

Assistance with Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

Representative to the Estonian Expert Commission on Military Pensioners

The main task of the Representative is to participate in the work of the Estonian Expert Commission on Military Pensioners, which makes recommendations to the Government on residence permits for retired Russian military personnel who stayed in Estonia after the bulk of Russian forces was withdrawn in 1994.

Activities and developments

The OSCE Representative continued to provide assistance in the review of appli-

cations for residence, mostly temporary, at four sessions of the Commission, the final one in August.

Permanent residence permits. A revised law on aliens came into force as of 1 June as a result of harmonization with a 2003 European Union Council Directive. In terms of residence, all third-country nationals, including military pensioners, became eligible for long-term resident status if they met certain requirements. Under the revised law, military pensioners are no longer treated as a separate

group and the Citizenship and Migration Board now reviews all their applications for residence.

The Commission, having completed its task after the review of some 26,400 cases since its establishment in 1993, was deactivated as of 1 September, allowing termination of the mandate in 2006.

OSCE Representative: Uwe Mahrenholtz
Revised unified budget: €101,600

Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners

The Representative continued to provide assistance in the implementation of the 1994 Agreement between the Latvian and the Russian Governments on social guarantees for military pensioners of the Russian Federation and their families residing in Latvia.

In 2006, a total of 16,739 people were eligible under the Agreement, 463 less than in 2005. At the time of the Agreement in 1994, a total of 22,320 people were eligible.

Activities and developments

Housing problems. The Commission's discussions centred in 2006, as in previous years, on issues surrounding the potential eviction of military pensioners and their families from so-called "denationalized" accommodation. Following

the adoption of a law regulating the return of nationalized property to the legitimate owners or descendants, Latvia stipulated a seven-year grace period for tenants in these properties and, when this period ended, followed up with additional special conditions for military pensioners and their families as well as others affected. These included financial support and priority access to social accommodation. Given budgetary constraints, a waiting list for applicants to social accommodation needs to be established and the relevant Latvian and Russian authorities are working closely together in order to resolve potential hardship situations.

Resettlement programme successfully launched. A Latvian-financed resettlement programme for military pensioners who wish to leave Latvia and take up permanent residence outside the country was launched on 1 January. By year end,

this programme delivered financial aid for resettlement to 91 persons. It will be continued in 2007 and nearly the same figure of interested applicants is expected.

OSCE Representative: Helmut Napiontek
Revised unified budget: €8,200