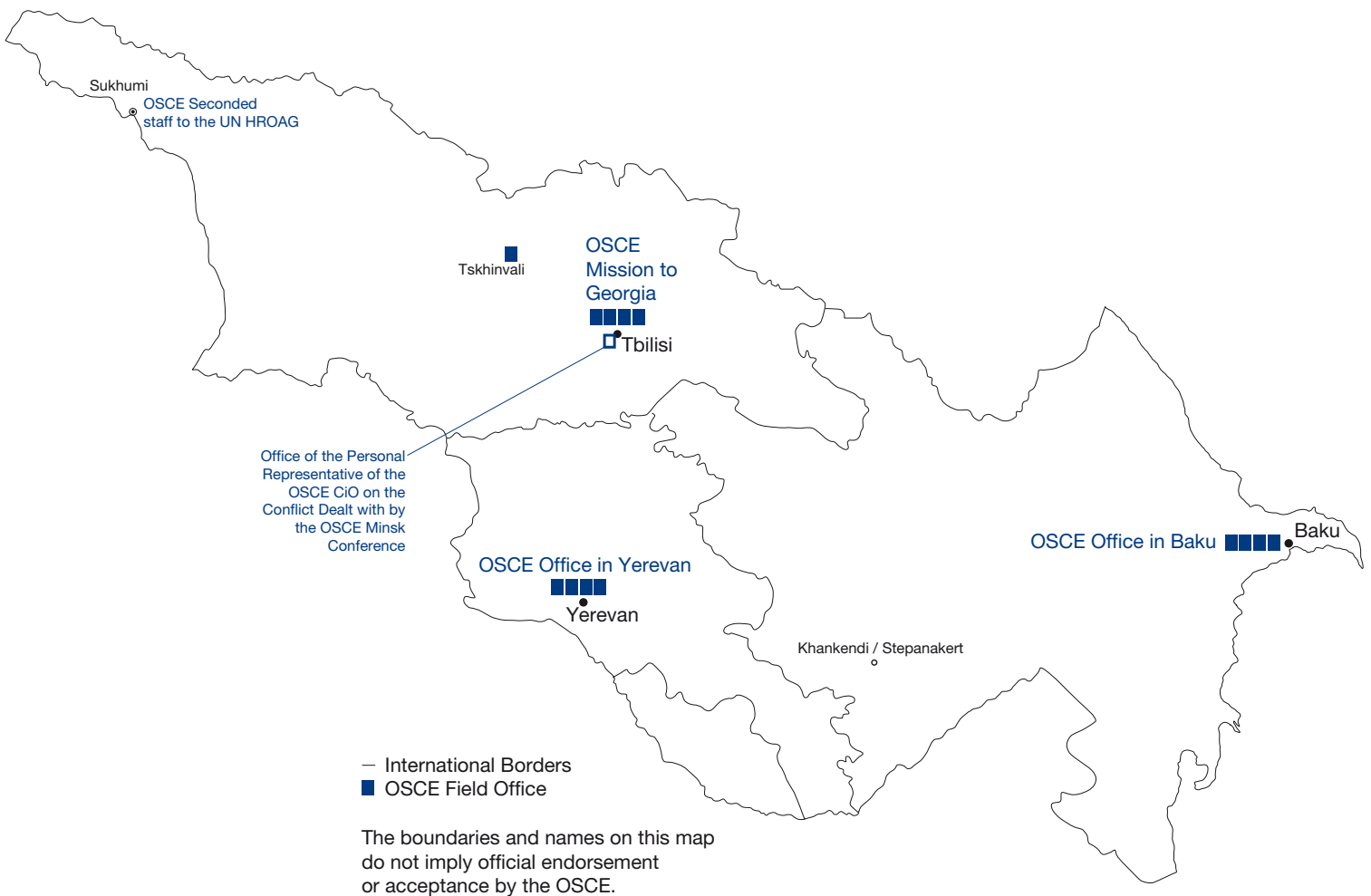


Field operations

OSCE/Steven Weinburg



Caucasus



Office in Baku

The Office in Baku focused in 2005 on strengthening the development of civil society, the rule of law and human rights; fighting human traf-

ficking; providing assistance to police; combating corruption; and raising public awareness of environmental issues. Support for elec-

toral reform and promoting freedom of assembly in Azerbaijan remained at the top of the Office's agenda. The Office also took the first

steps to recycle and dispose of stocks of toxic rocket fuel component.

Politico-military dimension activities

Police assistance programme. The Office made considerable progress in 2005 on improvements to the police school building and the training programme. The school now has furniture in all classrooms and some teaching can now be undertaken in an atmosphere more conducive to learning. Dormitory accommodation and specialist equipment, however, are still lacking.

The school's teachers attended the first formal teacher-training course, run by the national police academies of the Czech Republic, aligning Azerbaijan's police training with international standards. Lesson plans for the new induction training course were prepared from the programme of contents which had previously been agreed between the Government and the Office.

Training on freedom of assembly. The Office initiated two training projects for

the Interior Ministry's internal troops and police, including a five-day practical training in public event control. This culminated in a demonstration of containment skills that are in line with international standards.

Destruction of toxic missile fuel component. The Office supported a project that provided technical and financial assistance to Azerbaijan for the destruction or conversion of obsolete, toxic chemical missile fuel components in two storage sites. (For more on this topic, please see page 11.)

Human rights training and the fight against terrorism. As part of the Office's assistance to Azerbaijan in the fight against terrorism, it provided human rights training to the army's Oil Pipeline Protection Department, detailing their rights and responsibilities under international law.

OSCE/Ulvi Akhundlu



Top: Ministry of Defence experts provide detailed information to the combined OSCE/NATO-NAMSA team at the Mingechevir Melange storage facility.

Left: An Academy of Science expert, assisted by Ministry of Defence staff and observed by the OSCE, takes samples from a melange storage site to determine the level of contamination in Mingechevir.

Economic and environmental dimension activities

Development of small- and medium-sized enterprises. The key challenges hindering the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the regions of Azerbaijan are the lack of access to business training and micro-finance loans. Women, in particular, face significant obstacles in obtaining business training, capital and micro-credits, hindering their ability to launch and increase business activity. For this reason, the Office focused on entrepreneurial training for women in the rural regions. Beginning in January, the Office trained more than 200 women in five districts of Azerbaijan, culminating in a business plan competition with start-up support for winners.

Good governance and anti-corruption. Corruption is considered a key obstacle to the liberalization of market economies and regional economic development, particularly when there exist large-scale revenues from the oil and gas sector. Together with the Young Lawyers Union, the Office launched public roundtables to promote the new anti-corruption laws. The Office also published and distributed the OSCE Handbook for Best Practices in Combating Corruption in the Azerbaijani language.

Raising public environmental awareness. With an average of 75 visitors a week to its library, the Aarhus Centre was a hub of activity for environmental NGOs. In addition, it served as a venue for more than 50 public meetings.

The Office launched a one-year programme to develop an environmental education programme for schoolchildren. The programme will train teachers and community leaders on integrating so-called “Green Packs” with environmental educational material into the school curriculum.

The Office also continued to support the OSCE-NATO *South Caucasus River Monitoring Project*, which is now in its fourth year of monitoring and data collection. It also gave further assistance to the OSCE-UNDP-UNEP Environment and Security Initiative.

The Office and its implementing partners supported the Energy Bus initiative that provides public awareness of energy conservation and practical alternative energy solutions to rural communities. Despite significant oil and gas reserves currently under development, Azerbaijan still experiences chronic energy deficits in rural regions, hampering sustained economic development and contributing to deforestation in these areas. The Energy Bus – a mobile truck and trailer containing exhibition models and information on energy conservation and low-cost alternative and renewable energy solutions for rural communities – was instrumental in supporting the Government’s goals of promoting the use of renewable energy to address energy security needs. The Bus carried its message to some 150 villages in 2005.



The energy bus visited over 250 villages in Azerbaijan, helping communities to gain access to low-cost diversified energy resources.

OSCE/Ulvi Akhundova

Human dimension activities

Trial monitoring. Together with the ODIHR, the Office presented Azerbaijan’s Government in February with a joint report on the *Trial Monitoring Project in Azerbaijan 2003-2004*. Following talks with the ODIHR in Warsaw, the Government committed to a dialogue on implementing the report’s recommendations. Expert group discussions on pre-trial detention were held in November. Before the 6 November parliamentary elections, the courts

released seven prominent opposition leaders as a result of presidential pardons and expunged the criminal records of those convicted of criminal offences linked to public disturbances in the aftermath of the 2003 presidential election. With their records cleared, the seven leaders, whose trials had been monitored by the OSCE, became eligible to run in the parliamentary elections.

Public education programme for appeals to the Constitutional Court. The Office, the Constitutional Court and a domestic NGO launched a programme to empower members of the public to file individual complaints. Lessons and lectures were conducted in all areas of the country. The Office also commissioned local lawyers to produce a booklet outlining requirements for constitutional complaints.

Monitoring the newly established Bar Association. The Office monitored the activity of the new Bar Association and lobbied for the admission of lawyers denied membership. It disseminated a report on the *Situation of Lawyers in Azerbaijan*, which highlights the critical situation of the legal profession, stresses the importance of the matter and requests the Government address the issues.

NGO advocacy training programme. To help NGOs build advocacy and negotiation skills, the Office developed a new training programme and supported NGO-run training courses. These are designed to build a sustainable dialogue among representatives of political parties, municipalities and community-based organizations and to improve their skills in consensus-building and conflict management.

Survey on juvenile justice. The Office commissioned the NGO, *Alliance for Children’s Rights*, to prepare a report on juvenile justice in Azerbaijan. The recommendations of this report, the first of its kind, provide a basis for the authorities to address the shortcomings of the justice system in its treatment of juveniles. The Government said that it would consider the report’s findings to identify ways to improve the situation of detained children.



Police and demonstrators at a pre-election rally in Baku in September.

Members of the Office followed the voting process during the parliamentary elections on 6 November, which were monitored by the ODIHR. The Office closely monitored political rallies and public events and followed the process in the event of arrests.

Gender issues. The Office's focus in this field was on increasing the participation of women in the parliamentary election as voters, activists, observers and candidates. In co-operation with the local media NGO, *Internews*, the Office produced a series of feature stories and debates under the title *Women and Elections* broadcast countrywide until the day of the polls. During the year, the Office hosted several gender roundtables, which were attended by international organizations, donors and representatives of embassies.

Supporting the creation of a civil registry. An international expert commissioned by the Office assessed the work needed to set up a nationwide civil registry, identifying the financial and technical implications for the 2006 budget. The Office outlined the system's basic requirements and the main tasks state agencies needed to undertake to establish it. The registry will maintain demographic records for purposes such as personal identification or electoral rolls.

Anti-trafficking efforts. The Office designed and funded a training scheme for women at risk of becoming trafficking victims in the northern regional town of Guba, where opportunities for advancement are slim. With the support of the municipal government, the programme trains young women in secretarial skills and helps them find productive work, thus countering the threat of them falling victim to traffickers.

The implementation of the national action plan on the fight against human trafficking, which was adopted in 2004, gained momentum with the adoption of a new Law on Trafficking in Human Beings and amendments to the Criminal Code. The Office and the Interior Ministry refurbished a building designated as the country's first secure accommodation for victims and those at risk of trafficking.

Supporting political dialogue. One of the Office's key priorities was to support talks between the authorities and the opposition. It brought the two sides together in May to discuss the basic values of democracy, beginning the first of a series of "dialogue" meetings on democracy. All the participants agreed on a nine-point framework for the conduct of political parties.

In September, a second "dialogue" meeting brought together chairs of political parties, heads of regional Executive Committees and high-level representatives of the police and internal troops to discuss issues such as locations for demonstrations and pickets. During the meeting, participants were urged to seek dialogue among all actors involved and to draft an agreement before every meeting or picket. The agreement should describe who would participate, where it would take place and how it would be managed.

Parliamentary elections. The Office supported the implementation of the revisions and recommendations to the Electoral Code and further reform of the legal framework for parliamentary elections. It funded and advised on principles to take into account with regard to the content of television and radio spots produced by the NGO, *Election Monitoring Centre*. This project was part of the Office's efforts to educate voters on voter registration and to encourage election participation.

Head of Office:
Ambassador Maurizio Pavesi
Revised budget: €1,593,500
www.osce.org/baku

Mission to Georgia

The Georgian Government's democratic reform programme and the considerable challenges in the process of peaceful resolution of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict required an intensive and cross-dimensional approach by the Mission in 2005.

The situation in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict remained as volatile and tense as it was at the

conclusion of the cease-fire of August 2004. Violent incidents in 2005 involved shooting, kidnappings, killings, beatings and a mortar attack on a built-up area. Violations of agreements, including a military parade on 20 September, compounded the tension.

The Mission contributed to stabilization through close monitoring and active participation in the Joint

Control Commission and focused its activities on areas that would create a more favourable context for political dialogue.

Other significant challenges included the closing down of the Border Monitoring Operation at the beginning of the year and the rapid establishment and implementation of the Training Assistance Programme to pass on the Monitoring

Operation's lessons and experiences to the Georgian Border Guard Service.

The Mission also assisted the new Georgian Government in various aspects of its democratic reform programme, involving the Mission's economic-environmental and human dimension staff in further substantial work with their governmental and civil society counterparts.

Politico-military dimension activities

PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The Georgian-Ossetian conflict. As the main priority, the Mission engaged in all dimensions to contribute to the peaceful resolution of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. It participated actively in meetings of the Joint Control Commission (JCC), which met six times, including at a special session in Ljubljana in November by invitation of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The JCC is co-chaired by the Georgian, South Ossetian, North Ossetian and Russian sides, and aims at injecting impetus to the political process for peaceful resolution.

The Mission has urged the sides to take practical steps to improve the security situation. In particular, it submitted proposals to move forward the demilitarization of the zone of conflict and to promote co-operation between the police forces of the sides.

The Mission intensified consultations with the JCC participants, Georgian high officials and Embassies with a view to ensure that the sides maintain a dialogue and search for solutions towards stability. Monitoring the military situation in the zone of conflict and timely reporting to the OSCE participating States continue to be important tasks.

To help stabilize the security situation and create a more favourable context for



One of the core tasks of the Mission is to monitor the activities of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

political dialogue, the Mission has carried forward several initiatives to build confidence between the sides. These include programmes on: economic and infrastructure rehabilitation, civic society and human rights development, conflict journalists' training for unbiased media coverage of events and facilitating the production of the JCC newsletter.

Human rights and civil society activities in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. The Mission supported projects involving Ossetian and Georgian communities to promote human rights and to strengthen confidence in the civil society's ability to help settle conflicts.

Through the Human Rights Centre in Tskhinvali, the Mission arranged training for prison staff, weekly sessions on human rights and the English language for teachers as well as Georgian and Ossetian children. The Mission also engaged in activities to strengthen civil society and to raise awareness of human rights in villages administered by the different sides. The Mission supported training for Ossetian and Georgian students on international human rights and the history of the Caucasus. The Mission also funded 14 community projects and two language training centres to broaden career opportunities throughout the zone of conflict.

Ongoing rehabilitation projects

The Mission continued to co-ordinate the implementation of projects for infrastructure rehabilitation in the zone of conflict financed by a €2.5 million grant from the European Commission. These included projects to improve electricity, gas and water supplies to the communities. Under a Steering Committee, the Mission led regular consultations between the two sides, the European Commission, and implementing partners the UNDP and the UNHCR.



Fruit farmers in the Georgian villages north of Tskhinvali now benefit from a refurbished irrigation pump system. It was repaired in 2005 as part of the Mission's rehabilitation programme.



Georgian and Ossetian engineers working in partnership on the gas distribution refurbishment project in Tskhinvali.

Monitoring the situation on the ground.

Mission Monitoring Officers continued to patrol the zone of conflict and visit checkpoints and observation posts. The monitoring officers also accompanied Joint Peacekeeping Forces' (JPKF) monitoring teams and exchanged information with the commander of the visited observation posts. Weapons inspections took place to confirm the JPKF positions are equipped in accordance with its own inventory and regulations.



Twenty Georgian and Ossetian journalists trained on conflict reporting.

For the first time since tensions rose in 2004, journalists from Georgia and South Ossetia participated in a specialized programme on professional conflict reporting skills. The initiative included several training sessions in Tskhinvali and a study trip to the United Kingdom. Co-organized by the Mission and the British Embassy in Tbilisi, the course examined the challenges of balanced reporting on conflict issues in Northern Ireland and helped forge dialogue and working contacts between media professionals.

Needs Assessment Study on the rehabilitation and economic development in the zone of conflict

In November, the Mission launched a Needs Assessment Study in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, carried out by 18 international and local experts. The aim is to develop a number of project proposals in the fields of infrastructure rehabilitation and of economic development for submission to potential donors.

The Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The peace process resumed this spring within the UN-led Geneva framework and the 'Sochi working groups format' established by the Russian and Georgian presidents in 2003. The Mission participated in two meetings between the sides on the issue of security guarantees.

Still lacking agreement from the Abkhaz side, there was no progress in 2005 regarding the opening, in Gali, of a branch office of the joint UN-OSCE Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia.

As part of the activities of the Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, the Mission promoted human rights education for 3,000 children in schools of the district of Ochamchira, using Council of Europe materials for teaching human rights. It engaged a local commercial TV station in Sukhumi to produce local human rights awareness programmes on different themes. It provided training and grants to civil society organizations in the Gali district to improve their management skills and professionalism.

OTHER POLITICO-MILITARY DIMENSION ACTIVITIES

Destruction of surplus military stockpiles. In October, Georgia's Foreign Minister signed an agreement to continue with the third stage of an OSCE project to dismantle and recycle obsolete ammunition on Georgian territory. In November, maintenance, fencing and other preparatory work were under way at the dismantling base at Dedoplistskaro.

Action against terrorism. To prepare the ground for the adoption of the remaining three of the 12 Universal Conventions and Protocols on Anti-terrorism, the Mission and the Ministry of Internal Affairs launched a project to bring Georgian legislation in this field in line with international standards.

Through a range of targeted projects including study visits, the Mission helped Georgia's anti-terrorism structures strengthen co-operation with their counterparts in Europe and arranged a series of workshops on combating terrorism and

organized crime to significantly increase their professionalism.

The Mission also worked closely with the Ministry to develop a crisis management centre, set up a common information system on convicted and suspected terrorists and criminals, adopt a document of best practice, and send officials to anti-terrorism conferences in Georgia and abroad.

Police reform. In line with the Ministry of Internal Affairs' reform agenda, the Mission completed an in-depth needs assessment with the participation of international experts on policing in February. The recommendations provided the foundations for the current OSCE short-term assistance project, which was tailored to help the Ministry develop a comprehensive personnel management system, establish a Community Policing Development Unit and introduce a newly developed basic training course in the Police Academy curriculum. It also helped finance repairs and new equipment in the Academy library.

OSCE/Steven Weinburg



The first group of Georgian border guards receive their certificates from Head of Mission Ambassador Roy Reeve. By year's end, 375 trainees were formally evaluated as having acquired the core programme skills of the training assistance programme.

Training assistance programme. In response to a request by the Georgian Government in early 2005 to support the capacity of the Georgian border guards in border management, the Mission set up a training assistance programme. The initiative aims to transfer the skills it has gained from five years of border monitoring experience.

The trainees were mid-ranking and non-commissioned officers, some of whom were identified as potential future instructors.

Practical and theoretical sessions covered skills for:

- rescue operations and security rules in hazardous mountainous areas;
- planning and managing border units during day and night;
- patrolling, observing and reporting;
- maintaining special equipment;
- map reading;
- communications; and
- first aid.

A team of 50 personnel, including 30 international experts, implements the programme from the OSCE Mission Headquarters in Tbilisi and from four other regional training centres (Lilo, Kazbegi, Lagodekhi and Omalo).

Economic and environmental dimension activities

Economic security. The Mission continued to focus on developing small- and medium-sized enterprises, supporting the fight against corruption and providing economic policy guidance to the government. Additionally, the Mission actively supported good governance initiatives in regions outside Tbilisi. Activities included:

- assessing wheelchair production facilities in Georgia, including Abkhazia; these facilities, once established, will provide jobs for people with disabilities.
- organizing a youth summer camp on entrepreneurship; during the camp, young people from all over Georgia were trained on the basics of entrepreneurship.
- setting up an anti-money laundering workshop for Government officials; the Mission supported NGO efforts to ensure implementation of the recommendations of the OECD Anti-Corruption Network.
- analysing the country's privatization plan; this extensive review, conducted by the Mission in co-operation with the National Security Council, focused on economic growth and sound economic policy planning.

OSCE/David Khizantsev



Graduates of the train-the-trainers course in advanced criminal investigations in the newly refurbished library of the Georgian police academy.

OSCE/David Khizantsev



The Mission's police advisor with the future trainers of the Georgian Police Academy

- creating good governance resource centres in Gardabani and Marneuli; these centres aim at assisting local governments to develop and implement their budgets and to disseminate information to villages in regions with large national minorities.

Environmental security. The Mission established an Aarhus Centre together with the Georgian Ministry of Environment, in Tbilisi on 19 December. The aim of the Centre is to promote the principles of the Aarhus Convention signed by Georgia in 2003 and help build trust between the Government and civil society sectors working on environmental matters.

The Mission worked on identifying environmental problems that can result in instability and potentially in conflict. Assisted by the office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the Mission supported the OSCE-UN Environment and Security initiative in developing projects that tackle issues of environmental concern.

The Mission also funded an environmental youth summer camp to provide environmental education for young Georgians.

Human dimension activities

Strengthening democratic institutions. The Mission worked to strengthen the capacity of Georgian society and its institutions on their path to democratization. This included a functioning local democracy and the ability to conduct free and fair elections. The Mission also promoted the independence and professionalism of Georgian media.

The electoral process. The new Central Election Commission received assistance in its efforts to increase the transparency and accountability of the recruitment of election officials. The Mission continues to foster the capacity of local NGOs to observe elections and participates in the process of developing Georgia's legislation to ensure well-organized and fair elections.

Local self-government. In this field, the Mission's activities included supporting the training of local government officials, promoting citizen participation in local government and monitoring of the local budget process in towns throughout Georgia. The Mission supported public discussion on legislative changes in the area of local self-government ahead of the 2006 local elections.

Freedom of the media. To increase the media's capacity to inform citizens in a balanced and objective way, the Mission supported the development of professional skills of regional independent broadcast media. This comprised training sessions for journalists from South Ossetia, Ajara and other regions in west Georgia. The Mission also supported monitoring of the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act in the regions as well as in the capital.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

The Mission continued to work with state bodies and NGOs to promote international human rights standards, focusing on rural areas. It used a two-fold approach: implementing projects that promote human rights and working on human rights cases. The casework involved monitoring trials, providing legal advice and raising concerns about alleged human rights violations.

The Government was given assistance to implement the *National Action Plan against Torture 2003-2005* through strengthening co-operation between the National Security Council, the Public Defenders' Office, the General Prosecutors' Office and the Ministry of Interior. This included:

- paying unannounced visits to places of detention;
- reacting to violations; and
- developing strategies to improve detention conditions.

The Mission helped strengthen human rights protection mechanisms in rural areas mainly by advising the Public Defend-

ers' Office, making free legal advice available and holding seminars for officials, lawyers and human rights defenders.

It initiated and funded human rights education in schools in four districts of Georgia: Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Samegrelo and Ajara.

In addition, the Mission supported the integration of ethnic minorities by establishing community centres in Kvemo Kartli. The centres run regular training sessions on the Georgian and English languages, computer studies and human rights. They also arrange discussion groups on topics relevant to a multi-ethnic society.

Strengthening the fight against trafficking in human beings. A major focus was the implementation of the *2005-2006 National Action Plan against Human Trafficking*, developed by the Government and NGO representatives in 2004 with the support of the Mission. A national referral mechanism assessment supported by the Mission was published in September. It also assisted a pilot project in the region of Ajara to enhance co-operation between the local authorities and NGOs to identify and refer victims of trafficking.

Gender Equality. The Mission helped the Government and women's organizations to develop a national action plan to promote gender equality. By year's end, the draft was submitted for governmental approval.

PROMOTING LEGAL REFORMS IN GEORGIA

The Mission promoted the ongoing reforms of the legal system in Georgia. In 2005, this included:

- assisting the Ministry of Justice to implement civil registry reform;
- facilitating the development of an independent, professional, and equitable judiciary in Georgia; the Mission provided financial assistance to the Association of Judges of Georgia in order to develop guidelines on adopting court decisions in criminal, administrative and certain types of civil law. The Mission also supported the Association in



OSCE/David Khizamishvili

The OSCE Mission to Georgia and the U.S. Agency for International Development assisted Georgia in establishing a modernized civil registry system. The Mission organized a series of training sessions for the newly recruited Ministry of Justice staff working on the civil registry throughout the country.

conducting a series of training sessions for judges across the country from June to September.

- promoting the establishment of a safe and secure prison system; assistance included providing new penitentiary institution staff with basic professional skills training.
- facilitating dialogue among Georgian legal professionals; the Mission facilitated dialogue among Georgian legal professionals, which focused on fostering an opinion exchange on the ongoing legal reforms in Georgia.

Head of Mission:

Ambassador Roy Reeve

Revised budget: €12,324,800

www.osce.org/georgia

Office in Yerevan

The Office engaged in several initiatives to assist the Armenian authorities in improving human rights legislation and the functioning of the legislative branch in 2005. These efforts proved particularly timely in light of constitutional changes, adopted during a November referendum, which enhanced the authority of the National Assembly. The Office contributed to new legisla-

tion related to elections and freedom of assembly, and continued to work to improve laws on religious freedom and the fight against trafficking. It also conducted two large projects: the recycling of environmentally hazardous rocket fuel component (*Melange*) and assistance in police training and promoting community-based policing.

Increasing its focus on areas

outside of Yerevan, the Office established two local public environmental information centres in Syunik province and organized roundtables on economic, environmental, human rights and democratization issues in several regions. Other areas of activity included human rights protection, freedom of the media, small- and medium-sized enterprise development, labour migra-

tion and efforts to combat corruption, trafficking and money laundering.

Marking its fifth anniversary, the Office used the celebrations to promote OSCE values, commitments and principles and to increase its outreach activities.

Legislative reform. The Office made considerable headway in the promotion of legislative reform. The legislature approved amendments to the electoral code and to the *Law on conducting Meetings, Rallies, Marches and Demonstrations* that resulted in improvements in this legislation from the perspective of international standards. The Office had long promoted legislative reform in these areas and in both cases the laws were adopted based on recommendations provided by the ODIHR and the Venice Commission.

The Office lent support to the process of constitutional reform. ODIHR provided the authorities with comments on the human rights provisions of the package of amendments. Prior to the constitutional referendum of 27 November, the Office organized a media campaign to promote voter participation.

Working with civil society and governmental bodies, the Office continued to assist with work on draft legislation dealing with religious freedom and labour migration.

Support to the National Assembly. To strengthen the professional capacities of parliamentary staff, the Office, with the assistance of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, implemented a three-week advanced training course for staff experts from three Standing Committees and two Departments, followed by a one-week working visit to the Austrian and Slovenian National Assemblies. Following this successful experience, the Office, at the

request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized a similar one-week course to enhance research and analytical tools and methods of the Ministry's staff.

Combating corruption. The Prime Minister's Anti-Corruption Council established to implement Armenia's 2003 National Anti-Corruption Strategy provided the

context for the Office's continuing work in this field. Jointly with the Anti-Corruption Monitoring Commission, it organized an international conference at which international experts discussed best practices in the fight against corruption. The Office also continued to chair a working-group of international and bilateral missions interested in assisting these efforts.

Elimination of rocket fuel component stocks

The Office continued its rocket fuel component disposal project launched in 2004 at the request of the Armenian Government. *Melange* is a hazardous material that, due to the deterioration of storage containers, represents a risk to the population and the environment. With the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Defence on 30 September, the final and decisive phase of project implementation was initiated. The result will be the environmentally sound recycling of 872 tons of stockpiled *Melange* into a mineral dressing, which will be used for the improvement of pH-poor soil in the region. (For more on this topic, please see page 11.)

Recycling hazardous rocket fuel is key to address Armenia's environmental and military safety.



OSCE





Activities in the Syunik province included an environmental impact assessment visit.

The Office supported members of an anti-corruption coalition of NGOs to raise public awareness on corruption in important sectors such as traffic police, healthcare delivery, higher education and the civil service. The Office, jointly with the General Prosecutor's Office, translated and published an Armenian version of the publication *Best Practices on Combating Corruption*, produced by the office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

Politico-military dimension activities

Police assistance. In the framework of the OSCE's Police Assistance Programme, the Office promoted community-oriented policing in a district in Yerevan with the aim to improve the exchange of information between the police and the public, as well as to increase the public's confidence in the police.

The Office also supported the refurbishment of the national training centre for non-commissioned officers and is looking at additions to the Centre's curriculum in 2006 to bring it in line with international standards.

Addressing cyber security. The Office assumed a leading role in addressing this increasingly important issue. Armenia's rapidly developing IT-services sector is

vulnerable to cyber attack. In co-operation with the authorities, the Office played a key role in setting up a National Task Force to draft a National Action Plan on cyber security. The draft outlines methods to strengthen the legislative and technical aspects of cyber security and bolster the Government's capabilities to combat cyber crime.

Economic and environmental dimension activities

The Office supported the establishment of four new Aarhus Centres in three regions, whose aim is to raise public awareness of environmental issues and encourage public participation in environmental decision-making.

The Office continued its support for the implementation of the Armenian component of the South Caucasus River Monitoring Project, which focused in 2005 on re-establishing a regional water monitoring system, increasing local technical capabilities and creating a model sharing system accessible by Internet. This OSCE-NATO Project, now in its fourth year, monitors the quality and quantity of the waters of the Kura and Araks river basin.

The Office assisted the administration of the province of Syunik in the economic and social development of this remote and unique region. Activities included develop-

ment of a Syunik guidebook designed to attract both tourists and potential investors, as well as an environmental impact assessment of the mining industry in the town of Kajaran, a task undertaken at the local community's request. The Office, together with UNDP, commissioned a feasibility study on the establishment of a business incubator in the city of Goris focused on fostering SMEs.

To help combat money laundering and suppress the financing of terrorism, the Office, at the request of the Armenian authorities, supported the adoption of a legislative framework and the establishment of a Financial Intelligence Unit under the Central Bank of Armenia. The Office organized conferences and facilitated training programmes to support Armenia's integration into international organizations involved in combating crime.

To facilitate commerce and trade, the Office, together with the Eurasia foundation, launched a multi-year project to initiate a dialogue in the southern Caucasus region aimed at discussing possibilities to harmonize customs regulations and policies. The Office helped organize a workshop focusing on problems with legal and structural reforms related to trade and commerce and promoting dialogue between the business community and the relevant state officials across the region.

To enhance economic legislation reform, the Office, at the request of the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, conducted a series of roundtables focused on the reduction of administrative barriers and improving the business environment for SMEs. The reform recommendations developed during these discussions were incorporated into the 2006 *State Programme for SME Development*.

Human dimension activities

The Office chaired the international working group on Ombudsman issues. Jointly with the ODIHR, the Office contributed to strengthening the Armenian Ombudsman Office's capacities through exchange visits with Polish and Lithuanian Ombudsman institutions.

Through culture to tolerance

Prompted by the Declaration adopted at the OSCE meeting in Cordoba in June, the Office and the Foreign Ministry organized a concert on 29 September to promote the culture of tolerance in Armenia. Leading Armenian soloists and the Sympho-Jazz Orchestra of Public TV and Radio performed works by the outstanding Armenian composer, Willi Weiner, whose music draws on the cultural traditions of several nations. A special tri-lingual brochure of OSCE commitments based on the Helsinki Final Act, the 1990 Copenhagen Document, the 1990 Paris Charter for New Europe, and the Cordoba Declaration-- was published and distributed to guests at the event.

“The significance of such events is enormous,” said Armen Arnautov-Sargysan, Vice-President of the Menora Cultural Centre, co-organizer of the event. “(We are) building bridges of mutual understanding and convergence through history, culture, traditions and art, respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of cultures of the whole world.”

Zaven Khachikyan



Outstanding Armenian composer Willi Weiner’s music draws on the cultural traditions of several nations.



Willi Weiner’s works are performed at a concert on 29 September to promote the culture of tolerance.

Around 300 employees of the penitentiary system will receive training annually at the training centre, newly refurbished by the Office and the Ministry of Justice.

Based on its project of monitoring human rights in the Armenian military, the Office developed and presented to the Ministry of Defence and armed forces a series of recommendations, including the creation of an independent channel for receipt of complaints from servicemen and more systematic instruction in human rights.

The Office also consulted with the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues and the Ministry of Health on improving alternatives to military service in Armenia. The Office organized a roundtable involving major stakeholders in order to discuss different views of the practice of alternative service and to find a common denominator.

Some 150 children with disabilities benefited from the Community Centre in Noyemberyan region, which was established with the Office’s support. The Centre promotes socialization and inclusion of children with disabilities and provides

support to their families. It raises awareness of their problems with local authorities and community leaders.

The Office continued to work closely with the relevant Armenian authorities, the Human Rights Defender and civil society with regard to individual human rights complaints. The treatment of complaints by those authorities allows for better assessment of the human rights situation in the country and enhances the promotion of human rights. The Office also promoted its human rights public awareness campaign, addressing the issues of religious minorities and alternatives to military service.

The Office assisted the Government in developing anti-trafficking legislation and effective human rights-based mechanisms to protect and assist the victims of trafficking (National Referral Mechanism). The Office conducted a series of roundtables and seminars for the Armenian authorities and NGOs active in this field. In mid-2005 the Office strengthened its co-operation with the General Prosecutor’s Office in the enforcement of existing legislation.

The Office co-operated with the Government and other international partners in implementing the *National Plan of Action on Women’s Advancement*, adopted in 2004. The Office implemented a project aimed at increasing awareness of the role of women in the society among teenage students and, together with the UNDP, supported women’s participation in the local elections held in autumn.

The Office also continued to closely follow developments in the area of freedom of the media. The Media Legislation Working Group, chaired by the Office, continued to serve as an open forum for exchanging information, discussing problems and joint measures to improve the situation.

Head of Office:
Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin
Revised budget: €1,460,900
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