

OSCE

NEWSLETTER

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Porto Ministerial Council sets course for OSCE in 21st century

Foreign Ministers adopt charter on anti-terrorism, initiate annual review of security

By Keith Jinks

The Tenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE concluded on 7 December in Porto, Portugal, by adopting a range of deci-

sions crucial to the Organization's future role. Among these are an OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism, a set of agreed guidelines to meet

new challenges to security and a decision to hold an Annual Security Review Conference, beginning in 2003. The Ministers also decided that Bulgaria



OSCE/AT/Inst/02/01

“The OSCE is us,” says incoming Dutch Chairman-in-Office

Netherlands Chairmanship: OSCE concept of human security to take centre stage

“We cannot pretend that the adopting of texts by itself is enough,” said incoming OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dutch Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in an interview with Richard Murphy, Head of Press and Public Information. He called on participating States to reconfirm their commitment to the organiza-

tion and reminded them that “the OSCE is us”. Excerpts:

What do you hope to achieve during the Dutch Chairmanship?

Let me start by saying that, in my opinion, there are two things that set the OSCE apart from many other organiza-

tions active in the same or similar areas: the field missions and the fact that 55 States participate in the work of the Organization. Through its presence in areas that have been, until recently, involved in conflicts or that are still unstable because of the potential of conflict, the OSCE can prove its commitment to securing



would assume the OSCE Chairmanship in 2004 and Slovenia in 2005.

After the opening address by Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Manuel Durao Barroso, the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz, launched the meeting on 6 December with a call for the OSCE to demonstrate its capacity to respond to changes in the evolving European security architecture.

He said that the emergence and development of new threats to individual and collective security, and the continuing adjustments of the political and security arrangements in Europe, had led to a

recasting of the OSCE's future role.

"The driving force behind the Portuguese Chairmanship over this past year has been the strong conviction that the OSCE will continue to make a valuable, and in some fields unparalleled, contribution to peace and security in our ever-changing world," he continued. "Our efforts, therefore, were geared towards furthering the role of the OSCE as a forum of political dialogue within the Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian space."

Portugal's efforts, he added, were also channelled towards developing and consolidating the means necessary to enhance the Organization's ability to

successfully address varying security concerns.

With the adoption of the OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism, the OSCE and its participating States had reiterated the timeless core principles guiding the Organization's actions in the universal fight against terrorism, Foreign Minister Martins da Cruz said.

The Charter condemns "in the strongest terms terrorism in all its forms

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peace and stability. The missions are an important engine of change and, fortunately, that role is increasingly recognized by local populations.

I am hoping that in the year ahead, by streamlining the OSCE and focusing on specific issues where it holds comparative advantage, we will contribute to the Organization's work in strengthening the four pillars of any stable democracy with a strong legal order at its base: every country needs a functioning parliament, an independent judiciary, a modern police force at the service of the country's citizens, and professional and objective media.

The field experience that the OSCE can provide, the backing of 55 participating States, as well as the desire and commitment of the Netherlands to provide the OSCE with the necessary tools and political backing should put the Organization in a position where it can really make a difference.

Trafficking, especially in human beings, is clearly going to be a key focus. What can the OSCE do to address this issue?

Trafficking, not only in human beings, but also in weapons and drugs, is a crime that poses a problem for almost every participating State. It involves organized and international networks of criminals, often dealing in the whole range of illegal trafficking all at the same time. The trauma and social disruption caused by these criminal activities is beyond



New OSCE Chairman-in-Office Jaap de Hoop Scheffer was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands on 22 July 2002. From 1986 to 2002, he was a member of the House of Representatives of the States General for the Christian Democratic Alliance and, from 1997 to 2001, was leader of the parliamentary party. He was employed in his country's Foreign Service from 1976 to 1986, serving in Ghana, in Brussels as part of the Permanent Delegation to NATO, and as Private Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

description. No State can tackle trafficking by itself. States need to work together, making sure that their efforts to fight this problem don't stop at the border.

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and manifestations” and calls on States to “work together to prevent, suppress, investigate and prosecute terrorist acts, including through increased co-operation and full implementation of the relevant international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism”.

The Charter also notes “the links between terrorism and transnational organized crime, money laundering, trafficking in human beings, drugs and arms, and in this regard emphasizes the need to enhance co-ordination and to develop co-operative approaches at all levels in order to strengthen their response to these serious threats and

challenges to security and stability”.

Comprehensive strategy

Ministers instructed the Permanent Council to continue its work to develop a comprehensive OSCE Strategy to address threats to security and stability in the 21st century and to request the Forum for Security Co-operation to make its own contribution to this work.

[The Permanent Council in Vienna is the Organization’s main standing body for political consultation and decision-making, while the Forum for Security Co-operation is an autonomous body dealing with arms control and confi-

dence- and security-building measures.]

At the culmination of the meeting, the Chairman-in-Office said that important decisions had been adopted and the commitment of the OSCE to furthering peace and stability had been strongly reaffirmed. “The results testify to the vitality and continued relevance of the OSCE and its ability to adapt swiftly and efficiently to shifting circumstances,” Foreign Minister Martins da Cruz said.

He noted that the 55-nation OSCE remained the only regional security organization which was simultaneously pan-European, trans-Atlantic and Eurasian. “In a united Europe, there are

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The OSCE is particularly well-placed to deal with this issue, not only because 55 States can work together on the solutions, but also because in order for each of us to be effective, the Organization can help us do a couple of things: we need to control our borders, we have to make sure that the police recognize the problem, that they are properly trained to act against the problem, that a legal basis exists to track down traffickers, and that prosecutors and courts can prosecute this crime.

So, here you see that trafficking strikes at the OSCE’s core activities: the promotion of human security, the rule of law, and social and political stability. The missions are crucial in realizing this goal, and the Chairman-in-Office is there to support their efforts.

Given the enlargement of NATO and the European Union, and the creation of a NATO-Russia Council, is the OSCE still necessary?

I don’t like the comparison between the OSCE, the EU and NATO. First of all, I don’t think such comparisons serve any clear purpose. Secondly, I believe it does not do justice to any of these organizations. But speaking more specifically of the *raison d’être* of the OSCE, I have no doubt it’s still needed! The emphasis that the OSCE places on defining security – which is much broader than a strictly politico-military one – is very different from the approach taken by other organizations.

It is what we would call “human secu-

urity”, a concept that we in the OSCE have defined in more detail by saying that it is the result of the combination of peace and the rule of law: peace + rule of law = human security. I hope we will manage during our Chairmanship to put this concept of human security very much at centre stage.

Coming back to your question, though, I would add that the enlargement of both the EU and NATO cannot remain without consequences for other organizations. This should not be seen as a problem, however. It is related to changing international circumstances. There is nothing wrong with asking yourself whether your mandate and your core activities still apply in a different environment. It’s like playing football: you change your team according to your adversary, or to the kind of play that the opposite party is playing.

Of course, it is true that the activities of these organizations border on each other’s mandates. This is a question of co-ordination, and this is why the Netherlands, during its Chairmanship, will pay due attention to the issue of co-operation between the OSCE and other international organizations, such as the EU and NATO, but also the Council of Europe. This is something I have just mentioned in Porto.

In this regard, the Netherlands will enjoy three consecutive chairmanships: first, the OSCE, then the Council of Europe in November 2003, and thirdly, the Presidency of the EU in the second half of 2004. I am hopeful that we will be able to

use these opportunities to increase the cohesion between the activities of these organizations.

What do you think needs to change to make the OSCE more efficient?

We need the reconfirmed commitment of all the participating States to the Organization; we need to give the Organization the tools that we think it needs to carry out the role we want it to play. This may sound more complicated than it is. It is often forgotten that the Organization is really us. It is as strong or as weak as we want it to be.

Do we want the OSCE to take up the issue of terrorism? Well, then let’s give it clear guidelines and the means to do so. Do we want to develop a strategy addressing threats to security and stability in the 21st century? Well, this probably requires additional funding. What I am trying to say is: we cannot pretend that the adopting of texts by itself is enough. We need consensus, but not just about what is written on paper. We need consensus because we want to take this Organization forward.

This requires, among other things, that we need to reach agreement among ourselves on the balance that should be established between the human, economic and environmental, and politico-military dimensions. We would also like to focus on this challenge during our Chairmanship.

Most of the other Foreign Ministers did not make it to Porto. Does this indicate they no longer feel the

no dividing lines," he said. "We must preserve the OSCE as our common hope for continued dialogue and cooperation."

The participating States also adopted a Porto Ministerial Declaration entitled, "Responding to Change", in which they committed themselves to working together "to protect our peoples from existing and emerging threats to security".

"Terrorism, as recent atrocities in Moscow, Bali and Mombasa demonstrate, remains a threat to individual and global security," the Chairman-in-Office said. "No organization or State can meet this challenge on its own – we need to reinforce our regional and global cooperation in support of the United Nations' anti-terrorism strategy."

During its Chairmanship, Minister Martins da Cruz added, Portugal sought to ensure that the OSCE continued to adapt to meet the new challenges. This adaptation involved institutional reforms, "but it requires, above all, the availability of participating States to enable the OSCE to continue taking on the tasks entrusted to it by the international community".

Ministers also adopted measures to ensure that the OSCE concept of comprehensive security – embracing the politico-military, economic and envi-

ronmental and human dimensions of security – was not an empty one. They agreed to start holding an Annual Security Review Conference, complementing the annual human dimension reviews and the economic forum meetings. They also agreed to continue reinforcing the economic and environmental dimension.

The Security Review Conference will meet annually, in Vienna unless decided otherwise. The meeting will last two to three days, and will be held before the summer recess of the Permanent Council.

The continued importance of the human dimension was underlined by a Declaration on Trafficking in Human Beings. "This Declaration is particularly timely as this appalling form of modern slavery affects all OSCE participating States, whether as countries of origin for its unfortunate victims, transit countries or countries of destination," Minister Martins da Cruz said.

The Ministers also discussed a broad range of regional issues. The Portuguese Chairmanship received a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus with a proposal for the mandate of a new office replacing the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group. [On 30 December, the Permanent Council agreed to create a new OSCE Office in Minsk from

1 January 2003. See page 17.]

The Chairman-in-Office paid tribute to the dedicated work of the OSCE's field staff of about 3,500, including all Heads of Mission, as well as the staff of the Secretariat.

Although all the documents were adopted with the OSCE's customary consensus, a number of countries registered reservations on specific decisions. These, together with all the statements from the 55 participating States and speeches by invited guests and representatives of international organizations, can be found on the OSCE's special Ministerial Council website at www.osce.org/events/mc/portugal2002/ldocuments/. The website also features a selection of photographs of ministers and other officials taken during the meeting.

The Ministerial Council, the highest negotiating and political decision-making body of the OSCE after the Summit of Heads of State or Government, is held annually except in those years when a Summit has been called. The next Ministerial Council meeting will take place on 1 and 2 December 2003, in the Netherlands.

Keith Jinks is Senior Press and Public Information Officer in the OSCE Secretariat.

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Organization is important, and what can be done to persuade them otherwise?

Let me say first of all, that the international agenda of EU ministers has been quite heavy in the past few weeks. The Porto Ministerial Council was preceded by an important NATO summit in Prague and was going to be followed, shortly after, by the EU summit on enlargement in Copenhagen.

Having said that, one cannot deny that the failure of Ministers to attend the OSCE Ministerial Council is in some ways indicative of the importance they attached to the gathering. I think it shows, once again, that the OSCE needs to have a very clear focus and a streamlining of its activities.

In other words, we need to make sure that we concentrate our efforts on the

main characteristic of the Organization: its presence and activities in the field. The missions and specialized institutions such as the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights are what set this Organization apart from others. Through our field presence, we can contribute to democratic changes and the strengthening of the rule of law in the host countries. Our presence at high-level meetings should support those efforts and not become an end in itself.

Some delegations question the effectiveness of OSCE field missions, especially the smaller ones. What is your view on this?

Our view on the importance of field

missions is very clear: the missions are an essential tool of the Organization in its efforts to establish stability and security. Their efficiency can be increased partly through improved policy and management guidance from the Chairman-in-Office and the Secretariat, but also by strengthening relations between the missions and the host countries.

A mission, independently of its size, can profit from regular, day-to-day contact with the authorities and with official and non-governmental institutions in the country. We need to work on this area and increase the number of so-called "second generation missions". At the same time, we have to recognize that missions are not meant to last a life-time. If missions are closed down because the situation in the host country makes them superfluous, that is a good thing.

For Eurasian security, call the OSCE Not NATO

By Robert Barry

The following commentary appeared in the International Herald Tribune of 20 November 2002. Ambassador Robert Barry based it on his paper, 'The OSCE: A Forgotten Transatlantic Security Organization?', published as a research report of the British American Security Information Council (BASIC), of which he is a board member. With offices in the United States and the United Kingdom, BASIC is an independent research organization that analyzes and promotes awareness of international security issues to foster informed debate on both sides of the Atlantic.

WASHINGTON – Some commentators are talking as if the enlargement of NATO, to be agreed at the Prague summit meeting this week [21-22 November], and the recent creation of a NATO-Russia Council, will create a brand-new security organization "from Vancouver to Vladivostok", embracing the United States and most of Europe and Eurasia.

They seem to have forgotten that such an organization already exists.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE, is seldom mentioned in American and European media and is virtually unknown to the American public. Yet, unlike NATO, the 55-nation OSCE has unique capabilities to prevent conflict and deal with post-conflict situations.

During the last decade, the OSCE has helped to end civil war in Tajikistan, has constrained conflict in [the former Yugoslav Republic of] Macedonia, Moldova and Georgia and played a major role in building civil society in post-conflict Bosnia and Kosovo.

The OSCE, spawned by the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, is uniquely suited to many American goals. It is the only European security forum that includes



Ambassador Robert Barry was involved in OSCE/CSCE affairs as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, as head of the U.S. delegation to the Stockholm negotiations on Disarmament in Europe, and as co-ordinator of U.S. assistance to Eastern Europe. His BASIC report on the OSCE and the summary of discussions at a seminar on the future of the OSCE, sponsored by BASIC and the Royal Norwegian Embassy on 22 October in Washington, D.C., are available at www.basicint.org. (See also OSCE Newsletter, 'U.S. officials reaffirm strong commitment to OSCE', September-October 2002.)

the United States, Canada and the Russian Federation as full members. It follows a comprehensive approach to security that emphasizes human rights and economic development as well as military security issues.

It is agile and far less expensive than comparable international organizations. Its unique advantage is that it is highly operational. With more than 3,000 people in 19 field missions in 17

countries, the OSCE has a stronger operational capability than any other international organization in Europe.

As concern over conflict in the Balkans has given way to conflict prevention in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the OSCE's centre of attention has gradually moved eastward. With the international focus on Afghanistan and the stationing of U.S. and coalition forces in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – all OSCE members – stability in Central Asia promises to be a growing concern for the United States and its OSCE partners.

In the coming decade, the combination of organized crime, religious extremism, economic collapse and terrorism will create a need for the OSCE to play a greater role in this region. It is difficult to see what other organization could fulfill this role.

Whatever direction NATO takes after enlargement and the creation of the NATO-Russia Council, it is in no position to undertake the kind of conflict-prevention or post-conflict peace-building such as the OSCE has been involved in in [the former Yugoslav Republic of] Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan.

How about the Council of Europe? No Central Asian state is a member.

The European Union could conceivably play a larger role among non-members of NATO and the Council of Europe. But it is probably beyond the EU's capability to take on such a role without the participation of the United States and Russia, to say nothing of such important non-EU players as Canada, Switzerland and Norway.

The OSCE, by contrast, has a proven track record in effectively managing pre-conflict and post-conflict situations through its on-the-spot missions. It puts international staff on the

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ground for the long term, where they can understand the dynamics and build relationships with local officials.

Particularly after the September 11 attacks, the OSCE should be the instrument of choice in multilateral efforts to prevent the spread of terror by promoting civil society, especially in the volatile former Soviet republics of Central Asia bordering Afghanistan.

To deal with such immediate challenges as terrorism and Islamic extremism, we must pay more attention to long-term values – democracy, the rule of law, the development of market economies, modernization and education.

The OSCE, which should be the instrument of choice for dealing with these problems, particularly in Central

Asia, is underutilized and has been relegated to the margins by policymakers. It is time for the United States and its allies to reverse this trend.

The author, a retired U.S. ambassador, headed the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1998 to 2001. He contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

Director of OSCE Internal Oversight joins UN Inspectorate

As Director of Internal Oversight for the past 17 months, Ambassador Victor Vislykh has been the OSCE's financial watchdog, ensuring that high standards of propriety and integrity are maintained and that the money of participating States is well spent. He has recently been appointed by the United Nations General Assembly as a member of the UN System Inspectorate. Before taking up his new responsibilities in Geneva in January 2003, Ambassador Vislykh shared some parting words with the OSCE Newsletter.

What were the main problems you had to deal with in the OSCE and how do you see its present administrative and financial health?

On the whole, it is a robust and healthy Organization. There are some areas that lack sufficient transparency, such as procurement, project selection and implementation. But given the Secretary General's determination to improve management throughout the OSCE and the participating States' commitment to strengthen internal and external oversight, I am quite sure that this is a temporary situation.

There are many areas that have proved to be problematic from an audit perspective, but I will only mention one, which is close to my heart: the OSCE's accountability structure is unclear and our policies, regulations, rules and pro-

cedures are often either non-existent, inadequate or ambiguous. As auditors, one of our many responsibilities is to carry out compliance audits – to compare what is going on with what the rule book says. But because the rule book is often unclear, we sometimes find ourselves having to decide whether a particular practice or activity is reasonable and acceptable.

While we always exercise our judgement prudently, this dual role – to put it bluntly – as both prosecutor and judge can cause tensions with some – but certainly not all – senior managers, to the extent that the mandate given to us by the Permanent Council has been challenged and attempts have been made to undermine it.

The Secretary General has, however, given Internal Oversight his full support and encouragement, as have most other Heads of Institution and Heads of Mission. Of course, the phenomenon caused by the poor regulatory framework affects the work of the whole OSCE in some way; this is something that the Secretary General is actively trying to address.

What is your personal view on the future of the OSCE?

It seems to me that with the continuing expansion of the European Union and NATO, there is a danger of the OSCE losing its relevance. There is less and less uniqueness in its agenda or membership. The only remaining unique

feature of the OSCE is its *modus operandi*, its famous flexibility. But that is also being steadily eroded.

This, of course, is the pessimistic view. We need to view all this as a challenge and turn it to our advantage. We are a flexible organization, unburdened by a huge bureaucracy. And we can certainly deliver much more quickly than either the UN or the EU, and probably at much less cost.

Unless the OSCE finds a really unique, substantive niche that would make it an undisputed leader and expert in an area that is vital for strengthening security and co-operation in Europe, it may not survive until the next decade. I can envision, for example, the development of effective ways of defusing inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions within and around Europe.

The Organization will also have to recognize that for all practical purposes, there are no longer tangible security threats within Europe. In the 21st century, these threats will originate mostly from outside.

What has given you the most satisfaction in your career?

At the Russian Foreign Ministry I succeeded in creating a team of world-class professionals who are expert in the administrative and budgetary functioning of international organizations. This has allowed my Government to take a

pro-active stand in the financial bodies of these organizations and more effectively influence the political decision-making process. The work of these experts has saved Russian taxpayers

hundreds of millions of dollars.

At the OSCE Secretariat, I am pleased that the Office of Internal Oversight has laid a solid foundation for the future. I would like to pay tribute to our

small team and their hard work, and to single out my deputy, Andrew Caddies, for special mention. Andrew is what I can only describe as the consummate professional.

Strong mandate modernizes internal auditing

OSCE/Alex. Nitzsche



Ambassador Victor Vislykh: distinguished career in international affairs

Ambassador Victor Vislykh has largely been responsible for re-inventing the old internal audit function into a modern, independent oversight office, with a strong and broad mandate from the Permanent Council. As well as continuing to carry out compliance and financial audits, Internal Oversight,

which is under the Office of the Secretary General, is now responsible for programme and project evaluation and efficiency studies.

The Oversight team is also responsible for carrying out investigations into allegations of fraud, mismanagement and abuse of authority and has established a hotline through

which staff and mission members can report cases with guaranteed confidentiality. The office has the right of access at all times to OSCE papers, staff and premises and is wholly independent.

Ambassador Vislykh has had a long and distinguished career in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN Secretariat. For more than 20 years, he represented Russia in the most influential external oversight bodies of the UN General Assembly in New York. In 1991, at the age of 45, he became the first Russian citizen to be appointed Director of Administration in the United Nations.

In 1995, he was appointed Deputy Director General, Department of International Organizations, in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His responsibilities included the development and implementation of national policy on administrative, budgetary and personnel issues of all international organizations. Ambassador Vislykh served on the Russian Federation's Delegation to the OSCE from 1994 to 2001.

Visit the website of the
Netherlands Chairmanship 2003 at:

www.osce.org/cio/netherlands



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New projects to strengthen link between security and environment

OSCE, NATO and partners launch joint activities

By Gianluca Rampolla

The OSCE, in partnership with specialized organizations, has identified a number of projects aimed at addressing water-related security risks and promoting dialogue and co-operation on sustainable water management. The projects are expected to enhance early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms and to strengthen confidence-building and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The newly launched activities are in response to the recommendations of the Tenth OSCE Economic Forum, which was held in Prague in May 2002. The 55 OSCE participating States had warned that shared water resources, if not managed properly, could threaten sustainable development and lead to political instability.

NATO to monitor southern Caucasus waters with OSCE assistance

In a first joint activity of its kind with NATO, the Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) will contribute to laying the scientific basis for the sound management of the Kura-Araks basin in southern Caucasus through the provision of political, logistical and financial support. The OSCE's field offices in the area will play an important role in the effort.

The NATO Science for Peace (SfP) programme, which had actively sought the OSCE's involvement, is providing a grant of 430,000 euros for the project over three years. The OSCE will co-finance it with 50,000 euros for activities that are not covered by NATO.

The project will monitor water resources in a total of 30 sites in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Local technical capabilities will be improved; standard sampling, analysis and data management techniques will be established; and a model-sharing system will be cre-



Sound management of the Kura-Araks basin will promote sustainable development and security in the southern Caucasus

ated and made accessible on the Internet.

The project's main activities, designed by three experts from each of the partner countries, will involve sample and data collection, training, laboratory analysis and data management, and creating a monitoring system for the management of the water basin.

Data will be centralized on a website managed by the University of New Mexico and will be available to users cost-free. A dynamic simulation modelling platform will serve to develop models of the Kura-Araks system.

Scientists in the NATO Science for Peace Programme and specialists in OSCE/OCEEA have welcomed the challenge of combining their expertise to ensure that the project is scientifically and technically sound and that its potentially significant impact on the region's stability and security is realized.

Kyrgyz-Kazakh water commission to be set up

The OSCE, together with the United Nations Economic Commission for

Europe (UN ECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), is helping the Governments of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to establish an inter-governmental transboundary water commission.

This involves developing the water commission's statutes and other activities to enable the two countries to co-operate more closely on the Chu and Talas rivers, following an agreement signed in 2000.

The project is expected to serve as a model of efficient management of shared water resources for the region. Institutional arrangements, policies and operational procedures and guidelines, and capacity-building activities will be put in place through a series of meetings, fact-finding missions, training and publications.

An economic analysis of the Chu and Talas rivers and policy recommendations aimed at the sustainable management of the waters will be integrated into a report, which will be published in English and Russian.

OSCE Collection Movement/Araks, Nat 02/04

SE Europe and Central Asia to map out environmental agenda

The OSCE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are heading a project to promote co-operation on environmental management as a strategy for reducing insecurity in south-eastern Europe and Central Asia. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN ECE and a coalition of partners are co-operating on the project.

The initiative will harness the partner organizations' special strengths to identify environmental threats to security, determine potential solutions, encourage

regional co-operation and help ensure that these issues are properly integrated into national decision-making and international assistance efforts.

The project will result in thematic maps illustrating the significant environmental threats to each region and environmental policy tools that can be employed to mitigate these threats.

Regional consultations with local stakeholders will be aimed at defining the most relevant environment and security linkages both in south-eastern Europe and Central Asia. The first regional meeting on environment and

security in south-eastern Europe took place in Belgrade on 3 and 4 December. The first regional meeting for Central Asia will be held on 20 and 21 January in Ashgabad, Turkmenistan.

The maps will be presented in a report as well as on a website. The report and its conclusions and recommendations will be presented at the 'Environment for Europe' ministerial meeting in Kiev, Ukraine, and at the Eleventh OSCE Economic Forum, both in May 2003.

Gianluca Rampolla is Economic and Environmental Affairs Officer, OCEEA.

Tackling the complex task of cross-border co-operation

Central Asian officials take close-up look at French-German-Swiss border region

By Rainer Hermann

Eighteen officials from state administrations of nine different border provinces of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan visited the border region of Germany, France and Switzerland from 19 to 27 October to study practical ways of cross-border co-operation focusing on economic and environmental aspects.

Have we actually crossed the border already?" asked Safarali Saidshoev, as our bus passed over the *Europabrücke* between the German city of Kehl and Strasbourg in France. His amazement was understandable. Back home in the south of Tajikistan, where Mr. Saidshoev is Deputy Governor of the Khatlon region, crossing the border to neighbouring Afghanistan is still almost an impossible endeavour.

The issue of borders is currently high on the agenda almost everywhere in the Central Asian region. And for good reason. During the Soviet era, the borders shared by the republics were little more than administrative lines on maps with hardly any impact on daily life. With the onset of independence, these lines were



At Badische Stahlwerke Kehl in the southern Upper Rhine region, officials from Central Asia looked closely at the challenges of managing an industrial enterprise in a border region

suddenly turned into actual state borders.

The new States found themselves in a dilemma. On the one hand, they have to control borders effectively to serve their

security interests in a region heavily affected by drug trafficking and terrorism. On the other hand, these new borders have often made life difficult for normal citi-

zens, for example, by impeding trade opportunities or by creating obstacles for people who simply want to visit relatives who now happen to live in a different State.

Maksat Dykanov, chief of the Governor's office in Batken province in southern Kyrgyzstan, describes the problem succinctly: "Our countries' ruling elites have separated, but the people have not."

This situation led the Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) to develop a project that would allow a sharing of experiences on how other areas of the OSCE region have dealt with similar problems. The project was jointly financed by the Governments of Germany and Switzerland.

"We wanted officials in Central Asia to witness concrete, creative solutions to problems of a cross-border nature," explained Marc Baltes, Deputy Co-ordinator in the OCEEA.

The southern Upper Rhine region between Germany, France and Switzerland was chosen as the focus of the study tour because of its reputation as a model for successful cross-border co-operation.

"Of course, not all examples are relevant for Central Asia at this time, but we wanted to provide some inspiration and show a specific perspective," said Mr. Baltes. For example, there is a long way to go before a major tri-national infrastructure project such as the Euroairport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg – which was

also visited by the group – can be replicated in Central Asia.

Another goal of the project was to facilitate contacts between officials across borders. "It was most useful for me to get to know my colleague better across the border in Tajikistan," Mr. Dykanov said. "Back home, we want to develop some initiatives together." Kuralbek Nakeev, First Deputy Head of Jalal-Abad State Province Administration in Kyrgyzstan, added: "I hope that we can apply some of the ideas in our region to solve some of the problems along our borders."

Listening to the favourable feedback, Marc Baltes regretted that not all five Central Asian States had taken advantage of the opportunity to nominate participants.

A highlight of the trip was a tour of the *Badische Stahlwerke Kehl*, one of the most modern steel factories in the world, which is located on the German side of the Rhine. The participants were keen to find out how the factory dealt with the fact that about one-third of its employees were French citizens. The management explained that, along with a number of initiatives, the factory offered language courses to all employees.

The group also visited the tri-national information and service centre, *Infobest*, located in a former customs house on the border between Germany and France. The centre offers citizens cost-free information related to cross-border problems

encountered in day-to-day life, addressing questions such as: "How do social security systems apply across borders?" "What are the requirements for obtaining a residence or working permit in the neighbouring country?"

The visitors from Central Asia were particularly impressed by the intrinsic culture of service of the *Infobest* staff. "This is truly a service provided by the authorities to the citizens," observed a participant.

"We have seen many interesting practices, some of which could perhaps also be relevant to our environment," commented Viktor Dolzhenkov, First Deputy Region of the Administration of the Almaty Region in Kazakhstan. He believes proposals should be brought to the level of decision-makers such as chiefs of provinces and mayors. "The OSCE could play a role to assist in this process," suggested Mr. Dolzhenkov.

At the end of the tour, the officials suggested that they meet again in Central Asia to follow up on concrete proposals for cross-border initiatives.

The OSCE is ready to provide support that will bring Central Asia closer to the day when crossing borders will be so problem-free that it will elicit the same incredulous question: "Have we *actually* crossed the border already?"

Rainer Hermann is Adviser to the OSCE Secretary General.

Bosnian women take their place at the negotiating table

New, constructive players brought into political process

By Tanya L. Domi

Recognition is growing that including women in conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution activities around the world is essential if peace-making and democratization are to progress. The OSCE is one of the few organizations that is attempting to reverse the status quo through policy and practice.

At the height of nationalistic fervour just before the outbreak of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in 1992, the traditional role of women was repeatedly reinforced through the ethnocentric lens of the state-controlled mass media, which distorted women's roles in the family, in the work-

place and in religious life. By 1990, the number of women elected to parliament had plunged to an all-time low of one per cent of the total number of representatives. In September 1996, when the country held its first elections after the conclusion of the Dayton Peace Accords, the proportion of women elected was below

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two per cent. The women's party did not win a single seat in any of the three parliamentary bodies established by Dayton.

The almost total lack of women holding representative office was a stumbling block to the peace and democratization process at two levels. Firstly, 60 per cent of the population, i.e., women, were virtually absent from Dayton's governing structures. Secondly, the fact that the same men who had waged the war were readily elected and appointed to government positions allowed the conflict to continue in other forms.

By 1997, women were being regarded as the best hope for a sea change in the implementation of peace. The OSCE, which had been entrusted by the Dayton Accords with preparing, conducting and supervising post-war elections in the BiH, realized, after endless discussions with nationalistic and obstructionist elected officials, that women could potentially be more constructive partners. The moment had arrived to bring new players into the political process.

Overwhelming majority

Working closely with Bosnian women activists, the OSCE took major steps to secure a significant role for women in elected office, notably through the introduction of a minimum quota for female candidates. The new initiatives were carried out at the national level in 1998 by including women on closed party list-ballots, and at the local level in the municipal elections in 2000, by including them on an open party list-ballot.

If there was ever any doubt about whether the citizens of BiH would elect women to public office, it was laid to rest by a survey carried out by the OSCE Mission to BiH in June 1999. An overwhelming majority of some 1,000 male and female respondents from 100 municipalities supported a stronger role for women in political life, both in elective office and executive positions.

By November 2000, women occupied 18 per cent of posts in parliamentary bodies, cantons and municipalities, confirming that women *can* make tangible political gains at the ballot box in the nascent democracy of post-war Bosnia and



OSCE Mission BiH

*The women of
Bosnia and Herzegovina
are poised to assume
a more visible role in
political and public life*



OSCE Mission BiH/Clar/Gorandzic

Herzegovina. The results of the most recent national elections hold out hope that women have secured a stable presence in Bosnian politics (see table). However, it remains to be seen whether female office-holders – who are fast earning a reputation as serious and responsible political leaders capable of working across ethnic and party lines – will continue to represent the citizens of BiH in significant numbers.

Gender issues

Although academics and political analysts have increasingly been advocating for the inclusion of women in the political and nation-building process, there are no signs of a reversal of existing practice in the policy-making boards of most international organizations.

In the OSCE, at least, the move over the past few years to integrate gender issues into the mainstream of its field activities is promising and should be

encouraged. In 1998, the OSCE Mission to BiH introduced a policy to provide for minority gender representation. This was the first initiative of its kind in a field mission. In Kosovo, which also adopted a similar quota policy, the initial impact has been felt less, but efforts are continuing to reach out to women and civil society.

The work by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights over the past few years to combat the escalating rate of trafficking in human beings has also been crucial in addressing the plight of women in the region. The OSCE should continue to assign priority to incorporating these policies and programmes into the core of field work.

In partnership with the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, and with the support of individual governments, primarily from northern Europe, the OSCE Mission to

BiH launched a training programme in 1999 to build a core of qualified female political leaders in the region. Since then, their numbers have grown considerably.

By committing itself to actively promoting women's rights in south-eastern Europe, the international community will be seizing a genuine opportunity to accelerate the process of building sustainable and vibrant democratic societies. Perhaps this time, after a decade of war, empowered women will demand their rightful place at the negotiating table – and public opinion and the international community will support them.

Tanya Domi was with the OSCE Mission to BiH from 1996 to 2000, serving as Spokesperson and Director of Press and Public Information and as Counsellor to the Head of Mission, among various assignments. She is currently a candidate for a master's degree in human rights at Columbia University in New York.

General elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina

How women fared

	Total elected	women's share
Representatives of Republika Srpska National Assembly	83	14 (16.87%)
Representatives of parliament of BiH	42	6 (14.29%)
Representatives of parliament of Federation of BiH	98	21 (21.43%)
Members of cantonal assemblies of Federation of BiH	289	64 (22.15%)

58 seats have been allocated as compensatory mandates, which give minority parties a chance to be represented. Of that number, 16 mandates (27.59%) were given to women.

Source: Election Commission, October 2002

Note: The representation of female parliamentarians hovers just above 14 per cent in the BiH State parliament and a little more than 16 per cent in the Republika Srpska assembly. According to political scientists, any minority group with a participation of less than one-third in a parliament is not likely to wield any critical influence. Nonetheless, in the federation and cantonal assemblies, women's representation has slightly improved. It remains to be seen how women politicians will fare in Bosnia's political environment during the next four years. The nationalistic trend emerging from the October elections does not portend well for women if history is repeated. – T. Domi

Tetovo's City Desk comes of age

Troubled times give birth to multi-ethnic press agency

By Mathias Eick

The national elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia demonstrated that the multi-ethnic press agency, "City Desk, Tetovo" – a project born out of the conflict in the region – had fully come of age. For the OSCE's media experts and international partners who have been working intensively to reduce the ideological gap between Macedonian and Albanian journalists, this spells encouraging news.

On 15 September 2002, polling day in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a group of armed men burst into election rooms in the village of Lesok near Tetovo. They intimidated the electoral commission, fired some rounds in the air, and stole a ballot box stuffed with votes. It was one of the few seriously disruptive incidents in an electoral process that was later praised by local people and the international community alike as mature, democratic and fair.

Two hours later, national television beamed vivid images of angry and tearful ethnic Macedonian voters in Lesok crying foul. They were important emotional images, and the widespread outrage they provoked among voters and parties across the political divide was testimony to the country's desire to distance itself from the violence of the past in favour of peaceful democracy – something that was emphatically proven on election day.

"We had a completely multi-ethnic crew arrive at the scene within two minutes of the incident," recalls Jakob Abdii, the City Desk's project manager. "Initially there was some hostility, but when the crowds saw our City Desk badges, they calmed down and we got exclusive shots. The chief editor of A1, the national television station, felt our report was an exceptionally powerful piece and led the



The City Desk is breaking new ground in multi-ethnic co-operation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

evening news with it."

The City Desk project was created in April 2002 by the Media Development Unit of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje to try to address the serious problems affecting journalism in the former crisis region of Tetovo. The conflict in 2001 had driven an ideological wedge between many of the Macedonian and Albanian media outlets, and reports from the region were often biased, poorly researched and sometimes so inaccurate as to be extremely inflammatory.

Local initiative

"We discovered that in general there was a real willingness between the ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian media in the area to work together," says Daniel Renton, who heads the Unit. "There had been some extreme polarization as a result of the conflict, but the main problem was a lack of access to information; ethnic Macedonians and Albanians were

unable to travel to each other's areas. So we decided – in response to an initiative from the local media – to develop a project focused on equal access, co-operation and, ultimately, higher journalistic standards."

Five local Albanian and Macedonian radio and television stations joined together to form a non-governmental organization. With funding from international donors, they opened a project office in Tetovo that was fully equipped with television cameras, a digital editing suite and every item of equipment necessary for news gathering.

On an average day, 12 people seconded from various local stations – journalists, cameramen, technicians and project managers – work at the City Desk, producing news stories in both Albanian and Macedonian that are offered for broadcasting free of charge to local media and national television. The project staff have recently had the benefit of

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three weeks' in-house training from an experienced Austrian television journalist, paid for by the Mission's Media Development Unit.

Pooling ideas

"We are a 50 per cent Albanian, and 50 per cent Macedonian team here," says editor Simeon Serafimovski, an ethnic Macedonian who, with his Albanian counterpart, is responsible for ensuring that the news coverage is objective and balanced. "We genuinely work well as a team, and the very fact that we all come from different villages and areas means that we are able to pool ideas and come up with stories that are off the daily news agenda."

For example, while the media in general have focused over the past year on the aftermath of the conflict, especially the poor security situation and the political machinations in the lead-up to the elections, the City Desk has deliberately widened the news agenda to cover human interest stories and issues dealing with

culture, education and the economy.

"Many people are tired of politics. We believe our strength lies in developing news features that better reflect local interests," says Albanian editor Muharim Idrizi. "This week, we will do stories about crime and problems in local schools, but we're also planning some more positive human interest features; for example, tomorrow we will film a news story about a young history enthusiast who is helping the local museum to raise funds for the excavation of the Sobri ruins, an old mediaeval and Ottoman fortress town in the northeast of the region."

Paying off

The City Desk has been hailed by financial backers and users alike as breaking new ground in multi-ethnic co-operation. "We have been very pleased to fund it," says Sally Broughton, Media Officer of the International Organization for Migration. "We were sceptical at the beginning, but in terms of confidence-

building for the region, it is definitely paying off." Aco Kabranovski, chief editor of A1 national television, is similarly impressed: "Technically, the City Desk now produces some of the best reports in the country."

And the cameras will keep rolling. The OSCE has secured a substantial donation from the German Government to keep the project running until the end of March 2003. From there, the Media Unit hopes that the project will develop into a news-producing training unit.

"Everyone has put a lot of effort into this project," says Daniel Renton. "I hope that in a few years' time, I'll see a self-sustainable City Desk reporting from the steps of the European Parliament on the inclusion of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the European Union. I also hope the crew won't forget the camera tripod – again!"

Matthias Eick is a staff member of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje.



FROM THE FIELD

South-eastern Europe examines children's television programming.

Media professionals from Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gathered in Kosovo at the end of November to explore how the region could improve the quality of its children's television programming. The four-day conference featured workshops on writing for children and screened 26 innovative programmes that received awards at the 2002 world competition sponsored by the *Prix Jeunesse* Foundation. The event was organized



by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Children's TV Belgrade (DTV), *Prix Jeunesse* Foundation, Goethe Institute and *Zweite Deutsche Fernsehen* (ZDF).

Albania's budgetary process receives assistance.

Improving parliamentary procedures for the approval, oversight and implementation of Albania's 2003 budget was the goal of a conference on 22 and 23 November. The discussions aimed at increasing the efficiency of the Albanian Assembly as its review of the draft budget proposed by the Council of Ministers got under way. The event was co-organized

by the Assembly and the OSCE Presence in Albania, with funding from the Netherlands.



OSCE launches award for best education coverage in BiH.

A competition on exemplary journalistic coverage of education issues has been launched by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, with three winners receiving cash awards. Encouraging journalists to focus on education is part of a public awareness

campaign that was initiated by the OSCE and the Office of the High Representative in October. The country's broadcast, print and photo journalists are invited to submit entries (material published or broadcast between 20 November 2002 and 1 March 2003) directly to the OSCE Mission. The winners, to be chosen by an independent jury, will be announced in March.

Croatia undertakes efforts to improve local administrations.

Some 50 mayors, councillors and government officials, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and youth associations, took part in a series of five seminars aimed at improving local governance in Croatia. Topics ranged from European integration to the role of NGOs. The seminars, held throughout the country, were organized by the Proni Institute for Social Education and financed by the OSCE. The final seminar took place in Zagreb on 29 and 30 November.



Work of Kosovo Assembly to be monitored.

To help strengthen the democratic system, an international official has been appointed by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo to regularly monitor the work of the Kosovo Assembly. The monitor, who took up her post on 4 December, will verify the Assembly's compliance with its rules of procedures and the provisions of Kosovo's Constitutional Framework. She will report twice a month to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Kosovo. Regular plenary sessions, debates of Assembly members from smaller communities, as well as voting procedures, will be covered.



Media managers in FYROM enhance skills.

Twelve managers from Macedonian, Albanian and Roma broadcasting stations completed the first training course on business management and marketing for local independent radio and television stations. The two-week course, which ended on 6 December, was one of several in a series aimed at helping small- and medium-sized media operations to become self-sufficient. The programme was launched by the Media Development Unit of the OSCE's Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, in co-operation with the Macedonian Institute for Media, which was established by the Dutch School of Journalism and the International Research & Exchanges Board/ProMedia.

Ukrainians study Italian strategies to combat organized crime.

A high-ranking delegation from Ukraine's Office of the General Prosecutor, the Interior Ministry and NGOs, met their Italian counterparts during a visit to Italy from 10 to 13 November. The study trip, organized by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, made possible the sharing of information and expertise focusing on the fight against organized crime, trafficking in human beings, corruption and money laundering, as well as witness and victim protection.

Democratic control of armed forces in Central Asia reviewed.

The first in a series of workshops in Central Asia on politico-military aspects of security ended in Bishkek on 26 November. "Democratic control of the armed forces is not an abstract thing, but very urgent and important, particularly in our fight against terrorism and trafficking," said Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Minister, Askar Aitmatov, in his opening address.

The event was organized by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre and Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Ministry. The principle of democratic control of the armed forces is enshrined in the OSCE's Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, adopted at the Budapest Summit in 1994.

Seminars for border and customs officials held in Turkmenistan.

Four training seminars to improve the professionalism of Turkmenistan's border and customs authorities concluded on 22 November in Ashgabad. The two-day seminars started at the provincial level, in Turkmenbashi, on 11 November. Participants were mid-career officials from the Turkmen State Border and Customs Service, the relevant ministries, the Prosecutor's Office, the police, and provincial administrations. Topics ranged from legal matters to co-operation with other ministries and with national and international agencies. The seminars were organized by the OSCE Centre in Ashgabad, together with the International Organization for Migration.



More Russian matériel leaves Transnistrian region of Moldova.

The OSCE Mission to Moldova has recently verified two more operations involving removal of Russian military equipment from the Transnistrian region, as part of the Russian Federation's Istanbul Summit (1999) commitment of full withdrawal from Moldova. A train with 47 open platforms loaded with 77 military trucks left Tiraspol on 16 December, followed by 29 rail cars carrying bridge-building equipment and other material on 24 December. Neither train carried any ammunition.

Sannino receives special Yugoslav award. Ambassador Stefano Sannino, former Head of the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was given a special award by the Yugoslav Ministry for National and Ethnic Communities for his contribution to the country's democrati-

zation process. At the award ceremony on World Human Rights Day, 10 December, President Vojislav Kostunica conveyed his congratulations to Mr. Sannino, who could not be present. Politicians, diplomats and other guests at Belgrade's Sava Centre watched a short film showing the

ambassador at work and meeting with officials, children and NGO representatives. Also honoured were the recipients of the first Yugoslav Tolerance Award: Dragoljub Micunovic, speaker of the Yugoslav parliament's Chamber of Citizens, and Radio Television B92.

Maurizio Massari heads Mission to Federal Republic of Yugoslavia



Maurizio Massari, a career diplomat and specialist in south-eastern Europe, was appointed Head of the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on October 30, succeeding Stefano Sannino. His 18 years of service in the Italian Foreign Ministry have included postings in Moscow, London and Washington, D.C.

Prior to his OSCE appointment, Ambassador Massari headed the Western Balkans Department in his country's Foreign Ministry. From 1994 to 1996, he was Chief of Staff of the Deputy Foreign Minister, responsible for the OSCE and for Italy's policy in Europe, including in the western Balkans.

Commenting on his new post, he said: "I see the role of the OSCE Mission as crucial to helping Serbia and

Montenegro to consolidate their democratic institutions and to move closer to Europe. I intend to do my best to contribute to this positive process. It is most satisfying to take on such a position at such a historic time."

Ambassador Massari said that during his visits to the OSCE Secretariat and the Mission, to prepare for the start of his assignment in early January, he saw a very stimulating and highly professional environment in both Vienna and Belgrade. "The OSCE possesses a unique supply of human capital to serve its important purpose," he said.

Ambassador Massari, 43, completed his master's degree in international public policy at Johns Hopkins in Washington, D.C., in 2001. Earlier, in 1997, he had spent time at Harvard's Center for International Affairs as a Fellow.

IN BRIEF



OSCE-EU in Croatia: "recipe for success"

Foreign Minister Tonino Picula of Croatia told the OSCE's Permanent Council on 12 December that the OSCE and its Mission have been valuable partners and that "we expect their continued assistance and advice in achieving our goals". He was referring to the completion of work on such issues as facilitating the return of refugees, protecting national minorities, promoting freedom of the media, as well as speeding up the

pace of the country's integration into Europe. [On 13 December, the Croatian parliament adopted a new Constitutional Law on National Minorities.]

Welcoming the close co-operation between the European Union and OSCE in Croatia, the Foreign Minister said: "This joint effort could be a recipe for success – the OSCE's assistance and advice in resolving residual post-conflict issues; the EU's pre-accession instruments to help us move toward a stable and prosperous future within the EU."



Foreign Minister Tonino Picula of Croatia (left), with Ambassador Vladimir Matek, Head of Croatia's Mission to the OSCE



He believed that Croatia's candidacy for EU membership would be an additional impetus to the country's reform process and would also drive positive developments in the region. At the same time, better developments would also create a favourable climate and resources to resolve the issues from the OSCE mandate.

"I am happy that the Mission has agreed with our requests to proceed with the nationalization of professional posts," the Foreign Minister said, noting that the eighth year of the Mission's presence in Croatia would be a decisive one. "The cumulative progress and achievements of my Government in meeting international obligations – in particular since 2000 – shall warrant an in-depth debate on the mandate towards the end of next year."

UN Human Rights Commissioner calls for expanded co-operation

The new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), Sergio Vieira de Mello, has called for expanded co-operation between his office and the OSCE. Speaking for the first time at a meeting of the OSCE's Permanent Council, on 21 November, he acknowledged "the OSCE's pioneering role in placing human rights – all human rights – very much at the core of the con-



Sergio Vieira de Mello,
UN High Commissioner

cept of security". The UNHCHR and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) signed an agreement four years ago committing themselves to exchanging information, developing joint projects and providing mutual support in a range of areas.

The High Commissioner stressed the important work of the UNHCHR and the OSCE in Central Asia, south-eastern Europe and the southern Caucasus, calling for an expansion of co-operation in these and other areas. "I am thinking here about regular policy consultations and assessment of needs, not only between ODIHR and my Office, but also at the level of the political leadership and with such units as the OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media and the Conflict Prevention Centre," he said.

CiO urges Turkmenistan to conduct open investigation

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs Antonio Martins da Cruz, called on Turkmenistan on 11 December to under-

take a rapid investigation into the attack on President Saparmurad Niyazov, which occurred in Ashgabad on 25 November. He expressed concern about reports suggesting that large numbers of people related to those suspected of being involved in the incident had been subject to persecution, and sometimes arrest.

He called on the Turkmen authorities to exercise restraint and transparency in the investigation process, and to comply fully with the country's international human rights obligations and OSCE commitments. The CiO also urged that the Government not lift the moratorium on the use of the death penalty, the adoption of which had been widely recognized as one of Turkmenistan's major achievements.

Serbian political leaders urged to remedy election failures

In a statement on 10 December, the OSCE CiO expressed his regret that the repeat presidential election in the Republic of Serbia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, held on 8 December, failed again due to insufficient voter turnout.

The CiO expressed his full support for the preliminary conclusions of the International Election Observation Mission and urged all political forces in Serbia to address and remedy the underlying factor for this failure, before scheduling another repeat election.

OSCE and Belarus agree on new OSCE Office in Minsk

The Permanent Council has created a new OSCE Office in Minsk from January 1, 2003, replacing the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group, which ceased its activities on December 31, 2002.

This was decided by the OSCE's 55 participating States, on 30 December, following negotiations between the Government of Belarus and the OSCE's Portuguese Chairmanship on a new mandate for the Organization's activities in Minsk.

The mandate of the new Office in Minsk will be to "assist the Belarusian Government in further promoting institution-building, in further consolidating the rule of law and in developing relations with civil society, in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments". The Head of Office, assisted by a team of experts, will also assist the Belarusian Government in its efforts to develop economic and environmental activities and will monitor and report accurately on the Office's objectives.



Belarusian Foreign Minister Mikhail Khostov
(right) and CiO Antonio Martins da Cruz in Porto



PRESS PROFILE

Excerpts from a recent selection of articles on the OSCE and its activities

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AFP, 7 December

OSCE foreign ministers adopted a charter on fighting terrorism after a two-day meeting that focused on adapting the organization to new geopolitical realities as the EU and NATO expand eastwards. The chairman of OSCE, Antonio Martins da Cruz, said the OSCE had shown "vitality and continued relevance ... and its ability to adapt swiftly and efficiently to shifting circumstances". In what may be a sign of the relative importance attached to the OSCE, neither US Secretary of State Colin Powell nor most other western European foreign ministers attended the meeting, which fell between a NATO summit in Prague in November and an EU summit later this month in Copenhagen.

Reuters, 7 December

The pan-European human rights and security watchdog OSCE warned of the dangers of a growing criminal trade in women and children for prostitution and slave labour. The 55-nation OSCE, created to cope with Cold War threats, targeted human trafficking as part of a shift in focus to new threats in a unifying Europe. Western diplomats said the push against trafficking fits into the OSCE's other new role, anti-terrorism, by cracking down on a criminal underworld which is home to both smugglers and political extremists.

OSCE IN GENERAL

Wall Street Journal Europe, 15 November

[from an article entitled "Will This OSCE Guard Dog Ever Bark?"] When left to face Russia in what the latter considers its ex-Soviet sphere of influence ... the OSCE is consistently failing in its tasks. The OSCE is being largely paralyzed by its consensus rules, which give

Russia effective veto power over the organization's decisions.

Wall Street Journal, 26 November

[from a letter to the editor, "The Dog Does Bark", sent by Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre Lamberto Zannier] Although it is a truism that "soft security is a hard sell", it is simply the approach that the OSCE has applied with success in Europe over the last three decades. And in terms of early warning, the OSCE watchdogs do bark. In fact for some states, they bark too loudly for comfort.

MISSION AREAS

Reuters, 4 December

Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko said he was ready to hold talks with the OSCE on its mission in Minsk in a move that could ease a long-running row ... Over the last year, Belarussian authorities have refused to extend the visas of five diplomats from the OSCE mission, forcing them to leave the country amid accusations that the group openly supported the opposition.

AP, 19 November

The EU had warned Lukashenko that a refusal to assist human rights monitors sent by the OSCE – which promotes democracy throughout the continent – would seriously damage relations.

Interfax, 4 November

OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis said [in Minsk] he hopes the OSCE and Belarus will find a way out of the abnormal situation, referring to the OSCE-Belarus conflict over the presence of an OSCE mission in the republic.

Radio Free Europe, 23 November

Officials from Russia and the OSCE say the withdrawal [of Russian military forces and equipment from Moldova's

breakaway province of Transnistria] has fallen behind schedule because of opposition by separatists in the region ... According to OSCE estimates, there are some 100 train-loads of arms and munitions still left in Transnistria [and that] at a rate of one train-load leaving the region every four days, it will take more than a year to complete the withdrawal. OSCE States have also established a multimillion-dollar voluntary fund to finance the destruction of old weapons and munitions locally.

Financial Times, 7 November

Human rights officials expressed alarm at the deteriorating health and suspicious circumstances surrounding the arrest of a top opposition journalist in Kazakhstan. The OSCE, the continent's top democracy and human rights body, said it was "alarmed by the situation and the facts" surrounding the case of Sergei Duvanov, who is accused of raping a 14-year-old girl.

Wall Street Journal, 11 November

The OSCE said, "The pattern of incidents involving Mr. Duvanov, their coincidence with his planned trips abroad to discuss publicly the situation in Kazakhstan, and the disputed circumstances of the latest case trigger concerns that these incidents may be politically motivated."

ELECTIONS

Radio Free Europe, 10 December

Election monitors from the OSCE and the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly today issued a statement saying the repeated failure to elect a new Serbian president comes at considerable cost to public confidence and Serbia's international credibility.

AFP, 9 December

"There were numerous traps at these

elections.” [FRY President Vojislav Kostunica told reporters. “We will lodge all complaints possible. We will address the international organizations,” he added, referring to the OSCE whose observers monitored the polls.

Financial Times, 5 November

A lucky break at last for the hard-pressed election observers from the OSCE. Usually seen ducking gunfire in places such as Kosovo and Bosnia, a delegation has spent the past few days in Florida. An 11-member team, including election officials from Britain, Switzerland, Russia, Bosnia, and Albania, spread out across the Sunshine State yesterday to check on how well Florida was “meeting

the challenges of the 2000 elections”.

Washington Times, 10 November

[from an article by Oliver North] The OSCE dispatched election monitors to oversee Florida polling stations and “assess the improvements in the electoral process after the 2000 elections in Florida”, as OSCE administrator Hrair Balian announced in a letter to the Florida secretary of state’s office. How did we get to the point where foreigners look over the shoulders of American citizens as they cast their ballots for governor, senator, representative, or city council member? ... Such is how the New World Order operates: it observes and dictates to us, but we dare not ask questions about it.

Washington Times, 13 November

[from a letter to the editor sent by Eric Jansson] In Oliver North’s *Commentary* column on the OSCE’s election-monitoring presence in Florida (“Monitoring the elections”), Mr. North proves himself to be either a witty master of disinformation or an ignoramus. By describing the OSCE as the tool of a “New World Order” at odds with American interests, he completely ignores the fact that the United States is a leading OSCE member state and driving force behind most of its work. To suggest that international bureaucracies such as the OSCE are anti-American is simply inaccurate, even if they do run amok from time to time.



UPDATE

OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

ELECTIONS

Early parliamentary elections in Turkey: 3 November

Led by Peter Eicher (USA), a five-person ODIHR team was in Turkey for one week to carry out a limited assessment of the legislative and organizational aspects of the election process.

In its report, the ODIHR concluded that the electoral legislation framework for Turkey’s parliamentary elections was in line with international standards. Significant constitutional and legal reforms over the past two years had further improved the legal framework. The public’s confidence in the integrity of the election process was high, especially in the Supreme Board of Elections.

At the same time, the report noted that the broader legal framework and its

implementation placed strict limits on the scope of political debate. Non-violent expression of political views beyond these limits was restricted by a variety of laws, which were rigorously enforced. The restrictions on free speech and the practices of dissolving political parties and banning candidates stood in stark contrast to the otherwise open spirit of Turkey’s democracy, as well as its international commitments.

Congressional elections in the United States: 5 November

Following an invitation by the U.S. Government to observe its congressional elections on 5 November, the ODIHR sent a short-term assessment mission to the United States to assess how the authorities and civil society would address the challenges of the 2000 elections and to learn from the remedial measures implemented. The mission focused on the state of Florida

and also visited Washington, D.C. The mission, composed of ten experts, was headed by ODIHR Director Gerard Stoudmann.

The elections of 5 November – the United States’ first nation-wide elections since the presidential election in 2000 – were closely scrutinized as they were seen as a test of the measures taken in response to the problems in 2000. The shortcomings in Florida at that time included the election personnel’s lack of experience and training; lack of uniformity in voting systems, ballot design and counting procedures; inaccuracies in the voter register, particularly in the felons list; lack of provisions for “provisional voting”; discrepancies in regulations for overseas voting; and lack of resources for voter education. There had also been serious allegations that these problems had a disproportionate impact on minority voters, particularly African-Americans.

The ODIHR mission concluded that the adoption of remedial measures at the federal, state and county levels addressed the shortcomings to a significant degree.



It noted that although there was room for further improvements, a number of measures adopted in Florida could serve as an example of good practice to the rest of the country and other OSCE participating States.

Albania: roundtables on election reforms

Two roundtables were held in Tirana in November, focusing on the legislative framework for elections and on electoral complaints and appeals. The meetings, jointly organized by the OSCE Presence in Albania, the ODIHR, the Council of Europe and Albania's Parliamentary Assembly, were part of a programme of support and technical assistance to the bipartisan committee on election reform that was established in May.



DEMOCRATIZATION

Azerbaijan: public awareness radio talk shows on human rights

In partnership with the BBC World Service, the ODIHR and the OSCE Office in Baku ran a series of radio talk shows in Azerbaijan as part of a public awareness project. Over several weeks, the programmes dealt with such sensitive issues as juvenile justice, prison reform, gender matters, political prisoners, torture, the rights of disabled Karabakh war veterans and the incidents in Nardaran. The series, which ended in November, featured 25 programmes of seven to ten minutes each, and eight one-hour talk shows. There were an average of 15 to 20 calls on every talk show.



Azerbaijan: training on human rights monitoring and reporting

A training course on human rights monitoring and reporting in Azerbaijan took place, from 6 to 15 November, for 20 future human rights defenders from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and three government officials. It was con-

ducted by the ODIHR and the OSCE Office in Baku, in partnership with the Polish Helsinki Foundation. The monitoring undertaken by the graduates of the first course in 2001 was presented to the representatives of the relevant ministries.

Azerbaijan: training border guards in Poland

A group of 15 mid-level border officials from Azerbaijan, including five women, arrived in Poland in October to start a one-year course at the training centre for Polish border guards in Ketrzyn. The unprecedented programme, organized by the ODIHR, responds to the urgent need for well-educated and professional border officials who would promote institutional reform. The officers' course includes communication skills, computer sciences, border crossing control and border protection, in addition to three months' practical work at checkpoints.

Central Asia: regional conference on penal reform

The transfer of prison systems from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice was the focus of a regional conference in Dushanbe in October. Organized by the ODIHR and hosted by Tajikistan's Ministry of Justice, the conference gathered high-ranking officials from the penitentiary system and related agencies in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Participants agreed on a set of recommendations focusing on the transfer process in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. After the conference, additional training for the Kyrgyz authorities was provided by Latvian and Russian experts.

Central Asia: training border services

Five Kyrgyz and nine Tajik border service officers joined their Kazakh colleagues at a regional training seminar in Almaty in September and October.



Topics covered border and immigration control, international law and human rights standards. An expert from the Czech border police service shared the Czech Republic's experience in making its border service more professional. The training was organized by the ODIHR in co-operation with the Regional Centre for Migration and Refugee Issues and Kazakhstan's border service, with the support of the International Organization for Migration.

Chechnya: training for defence lawyers

The first in a series of six training seminars for the Chechen Lawyers Association was organized by the ODIHR from 23 to 26 October in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Russian NGO, Memorial. The lawyers were briefed on human rights standards and mechanisms as well as the Russian Federation's new legislation. The training, focusing on advocacy skills, was a follow-up to a conference in May on the re-establishment of the rule of law in Chechnya.

Kazakhstan: conference on death penalty

As part of the ODIHR's civic dialogue project for Kazakhstan, a conference on the abolition of the death penalty was held in Almaty on 30 September and 1 October. Kazakhstan's Minister of Justice as well as senior officials from the judiciary, the Ombudsman's office and the penitentiary system took part. The meeting led to a public commitment to continue work on the issue, to seek to diminish the number of crimes that are subject to the death penalty, and to encourage a public debate through a large-scale public awareness campaign.

Kazakhstan: seminar on establishing jury trials

An international seminar on jury trials was held in Kazakhstan on 25 and 26 November. The introduction of jury trials, as called for in the constitution, represents a significant change in

the country's criminal procedures. Members of the judiciary and NGO representatives discussed the jury trial model that should be adopted. A working group will continue the discussion. The seminar was organized by the ODIHR in co-operation with the German development agency GTZ, the OSCE Center in Almaty and the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan: reforming law enforcement agencies

A roundtable on preliminary investigation in Kazakhstan was organized in November by the Ministry of the Interior, the ODIHR and the OSCE Centre in Almaty. The event marked the start of a new co-operation programme between the ODIHR and the Ministry on the reform of the country's law enforcement agencies. Government representatives, members of the judiciary and civil society leaders adopted a set of recommendations on the training and education of police authorities. These will form the basis for co-operation between the ODIHR and the Ministry, focusing on region-wide training and the development of new curricula for police investigators.

Kyrgyzstan: human rights training for prison staff

A human rights training seminar for senior prison staff in Bishkek was conducted by the ODIHR, Penal Reform International and Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Justice, on 14 and 15 October. Participants welcomed the opportunity to improve their knowledge of international prison standards and agreed to step up implementation efforts. The Deputy Chairman of Kyrgyzstan's prison administration encouraged the staff to come up with creative solutions to problems, including the use of simple and cost-effective measures.

Tajikistan: human rights training for prison personnel

The ODIHR conducted training courses in October for deputy directors and other management-level prison personnel in Tajikistan. Subjects covered human rights and their relation to prison management and the daily responsibilities of prison staff. The seminars, part of

the ODIHR's ongoing training for the country's prisons, were jointly implemented with the Presidential Executive Office and the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: draft religion law

Leaders of the four main religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, the Islamic community and the Jewish community – signed a draft Law on the Status of Religious Associations in October. The religious leaders have handed the draft to the country's Collective Presidency, which was to forward it to parliament for debate and eventual adoption. The draft Law was prepared by experts of the ODIHR Advisory Panel in co-operation with the country's religious leaders.

FYROM: capacity-building workshops

Managing natural and man-made disasters was the focus of a series of workshops in Gostivar/Mavrovo, Veles and Ohrid last autumn. The aim was to contribute towards re-establishing confidence, building institutions, decentralization, and the implementation of the law on local self-government. Another concern was to help municipal authorities protect and ensure basic human and social rights. The workshops, organized by the ODIHR and implemented in co-operation with the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and the Ministry of Interior, complemented earlier workshops in 2001 in the country's former crisis areas.

FYROM: police training on anti-trafficking

A workshop in Skopje on 27 November brought together experts from various law enforcement departments and the judiciary to discuss gender issues and identify problems and concrete solutions in the area of trafficking in human beings. The event has been considered a milestone in counter-trafficking activities,

with its results to be used in the design of a specialized police training curriculum. The ODIHR, which has been involved in the country's police reforms since the Kosovo crisis in 1999, is helping the Ministry of Interior and the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje to develop specialized training courses for police officers.

Uzbekistan: roundtable on UN Anti-Torture recommendations

A roundtable on 8 November served as the first opportunity to discuss the issue of torture in Uzbekistan, the reporting requirements under the United Nations Anti-Torture Convention, and the recommendations made by the United Nations Committee Against Torture. The event, jointly held by the ODIHR, the OSCE Centre in Tashkent and the National Centre of Human Rights of Uzbekistan, brought together representatives of the concerned ministries and state agencies, the judiciary and international experts.

Uzbekistan: training education centres' teachers

Instructors and teachers in educational centres that specialize in training procurators, law enforcement personnel, judges, lawyers and security professionals took part in a training course from 20 to 22 November. The training, organized by ODIHR with the National Centre of Human Rights of Uzbekistan and the American Bar Association, covered curriculum development, modern teaching methods, and international standards relating to the criminal process. Protecting the rights of juveniles, ethnic and religious minorities and women was highlighted.

Uzbekistan: assistance to Ombudsman

The ODIHR's ombudsman expert, Dean Gottehrer, visited Uzbekistan in early November to provide assistance aimed at improving the draft Ombudsman Law. He discussed the draft Law with the Uzbek Ombudsman, the institution's rep-



representatives in the regions and parliaments.

Uzbekistan: roundtable on reforming criminal system

A roundtable was held in mid-November to familiarize members of Uzbekistan's legal community with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to discuss compliance of the country's Criminal Procedure Code with the Covenant. The ODIHR and the American Bar Association organized the meeting following a series of assessment meetings on the reform of the Uzbek criminal system.

South-eastern Europe: seminar on trial monitoring

Trial monitoring was the focus of a regional seminar in Tirana for OSCE Missions in south-eastern Europe, which was hosted by the ODIHR and the OSCE Presence in Albania, on 18 and 19 November. Participants explored ways of co-operating closely in identifying good practices, training OSCE staff and local partners, and establishing a centralized database of trial monitoring documents and rule of law experts.

Ukraine: first nation-wide anti-trafficking hotline

Ukraine's first country-wide anti-trafficking telephone hotline took its first callers on 18 November. Operated by the NGO, La Strada, the service is free of charge. It provides information and support not only to victims of trafficking, but

also to individuals planning to go abroad for work, marriage or for other reasons. The hotline's establishment was initiated and supported by the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine and the ODIHR.



ROMA & SINTI

Bosnia and Herzegovina: training for Roma contact points

The ODIHR Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues held a national training workshop for local Roma contact points in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 26 and 27 October. The workshop, conducted in Sarejevo by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, was designed to make the contact points more effective in their work by improving their skills and knowledge of issues. The activity was a follow-up to regional training in November 2001.

Roma: advancing political rights

A Romani short-term observer was sent to the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 5 October. In addition to his tasks within the ODIHR observation mission, his assignment was to gather information on the electoral behaviour of Romani individuals, groups and communities, and to identify other potentially problematic issues. The Contact Point also assigned an expert to assess the participation of Roma in the local election in Greece in October.

Following a training workshop in July, the Contact Point organized three more seminars on civic education and electoral participation for Roma living in the Malopolska region of Poland. The seminars were organized with the British Know How Fund. The turnout of Romani voters during the local elections on 27 October was reported to be unusually high in the areas where the seminars took place.

Montenegro: roundtable on refugees and IDPs

A roundtable on Kosovo Roma refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) was organized on 7 and 8 November in Budva, Montenegro/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as part of a programme of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which is implemented by the ODIHR and the Council of Europe with funding from the European Commission. The roundtable explored possible long-lasting solutions, including repatriation or integration in the host society. The status to be given to the refugees and IDPs if they remained in Montenegro was also examined.

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Elections to be observed by ODIHR in early 2003

	Type of election	Date
Republic of Montenegro/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	presidential (repeat)	9 February
Cyprus	presidential	16 February
Armenia	presidential	19 February
Belarus	municipal	2 March
Republic of Serbia/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	presidential (repeat)	spring

For further information, please consult: www.osceodihrelections

UPDATE

HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

HCNM visits Turkmenistan for first time. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, visited Turkmenistan on 8 and 9 November to discuss inter-ethnic issues with Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, and to get a better sense of the Government's views on minorities in the context of its nation-state building efforts. It was the first visit of a High Commissioner on National Minorities to the country.

Ekeus promotes integration in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The High Commissioner co-hosted a conference in Tbilisi on promoting integration and development in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region. The conference was held on 19 November in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme.

Populated mostly by ethnic Armenians, Samtskhe-Javakheti has weak economic, political and communication links with the rest of the country. Further complicating the region's relative isolation is the scheduled closing of a Russian military base – the motor of the local economy – in accordance with a joint statement made by the Russian Federation and Georgia at the Istanbul Summit in 1999.

Georgia has also committed itself to repatriating Meskhetians who were deported from the region in the 1940s, which adds another dimension to fragile inter-ethnic relations.

In an effort to address these various issues, the High Commissioner is seeking to secure international assistance to improve Georgian-language education, promote media development and enhance

information flows between Tbilisi and the Samtskhe-Javakheti region.

On the same visit to Georgia, Ambassador Ekeus continued his dialogue with President Eduard Shevardnadze and Speaker of the Parliament Nino Burjanadze and other high-level Georgian officials on a range of issues that has

been initiated by the High Commissioner in 2000 in co-operation with the Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations, more than 1,500 teachers from all parts of Moldova have been able to learn a new technique for teaching Moldovan (or Romanian) as a second language.

Some members of Moldova's minority communities – Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz and Bulgarian – have limited knowledge of the State language. While seeking to ensure that minority languages are adequately protected and promoted, the High Commissioner has repeatedly emphasized – in Moldova as in other OSCE participating States – the need for minorities to learn the State language to facilitate their integration and guarantee equal opportunities.

The teacher training project was developed by experts from Estonia and Romania, who worked with national experts from the Ministry of Education and Productivity, a local non-governmental organization. The team designed a methodology for grades five to nine, which teachers received enthusiastically in a series of workshops held across the country in 2001 and 2002. A teacher's manual and activity book was scheduled for publication at the end of 2002, ensuring that the teaching techniques would continue to be passed on to other teachers.

The project is expected to continue through 2003 to consolidate its achievements and to ensure that the teaching methodology and materials are incorporated into the national curriculum.



Ninotsminda, a small town in the remote region of Samtskhe-Javakheti, was the focus of a recent HCNM-UNDP conference in Georgia

engaged him throughout the year. These include legislative reform, particularly the Draft Law on the State Language, inter-ethnic relations in the context of Georgia's integration and security, and the repatriation of Meskhetians.

Georgian authorities highlighted the difficulties students faced in learning Georgian in schools in Abkhazia's Gali district. The High Commissioner said he would assess the situation and consider his possible role.

Teacher training in Moldova completes second year. A project designed to improve the State language-proficiency of children in minority communities in Moldova has successfully completed its second year. Since the pro-

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OSCE

NEWSLETTER

UPDATE

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

PA President proposes OSCE information offices

"I would propose the idea of establishing OSCE information offices in all participating States of the OSCE," said the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), Bruce George, in his address to the Tenth OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Porto.

These information offices, he said, would be similar to the offices of the European Union in its member and applicant countries. They would have the twin objectives of increasing the visibility of the OSCE and reducing the stigma attached to hosting OSCE offices or missions on the part of some participating States.

Mr. George noted that very few people in OSCE countries knew what the OSCE was, what it stood for and what it was doing. "And not only at the level of our common citizens, but at a higher political level in our capitals, the OSCE does not seem to be given very much attention – if at all," he said.

He also examined the role of the OSCE in the context of NATO and European Union enlargement, a development that he believed would extend even further the already large common space of democratic stability in the European continent.

"The OSCE, as the only pan-European security Organization, has a crucial and unique role to play in enhancing overall security within and among States," Bruce George said, adding that this would be the theme of the upcoming Annual Session of the Assembly in July 2003 in Rotterdam.

He emphasized that the OSCE must continue to reform and adapt its mechanisms and procedures with a view to maintaining its efficiency and credibility. "Other institutions are adapting to the changing circumstances and we, in the OSCE, are engaged in that same process," he said. "It appears to me it is a

question of adapting or progressively fading away. This adaptation process requires imagination, resolve and recognition of the difficulties of securing consensus. It requires difficult decisions to be made. We must not confuse activity with achievement."

The PA President also emphasized that the OSCE's internal working processes demanded patience. "The requirement for consensus, paradoxically, is both a strength and a weakness in the OSCE. The search for a common denominator can reinforce at times the sense of an OSCE community and improve prospects for implementation. However, I am more than conscious of the difficulties of securing agreement on key or even less crucial issues. Consensus has its price. If that price is the absence of taking the right and necessary decisions or to postpone the right decisions, or to dilute the right decisions, one may wonder if the price to be paid is too high."

On co-operation with the governmental part of the OSCE, he emphasized the constant readiness of the Parliamentary Assembly to be supportive. "In recent years our level of activity has dramatically increased in support of the OSCE. What you are doing, we are here to assist. We look to you for your support in helping us to do more. We are on the same side and we can do more operating together than being mistrustful towards each other."

PA President holds bilateral meetings in Porto

In Porto, PA President George also held bilateral talks with the incoming OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dutch Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jan Petersen, and Kazakhstan's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dulat Kuanyshev. In line with his specific interest in relations between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, Mr.

George also met Foreign Minister Shaher Bak of Jordan, Secretary of State Saida Chtioui of Tunisia and Egypt's Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs, Muhammad Shabaan.

PA Bureau meets in Porto

In conjunction with the Tenth Ministerial Council in Porto, a meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Bureau was held on 5 December, chaired by President Bruce George. The Head of the Portuguese Delegation to the OSCE PA,



OSCE PA
OSCE GO Antonio Martins da Cruz addresses the Bureau of the OSCE PA in Porto

Maria Eduarda Azevedo, addressed the meeting.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz, also addressed the parliamentarians and took questions from the floor. He noted that the OSCE PA played an irreplaceable and central role in the promotion of the common values, principles and commitments of the OSCE. "Let me reiterate our appreciation for all the support of the Parliamentary Assembly to the Portuguese Chairmanship, bearing in mind our shared goal of bringing the OSCE closer to our citizens and constituencies," he concluded.

The Bureau heard reports from

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Treasurer Jerry Grafstein, as well as from Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, who informed the Bureau about his activities as head of the new OSCE PA Liaison Office in Vienna. The Bureau discussed the theme of the Annual Session in Rotterdam in 2003 and agreed to focus on the recasting of the OSCE's priorities in view of the enlargement of NATO and the European Union.

Parliamentarians visit PA Secretariat in Copenhagen

A group of Canadian parliamentarians led by Charles Caccia paid a working visit to the OSCE PA International Secretariat in Copenhagen on 29 November. The delegation, which included the Vice-Chairperson of the Assembly's Third Committee, Svend Robinson, had meetings with PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretaries General Vitaly Evseyev and Pentti Vaananen, and other senior staff. The discussions focused on the activities of the International Secretariat and its working relationship with the OSCE's governmental side.

Earlier, on 22 November, the International Secretariat had also been visited

by the Head of the Norwegian Delegation, Bjorn Hernaes, who was accompanied by the Delegation Secretary, Sverker Henrik Foyen. They discussed the PA's current priorities with senior members of the staff and expressed particular interest in OSCE activities in the Caucasus and Central Asia and in the situation in Belarus.

The Norwegian Delegation also discussed the invitation extended by the Speaker of the Norwegian Parliament to the OSCE PA to host the fourth OSCE PA sub-regional economic conference in Norway in 2005. The third such conference will be held in Bern from 14 to 16 May, focusing on the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the OSCE area.

Parliamentary seminar on federalism proposed for Moldova

The OSCE Parliamentary Team on Moldova, led by OSCE PA Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen, MP (Finland), visited the country from 18 to 20 November. The delegation, which included Roberto Battelli, MP (Slovenia), and Ann-Marie Lizin, MP (Belgium), was accompanied by PA Deputy Secretary General Pentti Vaananen.

Following a meeting with Ambassador David H. Swartz, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the Team had meetings in Chisinau with Vladimir Voronin, President of Moldova; Eugenia Ostapciuk, Speaker of Parliament; Vasile Tarlev, Prime Minister; and other political leaders. In Tiraspol, the Team met Igor Smirnov and Gregory Marakutca.

The Team expressed strong support for the new OSCE initiative to solve the dispute on the status of the Transdniestrian region of Moldova. Although negotiations between the parties had made some progress, the Team voiced concern about the current pause. To promote the debate aimed at solving the dispute, the Team suggested holding a Parliamentary Seminar on Federalism in Moldova in early 2003. The OSCE PA proposed inviting Moldovan parliamentarians and other political leaders from Chisinau and Tiraspol. Members of the Russian *Duma* and the Ukrainian *Rada* as well as the Council of Europe PA and the European Parliament, would also be invited.

On a visit to the Moldova-Ukraine border, the Team had discussions with authorities on border security and the problems of smuggling and trafficking.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly opens Vienna office

The Parliamentary Assembly's office in Vienna was inaugurated on 13 January. The office, which started its work in November, is headed by Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, a former Secretary of the German Delegation to the OSCE PA who has now been succeeded by the German Bundestag to the Assembly. He will be assisted by Liaison Officer Kathrin Volz, former Research Assistant in the OSCE PA International Secretariat in Copenhagen.

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UPDATE

REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

Journalists under pressure in the Central Asian States

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM), Freimut Duve, has recently called attention to several cases of harassment of journalists in the Central Asian participating States.

Uzbekistan. In a letter addressed to Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov on 16 October, Freimut Duve raised the case of one of the participants at the Fourth Central Asia Media Conference, which was organized by the Representative on Freedom of the Media in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in September. The journalist had been beaten up by Uzbek border guards on his way to Kyrgyzstan. During the assault, reference was made to articles written by Alisher Sayipov, a Kyrgyz journalist for Voice of America, who had been reporting on the corruption of Uzbek customs officers.

"Incidents like these put seriously into question the commitments Uzbekistan has willingly given as a participating State of the OSCE to freedom of the media," Mr. Duve said in his letter. "The safety and integrity of journalists writing about controversial and necessary topics have to be guaranteed."

Kazakhstan. On 28 October, Mr. Duve brought up the case of Sergei Duvanov with Kasymzhomart Tokayev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. A prominent Kazakh journalist, Mr. Duvanov had been arrested on 27 October in Almaty for alleged rape. Mr. Duve had addressed the authorities on behalf of Mr. Duvanov on earlier occasions: on 17 July, when the journalist had been charged with criminal libel under Article 318 of the Kazakh Criminal Code for "infringing the honour and dignity of the President", and after an attack on him on 27 August, just before his departure for the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw.

Freimut Duve has asked the OSCE

Centre in Almaty to follow the current court proceedings. In his letter to Foreign Minister Tokayev on 18 December, the OSCE Representative stressed: "The trial of Mr. Duvanov will be monitored closely by several human rights groups from OSCE participating States. I expect it to prove that the rule of law is taking hold in Kazakhstan and that all relevant legal provisions will be followed to the letter."

Mr. Duve has also asked the Government of Kazakhstan to take all necessary measures to ensure a prompt investigation of the case of Nuri Muftakh, a prominent journalist who died shortly after being hit



OSCE/Leifmore Kook

by a car on 17 November. He had been involved in investigating corruption. Mr. Muftakh was editor of the independent newspaper, *Altyn Ghasyr*, and was one of the founders of *Respublika 2000*, a well-known independent newspaper, which the authorities closed down in 2001.

Turkmenistan. The OSCE Representative has asked the Delegation of Turkmenistan to clarify the details of the detention of Russian journalist Leonid Komarovskiy, who was arrested on 26 November in Turkmenistan allegedly in connection with the recent attack against the country's President.

In his comments to the OSCE Permanent Council on 12 December, Freimut Duve said: "Turkmenistan is still a member of this Organization that prides itself on being a family of declared democracies. In this 'declared

democracy', the media are currently being used to humiliate and terrorize anybody who is even remotely contemplating the legitimacy of the current state of affairs. Some of the television programmes I have been informed about remind me of the show trials on Soviet radio and in the newspapers during the thirties. The brutality is of the same level but the media, especially television, provide a much more chilling effect."

The Representative has suggested holding a special session of the Permanent Council on Turkmenistan, with all three heads of OSCE Institutions and the head of the OSCE Centre informing delegations on the situation in Turkmenistan and its human rights record.

OSCE Media Representative launches two projects

Media in multilingual societies. In response to the interest shown by several delegations in the potentially constructive role of the media in combating discrimination, promoting tolerance and building a stable peace in multilingual societies, the OSCE RFOM has launched a pilot project aimed at addressing the media's use of prejudices and intolerance against members of minorities.

The project seeks primarily to raise participating States' awareness of the need to generate an environment in which media can function effectively and responsibly in order to promote tolerance and understanding in multilingual societies.

The project's first phase will involve examining the practical working environments of the media in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Luxembourg and Switzerland. Country reports will be produced. The second phase will culminate in a conference in March 2003 in Switzerland, which will present the country reports and enable governments, media representatives and

non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the five countries to interact.

Freedom of the media and the Internet. Freimut Duve held a workshop on the relationship between 'Freedom of the Media and the Internet' on 30 November in Vienna. Six experts from Europe and the United States contributed to the discussion on the new information and communication technologies and the opportunities and challenges that they presented to freedom of expression and freedom of the media in the OSCE region. Participants included experts from UNESCO, the Council of Europe, online media, Internet service providers, and specialized NGOs, as well as scholars and advisers from the Office of the Representative. The workshop set the stage for a conference on the issue to be organized by the RFOM in Amsterdam in spring 2003.

Restrictive media amendments rejected by Russian President

In November, several restrictive amendments to the Media Law and to the Law on Combating Terrorism passed through both Houses of the Russian parliament. They were adopted in response to the recent hostage-taking and rescue operations in Moscow. The OSCE Representative immediately commissioned a legal review which was conducted by experts from Article 19, a leading media NGO. A review was also carried out in Moscow by Mikhail Fedotov, a leading Russian media expert.

Speaking at the OSCE Permanent Council on 12 December, Mr. Duve noted: "Both reviews reached similar conclusions that basically the amendments were highly restrictive. That is why I welcomed the decision by Russian

President Vladimir Putin not to sign these amendments into law and to send them back to parliament. I also welcome the President's proposal that the journalists themselves should play an active role in drafting amendments to the Media Law."

The Representative drew the delegates' attention to incidents in the regions that appeared to indicate that the work of journalists had been impeded: the police search of a newspaper in Krasnoyarsk; the beating of a newspaper director in Primorye Kray; the search of the editorial offices of a television channel and a newspaper in Balakhov by economic crime officers; the arrest of the editor-in-chief of a popular independent daily in Kovrov; and the arrest of a television film crew in Irkutsk by the city department of internal affairs.

OFFICE OF THE OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA (RFOM)

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UPDATE

SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE SECRETARIAT

Belarus-OSCE talks held in Minsk.

OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis visited Minsk on 3 and 4 November at the request of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. He met the Head of the Presidential Administration, Ural Latypov, and Foreign Affairs Minister Mikhail Khvostov. Their talks focused on OSCE-Belarus relations, especially the future of the OSCE's field presence in Belarus in light of the recent exchange of letters between the Chairman-in-Office and the Belarusian Foreign Minister.

Troika participates in seminar on OSCE in Bratislava.

The Secretary General addressed a seminar on 'The OSCE and its importance in a wider Europe', held in Bratislava on 27 November. He spoke at the invitation of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Slovakia

and the Slovak Foreign Policy Association. The OSCE Troika was represented at the event by the Chairman of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Francisco Seixas da Costa; the Head of the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the OSCE, Ambassador Justus de Visser; and the Ambassador of Romania to Slovakia, Valerica Epure.

SG meets EU and EC officials. At the invitation of the European Union presidency, the Secretary General, accompanied by the head of his office, Hamme Pollmann-Zaal, and the OSCE's Senior Police Adviser, Richard Monk, travelled to Brussels on 29 November to meet the ambassadors of the European Union's Political and Security Committee. They also met representatives of the European Commission and the Council Secretariat. Their dis-

cussions focused on OSCE initiatives in policing, including the activities that the Organization is co-ordinating with host countries in Central Asia and in other participating States. Possible areas of cooperation with the European Union/European Community were explored.

Council of Europe updated on OSCE developments.

Secretary General Jan Kubis addressed the 821st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe on 11 December in Strasbourg. In his speech, he provided an update on the OSCE's Ministerial Council meeting in Porto, reported on topical issues of cooperation between the two organizations, and said that the OSCE and the Council of Europe would continue building on the strong relationship that they had developed over the years.

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NEWSLETTER



OSCE / Antti Aho / Centre for Open Video

The Tenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in session



Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov of the Russian Federation and Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz of Portugal, OSCE CIO in 2002



Edifício da Alfandega in Porto, venue of the Ministerial Council

The **OSCE NEWSLETTER** is published by the Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The views expressed are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the OSCE and its participating States.



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