



The

## Goodbye 2007!

An important year for the OSCE is coming to an end, the year of the elections in Croatia, of the Spanish Presidency of the OSCE, of the transfer of seat of the Secretariat to the Palffy Palace, the year in which the Organization's presidencies for the next five-year period are decided, the year of doubts regarding Kosovo and also of doubts regarding the future of the Mission to Croatia.

When this issue of the Courier has come out, many of these question marks will have been resolved: perhaps a government will have been formed in Croatia, perhaps the Permanent Council will have adopted a decision with respect to the Missions in Kosovo and Croatia.

What is evident is that with the end of the year 2007, the existence of a great Mission in Croatia, that once had close to 700 members, will be a model belonging to the past and even without knowing the political decision about to be reached in Vienna, it is very improbable that the budget involving a most important reduction of 51% for 2008, which will inevitably entail a significant decrease of the Mission and Field Offices' personnel, would be rectified upward.

In the course of the years, the Mission has undergone significant downsizing. Only in the past three years, with the closing of several Field Offices, we dismissed nearly 70 people. But this downsizing was made gradually. Each month we faced a sad situation of saying goodbye to one, two or three persons. For the Head of Mission this happened to be one of the most emotional and sad tasks. Many great friends and associates have already left by virtue of the 7-year rule, due to personal decisions or as a consequence of the progressive fulfilment of the mandate: Tim Stanning, Mark Fawcett, Antonella Cerasino, Eric Galmot, Knut Dreyer, Julia Gilbert, Michel Dreneau, Jean-



Pierre Golubic, Stefano Gnocchi, Jeroen Jansen, Jan Repa, Jose Luis Masegosa etc. We miss them all.

But now the departures are not going to take place one by one, but suddenly, in a matter of weeks the Mission is going to lose dozens of friends, very close associates whose names are not yet due to be specified since a consensus on the budget decision has not yet been reached.

Since we do not know who is going away, we also do not know who is going to stay. There will probably be more of the former than the latter. And this HoM laments such uncertainties and doubts that are inherent in the tasks weighing down on those who join a "non-career organisation". One of the Mission members who is probably going to leave us is known to reflect his

manner at these moments: "I am very proud that I helped with my little contribution to the success of the Mission".

For this noble member of the Mission and for the ones who think like him or her, also for those who have better sentiments, and since we are aware that we are also in a "non-family organization" my wife and I want to toast as a farewell to the year 2007 and to welcome 2008. Good luck to all of you and thank you very much for all.

Ambassador Jorge Fuentes,  
Head of Mission

## Calendar

5-6 November - Unified 2008 Budget Discussion, Vienna

8 November - Visit to Croatian Mine Action Centre, Sisak

15-16 November - OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre Director, Ambassador Herbert Salber, in Zagreb

15 November - Plenary meeting on war crimes prosecution - OSCE/EC Delegation/ICTY on international side and Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court Chief State Prosecutor and Ministry of Interior on Croatian side; Amb. Herbert Salber also attended

16 November - Ambassador Herbert Salber in HQ

21 November - Opening of new OSCE Secretariat Premises, Vienna

29-30 November - 2008 Ministerial Council, Madrid

7 December - Extended Senior Staff Meeting

11 December - Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović

The Elementary School Plaški, near Ogulin, was badly damaged during the war in Croatia. Some 220 children, mostly Croatian refugees from Bosnia and Hercegovina, attend the school. Its sister school in Saborsko Municipality was renovated after the war. Most families have many children and a very poor standard of living; jobs are scarce and they depend on the assistance from Caritas. Vlatko Kulić, the Principal of the school, told us that the children have many different extra curriculum groups such as media, drama, choir, small piano school, floral group etc. The student's orchard/fruit growers organization helped the children plant over 200 fruit trees such as pears and apples in Plaški, and additional 50 fruit trees in their sister school in Saborsko.



## Activities

### OSCE connects Plaški with the rest of the world

At the beginning of the school year the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport donated textbooks to several schools including Plaški and Saborsko, however, the students lack school supplies.

On the occasion of St. Nicholas, a group of good samaritans headed by Jasna Polić Biliško decided to spread some happiness with small gifts for all children and large ones for the schools. Polić Biliško succeeded in a very short time to organize many donations in order to prepare gift packages for all the children in Plaški.



LEFT: Principal Vlatko Kulić greets the children

TOP: PCs provided to the Plaški school by the OSCE Mission to Croatia

BOTTOM: Karlovac School of Music performs for the school's children

RIGHT TOP: Maja Knežević, school's librarian with children using the OSCE donated PCs

RIGHT BOTTOM: Good samaritans singing for the children



The OSCE Mission to Croatia was also one of the contributors on this joyous occasion. Ambassador Jorge Fuentes promptly allocated the Mission's PCs to the Plaški School when approached by Biserka Sanković, the Mission's Protocol Assistant. Due to the closing of many field offices, the OSCE was able to donate ten computers which were immediately packed for transport by the Mission's Marijo Marjanović, Danijel Stojisavljević

and Bratilav Vljaković. The PCs were then placed in the newly-established computer workshops in the two schools.

The Principal, Vlatko Kulić, said the OSCE Mission has made it possible now for Plaški to be connected to the rest of the world.



Many others contributed to make this heart-warming occasion a success: Father Slavko Antunović opened the ceremony and Tuga Tarle followed by reciting a few of her charming poems. The Karlovac Music School students played beautifully for the children. Daniella Eva Sanković touched the children's hearts with her magic voice by singing "Stand Up for Love". Students from Željeznička Tehnička Škola in Zagreb with their professor Mirna Žakman collected a donation of some HRK 1700. Narodne Novine gave a donation and also prepared packages of school supplies, which were sweetened with goodies from Kraš. Many choir members from various choirs came to sing. All this would not have been possible if the Zagreb City Mayor, Milan Bandić, had not allocated a large bus to transport all the gift-giving participants and the presents to the schools.



The sparkle in the children's eyes and the happiness on their parents' faces showed that people do care.

Biserka Purgar Sanković,  
Office Assistant/Protocol

## Activities

### The Palffy-Erdödy Palace

From their common beginnings, the CSCE/OSCE have always been on the brink of an existential crisis. Ever since the East achieved the confirmation of firm borders after World War II, it seemed as if nothing could retain its components in the Conference and later in the Organization.

But it is certain that the CSCE brilliantly fulfilled its vital cycle until 1995 and since then the OSCE has had more than a few successes in the consecutive Summits, Ministerial Councils, in the intense life of the Permanent Council, the General Secretariat, the Institutions and the Missions.

In November 2007, under the Spanish Presidency, two events took place that rather moved the looming atmosphere of disappearance further away from the Organization.

First of them was the inauguration by the King of Spain Don Juan Carlos I of the new seat of the OSCE Secretariat and the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in Vienna in the beautiful Palffy Palace, in one of the city's best locations, two steps away from the Graben and the Hofburg where the meeting rooms of the Permanent Council and other bodies have remained.



The Austrian Government has been very generous towards the Organization and has subsidized most of the € 30 million expenditure incurred on renovation of 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> of the Palace. With this, the Secretariat was transferred from a less independent and convenient building to the Ring, and the Organization has consolidated, firmly settled with the air of continuity.

The Palace, faithfully preserved on the outside, has undergone a remarkable and modern transformation in its interior thanks to the genius of architects Ablinger and Vedral.

LEFT: HoM at the inauguration of the new seat of the OSCE in Vienna 27, September 2007.

TOP: The re-built and re-designed interior of the Palffy-Erdödy Palace

The long life that we wished from Croatia to the seat of the Secretary General Brichambaut and his associates as well as to Miklos Haraszti and his staff, is confirmed in the second great event of November, the Ministerial Council of Madrid that saw intense participation on the part of President Zapatero, CiO Moratinos

and 45 ministers from all corners of Europe. The Madrid Council reached a consensus on the successive presidencies of the Organization up to 2011, until which year, due to that reason, the life of the OSCE will not be in question.

Until that moment, high-priority tasks will include the holding of a new Summit, following the one held in Istanbul in 1999, the adoption of an Agreement that ratifies the legal personality of the OSCE and the approval of a Ministerial Declaration also pending from 2002. The Summit and the Councils must be able to find an exit out of the crisis situation in which the International Community finds itself, a crisis that has appeared as soon as the East-West conflict has disappeared, surpassing its complexity. The OSCE along with the remaining International Organizations can and must mobilize their resources and transcend this crisis.

Ambassador Jorge Fuentes,  
Head of Mission

## Feature story

### OSCE Ministerial...

The Municipal Palace of Congresses in Madrid, a huge and imposing avant-garde building designed by renowned architect Bofill, held the 15th OSCE Ministerial Council on 29 and 30 November, 2007.

Forty six Ministers from the 56 Participating States gathered in Madrid not only to discuss the official points of the agenda, but also for sideline and bilateral negotiations, which could often be even more important. Other high level authorities included Under-Secretary Nicholas Burns, representatives of other international organizations like the SG of the Council of Europe, Terry Davis, or the EC Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero. Such a high level of attendance by Ministers can already be considered a big success of the Spanish CiO. It also speaks clearly about the crucial stakes that were at play with worrisome uncertainties hovering over the future of the OSCE.



Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero welcomed the Ministers with an inspired speech before the CiO opened the session. A celebrated novelty introduced for the first time in the format of a Ministerial Council was a Working Lunch for the Ministers followed in the same day by an elegant dinner at Santa Cruz Palace, a good example of architecture in the “Madrid de los Austrias” (XVII century under the first Spanish Habsburgs). Controversial as it might be, the CiO dared to propose the “Role of the OSCE in Kosovo” for Ministers’ discussion. Against all fears, an articulate and constructive debate took place. Such a discussion, on such a divisive topic, and within an OSCE framework, could solely be assessed as a big success. Moreover, a practical result was also obtained: an informal agreement on continuity for 2008 to the mandate of the Kosovo Mission, to be confirmed at the PC before the end of the year.

The last day, during the press conference following the formal closure of the MC, a journalist asked the CiO his opinion about having Madrid be a battlefield for the new tensions between the USA and Russia. Minister Moratinos replied that the OSCE is certainly not a battlefield ground, but, on the contrary, a dialogue field.

OSCE is the unique forum where, precisely, dialogue can take place, a negotiating table where States can present and discuss their different views over sensitive issues and find common grounds of understanding and way forward, he said. This answer perfectly summarizes what the spirit of Madrid has represented during the MC.

It is true that a Ministerial Declaration, a decision on improving Electoral Commitments and the OSCE Legal Reform could not be agreed, but given the general political atmosphere and against all odds, Madrid succeeded in being one of the most intense political meetings in the recent history of the Organization. Madrid has decisively helped to restore the truly political nature of the OSCE and has provided for the needed continuity and predictability while at the same time, has opened up promising venues. In this sense, OSCE continuity in future Chairmanships was approved until 2011, OSCE acquired more relevance

**LEFT:** The CiO, Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, accompanied by the OSCE Secretary-General and two other Ambassadors of the Troika, Belgium and Finland, addressing journalists during the final press conference

**BOTTOM :** HoM accompanied by Enrique Horcajada, Head of Mission’s Executive Office and Mark Fawcett, formerly of the Mission, now with the Office of the Special Representative for South Caucasus

**RIGHT TOP:** Minister Moratinos, Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Zapatero and Ambassador Carlos Sanchez de Boado at the conferece

**RIGHT BOTTOM:** The back seat of the chairing table during the speech of the Spanish PM, HoM was present.

**FAR RIGHT:** CiO, Minister Moratinos, greets the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović at her arrival at the Ministerial Council Palace



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## Feature story

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### ...Council in Madrid

by engaging with Afghanistan, a Partnership Fund related to the Partners for Co-operation was approved after more than a year of difficult negotiations, a statement on Nagorno Karabakh was issued, and, finally, a big set of important decisions were agreed, for example, the ones on combating the threat of illicit drugs, trafficking of human beings, sexual exploitation of children and internet, tolerance and non discrimination, etc, also, the Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security that for the first time links at Ministerial level both concepts, the sensitive strategic Water Management decision finally found consensus and a solid and innovative package in the realm of fighting against terrorism was introduced in the OSCE.



While the future role of the OSCE in Kosovo was discussed during the Ministerial working lunch, Participating States still had some divergences over the future of the Mission in Croatia and, consequently, the topic was not introduced in the agenda of the Ministers. Having said that, it is obvious that Madrid was also used by delegations to continue informal sideline discussions trying to build consensus on the future of the Mission in 2008.



To that effect, Ambassador Fuentes had been invited by the CiO to Madrid. HoM attended the bilateral meeting between the Croatian Foreign Affairs Minister and Minister Moratinos, as well as the sideline meeting between the Director of the CPC, Ambassador Salber, and State Secretary Bišćević. Minister Grabar-Kitarović met also with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov.



Apart from Minister Grabar-Kitarovic, only six other Ministers mentioned Croatia during their speeches. Four of them expressing their satisfaction to be near to a closure that will represent a success story for the OSCE. Two of them expressing that work is still needed in the field of refugee return. The CiO also mentioned Croatia both during his introductory and closing speeches to the conference. Minister Moratinos said OSCE should further bond its compromise with the Balkans since some of the Field Missions are successfully fulfilling their goals, like Croatia where a transference of functions to its authorities is suggested preparing a reduction of OSCE presence to the minimum necessary, meaning almost its closure.

In brief, the Madrid rendez-vous has been very useful to continue advancing towards a joint OSCE decision about the future of the Mission in 2008 that could be finally taken as soon as next December.

Last but not least, the traditional Spanish hospitality and the perfect technical and practical organization of the Conference, to include superb cocktails and dinners with Spanish tapas and paella, highly contributed to create the good atmosphere that was finally created among the negotiators.

Enrique Horcajada  
Head of Political Unit & Executive Office

## Photo Story

### “End of the Year Party”

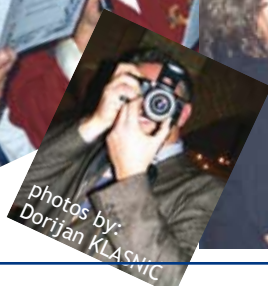
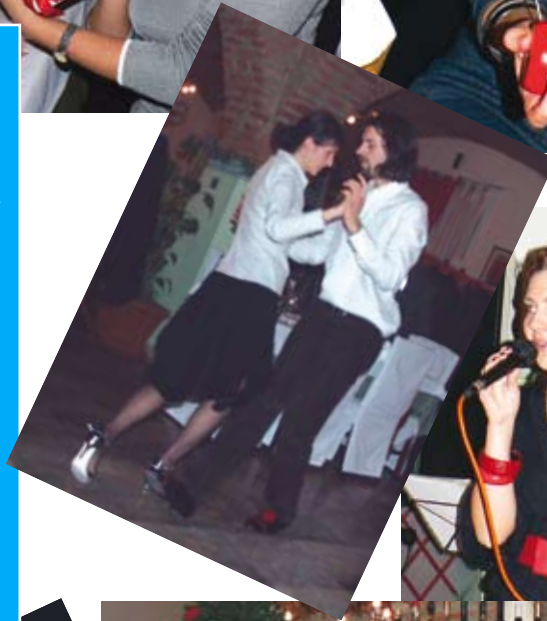


photos by:  
Nevenka LUKIN



One would say “a party without a surprise is a boring one”!

Last Wednesday, on 12 December, in a downtown restaurant in Zagreb, a party took place that was everything but boring! A traditional End of the Year gathering turned into a festival of performances, appearances and above all, true surprises. Whilst enjoying in delicious food, we have been awarded by stunning live singing performance by Biserka’s daughter Daniella Eva Sanković, Christmas Carol singing, led by Ambassador Becker and Biserka, beautiful tango show by Dagmara and Ivan, contest in “who is the tallest Mission member” followed by dancing act by the two winning couples, Marijo and Monika and Hrvoje and Maja, as well as a gift exchange event. The story does not end here: the biggest of all surprises was given by a “Just Married” Mission couple, Suzana and Ivica, who finally revealed their secret by sharing with us a delicious wedding cake, upgrading our party into a wedding one!



photos by:  
Dorijan KLASNIC



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## Deputy Head, Robert W. Becker is leaving the Mission

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### Todd Becker, first foreigner to receive Croatian Human Rights Award

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After seven years in Zagreb, the Mission's Deputy Head, Ambassador Robert Becker, is leaving. Since his arrival in Croatia in 2000 until now, Todd has worked and cooperated with three Governments and three Heads of Mission. During that time he has witnessed this transitional country's first steps on its journey toward democracy, metamorphosing from the post-Communist and authoritarian regime into a country knocking on NATO and EU doors.

The highlight of Ambassador Becker's last days in Croatia was 8 December, when he became the first foreigner to be given the Croatian Helsinki Committee (HHO) Human Rights Award. At the annual observance of the International Human Rights Day, in the presence of the Prime Minister, Ivo Sanader, and a representative of the President of the Republic, Todd received the Mika Tripalo Award for having "consistently worked as an official, for seven full years, on the protection of human rights in Croatia, while his endeavors exceeded professional obligations to a large extent".

"When I was offered the DHOM position seven years ago, they said it would be for nine months because the new reform Government would wrap up all the necessary reforms by then. Well, we have experienced that transforming a country is a complex thing and takes a lot of time. And it takes hard work, idealism and dedication to human rights and the Rule of Law which my many friends in the Mission, Government and NGO's have shown. The HHO Award was given to me as a person, but it really reflects the cooperation and dedication of all those friends and colleagues, who set goals years ago, and continue to pursue them".

In his 40 years of diplomatic experience, Todd was in many exciting places at crucial times. The dust of the fallen Wall was still in Berlin's air when he established the first US Consulate General in a former Warsaw Pact country, in Leipzig. Serving twice in Greece, Todd experienced up close two coups d'etat in 1967. While living in Berlin the terrorist threat was so high that he had armed police guards living in his house around the clock. And even in the "idyllic" Fiji Islands he helped organize and direct a major hurricane relief project when the islands were devastated by one of the largest storms for decades.



Ambassador Becker receiving congratulations from PM Sanader.

"These countries, including of course Croatia, have all become my second homes, but Croatia stands out because Christa and I have lived here longer than anywhere in my life since I was seventeen years old. It will be strange not driving down Vukovarska, or walking summer nights through Gornji Grad, still one of my favorite places." Going back to America after an absence of almost 22 years will be strange for Todd and his wife Christa, but they will be joining five children and nine grandchildren, and bringing with them their beloved dogs. Seven of the four-legged friends, all of them

once homeless, hopeless and hungry stray dogs, are travelling with them to the States. The three oldest ones come from the streets of Athens, the other four are from Croatia.

Looking back over the years he spent in Croatia, Kosovo, Germany, Greece and Fiji, where racial, ethnic and national conflicts have continued for centuries and even millennia, Todd says he has learned that the real path to reconciliation is to engage in what he calls "Radical Forgiveness". Injuries, harm, pain and loss should never be the subject of a "to forgive and forget" mentality. To forget any wrong, any pain, any injury, is to denigrate the injured party, and dismiss his loss and pain. And it also sends the message to the one who inflicted the pain and loss that it is o.k. to do it again. But to demand punishment and retribution is not a long term solution. It is morally satisfying, but it only whets the appetite for self righteous justification, revenge and counter-retribution. Stopping the vicious chain reaction of hate and destruction requires a radical form of forgiveness. Punishment for crimes may be called for, but moralizing and judgmentalism need to be left behind. Only then can victim and victimizer, judged and the judge begin to find their way to one another, in a sense of realistic appreciation of what has happened, and in a framework of mutual respect and acceptance. Todd believes he has seen this kind of "radical forgiveness" at work in Croatia, involving Mission members, government officials, members of different ethnic groups, working without moralizing or being judgmental, which has allowed them to work together with respect to build a common - healthy - future together. That is what he will cherish most from his time here.

Ljerka Draženović,  
Spokesperson

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## Hrvoje donated 13 litres of blood over the years

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Since 1953, the Croatian Red Cross has been organizing voluntary blood donating activities in the country. The Mission's Senior Driver, Hrvoje Šandor, has been a blood donor since his high school days in Velika Gorica at the age of 18. Since then, Hrvoje has donated blood 26 times thus providing the Croatian Red Cross with some 13 litres of this precious liquid. Which means approximately three times the average a human being has. The greatness of blood donors is that they save lives, but they do not know which ones. It can be an unknown person you meet on the street. It can be a friend, or even an enemy. "I always felt good about it, and still do", Hrvoje said and added that he donates blood once or twice a year and will continue doing so.

## Photo Gallery



King Juan Carlos I of Spain speaks at the inauguration of the OSCE Secretariat's new headquarters, 21 November 2007.



DHoM, CPC Director, Ambassador Herbert Salber, HoM and Christian Loda, former Head of the Mission's Return and Integration Unit, Zagreb, 16 November 2007.



The Mission HQ's End of the Year Party was upgraded to a Wedding Party for the Mission's newlyweds, Suzana and Ivica Maltar



HoM offered a farewell lunch for Msg. Francisco Javier Lozano, the Apostolic Nunzio in Croatia. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović and a large group of ambassadors attended the gathering.



*Elections are a crucial moment in the life of a democracy. It is the moment at which the people manifest themselves directly and unmistakably on their authorities, their politicians, their representatives and their institutions. The event is of such magnitude that no citizen should abstain from voting. With all logic, if each person were conscious of the importance of the moment of voting in the life of their country, nobody would abstain. (The Courier No. 133, front page)*