

**6th meeting of the Co-ordination Group
between the Council of Europe and the OSCE
(Strasbourg, 19 October 2007)**

Report by the Chairs

1. The sixth meeting of the Co-ordination Group between the Council of Europe and the OSCE took place on 19 October 2007 at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg. The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Sladjana Prica, Permanent Representative of Serbia to the Council of Europe, Chairperson of the Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe, and co-chaired by Ambassador Carlos Sanchez de Boado, Permanent Representative of Spain to the OSCE, Chairman of the Permanent Council of the OSCE. The OSCE delegation included representatives of the OSCE Troika, the four OSCE focal points and the Secretariat. The Council of Europe delegation included representatives of the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies, the Chair of the Rapporteur Group on External Relations, the Council of Europe focal points and the Secretary General, Terry Davis.
2. In the light of the reports jointly presented by the OSCE and Council of Europe focal points, the Group welcomed the progress made regarding co-operation in these four areas. The Group invited the Secretariats to regularly provide the political bodies with information on the activities of the other organisation and, to the extent possible, to improve the opportunities for the planning of joint activities.
3. The Group noted that further opportunities for joint action in the agreed priority areas should be seized upon on the occasion of the events to be organised by one of them inviting the other to be associated or jointly by both institutions where appropriate, taking into consideration their different membership. In case of such joint events, the OSCE and the Council of Europe will take the necessary decisions on the subject, dates, agenda and modalities following consultations between the two organisations.
4. Regarding the fight against terrorism, the Group took note of cooperation between the two organisations. OSCE participated in the Council of Europe International Conference "Why terrorism?- Addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism" and in CODEXTER last April. The Council of Europe participated in OSCE events, like the High level meeting on Victims of Terrorism (Vienna, 13-14 September 2007). A workshop on Enhancing International Legal Co-operation in Criminal Matters related to Terrorism will be jointly organised by the UNODC, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. It will be held in Turkey in 2008 and will be an occasion to discuss regional and universal standards in this field. Cooperation was also regular with ODIHR, *inter alia* as regards the preparation of an ODIHR manual on human rights and the fight against terrorism and for participation in a series of training seminars on human rights and terrorism organised by the Council of Europe. The Group recalled OSCE Ministerial Decision 07/06 in support of the Council of Europe Convention for the prevention of terrorism, which entered into force on 1 June 2007.
5. As regards the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, the Group welcomed the appointment of Ambassador Knut Vollebaek as the new OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. It noted excellent level of working relations and exchanges between the Council of Europe and the HCNM. For example, the HCNM recently submitted detailed comments on the preliminary draft commentary prepared by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention on the effective participation of national minorities. The Group welcomed innovative aspects in the co-operation between the two organisations and the joint publication "National Minority Standards – a compilation of the OSCE and Council of Europe texts", which was published in English in June 2007. The preparation of French and Russian versions is under way. The Group also took note of the joint CoE and HCNM participation by their observers in Ukrainian-Romanian missions monitoring the situation of, respectively, Romanians in Ukraine and Ukrainians in Romania. This enables on-the-spot observation of the minority situation on both sides and thus helps to better identify the scope of existing needs and possible improvements. It was agreed that avenues for further co-operation could be identified. In this connection, the Group welcomed the suggestion of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities to jointly assist the implementation of the law on the repatriation of Meshketians in Georgia.

6. Concerning co-operation in the fight against trafficking in human beings, the Group noted the very good continued working relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE Special Representative / Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, starting from her first visit to the Council of Europe. The OSCE Special Representative had been an advocate for the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking, where appropriate, and was a key note speaker at a seminar in Cyprus on Action (Nicosia, 15-16 February 2007) and in Paris on 27-28 September 2007, promoting the OSCE multidimensional and victim-centered approach to trafficking in human beings and encouraging the due implementation of the OSCE anti-trafficking commitments. On 8-9 November, a high-level conference will be organised in Strasbourg on the monitoring mechanism of the Convention (GRETA), at which the OSCE Special Representative will be present. The Convention currently had 9 ratifications and 1 more was needed for it to enter into force. This 10th ratification will most probably take place in the incoming month, which will allow the entry into force of the Convention in the beginning of 2008. The Group took note that the Council of Europe and the OSCE were considering preparing a joint publication in 2008 on action against trafficking in human beings incorporating the most important Council of Europe legal instruments and political decisions of the OSCE, as well as combining efforts in organising a joint follow-up event to the OSCE 6th Alliance Conference on National Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms to address trafficking in human beings. The advisability of jointly organising regional meetings in countries of origin, transit and destination was also mentioned.

7. The Group welcomed the excellent practical co-operation between the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and other bodies such as the Division for Citizenship and Human Rights Education, the Venice Commission and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, geared to promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. This co-operation should continue, increasing the emphasis on joint activities to be conducted in the fields of education to promote mutual respect and understanding and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. On these subjects, the Group took stock of past and future initiatives of both organisations, such as the European Conference on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue, organised by the San Marino Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 23 and 24 April 2007, the presentation of the CoE "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue" at the Annual Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Madrid in January 2008, the OSCE/ODIHR's *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and beliefs* which the Council of Europe was engaged in developing and the OSCE Conference on "Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims" (Cordoba, 9-10 October 2007), in which the Council of Europe participated.

8. The initiation of a compendium of "good practice" in human rights and education for mutual respect and understanding was highlighted as a good example of joint project between the two organisations. The Group also welcomed a joint project between the ODIHR, the Council of Europe and UNESCO which will lead to guidelines and principles for Education for Mutual Respect and Understanding, which will be completed towards the end of 2008.

9. Referring to the future, the Group agreed on the necessity of sustaining the efforts that had been undertaken over the last three years. The importance of a constant flow of information between the two organisations on their respective activities and projects was underlined. This will allow to identify at early planning stages the potential areas for co-operation and to keep the risks of unnecessary duplication to a minimum, bearing in mind the differences between the two organisations regarding their membership, mandates and working methods.

10. In connection with the joint activities currently being developed, the Group noted that these had to be designed on a long-term basis in order to maximise their impact. Therefore, when a particular activity was being devised jointly, special attention should subsequently be paid to securing follow-up.

11. The Group invited the focal points to maintain contacts as close as possible during the coming months so as to ensure that the co-operation process could continue on the basis of these guidelines, with a view to reporting on progress at the following meeting. In this context, the Group noted the specific value of co-operation on the ground between the two organisations and welcomed the excellent working relations which exist between the OSCE field missions and the Council of Europe offices.

12. In conclusion, the Group decided to meet again in Vienna on 14 March 2008. It was also agreed that the two Chairs will report to the Permanent Council and the Committee of Ministers on the results of the present meeting as soon as possible.