



**Mediating and Monitoring:
On the scene in Georgia**

**Action plan on Roma and Sinti:
Keeping track of progress**

**First Model OSCE:
It's a long, hard road towards consensus**





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Message from the Special Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office

Right at the outset of its OSCE Chairmanship, Finland was determined to devote itself energetically to promoting the resolution of the protracted conflicts in the OSCE area. Over the past nine months, I have been acting as the Special Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office responsible for helping to defuse tensions, build confidence between communities, and foster negotiations to resolve the conflicts in Transdniestria in Moldova, South Ossetia in Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh, between Armenia and Azerbaijan.



OSCE/MIKHAIL EVSTAFIEV

The tragic events in Georgia in August marked a turning point: They challenged the existing security structures in Europe and put the role of regional and international organizations alike to the test. Several articles in this issue of the *OSCE Magazine* describe how the Organization has been at the forefront of international efforts. When the fighting broke out, the OSCE's Finnish leadership did its utmost to defuse tensions, negotiate and strengthen the ceasefire, and promote a peaceful settlement. Reaction was swift, with participating States taking a prompt and vital decision to send additional Military Monitoring Officers to the area.

I believe that the OSCE should continue with this proactive approach. It should give robust support to future negotiations and use the expertise of its Mission to Georgia to maximum advantage. The Organization will also need to work closely with the United Nations and the EU.

This brings us to the next crucial step: Traditionally, the OSCE has dealt with the conflict in South Ossetia and the United Nations with the conflict in Abkhazia. The Chairmanship is convinced, however, that the most feasible option at our disposal now is to create a common forum to consider both conflicts together. This is our hope and this is what we will try to explore in Geneva in mid-October. Clearly a lasting solution will not emerge overnight, but the Ministerial Council meeting in Helsinki in December could step up the process.

It is still too early to make a comprehensive assessment of the implications of the Georgian crisis for the other protracted conflicts. This year has seen positive movement in the Transdniestrian settlement process. The developments in Georgia have brought the issues concerning status to the fore and have infused a new sense of urgency into our efforts. That said, prospects for progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict appear rather limited in 2008, an election year for both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

As we gear ourselves up for Helsinki, the Finnish Chairmanship will ensure that the unresolved conflicts are kept high on the agenda. The OSCE must invest even more time, energy and effort in pursuing the settlement of the protracted conflicts and making the most of every window of opportunity that opens up. It is in the interest of the whole OSCE community to back up these efforts with steadfast commitment and political will.

Heikki Talvitie
Helsinki, 1 October 2008

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OSCE/MILAN OBRADOVIC



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Front cover: A newly deployed OSCE Military Monitoring Officer on patrol in the areas adjacent to South Ossetia, Georgia. Photo: OSCE/David Khizanishvili
Back cover: Roma youngsters listen to music over a tiny radio in the remote hills of Chibed, a village in Transylvania. Photo courtesy of Zoltan Krisztian Bereczki and the Decade of Roma Inclusion