

DECEMBER 2006

OSCE

Transition: Belgium hands over
the Chairmanship to Spain

MAGA

Montenegro:
Seizing the momentum

ZINE

Asian Partners:
A meeting of minds



Hanging on to
hope in Croatia



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The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is a pan-European security body whose 56 participating States span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

OSCE Chairmanship 2006: Belgium

OSCE Structures and Institutions

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 Forum for Security Co-operation, *Vienna*
 Secretariat, *Vienna*
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 Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *Warsaw*
 High Commissioner on National Minorities, *The Hague*
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 OSCE Mission in Kosovo
 OSCE Mission to Montenegro
 OSCE Mission to Serbia
 OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

Message from the Chairperson of the Permanent Council in 2006



Like a beehive that never sleeps, the OSCE bustled with vitality again this year. Its dedicated men and women upheld the Organization's ideals and translated them into action.

How the Belgian Chairmanship went about providing leadership, fostering inclusiveness and expanding co-operation is described in the lead article in this issue of the *OSCE Magazine*.

One of the year's most significant developments took place when we welcomed Montenegro as our 56th participating State. We were the first international organization that the newly independent State chose to join — thereby casting an eloquent vote in favour of the OSCE's values, norms and commitments. At the Permanent Council, it took just two weeks for the accession process to be completed!

The special series of articles on Montenegro in this issue illustrate the kind of progress that is possible when there is unbridled co-operation between the OSCE and its host on the ground.

I am pleased that a special section is dedicated to our Asian Partners for Co-operation. They have shown a steady interest in the gradual, multidisciplinary and consensual approach to security so characteristic of the OSCE. So far, they have maintained a cautious, non-committal style. Perhaps the time is ripe for further engagement on both sides, applying the experience gained.

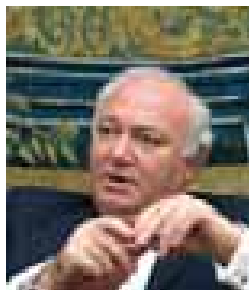
We pay tribute to Anna Politkovskaya, the Russian investigative journalist. Her murder is a clear warning that the right to freedom of expression is never secure. Let us hope that she will not have died in vain.

The cover story gives the returns issue in Croatia a human face. OSCE field missions have joined forces with the EU and the UNHCR to accelerate the process and devise alternative solutions. We have been strongly supporting this effort. Although this tragic chapter in history has not yet been closed, the OSCE has been playing a crucial role in the attempts to do so.

And, since the OSCE never sleeps, the next Chairmanship is poised to take over the helm, bringing with it fresh ideas and renewed energy, as the interview with the Spanish Foreign Minister reveals. Such are the dynamics of the OSCE.

Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrughe
 Head of the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the OSCE
 Vienna, December 2006

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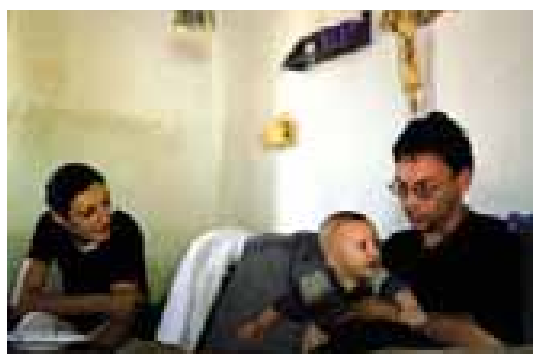
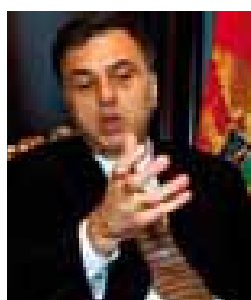
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Front and back cover photos by Ivor Prickett for the OSCE Mission to Croatia. Front: Near Vojnic, central Croatia. Returnee Nebojsa Eremic thanks his wife, Slavica, for dinner. Back: Knin, Croatia. Nada plays with her granddaughter, Gorana, whose mother, Volga, is a returnee. With the help of the OSCE, Volga was able to secure State funds and restore her flat.

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Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht

The year that was Restoring confidence and credibility to the OSCE

Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2006, said that the year had been one of “relatively smooth and cautious sailing along well-charted coastlines and around well-recognized reefs”. In a recent address to participating States, he added that “reefs can be treacherous and seas can get rough at almost no notice” and called on political leaders to take responsibility for helping solve “frozen conflicts”, which threaten to erupt at any time. Reviewing the ambitious agenda in Brussels, he said the Belgian Chairmanship was all about restoring confidence in the OSCE as an effective instrument for peace and stability in Europe. Excerpts from Minister De Gucht’s remarks follow.

BY OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE KAREL DE GUCHT

We are now nearing the end of our Chairmanship, and as we approach the Ministerial Council meeting, I will not attempt to draw up here a preliminary balance sheet of our work. I will merely review what our main objectives are for Brussels and the ambitious agenda we, collectively, have set for ourselves.

The years before the Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana in December 2005 were difficult and were surrounded by growing doubts as to the viability and indeed the *raison d’être* of the OSCE. Ljubljana helped clear the atmosphere. But the underlying fundamental issues threatening to create new rift lines within Europe are still there. They should be addressed.

This is why our main task throughout 2006 has been to restore confidence in the OSCE as an effective instrument for peace and stability throughout the whole of Europe through cooperation and preventive diplomacy and through initiatives promoting economic development, respect for human rights and democratic institutions.

True, there are other institutions active in these various fields, all claiming to be mutually supportive — and indeed they are, to a large extent. But the OSCE is unique not so much for its cross-dimensional approach as for the nature of its membership, extending beyond the traditional confines of Europe in geographic and cultural terms.

The OSCE was originally created as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) to mitigate the consequences of ideological confrontation in Europe. Then, in 1990, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe marked the rebirth of the continent on the basis of common democratic values and principles.

Today, the mission of the Organization is as much about giving concrete expression to these values and principles — so-called “good governance” — as it is about managing diversity within a vast group of countries. These are countries that are not, like the original set of members of the European Union, bound together by virtue of a common past and a common cultural heritage, but by the tribulations of an often tragic history.

What brought us together as a result of the Charter of Paris and the dissolution of the USSR is not so much the past as a set of standards, principles and commitments that we have adopted through a common accord, to lead us together into the twenty-first century. These principles are the bedrock on which we have formed a shared sense — even a *new* sense — of common purpose. No organization can live or, indeed, prosper without such a covenant.

It is in this spirit and in the light of the report issued in 2005 by the Panel of Eminent Persons that the Belgian Chairmanship intends to complete, with the help of all participating States, the mandate we received in Ljubljana on “strengthening the efficiency of the OSCE”.

Our goal is not just to adopt a number of practical measures, which, although useful, would have only a limited impact on the Organization’s political functioning — and here

I stress the word “political”. And neither is it our purpose to reform the OSCE’s time-tested institutions and mechanisms for the sake of reform or as a substitute for action. Nor do we see much point in mere bureaucratic reshuffling, although there is undoubtedly room for improvement.

More importantly, the purpose of the exercise is to turn the page of past doubts and mutual recriminations so as to restore confidence, political credibility and a sense of unity of purpose within the Organization.

Work on the proposed decisions for consideration by the Foreign Ministers who will convene in Brussels has been set into motion. These decisions will, I hope, be driven by a sense of vision and responsibility vis-à-vis the *acquis* of the OSCE and the principles and commitments which we have freely set for ourselves as participating States and as individual countries.

Turning to a topic related to the future of the OSCE — election observation and the expected report on this matter by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, as requested in Ljubljana — I do not need to stress once again the critical importance of this issue for all of us and for an Organization that has built its reputation around developing and strengthening democratic institutions. The international monitoring of electoral processes is key to the credibility and to the legitimacy of a process that is at the root of any form of democratic regime.

Brussels could be a good place to conclude the Ljubljana exercise on strengthening the efficiency of the OSCE with a strong reaffirmation of the long-standing principles and commitments binding us together individually and collectively as participating States dedicated to free, fair and transparent elections.

UNRESOLVED CRISES

Following the cataclysmic upheavals that Europe has experienced during the past 15 years, one is pleased to be able to say that the OSCE area appears to be generally at peace. Still, the retreating tide of violence has left, here and there, a number of small islands of unresolved crises where latent violence threatens to spark fresh eruptions at any moment. The issue of “frozen conflicts” reminds us that peace is not something that is achieved once and for all, and that it must be attended to every day.

This Chairmanship has endeavoured — as have those preceding it — to promote progress through its good offices whenever the occasion has warranted it, relying on the diplomatic instruments and the field assets that the OSCE has developed over the years. It has done this, we regret to note, largely without conspicuous results.

In certain respects, hopes invested in a decisive breakthrough, for example, in Nagorno-Karabakh have been frustrated. Tensions in the South Caucasus remain very much alive and even alarming. Negotiations on the Transdniestrian conflict are deadlocked.

Nevertheless, there are encouraging prospects everywhere. Today, all the elements of a settlement are on the table. What is required at this point is an expression of political will. Accordingly, I am calling on persons in positions of political responsibility in the countries concerned to demonstrate their farsightedness and to discharge their responsibilities.

Obviously, the Chairmanship has no illusions about its



Moldova, 13 November 2006: As part of a fact-finding visit, more than 30 Heads of Delegation to the OSCE toured the Russian ammunition depot in Colbasna in the Transdniestrian region. Describing the visit as a “confidence-building measure”, Karel De Gucht said: “Further initiatives should be built on this until the complete withdrawal of all ammunition, as provided for by the commitments made at the 1999 Istanbul Summit.”

ability to settle everything in Brussels. What it does wish, however, is for the parties’ political authorities to make a maximum commitment to putting the negotiation process back on track and to reaching a solution. I am thinking in particular of the Transdniestrian conflict. The Chairmanship has offered specific ideas. It has invited the parties involved to engage in a dialogue. It is up to them to seize this opportunity.

Is it conceivable, not to say tolerable, that 15 years later, the frozen conflicts are still where they were — that is to say, frozen? Is it justifiable that this stagnation should lead to the paralysis of the entire security dimension of the OSCE? This situation is detrimental to the overall credibility of our Organization. Above all, it is harmful to the countries concerned and to their people, who are the ones who continue to pay the price. Brussels must not be a venue for sterile confrontation.

As everyone knows, peace, security and co-operation represent the central priorities of the OSCE. But the OSCE also represents a long-term vision. It is not so much a matter of building a common future in the strict sense of the term as it is of forging a shared concept of a greater Europe in which the human dimension is at the heart of society’s political organization.

The fourteenth Ministerial Council meeting will provide an opportunity to give political expression to a number of issues that the Chairmanship has wanted to focus attention to throughout the year — tolerance and mutual understanding, protection for human rights advocates, measures to combat trafficking in human beings and, of course, the rule of law.

Finally, I would like to thank the Governments and delegations in Vienna as well as the Secretary General and the members of the OSCE institutions and missions for the help and support they have been providing to the Chairmanship.

The fact is that, without the OSCE, Europe would today not be what it has become — a reunified continent and a continent at peace with itself. May yesterday’s achievements serve to inspire us in our efforts to ensure that tomorrow’s destiny is worthy of the aspirations of our peoples.

Spain's turn

Preserving a sense of common purpose

Expect focused pragmatism rather than a broad-brush revolution when Spain takes over the Chairmanship of the OSCE on 1 January 2007. The focus will be on fighting terrorism, tackling land degradation and water resources, and encouraging diversity and participation in pluralistic societies — all themes that draw on Spain's experience and geostrategic position. Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos, the incoming Chairman-in-Office, met OSCE Spokesperson Martin Nesirky at the seventeenth-century Santa Cruz Palace, seat of the Spanish Foreign Ministry in Madrid, to talk about Spain's priorities for the year.

Martin Nesirky: Why did Spain want to assume the OSCE Chairmanship?

Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos: When the present Spanish Government came into office, we were aware of — let's put it this way — a striking anomaly: Spain, one of the most influential, internationally active members of the OSCE, had never before assumed responsibility for its Chairmanship.

The truth is, Spain has always been deeply involved in all OSCE policies and has of course always been unquestionably committed to the OSCE's goals and principles. I recall how important the Helsinki Final Act was for my country as were, later on, the review meetings of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), held in Madrid in 1983. Against this background, I consider it paradoxical that Spain has never had the responsibility for leading this Organization.

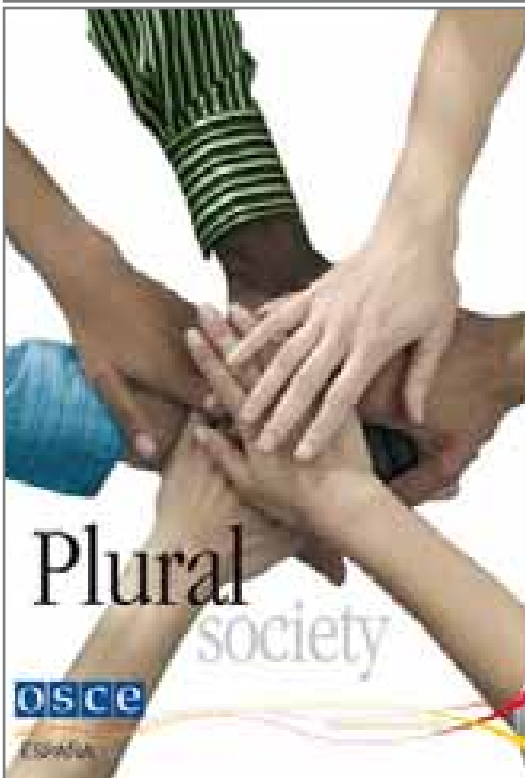
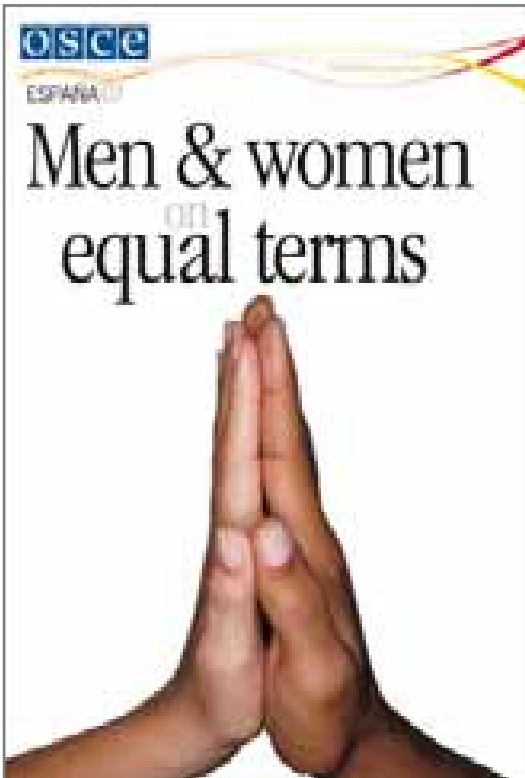
Let me also stress that Spain considers dialogue and co-operation as essential instruments for the orderly development of international relations and for the promotion of effective multilateralism.

What do you think Spain brings to the OSCE Chairmanship?

The OSCE is an organization in which members should feel they are entitled to the same rights and are bound by the same commitments and the same rules of engagement, so to speak. The Spanish Chairmanship will bring its own political impetus, as did previous chairmanships, to help the Organization adapt to the new challenges of the twenty-first century. I hope the reform process to strengthen the OSCE's effectiveness can be completed under the Belgian Chairmanship so that, in 2007, we can start leading an organization that is better prepared to meet its goals. If, for any reason, some tasks are left pending after the Ministerial Council meeting in Brussels, we will make every effort to complete them.

The Spanish Chairmanship can also bring greater sensitivity to all matters concerning the southern Mediterranean countries. When we talk about security and co-operation in Europe, we should not ignore the situation of our Mediterranean neighbours. Mediterranean issues should be placed at the very heart of our agenda. The OSCE principle of the indivisibility of security should be fully applied to our Partners for Co-operation.

From its own vantage point, with its specific "personality", Spain will contribute to the objectives of peace and security, which are



the crux of OSCE activities. We will try to reinforce the OSCE's role as a forum for dialogue and co-operation to avoid the conflicts and ideological confrontations that have been part of our past. We will do our best to uphold and give real meaning to what lies at the core of the OSCE's defining difference: electoral monitoring, the promotion of human rights and the whole range of issues that give the OSCE added value.

If I can explore that a bit further — what is the role of the OSCE, in Spain's view?

The OSCE's role is to maintain and promote stability and security. At the same time, we should make every effort to defend our values and principles. Our democratic convictions, our commitment to the rule of law, and the protection of human rights must be visible in all our areas of activity. These make up what might be called our main identity, the hallmark of our common world. These are inherent in the very nature of the Organization. These elements explain why the OSCE has been an extremely positive presence in various countries and crises, why it enjoys worldwide prestige, and why its role in today's international architecture is recognized. And there is still room for the OSCE's specific mandate to be developed to its full potential.

Do you think, however, that the OSCE is still relevant, given that there are other important players?

Of course it's relevant. It's extremely relevant, as we have recently seen in Georgia. There are other examples — Ukraine, Kosovo and the Western Balkans.

At the same time, we are still confronted with several situations where this Organization of 56 States should pursue its clear objective of promoting and guaranteeing peace, security and co-operation through dialogue. The OSCE's work has produced excellent results in many areas and I am sure even more can be achieved in the years to come. For example, as long as OSCE field missions are needed in certain countries, the Organization will have an important role to play.

Those are the strengths. What do you see as the OSCE's weaknesses?

I think we have to preserve a sense of common purpose among participating States so that we can all take pride in being part of the OSCE. We need to develop a higher sense of self-esteem regarding the OSCE's achievements towards helping end the Cold War and our current achievements. We should try to restore the communitarian spirit we once had — the spirit of sharing



the same goals, the spirit of involvement and commitment, and the spirit of respect for everybody's sensitivities and concerns.

At recent meetings of the OSCE Ministerial Council, we were unable to agree on certain texts, and the absence of a final declaration gave rise to a sense of failure. This is strange. We are all part of this Organization. We need to work together and explore every possible way to improve mutual understanding. So, let's put the accent on the positive instead of on creating divisions.

What are Spain's priorities for the year and why?

First of all, there is the traditional OSCE agenda, which will be pursued as usual. The Spanish Chairmanship will be a straightforward one and will focus not only on the implementation of the reform agenda.

Having said that, peace and security and the fight against terrorism will be very high on the Spanish agenda.

On the economic side, we will focus on concerns about the environment, soil and land degradation, and water management. Everybody should be helped to understand that these issues pose a serious threat to our common security.

Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos: "We should try to restore the communitarian spirit we once had."

We also want to focus on the Alliance of Civilizations, an initiative backed by the United Nations. We think it can serve as a good platform for fostering mutual respect in the OSCE area, which reflects a diversity of societies, religions, cultures and histories.

Concerning the human dimension, we would like to keep the three personal representatives on tolerance and non-discrimination. We are in favour of a follow-up conference on anti-Semitism and the struggle against other forms of intolerance, and we are also ready to hold a conference on "Islamophobia", which I feel is important and should be placed on the international agenda.

Is one year enough to achieve these kinds of priorities?

One year is a reasonable span of time within which to develop a coherent programme of activities and to address some difficult issues. For instance, one can engage in a dialogue with parties involved in a particular conflict and representatives of local communities, thus facilitating the task of the OSCE. The role of the Secretariat is vital in this respect, as it ensures continuity and coherence among the successive chairmanships.

What do you think Spain's biggest challenge will be as Chair in 2007?

I think adapting the OSCE to the challenges of the twenty-first century is a great responsibility. It means that we should all work together like a family since we are faced with the same threats and challenges. Therefore, we need a positive agenda that encourages co-operation among participating States, whether it concerns electoral processes, the protection of human rights or safeguarding of the environment. All members of the OSCE should be able to take part in this process on equal terms. Participating States are not classified into different categories and each one should be able to address its concerns in the same manner.

How do you see the role of our Mediterranean Partners?

As I have already mentioned, it is strange to talk about security and co-operation in Europe and not be actively engaged in co-operation with our Mediterranean neighbours. That's complete nonsense. Their status should be reinforced.

After all, where are Europe's main security

threats coming from today? We talk about terrorism, about immigration, about demography, about cultural challenges. So I don't understand why just a few Mediterranean countries are invited [to take part in OSCE activities].

That has to change. We should not forget that the relationship between Mediterranean countries and the OSCE goes back to the beginning: The Helsinki Final Act had a Mediterranean chapter. Right now, however, these Partners have a limited capacity to speak and to make their voices heard.

Of course I don't mean to launch a revolution within the Organization, but we do need to start a new process in which we can strengthen this co-operation so our Mediterranean partners can participate in as many OSCE initiatives as possible for the benefit of the OSCE and regional security.

Since Spain is one of the two co-sponsors of the Alliance of Civilizations, what do you hope to achieve in this area during your Chairmanship?

We would like to promote the development of the Alliance as soon as we assume the OSCE Chairmanship. We should analyze how the OSCE can contribute to this initiative in the light of the findings of the Alliance's High-Level Group. I believe the OSCE is well placed to make a contribution.

What is your view on the number of Spanish staff members in the OSCE, including in the field. Too few, too many?

Well, too few. Spain has the world's eighth largest economy and has been an active participant in OSCE developments from the very beginning. It is unfortunate that we do not have more Spanish nationals working in the OSCE. We really need to be much more present in field missions. Just to give you an example, the first Head of Mission from Spain is Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, who was appointed to the post in Croatia in 2005. Just think of it, after so many years! We are a country with immense experience and talent and yet only 2.1 per cent of the OSCE staff is Spanish. Some improvements are to be expected in this area.

Does Spain encourage secondments as an OSCE mechanism for placing people in certain posts?

Yes, we do encourage secondments, but we need to work and interact more closely with OSCE institutions to address the current low level.

Meet Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé

Since April 2004: Minister for Foreign Affairs

Since March 2004: Member of the Spanish Parliament

1996-2003: EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process

1996: Ambassador of Spain to Israel

1993-1996: Director-General of Foreign Policy for Africa and the Middle East

1991-1993: Director-General of the Institute for Co-operation with the Arab World

1987-1991: Deputy Director-General for Northern Africa

1984-1987: Political Adviser, Spanish Embassy in Morocco

1979-1984: First Secretary, later chargé d'affaires, Spanish Embassy in Yugoslavia

1974-1979: Director; Head of the Eastern Europe Co-ordination Desk, Foreign Ministry

Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos holds a degree in law and political sciences.

On the fast track to reform

Seizing the momentum in Montenegro



From the perspective of a country with strong European roots now making every effort to get its democratic institutions up and running, the OSCE represents all the internationally prescribed standards and commitments that Montenegro — the world's newest State — is striving to live up to, says President Filip Vujanovic.

OSCE/INSTA BOZOVIC

BY SUSANNA LÖÖF

Office of the President, Podgorica — Montenegro's chances of moving rapidly towards accession to the European Union are "great" and "realistic", President Filip Vujanovic told the *OSCE Magazine* in early October. By the end of this year, Montenegro expects to sign the European Union's Stabilization and Association Agreement — the first legal step towards its accession.

The country has world-renowned natural scenery that is attracting tourists and investors, a sound economic development framework, and — with just 630,000 inhabitants — a favourable demographic profile.

"In countries with relatively small territories and populations, it is faster and easier to undertake reforms," said the 52-year-old head of State, who was elected in May 2003 for a five-year term after having served as Acting President for six months. Earlier, he also held the post of Prime Minister for four years.

In contrast to the long road to the EU, entry into the OSCE took only 19 days. After

the referendum on Montenegro's legal status as a State on 21 May and the declaration of independence on 3 June, the Government made known its wish to join the OSCE before any other organization. Less than three weeks later, on 22 June, Montenegrin Ambassador Vesko Garcevic took his seat in the Permanent Council.

On 1 September, a related momentous event took place in Finland. The Prime Minister of Montenegro at the time, Milo Djukanovic, signed the Helsinki Final Act in Finlandia Hall — where the Yugoslav leader, Marshall Tito, had signed the landmark document 31 years earlier.

President Vujanovic said the fast accession of Montenegro to the OSCE was "the best evidence of the good co-operation between us", adding: "This kind of attitude is highly appreciated."

He said he regarded the Organization as a supportive partner of Montenegro as it continued on its challenging reform path. "The OSCE can help us in our efforts to adopt standards set by the EU," he said. "So far, we have received extraordinary assistance

President Filip Vujanovic

Republic of Montenegro
Estimated population of 630,000 by ethnicity
(2003 census)

Montenegrins: 43.2 per cent

Serbs: 32 per cent

Bosniaks: 7.8 per cent

Albanians 5 per cent

Muslims: 3.9 per cent

Undeclared and undefined: 4.3 per cent

Other: 3.8 per cent

Source: Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT)

from the Organization in all areas of reform — whether it relates to public administration, the judiciary and the police, or the media. We expect this support to become even more intensive as we carry the processes through to their full completion.”

In the recent past, the political landscape in Montenegro was dominated by a debate about whether the Adriatic republic should become independent or stay in a union with Serbia. That debate culminated in a referendum, which was observed by the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

“We are very proud of the way we conducted the referendum and its outcome,” President Vujanovic said. “The process that the people of Montenegro went through in solving a sensitive, crucial, strategic and historic issue demonstrated their democratic maturity.”

The President also remarked on how the messages conveyed by the referendum exercise on the one hand, and by decades of conflicts within the region on the other, could not have been more drastically different.

“It gives me particular joy that the country managed to prove that it can offer a good ‘space’ for democracy, with both the State and its citizens committed to further democratization.”

With the independence issue settled, the country has been able to turn its attention to tackling other challenges: The unemployment rate is almost 30 per cent and the per capita GDP, estimated at 2,648 euros in 2005, lags behind that of other former Yugoslav countries.

“Our priority is to improve the social and economic climate,” President Vujanovic said. “Our responsibility is to maintain macro-economic stability, continue encouraging investment flows into Montenegro, and create competitive conditions for the development of entrepreneurship.”

Susanna Lööf, a Press Officer in the Secretariat’s Press and Public Information Section, wrote this special focus on Montenegro.

Helsinki, 1 September 2006. Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen looks on as the Prime Minister of Montenegro at the time, Milo Djukanovic, signs the Helsinki Final Act in Finlandia Hall, where Marshall Tito signed the document as President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 31 years earlier.



Montenegro’s famous coastline is 293 km long. The country borders Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Croatia and Italy over the Adriatic Sea.

Map courtesy of Montenegro Tourism Centre



FOREIGN MINISTRY OF FINLAND/HARRI KILPI

“A huge responsibility”

Partnering with the world’s newest country

Post-independence transition brings with it new rights as well as greater responsibilities. This holds true not only for the world’s newest country but also for the OSCE’s newest mission, Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu said in an interview with Susanna Lööf shortly after her appointment as the first Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro.

PODGORICA — As Montenegro was transformed from a republic within a union into an independent State, the OSCE presence underwent its own transformation. The Office in Podgorica, which had been run since January 2002 on the principle of “substantial autonomy” under the former Mission to Serbia and Montenegro, became independent from its Belgrade headquarters on 29 June, barely a month after its host republic became the world’s newest country.

A fully-fledged status has injected fresh impetus into the Podgorica-based OSCE field presence and has meant increased visibility in Vienna and elsewhere. However, on the ground, much remains the same as it was in the past five years, particularly regarding programmed activities, said Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu.

“We are continuing our activities in all areas — democratization, legislative reform and institution-building, reform of the media and the police, and environmental protection and economic development,” she said.

A memorandum of understanding was signed on 24 October in Vienna by Montenegrin Foreign Minister Miodrag Vlahovic and OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, setting out the conditions governing the new relationship.

“What is different about our new mandate is that it is even more comprehensive than before; it requests us to work in matters such as military security and defence reform,” said Ambassador Badescu, a Romanian diplomat who traces her direct involvement in CSCE/OSCE politico-military issues to the early 1990s.

Fortunately, the Mission is spared having to grapple with post-conflict challenges



OSCE/ARISTO BOZOVIC

Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu

faced by several other OSCE operations in the region. It also benefits from an enthusiastic host country.

“We have a major advantage in that the OSCE is a welcome presence here. Our Mission has been established at the country’s request, and it has a high profile relative to other organizations,” Ambassador Badescu said.

“So now our task is to meet the high expectations, to build the Mission’s capacity to help, and to reinforce our partners’ generally

As part of an OSCE project supporting citizen education and information centres, hundreds of citizens were surveyed in the municipality of Ulcinj to draw them closer to the work of local administrators.



positive perception of our work. This is a huge responsibility.”

The Mission includes 15 international and 30 national staff members. The Police Training Centre in Danilovgrad, near the capital, has also come under the Mission’s wing.

Montenegrin officials listen intently to what the OSCE Mission has to say, and they often take it into account. “Knowing that our voice is listened to gives us an even greater sense of responsibility,” the Ambassador said. “My staff and I take special care not to impose unwanted solutions. Co-operation is key.”

This does not mean, however, that the Mission does not express constructive criticism when the situation calls for it, she said. “Our hosts do appreciate this frankness. They welcome being advised in a timely manner so that they can initiate improvements and avoid making mistakes.”

The statehood issue having absorbed much of the country’s attention and resources, the ruling coalition’s top priorities have moved on to consolidating statehood, bringing about integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, and improving the country’s economic performance through sweeping reforms.

Beyond these, a host of other interlinked issues are high on the agenda as well.

“Young democracies that are emerging from decades of centralized rule are confronted with the struggle against corruption, organized crime and trafficking in human beings, and related rule-of-law problems that

come with more openness,” Ambassador Badescu said. “Montenegro is no different. Corruption does exist and organized crime is also present. The issue is whether there is a political will to eradicate these phenomena.”

And does she think that a political will exists in Montenegro?

“The authorities acknowledge the issues and there is no lack of will,” the Ambassador says. “Whether there is enough of it is of course debatable. All the necessary mechanisms have been established, but the challenge is to make them work properly.”

The Mission will continue to be engaged in this area, as reflected in its ambitious programme in law enforcement and good governance.

At a recent summit meeting of south-eastern European leaders held in Serbia, which focused on the fight against organized crime and terrorism, Montenegrin President Filip Vujanovic pledged a “strengthened resolve to fulfil standards in this field, as a precondition for [Montenegro’s] further democratic development and its European and Euro-Atlantic integration”. He cited details of the OSCE’s assistance and recommendations towards meeting these standards.

As the OSCE Mission’s host country tackles its comprehensive institutional, political and economic reforms affecting practically every aspect of security, Ambassador Badescu and her staff are keen to assist in any way they can.

“I’m very proud of the OSCE’s achievements here over the past five years, but I’m also well aware that much remains to be done and that major challenges still lie ahead,” she said.



A Romanian stamp to commemorate the signing of the Helsinki Final Act was issued in 1975 with the help of Ambassador Badescu. Three decades later, independent Montenegro was to sign the historic document in Helsinki.

Aiming high in Montenegro

Roma scholars discover a wider world

When Senad Sejdovic, 31, was growing up, he saw his future options as limited. As a Roma, he thought, he could only hope to land a menial job. But that was before he took part in a two-year OSCE project that aimed to empower the Roma community in Montenegro. Today, he is a freelance journalist with his own show on public radio. In an interview with Susanna Lööf for the *OSCE Magazine*, Mr. Sejdovic was brimming with new-found confidence.



“My son can be anything he wants: doctor, lawyer, anything,” Mr. Sejdovic said, referring to Kristijan, born just two weeks earlier. “All professions will be open to him.”

An OSCE project, “Developing Roma Leadership Potential in Montenegro”, financed by the Netherlands Government, helped him and about 50 others to widen their horizons. By breaking into new fields, they are serving as catalysts for change in the country’s disadvantaged Roma community.

To groom them to become Montenegro’s first Roma journalists, the project sent Mr.

Sejdovic and six other young people through six months of rigorous training. They spent half of this time in newspaper offices and broadcasting studios.

In addition, under the project, five young Roma began university studies and 20 attended high school. Twenty were trained in every aspect of running non-governmental organizations. Several of the participants also attended workshops to

learn how to overcome psychological and sociological barriers.

When the project was launched in 2004, the group doubted that it would result in anything, Mr. Sejdovic said. But as it went on, perceptions started changing.

“Now we are setting our sights higher,” he said. “We know that more doors are open to us, that everything is possible provided we do our best to achieve what we want.”

Mr. Sejdovic is certain that his 30-minute show on Radio Montenegro for minority communities, which goes on the air twice a month, is making an impact. “In my previous job, I worked only for myself. Over the radio, I can influence members of my community,” he said. “I can convince them that pursuing an education is worthwhile.”

He peppers his show with advice on the rights and responsibilities of Roma as citizens of Montenegro to reduce his community’s isolation. Roma often avoid approaching public institutions even for simple issues such as asking for identity cards. “By giving them the right information about rules and procedures, I hope I can bring them closer to the institutions of Montenegro,” Mr. Sejdovic said.

Profile of Montenegro’s Roma community

Official estimate: 2,601

Informal estimate: 20,000

Unemployment rate: 43 per cent

Illiteracy rate: 76 per cent

Senad Sejdovic, journalist



Anita Zeciri, law student



Alexandar Zekovic, Director of the Roma Scholarship Foundation, stands next to a poster of Roma children asking, "Can I, too?", referring to their wish to join formal classes.

Although the project has made a difference in his life, Mr. Sejdovic warned his fellow Roma against expecting too much, too soon. For one, he and his family cannot yet live solely on his income as a freelance journalist and has had to take on another job in a clothing market. "It takes at least 60 years to bring about even a little change," he said.

To ensure that the project lives on, an independent Roma Scholarship Foundation, which also serves as an information centre, has been created. Initially wholly financed by the project, the Foundation is expected to stand on its own feet by the end of the year.

It is close to that goal, said Alexandar Zekovic, the Foundation's director, adding: "Our vision is a Montenegro in which Roma are integrated into society."

The Foundation has helped some 50 Roma students to either complete or start high school, and is currently supporting 25 students who are in high school or are taking classes to prepare themselves for high school equivalency exams.

The project's impact extends beyond the Roma community. "The public perceives Roma people as beggars

and criminals, but our work is helping break down prejudices. We are proving that Roma can be successful students, that they can be good journalists, and that the Roma NGO sector is very capable," Mr. Zekovic said.

"We are also proving to Roma that not everything depends on the government, that a lot depends on their willingness to confront some negative aspects of their traditions."

But some of these traditions, such as marrying early, are hard to counter: Two of the university students supported by the project dropped out to get married.

Anita Zeciri is determined not to be among them. Working as a part-time assistant at a prestigious Podgorica law firm, she ponders a future in international law. When she graduates from university, she will be the first Montenegrin Roma with a law degree.

This does not make her feel special, however. "I think it's sad that I'll only be the first one," she said. "There should have been more before me."

The OSCE project and the Foundation have not only financed her studies, they have also helped her personal growth. "I used to be shy and found it difficult to make any decisions," she said. "Now I am much more confident about what I want."

Although elementary school children were not the project's target group, the benefits have trickled down to them, said Ivana Vujovic, a National Education Officer at the OSCE Mission who helped run the project.

"This year, the number of Roma children enrolled in the first grade went up enormously, which is a great success," she said.

Ms. Vujovic is convinced that this is because the young Roma who are benefiting from the project are looked up to as role models within their settlements. "The community is rather small, and they know each other," she said.

Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, said the project has built a core of educated Roma leaders who will be able to take on the problems of poverty and illiteracy in their community. "That is why it is so important to focus on long-term education."

The Roma and Sinti populations in Europe migrated from India between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. They dispersed across Europe and developed diverse communities, some with their own dialects. Several million Roma live in Europe today, making them the continent's largest minority. Often linked together pejoratively under the term "gypsies", alongside ethnically unrelated groups, Roma have been persecuted throughout their history and were victims of the Holocaust. Discrimination and exclusion still characterize the lives of most Roma today, reflected in racist violence and high levels of unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and infant mortality.

– from the *Action Plan of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area*, adopted in December 2003 by the Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht, the Netherlands



More information about the Roma Scholarship Foundation in Montenegro is available at www.fsr.cg.yu/en.



The OSCE and its Asian Partners

A meeting of minds

BY FABRIZIO SCARPA

In the early 1990s, as the Organization was taking on a more formal structure and becoming increasingly concerned about the new security threats emerging after the end of the cold war, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) — and subsequently the OSCE — started developing a dialogue with Asia.

That exchange was inspired by the Helsinki Process principle that the security of Europe is dependent on that of adjacent regions and linked to the broader context of world security.

Two principles underlie the participating States' relationship with their five Asian Partners: the desire of the OSCE to share its experience and the Partners' wish to learn from it; and the mutual benefits to be gained from the Asian Partners' contribution to the OSCE's goals. Most importantly, all five fully support OSCE values and commitments and have taken significant steps towards their voluntary implementation.

This Asian dialogue has become an integral part of the OSCE's work and a complement

to the long-standing OSCE-Mediterranean relationship. [The OSCE's partnership with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia will be featured in the *OSCE Magazine* in 2007.] These ties have led to activities focusing on human security, anti-trafficking, regional co-operation and comprehensive security in Central Asia, as well as the applicability of OSCE confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) in North-East Asia, a potential flashpoint bordering on the OSCE area.

Japan became the OSCE's first Asian Partner for Co-operation in 1992 and has contributed to the work of the Organization by seconding personnel to OSCE missions and financing a number of field projects.

Two years later, in 1994, South Korea became a Partner and has since seconded experts to the OSCE. The Organization has kept an eye on developments in North Korea, as reflected in the statement of the Chairman-in-Office in early October condemning the country's declared nuclear bomb test as a serious threat to regional and global stability. "Co-operation and dialogue, not nuclear deterrence or larger militaries, lead to global security," said Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht.

Thailand's accession as a Partner State in 2000 has helped to intensify the dialogue with Asian Partners in the human dimension, especially in human trafficking, and has fostered closer relations with the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

In October, a member of the Thai Royal Family, Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha, who works as a Public

Left to right: Ambassadors Kim Sung-hwan of the Republic of Korea, Zia Uddin Nezam of Afghanistan, Itaru Umezu of Japan, Luvsandagva Enkhtaivan of Mongolia and Adisak Panupong of Thailand.
Photo: OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev

Prosecutor, headed a Thai delegation that came to Vienna for a workshop on “Preventing Terrorism: Fighting Incitement and Related Terrorist Activities”, which was jointly organized by the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

Shortly after Afghanistan was welcomed as a Partner in 2003, the OSCE sent election support teams to assist in the country’s presidential elections in October 2004 and its parliamentary and provincial council elections in September 2005.

The newest Asian Partner, Mongolia, joined in 2004 and has since sent two policewomen to a workshop on community policing in Kyrgyzstan that took place this past October. Also in October, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut visited Mongolia — the first OSCE Secretary General to do so.

The OSCE’s dialogue with the Asian Partners is maintained mainly through an informal Asian Contact Group and an OSCE conference held annually in Asia. Countries are regularly invited to attend meetings of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation. They also participate in annual Ministerial Council Meetings, in regular implementation and review gatherings, in the Economic Forum, and in major meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Workshops were held in Seoul in 2003 and in Bangkok in 2005; an informal meeting on terrorism, together with the Mediterranean Partners, during the Annual Security Review Conference in 2005; and another informal meeting on human security during the 2006 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw.

The Partners have also provided election observers to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Most recently, the Asian Partners took part in a CSBM simulation exercise in Slovenia in October, where they were able to play the role of an evaluation team and gain first-hand experience in effective confidence-building, risk identification and security dialogue.

Summing up the relationship of the OSCE and its Asian Partners recently, Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut said: “One way or another, the security concerns of our Asian Partners and those of the OSCE participating States converge, especially in those regions where our borders meet.”

Fabrizio Scarpa is a Senior External Co-operation Officer and the Secretariat’s focal point for relations with the OSCE’s Partners for Co-operation.



Ljubljana, CSBM simulation, 17 October 2006. A member of the First Brigade of the Slovenian Armed Forces and Col. Eiju Uchida, Defence Attaché of the Japanese Delegation, exchange views on telecommunications equipment.

Japan, Partner for Co-operation since 1992

Japan’s longstanding involvement with the OSCE stems from a firm conviction of the importance of the OSCE’s mission. The fundamental values of the OSCE — democracy, human rights, and the rule of law — are also Japan’s values.

Japan, as an Asian Partner for Co-operation, has participated in a wide range of OSCE activities for many years. It has exchanged its knowledge and experience with the OSCE by sending its experts and officials to field operations and election monitoring missions, and by providing financial assistance to seminars and other activities.

For instance, Japanese participants made a presentation at the OSCE’s Economic Forum in January and an expert workshop on urban transport security in May, both held in Vienna this year. Currently, there are some Japanese nationals serving on the staff of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the Spillover Monitor Mission in Skopje (see page 19).

Japan believes that the Asian Partners can profit from the experiences of the OSCE to frame their own intraregional security dialogue and intensify mutual co-operation. Constructive contact between the OSCE and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is of utmost importance. The OSCE participating States could also deepen their understanding of the Asian security environment, which is significantly different from the security environment in Europe, with much instability remaining in the region.

We hope to continue to provide such opportunities, co-operating with Partner countries in Asia, as we did on the margins of the OSCE-Japan Conference in March 2004.

Japan also greatly appreciates the work of the OSCE based on the concept of comprehensive security, encompassing not only the politico-military aspect of security, but also that of the human dimension, and the economy and environment.

In our view, comprehensive security overlaps with the concept of human security, on which we place great emphasis. Japan believes that incorporating the concept of human security into OSCE activities is beneficial for obtaining co-operation from other countries and international institutions. To promote this concept in the OSCE area, Japan, with other Asian Partners, hosted a side event on human security during the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw early last October.

Co-operation between Japan and the OSCE has brought concrete benefits to both sides. We trust this will continue in the future, and that each year will find us closer to our common goals.

Ambassador Itaru Umezu of Japan

Thailand, OSCE Partner since 2000

Thailand is currently the only OSCE Partner for Co-operation that is also a member of ASEAN. By taking part in specific activities and in various constructive conferences of the OSCE, we are seeking to gain knowledge and experience concerning political and security processes in Europe. The goal is to adapt and apply these to enhance co-operation within our own regional mechanisms.

Thailand is also learning more about evolving security issues — both traditional and new — of concern to the OSCE community. Thailand believes that the participation of additional fellow ASEAN members, as well as other Asian countries, in the OSCE will introduce a diversity of opinions and identities into the Organization's framework, expand the scope of its co-operation, and enhance its capacity to rise to the complex and cross-dimensional challenges of globalization.

Thailand is proud to be an active Asian Partner for Co-operation, especially in human security matters. We attach high national priority to the betterment of

Vienna, 20 October 2006. Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha of Thailand is welcomed by OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut on the occasion of her participation in an OSCE-Council of Europe workshop on preventing terrorism.

people's well-being, and to the prevention and combating of transnational organized crime, particularly trafficking in human beings and in illicit drugs. These threaten the whole international community and call for concerted efforts, at both the regional and the global levels, to bring about sustainable and lasting solutions.

We have co-hosted the following international events that examined human security issues: the OSCE-Thailand Conference on the Human Dimension of Security (2002), the Thailand Conference on the Sharing of Experiences in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2005), and the OSCE-Thailand Conference on Challenges to Global Security (2006).

Proposals have been put forward to enhance co-operation between the OSCE and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) with a view to achieving added value and based on their common fundamental principles.



Launched in 1994, the ARF aims to be an effective consultative forum for promoting open dialogue on political and security co-operation in the Asian-Pacific region.

Unfortunately, not much progress has been made due to the reluctance of other ARF members to move the initiatives forward. Nevertheless, Thailand fully supports the idea and is ready to act as a bridge between the two organizations.

Ambassador Adisak Panupong of Thailand



Ljubljana, 4 December 2005. South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon (left), now Secretary-General-Designate of the United Nations, said at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Slovenia: "It is a source of particular satisfaction to me to see progress in our ties since I, as the then Ambassador to Austria, was behind the efforts to initiate the first OSCE-Korea Conference in 2001."

Republic of Korea, OSCE Partner since 1994

The Republic of Korea cherishes its 13-year partnership with the OSCE. As a nation still divided and suffering from the legacy of the Cold War, my country has sought to learn from the rich experiences gained by the CSCE/OSCE through the Helsinki Process over the past three decades.

A multilateral security co-operation mechanism for North-East Asia — patterned after the mechanism for post-Cold War European countries — has yet to be created. Even if there is a regional security arrangement within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), North-East Asian countries should continue to strengthen the process of mutual engagement, including confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), as the first step towards regional stability.

The Korean Government, in its pursuit of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in North-East Asia, has been actively

drawing lessons from the OSCE's experiences through participation in joint conferences and workshops.

Korea hosted a first OSCE-Korea joint conference in 2001 and an OSCE-Korea joint workshop in 2003, which explored the possibility of applying the OSCE's experience in CSBMs to North-East Asia. To come up with a common response to newly emerging security challenges in a globalizing world, my country held a second joint conference with the OSCE in 2005 focusing on new security threats and a new security paradigm.

We are following with great interest the OSCE's ongoing work in resolving frozen conflicts, reviewing CSBMs, including those embodied in the 1999 Vienna Document, monitoring elections and reforming the OSCE.

Recognizing the crucial role of the OSCE's election monitoring in securing fair and democratic elections in accordance with the 1990 Copenhagen Document, my country has also taken part in some of the OSCE's successful election observation missions in the Western Balkans and in Central Asia. To cultivate closer contact with the OSCE, we have also seconded Korean experts to the OSCE Secretariat and to a field mission.

At the Ministerial Council Meeting in Ljubljana in 2005, then-Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon — now the United Nations Secretary-General-designate — chaired a meeting of Asian Partners to enhance mutual understanding of the crucial changes taking place in both Europe and Asia, enabling both regions to tackle the challenges posed by these changes. On behalf of the Asian Partners, the Republic of Korea recommended to the Ministerial Council specific ways and means of strengthening consultation and co-operation between the OSCE and its Asian Partners.

Ambassador Kim Sung-hwan of the Republic of Korea



OSCE/ALEXANDER NITZSCHE

The OSCE played a crucial role in Afghanistan's first elections in decades.

Afghanistan, OSCE Partner since 2003

Following a period of almost three decades marked by invasion, major conflicts, foreign interference, and the emergence of Al-Qaida and the Taliban, Afghanistan was in ashes, with its economy, institutions and social fabric shattered.

As an Asian Partner that shares the core values of the OSCE and its participating States, Afghanistan has participated in many OSCE activities, such as workshops focusing on border management and travel documents.

My Government ascribes the greatest importance to the OSCE's role in supporting the democratic process in Afghanistan. The presidential and parliamentary elections

constituted a key component of our efforts to build a democratic and stable future for our people. The presence of OSCE election support teams monitoring those elections was of utmost significance to my country, and their recommendations will be implemented towards enhancing the general conditions for future elections.

The Bonn Agreement of December 2001 launched the starting point of reconstruction, democratization and nation-building. Five years later, people's lives in the country have certainly improved.

However, the overall situation is still far from good. Multilayered challenges lie ahead. Among these are the fight against terrorism, drug production and drug trafficking; measures to curb corruption and related crimes, secure good governance at all levels, and protect the public's interests; action to improve the situation of women; and work to rebuild the country's infrastructure, thereby reviving our economy.

Since terrorism is not exclusively an Afghan problem, my Government strongly advocates regional co-operation and international assistance to suppress this global menace.

Terrorism is paralleled by another major scourge: the problem of illicit drugs, which must also be addressed multilaterally. We must focus on breaking the linkages between the two kindred phenomena, drug trafficking and terrorism.

Alternative livelihoods for farmers are crucial to curbing the illicit production of drugs. Afghanistan could make use of disseminated know-how and technical assistance from the OSCE, for instance, in creating consulting centres for rural entrepreneurs and farmers.

In this connection, my Government highly values the co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Unless our efforts are tailored to the international nature of these problems, they are destined to fail.

The visit of the Chairman-in-Office to Afghanistan in March this year was highly appreciated by my Government. We also look forward to welcoming the Secretary General in the near future, thereby further strengthening the excellent relations between the OSCE and Afghanistan.

My country shares borders with three participating States of the OSCE. We hope that there might be even greater opportunities in a new phase of co-operation to participate in OSCE activities in the region. Afghanistan and the participating States in the region share not only borders but also mutual security interests relating to such issues as border management and anti-trafficking in arms and drugs. The active support of the OSCE could lead to significant improvements in many areas, such as cross-border control and police co-operation.

Ambassador Zia Nezam of Afghanistan



ERIC GOURLAN

A UN resolution has welcomed Mongolia's efforts to preserve nomadic culture and traditions in modern societies.

Mongolia, OSCE Partner since 2004

Mongolia's foreign policy concept, adopted in 1994, states that as a member of the world community, our country shall strive to make an active contribution to the common cause of settling pressing regional and international issues.

We in Mongolia believe that by joining the OSCE as a Partner, we took a significant step forward in pursuing our foreign policy goals and ensuring our closer engagement in building world peace and security. As the world's largest regional security organization,

the OSCE has amassed a wealth of experience and is playing an important role as a flexible mechanism for addressing the new challenges to regional and international security and stability.

We have been participating in all the Organization's major meetings and conferences, and this has provided us with an ideal opportunity to learn from and share experiences with participating States and other Partners for Co-operation. The knowledge we have gained from these gatherings is helping us in our efforts to tackle the adjustments of transition into a modern democratic nation.

We have expressed our wish to develop more dynamic relations with the OSCE with a view to strengthening the capacity of our law enforcement organizations to fight organized crime; promoting democratization through an improvement in our observance of the rule of law, election legislation and election observation; upholding human rights; and carrying out joint projects in the economic, environmental and human security spheres.

As the newest Partner for Co-operation, Mongolia greatly appreciated the visit of Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut from 8 to 10 October, which we regard as marking a good start to what we hope will be a successful, long-term relationship. We found it symbolic that the first visit of an OSCE Secretary General to our country took place during the 800th anniversary of our Great Mongolian Statehood, celebrating the fact that we have always provided a home for various nations, cultures and beliefs throughout the Eurasian continent.

Ambassador Luvsandagva Enkhtaivan of Mongolia

From Hiroshima to Kumanovo

Japanese confidence-building officer prescribes patience and persistence



Little did I know on my first visit to the former Yugoslavia in 1988 that the federation would soon start falling like a house of cards, that this would inspire me to pursue peace and conflict studies, and that I would eventually devote more than a decade of my life, so far, to helping the region to heal the wounds of war.

BY TAKASHI KOIZUMI

It was the summer of 1988. I was a 22-year-old law student from Hiroshima, traveling solo around Europe. At that time, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was just about the only country in Eastern Europe that “westerners” and Japanese nationals could visit without having to apply for a visa.

After crossing the Trieste border from Italy, I spent five days exploring Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. I remember being struck by the people’s relatively high living standards and by their warmth and kindness towards a rare Japanese tourist. I was also deeply impressed by the ethnic and cultural diversity of the region, which was in stark contrast to the homogeneous character of Japanese society.

To fast-forward to January 2004: After stints with the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), followed by a short stay in Kosovo and then several years in the OSCE Mission in Croatia, I started work-

ing as a “confidence-building officer”, based in Kumanovo in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Kumanovo is a city with a population of more than 100,000, 35 km north of Skopje. With 36 staff members, the Kumanovo office is one of the two field stations of the Spillover Mission to Skopje, the other one being in Tetovo.

These two predominantly ethnic Albanian areas were at the heart of a seven-month armed conflict that broke out early in 2001 between a group of ethnic Albanian insurgents and Government security forces. It was a sad chapter in the history of this incredibly beautiful country, which is blessed with a spectacular landscape, a rich multi-cultural fabric, and open and friendly people.

I now manage the Confidence-Building Unit of the Kumanovo Field Station, supervising ten colleagues: an Italian, a German, an Austrian, a Portuguese, and six national staff, five of whom are ethnic Albanians and one an ethnic Macedonian.

The country’s overall security situation has improved dramatically since the hostilities were resolved more than five years ago with the help of the OSCE and other international partners. However, even as the OSCE Mission is assisting the country’s integration into

“To be an effective confidence-building officer, one needs patience, good communication and mediation skills, and relevant experience at the grassroots level,” says Takashi Koizumi, shown here at the market in Kumanovo with two young members of the Roma community.
Photo: OSCE/Maria Dotsenko

Euro-Atlantic structures, tensions are still simmering at the local level.

This is where the Confidence-Building Unit's contribution is crucial. In a very real sense, our job is to ensure that the peace deal — the Ohrid Framework Agreement of August 2001 — is put into effect through practical, on-site initiatives.

EARLY WARNING

A large part of our role is to operate an early warning system that enables us to intervene in certain situations before they escalate into crises. Confidence-building officers such as myself go on daily rounds of the former crisis areas and interact with local political representatives, mayors, heads of village councils, police chiefs, former guerrilla commanders, religious leaders, school principals and youth groups.

I cannot think of anything more personally and professionally fulfilling than being exactly where things are happening — analysing and reporting on the political and security situation at the grassroots, mediating between parties, and fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and peaceful co-existence through modest but tangible projects.

But it can be tough and frustrating as well. As we go about our daily activities, we do not always see positive changes unfolding before our eyes. Our monitoring and advisory duties demand generous doses of patience and diplomacy. No wonder we rejoice at the most minor step forward.

Occasionally, our mediating role leads us into awkward situations when we find ourselves caught between two parties. Sometimes our efforts to uphold specific rights lead ethnic Macedonians to accuse us of practising “positive discrimination” and “siding too closely” with the ethnic Albanians — who form the country's largest ethnic minority group.

We are also on the receiving end of complaints from ethnic Albanians. I once had to rush to an ethnic Albanian village on the border with Kosovo after a special police operation had confiscated weapons illegally possessed by former guerrilla commanders. Some village residents criticized us for not protecting their human rights.

I am convinced, however, that our monitoring activities have been contributing towards the creation of a stable society in our host country. My conviction is supported by a recent report of the United Nations Development Programme which revealed that people's dominant concerns have shifted from security to socio-economic issues such as poverty, corruption and unemployment — the same issues that preoccupy citizens within the EU.

ASIAN PARTNERS

I often get asked by those who are only vaguely familiar with the Organization's community of States how a Japanese national can work in an OSCE mission, since Japan is not a participating State.

I explain that the OSCE has two mechanisms for external co-operation — one linked with its Mediterranean Partners and another with its Asian Partners — and that my country became the first Asian Partner for Co-operation in 1992.

Unknown to most, Japan, quite apart from its substantial financial contribution, has also sponsored personnel in OSCE Missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, and three other officers before me in Skopje. And quite a few Japanese have served as election monitors under the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Over the years, relations between the OSCE and its Asian Partners have become closer. However, this has yet to be translated into a comprehensive mechanism for multilateral security and co-operation in Asia. The Asian region is a region grappling with a number of worrying inter-ethnic and religious issues that have the potential to develop into devastating internal or international armed conflict. Some political commentators have even speculated that multi-ethnic Indonesia could suffer a fate similar to that of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

A pan-Asian equivalent of the OSCE would encourage Asian States to commit themselves to working towards regional security by enhancing democratic processes in such areas as human rights, pluralism and freedom of the media. A forum of this kind would contribute to preventing the escalation of nuclear threats such as the one posed recently by the North Korean regime.

Various factors make it a major challenge to follow the OSCE example in Asia. Asian cultures and religions vary more widely than those in Europe. Furthermore, some Asian countries, especially those with more centralized regimes, believe their populations are better off with “collective human rights” and limited individual human rights.

Still, specialized research on the OSCE and its structures has been gaining in popularity among Japanese academics, who believe that the Organization is playing a significant role in containing ethnic-related conflicts in post-Cold War Europe by promoting internationally accepted norms in democracy and human rights.

Needless to say, I am proud to be part of these efforts and look forward to the day when we can establish an OSCA: an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Asia.

Born in Hiroshima, Takashi Koizumi holds a bachelor of law degree from the Hiroshima Shudo University, and a post-graduate diploma and master's degree from the University of Ulster, Magree College.



Takashi Koizumi and some of his colleagues at the Kumanovo Field Station.



Remembering Anna Politkovskaya

Spencer Oliver, Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's International Secretariat, attended the funeral and memorial service for Anna Politkovskaya on 10 October. He shared this account with the *OSCE Magazine*.

MOSCOW, 10 October 2006 — “Heaven is weeping,” remarked one of Anna Politkovskaya’s colleagues from *Novaya Gazeta* as we stood in the rain. Lined up four or five abreast for over a mile, thousands of Russians from all walks of life had come to pay their respects to the murdered journalist.

Despite the masses of people, the silence was only broken by the shuffling of feet as mourners filed past the casket. It seemed that everybody had brought a tribute to Ms. Politkovskaya, from single roses to large floral arrangements. The entire area was soon covered with flowers.

In a memorial hall filled with hundreds of people, the editors of *Novaya Gazeta* had kindly arranged a prominent place for

me, as representative of the OSCE, which had awarded Ms. Politkovskaya its Prize for Journalism and Democracy in February 2003.

Several moving memorials were given. Ms. Politkovskaya’s friends and colleagues spoke of her fearless character and devotion to her work. Others, including representatives of government and the diplomatic community, spoke of the impact that this gross crime would have on the media and civil society in Russia.

The service was a moving ceremony and testimony to a courageous life. In her own humble yet strong manner, Anna Politkovskaya perhaps gave the most fitting memorial herself three years ago when she addressed the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vienna:

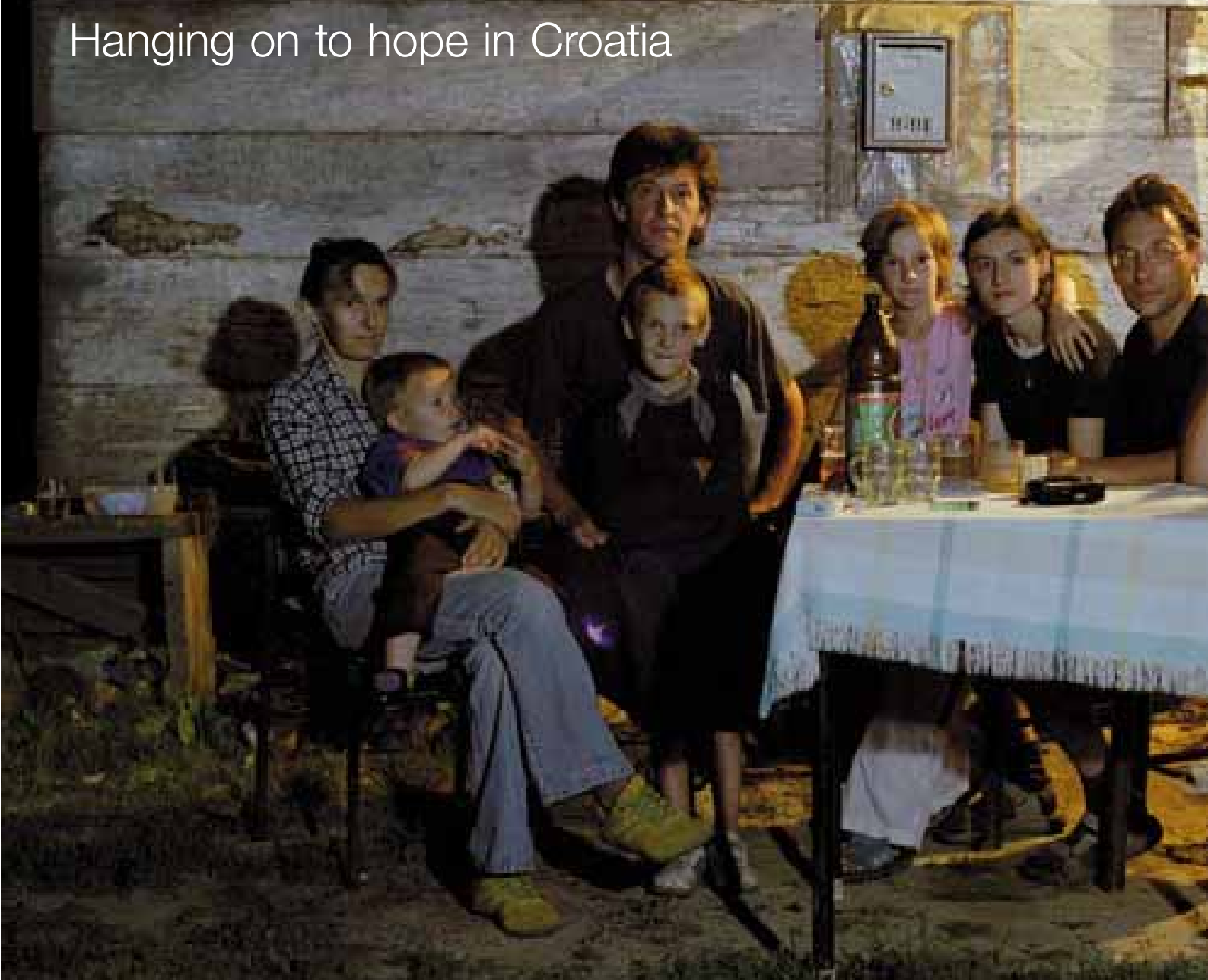
I’m neither a politician nor a diplomat. And so I’m not polite — I say what I think.

And what I think about is what I see with my own eyes. My job is simple: to look around and to write what I see.

Photo courtesy of
Novaya Gazeta

Home at last

Hanging on to hope in Croatia



BY IVOR PRICKETT

As I stepped off the bus at Karlovac central bus station after a three-hour ride from Knin in southern Croatia, a slight 29-year-old man with a hunched posture and wire-rimmed glasses, greeted me with a hearty handshake. His name was Nebojsa.

We piled into his little blue Yugo and began to trundle our way out of the city.

Or so I thought, until we practically started flying down the main road while Nebojsa, using his best English, told me the story of his life.

It was the beginning of an intriguing ten-day stay with Nebojsa and his small family as part of a project funded by the OSCE Mission to Croatia, aimed at giving the issue of returns a human face.

In the course of one month in the middle



Slavica and Nebojsa Eremic (centre) are surrounded by a strong network of close friends who are practically family.

of summer this year, I lived in four different households in central and southern Croatia, documenting the lives of a cross-section of Serb returnees who were going through various stages of resettlement and reintegration.

When we reached Nebojsa's cottage in Jurga, a tiny, closely-knit village just outside the town of Vojnic in central Croatia, my host introduced me to his 21-year-old wife, Slavica. They led me proudly to ten-month-old Nikola, who was sleeping peacefully. Peering into the cot, Nebojsa whispered: "My Nikola and my Slavica are my whole life." He would tell me this again and again during my stay.

Nebojsa told me that he and his younger brother had grown up in Jurga. In August 1995, they and their parents were among an estimated 200,000 people who fled to Serbia to escape the hatred and violence of "Operation Storm".

In the family's absence, the abandoned house became a convenient shelter for a Bosnian refugee and his two children. Nebojsa's father rushed back to Jurga to regain ownership of the house. When he finally managed to do so, with the help of the OSCE Mission, he sold the property immediately and rejoined his family in Serbia.

After two years as a refugee near the city of Novi-Sad in Serbia, Nebojsa decided to go back to Croatia and live with his grandmother. After her death and despite his father's offer of a flat in Serbia to lure him back, he continued to hang on to his grandmother's 20-square-metre, two-room cottage.

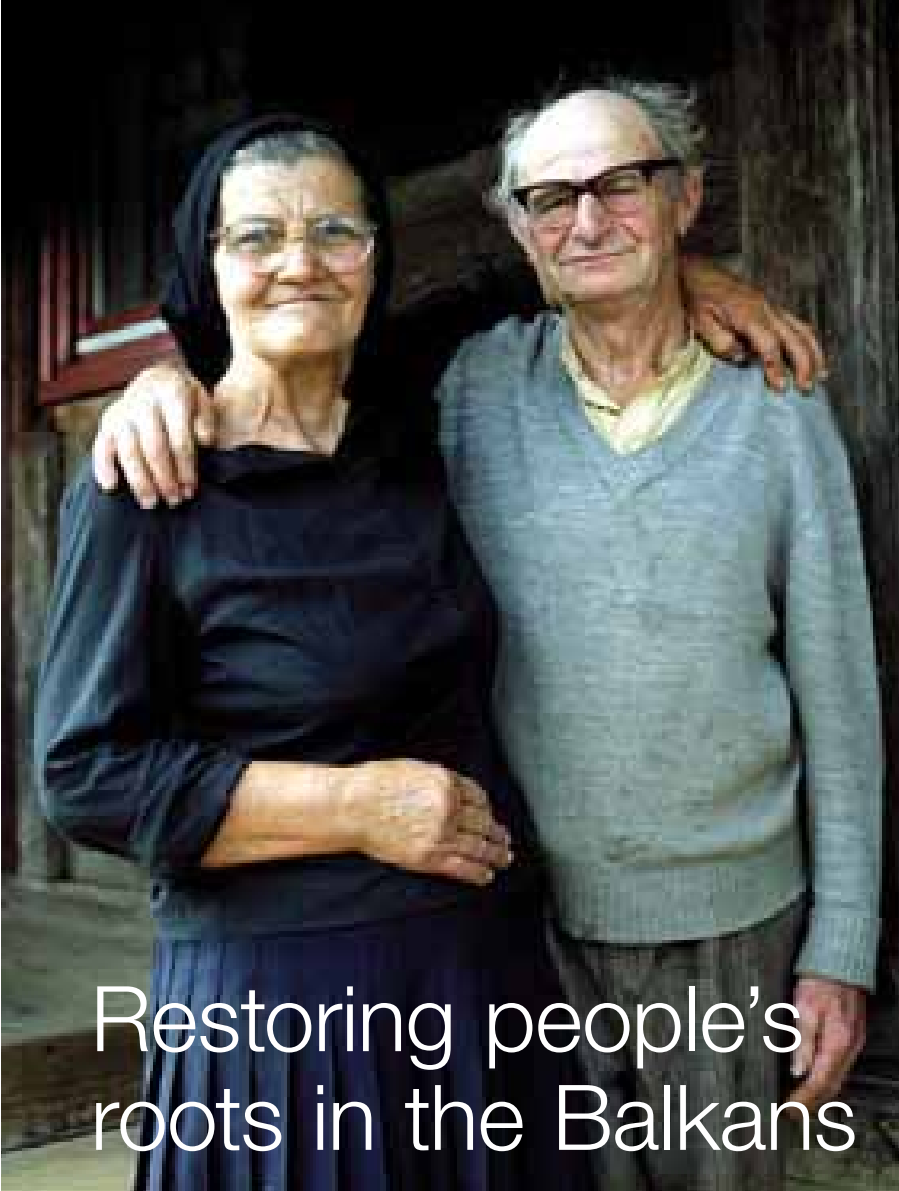
It was to be another two years until Nebojsa met Slavica, an ethnic Croat from the nearby city of Karlovac. Slavica's parents were unhappy with her decision to marry a struggling young Serb returnee. The couple told me about a family row that led to the police confiscating a gun from Slavica's father.

Unemployment is rife among the returnee community. Because of ill health and lack of tools and equipment, Nebojsa is not even able to take on casual work as a farm hand or manual worker. The family survives on a modest monthly subsidy from the State.

In spite of their share of trials and tribulations, Nebojsa and Slavica have decided to remain together in Jurga. Against all odds, they have succeeded in fully integrating themselves into the community. Not a single day passed without someone dropping in to say hello or without us driving off together in the Yugo to visit friends nearby.

Recently, Nebojsa phoned me in Newport, South Wales, to say that he would start doing what he could to rebuild their dilapidated, poorly insulated home despite his meagre funds. He was confident that any slight improvements in their surroundings would go a long way towards restoring a semblance of normalcy to their lives.

Not every returnee I met possessed Nebojsa's inner strength and resolve. I have no doubt that these will serve him well as he carves out a life for himself, Slavica and Nikola in their little slice of Croatia.



OSCE MISSION TO CROATIA / IVOR PRICKETT

Restoring people's roots in the Balkans

In January 2005, the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and the former Serbia and Montenegro signed a regional ministerial declaration in Sarajevo together with the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) committing themselves to an ambitious goal: to resolve all outstanding refugee and international displacement cases throughout the region by the end of 2006. The Governments were to draft national “road maps”, later to be combined into a regional matrix, addressing all the tasks needed to facilitate the completion of the process of refugee return and integration. Early this year, the parties to the agreement met again to review progress made, acknowledging the “entire complexity” of the process. The following contributions from the field describe some of these complexities.

CROATIA: DIGNIFIED RETURN IS CORE CHALLENGE

An estimated 300,000 Croatian citizens of Serbian nationality left Croatia during or right after the 1991-1995 conflict.

In 1997, the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Croatia, first set out in 1996, was extended to include “assisting and monitoring the implementation of Croatian legislation and international commitments on the two-way return of all refugees and displaced persons and on protection of their rights”. Since then, the

Near the village of Tremusnjak in Sisak Moslavina, Croatia. Maria and Velko Eic returned to their wooden house in 2002 and are still desperately in need of electricity.

Mission has been working with the Croatian Government to enable those refugees who wish to return to do so under acceptable conditions.

A unit in the Mission, comprising 22 national and international staff, deals solely with refugee issues. The team works at the central level in Zagreb, mostly with Government authorities, and undertakes extensive monitoring of returns-related issues from field offices in Gospic, Karlovac, Knin, Osijek, Pakrac, Vukovar, Sisak, Split and Zadar.

By August 2006, 121,391 ethnic Serb refugees had registered as having returned to Croatia, representing about 36 per cent of the total number who had left the country.

Recent statistics also reveal that the number of Croatian Serbs officially registered as refugees in Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, has dropped to an estimated 85,000 from some 270,000 in 2001 — indicating that they have either returned to Croatia or have chosen to settle in their countries of exile.

The latest census, in 2001, had revealed that ethnic Serbs made up just 4.5 per cent of Croatia’s population of more than 4 million, compared with 12.2 per cent before the conflict.

Because the conflict had led to the complete or partial destruction of some 190,000 homes and properties belonging to both Croats and Serbs, access to housing has been a key precondition for a dignified and sustainable process of return.

Further complicating the matter is that about 19,500 predominantly Serb-owned properties in formerly occupied areas were made available by the State to Bosnian Croats — who had themselves fled the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, some 30,000 former holders of occupancy/tenancy rights (OTR) lost their right to socially owned apartments in their absence.

Although the process of reconstruction and repossession of properties is now almost complete, there appears to have been little progress in the provision of alternative housing solutions to these former OTR holders. So far, out of 4,400 housing applications submitted to the Government, only a few dozen have resulted in an allocation of flats.

Antonella Cerasino, Spokesperson,
OSCE Mission to Croatia

SERBIA: STILL WAITING FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Since the first influx of refugees into Serbia in 1991 until the peak of mass displacement from neighbouring countries in 1995, the

republic continues to host the highest number of refugees and internally displaced persons in the region.

This is despite the fact that official statistics show a significant decrease in the number of registered refugees, falling to 105,000 in 2006 from 538,000 in 1996, at the peak of the refugee crisis.

During the ten-year period from 1995, when the return process started, to the present, 89,428 persons are estimated to have returned to Croatia from Serbia and Montenegro. The returns to Bosnia and Herzegovina are believed to be about 70,000. How many of those who returned to their country of origin and actually remained there is not known.

The amendments to the Citizenship Law in Serbia in 2001, which enabled refugees to obtain Serbian citizenship under favourable conditions, served as the main stimulus for altering the status of “refugee” to the status of “citizen”, thus significantly transforming the statistics.

Nonetheless, it is estimated that more than 300,000 people residing in Serbia who had fled from one of the republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are still awaiting durable solutions.

Whether their preferred option is repatriation to their country of origin or integration within their host country, refugees still face daunting obstacles in claiming their rights in their countries of origin. Reportedly, this is especially true in the case of the returns to Croatia even concerning issues that are supposed to have been resolved, such as access to reconstruction, repossession of property and entitlement to acquired rights.

Some refugees in Serbia still live in collective centres and depend on the scarce resources of the State, which also needs to take care of more than 200,000 internally displaced persons from Kosovo. Others have simply dropped out of sight by taking Serbian citizenship; no one knows what their living conditions are, whether they want to return or stay, and what difficulties they face.

As the agreed deadline for the Sarajevo process approaches, one thing is clear: the vast majority of uprooted people living in Serbia are still waiting for a chance to take back control over their own lives after more than a decade of displacement.

Ruzica Banda, National Human Rights Officer,
OSCE Mission to Serbia

MONTENEGRO: LOWEST CASELOAD, BUT STILL SIGNIFICANT

There are no refugees and returnees from Montenegro in surrounding countries. Although it has the smallest caseload of refugees in the region, the number is significant relative to the country’s size.

Of the 8,474 refugees, 6,105 are from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2,343 are from Croatia and 26 are from Slovenia. A further 18,047 internally displaced persons from Kosovo are residing in Montenegro.

Besides being directly involved in the implementation of the Sarajevo ministerial declaration, the OSCE Mission to Montenegro provides the Montenegrin Commissariat for Displaced Persons with support towards implementing the country’s strategy for resolving the refugee issue and the Sarajevo declaration.



OSCE MISSION TO CROATIA / IVOR PRICKETT

Near Benkovac, in Zadar, Croatia. Branko and Maria Banic take a break from clearing out their old house on the same day they returned from their 11 years as refugees in Serbia.

In its efforts to solve the displacement issue once and for all, Montenegro equally supports both options — for the refugees to return or to be locally integrated.

Between 2000 and 2005, a total of 1,826 refugees returned to their roots — 1,505 to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and 321 to Croatia. Since then, however, the number of returns has declined. In 2006, the UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 13 refugees — 6 to BiH and 7 to Croatia. Three of these refugees returned to Montenegro, citing economic reasons.

Ivana Vujovic, National Education Officer,
OSCE Mission to Montenegro

Editor’s note: The returns issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina was featured in the January 2006 issue of the OSCE Magazine.

Ivor Prickett studied documentary photography at the University of Wales College, Newport. Having graduated with a First-Class Honours degree, he now works as a freelance documentary photographer covering humanitarian issues around the globe.
www.ivorprickett.com



The Office of Internal Oversight comes of age

Nearly four years ago, George Bartsiotas was appointed Director for Internal Oversight, the office that keeps a close eye on the OSCE's management of resources and internal control mechanisms. A former Foreign Service officer, Mr. Bartsiotas has held senior executive positions in the U.S. Department of State and in international organizations abroad. He recently shared his thoughts with the OSCE Magazine on efforts to promote modern internal audit practices in the Organization.



Director for Internal Oversight George Bartsiotas

OSCE Magazine: What is the role of the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO)?

George Bartsiotas: The OIO carries out an independent and objective assurance and consulting function. The Office was established in 2001 to improve and to add value to the OSCE's activities. It does this through audits, evaluations and investigations, and by advising on risk management processes and governance issues.

How do OSCE managers view the OIO coming to audit?

While it may be natural for managers to be guarded when auditors are at the front door, I must say that managers in the OSCE are not as guarded as they used to be. Many are now inviting us proactively to work with them. We are not only a valuable barometer of financial health, but we also help managers to determine the best ways to achieve their objectives. Part of our job is to make recommendations on areas that need improvement and to disseminate best practices and lessons learned throughout the Organization.

Does the auditing function receive adequate support in the OSCE?

An organization would be unhealthy if top management did not nourish auditing work and allow auditors to work without fear or favour. Fortunately, we in the OIO receive good support in terms of resources and recognition for our work. In a relatively short period of time, we have converted a small audit unit into a fully fledged internal oversight office that operates on the basis of best practices and that adds value to the

OSCE. We recently passed a quality assurance assessment by an independent validation team, confirming just that. And while the participating States' support has been vital in terms of resources, it's the support of the current Secretary General that has been instrumental in strengthening the audit function and its independence.

Regarding the OIO, what keeps you awake at night?

Naturally there are things that worry me. We are doing our best to tackle auditing work related to the adequacy of control and compliance measures. But good internal controls by themselves do not always prevent wrongdoing. There are very few control barriers that cannot be hurdled by someone determined to commit a fraudulent act. In a political setting such as ours in the OSCE, fraud that carries with it even the smallest financial implications can become a high-profile event. So what keeps auditors awake is the possibility that someone out there may be misappropriating assets, falsifying financial statements or committing other illegal acts.

So what is the OIO doing about that?

Preventing fraud entails understanding not only what motivates people to commit it, but also what actually causes fraud. Most fraud cases come to the surface as a result not of audits, but of tips from co-workers and whistleblower hotlines. You can find our hotline at www.osce.org/oio. We are currently reviewing the OSCE ethical framework and code of conduct, and developing fraud-awareness guidelines to ensure that managers can be held accountable for their actions. Simply said, OSCE officials have an obligation to spend public money with economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and to avoid waste, fraud and mismanagement.

Are there other areas in the OSCE where more can be done?

Yes, we need to institutionalize the OSCE evaluation process with the support of the governing bodies. I know of no organization that considers itself well managed without having a performance-based and systematic evaluation system in place. It all comes down to this: Unless you set expectations for your programmes, and unless you set benchmarks to measure your progress, you have no chance of evaluating, with any degree of validity, whether or not your money is being spent effectively and efficiently, and no chance of holding people accountable for their actions. This is why the performance-based system that is being introduced in the OSCE is important: Among other things, it will set clear expectations up front and will provide the framework for effective evaluations later on.

How do you see the OSCE a few years from now?

More focused on what it does best, and more streamlined in the way it goes about things. I think that people will come to realize that you cannot spread the OSCE's resources thin by continuing to add programmes and activities while expecting the Organization to maintain its unique *modus operandi* and be effective in executing its core activities.

Eva Biaudet, a member of the Finnish parliament, has been appointed **OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**. She is expected to assume her post at the beginning of 2007.

Supported by the Secretariat's Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit, Ms. Biaudet will be at the forefront in implementing the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. The plan advocates protecting victims' rights, bringing perpetrators to justice, and adopting prevention measures that take human rights into account.

"Working with our partners, I hope we in the OSCE can significantly raise the awareness of politicians, the media and civil society about the fact that trafficking in human beings affects us all, so that we can join forces to translate anti-trafficking programmes and policies into action," Ms. Biaudet told the *OSCE Magazine*. "We have a responsibility to make our part of the world a trafficking-hostile environment. We owe it to every individual — whether adult or child, man or woman — to give real meaning to human rights and freedoms."

As Finland's Minister of Health and Social Services (1999-2000 and 2002-2003),



Ms. Biaudet launched a Nordic-Baltic campaign against trafficking in human beings and was engaged in bringing the issue to the centre of public debate.

As a member of parliament since 1991, she has helped shape Finland's trafficking-related legislation. She has also been taking active part in the human rights work of NGOs, with a special interest in child protection, refugees and gender matters.

A law graduate of the University of Helsinki, Eva Biaudet was a deputy member of the Finnish delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

She succeeds Helga Konrad, who served in the post from May 2004 to May 2006.

German diplomat **Herbert Salber** was appointed **Director of the OSCE Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC)** with effect from 6 November. He succeeds Lamberto Zannier of Italy, who served in the post from September 2002 to August 2006.

Most recently, Ambassador Salber was based in Moscow, where he headed the German Embassy's department for economic and scientific relations from July 2004.

Ambassador Salber has been closely associated with the work of the Organization and its field operations for several years. He was Deputy Head of Germany's Permanent Mission to the OSCE (1997-2000), moving on to Kazakhstan where he served as Head of the OSCE Centre in Almaty (August 2000-August 2001). Later, under the OSCE Chairmanship of Portugal in 2002, he was appointed Special Adviser on Central Asia.

After completing his studies in French and Russian philology at the Universities of Bonn and Toulouse, he joined his country's foreign service, serving in Belgrade and in Managua, Nicaragua. His later assignments, which includ-



OSCE/MIKHAIL EVSTAFIEV

ed representing Germany on the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), led him to specialize in matters relating to security policy and arms control.

At the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, he headed the division dealing with EU relations with south-eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central

Asia (September 2001-February 2002) and, later, the division dealing with EU relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Western Balkans, Turkey, Asia, Africa and Latin America (January 2003-July 2004).

Part of the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, the CPC supports the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary General in implementing the Organization's tasks in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Aside from its prominent role and expertise in the Organization's politico-military dimension, the CPC is also involved in a number of projects and activities in the field, focusing on education, border security and management, and other security-related issues.

Ambassador **Paraschiva Badescu**, a career diplomat from Romania and a specialist in CSCE/OSCE affairs, assumed her new position as **Head of the OSCE's new Mission to Montenegro** on 12 September.



OSCE/RETO BOZOVIC

Ambassador Badescu had been Acting Head of the Mission since it was established by the Permanent Council in June 2006. Prior to this, starting in January 2005, she was Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro and also Head of the Office in Podgorica.

From January 2002 to July 2004, Ambassador Badescu was Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabad, Turkmenistan. She served as Senior Adviser to Romania's OSCE Chairmanship in 2001, leading the Political, Military and Institutional Section.

"The OSCE has long been an important part of my whole life, ever since I was Deputy Head of my Foreign Ministry's Department for the CSCE and other Euro-Atlantic institutions in the early 1990s," she said.

From there, she was assigned to the Permanent Mission of Romania to the OSCE and other international organizations in Vienna, completing her term as *chargé d'affaires* in 1997. Back in Bucharest, she was Deputy Head of the Foreign Ministry's Department for the OSCE, the Council of Europe and regional organizations until 2000.

Paraschiva Badescu either led or was a member of a number of Romanian delegations that negotiated several significant multilateral agreements in the politico-military area. Her most recent role in the Foreign Ministry was that of Special Adviser for Security and Strategic Issues.

She holds a master's degree in philology from Bucharest University. In 2004, she received an award as the best Romanian diplomat working in an international organization.



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