE staff also worked with BiH, Entity and Cantonal officials to obtain their support in issuing appropriate election directives and providing necessary resources and funding to local governments for related operations. In addition, the Mission provided significant support for the establishment of the BiH Association of Election Officials.

The out-of-country voting (OCV) process was relocated this year from Vienna to Sarajevo, where a permanent co-ordination centre was established. The OCV programmes in Croatia and the FRY, which previously relied on personal participation, were converted to by-mail programmes for both voter registration and polling.

Work continued on developing a sustainable voter registration and election system. The cornerstone of this process was the creation of a nation-wide voter register maintained through a centralized database. This is the most comprehensive database on BiH citizens, resident both in the country and abroad, created since the war.

The Implementation Office supervised implementation of the 1998 municipal election results in the twelve new municipalities recognized by the Provisional Election Commission. By mid-March, final certification had been granted by the Head of Mission to all the new

municipalities with the exception of one, which will soon be recommended for final certification to the National Election Results Implementation Committee. Minority political party representation, mediated by the OSCE through strict power-sharing agreements, was the key criterion for granting final certification. The most significant achievement in the field of election implementation in 1999 was implementation of the 1997 election results in the municipality of Srebrenica where, in June, a multi-ethnic municipal council was finally installed.

Democratization. The Democratization Department is a leading force in building the political, governmental, legal and social values, practices and structures of democracy through an integrated approach, focused on four main sectors: civil society, political parties, governance and rule of law.

A BiH-wide NGO conference was held in April in which NGOs developed a strategy for becoming more effective vehicles for political and social change, which strategy is now informing all the Department's civil society work. NGOs were also key partners when in May and June the public was asked to express its preference on the content of the permanent election law.

The Department's seven locally-managed democracy centres and one youth-and-media space were transferred to one local umbrella NGO, which is largely independently funded. The OSCE continues to train and advise the centres, which serve as implementing partners in disseminating correct information and developing participatory communities, including other NGOs.

Targeted training and assistance were focused on the most viable political parties supporting multi-ethnic democracy. Ten political resource centres continue to support political party training and voter contact events in the field, and have increased initiatives in promoting party alliances, conducting political research and civil education, and supporting politically active NGOs.

The women in politics programme worked successfully with many women elected in 1998 to entity and state parliaments on developing networks across party lines and improving media access. Together with the governance programme, it educated women parliamentarians on mechanisms for women's empowerment called for in such international instruments as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the examples of implementation in nearby Slovenia.

The municipal infrastructure, finance and implementation project trained municipal leaders throughout the year in selecting, financing and implementing sustainable infrastructure projects by transparent, participatory and professional methods.

The rule-of-law programme was a key contributor to the inter-agency judicial reform strategy, and contributed to its implementation by helping to draft entity laws on judicial service and to convince entity judges' associations to adopt a common code of ethics. Training was conducted for 120 legal professionals on Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and a handbook was produced for basic legal training of the police. The benefits commission legal aid programme continued to improve judicial access by financial assistance, with 7,663 cases pending and 304 legally resolved by the end of June. It has diversified its funding and is opening a sub-office in the Republika Srpska to improve service there. In July and August, 1,200 copies of a locally authored law commentary were distributed, and three others were distributed during the autumn of 1999. The department

also contributed to the inter-agency anti-corruption strategy, and plans to implement anti-corruption projects in all programme areas.

Human Rights. Monitoring implementation of the amended property legislation continued to absorb a good part of the time of the human rights officers (HROs) in the field throughout 1999. Although legislation was passed in both entities in 1998 that allowed persons to reclaim their pre-war property, the housing and other authorities obstructed the process throughout 1999. The HROs played an integral part in trying to overcome these obstacles by ensuring that people were able to file their claims and by the establishment of what were termed “double occupancy commissions” throughout the country that identified illegal occupants and created prioritized lists for eviction. HROs also took the lead in ensuring the local police were trained on their obligations to enforce evictions.

The Department spearheaded a public information campaign and worked to implement it with the property working group (OSCE, OHR, UNHCR, Commission for Real Property Claims, International Organization for Migration, United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina). The campaign was directed at people affected by the new property legislation.

Recognizing the need to focus on sustainable returns once returnees had repossessed their pre-war property, the Department focused on access to identification cards, utilities, pensions and employment. In addition to the casework, two comprehensive reports were published in the first part of 1999: “The Bosnian Pension System and Its Current Problems” provided a comprehensive overview of this issue, and the international community adopted the recommendations in the report. The second report provided the first systematic analysis of the character and extent of employment discrimination in BiH. The recommendations in the report for the promotion of a document on “fair employment principles”, a pilot audit scheme for use prior to conditional lending, training of lawyers and judges and public information campaigns were taken up in the latter half of 1999.

As part of a new capacity-building strategy aimed at fostering a sustainable human rights presence in BiH, the Mission introduced targeted intervention trainings. These forms of training were used when cases of judicial obstruction were reported, with human rights officers and perhaps a meeting with relevant prosecutors, judges and lawyers to highlight violations and make recommendations for remedies.

The Mission continued to support the Human Rights Chamber, the BiH Ombudsman and the Entity Ombudsmen and promoted the acceptance and implementation of their decisions, which are prerequisites for an effective exit strategy. The department also contributed to the drafting of legislation to strengthen the office of the federation prosecutor and an independent judicial appointment system.

Finally, the Department, with its extensive field presence, monitored and reported on the human rights situation in BiH throughout 1999. The information, gathered on a weekly basis, was analysed and used by the Department and the inter-agency body, the Human Rights Co-ordination Centre, to make policy and issue guidelines to address current needs in the country. The Department intervened throughout the country in thousands of cases to rectify human rights violations.

Regional Stabilization. Further progress was made in 1999 towards implementing the confidence-building measures and arms control agreements negotiated in accordance with Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

(Articles II and IV. See also sections 1.2.3 and 1.2.4). In March, the second conference to review the implementation of the Agreement on Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) in BiH took place in Vienna. The parties noted with satisfaction that the annual exchange of information had improved, and the protocol on visits to weapons manufacturing facilities was approved.

The twentieth session of the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) on Article II was convened in Vienna in mid-June. During the JCC the parties submitted an extraordinary data exchange and agreed to conduct an information exchange working group in an effort to clarify any outstanding ambiguities. The following month, the parties provided detailed information on their respective military budgets as well as on support provided to their militaries from foreign sources. This was the first time that such information had been exchanged in a public forum.

As a result of guidelines established by the Madrid Peace Implementation Council (PIC), the Regional Stabilization Department organized several seminars, in co-operation with other organizations, for the BiH political and military leadership. The seminars and workshops were conducted at the ministerial level and focused on such topics as democratic control of the entity armed forces, security interests, civil-military relations, strengthening the dialogue between parliamentarians and between military and parliamentary bodies on defence spending, and regional co-operation.

Also stemming from the Madrid PIC, the OSCE, OHR, SFOR and other international organizations co-ordinated efforts to strengthen the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM). As a result of these efforts, the BiH Presidency agreed in July to establish a permanent secretariat of the SCMM. The Department has provided an international observer/liaison officer and a special assistant has been provided by OHR.

Numerous working groups at lower levels also continued to function. These included working groups on: (a) information exchange, (b) aerial observation, (c) defense-related matters, (d) definitions, (e) communications, and (f) scheduling of Article II, Measure XI, voluntary activities and programmes. In the area of inspection operations, a total of nine inspections under article II and IV were conducted. Article IV events were hampered by the decision of FRY to suspend their participation as of 31 March 1999, due to the NATO bombing of their territory. FRY announced its intention to resume participation in Article IV activities beginning in September 1999. Throughout the period, the spirit of co-operation among those participating in these activities improved significantly.

The Military Liaison Missions (MLMs) also matured during the reporting period. In December they exchanged standard operating procedures and made significant progress on their joint statement of work. During times of increased tension, such as the Brcko decision and the Poplasen dismissal, the MLMs continued to operate towards reducing tensions even though bilateral activities of other political bodies were suspended. The Department has also been examining the possibility of assuming certain responsibilities and duties from SFOR, such as the professionalization of entity armed forces, as SFOR continues to reduce in size over the coming years.

Media Affairs. The Media Affairs Department continued to support the development of independent, pluralistic and professional media. To date, in 1999 it has provided small grants and other forms of in-kind assistance to more than 40 independent BiH media outlets to improve their ability to produce high quality, professional programmes and to become self-sustainable in the long term. Media Affairs was also significantly involved in the

expansion and evolution of the Free Exchange Radio Network (FERN), the only independent radio covering all of BiH, and in the creation of the Independent Radio Network (NERA), a voluntary co-operative effort of the most viable independent radio stations in BiH.

A media law initiative was also launched in 1999, which aims to develop a body of law, and a corps of lawyers, capable of promoting and protecting journalists' rights, ensuring freedom of expression, and permitting the establishment and operation of transparent, independent media outlets. With the co-operation of the Office of the High Representative and the Human Rights Department in the Mission, Media Affairs is overseeing the drafting of a freedom of information law and a law aimed at decriminalizing slander and libel, thereby working to ensure access to information and to protect journalistic inquiry. The Department also continues to monitor and track freedom-of-the-media violations. Moreover, in co-operation with the Human Rights Department, it established a Media Ombudsman position as a means of creating an indigenous structure with the legal means to deal with freedom-of-the-media cases in the future.

Equally important is the work Media Affairs undertook to promote inter-entity communication between media outlets. In 1999, this work was carried out not only through nation-wide journalists' seminars, but also through support for the development of journalists' associations.

Press and Public Information. One of the main activities of the Press and Public Information Department during 1999 was the organization and management of the permanent-election law information campaign, which the OSCE was mandated to carry out by the Madrid Peace Implementation Council in late 1998. The information campaign, which was undertaken simultaneously with the drafting of the permanent-election law, has been aimed both at building public support for a reformed and open electoral system in BiH and at encouraging public participation in the process of developing a new election law. Phase II of the campaign, which will run into the fall of 1999, will involve facilitating and supporting a lobbying effort led by BiH citizens aimed at the ultimate passage of a permanent election law.

The Department was actively involved in the Stability Pact Summit in Sarajevo, which took place in late July and was one of the most important political events held in BiH since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords.

In September, Press and Public Information hosted a meeting in Sarajevo of spokespersons and information officers from throughout the OSCE family. The goals of this meeting were to contribute to the creation of a community of media professionals and to strengthen the public relations and public affairs capacities of the Mission.

Finally, the Mission website has been updated and expanded throughout 1999, and it serves as an important vehicle for providing timely and comprehensive information on the structure, goals and ongoing activities of the Mission.

1.1.3 OSCE Mission to Croatia

The OSCE Mission to Croatia, established in 1996, currently has 250 international members serving in the Headquarters in Zagreb, three Co-ordination Centres in Vukovar, Knin and Sisak, and 15 field offices. By Decision 112 of the Permanent Council (18 April 1996), the Mission was tasked to provide assistance and expertise to the Croatian authorities, individuals and groups in the field of human rights and minority rights as well as to assist and advise on the full implementation of legislation. Furthermore, the Mission was

mandated to monitor the proper functioning and development of democratic institutions, processes and mechanisms. Decisions No. 176 (26 June 1997) and No. 239 (25 June 1998) amended the mandate of the Mission to assist with and to monitor the implementation of Croatian legislation, and agreements and commitments entered into by the Croatian Government on the two-way-return of all refugees and displaced persons and on the protection of persons belonging to national minorities. In view of the withdrawal of the United Nations Police Support Group in the formerly United Nations administered eastern part of Croatia, the OSCE deployed 120 civilian police monitors to assume the responsibilities of the United Nations.

Pursuant to the Mission's mandate in its enhanced form, the main activities of the Mission in the past year were related to the process of the return of refugees and displaced persons and the strengthening and promoting of civil society. With a view towards upcoming parliamentary elections for the Lower House of Parliament not later than January 2000, the Mission also focused on questions related to the electoral law and independence of the media. The Mission is thus stressing that only substantial reform in both areas would allow the elections to be considered free and fair.

To assist further integration of the Croatian Danube Region, the OSCE Police Monitoring Group (PMG) has continued to monitor the performance of the ethnically mixed local police force and to assist in providing professional expertise to that force.

The overall security situation in the Danube region, as reported by the PMG, has remained stable during the reporting period. However, serious criminal and partly ethnically motivated incidents have been noted, mainly in the greater Vukovar area. Most such cases were linked to ongoing demonstrations of ethnic Croats in some villages, calling for the co-operation of ethnic Serb inhabitants to establish the whereabouts or graves of missing persons. The Mission, including PMG, has tried to facilitate a dialogue between the groups involved and has called on the Croatian Government to finally establish the Sub-Commission on Missing Persons for the Danube Region in accordance with agreements with the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES). This includes the appointment of members of the Serb community to the Sub-Commission on Missing Persons as well as the reactivation of local committees to establish trust. An increasing feeling of insecurity among the ethnic Serb population in the Danube Region has also been caused by a lack of transparency in the application of the 1996 Amnesty Law and several new indictments for war crimes.

Non-compliance of the local police force is, when it occurs, noted by the PMG and discussed with supervising Croatian police authorities. Regular contacts have been established between the PMG Police Commissioner and the Croatian Ministry of the Interior.

In June 1999 the Mission, in co-operation with the Italian Police Academy in Rome, organized a seminar for the local police force and PMG officers in Rome. Furthermore, the Mission Police Advisor and the Police Commissioner took part in a conference at United Nations Headquarters in New York in July 1999, when tasks of the United Nations Police Force in Kosovo were discussed.

A major focus of the Mission's activity continues to be the monitoring of the Croatian Government's implementation of its commitments related to the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons. The Mission has provided considerable assistance and advice to the Government on return issues, including close work with the relevant authorities on identifying and amending discriminatory laws, and provision of detailed assessment

information on the implementation of the Programme for Return. The Mission collaborates closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in providing advice and assistance to the Croatian authorities at both the central and local levels on return-related issues.

In order to enhance the process of return, reconstruction and reintegration, particularly in the war-affected areas in Croatia, the Mission has actively co-ordinated international participation at a Conference on Development and Reconstruction, hosted by the Croatian Government in Zagreb on 4 and 5 December 1998. As the Conference clearly showed the need for further international assistance, the Mission called for increased support for normalization and democratization in its Progress Report of 26 January 1999. The Mission also stressed that this direct support, through material contribution and/or expertise, should not be linked to political discussions on Croatia's further integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

By September 1999, 33,666 individuals had returned to Croatia from other countries, according to the UNHCR. While the physical return of refugees now appears to be well-organized, there are still major concerns with regard to the repossession of occupied property, non-discriminatory reconstruction of damaged property and access to returnee benefits, particularly for "self-assisted" returnees. The performance of the Housing Commissions, monitored by the Mission in collaboration with the European Community Monitor Mission (ECMM), mandated to implement the Return Programme, remains uneven. In summer 1999, the Government of Croatia reorganized the Ministry for Development, Immigration and Reconstruction (MDIR) and gave the Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees responsibility for implementing the Return Programme. This reorganization may enable the Government of Croatia to fulfil better its commitments related to return. In late summer 1999, the Government adopted the Amended Mandatory Instructions to the Reconstruction Programme, and MDIR issued Operational Procedures to enable County Reconstruction Offices to process applications. These two documents are viewed as an interim measure to allow eligible individuals to apply for reconstruction until the Law on Reconstruction is amended to eliminate its current discriminatory provisions.

In conjunction with the UNHCR, the Mission continues to co-chair three Area Return Facilitation Groups (in Knin, Sisak and Vukovar) that aim to enhance co-operation on return issues among international organizations at the local level. Held twice monthly, these meetings include cross-border international partners. The Return Facilitation Group, which serves as a regional body for co-ordination of return issues, met in December 1998, and in January, April and September 1999.

OSCE Missions to Croatia and to Bosnia and Herzegovina also held two cross-border seminars in March and April 1999 on Property Repossession and Personal Documentation, and Information and Motivation for Cross-Border Return.

With parliamentary elections due in late 1999 or early 2000 the Mission has pursued its goal of ensuring free and fair elections, bearing in mind that previous elections in Croatia were considered free but not fair. A principal reason for this assessment was provisions in the Croatian electoral law that clearly favour the ruling party and the influence this party was able to exert particularly on the electronic media.

In high-level contacts with the Government of Croatia, the Mission together with other international partners in Zagreb (EU, USA), continued to promote the reform of electoral legislation and the media. In 1998 the international community presented two

non-papers on these topics to the Government. Considering that these issues form part of the commitments Croatia undertook when it acceded to the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1996, the Mission has closely co-ordinated its efforts with the CoE. In a visit facilitated by the Mission, experts of the CoE visited Croatia in January and June 1999 to hold discussions with the Government about broadcasting elements in the draft telecommunications law.

In May 1999, at the initiative of the Mission, the Chairman of Croatian Radio and Television (HRT) agreed to regular meetings with representatives of the international community in Zagreb to discuss HRT programming during the pre-election period. Meetings have taken place bi-weekly and deal mainly with presentation of political issues related to Government action and activities of the ruling party and the opposition.

The Mission continued to call for transforming HRT into a public service broadcaster and to promote the private broadcasting sector by privatizing the third channel of HRT under fair and transparent conditions.

In support of the Mission's efforts concerning return, electoral law reform, media independence, democratization and human rights, these topics were also discussed during several high level visits to Croatia. The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, Ms. Helle Degn MP, visited Croatia on 11-13 January 1999.

On 8-9 February 1999 the Mission organized a joint visit by officials of the OSCE, the CoE and the United Nations. This delegation was led by Mr. Are Jostein Nordheim, Deputy Director General of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Representative of the CiO. He was joined by Mr. Hans Peter Furrer, Director of Political Affairs of the CoE; Mr. Jiri Dienstbier, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Former Yugoslavia; Mr. Freimut Duve, OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media; Ambassador Gerard Stoudmann, Director of ODIHR; and Mr. Max Van der Stoep, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. The delegation met with the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tudjman, as well as members of the Government.

On 4 June 1999 the CiO, Norwegian Foreign Minister, Mr. Knut Vollebæk, visited Croatia and held separate talks with Prime Minister Zlatko Matijašević and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Mate Granic. The Chairman in Office was also received by the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tudjman.

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities visited Croatia for a second time on 3 and 6 June 1999 to attend a seminar on the Oslo Recommendations regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities and the Hague Recommendations regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities.

Members of the Mission attended meetings of the European Commission on Democracy through Law of the CoE (Venice Commission) in December 1998 and acted as facilitators at a joint training workshop on human rights of the EU, OSCE, United Nations and CoE in Venice in July 1999.

The Deputy Head of Mission attended an international conference on missing persons in the former Yugoslavia in Amsterdam in March 1999, and a Regional Conference on Landmines in Zagreb in June 1999, hosted by the Government of Croatia as a follow-up to the Ottawa process.

As part of his efforts to inform international partners about ongoing activities and to broaden the international dialogue, the Head of Mission visited Brussels on 11 January 1999 and Bonn (German EU Presidency) on 12 January 1999 at the invitation of the EU and NATO.

1.1.4 OSCE Missions of Long Duration in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina

The Missions of Long Duration were established in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina in 1992. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) did not renew the mandate and the missions were withdrawn in 1993. Following the start of the Kosovo crisis in February 1998, the Permanent Council, in its Decision No. 218 of 11 March, called upon the FRY authorities:

“...to accept without preconditions, an immediate return of the OSCE Missions of Long Duration to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina, noting the return of these Missions as essential for future participation in the OSCE by the FRY”.

The Missions were unable to implement their mandate in 1999 because the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia continued to link the reactivation of these Missions to the FRY's participation in the activities of the OSCE. The OSCE's Missions in Kosovo of 1998 and 1999 are described separately (see paragraph 1.1.5 below).

The Ad Hoc working group, established in 1993, continued to meet regularly in Vienna in order to assess the situation in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina, and to transmit the information to the Permanent Council on a weekly basis.

1.1.5 OSCE Mission in Kosovo (including the former Kosovo Verification Mission)

1.1.5.1 The OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM)

The Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) was established on 25 October 1998 by Permanent Council Decision 263. Its tasks were to ensure compliance with the tenets of United Nations Security Council resolution 1199 of 23 September 1998, *inter alia*, to verify that:

“all parties ...immediately cease hostilities and maintain a ceasefire in Kosovo”;

“the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Albanian leadership take immediate steps to improve the humanitarian situation”;

“the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Albanian leadership...enter immediately into a meaningful dialogue...leading to...a negotiated political solution to the issue of Kosovo”

Further tasks were set out in the OSCE - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) Agreement, signed in Belgrade on 16 October 1998 between the OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO) Bronislaw Geremek and the FRY Foreign Minister Zivadin Jovanovic.

The Mission established its headquarters in Priština in October 1998 and five regional centres and began the build-up to an envisaged total of about 2,000 international staff. In the light of a sharp deterioration of the security situation and commensurate erosion of the Mission's ability to discharge its tasks, the KVM was withdrawn from Kosovo on 20 March 1999. NATO began a bombing campaign against the FRY on 24 March 1999. The

bulk of KVM's personnel were repatriated in April 1999. About 250 staff were retained in Skopje. This group was later subdivided into two task forces, established in Albania and in Skopje, to assist UNHCR with the Kosovo Albanian refugee crisis.

1.1.5.2 OSCE Task Force for Kosovo

The KVM was dissolved by Permanent Council decision 296 of 8 June 1999, and the transitional Task Force for Kosovo established on the same date. Its tasks were as follows:

“prepare for the deployment to Kosovo of available and relevant OSCE assets as soon as this may be required;

“assist in planning and preparation for new tasks which the OSCE may take on as part of a new international presence in Kosovo;

“carry out preparatory visits and activities in Kosovo in order to facilitate the entry of a future OSCE Mission to Kosovo as soon as conditions allow;

“co-operate, as required, with the United Nations and other international organizations in on-going activities relevant to possible future OSCE tasks in Kosovo, in particular registration and documentation of refugees;

“continue assessing the human rights situation in Kosovo.”

A Military-Technical Agreement was signed between the international security force (KFOR) and the governments of FRY-Serbia on 10 June 1999, re-affirming FRY-Serbian commitments to the peace plan presented by President Martti Ahtisaari and Mr. Viktor Chernomyrdin and approved by the Serb parliament and the Federal Government on 3 June 1999. This plan included deployment in Kosovo under United Nations auspices of effective international civil and security presences, and outlined plans for the withdrawal of FRY security forces from Kosovo in three phases.

KFOR entered Kosovo on 12 June 1999. An Assessment Team of the OSCE Task Force for Kosovo entered the Province on 14 June and re-established themselves in the former KVM headquarters in Pristina.

On 1 July 1999, the Permanent Council, in decision 305, formally established the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OSCE MIK) for an initial period until 10 June 2000, with the possibility of prolongations as decided by the Permanent Council. Ambassador Daan Everts of the Netherlands was appointed as Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OSCE MIK) on the same day.

1.1.5.3 OSCE Mission in Kosovo

On 10 June 1999, United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1244, formally authorizing the United Nations Secretary-General to establish an international civil presence in Kosovo in order to provide a United Nations interim administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Permanent Council decision 305 called upon the OSCE Mission in Kosovo to concentrate its work in the following interrelated areas:

- Human resources capacity-building, including the training of a new Kosovo police service within a Kosovo Police School which it will establish and operate, the training of judicial personnel and the training of civil administrators at various levels, in co-operation, inter alia, with the Council of Europe;
- Democratization and governance, including the development of a civil society, non-governmental organizations, political parties and local media;
- Organization and supervision of elections;
- Monitoring, protection and promotion of human rights, including, inter alia, the establishment of an Ombudsman institution, in co-operation, inter alia, with the UNHCHR;
- Such tasks which may be requested by the Secretary-General of the United Nations or his Special Representative, which are consistent with the UNSC Resolution 1244 and approved by the Permanent Council.

On 2 July the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Daan Everts as his Deputy Special Representative for institution building. In addition to OSCE, three other pillars (United Nations Civil Affairs [civil administration], UNHCR [humanitarian] and the EU [reconstruction]) were established as part of the overall UNMIK structure.

The tasks of each of the four UNMIK pillars were set out in the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the UNMIK in Kosovo of 12 July 1999. The division of labour between the United Nations and the OSCE within UNMIK was further clarified in an exchange of letters, dated 19 July 1999, between Ambassador Kim Traavik, head of the Chairmanship's OSCE Co-ordination Unit and Bernard Miyet, the United Nation's Under-Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations. The exchange additionally allocated responsibility for Media Affairs to the OSCE pillar, thus creating a further department within the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

OSCE MIK headquarters has been established in Priština. Five Regional Centres have been set up in Gnjilane, Kosovska Mitrovica, Pec, Priština and Prizren. The Mission has so far established 14 Field Offices in three priority-led stages.

The build-up of the Mission is proceeding. It is planned to reach approximately 550 international staff by the end of 1999. 125 of these previously served with the Task Force for Kosovo. Two days of induction training in Vienna and a further three days of training in Pristina precede operational duties.

Department of Police Education and Development. A site for the Kosovo Police School has been established in Vucitrn on the site of a former Police Academy. Construction and refurbishment has begun at the site. The training of new recruits began on 6 September 1999. It is intended to train a force of 3,000 police officers in one year. The first course consists of approximately 180 students whose training will include crime investigation; democratic policing; legal affairs; police patrol duties; firearms training; and traffic control. Subsequent field training is the responsibility of the United Nations international Police (UNIP) and will be administered in a 19 weeks programme, supervised by international police officers.

Department of Media Affairs. The establishment of a new public service broadcast facility in Kosovo is seen as a vital component of UNMIK's strategy in the province. Radio Priština now broadcasts eight hours a day in Albanian, Serbian and Turkish television programming was re-launched on 19 September by a European Broadcasting Union team, assisted by OSCE MIK personnel. The Department will gradually assume responsibility for the regulation of the media, formulation of codes of practice, monitoring of the media and institution of a training and assistance regime.

Democratization. A survey of the province to establish civil administration needs has been carried out in conjunction with the Council of Europe: the report makes a number of key recommendations about the future structure of civil administration in the province and the way in which regional administration might be managed. Work is additionally underway to establish a School for Civil Administration in Kosovo: it is hoped to initiate training in the autumn. Political party service centres are being opened in each of the five political districts: each allocates office space to political parties and access to shared office equipment in order to foster political party development.

Department for Human Rights/Rule of Law. A preliminary assessment of the situation of minority groups in Kosovo has been carried out by OSCE Human Rights teams in conjunction with UNHCR; a second was completed in September. A combined study dealing with the situation of the Roma and Sinti was carried out by the Council of Europe and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Operational emphasis is now concentrated on establishing full OSCE Human Rights presence across the Province. The Rule of Law Department has been particularly instrumental in recommending suitable judges to serve as part of the emergency legal process, including those serving on interim mobile legal teams. Subsequent effort has focused on selection of personnel to serve in District Courts and the establishment of a Kosovo Law Centre to serve as a resource and forum for legal issues in the Province. A study is also underway to assess judicial training needs prior to establishing a Judicial Training Centre.

Department for Elections. Two early studies have taken place, carried out by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and representatives of ODIHR in close co-operation with the United Nations, to assess registration needs and extant documentation. A core elections team in Pristina will be established in order to establish an elections plan; extensive use has been made of OSCE experience in Bosnia and Croatia in formulating recommendations. Key requirements to be fulfilled before elections will include the establishment of a legal framework for civil registration; the verification of identity; an associated public information campaign; and registration.

1.1.6 OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

During the year under review, the developing Kosovo crisis provided the dominating influence for the monitoring and other activities of the Mission within the framework of the mandate, which has remained unchanged. The Mission maintained an enhanced effort observing and reporting on all aspects of the crisis as they affected the Mission area, including the physical, political and psychological elements of 'spillover', actual and potential: *inter alia*, border security, refugee flows, public reactions, impact on inter-ethnic relations, relations with neighbouring countries and socio-economic consequences. Throughout the period the Mission maintained its traditional liaison role within the international community in the country, hosting and chairing weekly co-ordination meetings for international organizations, and groups of states, including the EU and Contact Group

countries. The Mission worked especially closely with the key agencies handling refugee issues - UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) - providing political input, information and guidance, and where possible practical assistance, including the transportation of refugees from remote border areas at critical moments in the early refugee influx in adverse winter conditions of snow and ice.

During the past year the Mission has maintained a dialogue with the Government and minorities in seeking to defuse tensions. The Mission has made specific efforts in the economic dimension, with a mission member dedicated to the task, in an endeavour to promote economic growth, crucial to general stability and security. The Mission has sought to bring business and investment opportunities to the attention of donors, to improve the range and quality of mission economic and environmental reporting and, acting as a catalyst, to work in tandem with aid and other international organizations and financial institutions to identify sectors for development. The Mission has co-operated closely with the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), until the cessation of its mandate at the end of February 1999, and with non-governmental organizations in assisting the host State in developing its democratic institutions. The Mission launched an initiative in the area of local self-government, arranging a study visit to Germany in September 1999 under the auspices of the Bavarian government for ten municipal representatives.

Working with ODIHR and the Government, the Mission contributed to the building of a new body of electoral law prior to the parliamentary elections in late 1998. The Mission played a key role in support of ODIHR for the international observation of the elections themselves, and as a separately registered entity continued the process of observation after the departure of the ODIHR team. The Mission observed four further rounds of voting, which had been called due to persistent irregularities in certain areas. The Mission oversaw the process until its final completion in late December.

The Mission provided ongoing local support for the work in the country of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), and worked actively to raise the profile of OSCE. Mission capacity relating to minorities issues was strengthened by the appointment of a minority expert in July 1999.

1.1.7 OSCE Mission to Estonia

During 1999 the Mission to Estonia continued to monitor the Estonian Government's policy and legislation relevant to the promotion of dialogue and understanding between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities. In particular this entailed strengthening co-operation with the Government and other institutions including key ministries and parliamentary commissions.

This year, the Mission's focus was directed towards, among other issues, monitoring legislation affecting citizenship, migration and residency issues in the country. The Mission considered a number of questions related to the issuing of temporary and permanent residence permits especially in cases of family reunification. Further, the Mission continued to monitor naturalization processes. The Mission was also active in monitoring legislation governing knowledge of the state language in both the public and private sectors, and in election processes.

The Mission has continuously followed and supported the Estonian Government's integration strategy, underway since the autumn of 1997. This policy is aimed at changing

attitudes related to non-Estonians, reducing significantly the number of persons with undetermined citizenship, improving the knowledge of the Estonian language among non-Estonians and assisting non-Estonians to adapt to the Estonian culture as well as promoting their active participation in Estonian society. Furthermore, the policy of the Government strives to reduce the regional isolation of non-Estonians, especially in Ida-Virumaa, and to promote the political integration of all Estonian citizens.

Furthermore, the Mission has continued its efforts to contribute to the integration process in Estonia through the practical influence of awareness programmes and a number of concrete projects, many of which have been supported by non-governmental organizations, national as well as international governmental organizations and foreign donors.

Along with the Mission's offices in Narva and Jõhvi in the north-east of Estonia, the Mission has been monitoring the difficult social and economic situation in this part of the country with its predominantly Russian-speaking population.

The Mission has been paying particular attention to the development of the educational system as a main factor of integration. In this context, together with Mr. Max van der Stoel, the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and the Foundation for Inter-ethnic Relations, the Mission organized a seminar entitled "Integration, Education and Language: on the Brink of the New Millennium". The seminar was opened by the High Commissioner and the Estonian Minister for Population Affairs, Ms. Katrin Saks.

The Mission has encouraged the creation of NGOs and supported their work by assisting them in obtaining and exchanging information in order to create awareness of the practical potential of NGOs in a civil society.

The Mission has continued to support the work of the High Commissioner and ODIHR in Estonia. In this context the Mission supported the work of the ODIHR Election Monitoring Mission in the Parliamentary Elections held in March 1999.

1.1.8 OSCE Mission to Latvia

The overall focus of the Mission to Latvia in 1999 continued to be that of integration of the majority and minority groups into society. The Mission particularly welcomes two developments in this field. First, major progress was made in relation to naturalization in amending the Law on Citizenship in June 1998, subsequently followed by a referendum in which the amendments were confirmed. The abolishment of the window-system caused a four-fold increase of applications for naturalization and is to be seen as an important step towards an integrated society in Latvia. However, the number of applicants temporarily exceeded the capacities of the Naturalization Board to process them, thus causing queues for submitting documents in the capital of Riga. Following closely the developments in the field of naturalization, the Mission appreciated the Naturalization Board's pro-active approach to meet the increased demands for naturalization.

Secondly, initiative has been undertaken to draft a State Integration Programme. Initiated in 1998, the Framework Paper of the State Integration Programme went through a 10-week public hearing phase in spring 1999. On the invitation of the Foreign Minister, Valdis Birkavš, the Mission participated actively in the public hearing phase, organizing a seminar in May on the role of language and education in promoting integration, with financial support from the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations. Supporting the idea of a State Integration Programme, the Mission is a regular member of the Programme's working

group and was involved in rewriting the Framework Document, accommodating discussion points made during the public hearing phase. Later this year the Mission will assist in conducting a seminar for the authors of the Concept Paper so as to rework the document into the final State Integration Programme.

Furthermore, the Mission has followed closely other human dimension issues such as developments in the field of education and language. It intensified its contacts with the institutions concerned with the relevant legislation, which has a direct bearing on the promotion of integration in Latvia. On 8 July, the Saeima adopted a controversial language law following a lengthy drafting process. However, the President of Latvia, Ms. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, returned the State Language Law to the parliament for reconsideration. Currently, the draft is with the responsible standing committee, and a final reading is foreseen for early December 1999.

The Head of Mission, in his capacity as OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners, continued to work with the Latvian and Russian authorities in the Joint Commission which handles problems connected with the retired Russian military personnel who stayed on in Latvia after the bulk of the Russian forces was withdrawn in 1994.

1.1.9 OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus

Within the scope of its mandate, the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group (AMG) has been pursuing a dialogue with the Government and representatives of different segments of Belarusian society on a number of issues relating to the building of democratic institutions and civil society. The Group has been offering advice regarding the drafting of electoral legislation, the establishment of an ombudsman's office, the penal code and the code of criminal procedure and also regarding projects that are considered important within the overall democratization process, such as the legislative project on the electronic media.

In view of the constitutional impasse in the country, with the opposition (13th Supreme Soviet) demanding a return to the Constitution of 1994, the AMG has been using all channels of communication, including talks with the President from time to time, to advance the dialogue for the sake of a new constitutional understanding.

After the collapse of the opposition's confrontational strategy in early summer 1999, the AMG renewed its endeavours to bring about an understanding for the strategy of dialogue and free and fair elections for a meaningful parliament in the year 2000.

The strategy of dialogue with opposing forces in Belarus and between government and opposition in the country, which has been advocated by the AMG since the very beginning of its work, is being supported by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and by the Council of Europe. The Chairman of the Belarus ad hoc Working Group of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Adrian Severin, after his visit to Minsk from 14 to 18 May 1999, took the initiative to engage both sides in a dialogue on the issue of free and fair elections for Parliament in the year 2000. At his invitation, representatives from opposition parties, the 13th Supreme Soviet as well as from the third sector, including trade unions, NGOs, the media and academic institutions, discussed at an informal meeting in Bucharest, from 11 June to 14 June 1999, the conditions for such elections. The Government initially agreed to participate but withdrew at this stage of the consultation process between the various forces of Belarusian society. The Conference was nonetheless the starting point for the consultations conducted by Mr. Severin and the Head of AMG, Ambassador Wieck, with

President Lukashenko on 15 July 1999. On this occasion, the Belarus President accepted the principle of talks with the opposition under the aegis of the OSCE on free and fair parliamentary elections in the year 2000 and a settlement of related issues. On 3 July 1999 the President initiated, in his address to the diplomatic corps, the review of the policy towards the West.

In the light of these developments the seven main opposition parties (Belarus Popular Front, the United Civic Party, two Social Democratic parties, the Belarus Communist Party, the Labour Party, the Women's Party) agreed to constitute the opposition in the formal framework of the 13th Supreme Soviet with two parties (Liberal Democratic Party and Jabloko-Democratic Party) outside this framework.

On 6 August 1999, President Lukashenko nominated six officials to comprise the delegation to these negotiations under the chairmanship of Mr. Sasonov, a close advisor to the President, and Deputy Foreign Minister Gerasimov as his deputy. Each side will be entitled to name two NGOs.

The first consultation between representatives of the Government and of the opposition on access of the opposition to the state-run media took place under the aegis of the Advisory and Monitoring Group at the site of the AMG on 3 September 1999. The next such meeting took place on 8 September 1999.

Despite events such as the disappearance of Victor Gonchar on 17 September, and the closing down of nine independent newspapers, on which the Chairman-in-Office issued a statement on 12 October, consultations between the Government of Belarus and the Advisory Council of the opposition parties over access by the opposition to the state media resumed on 15 October. The consultations were moderated by the AMG.

The AMG has continued to familiarize the public with democratic values, the principles of civil society, and with pluralistic democratic framework conditions by, *inter alia*, regularly publishing articles in the independent press on key issues, such as the role of the third sector in modern society or the role and function of political parties in pluralistic democratic states. These articles are well received and circulate widely. They are included into the AMG web site on the internet.

The AMG continues – together with international experts and organizations, representatives from the official Belarusian side, the opposition and the third sector – to organize seminars on topical items in Minsk and in the capitals of the provinces. Such seminars include “Information society”, “Local self government, Rule of law, Regional economic development” and “Human rights”. The AMG co-sponsors seminars in these fields organized by other institutions and co-finances publications in this field.

According to its mandate, the Group has also been monitoring compliance with international commitments to protect human rights and uphold the rule of law and democracy building, and acting as a catalyst for democratic values and projects between governmental and non-governmental forces in Belarus.

The AMG maintains a work unit of one seconded staff member, a lawyer and an administrative assistant (both recruited locally) to counsel citizens in need, in particular those who are prosecuted on political grounds, as well as others. So far the AMG has been contacted by 472 citizens, whose concerns and complaints have been taken up with the authorities. AMG is raising issues of compliance with national and international standards by

Belarus authorities and courts and other components of the judiciary system by letter and direct communication. It visits detained persons and prisoners and advises as well as supports the families of such citizens. Upon the initiative of the AMG, the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) will visit Belarus in the foreseeable future in order to discuss the situation of members of the 13th Supreme Soviet in detention or in prison as a result of court decisions.

The activities of the AMG are well known throughout the country. Its presence or absence in court proceedings can mean a great deal. Prisoners and detained citizens feel encouraged in their situation. Judges are aware of the fact that violations of the law are recorded.

Looking to the future, the continued support of the OSCE strategy in Belarus by the member States of the OSCE will be essential. The initiative for negotiations and dialogue between the opposition and the State, with a consultative role by the third sector, is being strengthened through the "Bucharest process" initiated in June 1999. Procedural agreement was finally reached on the basis of the OSCE concept for a peaceful solution of the political crisis by round-table negotiations on the substance of a law on free and fair parliamentary elections in the year 2000 and a satisfactory settlement of the issue of free access of the media and agreement on the role of the future parliament. The outlook of these talks would be improved considerably if confidence-building measures, such as the release of political opponents who are prosecuted in court on alleged economic crimes, were taken by the government.

1.1.10 OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya (Russian Federation)

The modalities of the work of the OSCE Assistance Group in 1999 have been largely defined by the security environment. During 1998, the security situation in Chechnya deteriorated to such an extent that it became progressively more difficult for the Assistance Group to perform its tasks in a meaningful way, while at the same time observing acceptable standards of safety for its own personnel. Developments so far in 1999 have only exacerbated the security situation. Against the backdrop of ever-worsening socio-economic conditions; crime, unrest and acts of terrorism have acquired endemic proportions, adding to a volatile political situation and a general break-down of law and order. In particular, hostage-taking and abductions for ransom have seen a sharp rise. Expatriates believed to be capable of raising large ransoms, have become prime targets for perpetrators of kidnappings. Hence, virtually all international institutions have left the region, terminating their previous activities or, at best, leaving it to their local sub-agencies or partners to carry on. Thus the OSCE Assistance Group, being the only remaining international body with a representation in Chechnya, has gradually come to be regarded as an increasingly vulnerable and likely target for malevolent forces.

Despite extensive security measures, the Assistance Group was forced to temporarily evacuate its expatriate staff from Grozny to Moscow four times during 1998. The last such evacuation took place on 16 December 1998. Unlike such previous periods, which had not lasted beyond three weeks, this latest evacuation was subsequently, by decision of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO), prolonged repeatedly in view of the further deteriorating security situation. In order to ensure the continuity and regularity of the Assistance Group's on-the-spot operations, working visits to Grozny by members of the Assistance Group were made three times during the period from January to March 1999. In March, following a further worsening of the overall security environment, the evacuation arrangement, although still meant to be a temporary measure, was tightened to exclude any further travels to

Chechnya by Assistance Group members. Thus, the Group has henceforth continued to operate from Moscow, where temporary office facilities have been established at the premises of the Embassy of Norway. The understanding had been that the Assistance Group would return to Grozny when the CiO is satisfied that positive and significant improvements in the security situation have occurred.

Due to the renewal of hostilities, including intensive military operations in September, the decision was taken at the end of September to relocate temporarily the Assistance Group's local staff and OSCE property to neighbouring Ingushetia. The evacuation was completed on 12 October. Thus, the OSCE does not have any personnel in Chechnya.

From its Moscow office, the Assistance Group has meanwhile been monitoring the political and security situation in Chechnya and in the adjacent region. At the same time it has been directing the practical activities involving the local staff at the Assistance Group's Grozny office, which was maintained fully operational with complete infrastructure until the time of the evacuation on 12 October.

Prior to this event, the Assistance Group had continued all the previously started long-term humanitarian aid projects in Chechnya and has also initiated some. Adequate routines had been established for directing the Group's on-the-spot operations. In addition to utilizing its own resources as far as the Assistance Group's own humanitarian aid activities are concerned (budget allocation for 1999 is USD 100,000), the Assistance Group has succeeded in attracting some voluntary contributions from OSCE participating States, providing distribution and monitoring of their aid. Among the main projects, special mention should be made of the "Wheat Flour program" sponsored by the US State Department, which was started in December 1998. Plans and agreements made ensured that the project was implemented as scheduled. Regular meetings with the Assistance Group's local staff and the implementing partners - the Chechen Red Cross and Red Crescent Society, and the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers - were held outside of the application area. The project successfully attained its goal of providing vital assistance to the most needy. Another large-scale project is the Psycho-Medical Rehabilitation Project, financed by the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida), which addresses a particularly serious issue within the broader field of post-conflict rehabilitation.

Until the complete evacuation of its international and local staff, the Assistance Group, as the only remaining international organization with fully developed facilities in Grozny, fulfilled to a certain degree the function of a human rights watch, advising and urging Chechen authorities to adhere to internationally recognized standards in the field of human rights. Certain developments in human rights and democracy-building in Chechnya were, however, not encouraging. Notably, there was an increased occurrence of persecution and harassment of non-Muslim religious bodies (i.e. the Russian Orthodox Church) and non-confessional NGOs, such as the Chechen Red Cross and Red Crescent Society. The introduction (as of February 1999) of Shariah rule has weakened the position of the legitimate (democratically elected) political institutions (i.e. president and parliament) and contradicts the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, *inter alia* with regard to discrimination of the political rights of non-Muslims.

1.1.11 The Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference

The implementation of the mandate of the Office of the Personal Representative (PR) of the Chairman-in-Office is closely connected to the tasks dealt with by the Minsk Group

(MG), its co-chairmen and the future Minsk Conference: Progress in negotiations on the cessation of the armed conflict in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) and on signing of the peace agreement. During 1999 some progress has been made in this respect. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan have met on several occasions, both privately and at international venues, in search for a common approach to a resolution of the conflict. The meetings of the presidents have resulted in some tangible results that can allow for careful optimism as to a possible solution. It should also be noted that the Office of the PR was an important element of the promotion of the peace process visible on the ground in this period.

The Office of the PR has remained active among the parties and maintained contact at all levels of political and military hierarchies. Information obtained through these contacts is forwarded to the CiO to keep him up to date on all developments related to the conflict. The Office has functioned as a messenger between the parties and has also filled the role of co-ordinator of events that have been organized at lower levels. Additionally the Office has been able to assist in creating and implementing important confidence-building measures.

Monitoring takes place on a monthly basis and contributes to stability along the front lines. During 1999 there has been a positive development as the parties themselves have requested monitoring to be carried out to verify the situation at places along the front lines, hence showing that they trust and respect the findings and the recommendations of the Office. Monitoring provides the CiO, and members of the Minsk Group with valuable information on the situation on the ground. They also serve as an important confidence-building measure as local commanders of the opposing sides get the opportunity to use OSCE radio equipment and clear up any existing misunderstandings. Resulting from the meetings of the presidents, the parties have decided to strengthen the cease-fire regime and implement several measures previously suggested by the Office to achieve that.

Concerning the humanitarian issues, the Office devoted special attention to the fate and situation of the people who are missing as a result of the fighting that went on in and around Nagorno-Karabakh until 1994. This weighs heavily on large segments of the populations and on the nations involved. To open the road towards reconciliation, the Office of the PR has put great effort into establishing a mechanism that can help to discover what happened to those that are still missing. In August a mixed group dealing with this issue held its first meeting in Yerevan. The second meeting was planned for September 1999 in Baku, Azerbaijani authorities granting safe passage for representatives from Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. The mixed group will also work for the exchange and release of Prisoners-of-War (POWs) that are taken due to incursions along the front lines, if this remains necessary. Resulting from the visit of the CiO to the region in September this year, a total of six POWs were released; three Azerbaijani and three Armenians. A civilian Armenian was also released on that occasion as a person not related to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The Office organized and implemented the transfer of the prisoners to their respective countries.

The momentum created by the CiO's visit makes it realistic that all POWs could be released before the end of 1999. The Office, in close co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross will continue to pursue this important humanitarian aspect of the conflict.

1.1.12 OSCE Office in Yerevan

The OSCE Office in Yerevan was established by Decision No. 314 of the Permanent Council at its 241st plenary meeting on 22 July 1999. The Office will begin operating in November 1999. The Memorandum of Understanding on the Office was signed by the

Chairman-in-Office and the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia on 15 September 1999 in Yerevan.

In accordance with Decision No. 314 referred to above, the mandate of the Office includes the following elements:

- To establish and maintain contacts with local authorities, universities, research institutions and NGO's and assist in arranging events with OSCE participation.
- To promote the implementation of the OSCE principles and commitments as well as the co-operation of the Republic of Armenia within the OSCE framework, in all OSCE dimensions, including human, political, economic and environmental aspects of security and stability.
- To facilitate contacts, co-ordinate activities and promote information exchange with the Chairman-in-Office and other OSCE institutions as well as co-operation with international organizations and institutions.
- To perform other tasks deemed appropriate by the Chairman-in-Office or other OSCE institutions and agreed on between the Republic of Armenia and the OSCE.

The initial period of duration of the Office's mandate is until 31 December 1999, with a possibility of prolongation for periods of 12 months by mutual agreement between the OSCE and the Republic of Armenia.

The Office will have up to six international staff members, including the Head of the Office. On 14 September 1999, the Chairman-in-Office appointed Ambassador Roy Reeve of the United Kingdom as Head of Office.

1.1.13 OSCE Mission to Georgia

After a long period of stagnation in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict-resolution process, a re-start of the conflict settlement mechanisms was achieved in 1999. Both the Joint Control Commission (JCC) and the political negotiations apparatus were set in motion again with the active assistance and participation of the Mission. In the light of the Oslo Ministerial decisions in December 1998, the Mission emphasized the necessity to keep up momentum in the process, to avoid the deadlocks of the past year, and to draw on the stable military situation and grass-root rapprochement as supporting elements of further progress. Though the process has moved slower at the end of the reporting period and with less substantive results than desired, the sides have indicated their support for adhering to the schedule of meetings and deadlines.

The first visit of the Georgian State Minister to Tskhinvali in February gave a start to a series of meetings at a high executive level. The political process, dormant since 1997, was resumed at the expert level.

The JCC, which deals with security, economic rehabilitation and refugee return, met in March and July, after a break that lasted 18 months.

In the period under review, the Mission enhanced its relations with the Georgian and the South Ossetian sides, as well as with the mediators from the Russian Federation and North Ossetia-Alania. Accordingly, the Mission has been instrumental in helping to maintain

transparency and confidence in the activities of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPKF). The Mission's presence has been particularly important, after the summer rotation of the JPKF. Moreover, the Mission has also been a focal point in the increased co-operation between the JPKF and the law-enforcement bodies, aimed at curbing growing criminality and providing security to international organizations. The military situation in the zone of conflict, however, has remained calm and stable throughout the whole reporting period.

Upon the initiative of the Mission, the European Commission was awarded observer status in the JCC with regard to economic rehabilitation and related economic issues. The observer status was requested by the President of the European Commission. The Mission has, likewise, actively underscored the need to inject private business dynamism into this endeavour. The new Georgian-Russian agreement on the economic rehabilitation, still to be signed, remains a key factor in underpinning the political process.

As a follow-up to a joint initiative of OSCE/ODIHR, UNHCR and the Council of Europe, the Mission encouraged the establishment of the Georgian working group tasked to address the restitution of the tenancy and property rights of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP). Mission facilities were provided for the first meeting in June. The OSCE and UNHCR participated as observers. With the working group's focus on restitution, this is an essential element of the comprehensive conflict settlement. The Mission also supports an early signing of the Georgian-Russian Programme to facilitate the return of refugees, especially to Georgia proper.

The conflict resolution process in South Ossetia is tied into the overall settlement of conflicts in the country and the building of a new Georgia. In addition, the general security situation in the Caucasus, may have an impact on the progress in the conflict resolution.

Concerning the situation in the other conflict zone of Georgia, there has been little substantial progress in the conflict settlement in Abkhazia, although the two sides continue to meet at the Co-ordinating Council led by the United Nations. No agreement has been reached on the return of refugees and IDPs to the Gali district.

The Head of Mission, representing the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE in the Co-ordinating Council, has repeatedly expressed the importance of an unconditional and safe return of refugees to the Gali District as a precondition for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict. Such an agreement is also a condition for implementing the December 1998 Oslo OSCE Ministerial decision to establish an OSCE human rights office in the Gali District.

Despite non-support from the international community, the Abkhaz side started to unilaterally process the return of Georgian IDPs to the Gali District in March. The number of returnees is uncertain as many return seasonally to cultivate their plots of land.

The two sides have not overcome one of the main contentious issues: the role and deployment area of the Peacekeepers of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The Abkhaz side has categorically opposed any initiative that would limit what they consider their sovereignty over Abkhaz territory. As elections are approaching on both sides, negotiations have come to a virtual standstill.

On the ground, the overall situation has been calm, but unstable in the Gali District. There was increased tension as 1998 drew to its close, which was defused as a result of a meeting of the Co-ordinating Council under United Nations auspices before Christmas in Geneva. Since then the situation along the line of separation of forces has improved

somewhat. However, the activities of armed irregulars may upset the delicate balance and continue to give rise for concern.

The Mission has gradually upgraded its activities in Abkhazia, and conducted several visits in close co-operation with other organizations, especially the United Nations. The aim has been to prepare mission projects, especially within human rights and the media.

The increased visibility of the Mission's activity in Abkhazia may be measured by the outcome of a meeting between Georgian, Abkhaz and South Ossetian journalists in Warsaw in August, organized jointly by the ODIHR and the Mission. One of the significant results was that the participants undertook initial steps to establish an All Caucasian Union of Journalists aimed, *inter alia*, at defending the rights of journalists. The meeting received extensive and favourable press coverage in the media, even from those quarters that are usually critical of such meetings.

One of the highlights from a human rights perspective was the entry of Georgia into the Council of Europe in April. By this, Georgia committed itself, *inter alia*, to further promote the rule of law and to move on with judiciary reform. Georgia has established a commission working on domestic legislation in order to make it compatible to international standards. Closely working with the Council of Europe, the Mission is monitoring Georgia's entry obligations.

The Meskhetian issue is receiving increased attention. As a result of a conference on deported peoples held in Vienna in spring, a joint Council of Europe, OSCE and UNHCR Needs Assessment Group visited Georgia in July to evaluate Georgia's fulfilment of commitments with regard to the repatriation of the Meskhetians deported in the 1940s. The visit was organized by the Mission, which also participated in the group.

As a result of increased focus on human rights, the Mission has allocated one more mission member to the Human Rights Office in Sukhumi.

Concerning the preparations for the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections in Georgia, one mission member has temporarily been assigned to the ODIHR Technical Assistance Group that *inter alia* conducts training for government officials, including police, and works out manuals for election officials since June 1999. At the end of September, one additional mission member was tasked to support the ODIHR election Mission preparing for the parliamentary elections on 31 October. As elections drew closer, much of the Mission's work was devoted to provide assistance to ODIHR, and mission members participated as short-time observers during the elections.

As far as the upcoming presidential elections in April 2000 are concerned, mission resources will continue be drawn on to support the OSCE/ODIHR efforts in this field.

1.1.14 OSCE Mission to Moldova

During 1999 the OSCE Mission to Moldova played an active role as mediator in the dialogue between the Republic of Moldova and Trans-Dniestria aimed at reaching a political settlement of their conflict. The Mission attended a number of high-level meetings, including January and July meetings between President Lucinschi and Trans-Dniestrian leader Smirnov. The representative of the Chairman-in-Office and mission members also attended the July 16 Summit hosted by Ukrainian President Kuchma in Kiev, with Russian Prime Minister Stepashin, President Lucinschi, and Trans-Dniestrian leader Mr. I. Smirnov.

Together with the Russian and Ukrainian mediators, mission members attended negotiations at the level of experts between the two sides, and at the parties' request participated actively in the analysis and development of negotiating documents. Together with the other mediators, the Mission produced a draft agreement on the "Step-by-Step resolution of relations between the Republic of Moldova and Trans-Dniestria," which served as a basis for subsequent political negotiations between the sides. Also at the request of the parties, the Mission in March hosted a visit to both sides by a noted Swiss constitutional expert. In the autumn, the Mission organized a conference of representatives of both sides, the mediators and western constitutional experts on possible models for a resolution of the issue of a special status for Trans-Dniestria.

Members of the Mission participated actively in the work of the Joint Control Commission (JCC), the body responsible for implementing the July 1992 Cease-fire Agreement and supervising the joint peacekeeping forces in the Security Zone. The Mission assisted in the implementation of a number of confidence building measures from the March, 1998 Odessa Agreement. Mission members observed the withdrawals of troops and equipment from the Security Zone, and also observed withdrawal from Moldova of property of the Operative Group of Russian Forces. Mission members took part in inspections of the joint peacekeeping forces, and twice participated in aerial inspections of the Security Zone. In March-April 1999, Mission members also successfully mediated a sharp disagreement over the effects of administrative reform in some communities in the security zone. In late summer, at the request of the parties, the Mission submitted to the JCC a comprehensive proposal for confidence building military transparency measures in the Security Zone.

Mission members followed closely the issue of the withdrawal of Russian arms and equipment from Moldova, and maintained close contact with the Commander of the Operative Group of Russian Forces, based in Tiraspol. The Mission reported to a July 1999 meeting in Vienna on Military Transparency in Moldova, and took an active part in preparing and seeking the agreement of all parties to the visit by an assessment team of a group of experts to the storage depots of Russian arms and equipment in Colbasna and Tiraspol.

The Mission facilitated contacts between the sides and EU/TACIS representatives which resulted in agreement on an EU-funded project to repair and re-open the Gura-Bicului Bridge, thus reopening the main highway between Chisinau and Odessa. The project was announced at a joint OSCE-EU press conference in April 1999.

The Mission monitored and encouraged increased contact between parliamentarians on both sides. In February 1999 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Ms. Helle Degn visited Moldova and stimulated a resumption of the parliamentary dialogue between the parties. Parliamentarians from both sides subsequently discussed the Trans-Dniestrian issue at a multilateral conference in Odessa, and attended the July meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg.

The Mission maintained contact with appropriate Moldovan officials and were involved in a wide range of other issues, in particular aspects of the human dimension. Mission members followed Moldovan local elections on May 23, and assisted visiting representatives from the Council of Europe and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. At the request of the Moldovan Foreign Ministry, the Mission, reinforced by experts from ODIHR, assessed the August 22 elections for the office of Bashkan and the Peoples Assembly in the Autonomous Region of Gagauzia.

The Mission proposed that the sides take steps towards forming a joint historical commission that could produce texts agreed upon by both sides on recent local history, including the conflict, for use in schools on both sides. As a first step in this process, the Mission organized a conference of historians from both sides and experts from the German-Polish Historical Commission.

The Mission closely surveyed issues of the freedom of the press, in particular the continuing suppression by Trans-Dniestrian authorities of the independent newspaper *Novaia Gazeta*. In June, the Mission hosted a visit by a representative of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, who raised this and other issues with authorities in Tiraspol.

The Mission closely followed developments in the case of the Ilascu group, several members of which are serving sentences in Tiraspol prison on charges of murder and terrorism. Mission members obtained permission for a prison visit to one of the members of the group, and made several representations on humanitarian grounds to Trans-Dniestrian authorities, urging them to agree to regular access to the prisoners by humanitarian NGOs.

The Mission received and responded to a very large number of petitions and complaints on a wide variety of subjects from Moldovan citizens on both sides of the Dniestr River. In January 1999, the Mission's Tiraspol Branch Office moved to new facilities closer to the centre of the city, which facilitated contact for the Mission with the population of the Trans-Dniestrian region of Moldova.

1.1.15 OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

The year 1999 brought important changes to the OSCE operation in Ukraine. Following negotiations in Vienna, on 30 April the OSCE Mission ceased to exist and the Branch Office in Simferopol was closed and replaced with a new form of co-operation between the OSCE and the Government of Ukraine.

An OSCE expert group was set up in Ukraine for the month of May. Then, as of 1 June, an OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine was established, based in Kiev, with an office of both international and local staff.

The initial duration of this new operation will be until 31 December 1999, with the possibility of a prolongation every six months. The new form of co-operation between the relevant authorities of Ukraine and the OSCE and its institutions is based on the planning, implementation and monitoring of projects, which may cover all aspects of OSCE activities.

Among the more important current and future projects are the following:

Reform of election complaint and appeal procedures. A workshop held in Kiev in June 1999 resulted in an OSCE/ODIHR report containing over 20 recommendations aimed at legislative reform, improving existing electoral laws, improving judicial and administrative practices, and providing guidelines for the international observation of elections.

Technical and practical support to the Ukrainian Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman is a key instrument for the promotion and protection of human rights in Ukraine. OSCE/ODIHR is providing support in the form of training in office management and administration of complaints, and human rights training to staff members, as well as providing computers and library materials.

Combating trafficking in human beings. Working closely with the International Organization for Migration, OSCE/ODIHR is beginning a project to combat trafficking in human beings. The project aims to provide technical assistance to support the Office of the Ukrainian Ombudsman in establishing a National Council against Trafficking, as a focal point both for a national strategy and for international co-operation.

Comprehensive review of human rights legislation. The Ministry of Justice has proposed that OSCE/ODIHR undertake a comprehensive review of human rights legislation in Ukraine, aimed at harmonizing this legislation and bringing it to accepted international standards. This broad project could be carried out in co-operation with the Council of Europe. It is further envisaged that a variety of technical and management assistance be provided to the Ministry of Justice, aimed at raising its performance level to international standards. OSCE plans to begin this major project in late 1999.

Management assistance to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has proposed that OSCE/ODIHR provide the Court with extensive management assistance, aimed at improving the Court's operation and focusing initially on its Training Centre. OSCE plans to begin this project in late 1999.

1.1.16 OSCE Mission to Tajikistan

Mandated by the General Agreement on Peace and National Accord as well as by the decisions of the Permanent Council, the OSCE Mission increased its efforts in 1999 to assist the parties in the implementation of the General Agreement as well as the building of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights.

1999 saw important advances in the implementation of the peace process. In close collaboration with the United Nations Mission of Observers to Tajikistan (UNMOT), the OSCE Mission played an active role in promoting these advances by helping to resolve differences between the parties as well as mustering outside support for the process. This was partly achieved through an active role in the Contact Group of Guarantor States and Organizations, the development of stronger relations with political forces, the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and the power structure, as well as the intensification of the Mission's collaboration with Tajik civil society.

Both within and outside of the framework of the Contact Group, through public and silent diplomacy and in close co-operation with UNMOT and other partners, OSCE assisted the parties in overcoming many difficulties, notably with regard to the amendments to the Constitution, the further nomination of UTO representatives to the power structure, the disbanding of the UTO armed forces, the legalization of UTO political parties, and the ongoing negotiations on the implementation of an amnesty for imprisoned UTO supporters. Co-operation with and assistance to the Council for National Reconciliation (CNR) was a key factor in contributing to the solution of many of these issues.

The way is now paved for the OSCE to assist Tajikistan in implementing the remaining steps of the General Agreement. Together with the UNMOT, the Mission is the focal point for election questions on which the two Missions alternately host meetings attended by representatives of all international organizations concerned with the issue of elections in the country. In order to prepare the Mission to better fulfil its role in the upcoming elections (monitoring and implementation of election related projects), an election officer started work in Dushanbe in August 1999. Thanks to the financial contributions of

participating States, the Mission is able to implement a number of election-related projects, such as an information campaign in advance of the referendum.

To encourage the development of political processes, and in connection with the September referendum and upcoming elections, the Mission organized a number of conferences and events in 1999 on a variety of topics. With regard to the elections, a seminar on electoral law was carried out, as well as a conference on the role of political parties in democratic societies. This last event was part of the Mission's continuing drive to facilitate dialogue between emerging political forces as well as provide capacity-building for political parties. In an effort to continue its work towards the establishment of an independent Ombudsman institution in Tajikistan, a conference was held on the role of the Ombudsman institution in various countries.

Pursuant to its strategy in strengthening civil society in the country and assisting in the creation of democracy, the Mission worked to reinforce its partnership with NGOs and the media throughout 1999. The Mission strove to become a focal point for political forces as well as civil society both in the capital and outside, where the four field offices are promoting the establishment of the rule of law and the building of confidence in the judiciary, law enforcement bodies and other local institutions.

To achieve these aims, the Mission concentrated on a few core activities, which came to dominate its agenda in 1999. The Mission strengthened its partnership with the Tajik media in all regards, including by instituting regular media *Jour fixe* meetings in its headquarters in Dushanbe and establishing stronger ties with many NGOs both in the capital and outside, collaborating with them on the implementation of specific projects.

The Mission also expanded its activities with regard to the launching of three new community newspaper rehabilitation projects in Khatlon during the year, following projects for two newspapers in 1998. Thanks to the financial support of participating States, another 10 media (newspapers, radio, television) should be rehabilitated throughout the country by the end of the year and into 2000. Parallel to these rehabilitation efforts, the Mission has concentrated on providing training for journalists. In this respect, a number of seminars were carried out during the year, including one together with the BBC regarding electoral issues and how to report on them.

The Mission's efforts in assisting the establishment of a local radio station in southern Khatlon have not been successful to date, as the necessary broadcasting license was not forthcoming. The Mission continues to work on this issue and hopes that the necessary license will be granted by the end of 1999.

Throughout 1999, the Mission has made a particular effort in the area of gender issues. The year saw the expansion of the Women Support Group programme from two to 20 groups in four districts, as well as the launching of an ongoing series of nation-wide seminars on women's rights, family law, women's rights in Islam and reproductive health, which is planned to continue until the beginning of 2000. A total of 35 seminars have been carried out in 23 districts to date, benefiting approximately 700 active women. In some instances, these women elaborated follow-up seminar programmes with the help of the field offices, where local women pass on the knowledge they have acquired to rural women in collective farms and villages. The Mission has also provided support to an NGO specialized in providing legal advice to women and helping them to solve human rights protection issues. Moreover, a number of other gender programmes are likely to take shape in the near future, such as the

creation of a women's centre in Khatlon, the creation of a women's newspaper, as well as the extension of the Women Support Group programme to 20 districts.

In the field of human rights protection and promotion, the Mission continues to take up individual cases. Interventions of the Mission in this field have resulted in the release of illegally detained individuals as well as the solving of a number of harassment and other cases in 1999. Parallel to this, the field offices continue to provide the local population, both returnees and others, with legal advice. The United Nations International Day of Support for the Victims of Torture was an occasion for the Mission to put together an information campaign through the media both in Dushanbe and in Khatlon, where one-page messages were printed. Parallel to this, a psychologist specializing in this field came to Tajikistan and held a number of meetings and workshops on the psychological effects of torture, including one at the police academy before about 200 police cadets. The Mission also continues to chair a weekly human rights co-ordination meeting where NGOs and other organizations interested in human rights issues share information.

In 1999, the Mission began activities regarding environmental and economic issues. Throughout the year, it reported on key problems such as the Sarez Lake issue, the deterioration of the water-supply system in Tajikistan and the segmentation of the Central Asian power grid and its consequences for Tajikistan.

The year was also marked by a new dynamic between the OSCE and Tajikistan, exemplified by the visits of the Chairman-in-Office, the Chairman of the Permanent Council, the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia, the Adviser to the OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media and two ODIHR delegations.

On the occasion of its fifth anniversary, the Mission organized an international conference, addressed by the Chairman of the Permanent Council, the leader of the Opposition and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan. During the conference, a message was delivered by President Rakhmonov calling for a new era of co-operation between Tajikistan and the OSCE.

1.1.17 OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia

In 1999 the Central Asia Liaison Office (CALO) continued its activities based on its mandate to establish and maintain contact with universities, research institution, and non-governmental organizations as well as to promote OSCE principles and commitments.

With the opening of new OSCE centres in Central Asia, CALO began a progressive process of restructuring its activities. CALO had the opportunity in 1999 to better focus on Uzbekistan and strengthen its national programmes. It was able to extend contacts and projects to the country's regions and to develop closer co-operation with central government and institutions as well as with regional authorities and NGOs. CALO succeeded in adopting a more decentralized approach, paying greater attention to local issues and problems.

In spring CALO drafted a strategy paper in which it identified the following as the main focuses for 1999: pre-election programmes; programmes to strengthen local NGOs; programmes to encourage respect for the Rule of Law; human rights monitoring and reporting; economic and environment support projects and support to the strengthening of national and regional security.

During the year, CALO assisted in the organization of several high-level meetings and working visits of OSCE officials to Uzbekistan. The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ms. Helle Degn, visited Uzbekistan from 16 to 18 February. In March, the Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, Ambassador Kai Eide, had meetings in Tashkent that focused on regional security problems. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Freimut Duve, came to assess conditions for free media in April. Together with a large delegation including representatives of various international organizations, the Director of ODIHR, Ambassador Gerard Stoudmann, met with President Islam A. Karimov and other high-level officials to discuss OSCE co-operation in the field of elections and human rights. The Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia, Ambassador Wilhelm Höynck also met with President Karimov and other high-level authorities to discuss prospects for enhanced co-operation between the OSCE and Central Asian participating States during a visit from 24 to 26 June. The Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Mr. Thomas Price had meetings in Tashkent to strengthen co-operation with local officials and other international bodies dealing with economic and environmental issues. In September, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Minister Knut Vollebæk, travelled to Uzbekistan as part of his visit to the region.

In 1999 the CALO sought to take a more proactive approach and become directly involved in designing and implementing projects. To do so it co-operated closely with ODIHR and other OSCE institutions. The CALO provided organizational support to the ODIHR to hold a second training course for Uzbek border guards and custom officials. It set up three NGO-Government meetings in close co-operation with the National Human Rights Centre and expects to hold a fourth one before the end of the year. The CALO and OSCE Centre in Bishkek worked together to bring a group of six NGO representatives from Nukus, Karakalpakstan, to Bishkek to develop experience-sharing and networking. A group from Bishkek will soon reciprocate and travel to Nukus.

The Civic and Legal Education Programme for Women, prepared together with virtually all the Uzbek women's organizations and in co-operation with key international organizations involved in gender issues, was the biggest large-scale project designed and implemented by CALO in 1999. Made up of three phases, the Programme aims to increase the knowledge of women leaders, women NGO representatives and rural women about their rights and potential roles in political life. In August, 30 women from 11 organizations and 13 regions attended the first phase of the Programme, which was a train the trainer course. During the autumn the women who were trained will go out into the field and organize a minimum of five training sessions each. At the end of November separate training sessions for women leaders will be held. The Programme is being financed by the Norwegian Government and the United Kingdom through ODIHR.

CALO also continued monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation. A local legal expert was hired to assist in this task, as well as to respond to individual complainants, who regularly approach the office. Throughout 1999 the human rights situation deteriorated, especially after bombings in Tashkent on 16 February that claimed an official 16 lives. At least 77 people were detained and tried for their alleged involvement in the bombings, in trials where rule of law and adherence to OSCE commitments were not always respected. CALO focused its monitoring efforts on trials of democratic opposition, human rights activists and persons accused because of their religious convictions. The Office also worked in close co-operation with national human rights protection bodies such as the Ombudsman's Office and the National Human Rights Centre.

Elections were singled out as one of the main priorities for CALO in 1999. Parliamentary elections are now scheduled for 5 December 1999, and presidential ones for 9 January 2000. However it was decided to wait with technical elections assistance until an assessment mission can determine that the conditions for free and fair elections exist in Uzbekistan. Working closely with ODIHR, CALO has maintained contact with the Central Elections Committee in an attempt to assist them in amending their elections' law to meet OSCE commitments and standards.

CALO has continued to help generate regional co-operation in the economic and environmental spheres. To facilitate this process, since early 1999 the Office has been working in close contact with the Uzbekistan State Committee for Nature Protection. The aim is to prepare the ground to start a dialogue with neighbouring countries on solving acute water and energy distribution problems, hence promoting stability in the region. The Uzbekistan State Committee prepared a proposal asking neighbouring countries to start negotiations and to develop co-operative approaches to handle these issues. The theme and the objective of the Uzbek proposal echo the agreements reached at the OSCE Seminar entitled Regional Environmental Issues and Co-operative Approaches to Solving Them, held from in September 1998 in Tashkent.

CALO has shared the Uzbekistan proposal with the OSCE Centres in the region for them to pass it on to their host governments in the other Central Asian States. Reactions to the proposal are still being collected.

CALO was actively involved in putting together the largest group of participants from Uzbekistan to the Seventh Economic Forum in Prague. The six-member group included representatives from NGOs, the business community, the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) and government officials. CALO was successful in obtaining funds from the Soros Foundation, Uzbekistan Foundation, to cover the travel costs to Prague of two NGO representatives.

CALO has also prepared training seminars and workshops for the development of the capabilities of domestic NGOs to deal with environment and business development issues in Uzbekistan.

Co-operation between CALO, embassies and international organizations greatly increased in 1999 in all dimensions of the Office's activities. CALO institutionalized regular human rights co-ordination meetings that are attended by 12 representatives of diplomatic missions and international organizations every three weeks. Co-operation has also developed on economic and environmental issues. Frequent meetings focused on information sharing to improve co-ordination among the donor organizations in delivering development support; discussions on CALO's contribution for passage of legal items and implementation arrangements for solving economic and environmental issues and exchanging views on promoting overall co-operation in the region. Several Elections Working Group meetings were also set up on CALO premises.

1.1.18 OSCE Centre in Almaty

The OSCE Centre in Almaty, Kazakhstan, was opened in January 1999 in accordance with PC Decision 243.

The opening of the Centre coincided with the presence of an ODIHR Election Assessment Mission on the occasion of the presidential elections on 10 January 1999. The ODIHR Mission issued a critical report on this occasion. However, in the following months,

discussion and co-operation with the Kazakhstani Government on election legislation and OSCE standards as set forth in the OSCE Copenhagen Document of 1990 ensued. The Centre together with ODIHR advised the Government on matters of election legislation. With some progress being made, ODIHR decided to send an Election Observation Mission to Kazakhstan for the parliamentary elections on 10 October 1999.

The first year of the existence of the Centre in Almaty was marked by a series of high-level OSCE visits by, among others, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Director of ODIHR, accompanied by representatives of international, public and private organizations, the Norwegian Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities on the occasion of an international seminar on the Aarhus Convention (Participation of non-governmental organizations in environmental decisions); and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office who had talks with President Nazarbaev, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister in the framework of his visit to the Central Asian participating States.

All these high-ranking visitors engaged in an in-depth dialogue with the Government of Kazakhstan on aspects of security in the framework of relations between OSCE and Kazakhstan.

The Centre has dedicated most of its time to the execution of a number of projects, agreed upon between the Government of Kazakhstan and ODIHR in a Memorandum of Understanding signed at the end of 1998. These projects concerned such important human dimension subjects as international election standards, legislative reform assistance (human rights), establishment of an Ombudsman office, women in politics and civil society assistance.

On the basis of the report on closer co-operation with Central Asia of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia, introduced to the Permanent Council in July 1999, an intensive discussion is going on concerning even closer ties between OSCE and its participating State of Kazakhstan. As a result of the discussion on the report, the Centre in Almaty is likely to intensify its role in the field of the economic and environmental dimension of OSCE. Questions such as transboundary water management and other urgent economic and environmental issues that might pose a threat to stability and security in the region will thus play an important role in the work of the Centre.

1.1.19 OSCE Centre in Ashgabad

The Centre in Ashgabad began to function in January 1999, in accordance with PC Decision No. 244. The Head of Centre arrived in Ashgabad on 14 January. He was received by Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov and President Saparmurat Niyazov, who assured him of the full support of the Government of Turkmenistan to carry out the Centre's mandate. The rest of the Centre's international staff arrived in Ashgabad on 25 January.

The Centre has developed contacts with central and local authorities as well as with other international organizations active in Turkmenistan. The Centre has explored possibilities for joint projects, the first one of which was realized in June when a course on international human rights law was sponsored jointly by the Centre, the UNHCHR and the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights. The objective of the course was to reach government officials whose work brought them regularly into contact with human rights issues. A Memorandum of Understanding between ODIHR and the Government of

Turkmenistan on the implementation of a package of human dimension projects is expected to be signed during the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November 1999. The lack of an ODIHR project Memorandum of Understanding has so far limited the scope of the Centre's activities in the human dimension.

The Centre was represented at several conferences and seminars organized by other international organizations and agencies that dealt with issues and problems of interest for carrying out the Centre mandate. These included a meeting of NGO representatives, government officials and parliamentary deputies who came together under the auspices of Counterpart Consortium and the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law to discuss the need for revision of legislation governing the activities of non-governmental and non-commercial organizations.

The Centre has concentrated on identifying NGOs with which it might co-operate and in this context has had intensive contacts with USAID and the Counterpart Consortium. Close ties have been established with active NGOs in the environmental field. This is one of the few areas in which organizations that are genuinely non-governmental can function.

In April, the Centre organized a meeting for representatives of interested embassies of OSCE participating States and international organizations to hear an assessment of Turkmenistan's election legislation, which was provided by two British experts who had prepared recommendations for revisions that would bring the country's legislation into line with international and OSCE standards.

Almost from the first day of its existence, the Centre has been approached by citizens seeking help with human rights questions. When the Centre assessed that human rights issues were involved, cases were raised with the appropriate Turkmen authorities.

Since its opening, the Centre has facilitated the following high-level OSCE visits, which helped to give visibility to its efforts: the Parliamentary Assembly President in February, Adviser to the Representative on Freedom of the Media in April, followed by an ODIHR delegation in May. The Co-ordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities in June and, later that month, the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia paid visits. Lastly, the Chairman-in-Office paid a visit at the end of September.

1.1.20 OSCE Centre in Bishkek

The OSCE Centre in Bishkek was established pursuant to PC Decision No. 245 of 23 July 1998, and deployed in January 1999. Since then the Centre has been acting in conformity with its mandate aimed at creating the necessary conditions for Kyrgyzstan's further integration into the OSCE community. This applies to all the three main OSCE dimensions: political, military and security; human dimension; and economic and environmental issues.

Political dimension. The Centre has established an intensive dialogue with all levels of Kyrgyz society. Regular contacts have been carried out with the country's President, State Secretary, Foreign Minister and Deputies, Parliament, President's Administration, academic and research centres, and many NGOs.

The Centre's visits to the Kyrgyz part of the Fergana Valley and Issyk-Kul province provided the opportunity of meeting representatives of local authorities. Meetings with Governors of the Osh, Jalal-Abad and Issyk-Kul provinces and the Deputy Governor of the

Jalal-Abad province, as well as other local officials, were very useful in terms of an exchange of views on the current situation in those provinces, and facilitating dialogue between authorities and civil society representatives. The Centre is paying particular attention to the situation in South Kyrgyzstan, in the light of the violent attacks and hostage-taking that occurred in the second half of the year.

Since opening in January 1999, the Centre has seen a number of high-level contacts, and exchange of visits between Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE. President Askar A. Akaev addressed the Permanent Council early in the year, the first among OSCE Heads of State to do so. The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, High Commissioner on National Minorities, Representative on Freedom of the Media, ODIHR Director, the Chairman-in-Office's Personal Representative for Central Asia and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office visited the country and all of them met with Kyrgyzstan's leading figures.

Implementing the task of facilitating an exchange of information between the Government of Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE, the Centre in Bishkek has distributed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Presidential Administration, as well as to other governmental structures, documents on the deliberations of the OSCE governing bodies and the decisions of the Permanent Council.

The Centre in Bishkek has established numerous contacts with universities, academic and research centres, and libraries. The Centre's members have given lectures and presentations at numerous conferences.

Human dimension. The new Electoral Code was adopted in late spring in order to create conditions for more transparent and fair local, parliamentary and presidential elections due in 2000. It should also stimulate the development of political parties. OSCE was involved in the preparatory stage of this Code and was requested to observe the forthcoming elections. Preparations for the elections and their monitoring will remain the focus of the Centre's activities in the coming months.

The Centre is actively co-operating with the Government of Kyrgyzstan, NGOs and international organizations on the implementation of projects as agreed upon in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Kyrgyzstan and ODIHR. In addition, the Centre in Bishkek has initiated in co-operation with other partners a series of election projects ("Voter education through television spots").

The Centre is closely involved in all aspects of the creation of a new national independent institution for the promotion and protection of human rights (Ombudsman). Two NGO-Government meetings on that issue will be organized in the autumn. Parallel to this, the Centre has also been involved in individual cases where obligations in human dimension were breached.

In the context of NGO-related activities and in co-operation with CALO, joint training of NGOs from the Karakalpak Autonomous Republic in Uzbekistan was conducted in Bishkek. NGO-Government meetings on election issues in Bishkek and Osh, organized by the Centre in Bishkek on behalf of ODIHR, provided a forum for NGO comments on issues of concern.

As a follow-up to the discussions by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, who was in Bishkek in April, the Centre together with the Kyrgyz Union of

Journalists held a regional conference in October on the state of the media in Central Asia. This event brought together journalists and government officials from the Central Asian States with the participation of the OSCE and representatives of other specialized international organizations to discuss major problems and ways of improving regional co-operation with regard to media-related issues.

Economic and environmental dimension. To bring Kyrgyzstan into the mainstream of OSCE economic and environmental activities, the Centre in Bishkek devoted a significant amount of time and effort to ensure participation of the Kyrgyz Government officials and NGOs in the Seventh Economic Forum in Prague. These and similar efforts paid off in terms of establishing and strengthening contacts with representatives of the Government, NGOs and the Central Asian Inter-State Council.

Better awareness of specific characteristics of the OSCE in the field of economic and ecological security on the part of these partners has resulted in a set of concrete proposals for co-operation with the OSCE and the Centre in Bishkek in particular.

Special emphasis was put on strengthening ecological awareness in the host country. The Centre in Bishkek participated in several workshops for high school and university students.

Being aware of the importance of water-management issues in the host country and Central Asia in general, the Centre in Bishkek strove to develop relations with the Central Asian Inter-State Council and major players i.e. donors, in that field with a view to creating a possible synergy between their efforts and those of the OSCE.

As a follow-up to the Almaty regional seminar on the Århus convention, held in June, the Centre plans, activities in the economic-ecological domain, including co-operation with government and non-government structures with a view towards searching for a mechanism to inform the public in environmental matters.

Regional context and co-operation. In their decision on establishing the Centre in Bishkek, the participating States have put a special emphasis on the regional context. In conformity with that provision, the Centre has tried to keep in mind regional aspects when elaborating proposals, projects or its assessments. In addition to the CALO, the Centre in Bishkek co-operates especially with the Centre in Almaty, as well as with the Mission to Tajikistan, especially on economic and environmental issues. From the outset, the Centre in Bishkek was looking for a public outreach through press conferences, interviews to electronic and print media, distribution of press releases, lectures and other public appearances.

1.2 OSCE Assistance in the Implementation of Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

1.2.1 The OSCE Representative to the Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners

The Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners continued the review of applications for residence permits by former Russian military personnel and dependants.

Since its establishment five years ago, the Commission has passed all requests for residence permits through the initial review. It has also been occupied with receiving applications for the renewal of temporary permits issued earlier. There are now 14,893 retired military and family members who hold valid temporary residence permits, the vast

majority of them for five years. Out of the large number of some 20,000 applicants, there have been only 96 refusals so far, 68 of them decreed in 1999.

Aside from attending to no-problem, routine business, the Commission has also been faced with handling a considerable number of odd, out-of-the-ordinary cases, many of which delayed the progress of the Commission. These relate to a number of former KGB officers whose applications turned out to be incomplete and had to be returned under notice to reapply within a given time. Also, an increasing number of beneficiaries of the United States apartment programmes for the resettlement of former officers in Russia had applied for residence permits although they were supposed to leave Estonia for good and should have been occupying housing already assigned to them.

Most of these applicants received temporary short-term permits from a few months to one year to be finally dealt with after 1 October 1999 when enactment of legislation, pertinent to the work of the Commission, would permit conclusive action.

The Representative has suggested revising the campaign for registration by including some guarantees towards eligibility for residence for a larger group of illegal residents. Amendments to the Law on Aliens that became effective on 1 October 1999 will permit a limited number of them to qualify for residence permits, but the problem remains.

Activities by the Office of the OSCE Representative to integrate divorced and widowed former dependants, abandoned after the Russian troop pullout, have continued on a larger scale and with promising results. The repatriation of some 25 widows and divorcees has successfully been completed.

1.2.2 The OSCE Representative to the Joint Committee on the Skrunda Radar Station

The Agreement between the Republic of Latvia and the Russian Federation on the Legal Status of the Skrunda Radar Station during its temporary Operation and Dismantling has been implemented in 1999 without any major problems. As agreed, the period of temporary operation ended on 31 August 1998. Seven inspections had been carried out during this phase, when an OSCE inspection team confirmed during the eighth inspection on 3 September, that the radar had been switched off and was no longer operational. The dismantling period started on the 1 September 1998 and there have been four more inspections by teams of experts from OSCE participating States since then, the last on 19 October 1999. During the final inspection it was confirmed that the dismantling had been finished four months ahead of schedule. Consequently, the Joint Latvian-Russian Implementation Committee decided that the Agreement could expire.

1.2.3 Article II of the Dayton Peace Agreement

Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see also section 1.1.2)

The agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been fully implemented this past year, notwithstanding turbulence connected with the Kosovo crises and the arrest of the Bosnian Serb Chief of Defence Staff, General Momir Talic, while he was attending a seminar in Vienna, sponsored by the Personal Representative and the Austrian National Defence College.

All obligatory measures have been reasonably implemented and, for the first time, the Parties have exchanged information on defence budgets (outlays for 1998 and authorizations for 1999) to include information on foreign military assistance. The Parties have requested, and the OSCE will assist, by providing budgetary experts who can properly analyse the respective defence budgets.

Inspections have been conducted in accordance with the agreed schedule and no major discrepancies have been encountered. The quality and transparency of information exchanges have improved dramatically since last year. OSCE countries have offered, and will continue to offer, courses on what are referred to as challenge inspections as well as training courses on visits to weapons manufacturing facilities. Twenty-six OSCE countries continue to actively participate by providing assistance to, and leading, inspections.

With regard to voluntary measures under the "Military Contacts and Co-operation" provision, the Personal Representative organized several seminars and workshops, most notably, seminars on Democratic Control of Security Policy and Armed Forces; Code of Conduct; Military Doctrine and Reductions/Transparency in Budgets. Moreover, a network of experts on security studies was established between the universities within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Representatives from major European NGOs and national institutes for security studies have offered financial support. Plans are underway to follow the 1998 seminar on Military Support to Civilian Authorities in Cases of Man-made or Natural Disaster by organizing an exercise in Italy, combining representatives from both armies into one multinational.

Meetings of the Joint Consultative Commission continue to effectively manage the implementation of Article II. Under the guidance of this body, Military liaison missions have been established and are functioning, planned activities for the year 2000 have been agreed, notifications of unusual military activity have been successfully resolved and a second Review Conference was held in which the Parties agreed on a further set of voluntary measures to enhance transparency and co-operation. Of equal importance, the Parties adopted a new protocol regulating visits to weapons manufacturing facilities, and agreed on the number of annual visits. Such visits began this year and no major discrepancies have been discovered.

This commission established several working groups whose task is to resolve or refine the following: implementation issues such as improving the annual exchange of information, agreeing on the interpretation of definitions of certain terms in the Agreement, agreeing on formats for submission of required information on defence-related matters; communications and scheduling activities under Measure XI (voluntary military contact and co-operation initiatives).

During the final Commission meeting for 1999, the Personal Representative will finalize with the Parties goals for the year 2000. These goals have been carefully harmonized with the Office of the High Representative, the Stabilization Force and the OSCE Head of Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1.2.4 Article IV of the Dayton Peace Agreement: Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control

The Kosovo crises caused a temporary suspension of implementation of the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control: the Delegation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia temporarily suspended implementation on 31 March and notified their intent to

resume implementation on 28 August. During this time the Commission met twice informally, with no decisions taken. Following the Commission meeting in September, all Parties agreed to resume full implementation.

The chairmanship of the Sub-Regional Consultative Commission was transferred to the Parties of the Agreement. The Parties adopted a protocol governing the procedures and establishing a rotational procedure for the chairmanship.

During the first formal Commission meeting after FRY's temporary suspension, the FRY delegation submitted a new and complete schedule for the exchange of information. Furthermore, the Parties agreed on a new inspection schedule, which will be complete by December 1999.

A final informal Commission meeting will be held in December for an annual exchange of information. The next formal meeting will occur in February 2000 to prepare for the second Review Conference scheduled for June 2000.

1.2.5 Article V of the Dayton Peace Agreement: Negotiations on regional stability in south-east Europe under Article V of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

At the time of the meeting of the Ministerial Council in Oslo in December 1998, the mandate for Article V on negotiation was adopted by the 20 participating states¹.

Due to events in Kosovo, the negotiation, which began in March 1999, was delayed until September.

At meetings held in September and October some progress was made namely on indicative programme of work for completion of the negotiation was agreed; and issues of substance for its early phases were identified.

Article V is expected to play an important role in the implementation of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

1.3 Regional Activities of the OSCE

1.3.1 The OSCE Regional Strategy and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

In the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis, the EU and its partners launched the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. This new initiative is aimed at addressing the needs of the countries of south eastern Europe in a more co-ordinated manner. The approach of the Stability Pact is integrative, based on the view that only a comprehensive and coherent approach to the entire region will successfully deal with the underlying causes of instability.

The Pact says that the OSCE should play a key role as the only pan-European security organization, and that thus the Pact should be under OSCE auspices.

¹ Albania, Germany, United States of America, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Netherlands, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Turkey and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

A development that is both interrelated and parallel to the launch of the Stability Pact development and is part of the overall international effort to improve co-ordination and address problems in the region in a more comprehensive manner was called for by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in July when he appealed for a regional strategy for south-eastern Europe. Ambassador Robert L. Barry, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, was thus asked to take on the responsibility of exploring ways to develop further the regional dimension of our own OSCE work.

The regional strategy has a dual and interrelated objective. First, it seeks to improve co-ordination between OSCE operations in the region, particularly in those areas where either one mission has experience that may be useful for other missions or where underlying causes of instability transcend boundaries, and thus OSCE operations could achieve more through a co-ordinated approach. Secondly, it should contribute to the work within the framework of the Stability Pact and support this initiative thus more effectively exploiting the interrelationships between various organizations.

To date, a working-level meeting on the regional strategy has been held in Skopje (in October) where a work plan was adopted that seeks to operationalize the strategy and to propose specific regional initiatives. The initiatives can be divided into two categories: directly OSCE related projects that already are part of the missions' activities; and efforts identified by the OSCE as necessary for the region and where the OSCE can play a supporting role in their implementation, *inter alia*, within the Stability Pact.

A second working-level meeting is scheduled for the beginning of November in Vienna. The meeting will be chaired by the OSCE Presence in Albania.

The Stability Pact and the OSCE regional strategy are complementary in the sense that both conceptualize south eastern Europe as a single political and economic area. Both initiatives are based on the idea that the region as a whole faces a number of common problems, and that many of these problems can only be overcome through a comprehensive and coherent approach to the entire region.

Chronology of Activities of the Stability Pact

Initial Developments. In order to begin a dialogue between field activities and central institutions on the best approach to regional issues, a dialogue between field activities in south eastern Europe was initiated, culminating in a meeting in July of the region's OSCE Heads of Mission. All were encouraged to contribute ideas and proposals, and the concept began to develop. At the same time the approach of the Stability Pact Summit in Sarajevo meant that participants in the region began to develop their ideas, and increasingly high priority was given to those proposals that the OSCE could contribute to or support, involving two or more regional actors.

Rome Meeting. In order to explore the relationship between the Stability Pact and the OSCE, Chairman-in-Office Vollebæk and Ambassador Barry met with EU Stability Pact Co-ordinator Bodo Hombach in Rome on 9 July. Specifically, they discussed how the OSCE's field activities and central institutions could provide concrete support to the goals of the Stability Pact, particularly in the context of the Pact's working tables on democratization and human rights and on security issues.

Vienna Meeting. In Vienna on 20 July, the Secretary General invited OSCE Heads of Mission and representatives of OSCE central institutions to discuss the evolution of the

regional strategy. The discussion focused on the OSCE's role, both within and outside the context of the Stability Pact - in encouraging greater regional co-operation between the states and citizens of the region, as well as on improving the OSCE's internal co-ordination in the region. As in Rome, considerable emphasis was placed on the need to keep informed of the regional activities of other organizations as a means of avoiding duplication and overlap.

The question of the 'ownership' of the Stability Pact process was also addressed. The OSCE strategy thus far has focused on the need to support initiatives emerging from the countries of the region, and on the need to include civil society actors as active participants in the process, in order to ensure the ongoing support and engagement of local actors.

Salzburg Meeting. One week after the Vienna meetings and in the immediate run-up to the Stability Pact Summit in Sarajevo, a meeting was convened in Salzburg with other multilateral organizations that have a regional focus on south eastern Europe. Participants included representatives from the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC), Central European Initiative (CEI), East-West Institute, European Commission, European Union, OSCE, Royaumont Process, South Eastern Europe Co-operative Initiative (SECI), South-East Europe Co-operation Process (SEECF), Stability Pact and Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations (UN/ECE). The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also represented. The main purpose of the meeting was to share ideas and exchange information on the regional efforts of each actor.

Stability Pact Summit Activities. The Sarajevo Summit on 29 and 30 July marked both the culmination of a substantial effort to launch the Stability Pact and the beginning of a much longer implementation process. On 28 July, the OSCE organized a press conference involving NGO representatives from throughout the region, who reported on a recent series of NGO conferences related to the Stability Pact and called for greater involvement by non-State actors in the development and implementation of the Pact. On 29 July the OSCE organized a press conference of women's NGO representatives from throughout the region, who similarly called for the inclusion of women in all aspects of the Stability Pact process. The OSCE continues to be involved with both groups in the development of follow-up activities aimed at involving civil society actors in the work of the Pact's three thematic working tables.

On the first day of the Sarajevo Summit, 29 July, Ambassador Barry addressed the participants on behalf of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and welcomed the Bosnian and Croatian calls for reducing military manpower and budgets. The OSCE willingness to undertake to negotiate mutual reductions in the context of Article IV of Annex 1 B of the Dayton Peace Agreement was also noted.

On 30 July, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office addressed the full assembly and emphasized the OSCE's commitment to make full use of its institutions and considerable field presence in south eastern Europe in the implementation of the Stability Pact. The CiO also stressed that the success of the Stability Pact was dependent upon the engagement of both States and citizens in the building of peace, democracy and stability in the region. He emphasized that the OSCE was determined to do its utmost to ensure that tangible results were forthcoming.

In conclusion, the CiO noted that the OSCE Summit in Istanbul would provide an opportunity of taking stock of developments after the Sarajevo Summit and give added impetus to the Pact.

Activities since the Sarajevo Summit. The inaugural meeting of the south eastern Europe Regional Table, whose task is to ensure co-ordination of activities in the Pact, was held on 16 September 1999 and chaired by the Special Co-ordinator Mr. Bodo Hombach. The meeting endorsed the proposed plan of work of the Pact, and an inventory of ongoing activities was established so as to avoid overlap.

Three working tables have also been set up, on democratization and human rights (chaired by Mr. Max van der Stoel), on economic reconstruction, development and co-operation (chaired by Mr. Fabrizio Saccomani), and on security issues (chaired by Mr. Jan Eliasson). All working tables have held their inaugural meetings and a number of initiatives for activities have been taken. Among these can be noted the setting up of task forces on specific issues to serve as frameworks for interested countries to present project proposals, the setting up of sub-tables and the presentation of concrete project initiatives.

1.3.2 Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on Central Asia

The Oslo Ministerial Council Decision No. 7 requested the Chairman-in-Office to prepare a report concerning various possibilities for the OSCE to strengthen its co-ordinated approach in Central Asia.

Supporting the CiO in preparing the report, Ambassador Wilhelm Höynck, acting as the CiO's Personal Representative, visited Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in June 1999. He had in-depth discussions on the status and further development of OSCE activities in Central Asia. Being received in most of the countries by Heads of State and Foreign Ministers, these talks and meetings with representations of international organizations, NGOs and the OSCE field Presences formed the basis of the report.

The report was presented to the Permanent Council on 15 July and discussed in further depth in the 9 September Permanent Council meeting.

The CiO asked his Personal Representative to support the follow-up to the discussion at the PC meeting on 9 September and contribute to further steps in this area leading to the Istanbul Summit.

1.4 Conflict Prevention Centre: Mission Liaison Activities

The Mission Liaison Section of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) has continued to act as a focal point for OSCE missions and field operations during the reporting period. It has successfully coped with the increased breadth and tempo of OSCE operations and a growing need to co-ordinate regional initiatives and co-operation between missions.

Recent OSCE commitments relating to the work of the Mission Liaison Section include the establishment of the Mission in Kosovo, the opening of a new OSCE Office in Yerevan, Armenia, and the beginning of operations of: the Office in Almaty, the Office in Ashgabad and the Office in Bishkek.

The Security Co-ordinator, whose position has been newly established, has started his tasks of harmonising security procedures in all missions, reviewing existing measures and, where necessary, implementing additional recommendations. He has recently completed a series of visits to OSCE missions in this regard.

An internship programme was also initiated by the CPC during the reporting period with assistance from the United Kingdom in the form of a voluntary contribution. It will enable interns from Eastern Europe to gain work experience in the Conflict Prevention Centre.

The Kosovo Verification Mission and the subsequent OSCE Mission in Kosovo have been one of the primary focuses of the Section since October 1998. The size of the two missions and the scope of their mandates demanded significant resources in planning and co-ordination terms. Much of this early work, in conjunction with the expertise gathered from other missions with similar mandates, enabled the rapid establishment of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the development of the requisite support mechanisms in the Secretariat. These included the establishment of a permanently-staffed Situation Room, providing communication, initially with the Mission in Kosovo and, since July 1999, with other missions as well, 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

2. Report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities

2.1 General

In the past year, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Mr. Max van der Stoel, has continued his active engagement in a wide range of subject areas and in a number of OSCE participating States. His efforts aim at identifying and seeking early resolution of tensions involving national minority issues. During the reporting period, he concentrated in particular on the issues described below.

2.2 Croatia

In Croatia, the High Commissioner has been monitoring the overall situation of minorities, in co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Croatia. He has paid particular attention to a wide range of issues relating to the Serb minority. In June 1999, Mr. van der Stoel wrote to the Croatian Government to express his concern about the continuous pattern of harassment and intimidation of Serbs in the Danube region. He called on the Government to take a number of steps to ensure that the feelings of insecurity and doubts about the future among the Serb population would be overcome.

In February, the High Commissioner took part in a joint high-level OSCE-United Nations-CoE mission to Croatia to discuss with Croatian authorities the country's international obligations in the area of democratization and human rights.

The High Commissioner also promoted and supported the work of the Knin Legal Aid Project and Joint Council of Municipalities, two projects initiated in 1997 by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations at his recommendation.

On 4 and 5 June, the High Commissioner, in co-operation with, *inter alia*, the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, organized a seminar in Zagreb on the subject of The Hague and Oslo recommendations regarding the educational and linguistic rights of national minorities.

2.3 Estonia

Over the past year, the High Commissioner focused his attention in particular on the amendments to the language law. In a letter to the Foreign Minister, Toomas H. Ilves, dated

16 March 1999, he criticized the law, especially because it allowed intrusion into the private sphere which went beyond what international standards would allow. Criticism was also expressed by the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

The Estonian Government subsequently promised to limit the impact of the new language law through implementation decrees. Mr. van der Stoel acknowledged the effort to interpret the law narrowly and to implement its provisions with attention to the justifications expressed in the law. At the same time he reiterated his basic recommendation to bring the law itself into conformity with international standards.

The High Commissioner continued to follow a number of other minority issues, including the implementation of the naturalization process, proposals to create an ombudsman-type institution in Estonia, language and teacher-training programmes and the implementation of the Government's integration strategy.

In June 1999, a seminar on educational and linguistic rights was organized by the High Commissioner in Tallin in co-operation with the OSCE mission and the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations.

2.4 Greece

With regard to an ongoing discussion in Greece on the question of national minorities, Mr. van der Stoel issued a public statement in which he referred to the 1990 Copenhagen Document and the commitments therein. These include providing persons belonging to national minorities with the right freely to express, preserve and develop (individually and as communities) their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity and to maintain and develop their culture in all its aspects, to profess and practice their religion, and to establish and maintain organizations or associations. These rights are not tantamount to recognizing the right to self-determination. Moreover, a minority does not have to be formally recognized in order to enjoy them.

2.5 Kazakhstan

In Kazakhstan, the High Commissioner focused mainly on the further development and strengthening of the principal mechanisms for dialogue between the majority and minority ethnic groups, and between the different minority groups in the country.

In this respect, the High Commissioner continued to assist the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan in its ongoing effort to improve its *modus operandi* by developing its own tools for early warning and early prevention of potential conflicts. As a part of the overall effort, the High Commissioner also helped the Assembly to further improve its own Research and Analytical Centre with a special monitoring network based on sub-regional structures and local correspondents.

The High Commissioner used his visit in March 1999 to raise the question of the creation of an ombudsman institution for human and ethnic rights. Subsequently, with ODIHR Director, Ambassador G. Stoudmann, he sent a joint letter to the President of Kazakhstan, which contained a formal suggestion to create such an institution. On the basis of this letter, a national seminar on the issue was organized in Almaty in September 1999 with broad participation by United Nations and OSCE experts.

Also, the High Commissioner has agreed with the Government of Kazakhstan to organize a seminar, scheduled for 29 and 30 October 1999, on the language policy of Kazakhstan.

2.6 Kyrgyzstan

As in Kazakhstan, strengthening the capacity of national and local structures to deal with inter-ethnic relations and further developing mechanisms for early warning and early prevention of conflict were the main areas of the High Commissioner's activities in Kyrgyzstan.

He continued to support the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan and its structures, in particular the Information and Research Centre, which organizes target-oriented seminars and issues a special bulletin relating to inter-ethnic issues.

The High Commissioner continued to support the special monitoring network, which provides the Kyrgyz Government with regular detailed information and analyses on the inter-ethnic relations in different regions of Kyrgyzstan. (This project started on his initiative and with his direct support in 1996.)

The High Commissioner, together with representatives of the relevant governmental structures, continued to attach special importance to further strengthening inter-ethnic harmony in the south of the country.

He has agreed with the President of Kyrgyzstan on the creation of an independent institution of ombudsman for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and also on the establishment of special management courses for representatives of the central and local administrations and NGOs, within the framework of the Academy for Management under the presidential administration. The High Commissioner has confirmed expert and methodological support.

2.7 Latvia

In 1999, the High Commissioner followed closely the further elaboration of the State language law. On his initiative, a group of experts met in Latvia in May 1999 with the responsible Saeima standing committee and discussed the latest draft law. In July, the draft was approved by parliament, which, however, did not live up to the international standards Latvia has subscribed to. Therefore, Mr. van der Stoep appealed to the President not to promulgate the law. She subsequently returned the law to parliament for further consideration.

In May 1999, a seminar on educational and linguistic rights was organized by the High Commissioner in Riga in co-operation with the OSCE Mission and the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations.

2.8 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The High Commissioner visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia regularly in order to focus on the improvement of inter-ethnic relations in that country, with special emphasis on the position of the ethnic Albanians. Language education, particularly at the tertiary level, remained a contentious issue. Late in 1998, the High Commissioner presented a number of recommendations on a possible compromise solution. His

recommendations included the creation of an Albanian language university college for training teachers for elementary and secondary schools and of a private trilingual (English, Macedonian, Albanian) university for business and public administration.

The crisis in neighbouring Kosovo had a severe negative effect on the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which had to accept a considerable number of Albanian refugees from Kosovo. This, in turn, led the High Commissioner to issue a formal warning on 12 May that, unless the international community significantly increased its efforts to provide more assistance, a destabilization of the country could occur.

As the crisis in Kosovo subsided, the High Commissioner remained actively engaged in finding a satisfactory solution to the educational issues and to fostering constructive inter-ethnic dialogue. He was encouraged by his meetings with the Prime Minister and the Albanian leaders who showed willingness to look for compromise solutions.

2.9 Romania

Education is also an issue in Romania, where the High Commissioner has promoted dialogue on possibilities for changes in the Education Law that would permit improvements in the tertiary education available to the Hungarian minority in their mother tongue. This Education Law, which was subsequently adapted in the summer of 1999, did open up more opportunities for multicultural education.

The High Commissioner is presently considering what could be done to help the University in Cluj to make full use of these opportunities.

2.10 Slovak Republic

In the Slovak Republic, during the past year, the High Commissioner has focused mainly on problems related to the use of minority languages, educational issues and issues connected with the reform of legislation on local elections. The new Slovak Government, which includes Hungarian minority representatives up to the deputy prime minister level (with minority issues in his portfolio), immediately started to implement a number of the High Commissioner's recommendations that had been rejected by the previous Government. These included the reintroduction of bilingual school certificates, significant changes in the cultural subsidy policy and a revision of the Law on Local Elections.

Significant was the commitment of the new Slovak Government to introducing a new law on minority languages to complement the existing Law on the State Language. After considerable discussions within the Government coalition and involving the High Commissioner and his experts, a draft law was presented to parliament in June 1999. This was passed, but without a clear reference to the overriding character of this law in relation to the Law on the State Language, although such clarification had been advised by the High Commissioner. Nevertheless, the Slovak Government subsequently assured the HCNM in writing that, notwithstanding the deletion of this reference from the draft, this law constituted a *lex specialis* in respect of the Law on the State Language. In a public statement Mr. van der Stoel welcomed the new law, while stressing that he hoped that the Government would move without delay to settle other still unresolved inter-ethnic issues.

The Slovak opposition thereafter called for a referendum on the law, for which they collected the necessary signatures. However, the Slovak President, after having consulted

experts, including the High Commissioner, decided that such a referendum would be unconstitutional and declined from announcing one.

A seminar on educational and linguistic rights of local minorities was organized at the end of September 1999.

2.11 Ukraine

In 1999, the High Commissioner continued to pay particular attention to the unsolved problems of the Crimean Tatars, including the issue of their representation in the local governing and representative bodies.

In April 1999, an assessment meeting was held on the implementations resulting from last year's donor conference, which had resulted in pledges of a total of USD 5.3 million (EUR 5.6 million) for the International Organization for Migration, UNHCR and United Nations Development Programme.

In September 1999, a seminar took place in Odessa, organized with the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, on The Hague and Oslo recommendations.

2.12 Other Minorities

The High Commissioner has hosted two meetings on the Meskhetian Turks, the most recent one in March 1999 in Vienna, together with the UNHCR and the Open Society Fund. A Chairman's statement, issued after this meeting, identified the broad parameters of the problems relating to the category of the population in question (rehabilitation, repatriation and regularization of their status in their places of residence) and recognized that attention should shift to the exploration of specific solutions that stress humane management of their problems.

In 1998, the High Commissioner came to the conclusion that the situation of the Roma population in several countries, in particular those in Central Europe, deserved more attention from the international community. Discrimination, the often worsening living conditions, poor health and education, and a high level of unemployment justified a special focus on this complex issue. Therefore, in the first half of 1999, a report was elaborated under his guidance to assess the different aspects of this problem. This resulted in a number of recommendations that were presented in the autumn of 1999 and that underlined the importance of participation of the Roma population in addressing their needs, of measures to combat discrimination and of strengthening the OSCE Roma contact point at the ODIHR in Warsaw.

2.13 Lund Recommendations on Participation of Minorities in Public Life

A major activity of the High Commissioner during the past year issued from the Conference on Governance and Participation: Integrating Diversity held in Locarno, Switzerland, from 18 to 20 October 1998. The aim of the conference, organized together with the ODIHR, was to focus attention on the objective of good governance through the effective participation of minorities in public decision-making processes. As a follow-up to the conference, a group of experts was asked to formulate a set of general recommendations on the effective participation of national minorities in public life. These recommendations were presented at a meeting in Lund, Sweden, in May 1999 and have subsequently been disseminated in the Permanent Council in Vienna and elsewhere.

The Lund recommendations follow the Oslo Recommendations regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities and The Hague Recommendations regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities. These recommendations are frequently promoted through the work of the High Commissioner, and in 1999, several conferences were held with the aim of applying the general recommendations to specific cases in a number of OSCE countries.

2.14 Linguistic Rights Report

In March 1999, Mr. van der Stoep issued a report on the linguistic rights of persons belonging to national minorities in the OSCE area. Based on responses to a questionnaire that was sent to all OSCE participating State governments in December 1996, the report provides an overview of international standards regarding linguistic rights and a comparative analysis of policies regarding linguistic rights in the OSCE participating States.

3. The Human Dimension: Report of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

3.1 Introduction

The foremost priority of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) during 1999 has been the implementation of Memoranda of Understanding signed with States in Central Asia and the Caucasus at the end of 1998.

The five Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the ODIHR and the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have paved the way for about 30 new projects in these countries. In addition, the ODIHR has been implementing projects in Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Latvia, Poland and Ukraine. The ODIHR has increased the scope 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 preventing trafficking in people. In addition, the ODIHR has observed four elections since the start of the year.

A second priority for the end of 1999 has been Montenegro (FRY). The ODIHR has reopened its Office in Montenegro to assist the authorities in their drive to promote human rights and democracy. Also, the ODIHR, like other institutions of the OSCE, has been involved in the conflict in Kosovo and in the development of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The OSCE/ODIHR has supported the launch of the OSCE's Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), by assisting with organizational aspects, helping to define the human rights mandate, developing human rights training and providing forward-planning for elections. Following the end of the conflict, the ODIHR has begun to develop projects to enhance human rights and build democratic institutions in the region, including working closely on Roma and Sinti issues.

3.2 Co-operation

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 (EC) and the ODIHR signed an agreement on a joint programme for advancing human rights and democratization in Central Asia and the EC pledged EUR 380,000 to the programme of

15 technical assistance projects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. The ODIHR and the EC are also working towards the development of a framework agreement on co-operation that would include the regular exchange of information, the conducting of joint needs - assessment missions in the field, consultation on programmes and projects, promotion of joint projects and the joint funding of projects.

The ODIHR also signed an agreement on co-operation with the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Mr. Oleg Mironov. It was agreed to exchange information, to hold bilateral consultations, and to arrange joint publications and conferences and seminars on human rights.

The UNDP, UNHCR, UNHCHR and the Council of Europe are just a few of the other major organizations the ODIHR has been working with on a regular basis, both in the field and at headquarters. At the same time, the Office has been promoting sustainable grassroots-level initiatives in the field by working with NGOs and local lawyers, journalists and human rights activists on projects and at election times.

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 and field missions.

3.3 Election Observation

Several elections were held in the OSCE region during the first half of 1999 and the ODIHR was on hand to provide technical assistance, legal advice and long- and short-term observation missions.

As outlined in the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Handbook, a revised version of which was published in April, and following the practice established in recent years, the ODIHR generally provides both long- and short-term observers to an election to ensure that the entire process is observed. Such missions were deployed in Estonia (7 March 1999), the Slovak Republic (15 and 29 May 1999) and Armenia (30 May 1999). Following each observation mission, a final report was produced outlining the degree to which the election process met OSCE standards, detailing any concerns that remained and offering recommendations to improve the process for future elections.

The ODIHR also deployed a limited mission to assess the presidential elections held on 10 January 1999 in Kazakhstan, and provided an expert to the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus to conduct a limited political assessment of the 4 April election for local council deputies.

During the latter half of 1999 and the first part of 2000, the ODIHR expects to observe elections in Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan and also in other Central Asian States.

3.4 Technical Assistance

Following the signing of the Memoranda of Understanding between the ODIHR and governments in Central Asia and the Caucasus, the ODIHR increased the number of technical assistance projects in the regions.

3.5 Election assistance

From 6 to 19 May, the ODIHR led a joint delegation of international organizations to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to evaluate the overall state of democratization and conditions for upcoming elections in the countries, and also to examine the implementation of the ODIHR's projects contained in the Memoranda of Understanding.

In February 1999, the ODIHR held its second Election Assistance Strategy Meeting to develop the electoral assistance strategy for Central Asia and the Caucasus together with other international organizations and agencies, organs of the OSCE and NGOs.

The ODIHR and the BBC World Service visited Kazakhstan in March to discuss the production of voter education television programmes. In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the ODIHR is assisting in the review of election legislation and has developed extensive recommendations for legislation amendments and regulations. In Tajikistan, the ODIHR jointly with the United Nations sent two needs assessment missions to assess and support preparations for the upcoming elections and organized a workshop on the development of election legislation. The ODIHR also visited Kyrgyzstan to initiate a project to train domestic election observers, and it implemented a similar project in Belarus. In Armenia, the ODIHR reviewed the new election code in advance of the May elections, and provided training for election officials.

Also, the ODIHR successfully completed its long-running civil/voter registry project in Albania, with the production of a report, providing the Albanian authorities with the necessary methodology and guidance to enable them to launch quality civil/voter registration databases throughout the country.

3.6 Democratization assistance

Covering a number of areas of democratization and human rights, ODIHR assistance to participating States, in countries both with and without MOUs, expanded during the first part of 1999.

Roma and Sinti work. The ODIHR's new adviser on Roma and Sinti issues has begun work on a wide range of projects, including producing a report on Roma and Sinti for the upcoming OSCE Review Conference, organizing a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti Issues, working on a Roma and Sinti website, arranging a training seminar for young Roma leaders, and documenting the situation of Roma and Sinti refugees in Kosovo. He has also assisted in widening the network of Roma and Sinti NGOs connected to the OSCE's contact point for Roma and Sinti issues.

Projects on gender and trafficking issues. A number of projects have been implemented to improve the participation of women in democratic processes, including training for trainers workshops on women in politics in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The ODIHR organized jointly with the International Organization for Migration a National Co-ordinating Council against Trafficking in Ukraine and co-financed a National Conference

against Trafficking in Poland as part of an effort to stem the traffic in human beings. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ODIHR began a project, to combat violence against women, by disseminating information on the topic. In Estonia, the ODIHR provided language training to promote the integration of widows and divorcees of ex-Soviet military officers.

Projects to strengthen the rule of law. The ODIHR was engaged in a wide variety of projects to promote the rule of law in OSCE participating States. These included sending an expert to Georgia to train the staff of the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia (Ombudsman), assisting in the development of a national Ombudsman in Albania, Kazakhstan and Ukraine and giving assistance to the Kyrgyz Commission on Human Rights.

The ODIHR also provided legislative reform assistance in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to bring domestic law into conformity with international standards.

Training programmes for prison personnel were established or assisted by the ODIHR in Albania and Croatia, while training was provided for police dealing with refugees in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In addition, the ODIHR provided an expert to the Law Faculty at the University of Shkodra in Albania to develop a course on human rights law and participated in an assessment mission to Moldova to explore the possible reform of the police force.

Following recommendations by the OSCE's Expert Panel for the Prevention of Torture, the ODIHR produced a handbook on torture prevention for OSCE field missions, and ran a public awareness campaign on torture prevention for the United Nations Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June 1999, which included placing an advertisement in newspapers in a number of countries in Central Asia and in central and south eastern Europe.

Projects on civil diplomacy, civil society assistance and public awareness. The ODIHR began implementation of civil society assistance projects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. These consisted of a series of meetings, bringing the governments of the countries together with NGOs to discuss a number of relevant human rights issues. In the Caucasus, the ODIHR has been engaged in public awareness projects, including making television programmes on human rights in Armenia, and in civil diplomacy projects to arrange meetings on relevant topics and bring participants together from across conflict lines in Georgia. In Azerbaijan, a workshop was held in co-operation with the BBC World Service to train local journalists in dealing with libel and in ethical journalism.

Projects on migration and freedom of movement. The ODIHR ran workshops on the registration of permanent residents in Armenia and Georgia and prepared for workshops in Kyrgyzstan with a view to improving the situation of internally displaced people and refugees, and the system of registration in those countries. The ODIHR also conducted training programmes for border guards from Uzbekistan.

Also, the ODIHR has followed-up the regional conference addressing the problems of refugees, displaced persons and other forms of involuntary displacement in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the relevant neighbouring States. The CIS Migration Conference took place in Geneva in May 1996.

Internships. The ODIHR has hosted interns from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and of Georgia, with a view to giving young diplomats solid experience in working in an international organization and in working on human rights and election issues.

3.7 Monitoring the implementation of human dimension commitments

The ODIHR continues to collect, analyse and disseminate information on the state of the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments in the OSCE area. The ODIHR has expanded its monitoring and early-warning work to provide enhanced assistance to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. Some of this information is provided in the form of thematic background reports published for OSCE meetings on implementation.

3.8 Meetings on the implementation of human dimension commitments

From 27 to 30 April, the ODIHR ran the 1999 Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw. The Seminar, on Human Rights: the Role of Field Missions, was attended by delegations from OSCE participating States, international organizations, members of OSCE missions and field offices, and NGOs. The Seminar was an important step towards recognizing the importance of field missions in the protection and promotion of human rights.

As well as playing host to the Seminar, the ODIHR has also organized three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings in Vienna on Freedom of Religion (22 March 1999), Gender Issues (14 June 1999), and Roma and Sinti Issues (6 September 1999). These meetings provided an opportunity for focused and constructive dialogue between the OSCE, its institutions and field offices, international organizations and NGOs on specific problems and solutions. Recommendations were made for OSCE action in the fields discussed.

The ODIHR is also helping to prepare and register NGOs for participation in the OSCE Review Conferences (Vienna, from 20 September to 1 October 1999 and Istanbul, from 8 to 10 November) and the OSCE Summit (Istanbul, on 18 and 19 November).

3.9 Budget

Voluntary contributions from the governments of the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and also money pledged by the European Commission, have played a considerable part in allowing the ODIHR to implement its Memoranda of Understanding and other projects. In addition, staff secondments from Finland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States have greatly increased the ODIHR's capacity to assist participating States.

3.10 Conclusion

In 1999, the ODIHR has shown its ability to implement a wide range of projects and programmes to enhance human rights and democracy in participating States. It has continued to be a flexible, integrated and fully operational instrument of the OSCE and its rapid response capabilities and adaptability have once more enabled it to respond to calls for assistance from emerging democracies throughout the OSCE area. The ODIHR hopes, with the continuing support of the OSCE participating States and other OSCE institutions, to carry its experience and expertise into the next millennium and further contribute to conflict prevention, stability and security in the whole OSCE area.

4. Report of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

In March 1999, the Representative on Freedom of the Media presented his first *Yearbook 1998/99: Freedom and Responsibility*, which not only described in detail the

activities of the Representative and his Office , but also provided a forum for European, American and Central Asian authors to discuss their views on freedom of expression.

Among the Representative's major concerns in 1998/99 were the media situations in Belarus, the Central Asian republics, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Ukraine and in several other countries.

4.1 Country-related issues

4.1.1 Azerbaijan

The Representative on Freedom of the Media paid an official visit to Azerbaijan in February on the invitation of the Government and met with President Aliyev. He appealed to the President to release Fuad Qahramanli, the only journalist held in prison in Azerbaijan. Qahramanli was pardoned by the President on 10 July 1999. Harassment of journalists and lack of licensing of independent television stations are elements of ongoing concern.

4.1.2 Belarus

In March 1999, the Representative on Freedom of the Media visited Minsk where he addressed a seminar on the information society organized by the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group. In addition, the Representative also held meetings with government officials and raised a number of concerns, among them the practice of issuing admonitions by the State Committee for the Press to independent newspapers. In the Representative's view, this was a form of censorship that was not in conformity with the relevant OSCE and other international standards.

The Representative continued to urge the Belarus authorities to ensure that the independent media had the right openly and publicly to discuss in a public forum issues of concern to the citizens of the country, no matter how controversial they might be. He also again urged the Government to transform the state-controlled television and radio into public media to which all political groups have access.

4.1.3 Croatia

On 9 February 1999, the Representative, together with heads of the other OSCE institutions, met in Zagreb with the Croatian Government led by Prime Minister Zlatko Matesa. Although at the meeting Prime Minister Matesa appealed to the Representative to help his country in developing freedom of the media and stressed his Government's willingness to co-operate with the Representative, very little, if any, progress was made in 1999. On several occasions, the Representative had to interfere on behalf of journalists who were arbitrarily harassed by the Croatian authorities.

4.1.4 Central Asian States

In April 1999, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and his adviser visited all five Central Asian states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. On 12 May 1999 the Representative submitted a report focusing on these countries, to the OSCE Permanent Council. In his report, the Representative noted the following:

“Although we are talking about a distinct geographical region, with many historic and cultural similarities among the five countries, one would be mistaken to

over-generalize about the status of media freedom in these nations. We can go to Kyrgyzstan with considerable media freedom; to Turkmenistan with a virtual absence of media freedom; to Kazakhstan, which until 1997 enjoyed a relatively high degree of media freedom; to Uzbekistan with its particular problems; to the special case of Tajikistan, just coming out of a five-year civil war. Each country is different in how its government has dealt with, and is dealing with, the issue of freedom of the media. The economic situation, too, varies from country to country and should be taken into account, since media independent from government and state can only exist if they are economically viable.”

The Representative proposed the establishment of a media fund for Central Asia that would assist struggling independent media in the region. The Representative also launched an initiative to create school newspapers in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

4.1.5 Moldova

The Office of the Representative conducted an assessment visit to Moldova in June-July 1999. The Representative told the OSCE Permanent Council:

“In general, the current media situation in Moldova is not much different from the other countries in the region. Once again we run into the same problems: lack of funding, lack of serious independent journalism, extensive domination of the media by political parties. Basically, the vast majority of media are politically affiliated. However, because of a proliferation of political groups, most views are represented in the media. There is genuine public debate in Moldova on issues of concern to the country, including the reintegration of the Trans-Dniestrian region.”

The assessment trip also included a visit to the Trans-Dniestrian region specifically to look into the case of *Novaya Gazeta*, a local newspaper harassed by the regional authorities. The case of *Novaya Gazeta* was raised by the Representative at the 22 July OSCE Permanent Council and in letters addressed to several Foreign Ministers in August.

4.1.6 Turkey

On several occasions in 1999, the Representative expressed his concern regarding certain constitutional limits to freedom of expression. In an intervention with the Turkish Foreign Minister, the Representative detailed individual cases when Turkish courts handed down decisions against journalists, writers and editors on charges, for example, of separatist propaganda and of insulting the army. In early July 1999, the European Court on Human Rights in Strasbourg issued several binding judgements stating that in several cases the Turkish jurisdiction violated Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which deals with freedom of expression, and decided in favour of the plaintiffs.

4.1.7 Ukraine

The Representative visited Ukraine in May 1999. This visit was preceded by his advisers travelling to Kiev in March 1999. The Representative drew attention to a major problem that should be solved: high libel fees issued by courts against journalists and publications. He is preparing a round-table meeting on this issue in Kiev to be held later this year.

The Representative also reported on continued harassment of the media during the spring and summer months. He had raised a number of cases with the authorities, and together with the Director of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, on 14 July, addressed the Ukrainian President concerning interference, sometimes even harassment and intimidation, by the executive branch in the work of private media regarding their coverage of the upcoming elections.

4.1.8 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Throughout 1999, the Representative on Freedom of the Media closely followed the situation in FRY. The Representative continued to criticize the Serbian Law on Public Information, demanding its repeal. On 4 and 5 December 1998, the Representative visited Belgrade and met with many independent journalists.

In his statement to the OSCE Permanent Council on 25 March, the Representative stressed that the Belgrade Authorities continued their onslaught on freedom of expression, ignoring calls from the international community to guarantee free and open debate on issues of concern to its citizens even in a time of crisis. On 25 June 1999, the Representative appealed to all Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating States, encouraging them to use their influence to support the repeal of the Serbian Law on Public Information.

During the NATO operation *Allied Force* (25 March - 10 June), the Representative issued a statement voicing his concern regarding the NATO missile attack against state-run *Radio and Television Serbia* (RTS) in Belgrade on 23 April 1999. The Representative stressed that this could set a dangerous precedent when journalists in military conflict areas could be dealt with as “combatants” rather than “non-combatants”.

One of the concerns of the Representative in FRY was the safety of journalists. On numerous occasions, he intervened with the FRY authorities on behalf of foreign journalists that were denied FRY entry visas, often harassed and sometimes arrested. Also, the Representative urged the authorities to ensure a safe and secure environment for all journalists working in that country, both foreign and local. He raised this issue at the OSCE Permanent Council on 22 April after Slavko Curuvija, a leading independent editor and publisher, was killed in Belgrade on 11 April.

Throughout the first half of 1999, the Representative and his staff, working closely with the Chairman-in-Office and the OSCE Secretariat, contributed proposals for a strategy on media development in Kosovo.

4.2 Special Projects

4.2.1 Supporting culture in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

In May 1999, the Representative on Freedom of the Media visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Following the trip, the Representative made a number of proposals in support of independent media and culture in the country. Through outside grants, the Representative initiated the publication of books in Albanian for the children of Kosovo. These books will be presented to children in Pristina later in 1999.

On 9 August 1999, the Macedonian cultural magazine *Brezi 9* published a special issue dedicated to writings by Kosovo refugees.

In August 1999, the annual *Struga Poetry Evenings* took place, attended by poets from 40 countries. This major cultural event was made possible through the intervention of the Representative and the financial support of the Government of Norway through the Chairman-in-Office.

4.2.2 European perspective - the cultural dimension of the Stability Pact

In June 1999, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and Wolfgang Petritsch, the European Union Special Envoy at that time, proposed to focus on the civil and cultural dimensions of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. In their view, the Stability Pact must become the starting point for peaceful neighbourly relations in the future and for the continuing development of civil structures throughout south eastern Europe. The European perspective had its cultural and civil dimensions and they should be developed from the beginning of the Pact's implementation.

Therefore the Representative and the European Union Special Envoy suggested that human and financial resources for the cultural dimension be provided at the outset of the Stability Pact. The cultural dimension could help to direct the gaze of citizens and politicians towards the future and at the same time stimulate initiative.

4.2.3 Protecting journalists in conflict areas

In June 1999, the Representative on Freedom of the Media issued a statement proposing the establishment of a sign of protection for journalists. This statement was made after the tragic death in Kosovo of two journalists, Gabriel Grüner and Volker Krämer. In 1998, 50 journalists were killed around the world. Nine of these lived in countries that are members of the OSCE and one person lived and worked in FRY, a suspended member of the OSCE. The Representative believes that it is imperative for the international community to do its utmost to ensure the safety and security of journalists in conflict areas. The Representative asked the OSCE participating States, together with national and international journalists' unions, to develop an emblem that should be accepted by all countries as a *bonafide* sign of protection for all journalists. The Representative held a round-table meeting on this matter in London on 22 September 1999.

5. Security Co-operation

5.1 The Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting

The ninth Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM 99) of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) took place in Vienna from 1-3 March 1999. The central role of this meeting for assessing implementation of Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) was again proven by the participation of experts from capitals. As in the previous years, the meeting focused on contributions to the ongoing revision of the existing Vienna Document 1994.

5.2 Vienna Document 1994

The ad hoc Working Group established on 4 February 1998 has conducted its negotiations throughout the year and is currently finalizing a revised Vienna Document with the aim of adopting it at the Istanbul summit.

5.3 Code of Conduct

The information exchange on the implementation of the Code of Conduct (FSC.DEC/4/98) took place on 15 April 1999, and created the basis for the second Follow-up Conference on the Code of Conduct, which was held in Vienna on 29 and 30 June 1999 with the participation of experts from capitals. All the proposals tabled during the Conference with a view to further enhancing the implementation of the Code of Conduct will be subject to discussion in the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) Plenary and Working Group A.

5.4 Global Exchange of Military Information

A three-day workshop on automated data exchange combined data experts was held in Vienna and preceded the Global Exchange of Military Information, which was successfully held on 30 April 1999.

5.5 Other

During 1999 the FSC continued its discussion of the regional dimension of security with a view to paving the way for the introduction of regional measures into the revised Vienna Document.

In June 1999 several participating States tabled a concrete proposal on possible action to be taken by the FSC in the field of small arms and light weapons with a view to adopting a decision on this topic during the Istanbul summit.

Pursuant to FSC.DEC/5/98 the OSCE communications network connecting capitals was upgraded in July 1999 to make it year 2000 compliant.

On 6 October 1999 the FSC adopted its Decision No. 5 on the establishment of a comprehensive OSCE Communications Network Document governing all aspects of network management and operation.

In 1999, participating States have implemented the following confidence- and security-building measures: four airbase visits; 60 evaluation visits; 50 inspections; five demonstrations of new types of major weapon and equipment systems; and ten visits to military facilities, military formations and observations of certain military activities.

6. Economic and Environmental Activities

In accordance with his mandate, the Co-ordinator's Office continued and intensified contacts with the international economic organizations and financial institutions, as well as with transborder institutions and regional arrangements. These included consultations with, *inter alia*, the European Commission, the Energy Charter Secretariat, Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), NATO, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and other UN organizations such as UNDP, United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the European Business Congress as well as other NGOs.

The Office continued to develop its links with the OSCE Missions and field operations, with the Co-ordinator visiting Missions in Estonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. He also met collectively with the

Heads of Mission during their meetings in Vienna in June, and in Oslo in February, as well as bilaterally on their individual visits to Vienna. In August, the Co-ordinator travelled with the Head of the Mission Liaison Section (CPC) to Tashkent and Almaty for meetings with a range of NGOs, government officials and representatives of key partner organizations and for a full-day meeting with the Heads of all OSCE offices in the region as well as with the economic/environmental specialists who work for them. Out of the meeting with the Heads, among many valuable suggestions came a strong request for better training, which the Office is currently working jointly with the CPC to develop.

The Office continued its programme of seminars. In preparation for the Seventh Meeting of the Economic Forum, held in Prague from 25 to 28 May 1999 on the theme of Security Aspects in the Field of the Environment, it organized four sub-regional seminars, all with the general title of Regional Environmental Problems and Co-operative Approaches to Solving Them, but each focusing on a different subregion: Central Asia (Tashkent, September); the Black Sea (Istanbul, November); the Mediterranean (Malta, February) and the Baltic (Warnemünde, April). These seminars helped to identify the most important sub-themes for the Economic Forum itself. In April, the Office also participated in a seminar co-sponsored by the OSCE and the European Commission on energy issues, in a follow-up to the Sixth Meeting of the Economic Forum.

In February the Co-ordinator attended, with Norwegian State Secretary Leif Meivik as Head of Delegation, United States Vice-President Gore's Global Forum on Fighting Corruption. Other meetings attended by the Office included a seminar in Malaga sponsored by the Helsinki Espana Network and the Spanish Ministry of the Environment, a meeting in Rome in April of a panel of experts representing international organizations active on environmental issues in the Mediterranean region, and the OSCE Seminar in Sofia, in May, on co-operation among international organizations and Institutions focusing on Experiences and Prospects in South Eastern Europe. In July, the Office also participated in the annual OSCE summer school in Stadtschlaining.

Shortly after the Forum, consultations started with the Co-ordinator regarding the Eighth Economic Forum; these consultations resulted in an early decision by the Permanent Council as to dates and themes for the next Forum, enabling serious preparatory work to begin before the summer break. The Office also participated in a follow-up seminar to the Seventh Forum, organized by the Norwegian Chair and the OSCE Centre in Almaty.

On 19 and 20 October 1999, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities held the first sub-regional Seminar in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The seminar, entitled Economic Rehabilitation and Next Steps in the Transition: Institution-building, Rule of Law and The Role of Civil Society, was the first one in a series of three, designed to prepare the participating States for the Eighth Economic Forum. The seminar was organized with the support of the Government of Uzbekistan.

In accordance with his mandate to increase interaction with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Co-ordinator attended, along with the Secretary General and other senior officials, the annual meeting of the Assembly in St. Petersburg. The Co-ordinator has also been working closely with the Assembly's Second Committee with its programme of activities, including the Nantes Conference, which took place in France from 13 to 15 October.

Several articles for publication in outside journals were prepared with the assistance of an intern who also helped to catalogue the many recommendations made at the various Economic Dimension activities over the preceding 12 months.

Finally, in accordance with the Co-ordinator's mandate, a first draft of the Work Programme and Schedule of Events in the Economic Dimension was distributed by the Secretary General in July. From then on the incoming Chair was engaged in extensive consultations with the aim of providing a final draft in November.

7. Relations with international organizations and institutions

Following decisions of the Ministerial Council in Copenhagen in 1997 and in Oslo in 1998, the OSCE is fostering its co-operation with other international organizations and institutions, increasingly focusing on co-ordinated approaches in all areas of its activities.

The biggest test case in Europe for the international community's ability to co-ordinate the work of a number of international organizations with their respective mandates continues to be south eastern Europe, in particular Kosovo.

Following United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 of 1 July 1999, the decision was taken to establish an OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OSCE MIK), as a distinct component within the overall framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The OSCE Mission, within this overall framework, has taken on the lead role in matters relating to institution- and democracy-building and human rights. The Mission co-operates closely with relevant organizations – intergovernmental and, as appropriate, non-governmental – in the planning and implementation of its tasks. Clearly, the scope and difficulty of tasks in Kosovo requires close co-ordination and co-operation of all actors in Kosovo.

Most importantly, the OSCE develops an innovative and close relationship with the United Nations, as the OSCE MIK forms an organic part of the United Nations framework. The Mission maintains close links with the Kosovo Stabilization Force (KFOR), which provides a secure environment for OSCE activities in Kosovo. Furthermore, in Kosovo, co-operation with the Council of Europe has taken on a new dimension, and the relations between the OSCE and UNHCR following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 1998 have deepened significantly as a result of the challenge of the refugee crisis in the region.

A wide array of regular consultation mechanisms involving its main partners, which have been elaborated in the past, have been used in 1999 in the context of the Kosovo crisis to co-ordinate responses. The Tripartite meeting (OSCE, Council of Europe, United Nations office at Geneva) of 12 February; "2+2" high level meetings with the Council of Europe of 26 January and 20 October and at a working level on 28 June; a target-oriented meeting on the reform of the judiciary of 8 February; and a Heads of OSCE Missions meeting with international organizations of 16 June; all have contributed to providing for better co-ordinated planning and responses to specific situations, and the avoidance of duplication of effort. In addition, joint endeavours in south eastern Europe have also been addressed by high-level representatives of other international organizations at the OSCE Permanent Council. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, visited the OSCE for the first time on 20 July 1999, and the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Frechette, on 7 October, also to discuss the ongoing co-operation in Kosovo.

The speakers' list at the OSCE Permanent Council included, *inter alia*, also the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Daniel Tarschys; the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, Assistant United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Soeren Jensen-Petersen, and Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Mr. Bodo Hombach. The OSCE Secretary General has given corresponding speeches at the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1998, at the Committee of Ministers Deputies of the Council of Europe in April 1999 and at the Annual Session of the North Atlantic Assembly in November 1998.

Further important opportunities for the OSCE and its partner Organizations to address the co-ordination of efforts were provided during a number of other meetings, such as the Review Conference, which took place in September 1999.

Another new framework for closer co-operation with other international organizations is the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Following a decision of the European Union, in July 1999, the OSCE Permanent Council decided to place the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe under OSCE auspices. Furthermore, participating States decided to work closely with international organizations, institutions and other bodies (the EU, Council of Europe, United Nations, NATO, the OECD, the WEU, international financial institutions). The OSCE also declared its readiness to host meetings of the working tables in Vienna.

During the reporting period, important innovative approaches to co-ordination and co-operation with other international organizations and institutions have been developed. Early planning and consultations prior to deployment of OSCE Missions have for the first time included other international organizations. The Council of Europe, UNHCR and UNHCHR were invited for consultations at the OSCE Secretariat prior to the deployment of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

The Council of Europe offered to provide secondments to OSCE Missions. It contributed seconded staff to the Kosovo Verification Mission and provides experts to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, on both short-term and long-term bases, in the fields of media affairs, police training, democratization, human rights and the rule of law. The decision taken upon an OSCE initiative to co-locate the staff of the Council of Europe with the Office of the OSCE in Priština significantly enhanced interaction and co-ordination of activities in Kosovo.

Co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe was also subject to a meeting on Procedures for Monitoring of Commitments and on Present and Future Co-operation, held in Vienna on 4 October. The meeting brought together delegations to both organizations in an attempt to evaluate the current state of co-operation and to come up with proposals for further developing pragmatic and goal-oriented approaches to challenges the two organizations are facing. Proposals included the possibility of nomination of liaison officers responsible for co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe in specific geographical regions, and joint programming and/or review Missions.

Co-operation with other international organizations and institutions, particularly the Council of Europe, but also UNHCR, UNHCHR and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), contributed to the training of OSCE Mission members in the Kosovo Verification Mission, and later also to the training of experts from the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. A joint pilot project of a number of organizations and other bodies (UNHCHR, Council of Europe, the European Commission and the OSCE) was developed in order to create a coherent and quality-based approach to training in human rights monitoring.

Relevant OSCE Missions in south eastern Europe co-operate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, in particular in the monitoring of host countries' commitments towards the Tribunal.

In an example of successful co-ordination of political and economic approaches to post-conflict rehabilitation, the OSCE Mission to Moldova engaged with the European Union's TACIS programme to win the agreement of both sides to the conflict, the Government of Moldova and the Trans-Dniestrian authorities, to a shared reconstruction project to repair wartime damage and reopen a bridge, part of a major highway between Chisinau and Odessa. The prospects of mutual economic benefits from the project were a key in persuading the sides to take this step in restoring contacts and comments between the Dniester's right and left banks.

In a similar development, ODIHR concluded a Covenant with the European Commission to establish and provide funding for the joint programme for advancing human rights and democratization in Central Asia in December 1998, providing for partial funding for 15 ODIHR projects in this region.

These new methods of co-operation allowed the OSCE to effectively address a number of complex situations, which required a multi-institutional and multi-faceted response.

8. Relations with partners for co-operation

The OSCE continued to work with its Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (MPCs), Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, and with its Partners for co-operation, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

The dialogue with the Mediterranean partners continued mainly through Contact Group meetings with the MPCs. Briefings were held by the OSCE Secretary General, the Head of Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as by the Chairman of the Security Model Committee on the Charter on European Security. During an informal session, the Public Information Officer of the OSCE Secretariat held a general briefing on OSCE for the Mediterranean partners for co-operation and the partners for co-operation.

Following the adoption of a decision last year, providing for representatives of the Mediterranean partners to make short-term visits to the OSCE Missions, almost all MPCs participated in a workshop in Sarajevo in May 1999 organized by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. With regard to the other part of the decision to include observers sent by partners in OSCE/ODIHR election monitoring or supervision operations, some of the MPCs have also participated in election monitoring activities organized by ODIHR in the OSCE region.

Both the MPCs and the partners for co-operation were invited to the Follow-up Conference on the Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security in June 1999. In addition, they were invited to the opening and closing sessions of the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting, which convenes to assess the implementation of the Vienna Document 1994. All the Partners are invited to the Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as well as to some Special Conferences.

For the first time, all Partners were invited to participate in a session of the relevant working group of the Security Model Committee in the discussion on security and

co-operation in adjacent areas – co-operation with partners for co-operation. Some of the Partners submitted their contributions in writing, while others expressed their views orally in order to be considered for the relevant part of the Charter for European Security.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in co-operation with the OSCE Secretariat, will host the next OSCE Mediterranean Seminar. The Seminar, entitled Implementation of Human Dimension Commitments, scheduled for 6 and 7 December 1999, in Amman, will carry forward work started at last year's Seminar held in Malta on *the Human Dimension of Security, Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law*. Discussions will focus on risks and challenges in the Human Dimension, including the cultural dimension of security and the role of civil society, and the future of the OSCE Mediterranean dialogue.

Japan continued to attend the plenary meetings of the Permanent Council, the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Security Model Committee. Japan extended significant contributions to OSCE's endeavours in south eastern Europe.

The Republic of Korea also continued its co-operation with the OSCE, and has participated in a number of OSCE meetings. The Republic of Korea also took part actively in the Mediterranean Seminar, held last year in Malta. The country is provided with access to OSCE official documentation, and may be invited on a case-by-case basis to OSCE meetings on subjects in which it has a special interest.

9. Contacts with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

The main focal point for OSCE contacts with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) remains the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and especially its NGO Unit.

During 1999 the activities included developing an electoral assistance strategy for Central Asia and the Caucasus in co-operation with NGOs, and increasing the network of Roma and Sinti NGOs connected to the OSCE Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues.

In the fifteenth Human Dimension Seminar on Human Rights which took place in Warsaw in April, both the plenary and the working groups were open for participation from NGOs. Furthermore, the ODIHR introduced three new informal Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings during 1999: on Freedom of Religion; Gender Issues; and Roma/Sinti. All the meetings took place in Vienna and NGOs whose activities directly relate to the topic of each Supplementary Meeting were strongly encouraged to participate. They were moreover able to address the meetings on an equal footing with participating States and international organizations. The high number of NGOs, between 30 and 55, that participated in each meeting gives an indication of the increasing amount of mutually beneficial interaction between the NGO community and the OSCE.

NGOs were also invited to attend the Review Conference held in Vienna from 20 September to 1 October 1999. At the Conference, they were encouraged to make written presentations and address specific questions orally. They were also invited to attend the working sessions on the human and economic dimensions, and OSCE activities, institutions, structures and instruments dealing, *inter alia*, with lessons learnt from field activities.

The participation of NGOs in several OSCE seminars and conferences was further encouraged through funding from voluntary contributions. Participating NGOs from Central Asian and Caucasus States were given financial assistance from the Recently Admitted

Participating States (RAPS) Fund to take part in the Human Dimension Seminar on Human Rights and the Economic Forum.

Other OSCE institutions also have close relationships with the NGO community. The Representative on Freedom of the Media, having last year identified NGOs as one of his four constituencies, has maintained contact with NGOs as a regular feature of his office's visits to OSCE countries, during which the commitment of governments to freedom of the media is assessed. In this work, the input of local NGOs is always taken into account. The Representative relies on local and international NGOs for information on media developments throughout the OSCE area, and his office co-ordinates its activities with them when appropriate.

NGOs also continue to function as an important source of information for the High Commissioner on National Minorities. Contacts with NGOs have accordingly been on the agenda for his visits to OSCE participating States.

The mandate of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities also includes contacts with NGOs and the private sector. Through his connections with NGOs active in the economic and environmental dimensions, the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities has widened the scope of NGOs maintaining active contact with the OSCE. Co-operation is particularly vivid in the environmental area and as a result a large number of NGOs participated in this year's Economic Forum, which had an environmental theme, as well as in the sub-regional preparatory seminars.

Gender issues have remained an important field of co-operation between the OSCE and NGOs. The Gender Adviser in the Secretariat has continued the work initiated by the focal point on gender issues concerning contacts with NGOs. In May she attended a meeting of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, which is the forum for all NGOs accredited to the United Nations Office at Vienna who are working with gender issues. She has also been present at several gender-related conferences with a high attendance of NGOs with whom she has established links in order to take advantage of their expertise. The Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights for Women Adviser at the ODIHR has also maintained contact with NGOs in accordance with her mandate, both in projects and in seminars.

The Conflict Prevention Centre has consolidated its contacts with NGOs active in the field of research on security issues. The CPC kept them informed about OSCE activities, attended and contributed to seminars and conferences organized by them and followed the practice of inviting those NGOs to the OSCE seminars.

The OSCE Missions have maintained close contact and co-operation with NGOs in areas relevant to their mandates. Human rights and minority issues, the strengthening of civil society, gender issues, election observation and humanitarian assistance are all areas of endeavour that have benefited from such collaboration.

Finally the Researcher in Residence Programme continues its co-operation with academic institutions. It is designed to give researchers working on OSCE or OSCE-related topics the opportunity to carry out research in the OSCE archives in Prague and thereby to promote knowledge of the Organization.

10. Other Activities

10.1 Administration of the Fund for Recently Admitted Participating States

The Fund for Recently Admitted Participating States (RAPS), administered by the Section for External Co-operation of the Conflict Prevention Centre, financed participation of delegates, both officials and NGO representatives, from recently admitted participating States in OSCE activities, especially OSCE-sponsored seminars and meetings, including human dimension meeting, and the Economic Forum, as well as regional economic dimension seminars.

Furthermore, as in the past, the RAPS fund was used to support, on a case by case basis, young academics from RAPS countries undertaking research on the Organization, and an internship programme at the OSCE Secretariat for representatives of Central Asian participating States. In 1999, the internship programme has covered representatives of each of the five Central Asian States, for a term of two months, whose travel costs were covered by the Fund and other expenses by the Conflict Prevention Centre. The Fund was also used to support a project aimed at the creation of a women's newspaper in Abkazia, Georgia.

The balance of the voluntary RAPS Fund as of 10 October was EUR 100,000.

10.2 Press and Public Information

10.2.1 Press

The OSCE was the focus of continuous and sometimes intense press interest in 1999. The OSCE's involvement in Kosovo made headlines and attracted the attention of all major news media. There was considerable interest for other OSCE activities as well, all in all resulting in a year of a high and positive media profile for the OSCE. Unrealistic expectations based on ignorance have largely been dispelled as understanding among media about OSCE's role and mandates has been growing. Any unfavourable reports in the press about the performance of the OSCE were usually placed within the context of circumstances beyond its control.

The Spokesperson and the Press Officer worked closely with the Norwegian Chairmanship helping to keep the press and general public aware of the Organization's aims and activities. This work included a steady stream of press releases, frequent press briefings and press conferences, background briefings for selected journalists and organized trips for media representatives interested in travelling with the Chairman-in-Office and other high-level OSCE officials (e.g. to the Balkans and Central Asia). In order to cope with the increased demand on the Press and Public Information Section that followed the Kosovo crisis, a Public Information Liaison Officer for Kosovo was placed in the Press and Public Information Section (PPIS) on a secondment basis.

Co-ordination of press work with OSCE field activities and Institutions was increased. Regular meetings of Press and Public Information Officers from the Secretariat, field activities and Institutions were introduced (Public Affairs Round-Tables). The first such meeting was held in Vienna in March and the second one in Sarajevo in September.

10.2.2 Public Information

Beyond its regular activities - such as the production of the monthly OSCE Newsletter; answering public requests for information; and providing programmes for student groups - the projects from 1999 mentioned below should be highlighted.

The PPIS produced the third edition of the OSCE Handbook at the beginning of 1999. Completely revised and updated, the new issue explains the purpose and function of the Organization, including its history, its structures and institutions, and its field activities as well as outlining the concepts of various dimensions of security and co-operation. About 10,000 copies of the English version have been distributed to the public, delegations, media and researchers. An updated edition will be available in all six official OSCE languages by the end of 1999.

With the addition of the post of Online Manager, the Press and Public Information Section have been working, as a priority, on upgrading the OSCE website. The newly designed website will place special emphasis on providing timely and easily accessible information, with improved graphics.

Due to the high demand for information regarding OSCE activities in Kosovo, the PPIS set up a special website devoted to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (www.osce.org/kosovo). The website contains the latest news from the Mission, regular updates on the its work and general background information on the Mission.

The OSCE's range of public information material has been enhanced with new fact-sheets on the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This practice will be extended with the goal of providing fact-sheets on every OSCE institution and Mission.

The PPIS has also begun implementing a public information initiative designed to target specific groups of the general public in order to enhance their understanding of the historical evolution, the mandate and the workings of the Organization. As a first step, the PPIS is targeting university professors in OSCE States who teach international relations, public international law, political science and international history.

The Researcher in Residence programme, introduced in 1998, has proven very popular. The programme is designed to give researchers working on OSCE or OSCE-related topics the opportunity to carry out research in the OSCE archives in Prague. Currently there is a waiting list of applicants to the programme, as space limits the number of applicants to a maximum of two per month.

Also in 1999, the Press and Public Information Section began preparations for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. The launching of the anniversary year will begin at the Istanbul Summit, and will culminate around the time of the signing, in summer 2000, with a public event in Vienna. The PPIS has begun planning for a number of publications, as well as a video, a new cd-rom and a section on the web site to contribute to the commemoration.

10.3 Gender Issues

In 1999 gender issues continued to be addressed within the OSCE and were increasingly integrated into various activities. The Focal Point for Gender Issues at the

OSCE Secretariat held the first Informal Information Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming on 16 December 1998, to give the delegations of the participating States an overview of the ongoing work on gender mainstreaming in the OSCE and to provide an opportunity to discuss plans for the future. A second Informal Information Meeting on Gender Issues took place on 13 April 1999, when an update on activities was given.

In December 1998 a section on gender issues was included for the first time into the bi-weekly induction course for new Mission members. This briefing was subsequently developed to include the theoretical aspect of gender mainstreaming as well as the practical aspects of a gender approach in fieldwork. The new Mission members are made aware of gender issues that concern the organization itself, such as equal opportunities for women and promotion of a professional working environment where all staff members are treated equally regardless of sex or other personal aspects. A second part of the induction course is devoted to the human rights of women and OSCE's provisions referring to equality between men and women. The Mission members are thus informed about ways in which these commitments can be implemented in their fieldwork. Furthermore, the module on gender issues of the induction course is constantly adapted in order to reflect actual concerns in the field. Overall, the development of training modules is done in close co-operation between the Secretariat and the ODIHR Gender Adviser.

A Gender Adviser was seconded by Switzerland to the Secretariat in April 1999 for a period of eight months to continue the work initiated by the Focal Point for Gender Issues. Her tasks are in particular to promote gender awareness at the Secretariat and the field operations and to monitor the representation of and opportunities for women in OSCE. She also develops training for Mission members in awareness of gender aspects, liaises with other international organizations and NGOs on gender-related issues, and prepares reports and other materials concerning gender issues in the OSCE.

On 9 June, the Secretary General issued Organization Directive No. 11 on the Professional Working Environment in the OSCE, which was developed by the Secretariat in co-ordination with OSCE institutions and field activities. The Directive aims to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination and is applicable to all OSCE institutions and field activities and to both local and international staff. It is being followed by a policy awareness campaign in field activities and institutions through the distribution of a leaflet explaining the Directive. Institutions and field missions has subsequently been asked to appoint a staff member as mediator to deal with possible complaints of harassment or discrimination. These staff members will be trained in order to be able to provide counselling for staff members at an early stage of possible complaints. The Gender Adviser has developed contacts with the field mission staff concerned and is assisting them in the implementation of the Directive.

In addition, contacts have been reinforced with staff members in field missions in order to analyse their concerns regarding gender issues, both involving internal staff matters and work in the field. With a voluntary contribution from the Canadian International Development Agency, a survey of staff's knowledge of gender issues is being prepared in several field missions. The results will be used to develop the content of specific guidelines for field staff on gender issues in post-conflict situations. The guidelines will be presented to the different field activities through training seminars elaborated to raise awareness of gender aspects among staff in their work and to prepare them to deal with gender issues as part of human rights.

As a result of OSCE's commitment to gender mainstreaming in all its activities, the Secretariat, together with all OSCE's institutions, developed upon the request of the Chairman-in-Office an Action Plan for Gender Issues. It describes the tasks related to the implementation of OSCE's obligations and sets a time frame for the goals. It assigns responsibilities to the different actors of the OSCE and determines the resources needed to carry out the work. The Plan is based on the recommendations made during the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Gender Issues held in Vienna on 14 and 15 June. The Meeting brought together a large number of international organizations and NGOs who provided invaluable input for the drafting of recommendations on how the OSCE and its participating States can better address gender issues in policy-making and projects. The Meeting also constituted a forum for making contacts that facilitate closer co-operation regarding the work with gender issues.

The ODIHR has continued to develop projects on gender issues and to implement gender mainstreaming of other projects. Gender related projects implemented during the year 1998-99 have included initiatives to advance women's political participation and awareness raising on international standards on women's human rights. In Central Asia, women from NGOs and governments attended training workshops to develop political and decision making skills and understanding of international commitments on equality and women's human rights. Follow-up workshops were then conducted by participants. The ODIHR also supported NGO projects to combat trafficking of women and violence against women, and in Estonia conducted a project to integrate Russian women through language training. Mainstreaming activities seek to ensure that other ODIHR projects consider impact upon women and inequality between women and men.

In addition to the gender projects implemented by ODIHR in the field, several field activities have engaged in small-scale programmes to address gender issues and promote the status of women. The OSCE field offices in Tajikistan, for instance, have formed several women's groups who meet regularly to develop awareness and strategies for dealing with their specific problems. The OSCE Presence in Albania has organized a conference to look at the status of rural women, and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed close co-operation with other international organizations and NGOs and promoted a concerted effort for gender mainstreaming in their field work. The Mission in co-operation with UNHCHR has also organized a conference with the goal to share its experience in integrating a gender aspect into field work with international organizations and NGOs as well as the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

10.4 Training and Capacity Building

In response to views expressed by participating States, the Secretary General initiated the development of a strategy regarding training in the OSCE in 1998. The work on the strategy was based on input from participating States, the field missions and the Institutions as well as from the staff of the Secretariat. The elaboration of the document containing the strategy was carried out in close consultation with the most interested participating States. On 18 March 1999, the Permanent Council approved the OSCE Strategy on Capacity-Building through Training (SEC.GAL/25/99/Rev.1).

The Strategy is based on a decentralized, controlled approach. For this reason a network of focal points for training in the field missions and the Institutions, including the Secretariat, has been set up. Their task is to ensure that the training activities carried out are

relevant for the tasks of the missions etc. The co-ordination of the training activities will be ensured by a Co-ordinator for Capacity Building and Training.

In 1998, an induction course for new mission members and new staff in the Secretariat was set up by the Mission Support Section. The first provisional curriculum of this course has been adjusted to meet the needs of the participants, and, *inter alia*, new subjects such as human rights and gender issues have been added. The induction course is held every two weeks at the Congress Centre at the Hofburg in Vienna. From 18 August 1998 to 14 September 1999, 26 such courses have been held with a total of 324 participants.

In order to streamline the bi-weekly induction programme a prototype of an overview module for an introduction to the OSCE and for working in OSCE field missions has been developed co-operatively by the Secretariat and the Missions to Croatia and to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This module consists of a standardized PowerPoint presentation complemented by a Facilitator's Guide and reading material. The purpose of the module is to ensure unity of message and improved cost-effectiveness. It can be updated easily. The module will also increase flexibility by reducing the dependence on individual presenters/facilitators for the induction courses. The relevant parts of the module are also used for public information purposes.

The next steps will be to develop the module into a version for self-study to be used e.g. for local staff in the field missions and a version that can be used in national training programmes in participating States. Such national training efforts will provide an important addition to the preparation of new mission members. It is, however, important to ensure unity of message and an even quality in such efforts.

Following an initiative by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson, at the Permanent Council of the OSCE in June 1998, the OSCE has participated in the development of a joint approach to human rights training for field missions. Apart from the OSCE Secretariat and ODIHR, the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights participate in this co-operation. The first result of this co-operation was a Joint Pilot Workshop: Human Rights Training for Field Missions held in Venice 11-16 July 1999. Out of the 25 participants 18 came from the OSCE field missions (both international and local staff) and from the Secretariat (one) and from ODIHR (one). The facilitators were nominated by the participating organizations. This first joint project will be followed up.

In co-operation between the United Nations Training and Research Institute (UNITAR) and the OSCE, a Workshop on Mediation Techniques was held in Vienna on 6 and 7 October 1999. Out of 25 participants 10 came from the OSCE.

An Administration and Financial Workshop for field missions was held in Vienna from 7 to 11 June 1999. This was the second workshop organized to train, in particular local staff, in administrative and financial matters. The Workshop will be followed up by the elaboration of a handbook/manual that can be used not only as training material, but also as a reference in the daily work.

The first ever mission/institution IT staff seminar was held in Vienna in June. All large missions and institutions participated in this event, which was targeted at improving co-operation and sharing knowledge. Extensive training has also been initiated for the users of the Oracle Financial/Materials Management Systems software.

Apart from the training materials mentioned above, materials are produced for each training event. This material is collected centrally in the unit for Co-ordination and Training in the Secretariat so as to make it available for future training activities. The Unit is collecting training materials from other international organizations and NGOs as it is made available. The Unit is also establishing a list on available outside expertise in different areas and of available courses that may be of interest to the OSCE. These activities are part of the efforts to establish a training resource centre which can support training efforts in different parts of the Organization.

A general mission handbook would be of great importance to ensure continuity and avoid re-inventing the wheel. Discussions are going on the elaboration of such a handbook. This handbook and a collection of rules and regulations will be important means to ensure unity of approach and recording best practices for the Organization as a whole.

10.4.1 Training in the missions

The resources allocated to training in 1999 are concentrated on the field missions reflecting the principle laid down in the Strategy that the training should be carried out as closely as possible to the actual activities in order to ensure that they are relevant. The central training funds are limited to activities that for obvious reasons of cost effectiveness and consistency should be carried out centrally. In December 1998, the Permanent Council decided to provisionally allocate funds for training in the missions pending the completion of the elaboration of the Strategy. The Permanent Council also decided that these funds should be reviewed by the Informal Financial Committee in the light of the Strategy once that was approved. In order to provide a basis for this review the Secretariat requested the missions to provide information on how they planned to use these funds. The plans of the missions were collated in a Secretariat report and on the basis of this report, the IFC and subsequently the PC decided to approve these plans (PC decision 304 of 24 June 1999). From the information collated it can be seen that the field missions have started to use training according to the guidelines provided in the Strategy.

Since a large part of the training funds in the OSCE is used by the large missions, their training activities may merit special mention.

In 1999, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated the implementation of a comprehensive training strategy. Designed around the target areas identified in the OSCE Strategy for Capacity-Building through Training and tailored to the particular needs of the Mission, the different activities organized have been concentrated on the improvement of the skills of the staff of the Mission and the overall efficiency in the performance of their duties. Regular induction courses assist new staff in the assumption of their duties. The Mission also offers different programmes to improve specific skills, such as IT courses and courses on reporting and management techniques. Fostering interagency co-operation in the theatre has also been a priority. Interesting joint ventures have been the result, such as a risk prevention and first aid programme developed together with the International Federation of the Red Cross, and the development and implementation of a sustainable training programme to improve negotiation and influencing skills of field officers together with the United States Institute for Peace (USIP).

The Mission to Croatia has a well-developed training programme that comprises induction training and specific induction for police monitors. Training for regional centres is carried out with regular intervals as well as administrative training. Meeting the needs identified by the Mission a workshop has been held to improve human resources

management. The senior management in all parts of the Mission participated in the workshop and it has resulted in a number of changes to improve the performance of the Mission.

As of summer 1999, after the establishment of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, a part of United Nations Mission in Kosovo, and in order to meet the short-term needs in the build-up of this Mission, a separate induction programme has been set up by the Mission Staffing Section in the World Trade Centre at the Vienna Airport. This programme has been designed to give new mission members two days familiarization with the OSCE, which is followed by a further three days of mission specific detail on arrival in Kosovo. As of 11 October, 11 induction courses have taken place with 264 participants.

10.5 Conflict Prevention Centre: Mission Staffing Activities

In addition to its regular work of recruitment and deployment of staff in the missions, the Mission Staffing Section had to cope with recruiting, selecting, training and deploying hundreds of specialised mission members within a short time-frame for the new OSCE Mission in Kosovo during the summer and autumn of 1999. The Section developed, in conjunction with the Mission Liaison Section, a new mission staffing procedure that was successfully tested during the build-up of the Mission in Kosovo. Features of the new procedure include the creation of a Mission Staffing Table, based on a thorough evaluation of the Mission's tasks and mandate, the circulation of job descriptions to OSCE delegations of participating States, based on the provisions of the Staffing Table; and the establishment of a series of Selection Panels, comprising members of the Section and experts relevant to the tasks at hand (such as human rights, rule of law, democratisation, media and police training), charged with selection of the relevant personnel. The list of proposed candidates, assembled during this process, is then reviewed and approved by the leadership of the Mission. A performance evaluation review of each mission member is prepared twice annually and sent to Vienna.

III. Report of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The Parliamentary Assembly (PA) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, created as part of the institutionalization of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe at the 1990 Paris Summit, occupies a unique place in the structure of the OSCE. The Assembly's primary task is to support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in the OSCE's participating States, to develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and to contribute to the development of the institutional structures of the OSCE and of relations and co-operation between existing OSCE institutions. A dialogue aimed at further strengthening ties and co-operation between the governmental and parliamentary OSCE branches has usually been very positive and productive. The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ms. Helle Degn, has participated regularly in the Troika meetings and has always addressed the OSCE summits and meetings of the Ministerial Council. The International Secretariat of the OSCE PA, located in Copenhagen, has worked closely with the OSCE Secretariat and other OSCE institutions.

1. Annual Session

At its Eighth Annual Session in St. Petersburg in July, the Assembly focused on common security and democracy in the twenty-first century. Nearly three hundred parliamentarians from fifty-two OSCE participating States met together to deliberate and to

adopt the St. Petersburg Declaration containing recommendations on a wide range of political, economic and human rights issues. The Final Declaration included resolutions on specific issues such as the Kosovo resolution containing the concept of sending a parliamentary democracy team to Kosovo to contribute to the rebuilding of civil society, protection of human rights, and development of democracy and the rule of law. A resolution on correcting the democratic deficit of the OSCE recommended that, before making major decisions, the Ministerial Council of the OSCE should be obliged to ask the opinion of the Parliamentary Assembly. Furthermore the Assembly proposed again that “approximate consensus” – requiring 90 per cent of both membership and financial contributions to agree in order for a decision to be approved – be adopted in the OSCE decision-making process, as had been advocated by the OSCE PA since the 1994 Vienna Annual Assembly. Following an established tradition, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, along with the OSCE Secretary General and the leaders of various OSCE institutions, addressed the Annual Session in St. Petersburg and answered questions from the floor. Furthermore, the Presidents of the Parliamentary Assemblies of NATO, the Council of Europe, the Nordic Council and the Western European Union made presentations to the plenary meetings. Ms. Helle Degn of Denmark was unanimously re-elected for an additional one-year term as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The Assembly’s Secretary General, Mr. R. Spencer Oliver of the United States of America, was re-elected by acclamation by the Standing Committee to a new five-year term, which will begin next year.

2. Annual Briefing in Vienna

At the beginning of every year, the Standing Committee, which comprises the heads of the delegations to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, meets in Vienna at OSCE Headquarters in the Hofburg Congress Centre. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the OSCE Secretary General and heads of other OSCE institutions met with members of the Standing Committee of the OSCE PA in January during their meeting in Vienna and briefed them on the latest developments in the Organisation’s work. This briefing provides parliamentarians with the latest information about OSCE activities, while answers to questions from the floor ensure a vital direct link between members of parliament and the OSCE leadership. This unique dialogue has become increasingly popular with the leadership of the Parliamentary Assembly. At their 1999 meeting in Vienna, the members of the Standing Committee adopted a resolution on Kosovo restating the willingness of the Parliamentary Assembly to assist in the work of the OSCE in Kosovo by deploying teams of parliamentarians in the field. The Standing Committee also adopted a resolution aimed at developing a common strategy for the international community in election monitoring, particularly concerning the follow-up of recommendations issued by election observation missions.

3. Election Observation

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has continued to make important contributions to the OSCE election observation efforts. The co-operation agreement between the Assembly and the ODIHR, signed in Copenhagen in September 1997 by the Chairman-in-Office and the President of the Assembly, increased and enhanced the working relationship between these two important OSCE institutions. In accordance with this agreement, the Chairman-in-Office appointed senior members of parliament, nominated by the President of the OSCE PA, as his Special Representatives to lead election monitoring operations and to present the conclusions of the observer teams. Since September 1998, the OSCE PA has carried out election monitoring missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Slovak Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Georgia. In April 1999, the

OSCE PA established an Ad Hoc Committee on Election Monitoring, whose task it was to create an effective mechanism to follow-up recommendations made after election observation missions and to design a common election monitoring strategy for the international community.

4. Presidential visits and missions

During the past year, the President and other senior representatives of the Assembly have undertaken a number of official visits and missions in order to promote OSCE principles, to establish closer ties with Assembly members and to contribute to the development of democratic institutions in the OSCE area. The President of the OSCE PA – re-elected at the Eighth Annual Session for a further one-year term – significantly increased the visibility of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly by visiting all OSCE institutions and 12 OSCE field missions in Georgia, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Estonia and Latvia. She also undertook high-level bilateral visits to the United States, Sweden, France and Finland. The Assembly's President, Ms. Helle Degn, attended four meetings of the OSCE Ministerial Troika, addressed the Permanent Council twice and addressed the OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Oslo last December. In September, she also addressed the OSCE Review Conference in Vienna. The President continued to strengthen the OSCE PA's relations with the Council of Europe by visiting Strasbourg in January, by participating in a joint OSCE PA/Council of Europe Bureau Meeting in Paris in March and by addressing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in June.

5. Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus

The OSCE PA Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus, established by the Parliamentary Assembly in July 1998 to play a supportive role in the work of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus, has visited Minsk four times since the beginning of this year.

In September 1999, the Ad Hoc Working Group held a meeting in Copenhagen with representatives of international organizations and of governments regarding recent political developments in Belarus and the work of the OSCE's joint parliamentary and governmental initiatives.

6. Nantes Conference

In October 1999, the second parliamentary conference on Sub-regional Economic Co-operation Faced with New Challenges was held in Nantes. The Nantes Conference was organized jointly by the OSCE PA and the French National Assembly in partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations.

7. Other activities

Since 1 December 1998, regular meetings of the leadership of the OSCE PA have taken place in Oslo (Bureau), Vienna (Standing Committee), Copenhagen (Expanded Bureau) and St. Petersburg (Bureau, Standing Committee, Annual Session).

On 16 September 1999, the Secretary General of the Assembly, Mr. R. Spencer Oliver, addressed the Permanent Council on the results of the Eighth Annual Session in St. Petersburg.

The Parliamentary Assembly awarded its Fourth Annual OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy to international reporter Ms. Christiane Amanpour whose reporting stands as a model for free, independent journalism in the OSCE area. Ms Amanpour asked that the funds associated with the prize be used for projects aiding the development of free and professional media in Kosovo.

The Assembly also continued to expand its International Research Fellowship Programme on the premises of the International Secretariat in Copenhagen. Fellowships are awarded for six months but may be extended to up to one year. The fellowship programme is now in its fifth year and over sixty research fellows have already benefited from it.

During the past year, the International Secretariat intensified its efforts to raise public awareness about the Assembly and its work by creating new information material. Brochures are now available on the history and principal aims of the Assembly, annual sessions, presidential activities, election monitoring projects, seminars and conferences organized by the Assembly and also on the International Research Fellowship Programme. In addition, a new OSCE PA website was developed and improved and is now regularly updated.

IV. Resources Management

In November 1998 the Secretariat was reorganized on the basis of two main departments - the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) and the Department for Administration and Operations (DAO). Resources Management covers the following major tasks:

- (a) Support of policy making organs (servicing of meetings and conferences, including support to the Chair and assistance with implementation of decisions);
- (b) Support of missions and operational activities (finance, personnel - other than seconded staff, logistics and procurement); and
- (c) Administrative support activities to the OSCE's main programmes and institutions.

All three main tasks are underpinned by a rapidly expanding information technology service. Resources Management co-operates closely with Internal Audit and The Legal Adviser, both situated in the Office of the Secretary General.

In the reporting period the start up of the Kosovo Verification Mission and subsequently of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, both of unprecedented size and complexity, put a very considerable strain on the resources of the Department leaving little time for longer term issues. Nonetheless, it was possible to develop the Department's cohesiveness, and to undertake organizational development and institutional memory-building measures. Emphasis was put on the Department's management principles (open information flow, participation, rapid decisions and responses, decisions taken at the lowest possible level and clear accountability).

In addition to contributing to the Organization's training efforts carried out under the responsibility of CPC, DAO has organized a week-long training seminar for local administrative staff of missions and has offered training on recruitment skills.

An Internal Working Group on Documentation (IWGD) has been re-established. Facilitated and co-ordinated by Conference Services, it comprises representatives from various departments and units of the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna and Prague as well as from

OSCE Institutions. The group is developing OSCE wide standardized working procedures for correspondence and documentation as well as guidelines for OSCE corporate identity and other issues.

1. Conference Services

1.1 Meetings Services

Conference Services (CS) provides regular services to OSCE, Joint Consultative Group (JCG) of the Treaty of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC).

During the reporting period from 1 December 1998 to 30 November 1999, CS will have serviced over 1,600 meetings (not counting the 1999 Review Conference, Preparatory Meeting and Summit). The total number will have increased about 20 per cent compared to previous years:

- Permanent Council meetings and related "PC" consultations: approximately 560.
- Forum for Security and Co-operation meetings and related "FSC" meetings: 310.
- Joint Consultative Group (JCG) and the Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC): over 150 meetings.
- Meetings on specific topics held by regional groups/groups of OSCE participating States: 510.

Major seminars, such as the Code of Conduct, Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting, and the Military Transparency Meeting, were serviced during the reporting period. Several meetings in and outside of Vienna for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) with specific topics as well as meetings related to Article II, IV and V of the Dayton Agreement were supported.

In addition, CS provided support for meetings of other international organizations and NGOs, such as the Southeast European Co-operative Initiative, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Helsinki Federation, the World Federation of United Nations Associations and others. Other events and workshops not related to any specific body included the Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons and book presentations. Briefings for visiting organizations, student groups, academics and research institutions, to which CS provides support, have increased over 12 per cent to approximately 110.

Outstanding meetings included the Seventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council in Oslo from 2 to 3 December 1998 with numerous additional PC and JCG - related meetings and consultations for preparation, both in Vienna and in Oslo. Major meetings outside of Vienna with CS assistance were above all the Seventh Meeting of the Economic Forum in Prague from 25 to 28 May 1999 and meetings in Warnemünde, Almaty, Istanbul and Malta.

The second half of the year 1999 was much devoted to preparing for the Istanbul Summit 1999, including servicing the Review Conference from 20 September to 1 October 1999 in Vienna, from 8 to 10 November in Istanbul, as well as the Preparatory

Meetings in Istanbul from 11 to 17 November and above all the OSCE Summit from 18 to 19 November.

1.2 Documents Distribution

Documents Distribution includes – apart from registration and distribution of documents, and the reproduction, archiving and retrieval of past documents upon request by delegations and institutions - co-ordination of room bookings, servicing of meetings and liaison with the Documents Control Section with regard to the translation and/or editing of OSCE documents. This is accounted for in the 6,300 documents distributed during the reporting period and the 26 requests received on average per day.

1.3 Interpretation

Conference Services provide simultaneous interpretation for meetings held in and outside Vienna. In addition to the regular meetings of the OSCE, the JCG and the OSCC, the CS services *inter alia* the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting and the Code of Conduct Seminar, as well as meetings of Articles II, IV, and V of the Dayton Agreement held in Vienna under the OSCE auspices.

Since OSCE activities continuously grow, the need for additional meetings with interpretation have increased rapidly during the reporting period (see under meeting services above).

1.4 Documents Control, Translation and Editing

As in all units of CS, there has been an increase in activities, i.e. the number of documents translated and edited. During the reporting period, over 9,500 pages were translated and edited by the Translation Unit and over 16,500 pages of documents in one or more of the six official OSCE languages were word processed. In addition to the work of Documents Control, translating and editing of the OSCE Newsletter and the OSCE Handbook, the compilation of the OSCE Decisions Manual 1998 and translation of reports and draft resolutions for other OSCE institutions and bodies, such as the OSCE PA, ODIHR, HCNM, etc. have been completed.

2. Finance

Rationalization and consolidation of all functions relating to Accounts, Budget and Treasury Units were initiated in relation to the development of the new Oracle financial application. The new system, expected to be in place by November 1999, required, and is expected to require in 2000, a substantial amount of time, flexibility and resilience from the finance team to ensure proper re-engineering of current financial business practices.

To gain maximum benefit from the new system, additional modules such as Human Resources Management, Travel, Audit will need to be implemented over a one to three year period, with a commensurate level of resources earmarked to develop and to operate.

2.1 Budgeting

The 1999 Unified Budget approved by the Permanent Council on the 17 December 1999 (PC.DEC/282) amounted to EUR 154 million. In addition, Permanent

Council Decision 282 and 286 approved a Spending Authority for the Kosovo Verification Mission of EUR 49 million. This Spending Authority was subsequently utilized for the transitional OSCE Task Force for Kosovo established by the Permanent Council on 8 June 1999 (PC.DEC/296) and for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo established by the Permanent Council on 1 July 1999 (PC.DEC/305).

The 1999 Budget was also further increased through separate decisions of the Permanent Council to include budgets for the Vienna portion of the OSCE Review Conference, (PC/DEC/311), held in Vienna from 20 September 1999 to 1 October 1999, and for the newly established Office in Yerevan (PC/DEC/314).

The decision to postpone the elections that were to be held in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1999 to April 2000, made it necessary to reduce the budgetary requirement for the Mission by approximately 27 per cent (PC/DEC/310 of 15 July 1999).

The residual 1999 budgetary requirement for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo is expected for submission to the Permanent Council during the last quarter of 1999.

All of the above decisions, excluding the residual 1999 budget for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, brought the OSCE total budget for 1999 to EUR 142 million.

2.2 Accounting

The Report of the External Auditors for the year ended 31 December 1998, in addition to a number of recommendations for improvements, included the opinion that the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the OSCE as at 31 December 1998, and the results of the operations for the period then ended; the financial statements were prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles; and transactions were in accordance with the approved financial procedures and legislative authority.

The audited financial statements for 1998 were submitted to the delegations of participating States in June 1999, and were accepted by the Permanent Council on 8 July 1999 (PC Decision No. 309).

With the intention of standardizing work processes and procedures, a training seminar for local finance and administration staff members at the OSCE missions and institutions was held during the period from 7 to 11 June 1999.

2.3 Cash Management

The bills of assessment were issued in euro in order to reflect the amendment to the financial regulations changing the official OSCE book currency from the Austrian schilling to the euro. The Financial Regulations were also amended in order to base the official monthly OSCE exchange rates upon those issued by the United Nations.

Arrears procedures in accordance with the financial regulations were implemented in order to reduce the amount of outstanding contributions.

As the OSCE budgetary activity grew significantly above the balances held on account, increased and short-term time deposits were placed in order to maximize bank interest.

New Bank accounts were established for the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the OSCE Central Asian Offices in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan.

During the evacuation of 1,100 Mission members from Kosovo cash payments in excess of DEM 8 million were made over three days in order to clear the outstanding Mission Member board and lodging allowances.

3. Personnel

3.1 Policies and Procedures

Pursuant to Decision No. 4 of the Oslo Ministerial Council (MC (7).DEC/4) the issue of further strengthening the operational capacities of the OSCE was discussed at the special meeting of the Informal Financial Committee in April 1999. Several statements of the CiO as well as a report by the Secretary General devoted, *inter alia*, to enhancing the human resources potential once again highlighted the importance of normalization of the OSCE employment conditions. This was further stressed in the report of the External Auditors of June 1999 on the OSCE Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 1998. A draft revision of OSCE Staff Regulations and Rules to reflect the normalization as well as cost implications was distributed to the delegations of the participating States for consideration.

Efforts were undertaken at regularizing and unifying the conditions of service of the local mission staff and appropriate guidelines were distributed to the Heads of Missions.

3.2 Social Security

Basic recovery coverage and the possibility to extend the life and accident/disability insurance for the local staff in missions was designed in collaboration with Van Breda & Co. International and was introduced in January 1999.

With the adoption of a new law on accident and disability insurance in Croatia, placing additional obligations upon the employer, life and accident/disability coverage was negotiated with the insurer for local staff.

A full social insurance package was elaborated for the local staff in Kosovo and was introduced in October 1999.

3.3 Recruitment

In line with PC/DEC. 260 and 263 on the establishment and funding of the Kosovo Verification Mission, the Permanent Council approved the 1998 Budget and post table for the KVM Secretariat augmentations and the international contracted staff in Kosovo. Administrative efforts aimed at strengthening operational capacities of missions such as the KVM, placed the OSCE Personnel Unit under a heavy workload during the reporting period.

The number of approved posts under General Fund and augmentation budgets increased by 91 posts (the majority of them under the augmentation budgets). Eighteen staff members have separated from OSCE since 1 January 1999, and 28 left in 1998.

In the course of the first six months of the current year, 75 persons were recruited under the approved OSCE post table. The growing recruitment activity again brought to light the issue of attracting the best qualified professional staff. At the request of the Delegations

the Progress Report: Implementation by the Secretariat of Administrative and Operational Support provided for in the 1999 Budget and 1998 KVM augmentation Budget was presented to the Informal Financial Committee. It provided a detailed analysis of the existing recruitment policies and constraints in implementing these.

3.4 Internship Programme

The normal internship programme continued with 12 interns having been assigned in the reporting period in the Office of the Secretary General, Conflict Prevention Centre, Department of Administration, Office of the Representative of the Freedom of Media and ODIHR.

The schedule for Internship Programme for Central Asian countries was revised and five countries were identified for nomination of candidates. Three interns have already completed their programme and two more will join before the year-end.

3.5 Post Classification

The job classification review initiated in 1998 continued this year, and a progress report was submitted to the Informal Financial Committee in May 1999. A Special Staff Meeting chaired by the Director for Resources was held for all staff of the OSCE Secretariat.

4. Operations

The Operations Section provides operational support and services to all OSCE Missions and other field operations. It consists of four organizational entities: Logistics, Procurement, Communications and Administrative Services.

4.1 Logistics

The Logistics Unit supports missions in the areas of transport, supply and maintenance. The Mission in Kosovo has been the most demanding, with the evacuation of the KVM in March and the re-establishment of the mission in Kosovo in May. Since 1 July OSCE has been tasked, among other things, with the setting up of a Kosovo Police School. In close co-operation with the United Nations, a logistics pipeline from Brindisi (Italy) to Priština (Kosovo) has been established to facilitate the delivery of supplies and equipment. A vehicle fleet of approximately 450 vehicles is being maintained.

4.2 Procurement

The demands on the Procurement Unit increased heavily during the end of 1998 and the beginning of 1999 as a result of the establishment of the Mission in Kosovo. Two additional staff-members were recruited. The Unit processed 794 procurement requests during the first five months of the year, which resulted in a total purchase value of approximately EUR 16 million. New for the reporting period was the placement on the internet of tenders for procurement of goods and services to the OSCE.

4.3 Communications

The Communications Unit was engaged in supporting the implementation of planned communications networks and facilities in KVM, the co-ordination of communications activities during and after the evacuation, and the establishment of the necessary links and networks for the Kosovo Task Force in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in

Albania. Following the decision to set up the new Mission in Kosovo, the Unit helped with the preparation of Communication Concepts, Plans and Projects for the Police Elements, the re-establishment of communication networks and links in the new Kosovo Mission, and co-ordination of communication activities with other international organizations (UN, KFOR etc). Further, the Unit assisted with upgrading the UHF radio network in the OSCE Presence in Albania and the setting up of communication networks in the new OSCE Centres. Among current tasks, help-desk support is regularly provided for communication problems of OSCE missions and the cost of satellite communications is closely monitored to keep expenditures at a low level.

4.4 Administrative Services

In view of the increasing number of staff, demand on the Administrative Services Office is ever increasing. It provides essential support related to travel for staff and mission members; procurement of Secretariat supplies, equipment, acquisition and preparation of additional office accommodation.

4.5 Records Management

The last 12 months has seen a significant increase in workload to the Records Management Unit (RMU). The main contributing factors have been the opening of the OSCE Centres in Almaty, Bishkek and Ashgabad along with the KVM and its transition into the Task Force and subsequently the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. Due to this increased workload two extra archivists have been employed. Furthermore, a messenger service had to be installed to manage the growing flow of correspondence between the Secretariat, Hofburg (delegations) and Stallburg.

The Mail Room located in the RMU has continued to provide the OSCE Missions and Institutions with a diplomatic mail service. The quantity of mail has drastically increased since last year as a result of the expansion of the OSCE and its Missions.

5. Information Technology

5.1 General and Technical Support

The process of standardization of software in the Secretariat was completed. A standard user set-up was designed to roll out Windows NT and Office 97 for all OSCE desktop computers throughout the Secretariat in Kärtnering, Hofburg and Stallburg for a total of roughly 250 desktop computers. Moreover, the majority of the desktop computers in the Secretariat have been upgraded to Pentium II processor level.

An important step towards higher availability was achieved, by upgrading all non-brand computer servers in the Secretariat to brand servers. A new servers' room was set up at Stallburg location for all Conference Services and Financial/Materials Management System project network. A second servers room was set up at Kärtnering with completely new adaptation to accommodate the computer servers for the Financial/Materials Management System project.

A new network segment at the Stallburg was installed to support the Financial/Materials Management System project and IT Section. A Computer Working Area for delegates including Internet browsing and print services was also set up. Another

network segment was added to the Secretariat network infrastructure to connect the OSCE Operations at the new Palais Corso offices.

IT support was provided to other OSCE entities such as Articles II and IV, Article V, Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Level Planning Group.

The Secretariat's local area network was reinforced with a firewall and Internet Security to ensure proper security for the Financial Management Systems (FMS) and Materials Management Systems (MMS) and the computer network in general.

A Year 2000 readiness action plan was developed to ensure compliance with year 2000 requirements for hardware and software and to manage year 2000 problems.

5.2 Management Information Systems

The activities of the Management Information System Unit were based on the goals and priorities defined in the OSCE Information Systems Strategic Plan (ISSP).

The team of key users selected a FMS/MMS Systems software package for the OSCE. The main modules being implemented are General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Cash Management, Purchasing and Fixed Assets. The contract was signed in April 1999.

An implementation team received training in the functionality of the software. The team is working, together with consultants from the vendor, on the parameterization of the system. The go-live date of the software for the Secretariat and a number of missions was planned for 2 November 1999 with an expected number of users on the first day of about 100.

Intensive efforts are made to document the system by producing user and training manuals, which describe the OSCE business procedures.

The computer servers needed for the new system were purchased, installed and tested. Communication lines to the Missions and Institutions are being improved and extended.

The new Financial/material System is a state-of-the-art technology, based on a modern and robust database and on the communication technology of the future – the Internet. The system uses a centralized database, which is accessed by users in Vienna or anywhere in the world. It has a major impact on the OSCE operations, because every transaction is processed on-line and is immediately visible for all the users concerned. This will lead to better information availability and much faster and efficient communication between the Missions and the Secretariat. Future applications can be built on the same platform.

The Document Management System (DMS) for OSCE is defined as another high priority area in ISSP. A business study of the OSCE DMS has been presented with proposals for pilot installations.

A self-developed Human Resources system has been implemented at the Secretariat. The Mission Staffing database has been enhanced and adapted to the changing needs.

5.3 Missions Support

Various OSCE Missions received assistance for the build-up of their respective IT infrastructure (Desktop PCs, LAN, Internet, Data Communication) with a view, *inter alia*, to enable their participation in the Financial/Materials Management System project. Particular assistance was given to OMIK for the re-establishment of the computer network.

The first ever Mission/Institution IT staff seminar was held in Vienna in June. All large Missions and Institutions participated in this event which was targeted at improving co-operation and sharing knowledge.

The long issue of the computers warranty for the BiH Mission was resolved for warranty handling procedures for the large number of more than 1000 notebook computers installed. Establishing a new service facility and arranging for a commitment by the vendor to solve future issues like this on highest priority was addressed.

5.4 Year 2000 Readiness Task Force

The terms of reference for the Year 2000 Readiness Task Force are to assess the potential risks of the year 2000 phenomenon and set priorities; to provide a focal point for co-ordination and exchange of information; to ensure that appropriate solutions are in place; and to monitor their implementation.

Work under way by the task force is, *inter alia*, to build awareness among staff, to review, upgrade and replace non-compliant software, hardware and appliances, to test systems, to finalize contingency plans and to advise staff to be prepared for potential year 2000 problems, both professionally and personally. So far a questionnaire has been sent out to all OSCE institutions and field activities aimed at ensuring the compliance of their software and advising them what measures to take in case of problems. A Y2K page has been added to the OSCE website providing information on OSCE policy and actions on the issue and an Administrative Circular has been addressed to all staff advising them about individual precautions that should be taken.

The Senior Internal Auditor was Chairman of the Year 2000 Readiness Task Force during the first half of the reporting period. Since August 1999 this function has been performed by the Deputy Director for Finance at the Secretariat.

6. Internal Audit Section

In 1999 the Internal Audit section has been covering a wide-ranging programme including audits of the OSCE Secretariat Travel Subsistence Allowance and travel arrangements; the Mission to Croatia: human resources, procurement and general ledger procedures; and the OSCE human resources policies, procedures and their application throughout the Organization (ongoing).

From October 1998 to April 1999 the Internal Audit office was heavily involved in assisting the Kosovo Verification Mission and its Support Unit, providing management advice on OSCE regulations, rules and procedures.

Internal Audit has been one of the key players in the evaluation and selection of the new finance and material management system. In addition, the Internal Audit office has been

assessing and reviewing the implementation of all the Oracle software and related procedures to ensure that internal controls are included and functioning.

7. Legal Matters

Legal assistance was provided to the Secretary General, other components of the Secretariat, OSCE Institutions and field activities, as well as to delegations. The main areas of work were privileges and immunities; negotiation and drafting of, and advice on, international legal instruments, such as memoranda of understanding governing the activities of missions and other operations; contracting, claims and insurance matters; taxation, social security and personnel questions. Work also included drafting and interpretation of internal documents, including the Financial Regulations, the Staff Regulations and Rules, Administrative Instructions and other directives applicable to the Secretariat and other OSCE activities such as the Organization Directive on Professional Working Environment in the OSCE and Organization Directive on Disciplinary Procedure.

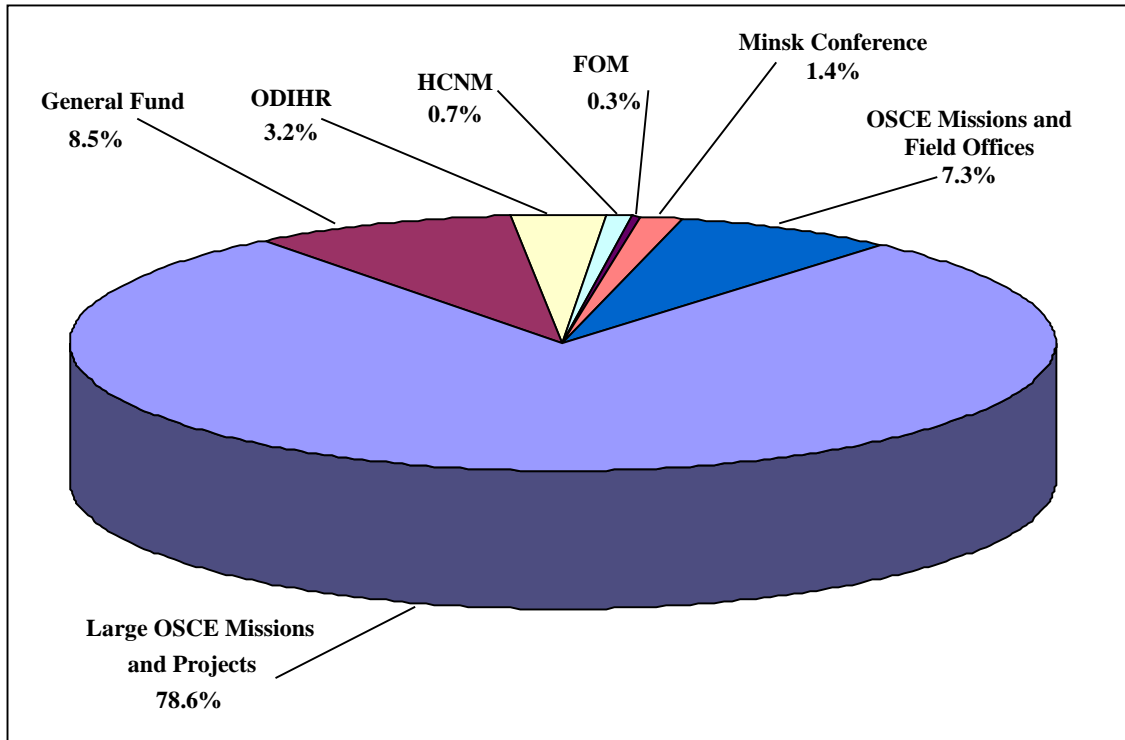
8. Co-ordination and Planning Group

To ensure the Secretariat's preparedness for the establishment of new missions and to initiate and co-ordinate preparations and planning for specific missions at short notice, a Co-ordination and Planning Group has been set up, comprising key personnel representing different departments within the OSCE Secretariat. The Group has met twelve times during the reporting period and has so far prepared and adopted guidelines on the establishment of large OSCE missions as well as prototypes for Memoranda of Understanding, lease contracts and equipment requirements checklists for field operations of various sizes. Work is also under way on the establishment of a "surge capacity plan" which would include a roster arrangement for human resources and material resources.

**OSCE UNIFIED BUDGET 1999
AS PER 19 OCTOBER 1999**

Fund	Main Programme	EUR	Per Cent
<u>The General Fund</u>		14,294,183	8.5
	Secretary General and Central Services	1,229,024	0.7
	Activities Relating to the Economic and Environmental Aspects of Security	587,051	0.4
	Conflict Prevention Activities	1,902,307	1.1
	Activities Relating to Military Aspects of Security	577,424	0.3
	Conference Services in Vienna	3,998,662	2.4
	Common Services in Vienna	5,614,287	3.4
	Prague Office	385,428	0.2
<u>Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)</u>		5,407,868	3.2
<u>High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)</u>		1,246,843	0.7
<u>Representative on Freedom of the Media</u>		446,676	0.3
<u>Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference</u>		2,283,637	1.4
	High Level Planning Group	197,463	0.2
	The Minsk Process	1,381,172	0.8
	Personal Representative of the CiO	705,002	0.4
<u>OSCE Missions and Field Operations</u>		12,233,351	7.3
<u>Large OSCE Missions and Projects</u>		132,052,817	78.6
	Mission to Croatia	22,289,111	13.3
	Tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina	34,617,620	20.6
	Activities in Kosovo ¹	<u>75,146,086</u>	44.7
TOTAL		167,965,375	100.0

¹ 49,054,163 Spending Authority approved under PC DEC 282 & 286
-27,123,086 Approximate expenditure as at 30.06.1999
21,931,077 Free Balance
48,023,000 1999 Budget (July-December 1999)
26,091,923 Approximate shortage of funding



OSCE UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE YEAR 2000²

<u>Fund</u>	Main Programme	EUR	Per Cent
<u>The General Fund</u>		17,924,600	15.9
	Secretary General and Central Services	1,828,300	1.6
	Activities Relating to the Economic and Environmental Aspects of Security	618,600	0.5
	Conflict Prevention Activities	1,922,300	1.7
	Activities Relating to Military Aspects of Security	552,500	0.5
	Conference Services in Vienna	3,921,000	3.5
	Common Services in Vienna	8,639,200	7.7
	Prague Office	442,700	0.4
<u>Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)</u>		5,820,800	5.2
<u>High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)</u>		1,447,600	1.3
<u>Representative on Freedom of the Media</u>		533,200	0.5
<u>Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference</u>		2,455,900	2.2
	High Level Planning Group	200,900	0.2
	The Minsk Process	1,236,500	1.1
	Personal Representative of the CiO	1,018,500	0.9
<u>OSCE Missions and Field Operations</u>		14,834,400	13.2
<u>Large OSCE Missions and Projects</u>		69,531,700	61.7
	Mission to Croatia	22,942,400	20.4
	Tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina	<u>46,589,300</u>	41.3
TOTAL		112,548,200	100.0

² Excluding the Mission in Kosovo

