

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe



The Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Goran Svilanovic, answered questions at a press conference following the special session of the Permanent Council.

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OSCE moves quickly to welcome Yugoslavia as participating State

President Kostunica to attend Ministerial Council in Vienna

A formal ceremony in Vienna this month marked the entry of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) as a participating State in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, following the success of the popular movement for democracy which brought about a change of administration in Belgrade at the beginning of October.

A special session of the OSCE Permanent Council in the Hofburg Conference

Centre was called for 10 November to take the decision to accept the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as an OSCE participating State. This meeting was then the setting for Albert Rohan, Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for South-eastern Europe, and the Heads of Delegation of OSCE participating States, to warmly welcome the representatives of the new administration in Belgrade.

The Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Goran Svilanovic, took a seat which had been

empty since the suspension of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1992. The flag of the SFRY was lowered and the flag of the Yugoslavia joined the flags of the other 54 OSCE participating States.

In his welcoming speech, the Personal Representative said: "The democratic changes in your country, which took place hardly six weeks ago, finally opened the possibility of a new chapter between the OSCE and the Yugoslavia.

“During the past decade, which brought so much suffering to the whole region, the OSCE was always on the side of the democratic forces in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We welcome you now in our midst and we will continue to support the process of democratic transformation.”

In his remarks during the ceremony, the Yugoslav Foreign Minister expressed the full readiness of his country to accept and carry out all OSCE principles and standards.

Territorial integrity

“We believe that, after ten years of conflict, the Balkans can be once again a cradle of democracy, peace and stability. All our neighbours should be aware that we are ready to give all guarantees for the territorial integrity of the States in the region, and this is what we also expect from them. We believe that with all our neighbours, hand in hand, we can join Europe.”

“This is a great moment for all of us to go forward,” he declared. “Let’s do it at this table, never at the battlefield – never again.”

On behalf of the President of Yugoslavia, Vojislav Kostunica, the Foreign Minister also formally invited an OSCE rapporteur mission to visit Yugoslavia, and the OSCE to observe the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Serbia, to be held on 23 December.

Prior to the democratic changes which ensued in Belgrade, the Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Foreign Minister, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, had called several times on the regime of Slobodan Milosevic to respect the results of the presidential election held on 24 September, and to avoid using force against the demonstrators in Belgrade and other Yugoslav cities. She had also called for international verification of the election results, and offered OSCE assistance in this process.

Then, following the change of administration, the CiO wrote to President Kos-



OSCE

The flag of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was lowered and the flag of Yugoslavia joined those of the other 54 OSCE participating States.

tunica on 17 October, with a formal invitation to join the OSCE, saying: ‘The democratic change that has taken place in the FRY, expressed by the election of a new leadership, now offers the long awaited possibility for a new relationship between the OSCE and the FRY.’

‘Opinions expressed by OSCE partic-

“This is a great moment for all of us to go forward,” Foreign Minister Svilanovic declared. “Let’s do it at this table, never at the battlefield – never again.”

ipating States all show a readiness to move in the direction of having the FRY as a participating State within the OSCE,’ she wrote. ‘Furthermore, intensive consultations show that the FRY’s application should take into account the international position on the succession to the former

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the sense that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is one of the successor states of the former SFRY...

‘Let me assure you that it is the expressed will of OSCE participating States to assist the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on its way to full democratization.’

On 6 November, President Kostunica handed over a reply to Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, expressing the readiness of the FRY to join the OSCE as a participating State.

In the letter, he wrote that: “The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is ready to sign and accept in their entirety the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter for a New Europe and the Charter for European Security, as well as to adopt the Vienna Document together with all other relevant CSCE/OSCE documents, demonstrating its willingness to accept fully all the commitments and responsibilities stemming from them, and to act in accordance with the provisions therein.”

President Kostunica also accepted an invitation by Ms. Ferrero-Waldner to attend the OSCE Ministerial Council to be held in Vienna on 27 and 28 November,

Kosovo's OSCE-run municipal elections pass off without major incident

Electorate's behaviour on polling day "impresses the world"

By Alexander Nitzsche

For the first time in over 10 years, the people of Kosovo went to the polls on 28 October to decide the local leadership, in municipal elections organized by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. After months of preparation and hard work by the OSCE Mission staff, election day passed off without any major incident and voting generally went smoothly. Unofficial results were made available within 48 hours.

"This is a historic moment," said Daan Everts, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK), after the official closure of the polls. "Kosovo has joined the world's democracies. As we have boldly predicted, these elections will probably go down in history as the best ever post-conflict first elections."

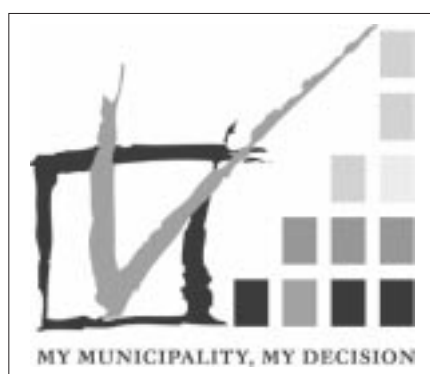
The Council of Europe, which observed the entire electoral process, said that the elections and the electoral process boded well for the development of local democracy in Kosovo.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo had every reason to be satisfied with these elections. Voter participation reached an average of 79 per cent throughout the province. People started queuing in front of polling stations as early as 7.00 a.m., when Kosovo's polling stations officially opened. Despite the general excitement that could be felt throughout the province on this day the polling took place in an atmosphere of calm and there were no serious security incidents reported.

Likewise, no reports about voting irregularities or fraud were filed: "There were very few and only minor com-

plaints about the process, and we can conclude that this has been a fraud-free election", Mr. Everts said.

Due to the success of the day, the first unofficial election results were already available 48 hours after the closure of the polls. These included some 80 to 90 per



Kosovo's electors were urged to use their votes in the OSCE-led polling

cent of the regular ballots that had been counted at individual polling stations right after the end of voting. The ballots cast by voters residing outside Kosovo or those participating in the OSCE's Special Needs Voting programme, as well as absentee and conditional ballots (which were issued to voters whose names were not found on the Final Voters Register on election day and had to be verified before counting) were counted separately in the Central OSCE Counting and Results Centre in Pristina.

Before the issuing of final, certified results, however, the Election Complaints and Appeals Sub-Commission had to adjudicate on all election-related complaints. Following this, the results and a report on the adjudicated complaints went to the Central Election

Commission, which issued a recommendation to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, Bernard Kouchner, who has the ultimate responsibility for certifying the results. This he did in a formal ceremony on 7 November 2000 (the results are available at www.osce.org/kosovo/elections).

What comes next, however, can be considered as difficult as organizing elections itself: the implementation of the results. Although this responsibility falls formally under the mandate of the United Nations Pillar of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the OSCE Mission will play a significant role in assisting them in the implementation process.

"We will provide for compensation for those minorities that are not adequately represented, particularly for the Serbs," Mr. Everts said. "The election results of the three northern Serb municipalities – Leposavic/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvecan – have not been certified because of the low participation there. UN Special Representative Kouchner will appoint the representatives for these municipal councils."

The key issues

"I am confident that the hand-over of power will be smooth, thus enabling the Municipal Assemblies to meet and start working on the key issues that you want to address as soon as possible, such as the economy, education, healthcare, reconstruction and the rule of law," the OSCE Head of Mission added.

Looking further ahead, he said that new elections loomed on the horizon: "All Albanian leaders have insisted that

we should have parliamentary elections very soon. They say that they have proven to be democrats at a local level, and now insist on having elections at the central level as well. This is in conformity with UN Security Council Resolution 1244, which asked for self-governing institutions and substantial autonomy. I expect that in the first half of next year we will have general elections in Kosovo”, said Mr. Everts.

It is hoped that future parliamentary elections will also address the one serious shortcoming of the municipal elections at the political level – the non-participation of a majority of Kosovo Serbs in the electoral process. The prospects for this looked good, he believed.

“I have talked with all the Serb leaders in Kosovo, they generally praise the conduct of the elections. They have all asked me now to start registering Serbs in Kosovo, so that they can become part of the process one way or the other. We will have to organize by-elections in the northern municipalities before too long, so they can have elected rather than appointed councillors there,” the Head of



Vote-counting in Kosovo's municipal elections went smoothly last month

the OSCE Mission in Kosovo confirmed.

All this has contributed to a rather optimistic mood among the OSCE staff in Kosovo. As Mr. Everts put it: “Since the events in Belgrade, there has been a movement of more rapprochement. The Serbs clearly want to see an active dialogue now with UNMIK, and on the side of the Albanian Kosovars we see more confidence and clarity as to who is the

dominant spokesman. The whole climate for dialogue has improved.

“These elections have done Kosovo and its people good, and the behaviour of the electorate on 28 October has deeply impressed the world. This will help shape the future.”

Alexander Nitzsche is a Public Information Officer for the OSCE

BiH Mission gives top priority to boosting youth vote in November parliamentary elections

Two special motivational projects break new ground

By Alexander Nitzsche

For the third time in five years, citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been called on to cast their ballots for representatives on cantonal, entity and state-wide level. One of the issues concerning the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), which is responsible for the conduct and supervision of the general elections on 11 November, has been the traditionally low participation of young voters in the electoral process, from voter registration to

the actual casting of ballots. To address this important issue, the Mission has developed two very specific and ingenious initiatives – an election song and a TV quiz show to motivate young people.

“No jobs, no money, no future! More than 60 per cent of the young BiH population want to leave, to escape from this country,” is how the Head of the OSCE BiH Mission, Robert Barry, describes the general atmosphere among the youth in the country.

“If we succeed in bringing the young generation to the polling stations, if we get them interested in the future of their own country, we’ve done a good job.”

With the production of an election song, the Mission has broken new ground. The song, entitled *Zgrabi Svoju Srecu* translates literally as “Grab your luck”, but can be rendered more poetically as “Seize your own destiny”. Since 20 October it has been running several times a day on all BiH TV and radio stations.

It is also featured with its own video clip on the Mission's website (the song can be heard and downloaded at www.oscebih.org), and has even replaced the classical music which usually greets telephone callers on the Mission's answering machine.

Commenting on the initiative, the Head of Mission said: "There's no better way to reach the youth than through music."

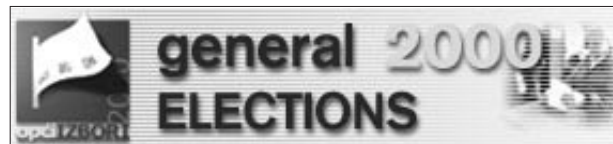
The election song, which is performed by three female singers from the country's constituent peoples – Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats – carries the message that one can make a choice in life and that voting is a chance to shape your own future. The trio performed their song during a promotional tour in seven locations throughout BiH.

But more spectacularly, the three singers were also invited to travel from Sarajevo to Berlin to perform the song live on MTV Europe. With this airing on one of the most popular TV music stations worldwide, the song neatly ties in with the

OSCE Mission's traditional 'Get out the vote' messages in the week before election day. In addition to the tour and the MTV show, the Mission also distributed free of charge 3,000 cassettes of the song and 600 T-shirts bearing the election logo.

Combining motivation and education with entertainment was also the idea behind the second BiH Mission initiative to 'Get out the vote' of the young citizens in BiH, a TV quiz game. The TV quiz called *1, 2, 3, kreni!* ("1, 2, 3, go!"), addresses the same segment of society as the election song, young citizens between the ages of 17 and 25, but has a far more interactive component to it.

Another first in the five-year history of election work of the BiH Mission, this TV show is the largest single youth-motivating project undertaken so far in the country. It is also the first post-war televised game show to have had a live stu-



Billboards across the country conveyed the OSCE's key electoral campaign advertisements

dio audience since the end of the conflict in the country.

The show consisted of seven 15-minute episodes, which were aired across BiH during the week preceding election day. Sixteen contestants had to answer election-related questions from three different categories: on the history of elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, governance, and the BiH elections 2000. All the contestants were recruited by the OSCE through an open casting call from cities and towns throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, and included representatives of all three constituent peoples.

Some of the games, which were filmed on a single weekend at the beginning of October, turned out to be very

close and provided excitement not only for the very dynamic young studio guests but also for the OSCE organizers.

The general elections held on 11 November were expected to be the last elections that the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina would organize and supervise. Some 2.5 million voters are eligible to vote in contests for the BiH state-level House of Representatives. In addition, elections were being held in the Republika Srpska (RS) for the president and vice-president and the RS National Assembly, while Federation voters elected a new House

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Contestants competing in the election TV quiz show, 1, 2, 3, Go!, an initiative of the OSCE BiH Mission to encourage young voters.

of Representatives and new cantonal assemblies.

In total, 5,814 candidates from 44 political parties, one coalition, five inde-

pendent candidates and three lists of independent candidates are running in the various levels of elections.

Over 7,000 domestic observers from

citizens' groups and local non-governmental organizations were registered to monitor the polling and counting procedures.

OSCE Troika Ministers meet in Vienna

Minister voice their concerns on range of issues

On 27 October, the OSCE Troika, which includes the present Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner of Austria, Foreign Minister Petre Roman of Romania (due to take over at the end of this year) and State Secretary Espen Barth Eide of Norway, last year's holder of Office, met at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna. Their meeting focused on current issues of interest to the OSCE, among them events in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), as well as the elections in Kosovo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Other issues discussed were the current situation in Belarus, Chechnya (Russian Federation), Georgia, Moldova and Central Asia.

The Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the democratic change in the FRY and their determination to integrate the country as a new participating State of the OSCE. They reiterated their offer of OSCE assistance in building the institutions fundamental to a democratic system and to observe the Serbian elections scheduled for 23 December.

On the eve of the Kosovo elections, the Ministers called on the people of Kosovo to seize this opportunity to take over the reins of government at a local level. They also expressed their regret that the Serbs and other minorities had refused to participate. With regard to the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministers were encouraged by the multi-ethnic platforms of the major political parties. They expressed the hope that these elec-

tions would take the country one step further and that the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina would assume full responsibility for their country.

The Ministers were discouraged by the conduct of the parliamentary elections in Belarus, held on 15 October. They noted that both the Parliamentary Troika and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights technical assessment mission had concluded that insufficient progress had been made to meet international standards for democratic elections and that the process remained flawed.

They hoped that, in the lead up to next year's elections, progress would be made in the four areas of reform identified by the international community, which entail greater transparency of the election process, establishing a climate of confidence and trust, regular access to state-controlled electronic mass media for opposition parties, and strengthening the functions of parliament.

Accusations rejected

The Ministers rejected the accusations by the Belarus Government regarding the objectivity of the OSCE's assessments and that the OSCE Assistance and Monitoring Group to Belarus was channelling funds to the opposition.

The Troika discussed at length the troubling situation in Chechnya (Russian Federation), where fighting is routine, no political dialogue exists, and the suffering of the civilian population continues unabated. They encouraged the Austrian

Chairmanship to continue its endeavours to reach a common understanding with the Russian Government on the technicalities of the deployment to Znamenskoje of the OSCE Assistance Group. They expressed support for the assistance the OSCE can provide in the humanitarian and human rights field. They also stressed that it was a distinct part of the Group's mandate to facilitate a political dialogue in support of a political and lasting solution to the conflict.

On Georgia, the Ministers outlined their expectations regarding progress in the resolution of the South Ossetian conflict. They expressed satisfaction that the experts' meeting in Baden, on 10-13 July, gave new impetus to the peace process and that the OSCE could play a stronger role in future negotiations. The Ministers commended the continued successful functioning of the OSCE border monitoring operation along the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic (Russian Federation). As part of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, it is generally recognized that the monitoring operation has significantly contributed to the stabilization of the region.

At the same time, the Ministers noted that the security situation in Abkhazia remained precarious and that the negotiations toward a political settlement remained at a standstill. They were satisfied that preparations were underway to send a joint UN-led expert fact-finding mission, with OSCE participation, to the Gali region to work toward the safe return of displaced persons.

Regarding the overall situation in Moldova, the OSCE Troika reiterated their concern about the lack of progress on the withdrawal process of Russian arms and munitions from the territory of the Republic. Immediate action was needed to speed up the withdrawal process, in particular with regard to the implementation of the relevant commitments undertaken at the Istanbul Summit Meeting on the deadline for the completion of the removal of all Russian arms and ammunition from the country. The Ministers expressed the readiness of the OSCE to monitor the process, adding their appreciation to the Austrian Chairmanship for its efforts to reinvigorate the negotiating process with regard to Transnistria.

Central Asia engagement

Ministers welcomed the strong engagement of the OSCE in Central Asia, and in particular the efforts of the Chairperson-in-Office (CiO) to enhance regional co-operation in respect of threats to stability and security involving terrorism, drug trafficking, and orga-



Petre Roman, Romania's Foreign Minister, talking with Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Austrian Foreign Minister and current Chairperson-in-Office at the meeting of the OSCE Troika

nized crime. They were encouraged that all five Central Asian States took an active part and adopted joint documents at the International Conference on Countering Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism in Central Asia, organized jointly by the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and the CiO, on 19 and 20 October in Tashkent. At the same time, they re-emphasized that progress in political and economic reforms, democratization, and respect

for human rights are essential aspects of comprehensive security and are key elements to ensure long-term stability.

The Secretary General of the OSCE, Jan Kubis, also took part in the meeting. Other participants included the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Adrian Severin, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Gerard Stoudmann, and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve.

OSCE's first Police Monitoring Group ends its duties in Croatia on successful note

'Model of success for future United Nations/OSCE co-operation' – Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General

With a short but poignant farewell reception held in Vukovar on 23 October, the OSCE officially marked the end of the Police Monitoring Group (PMG) in the Danube Region of Croatia. The Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia, Bernard Poncet, told the gathering that the PMG

had "contributed to the establishment of trust among different groups of the population as well as to the confidence that the ordinary citizen has in the impartial and professional behaviour of the Croatian police force."

The OSCE had assumed the responsibility for monitoring, assisting and

advising the local multi-ethnic Croatian police from the United Nations Police Support Group (UNPSG) on 16 October 1998. The OSCE PMG began with an initial total of 120 police officers from 16 participating States of the OSCE. In the ensuing two years, a total of 216 police officers served in the Group.

In order for the PMG to effectively perform its duties, the Mission negotiated a co-operation agreement with the Interior Ministry that allowed for the police monitors to work from inside the 11 local police facilities in the area.

In addition, the agreement allowed the monitors to have unrestricted access to all police operations in the area, and to documents and interviews. The importance of this agreement should not be underestimated as it allowed OSCE police monitors to directly monitor and at the same time advise the local police on international policing standards. This direct monitoring was effective in acting as an immediate, on-the-scene corrective to the performance of the local police.

Direct monitoring was particularly important in view of the fact that the local multi-ethnic police faced difficult security situations, many of which were ethnically motivated or related. The fact that the international and local police officers shared the same location also provided a stable work environment for the multi-ethnic police, allowing the officers to move forward with the processes of reconciliation and the establishment of trust.

The accomplishments by the PMG were reflected in a comment by the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, which stated: "I would like to

take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the OSCE for assuming responsibility of the United Nations Police Support Group following the end of that Mission's mandate in Croatia in October 1998. The long and close association between our two organizations in Croatia represents a model of success for our future co-operation and interaction."

The Mission to Croatia recommended that the PMG cease operations as a distinct unit as of 31 October, a deci-

mechanisms. The election of the new government in January also brought about a number of positive changes, many of which are evident in the Interior Ministry. For the first time, the Mission observed the Ministry acting as an internal corrective mechanism on the conduct and performance of its officers.

Some of these changes were evident at the farewell reception. In a significant sign of positive change, the Croatian Interior Minister, Sime Lucin, asked the

Serb Assistant Minister, Ljubomir Radic, to represent the Government.

Mr Radic stated: "The security situation and the crime rates in the Danube Region are better than the average in the Republic of Croatia. This does not mean that the situation cannot be improved and our daily efforts will be directed



A Croatian police officer and a member of the OSCE Police Monitoring Group engaged in the daily exchange of information

sion that was taken by the Permanent Council on 21 September. And so almost two years to the day after its inception, a brief episode in the history of the OSCE came to a successful close.

In arriving at the decision to wind down the operations, the Mission had considered a number of relevant benchmarks, such as the security situation in the Danube Region, the performance of the local police and internal corrective

towards the achievement of this goal."

Although the PMG has now ceased operations, a number of non-uniformed police monitors remain working within the OSCE Mission to Croatia and are assigned today to field offices throughout Croatia. Their main task will now be the retroactive monitoring of the local police. The Head of Mission stressed that this would be the Mission's approach in the future: "The OSCE Mission is deter-

mined to continue this approach, building on our experience of the last two years and based on partnership.”

The Head of Mission Poncet also thanked the governments that had provided police officers to the PMG, expressing the hope that they would continue to support the Mission by sending experienced police officers for the newly defined tasks ahead.

Acting PMG Commissioner, Richard Geen, acknowledges that the local police have accomplished a great deal in a very short time: “This factor has been recognized and acknowledged by the international community.”

Referring to the mixed Serb and Croat groups in the region, he added, “However, there can be no greater accolade than to receive a similar acknowledgment from your own community”

As a whole, the Danube Region is

today considered relatively secure, with most people living in a safe environment. It is, however, commonly acknowledged that more work has to be done before the multi-ethnic police enjoy the confidence of the entire local population. A feeling of insecurity still exists within sections of the community, particularly among ethnic Serbs.

Integrated Security

The multi-ethnic population of the region can thus be maintained only through an integrated system of security, law and order and institutional and local development. The police can provide the security for this to prevail, especially after receiving the important PMG advice and assistance. For the foreseeable future, OSCE police monitors and advisors will continue working with the local police in a spirit of co-operation and partnership.

The PMG also established a sound framework for policing within the Organization, and the OSCE and its participating States have shown their commitment to undertake such operations. The date on which the PMG was established, 16 October 1998, will be remembered as an important one in the history of the OSCE. However, 31 October 2000 will also be remembered as the time when the OSCE accomplished its first policing operation, highlighting the Organization’s ability to adjust to a changing environment in the field.

This article was jointly written by Gerard Beekman, Head of Civil Affairs Unit, Alessandro Fracassetti, Spokesman, and Andrew Burridge, Public Affairs Officer, Co-ordination Centre, Vukovar.

Fifth Human Dimension Implementation Meeting attracts record number of participants

Human rights violations remain cause for concern in many OSCE countries

By Ian Gorvin

With 600 representatives from governments, non-governmental and international organizations, as well as all OSCE institutions and field operations, the 2000 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting was one of the largest ever held. The meeting, held in Warsaw from 17 to 27 October, reviewed OSCE participating States’ record in putting into practice the commitments they had undertaken in the fields of human rights and democracy.

Almost 150 NGOs from throughout the OSCE area were active participants at the meeting, which was organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), in

co-operation with the Austrian Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Among the key issues debated were the problem of trafficking in human beings and the situation of children in armed conflicts, both of which were included in the agenda for the first time. Another focus was the controversial issue of Roma refugees and asylum seekers, which was discussed at a day-long side meeting prior to being debated in a regular working session on Roma and Sinti issues.

A record number of side events provided a broad range of human rights topics. They included presentations on the work of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Rep-

resentative on Freedom of the Media, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Third Committee, and ODIHR’s democratization programme. There were also campaign briefings by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Amnesty International and the NGO coalition for an International Criminal Court. Film screenings included a profile of the Russian journalist, Andrei Babitsky, winner of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Prize for Journalism and Democracy 2000, and a compelling BBC documentary on trafficking of women.

A topical highlight from the programme of side events was a presentation by a three board members of the

Association of Independent Judges of Serbia, representing those who had been dismissed from their posts as judges in the final months of the Milosevic regime, in order to ensure loyalty during the election period.

Welcoming the first opportunity for their Association to bring the situation of the Serbian judiciary to the attention of a large international forum, the judges expressed the need for international assistance to reform Serbia's judicial system.

"Without an independent judiciary there is no democracy", said Judge Leposava Karamarkovic. "The courts lost their independence during the Milose-

vic years and are almost completely dominated by the executive branch."

She pointed to a system of dependence and corruption based on low salaries, favouritism, and intimidation in case of dissent.

At the Implementation Meeting's closing session, government representatives from OSCE participating States reaffirmed their commitment to implement human rights standards.

"This year's Implementation Meeting has made clear that human rights violations remain a cause for serious concern in many OSCE countries", said Peter Eicher, Deputy Director of the ODIHR. "The conference has given us

a better picture of which problems are considered most pressing by participating States and NGOs, and has provided some constructive recommendations on how to address these problems. This will help the OSCE to set its agenda for the future."

Recommendations made during the working sessions have been referred to the OSCE decision-making bodies to ensure proper follow-up. The final report of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is available at the ODIHR website at www.osce.org/odihr.

Ian Gorvin is Head of Monitoring and Public Affairs of the ODIHR

Albanian elections reflect overall progress despite several serious problems

Second round reported to have various shortcomings

Despite some serious problems in the second round of last month's local government elections in Albania, the overall election process did mark progress. This was the preliminary conclusion of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Election Observation Mission, which had been deployed in close co-operation with the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE).

In a statement of findings and conclusions, the ODIHR Election Observation Mission (EOM), headed by Eugenio Polizzi, reported that the first round of the local government elections, held on 1 October, had shown significant progress towards meeting the OSCE commitments for democratic election, as formulated in the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document. However, the second round was less transparent and inclusive.

After the first round, the handling of complaints by the election commissions and the courts was inadequate and did not provide an effective means of redress. A number of valid complaints were dismissed without explanation. The Central Election Commission's (CEC) announcement of the final results was slow and incomplete, and the CEC did not take action to remedy some of the shortcomings observed on 1 October.

Peaceful campaign

The campaign environment for the second round was peaceful and calm overall. While the Socialist Party (SP) ran a high-level campaign, the national leadership of the Democratic Party (DP) decided not to participate in the second round. The failure of the CEC to set a deadline for candidate withdrawal in between the rounds created confusion on the eve of the election, when a number of DP candidates resigned following a

call to boycott from the DP national leadership.

In Himara, where there is a Greek-speaking minority, the end of the campaign at local and national level was marred by nationalistic rhetoric, reported at length in the press even on election day, in an environment of increased tension with a neighbouring country.

A broad spectrum of media reported on the elections, although the time given to candidates and the campaign was limited. The public television broadcaster, TVSH, gave overwhelming but neutral coverage to the SP. In the last days of the campaign, the press carried inflammatory language and nationalistic rhetoric against the Greek minority, in relation to the situation in Himara.

On election day, voting and counting procedures were carried out in a calm and orderly manner in most constituencies. Some DP representatives resigned from their posts on the election commissions,

thus depriving the process of an essential element of transparency. In Himara, the situation was marked by some serious irregularities.

Concluding, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM noted that, overall, the electoral process for the local government elections in Albania mark progress, but the

second round in particular showed the need to continue with further improvement in order to meet certain OSCE commitments.

OSCE holds annual seminar with its Mediterranean Partners

Chairmanship continues to promote the OSCE Mediterranean Dialogue

The OSCE Secretariat's External Co-operation Section, in co-operation with the Government of Slovenia, organized the annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminar on 30 and 31 October in Portoroz. The seminar, entitled 'Confidence-building measures and confidence- and security-building measures: the OSCE experience and its relevance for the Mediterranean region', also marked 25 years of OSCE relations with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

The conference was officially opened by the Foreign Minister of Slovenia, Alojz Peterle. The President of Malta, Guido de Marco, delivered a keynote speech. The delegates were also addressed by Franz Parak, the Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Jan Kubis, the Secretary General

of the OSCE, and Dr. Adrian Severin, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

In his welcome address, the Secretary General assured the Mediterranean Partners that the OSCE Secretariat would continue to support the Chairmanship in promoting the OSCE Mediterranean Dialogue.

In referring to the Mediterranean Contact Group, he said that "...one of the most important outcomes of (its) meetings and other joint activities with the Mediterranean Partners is the fact that the OSCE does not only offer a platform complementing other processes relevant to our Mediterranean dimension of security and co-operation.

"It also provides an additional level of communication between the

Mediterranean Partners themselves."

Representatives from 30 OSCE participating States, as well as from five of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, participated in the event. In addition, a representative from the Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and a number of international organizations and research institutions took part.

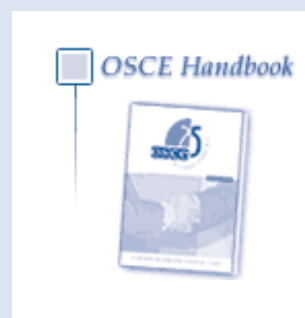
Participants discussed the politico-military aspects of security, and its link to the human and economic dimensions. The consolidated summary of the seminar and all other documents distributed during the event are available upon request from the Secretariat. The summary is to be made available on the OSCE website.

Latest edition of OSCE Handbook

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Permanent Council turns spotlight on the economic dimension of the OSCE

*Meeting looks at activities, role, and future of the OCEEA**

In a recent session, the Permanent Council turned its full attention to the economic dimension of the OSCE, thus implementing a key recommendation of the Eighth Economic Forum. In his speech to the Permanent Council on 14 September, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Thomas L. Price, highlighted the correlation between conflict and the economy. He cited a document on this theme – the Swedish Action Plan: ‘Preventing Violent Conflict’ – and underscored its clear echoes of the Helsinki Final Act.

“ ‘Growing income disparities within and between countries have also contributed to heightening the risk of conflict. While the tensions that develop are often expressed in ethnic or religious terms, the underlying causes are economic,’ ” quoted Mr. Price.

“ ‘Punitive measures will always be less effective than preventive measures, and the most effective prevention is the creation of attractive economic alternatives to the sordid business of buying, selling and shipping one’s fellow human beings.’ ”

Clear signals

“At various stages in its development, the OSCE has taught itself new skills and acquired new competencies when it recognised that something needed to be done,” said Mr. Price. “Even if we cannot equip ourselves with the skills and tools necessary to win the fight against poverty, we can at least

send clear signals to our partner organizations, and to our capitals, that we consider this to be a war worth fighting.”

Partner organizations have responded positively to this call, indicating, through their participation in and co-operation with activities in the economic dimension, that creating a favourable economic environment in regions of recent and/or potential conflict is necessary.

Comprehensive approach

Danuta Hübner, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, stressed the latter’s commitment to the OSCE’s economic dimension in her speech to the Council:

“The economic dimension is one of the components of the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, and the necessary complement to the human dimension. It has grown more prominent each year under excellent Presidencies and with the strong support of the OSCE Secretariat. Faced with instability still existing in our region, however, there is now a compelling urgency to achieve even more tangible results.”

The OSCE is not an economic organization; nonetheless, as part of its comprehensive approach to security, it is concerned with economic and environmental issues, operating on the premise that economic and environmental solidarity and co-operation can help build peace, prosperity and stability. Conversely, economic and environmental problems that are not effectively addressed can contribute to increasing tensions within or among States.

“By providing a platform for private business, national governments, interna-

tional organizations, and NGOs to interact – to exchange thoughts, comments, and criticism – the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) can have a lasting impact,” said Marc Baltes, the OSCE’s Senior Economic Advisor.

Since its inception in 1998, the OCEEA has been active in the monitoring of economic and environmental developments among participating States, with the aim of alerting them to any threat of conflict; and in facilitating the formulation of economic and environmental policies and initiatives to promote security in the OSCE area, particularly in participating States that are involved in the process of transition.

Mr. Baltes also noted that “By organising conferences and seminars on economic and environmental matters, promoting the articulation of and adherence to shared standards and norms for economic and environmental behaviour, and developing and intensifying contacts with relevant international organizations, we are taking an important step in alleviating the economic conditions that foster conflict.”

Environmental issues

Hand-in-hand with economic development, the OCEEA has also shown its commitment to addressing the environmental sources of conflict, such as sharing and safeguarding scarce natural resources, providing clean drinking water, preserving biodiversity, and maintaining the quality of the soil.

“These issues may have serious implications for citizens’ health and for

** Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities*

human security,” said Janne Heiskanen, the OSCE’s Environmental Advisor.

“With increased and better co-ordinated activities between the Chair, our field missions, and our Office, our var-

ious partners – other international organizations and NGOs – have started to recognize more clearly the role the OSCE can play. Thanks to this enhanced interaction,” Mr. Heiskanen

concluded, “our international partners are able to see the added value of the OSCE approach, with our common values and the basic principles our Organization can provide.”

Some recent activities in the economic and environmental dimension

OCEEA Training Seminar for Economic and Environmental Officers in the Field Missions; Vienna, 9 to 13 October

With broad support from the Chairperson-in-Office and the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, the OCEEA held its first training seminar for economic and environmental officers from OSCE field missions from 9 to 13 October. In addition to 13 OSCE field officers, representatives from the Russian, US, Romanian and Austrian delegations attended as observers.

Designed to address, as well as complement, the working environment and tasks of the officers in OSCE field missions, the first half of the training seminar introduced participants to high-ranking officials in key OSCE partner organizations, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the European Commission and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Follow-up Seminar to the Eighth Economic Forum; Vienna, 5 and 6 October

With the focus on how the OSCE’s interaction with other organizational actors can be enhanced, the Chairperson-in-Office held a Follow-up Seminar to the Eighth Economic Forum in Vienna from 5 and 6 October, on ‘How

to optimize inter-institutional relations in the economic and environmental field.’ According to the organizers, economic and environmental factors must be addressed to the extent that they represent threats to security.

However, the OSCE’s co-operation with other institutions also has to correspond to the needs and interests of its partner organizations.

Regional Seminar on ‘Global Environmental Law: Interpretation, Integration and Implementation’; Almaty, Kazakhstan, 13 to 15 September

As a follow-up to the recommendations of the Eighth Economic Forum, this regional seminar addressed the legislative and practical aspects of environmental issues. Representatives from all Central Asian nations, including delegates from ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of environment, parliaments, regional institutes, universities and NGOs, participated actively in the seminar and contributed to its success.

The seminar ensured that citizens of five Central Asian States received a thorough grounding in both the theory and practice of global environmental law. Participants discussed in depth the latest developments in multilateral agreements, explanations of negotiating strategies, and the history of the politi-

cal arguments. In addition to offering background information, two international experts analysed international conventions on trans-boundary water, climate change, and trade and environment.

Workshop on ‘Promoting Domestic Co-operation for Sustainable Economic and Environmental Development in Uzbekistan’; Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 4 to 8 September

This, the 11th in a series begun in November 1999, was the most recent workshop on “promoting domestic co-operation for sustainable economic and environmental development in Uzbekistan” brought together government officials, private businesses, NGOs and community activists in a comprehensive session. It covered a wide range of topics, including global environmental concerns, the privatization process and the legal aspects of small and medium size businesses in Uzbekistan.

To date, more than 450 participants have joined in this series of discussions and are due to participate in follow-up meetings, indicating that the workshop series is an effective tool for educating communities on the merits of working together, developing civil society, and underlining the value of co-operation toward a larger and more regional focus in the future.



News from the field

The OSCE currently has Missions or other field activities in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), Latvia, Skopje (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The following brief reports reflect some of the recent work which these field operations have undertaken.

Kosovo Political Party Guide marks anniversary of first party centre

On 13 October, the anniversary of the opening of the first Political Party Service Centre in Kosovo in 1999, the Democratization Department of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo launched the Political Party Guide to the Municipal Elections. The publication provides an introduction to all the political parties contesting the municipal elections on 28 October. Apart from the political entities themselves, it was intended for those working with and reporting on the elections, both inside and outside Kosovo, including the media and the international community. The guide gives an overview on each political entity, its history, stated aims and programmes. After the presentation at the Political Party Service Centre, the publication was presented to the Kosovo Transition Council and to political party leaders in most of the municipalities and at a number of other fora including NGO co-ordination meetings.

Kosovo women discuss their role in the political landscape

Some 60 women from all ethnic groups in Kosovo, including four Kosovo Serbs, two Bosniacs and two Kosovo Turks, participated in the OSCE Conference: 'Women in Politics: an agenda for Kosovo's communities' in Pristina, on 7 October. Twelve of the participants were candidates in the municipal elections held on 28 October. The conference, which was moderated by the publisher of the Albanian language paper Koha Ditore, also included several international speak-

ers, among them the former Macedonian Minister of Culture and Scientific Research, Mirje Rushani. The Conference closed with a discussion on the issue of how women can make a difference in the political landscape of Kosovo.

Conference on trafficking in human beings held in Moldova

On 26 and 27 September, the OSCE Mission and the Moldovan Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, supported by the OSCE/ODIHR, the Council of Europe, and the International Organization for Migration, staged a conference on 'Evaluation, prioritization, and co-ordination of national and international activities to combat trafficking in human beings on Moldova.' The areas discussed by some 80 representatives of various state institutions, international organizations, and national and international NGOs included raising awareness of the problem of trafficking in Moldova, a better exchange of information about activities, improved co-ordination of the work, and the formulation of recommendations for the Moldovan National Working Group on Trafficking Issues. Key recommendations included the establishment of one or more units in the National Working Group to review existing laws, draft amendments or additions, elaborate a national strategic plan, and improve co-ordination.

Seminar arranged to upgrade skills of Tajik local authorities

The Khujand Field Office organized a seminar from 28 to 30 September for

local authorities with the participation of representatives of the regional governments of Khujand and Ghafurov district, as well as deputies to the local assemblies and representatives of election commissions. A lively discussion was dominated by the issues of a legal framework for the various institutions' activities, their interaction and current problems facing the work of local executives and legislatures. The seminar contributed to remedying the lack of legal knowledge of the participants and revealed the existing problems between local assemblies and executives. Welcoming the Mission's initiative, participants pleaded for further expansion of the training activities in these fields.

Dialogue on security and co-operation launched in Yerevan

The OSCE Office in Yerevan has launched a series of 'Dialogues on security and co-operation' involving governmental and non-governmental experts to look at a range of economic and social issues. In this context, the Office hosted a working meeting on 'Social Downswing vs. Democratic Changes', in conjunction with the Armenian Centre of Ethnological Studies. Among the participants were the chairmen of two parliamentary standing committees, the Minister for Social Security and the Chairman of the Presidential Human Rights Commission. The meeting discussed impoverishment, social isolation and public disenchantment with political processes. The participants agreed on an understanding of the problems – partic-

ularly those related to poverty and impoverishment – and worded recommendations for policy discussion with official bodies.

OSCE hosts second drug control conference held in Tajikistan

On 10 October, the Second Roundtable on Drug Prevention and Control was organized in the Dusti Field Office of the OSCE Mission. The meeting brought together prosecutors, judges, representatives of the drug control agency, tax and customs committees, militia and security from Kurghon-Teppa, as well as from the Kolkhozobod, Kumsangir and Pyanj districts. They discussed the illegal use of narcotics and its prevention, youth and problems of drug consumption, as well as international law on the control of drugs, psychotropics and precursors. Local branches of political parties, NGOs and regional Muslim leaders demonstrated keen interest in the roundtable.

OSCE BiH Mission hosts anti-corruption seminar

In its overall effort to combat corruption, the OSCE Mission organized a seminar focusing on this topic, serving as the starting point for over 50 individual anti-corruption activities and events

in the form of tribunals, radio shows, public meetings, and opinion polls conducted by BiH local players. The background of the seminar was to provide an opportunity for an information exchange between organisations involved in the OSCE anti-corruption campaign. The event brought together over 20 BiH participants and five international representatives, who discussed the approaches to combating corruption, political transparency, public awareness, and anti-corruption activities of other international organizations.

OSCE property experts meeting organized in Croatia

On 16-17 October, the Mission in Croatia hosted a meeting of property experts from OSCE missions and offices in South-eastern Europe, which was also attended by the incoming OSCE Chairmanship, Romania. The purpose of the meeting was to identify best practices on how to deal with housing policies and property laws in the region. The participants discussed issues related to property repossession, including the restitution of lost occupancy rights to formerly socially owned apartments and the restitution of nationalised property. The meeting asked for the OSCE to encourage intensified regional co-operation

between the countries of the region, since a comprehensive approach to resolving property problems would be facilitated by comparative legal research. The participants suggested the setting up of regular meetings of experts in property law from OSCE Missions in the region, the establishment of a database of domestic laws from the various countries, and the creation of a central 'legal research' unit.

Military seminar conducted by OSCE Mission in BiH

With the participation of officers and soldiers from both entity armies, the OSCE conducted a seminar entitled 'Multinational formations and partnership or integration in international organizations,' informing the participants about the implications of the participation of military units in international peacekeeping missions. The goal of the seminar was to promote integration between the entity armed forces, and to further the ability of the BiH armies to co-operate with multinational formations and international organisations. A theme that was mentioned in every presentation was the fact that international co-operation, on an equal basis with all other participating states, clearly requires a distinctly established, state-level institution.

IN BRIEF



ON 2 OCTOBER, the **OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (CiO), Austria's Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner**,

paid a one-day visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), where she met the BiH Foreign Minister, Jadranko Prlic, members of opposition parties and representatives of the international community. During her visit, she urged BiH lawmakers and politi-

cians to implement much-needed reforms, including the adoption of an election law, the removal of trade barriers between the political entities in the country and the implementation of property laws to foster the return of refugees and displaced persons. She also delivered a direct message to the BiH voters, who are called on 11 November to vote in general elections: "At the upcoming elections, voters have a real choice to vote for change. If politicians standing for democratic values and concepts are voted into power, integration

with the rest of the world will be speeded up. If nationalist politicians prevail, the process of integration will be further slowed down."

IN A STATEMENT issued on 11 October, the **CiO** welcomed the decision of the Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan to finally agree to the registration of eight opposition parties, among them the Musavat Party and the Azerbaijan Democratic Party. As a result, she said, all major opposition forces would be able

to contest the 5 November parliamentary poll under the proportional system. “This gesture indicates the clear will of the authorities to move ahead on the path of democratisation and to co-operate more closely with European structures,” she said. “The time is ripe to accelerate the accession process of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe.”

ON 17 OCTOBER, the **CiO** issued a statement in which she expressed her regrets that, according to a statement of the ODIHR technical assessment, the 15 October parliamentary elections process in Belarus had failed to meet international standards for democratic elections. **Ms. Ferrero-Waldner** took note of the measures undertaken by the Belarusian Government in the run-up to the parliamentary elections, but stated her disappointment that the Government's promise to do its utmost to achieve an atmosphere of trust and confidence had not been fulfilled. Her statement stressed the need for keeping up the dialogue with Belarus and assuring the Belarusian authorities and population that the OSCE would continue to support Belarus in strengthening its democratic institutions.

ON 19 AND 20 OCTOBER, the **Chairperson-in-Office** participated in an international conference in Tashkent on enhancing regional security and stability, jointly organized by her Office and the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP). It was attended by the five Central Asian participating States of the OSCE, together with 200 participants from 67 countries. Together these states endorsed a document that would considerably strengthen co-ordinated efforts to combat the scourge of drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism. The document, entitled ‘Priorities for co-operation to counter drugs, organized crime and terrorism in Central Asia,’

outlines measures for improving co-operation and co-ordination, exchanging information, enhancing preventive and control measures and strengthening the justice system, the rule of law and good governance. The UNODCCP and the OSCE have both pledged to help the Central Asian countries in concrete initiatives and projects.

In her address to the conference, the **CiO** stressed the need for Central Asian countries to adopt the OSCE-advocated “comprehensive approach” to security that advocates the interdependence of the human, political, economic and environmental dimensions. Other speakers called on the international community to recognize their own responsibility as countries of destination for trafficking in drugs and human beings and as havens for the profits that this commerce generates. “The conference declaration and a priorities paper endorsed by the Central Asian countries are both available on the OSCE website at: www.osce.org.

ON 27 OCTOBER, the **Chairperson-in-Office** met with the co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group – Russia, the United States and France – who are continuing their efforts to facilitate a peaceful solution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan on Nagorno Karabakh. They discussed recent developments in the region and prospects for the peace process. The **CiO** showed her satisfaction that the overall situation in the region was relatively calm and stable. She shared the assessment of her two Co-chairmen that it would be crucial now to strengthen the ceasefire regime and to implement additional confidence-building measures. The **CiO** also welcomed the commitment of Armenia's President Kocharian and Azerbaijani President Aliyev to continue their direct talks.

THE **CiO** WELCOMED the peaceful

and orderly conduct of the municipal elections in Kosovo held on 28 October. “These elections represent an important step in the democratization process and the further implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1244”, she said. “I encourage the new holders of office to follow the path of moderation for the benefit of the people of Kosovo and strive for the peaceful co-existence of all communities. Within the framework of UNMIK, the OSCE will continue to work with the newly elected authorities to further develop the building of institution,” she added.

ON 31 OCTOBER, the **OSCE Chairperson-in-Office** issued a statement expressing her disappointment that, despite assurances given during her trip to Bishkek at the end of May, the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan of 29 October had failed to comply with OSCE commitments. “These elections did not reverse the negative trends identified during the parliamentary elections at the beginning of this year and can therefore not be qualified as being equal, free and fair”, she said. She took note of positive developments that had been exhibited during the electoral process, and called upon the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic to address all the shortcomings of these elections in order to give new impetus to the democratic development of the country. In her statement, the **CiO** expressed her hope that Kyrgyz President Akayev would use all his authority to rectify the shortcomings and put Kyrgyzstan firmly on the track of democratic and economic reform.

Permanent Council

The Italian Government has appointed Ambassador Guidi Lenzi, a former Director of the Institute for Security Studies of the Western European Union, as its Head

of Mission. He took up his new duties on 1 October.

The Netherlands has informed the Permanent Council of its decision to allocate 136,000 euros to the OSCE Voluntary

Fund for activities related to the removal and destruction of Russian equipment and ammunition from Moldova, and a further 90,000 euros to the Voluntary Fund for activities related to the removal and

destruction of Russian equipment and ammunition from Georgia. In addition, it has announced a \$10 million contribution to the Kosovo Consolidated Budget for 2001.



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

Reuters, 2 October

‘The OSCE on Monday urged all Yugoslavs to recognise the opposition claim of election victory and peacefully implement the unofficial results. OSCE head and Austrian Foreign Minister, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, said the opposition candidate, Vojislav Kostunic, had won the September 24 presidential poll. “We have enough reason to believe that Mr. Kostunica had clearly won the election for the Yugoslav presidency,” the current OSCE Chairperson told a news conference.’

Reuters, 6 October

‘The OSCE said on Friday it expected Yugoslavia to become reintegrated into the international community under a new democratic leadership. “I expect that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under the new democratic leadership will soon become an integral part of the international community,” Austrian Foreign Minister, Benita Ferrero-Waldner said. Ms. Ferrero-Waldner expressed satisfaction that the will of the Yugoslav people had triumphed

“despite all the manipulations, illegal moves and delaying tactics” of President Slobodan Milosevic.’

The Guardian, 7 October

‘After the revolution, the real work begins. Having bombed and blasted Serbia during the Kosovo war, impoverished it with economic sanctions and isolated and divided it by all available means, western governments now bear a heavy responsibility in helping its people put their country back together again. Institutions like the Council of Europe and the OSCE can also play a role in rebuilding a democratic, free and open civil society.’

Reuters, 19 October

‘The OSCE invited Yugoslavia back into its fold on Thursday, part of a drive to help it back into the international community after the fall of President Slobodan Milosevic. Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who holds the OSCE Chairmanship, made a formal invitation in a letter to Kostunica, saying she hoped to welcome Belgrade back at an OSCE foreign ministers’ meeting in Vienna on 27 November. “It is the expressed will of OSCE participating States to assist the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on its way to full democratization,” she said.’

BBC, 19 October

‘Detailed talks on admission would start as soon as a new Yugoslav Government had been formed. But Ms. Ferrero-Waldner was careful to make a distinction between the old and new

Yugoslavia, treating today’s country as simply one of the successors to the old. The old Yugoslav federation was expelled from the OSCE in 1992 because of the war in Bosnia. And since its suspension, Yugoslavia’s chair has always been left symbolically empty.’

ALBANIA

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 3 October

‘The Albanian opposition, headed by the former President Berisha, are refusing to recognize the victory of the governing Socialists in last Sunday’s municipal elections, citing a manipulation of the vote. Berisha’s Democratic Party thereby overrules the assessment by the international election observers of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the special representative of the American Government to the Balkans who on Monday unanimously spoke about a fair and correct election process.’

Die Presse, 4 October

‘The 250 international observers of the OSCE are satisfied with Sunday’s election. They see the peaceful conduct (of the election) as an important milestone on the road towards a functioning democracy.’

Die Presse, 10 October

‘One of the biggest problems for Albania on its road toward integration with Europe is its bad reputation, as the Head of the OSCE Presence in Tirana, Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, stresses: “Whatever you hear about Albania in the European

media is negative"... According to Ahrens, the OSCE is supporting the Albanians in the building of a legal system, in developing functioning media, in collecting stolen weaponry and in developing an environmental awareness ("the current situation is terrible").'

Der Standard, 17 October

'Two weeks after the municipal elections in Albania, the second round on Sunday confirmed the victory of the governing Socialists... The elections were observed by representatives of the OSCE and the Council of Europe. Both organizations had already described the elections as correct during the first round.'

CENTRAL ASIA

Kurier, 20 October

OSCE declares war on the drugs trade in Central Asia

'An international conference co-sponsored by the UN and the OSCE (under the chairmanship of the Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner)... has convened in the Uzbek capital Tashkent to discuss the fight against drugs, organized crime and (Islamic) terrorism, which is mostly financed through the drugs trade... According to Ferrero-Waldner, there has to be "a larger public awareness of the drugs trade problem, one of the scourges of mankind." The OSCE is concerned about this problem, since "the consuming countries bear as large a responsibility as the producing countries."'

Der Standard, 20 October

'Austria has made Central Asia the focus of its OSCE Chairmanship, which is coming to an end in December. Ferrero-Waldner told press she had worked one year on preparing the conference. For the Foreign Minister, the drugs prob-

lem is an example of the global and indivisible character of the concept of security, as it is propagated by the OSCE: "There will be no internal security without the rule of law and without minority rights, without economical security, without environmental security, without external security – and no external security without internal security."'

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Reuters, 23 October

'Bosnian Croat parties protested on Monday against an OSCE ruling that would change the way parliamentary deputies were elected in general elections in November... At a meeting in the southern town of Mostar, parties led by the nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) said a recent ruling by the OSCE was anti-constitutional and deprived Croats of their legal rights. The OSCE, which is organising the November 11 vote, ruled earlier this month that all members of 10 cantonal assemblies in the Muslim-Croat federation could vote for any delegate in the Upper House of the Federation Parliament, regardless of ethnic background. Previously, Croats and Muslims could vote only for members of their own ethnic group.'

Reuters, 24 October

'Croatia voiced concern on Tuesday that an OSCE ruling on the way Bosnia's Parliament is elected might endanger the precarious ethnic balance in its neighbour... Croatia's Foreign Minister, Tonino Picula, said the implementation of the OSCE ruling, "left room for doubt and was really contradicting some articles of the constitution"... He said Croatia was not demanding the withdrawal of the decision, but "now expects some reaction from the OSCE Mission in Bosnia."'

BELARUS

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 11 October

'The OSCE, whose Mission in Minsk has tried in vain to foster a dialogue between state authorities and the Opposition, assesses the pre-election situation as bleak. However, because of the improvements in the electoral law, it was decided to send an experts' group, which will observe the general framework conditions for the elections. With the same justification, a Parliamentary Troika, consisting of representatives from the European Parliament and the parliamentary assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, will be in place to monitor the elections. This will in no way constitute a recognition of the election.'

Süddeutsche Zeitung, 14 October

'On Sunday, a new parliament will be elected in Belarus; however, the election is being boycotted by almost all opposition groups. The OSCE had tried to negotiate a compromise between President Alexander Lukaschenko and the Opposition. But the dictatorially governing Belarusian Head of State was not prepared to budge. Therefore, the OSCE will not send any election observers.'

BBC, 16 October

'European observers say Sunday's parliamentary election in Belarus failed to meet international standards for a democratic poll. The Belarus mission of the OSCE said the minimum requirements for holding free and fair elections had not been met... The OSCE sent a small team of technical observers to Belarus, instead of a full-scale monitoring team, because of doubts about the election's fairness before the vote.'

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 17 October

'According to the OSCE, Sunday's

parliamentary election in Belarus violated “international rules for a democratic election.” Not even the most elementary commitments on free and fair elections were honoured, said a report by the Parliamentary Troika on Belarus, which consists of representatives of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament.

The OSCE had refused to send an official observation mission after President Lukashenko broke off the agreed OSCE-mediated dialogue with the Opposition. At the same time the OSCE (the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group) describes the election boycott by the Opposition as problematic.’

La Repubblica, 17 October

‘The Opposition... speaks of a “falsification” and a “farce”, while the OSCE describes the elections as not conforming with democratic standards.’

Le Monde, 18 October

‘The OSCE concludes that the authorities have manipulated the elec-

toral process in order to eliminate “undesirable candidates.”’

KOSOVO

Reuters, 18 October

‘More than a year after starting work, Kosovo’s United Nations-led administration is running a justice system which falls far short of the necessary standards, international monitors said on Wednesday. Experts from the OSCE said there was “clear and compelling” evidence of bias by the law courts in the predominantly ethnic Albanian province against the Serb minority... The OSCE also noted it had highlighted challenges facing the justice system in a report last December, and many of those problems were still in evidence today.’

BBC, 19 October

‘The report adds that Kosovan law conflicts with international human rights standards. Although the OSCE is part of

the UN administration in Kosovo, it also has the role of monitoring its human rights record. Its latest review covers six months of work in Kosovo’s judicial system and includes a series of recommendations.’

Kurier, 28 October

‘The OSCE was expecting a big turnout for the first free elections in the history of Kosovo. However, the enthusiasm of the Kosovars overwhelmed the international organizers... According to OSCE figures voters’ participation was around 80 percent.’

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 30 October

‘The head of the UN administration in Kosovo, Bernard Kouchner, and the head of the OSCE Kosovo Mission, Daan Everts, expressed their satisfaction over the elections... The UNMIK head thanked the political leaders for an “almost violence-free election campaign.”’

UPDATE

from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is located at Aleje Ujazdowskie 19, PL-00 557 Warsaw, Poland, tel.: (+48-22) 520 06 00, fax: (+48-22) 520 06 05, e-mail: office@odihr.osce.waw.pl

First women’s NGO coalition established in Georgia

This year’s ODIHR project on women’s leadership training and NGO coalition building for women NGO leaders culminated with the establishment of the first Georgian coalition of women’s NGOs on 11 October. The coalition aims to create greater gender balance in Georgian society, by improving status of women, and their active participation in passing resolutions in economic, political, cultural and other spheres.

Twenty-seven participants from 24 organizations took part in a first training

from 11 to 14 June which initiated an informal round table for women leaders. Group work, lectures and other methods were spread over the duration of the training to give the participants the maximum opportunity to work with as many different women as possible for a bigger networking impact. The degree of complexity of group work increased with each day.

Although some of the participating women had some previous knowledge of the group work method, the women’s organizations had never before come together to discuss topics of critical concern.

The lectures includes examples of best practice from a range of countries, among them Estonia, other Baltic States and the Nordic countries. The underlying idea was to help the women to identify some common ground on which to base attempts to develop co-operation in the future.

Many of the participants continued working together during the July – September period, holding weekly meetings. In addition to the participants of June workshop, five new organizations expressed an interest in joining in the work of coalition building for the follow-up training in October.



On the first day of the follow-up workshop, which took place in Tbilisi from 8 to 12 October, three representatives from women's journalist associations, invited as guests, decided to join the NGO's team.

The second workshop focused mainly on strengthening coalition initiatives, strategic planning, priorities for co-operation within the coalition, leadership skills and co-operation between the authorities and NGOs. The training was conducted by two gender equality experts from Estonia who have been the initiators and developers of successful women's coalition and networking in Estonia. The same experts had worked with the women at the first workshop in June and had interacted very successfully with the group.

An additional success of the project was an invitation to the newly created coalition from the representative from the Department for NGOs and Political Parities at President's Office, Manana Tlashadze, to co-operate with her office. They were also offered an opportunity to participate in an NGO board soon to be called together by the President's Office to develop constructive co-operation between the state authorities and NGOs.



Local government elections observed in Albania

The ODIHR observed the two rounds of the local government elections in Albania on 1 and 15 October, concluding that the overall election process marked progress towards meeting OSCE standards for democratic elections. The post-election statement issued after the first round of elections concluded that the election marked significant progress towards meeting the standards for democratic elections.

These elections took place under a reformed constitutional, legislative, and administrative framework. A new election code, adopted after multiparty round-table discussions with the participation of international experts, in general provided a sound basis for democratic elections. The elections were held, in contrast with previous occasions, in a tense but remarkably peaceful atmosphere with only a few isolated incidents of violence.

The shortcomings pointed out in the preliminary statement were: concerns about the lack of independence of the Central Election Commission (CEC); inconsistent transitional provisions in the election code introduced by the parliamentary majority; disputes surrounding the composition and establishment of election commissions at all levels, contributing to tight deadlines missed in the electoral process; and errors and omissions in the new voter register.

In the preliminary statement issued on 16 October, the ODIHR noted that the second round on 15 October was less transparent and inclusive, and showed the need for further improvement in order to meet certain OSCE commitments.

The Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) deployed 251 short-term observers from 26 OSCE participating States for the first round, and 80 observers from 18 OSCE participating States for the second round. For both rounds, it co-operated closely with the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

Parliamentary elections in Belarus not up to standard

The ODIHR deployed only a Technical Assessment Mission for the 15 October parliamentary elections in Belarus on the basis of a decision by the

30 August Technical Conference in Vienna. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), Council of Europe PA and European Parliament acting as a Parliamentary Troika visited Belarus during the election period for a political assessment.

In the statement of preliminary findings and conclusions issued on 16 October, and included in the statement issued by the Parliamentary Troika on the same day, the ODIHR concluded that the election process failed to meet international standards for democratic elections, including those formulated in the 1990 Copenhagen Document of the OSCE. In particular, these elections fell short of meeting the minimum commitments for free, fair, equal, accountable, and transparent elections. Despite some improvements since previous elections, the process remained flawed.

Other factors contributing to the failure of these elections to meet international standards included: substantial and fundamental deficiencies in the electoral legislation; significant restrictions of the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly and association; insufficient respect for the rule of law and due process of law, together with observed instances of the executive interfering with the independence of the judiciary; and heavily-biased state-controlled media, with no effective counterbalance of independent media.

Kyrgyzstan Presidential election not found to be free and fair

The ODIHR observed the 29 October presidential election in Kyrgyzstan, concluding that the election failed to comply with OSCE commitments for democratic elections. In particular, the international standards for equal, free, fair and accountable elections were not met. The EOM stated that the election

had not reversed the negative trends identified during the recent parliamentary elections, instead undermining some of its positive features. It further noted that democratic development in the Kyrgyz Republic still remains comparatively viable, though increasingly challenged.

While the electoral process also exhibited some positive elements and the electoral legislation provided the potential for democratic elections, implementation failures undermined this potential. The general pre-election environment and in particular the process of candidate registration limited the possibilities for full participation in the election.

The EOM was established on 21 September with a team of 16 international experts and long-term observers. The Mission deployed 104 international observers on election day. Observers reported from more than 500 polling stations out of the 2,090 across the country.

DEMOCRATIZATION



Advisory Panel for Prevention of Torture meets in Warsaw

On 19 and 20 October, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Advisory Panel for the Prevention of Torture met in Warsaw to review ODIHR's past activities in the field of torture prevention and to provide advice on new trends and developments in combating torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

The Panel which consists of five high-ranking anti torture experts gave important inputs for the ODIHR's anti-torture activities next year.

Kazakhstani prison officials visit Polish training centre

A group of 15 Kazakhstani prison officials visited the Prison Training Academy in Poland in September and October. The visit was organized by the ODIHR as the last phase of its prison reform project in Kazakhstan.

The Kazakhstani officials were the trainers at the new Kazakhstani Prison Training Facility in Pavlodar that began classes in autumn. The goal was to help the Kazakhstani authorities develop a curriculum for the training facility that more directly addresses the needs of prison personnel and incorporates international human rights standards. The trainers were exposed to new teaching techniques that will be used at the facility in Pavlodar.

Next year, the ODIHR will send prison experts to observe the classes being taught in Pavlodar and suggest ways to improve teaching methodology and the curriculum. The project was carried out in co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Almaty and in partnership with the Ministry of Interior and the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law.

Alternative sentencing project begins in Uzbekistan

In October, the ODIHR began implementing an alternative sentencing project in Uzbekistan. An agreement was signed with the Academy of the Ministry of Interior to draft a report after conducting research into Uzbekistan's current alternative sentencing system. The research will focus on analysing current legislation and, particularly, on current sentencing practices.

The report will identify and describe the reasons why the non-custodial sanctions available in the criminal code are little used in practice. The report is also expected to provide practical solutions to

current problems. These solutions may include amendments to legislation and policy recommendations to enhance the use of alternative sanctions and to develop standardized sentencing guidelines.

Once the report is completed in early 2001, a conference will be organized with Uzbekistan's decision-makers from the ministries, the Parliament, defence lawyers and NGOs working in the field of prison reform to discuss the Academy's results and recommendations.

The conference will be designed to result in concrete recommendations on how to improve the usage of non-custodial sentences in practice and address the role prosecutors, judges, defence lawyers and prison staff can play in reducing the number of inmates in Uzbekistan.

The conference is also intended to facilitate the development of an instruction and training manual to be used during the training stage of the project. This stage will consist of six seminars to be conducted throughout Uzbekistan for 150 representatives of the judiciary, prosecution and prison institutions. The first two seminars will be conducted as training for trainers.

Round table on trafficking in human beings held in Romania

A round table on trafficking in human beings was organized by the ODIHR in co-operation with the Ministry of Justice. Governmental representatives and NGOs met in Bucharest on 30 October to participate in a constructive dialogue on ways to combat trafficking in human beings in Romania.

Among the high level participants were Valeriu Stoica, the Minister of Justice, Ms Nadia Constantinescu, Counsellor at the Ministry of Justice, and Mihai Razvan Ungureanu, Secretary of

State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Both governmental and non-governmental representatives stressed the need to combine their efforts and to increase their co-operation as well as to share information on the topics discussed. There was a common understanding that the dialogue started at the round table should be institutionalized and lead to the development and implementation of a strategic national action plan. The participants identified the urgent need for short- and long-term goals to jointly combat trafficking in human beings.

Training held in Uzbekistan on monitoring of women's rights

In October, the ODIHR and the OSCE Central Asia Liaison Office in Tashkent (CALO) conducted a training course for members of NGOs and government bodies on techniques of reporting and documenting women's rights issues and cases of discrimination against women. Experts conducted a five day training on practical techniques and worked with participants to identify issues for monitoring and analysis. Following the training, the participants will use the acquired skills to monitor and report on the issues identified during the workshop.

Ukraine border officials visit Poland to receive further training

As part of an ongoing ODIHR project on the reform of Ukraine's Border Service, a group of Ukrainian border officials visited Poland from 23 to 26 October to learn from the Polish experience of reforming a border service.

An intensive programme had been prepared in collaboration with the office of the Commandant-in-Chief of the Polish Border Service. The Ukrainian delegation visited two checkpoints at the Polish-German border and saw at first-hand the joint Polish-German passport and customs controls. The delegation was given

practical information about the functioning of the checkpoints in general, and about dealing with cases of irregular migrants and attempted illegal border crossing in particular. Polish border guards briefed their Ukrainian counterparts about the tasks and challenges they faced.

Additionally, the visit included discussions between Polish and Ukrainian border officials on the more efficient protection of the common border in the light of future European Union enlargement, Poland being a candidate for accession to the EU. A second group of Ukrainian border officials, comprising legal instructors, will attend a training in Poland in November.

Seminar on data protection in state registers takes place in Ukraine

A seminar entitled 'Protection of personal data in the state registers in Ukraine', organized by the ODIHR in co-operation with the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, was held on 23 and 24 October in Kyiv.

The seminar was held within the framework of the ODIHR project on legislative review and a newly launched project on registration of permanent residents in Ukraine. The participants included representatives of the Presidential Administration, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Supreme Court, Security Council of Ukraine, relevant committees of the Parliament, and international experts in this field.

The agenda included presentations on international standards on data protection, ways of reforming the propiska (permit) system, and creation of a state population register in Ukraine.

An ODIHR representative presented the new project on reform of the registration system in Ukraine. ODIHR experts spoke about the compatibility of Ukraine's draft law on the state register

with the international standards on freedom of movement and choice of place of residence, and with data protection. In the closing discussion participants developed a number of concrete recommendations on the draft legislation.

Round table on human rights education held in Kazakhstan

An NGO-Government round table on 'Human Rights Education in Kazakhstan' was held in Astana on 31 October-1 November. The objective of the meeting was to raise the importance of human rights education in Kazakhstan and to persuade the Government of Kazakhstan to include a human rights education component into the curriculum of the primary and secondary schools of the country. The meeting was also aimed at enhancing co-ordination between several of the actors in this process, including NGOs and international organizations on the ground.

The round table was organized jointly with the OSCE Office in Almaty and the Conflict Management Centre of Almaty. It was attended by local and international NGOs, governmental institutions, including the Ministry of Education, the Human Rights Commission and the Constitutional Council, as well as by international organizations such as the European Union, UNESCO and UNDP.

ODIHR Advisory Panel on Freedom of Religion meets in Warsaw

The Contact Group of the Advisory Panel convened for the second time this year on 23-24 October in Warsaw on the margins of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. The Panel reviewed the progress made in its activities since February and discussed strategies to implement the recommendations made at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

ROMA AND SINTI

ODIHR meeting on issue of Roma refugees and asylum seekers

Some 150 representatives of governments, Roma NGOs and international organizations were invited by the ODIHR to an international consultation meeting on Roma refugees and asylum seekers which took place at the margins of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw on 23 October.

As a result of mediation efforts by the ODIHR Contact Point, the two largest international Roma organizations and long-time rivals, the International Romani Union and the Roma National Congress, set aside their differences for the first time in many years, formed a working group and agreed on a common platform on migration issues.

The establishment of the working group was welcomed at the meeting as an important step towards the emergence of a joint position of major Roma organizations.

The ODIHR made clear during the consultation meeting, organized by the



Participants in the ODIHR training workshop in Georgia on women's leadership and NGO coalition building (see page 19)

ODIHR with support of the Council of Europe and other partners, that it will continue to monitor the human rights situation in the countries of origin, as well as the application of asylum procedures in the destination countries, in particular when there are concerns that the procedures are applied in a discriminatory way. No consensus was reached among the participants on whether discrimination or economic reasons is the main cause for

the increasing number of Roma migrants.

There was strong support among Roma NGOs at the meeting for the proposal to establish a Roma-led assessment group, which should be tasked with evaluating the effectiveness of existing national and international Roma programmes. The proposal reflected growing criticism of internationally funded projects aimed at improving the situation of Roma in countries of origin.

NEWS from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) is located at Prinsessegracht 22, NL-2514 AP The Hague, The Netherlands, tel.: (+31-70) 312 55 00, fax: (+31-70) 363 59 10, e-mail: hcnm@hcnm.org

Preparations continue for Albanian-language institution in FYROM

The High Commissioner for National Minorities, Max van der Stoep, visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) twice during October. In the first visit from 4 to 6 October, he presented a business plan, which had been drafted by a group of experts, for the Albanian-language private university, to the Minister of Education, the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) and a group of ambassadors from poten-

tial donor countries. Further meetings concerning funding of the project and the structure of the University were held during a follow-up visit on 15 and 16 October.

HCNM takes part in minority higher education seminar in Romania

On 7 October, the High Commissioner participated in a seminar on 'Integrating diversity in higher education: lessons from Romania'. The seminar, co-organized by the High Commissioner's office and the Research Centre on Inter-

Ethnic Relations, was hosted by Babes-Bolyai University (BBU) in Cluj-Napoca. BBU has been the focus of discussions in recent years concerning the expansion of tertiary education for minorities in Romania.

The High Commissioner, together with international education experts, has worked with the University during the past year to develop multi-cultural and multi-lingual education at BBU. This has been particularly focused on expanding opportunities of study for the Hungarian

minority. The seminar provided an opportunity to review those developments, including the revision of the University Charter and the introduction of courses in Hungarian in the faculties of law and economics, and to look at what further steps could be taken. The seminar was attended by staff of BBU as well as national and international education experts. The High Commissioner's speech is available on the HCNM section of the OSCE website.

Van der Stoel speaks at OSCE Human Dimension Meeting in Warsaw

On 17 October, the High Commissioner on National Minorities addressed the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Review Meeting in Warsaw. In his speech, Mr. van der Stoel reviewed the most salient themes and activities that he had addressed during the past year. He concluded by stressing the need for assisting States in implementing the commitments they had undertaken concerning the protection of persons belonging to national minorities. He also emphasized the need for vigilance and early action in order to prevent inter-ethnic conflict. The full text of the speech can be found on the HCNM section of the OSCE website.

High Commissioner addresses religious extremism in Central Asia

The High Commissioner visited Kazakhstan, Krygyzstan and Tajikistan between 21 and 29 October. The main topic of the High Commissioner's meetings in all three countries was the causes and effects of religious extremism. In Almaty, the High Commissioner attended a two-day seminar co-organized by his office and the People's Assembly of Kazakhstan on the theme 'Religion, security and stability'.

During his visit to Krygyzstan, Mr. van der Stoel visited the southern region

of Osh. He was particularly interested in the problem of minority representation in the public service and the risk of religious extremism.

This issue was also raised in Tajikistan where there is a considerable Uzbek population in the south of the country. In all three countries, the High Commissioner stressed the importance of making a distinction between religious freedom on one hand and the use of religious extremism to undermine political structure on the other. He also noted the need for economic and social progress in order to reduce the climate of hardship in which extremism prospers.

The following is an excerpt from the concluding statement of the Almaty seminar on 'Religion, security and stability':

'[guaranteeing the principle of freedom of religion] means the right to practise one's religion free from governmental interference. It also means that people have the right to interpret the basic tenets of their religion in a way that they consider appropriate, free from governmental interference.

'At the same time, freedom of religion does not signify absolute freedom. No religious group has the right to use violence in order to undermine or overthrow the existing political order, even though members of such a group might consider it their religious duty to do this. The state has the right to defend itself against such attempts and to impose severe punishment on religious extremists who commit acts of terrorism and violence. However, the state must take the utmost care to ensure that only the real culprits are prosecuted. It would be a major mistake to prosecute people simply because they deviate from the dominant or traditional interpretation of a religion. The use of excessive force leads to state extremism. Recent history shows that this merely strengthens support for extremist groups by those

unjustly repressed. Thus, such measures should be excluded from the toolbox of anti-terrorist and anti-extremist policies.

'It is clear that current efforts by religious extremists to undermine the political structure in some Central Asian states are receiving support from outside the region. It is therefore of prime importance that concerted political and diplomatic efforts be applied in order to bring an end to this practice. On the other hand, there is a need to analyze carefully the methods the extremists are using in their efforts to mobilize support from the local population.

'There are clear indications that they are targeting those in difficult social and economic circumstances, notably young and unemployed people who have little hope of finding work, luring them with false promises of a better life after the revolution. Thus, the securing of peace and stability in Central Asia also has a clear economic dimension. Economic and social progress could perhaps provide the most effective barrier against extremist efforts to destabilize the region. There was always a strong case for extensive economic assistance to Central Asian states. In the light of the recent developments the need for this has become even more evident.'

New feature on the Website

A bibliography has been added to the HCNM section of the OSCE website. It includes articles and press clippings about the work of the High Commissioner and articles by Mr. van der Stoel. The bibliography will be updated as new material becomes available. Recommendations and speeches by the High Commissioner are also updated on a regular basis. The website address (which can also be reached through a link from the main OSCE site) is: www.osce.org/hcnm/

REPORT

from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is located at Rådhusstræde 1, DK-1466 Copenhagen K, Denmark, tel.: (+45-33) 37 80 40, fax: (+45-33) 37 80 30, e-mail: osce@oscepa.dk

PA's Expanded Bureau holds meeting in Limassol

The Assembly's Expanded Bureau, chaired by President Adrian Severin, held a meeting in Limassol, Cyprus on 2 and 3 October. After welcoming remarks by Mr. Severin and the Head of the Cypriot Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), Marcos Kyprianou, the Expanded Bureau heard a report by the Secretary General, Spencer Oliver on the activities of the International Secretariat. The members of the Expanded Bureau then informally discussed proposals on a theme for the next annual session. On the second day of the meeting Franz Parak, Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, reported on the activities of the OSCE governmental side and took questions from the floor. The Expanded Bureau heard reports on the activities of the Ad Hoc Committees on Belarus, Moldova and Kosovo as well as a report from Bruce George, Chair of the Bureau Working Group on the Rules of Procedure. The Expanded Bureau discussed the arrangements for the Assembly's forthcoming events.

PA President Severin chairs seminar on organized crime and corruption

President Adrian Severin chaired a parliamentary seminar in Cyprus on 4 and 5 October. The two-day parliamentary seminar on Organized Crime and Corruption consisted of a series of presentations and discussions on various aspects of the topic, including the distorting effects of organized crime

and corruption on economic development and the process of post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as international strategies to combat crime and corruption. Vice-Presidents Nino Burjanadze, Bruce George, Tiit Kaabin, Ihor Ostash, Tana de Zulueta and Second Committee Chair, Jacques Floch, chaired the Sessions. The Seminar was addressed by prominent officials and experts including Dr. Gherardo Colombo, Deputy Attorney General, Procura della Repubblica di Milano, Paul Higdson, Interpol Director of the Criminal Intelligence Directorate and Thomas Price, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. Presentations were also made by the Head of the Polish Delegation, Jerzy Osiatynsky, and Elisabeth Meijer, Member of the Kosovo Democracy Team. The Seminar was attended by more than 200 participants including 80 parliamentarians from 31 OSCE participating States and observers from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation.

During the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Seminar in Cyprus, President Severin met with the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Glafcos Clerides and other leading officials including the President of the House of Representatives, Spyros Kyprianou, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ioannis Kasoulides and the Mayor of Nicosia, Lellos Demetriades. In the spirit that "every party to a conflict should have their case heard", Mr. Severin also met with the

leader of the Turkish community, Rauf Denktash.

Parliamentary Troika headed by PA President Severin visits Belarus

The Parliamentary Troika, composed of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, visited Belarus from 12 to 16 October on the occasion of the parliamentary elections being held on 15 October. This visit took place as part of the continuing endeavours of the three institutions to encourage the development and consolidation of the democratic process in Belarus. The delegation was headed by OSCE PA President Adrian Severin, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Chairman of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with Belarus and Wolfgang Behrendt, Rapporteur on Belarus of the Council of Europe PA.

During the visit, the Parliamentary Troika held meetings with the Belarusian President, the Foreign Minister, and Chairperson of the Central Election Commission, as well as with representatives of opposition parties, human rights groups, domestic election observers and members of the diplomatic corps, to discuss developments with regard to the democratization process. On 16 October, the Troika issued a report on the results of the visit and held a press conference.

In this report, the Troika welcomed the fact that some effort had been made by the authorities to satisfy the democratic demands of the European institutions, but conveyed its disappointment



OSCE PA Vice-President Tana de Zulueta, a member of the Democracy Team, at a polling centre in the Peje/Pec area of Kosovo

that the Belarus authorities were, in the end, unable to use the window of opportunity offered by the organisation of these parliamentary elections to make satisfactory progress. The Troika also voiced its regret that the Belarusian authorities did not recognise the desire for democratic change expressed by significant parts of the Belarus population. Nonetheless, the Parliamentary Troika declared its intention to continue in the future to offer its support, and the support of the institutions it represents, to the strengthening of the democratic process in Belarus that will lead to the normalization of the country's relations with the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and the OSCE.

Parliamentarians attend OSCE human dimension meeting

Gert Weisskirchen, MP (Germany), Chair of the Assembly's Third General Committee, Senator Dorota Simonides (Poland) Vice-Chair of the Committee and Ms. Elena Mizulina, MP (Russia), Rapporteur of the Committee, represented the Assembly at the OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues in Warsaw on 19 October.

During the Implementation Meeting, the representatives of the OSCE PA held a side meeting with a number of NGOs. During this meeting the NGOs, in particular those from Central Asia, informed the parliamentarians about current regional issues and expressed their wish for political support.

PA President Severin meets new administration in Belgrade

From 19 to 20 October, President Severin visited Belgrade. During the visit he met with the President of the FRY, Vojislav Kostunica; His Holiness Patriarch of Serbia Pavle; President of the Chamber of the Republic of the FRY, Srdja Bozovic; President of Serbia, Milan Milutinovic and Deputy Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Zoran Novalic. President Severin also met with other officials and representatives of NGOs as well as with Ambassadors of several OSCE States in Belgrade.

OSCE PA Democracy Team visits Kosovo

From 25 to 29 October, four OSCE Parliamentarians, members of the OSCE PA Democracy Team on

Kosovo, visited the province to continue their work to further democratic development. The team, headed by PA Vice-President, Dr Rita Süßmuth MP (Germany), included Vice-President, Senator Tana de Zulueta (Italy), Elisabeth Meijer MP (Netherlands) and Grethe Fossum MP (Norway).

During their stay the parliamentarians visited Pristina, Prizren, Gračanica and Dragash and held meetings with representatives of the international community, leaders of political parties and media representatives.

The main purpose of the trip was to follow-up on their first visit from 12 to 15 August. The OSCE PA established its Kosovo Democracy Team to concentrate especially on helping to build civic society by promoting dialogue between parties and organizations representing different sections of the population in Kosovo. During their second visit to Kosovo the parliamentarians focussed in particular on furthering the involvement of women and youth in politics, as well as the development of a free and critical media.

The Delegation also had the opportunity to follow the municipal elections in Kosovo on the 28th October. Senator de Zulueta and Mrs. Fossum visited several polling stations in the area around Pec/Peja, whilst the Mrs. Süßmuth and Mrs. Meijer visited the areas around Pristina and Gnjilane/Gjilan respectively. The Team regarded the local elections as an important element in the building of democratic institutions and civic society in Kosovo and therefore of great significance in relation to the future work of the Team.

OSCE PA President participates in the Troika Meeting

President Severin participated in the Troika meeting which was held on 27 October in Vienna and included the For-

eign Ministers of the OSCE Troika, Benita Ferrero-Waldner of Austria, Petre Roman of Romania, and Espen Barth Eide (State Secretary) of Norway. The Secretary General of the OSCE, Jan Kubis, the Director of the ODIHR, Gerard Stoudmann, and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, also participated. During his visit to Vienna, President Severin also met with the President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Dr. Heinz Fischer.

PA addresses OSCE Mediterranean Partners Seminar in Portoroz

President Severin addressed the OSCE Mediterranean Seminar entitled 'Confidence-Building Measures and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures: the OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region.' from 30 to 31 October, in Portoroz, Slovenia. In his address to representatives from OSCE Member States, Mediterranean Partners and OSCE Institutions, Mr. Severin focused on the importance of the parliamentary dimension in any comprehensive approach to confidence-building measures and emphasized that the issue of Mediterranean security should be brought from the periphery to the centre of OSCE activities since European security was inextricably linked to that of the Mediterranean Partners.

"What is needed is a model of co-operation, based upon our commonly shared principles and values within the economic, cultural and political spheres, in order to ensure that lessons learned are utilized and overlaps minimized. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly with parliamentarians from 54 participating States provides a frame within which common solutions may be facilitated", said Mr. Severin.

The OSCE PA President also elaborated on the issue of migration, stressing

that adequate policies and legislation must provide the immigrants with a real prospect for an improved future within their own countries, while liberalising the circulation of people in Europe.

"More generosity shown towards the Mediterranean Partners is not a matter of charity but a means of consolidating European security itself. We must increase the awareness of our own people on this point," the President added. He concluded that the nature of the Parliamentary Assembly did not allow it always to be directly involved in the process of finding solutions for the various crises in the Mediterranean area, but it could contribute through inter-parliamentary dialogue and civic society programmes to the establishment of a suitable environment within which solutions might be identified and effectively implemented.

On the margins of the Seminar, Mr. Severin had the opportunity to have bilateral meetings with the President of Malta, Professor Guido de Marco and the Foreign Minister of Slovenia, Alojz Peterle. He discussions with the Secretary General of the OSCE and other Institutions, in order to explore the possibility for broadening future co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners.

PA at Stability Pact meeting in Bucharest

Martian Dan, Member of the Delegation of Romania to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, represented the Assembly at the plenary meeting of the Stability Pact Working Table 1 on Democratization and Human Rights, held on 26-27 October 2000 in Bucharest. The Meeting included discussion of the Action Plan on Parlia-



Kosovo PA Democracy Team Member, Elisabeth Meijer, meeting Bishop Artemije of the Serbian Orthodox church

mentary Co-operation adopted in Ohrid in April 1999. The Action Plan is mainly aimed at strengthening the democratic process in the parliaments of the countries in the region, with a specific objective of creating links between par-

liamentarians, and organizing training and exchange programmes for parliamentary staff. A proposal was put forward that bi-lateral and multilateral meetings with the purpose of exchanging experience between national par-

liaments and international parliamentary assemblies, such as the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe and the European Union, should take place at regular intervals, providing invaluable exper-

REPORT from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media is located at Kärtner Ring 5 - 7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria. Tel.: (+43-1) 512 21 45-0, fax: (+43-1) 512 21 45-9, e-mail: pm-fom@osce.org

Meeting with journalists in Serbia

Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, visited Belgrade on 11-12 October where he met with leading officials from Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) and with journalists. Mr. Duve also conducted a press conference at the Belgrade Media Centre. His subject matter was the freedom to speak, and the freedom to write, the freedom to broadcast without any government pressure. The OSCE Representative underlined the need for support for the media in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after the elections. Among other things, he suggested providing European programme packages to the television and radio station, RTS, and establishing a media board consisting of journalists and media experts, who fought for freedom of expression in Serbia for many years, to help the country's media during transition.

Continued harassment of ICBS-SARA Broadcasting Agency

On 11 October, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media intervened with the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Vilayat Gouliyev, regarding the continued campaign of harassment of ICBS-SARA Broadcasting Agency that has been under government pressure since 1999. This time the company was

ordered to vacate its premises. "This request to leave and the very short notice given, to a media outlet that has experienced problems before and is currently closed down, is of concern to my office," wrote Freimut Duve.

Freedom of expression discussed in Warsaw

On 17-18 October, the OSCE Representative took part in the Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues held in Warsaw. Freimut Duve addressed the plenary and chaired a session on 'Freedom of expression, free media and information.' He also held a side-meeting on high school newspapers that had been established with the support of his Office in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Duve underlined that, "in several countries journalistic media freedom today is under more pressure than it was when I took this job." Drawing the attention of the participants to some of the projects his Office was working on, the OSCE Representative, singled out, among others, the compilation of a collection of writers from the various nations of the Caucasus under the title *In Defence of the Future*. He expected to present this publication later this year at the OSCE Ministerial Council and in the region.

This book was edited by Heidi Tagliavini, the Chairperson-in-Office's Personal Representative for the Caucasus, and by Mr. Duve and brought together over 20 writers from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and from the northern Caucasus republics in the Russian Federation.

Among the issues that were discussed during the special session were libel laws, "hate speech," journalists in conflict zones, and the role of new technologies, etc.

Italian journalist killed in Georgia

On 31 October, the OSCE Representative wrote to Italian Foreign Minister, Lamberto Dini forwarding his condolences to the family and friends of Antonio Russo, an Italian radio journalist found murdered near Tbilisi, Georgia, on 16 October. "Mr. Russo had been awarded two Italian journalistic prizes, the Premio Ischia and the Premio Sarteano. I had greatly admired his courage for reporting on some of the most dangerous situations on the globe including Albania, Rwanda and Algeria," wrote the OSCE Representative, who is following this case and expects the Georgian government to conduct a thorough investigation so that the perpetrators of this crime are found and punished.

Office of the RFOM attends human rights meeting in St. Petersburg

On 10-13 October, Diana Moxhay, Senior Adviser to the OSCE Represen-

tative on Freedom of the Media, took part in the round table of Human Rights Ombudspersons from the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the

Baltic states held in St. Petersburg. One of the issues discussed was the use of media in the region for promoting fundamental human rights.

REPORT from the OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat

*The OSCE Secretariat is located at Körntner Ring 5-7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria.
Telephone: (+43-1) 514 36-0, Fax: (+43-1) 514 36-96, e-mail: pm@osce.org*

Visitors and working visits during October

On 2 October, the Secretary General, Jan Kubis, had discussions at the Vienna Secretariat with Robert Badinter, President of the OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. On 5 October he held talks in Vienna with Carl Bildt, the Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations to the Balkans.

From 19 to 20 October, the Secretary General visited Uzbekistan, to participate in the International Conference on Countering Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism in Central Asia, organized jointly by the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, and held in Tashkent. The meeting was also attended by all five Central Asian participating States (see report on page 15).

On 19 and 20 October, the Director of the conflict Prevention Centre, Marton Krasznai, attended a seminar in Paris organized by the Fondation pour la Recherche stratégique, Western European Union and the International Peace Academy. The aim was to draw lessons from the peace operations which occurred in Europe during the 1990s. The Director gave presentation on OSCE activities and co-operation in the field with major partners such as the UN, the European Union and NATO. On 27 October, the Secretary General took part in the deliberations of the OSCE Ministerial Troika in Vienna (see page 6).

OCEEA hosts training seminar in Vienna for field missions

With broad support from the Chairperson-in-Office and the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities held its first training seminar for economic and environmental officers from OSCE field missions from 9 to 13 October. In addition to 13 OSCE field officers, representatives from the Russian, US, Romanian and Austrian delegations attended as observers. Designed to address, as well as complement, the working environment and tasks of the officers at OSCE field missions, the first half of the training seminar introduced participants to high-ranking officials in key OSCE partner organizations, such as the UNECE, European Commission and OECD. OSCE staff presenters targeted participants' specific skills, e.g. on negotiating, conflict resolution, and report writing.

OCEEA participates in follow-up meeting to Eighth Economic Forum

With the focus on how the OSCE's interaction with other organizational actors can be enhanced, the Chairperson-in-Office held a Follow-up Seminar to the Eighth Economic Forum in Vienna from 5 to 6 October, on 'How to optimize inter-institutional relations in the economic and environmental field.' According to the organizers, economic and environmental factors must be addressed to the extent that

they represent threats to security; however, the OSCE's co-operation with other institutions also has to correspond to the needs and interests of its partner organizations.

OSCE's Press and Information Officers meet in Tbilisi

The OSCE's Mission to Georgia hosted the fourth semi-annual 'Public Affairs Round Table' on 5 and 6 October in Tbilisi. As well as a number of staff from the Press and Public Information Section (PPIS) of the Secretariat, the event drew Spokespersons from several of the OSCE's institutions and field presences. They participated in a regular forum that allows the media focal points to exchange experiences with their colleagues at the Secretariat.

Among the main agenda items were ways to exploit the Organization's greatly expanded website, and making better use of photographic images to raise the OSCE's profile. Both the role of the Representative on Freedom of the Media and media development activities in missions were discussed, and a training session was devoted to creating more effective press releases. The Mission itself presented several aspects of its work, including a highly detailed briefing on the border monitoring operation. A number of recommendations made by participants will form part of efforts aimed at increasing the press relations and public outreach activities of the Organization.

SOME PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS

available upon request at the Vienna or Prague Offices of the OSCE Secretariat*

and via the OSCE website (www.osce.org/publications)

* Rytirska 31, CZ-110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Publications	Publisher/ Editor	Language(s)
OSCE Newsletter (monthly) Volume VII (2000), Volume VI (1999), Volume V (1998), Volume IV (1997), Volume III (1996), Volume II (1995), Volume I (1994)	OSCE Secretariat	Since January 1998 in all six OSCE official languages (Eng- lish, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish) 1994-97 in English and Russian
Fact Sheet (revised October 1999) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is the OSCE? ¹ ■ The OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat ■ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights² ■ Representative on Freedom of the Media ■ High Commissioner on National Minorities ■ OSCE Parliamentary Assembly² ■ Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina³ ■ Mission to Croatia³ ■ Mission in Kosovo³ 	OSCE Secretariat	¹ 'What is OSCE?' is available in all six OSCE official languages. ² Also available in Russian. ³ Also available in local languages.
OSCE Handbook general information on OSCE, Third Edition (March 1999) - updated June 2000	OSCE Secretariat	English Also available on-line at: www.osce.org/publications
Survey of OSCE Long-Term Missions and other OSCE Field Activities (January 2000)	OSCE Secretariat/ Conflict Prevention Centre	English
The Secretary General's Annual Report on OSCE Activities (1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999)	OSCE Secretariat	In all six OSCE official languages
OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Semi-annual Reports	ODIHR	English and Russian

Publications	Publisher/ Editor	Language(s)
Other publications on democratization and human rights are available at the ODIHR website: (www.osce.org/odihr/publications.htm)	ODIHR	English
Bibliography on the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities: Documents, Speeches, Related Publications. Third Edition, March 1997	The Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, The Hague	English
The Role of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in OSCE Conflict Prevention – An Introduction June 1997	ibid.	English Russian
Chronological Review from 1973 to 1998 of CSCE/OSCE official publications <i>List of bound versions of documents issued at the conclusion of a review, follow-up and other major CSCE/OSCE events including the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures</i>	Prague Office	English
Reference Manual – Decisions Compilation 1993-94, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999	Prague Office	English

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For further information on this or other aspects of the website, contact the Press and Public Information Section of the OSCE Secretariat,
tel.: (+43-1) 514 36 180 or e-mail: info@osce.org.



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Kärntner Ring 5-7
A-1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel.: (+43-1) 514 36-180
Fax: (+43-1) 514 36-105
E-mail: info@osce.org

Keith Jinks, Editor
Alexander Nitzsche, Deputy Editor

For more information on the OSCE
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