Courier

Newsletter of the **OSCE** Mission to Croatia

2004 Bulgarian Chairmanship 🔳 2005 Slovenian Chairmanship



Prime Minister Ivo Sanader's "breaking of bread" with Serb returnees in the Zadar hinterland marked one of the most important events of the year. OSCE CiO Solomon Passy, Amb. Peter Semneby, PM Sanader, Serb MP Milorad Pupovac, 11 May.

Head of Mission: The way ahead in 2005

The end of the year is a good time to stop and reflect, both on the past and the future. For me, this reflection seems particularly appropriate at the end of this year, since the Mission is again going through a period of transition. The past year has been a particularly active one, and next year as well, we can look forward to a dynamic working environment.

Mission's streamlining

As a result of the transition, many staff members will find themselves in a new work situation. Some will work in an entirely new location. The Mission's new field structure will be simpler than before and allow a more flexible and efficient use of resources. The most painful part is that some dedicated and very capable staff members will also leave the Mission. All decisions related to the downsizing are among the most difficult that I have had to take as Head of Mission. I have tried to make sure that the necessary downsizing is carried out in such a way that it will hurt as few staff members as possible.

But it is impossible to avoid decisions that will hurt some. I very much regret this. At the same time I would like to express my profound gratitude and admiration for those dedicated staff members who now leave. Through the work with the OSCE Mission, you have made a very important contribution to the development of Croatia and Southeastern Europe, often under very difficult conditions. Although I realize that many of you will have a sense of loss and disappointment, I hope that you will also feel the pride of accomplishment that you deserve. And I believe that you will have received experience that will be valuable in the future as well

There are two reasons for the streamlining or downsizing. On a positive (cont. p. 2)



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

- Contents -

■ Head of Mission: The way ahead in 2005
Calender2-3
Focus
CSPM
Mission in the Press5 Mission Activities in the Spotlight of the Media
 Flash News4-5 Mission's Guide for Returnees FO Gospic and Zadar Opening Visit by Belgian Ambassador to OSCE Human Rights Day ICEJ Book Launch
 Field News
Staff Info7
Social Corner8

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Calender

2 and 15 September: HOM met with Chief State Prosecutor, Mladen Bajic.

3 September: HOM met with Stability Pact Co-ordinator, Erhard Busek.

15 September: PAC launched by HOM, Foreign Minister Miomir Zuzul and Construction Minister Bozidar Kalmeta.

16 September: HOM addressed COWEB meeting, Brussels.

20-21 September: DHOM attended seminar on national minorities protection organized by Government Office for National Minorities, Cavtat.

24 September: HOM addressed seminar on war crimes prosecution, organized by Ministry of Justice and ICTY, Opatija.

25 September: HOM addressed conference on SEE EU integration prospects, organized by Igman Initiative, Zagreb.

5 October: HOM - joint OSCE/UNHCR/ EC Delegation/US Embassy meeting with Construction Minister Bozidar Kalmeta. HOM also met with PM Ivo Sanader.

15 October: HOM attended conference on resolving issues of displaced persons, Belgrade.

18 October: HOM met with Minister of Justice, Vesna Skare Ozbolt.

DHOM and HFO Kostajnica Manuel Antonio discussed opening of FO in Gracac with Lika-Senj County Prefect Milan Jurkovic.

20 October: DHOM visited FO Osijek.

22 October: DHOM addressed World Veterans' Federation meeting.

25 October: HOM attended Stability Pact Ministerial Conference on Effective Democratic Governance at Local and Regional Level, Zagreb.

26 October: HOM held presentation at round table on European Day of Civil Justice, hosted by Minister of Justice.

2 November: HOM met with Ivica Crnic, President of Supreme Court and State Electoral Commission.

(cont. p. 3)

(cont. from p. 1)

note, it reflects progress that Croatia has made with the Mission's help. But at the same time, it has also been driven by the shortage of funding for the OSCE as a whole.

Mission in focus of attention

Probably the Mission has never been more in the centre of attention of media and the authorities in Croatia as in the last year. Our mandate issues have suddenly become central parts of the political agenda in Croatia. There are at least two reasons for this. First, the elections, which created a parliamentary situation that in turn paved the way for the agreement between HDZ and the Serb minority members of Parliament. Secondly, the rise of EU accession to the top of the foreign policy agenda, and together with it the political conditions for EU membership, which are almost identical with the Mission's mandate.

All this has enbaled us to develop closer contacts than before with authorities both at the central and local level. The most powerful image during the last year of this new relationship and the priority given to our work was probably Prime Minister Sanader's visit together with the Chairman-in-Office to the area around Zadar and Benkovac, which will be remembered thanks to the Prime Minister sharing a "pogaca" with a Serb returnee in front of the cameras.

The new climate has paved the way for progress on several issues of substance. For example, our systematic work on refugee return has eventually enabled us to reach understanding with the authorities on the issues to be addressed, although there are admittedly still differences on how to define satisfactory implementation of many of those tasks. We have also helped to stimulate and define a healthy public debate on war crimes issues with the Government taking joint ownership of the conclusions from our trial monitoring. I would also mention the amendments of media legislation that were made earlier in the year, after experts commissioned by us and our partner organizations made recommendations in order to reduce the possibility of political interference and the scope of criminal libel.

Looking ahead to 2005

But even if there is a lot of progress to be proud about, we should not lose sight of the uncertainties ahead. First of all, we are facing several elections, and with them a risk of political confrontation which will at best reduce the attention given to our mandate issues, and at worst create a less tolerant atmosphere. There are also uncertainties about the speed of EU integration and the level of popular support. So far, steady progress has been possible through a successful mix of carrots and sticks, but if too much public attention is focused on the sticks, support may falter. Yet another uncertainty is the very extensive and sometimes acrimonious discussion taking place within the OSCE at this moment on the role and priorities of the organization.

Among the most important issues for next year I would mention refugee return, minority representation and war crimes. We will increase the emphasis on projects to support the implementation of our mandate issues.

On **refugee return**, we have just started a discussion with the European Commission, UNHCR and the governments in the region on a political process that could lead to agreement between the countries on measures to close the refugee file within a few years. Those who have been displaced should be offered a fair deal regardless of whether they want to return or stay where they are now. In particular, we will have to monitor and support the housing programmes for those former holders of occupancy/tenancy rights who want to return. We are also in the final stages of hiring a public relations firm to conduct the Public Awareness Campaign on reconciliation and sustainable return.

On **minority representation**, we will work with the High Commissioner on National Minorities to develop programmes to make it possible for minorities to be represented at an appropriate level in the state administration, the judiciary and the police.

On **war crimes**, we will continue to discuss with the ICTY how we could support the Completion Strategy of the Court and how we could contribute to a fair treatment of war crimes in Croatian courts.

Of course, there will also be other issues on our agenda. We will continue to have a high public profile, since so much depends on how successful we are in influencing public attitudes.

Finally, as Christmas and the New Year are approaching, I would also like to mention that the Mission is planning to make its own contribution to bringing warmth - in the most literal sense - to many homes in Croatia. The Mission is providing winter aid - blankets, stoves, mattresses - to returnees in several villages.

I would like to wish all Mission staff a restful holiday, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ambassador Peter Semneby Head of Mission



Ambassador Peter Semneby, Construction Minister Bozidar Kalmeta and Foreign Minister Miomir Zuzul present a report on refugee return. Zagreb, 15 September.

Mission and Government Jointly Launch PAC

Public Awareness Campaign

PAC Facts

What is PAC?

■ PAC stands for Public Awareness Campaign on Reconciliation and Sustainable Return - a joint initiative by the Government, OSCE, EC Delegation Zagreb, UNHCR, and USAID.

Aims of PAC:

■ Motive refugees and displaced persons to make an informed decision on whether to return;

Promote the importance of multiculturalism and tolerance for building an integrated thriving society in the spirit of European Integration; and
 Support the Croatian authorities in the policy of empowering those who wish to return.

Substantial donors so far: ■ USA, Norway, The Netherlands and Sweden.

he groundwork was laid this year for facilitating the Public Awareness Campaign (PAC) on Reconciliation and Sustainable Return.

Following the first activity – a survey of attitudes conducted by the PULS agency which will serve as the basis for the Campaign, the focus in 2005 will be raising information awareness on positively influencing the conditions for sustainable return and by promoting tolerance among refugees and the receiving communities.

The Campaign will be designed and facilitated by a public relations agency - the winning bidder of the public tender that was issued 15 September.

The consultant will by February plan and design the communications plan for the activities and media component for facilitating the resolution of the remaining tasks related to refugee return. The fruits of the campaign will be assessed in a final survey to be completed in December 2005.

Calender

4 November: HOM attended lecture by ICTY President Theodor Meron, at the invitation of Supreme Court President Ivica Crnic.

5 November: HOM - field visit to Zadar hinterland with Amb. Stephan Minikes, Head of US Del. to OSCE.

10 November: HOM addressed Regional SE Europe OSCE/UNHCR/ EC Delegation meeting, Sarajevo.

DHOM and ROL Head Mary Wyckoff met Luka Madjeric, new Head of Government Office for Human Rights.

16 November: HOM met with BiH Minister for Refugees and Human Rights and BiH Ambassador Zlatko Dizdarevic.

17-19 November: DHOM met with representatives of Slovakia, France, Slovenia, Croatia and OSCE Secretariat and presented Mission's 2005 Budget, Vienna.

18-19 November: HOM attended Round Table on Election Legislation, organized by CoE and OSCE, Zagreb.

23 November: HOM - joint OSCE/ UNHCR/ECDelegation/US Embassy meeting with Minister Kalmeta, Zagreb. DHOM addressed OSCE Police Donor Meeting.

25 November: HOM presented Status Report at OSCE PC, Vienna.

26 November: HOM met with Croatian President Stjepan Mesic.

29-30 November: HOM attended Regional Conference on War Crimes Prosecution, Lake Palic, SCG.

6-7 December: HOM attended panel discussion "Croatia's Path to EU", Vienna.

9-10 December: Opening of new Field Offices in Zadar and Gospic.

13 December: HOM - joint OSCE/ EC Delegation meeting and presentation of "Road Map" with Interior Minister Marijan Mlinaric.

15 December: DHOM attended Osijek-Baranja County Charter signing ceremony in Osijek. ■

Civil Society and Project Management CSPM Greatest Hits in 2004

■ Western Slavonia: Councillors' training FC Sisak CSPM Unit designed the pilot project "Councillors' Training" which aimed at providing municipal councillors with additional knowledge and skills to

improve their leadership, communication and negotiation skills as well as advance their efficiency in the decision making process.

One of the top Croatian training organizations, SMART, was chosen to deliver the training to the following targeted municipalities: Dvor, Gvozd, Grubisno Polje and Plaski. Through specifically selected topics, participating councillors were trained on how to use necessary instruments to effectively negotiate, facilitate activities and initiate positive developments within the community. As an indicator of the project's impact, only a few days after the training the Municipality of Plaski devised a long-

lasting solution for the ongoing problem of the municipality's water supply and proposed this to the regional authorities.

■ Eastern Slavonia: Charters on co-operation between authorities and NGOs

To promote better co-operation between the Government and the non-governmental sector in Croatia and raise awareness amongst local stakeholders, FC Vukovar CSPM Unit became actively engaged in the support and development of the local Charters on co-operation. This was done together with the Regional Forum of Associations, City of Osijek and Osijek-Baranja County while in Vukovar it was led by the County De-

Mission's Guide

oess

for Returnees

partment for EU Integration and supported by the OSCE.

Several months of joint work on creating and improving draft versions resulted in final documents that were accepted by the County



Amb. Robert W. Becker and Osijek-Baranja County Prefect Kresimir Bubalo at the Charters' signing ceremony.

Executive Councils and the County Assembly in Osijek. The signing ceremony of the Charters took place on 15 December.

■ Community - Police bridge building This four-year-old initiative in the Baranja region, in which the Mission became engaged over the past two years with modest co-funding efforts, proved very successful in establishing co-operation between the Police and citizens. It promoted reconciliation in the area and introduced the Community Policing concept to the local population. It succeeded in achieving a visible and sound cooperation between the Police, NGOs and the OSCE. It also actively involved participation of state institutions both in the financing and implementation phases.

FC Knin: PTSD project for reconciliation The FC Knin CSPM Unit financially sup-

ported a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder project aimed at improving inter-ethnic relations through psychosocial and IT assistance for PTSD sufferers and their families. It targeted Bosnian, Croat and Serb families who suffer from PTSD in the town of Knin. The project involved group and individual family counselling, IT education for sufferers and their families with the aims of contributing to improve tolerance, as well as employment opportunities for the beneficiaries. This initiative acted as a catalyst.

The two-tier approach in addressing PTSD sufferers has been recognized by the Science and Education Ministry. The implementing NGO began discussions with the Ministry on the funding of IT training and having the education en-

dorsed in employment records (Radna knjizica) and the Ministry of Family and Defenders to network all organizations involved in psychosocial therapy. The NGO's efforts also received written support from the President's Office and was recognised as a leading service provider in IT education by the community. It exerted pressure on Knin town authorities to become more accountable for the dispersion of town budget funds intended for civic organizations. As a result the NGO is now on the advisory board of the Town of Knin for funding of civil society organizations.

CSPM Unit, MHQ

Flash

MHQ R&I Unit created the "**Guide for Returnees to Croatia**" so as to provide advice on the most common legal and administrative questions faced by the returnees.

The Guide will be published in

some 30,000 copies and widely distributed especially among the potential returnees in SCG, BiH and Croatia. Flash

Mission's Streamlining: Opening of FO Gospic and Zadar new Premises



FO Korenica moved to the town of Gospic and FO Zadar and Split to new premises, as part of the Mission's streamlining. In 2005, Misson's field presence will be concentrated in six major political, economic and administrative centres – Vukovar, Karlovac, Sisak, Gospic, Zadar and Split. Head of Mission opened the new premises of FO Gospic (left) and Zadar (right) in the attendance of Government and local officials.

Mission in the Press

Mission Activities in the Spotlight of the Media

ne of the major events that attracted nation-wide media coverage for the Mission in the last three-months of 2005 was the joint OSCE-GoC press conference about the report on the return of refugees which will serve as the basis of the Public Awareness Campaign, an initiative that will no doubt be in the media's spotlight in the coming year. presidential elections. *Vecernji list* focused on the return of Serb refugees, stating that the issue was still one of the most important aspects of the Mission's mandate. *Slobodna Dalmacija* and *Vjesnik* highlighted that the problem of housing options for former occupancy/tenancy rights (OTR) holders who wished to return to Croatia was still inadequately addressed.

PAC

Vecernji list (14.09) interviewed HOM Peter Semneby about the issues the Mission was addressing, choosing to lead the article with HOM's explanation of PAC on the eve of its launch. *Jutarnji list* and *Globus* (15.09) also reported on PAC by publishing some of the findings of the survey of attitudes on return issues which was conducted by the *Puls* agency.

Status report

Another top event was the Mission's regular press conference hosted by HOM to present the Status Report. All media summarized the findings of SR No. 15 well, each choosing to high-

light various issues. The *Dnevnik* daily headlined its report: "The OSCE is downsizing its Mission to Croatia in 2005". *Novi list* concentrated on the fact that the Mission would not monitor the



Projects in the press

OSCE-funded projects were also featured in the press. Amongst them were: the series of seminars on the registration of minority members on the Vot-



Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrugghe, Head of Belgian Delegation to OSCE, visited MHQ, FO Split and Knin area from 15 -18 December. Belgium is to chair the OSCE in 2006 and as such enters the Troika in 2005. (Photo: Meeting with senior staff, MHQ, 15 Dec.)



The Mission participated in the GoC's main event marking International HR Day on Flower Square, Zagreb. Citizens visited the Mission's information booth where they were informed about the Mission's mandate.

ers' Lists; GONG's voter awareness campaign and the monitoring of the presidential elections; a round-table on electoral reform in Croatia; an OSCE-organized visit of Interior Ministry officials to the German Federal State Saxony-Anhalt with the focus on methods of human resources; and a seminar in Cavtat for minorities about

> the implementation of the Framework Convention on the Rights of Minorities. The promotion of two books funded by the Mission were also reported on: "Elections in the Media – Croatia 2003" by the HHO, and "The Wealth of Diversity" by the International Centre for the Education of Journalists' about the treatment of ethnic minorities in the media.

> ■ Mission in the Press in 2005 The New Year brings the Mission's way many activities that are already of interest to the media. Just some of them are: the start of Croatia's EU membership negotiations, the ICTY's exit strategy, the Public Awareness Campaign in

full swing, the Road Map and of course more interest in the Organization as a whole as Slovenia takes over the chair.

Slavka Jureta, Senior PAU Assistant, MHQ



International Center for the Education of Journalists (ICEJ) promoted its OSCE-funded book "Wealth of Diversity" in Zagreb. The book is the result of a scientific study on the relationship between media and minorities.

Relocating villages closer to areas equipped with urban facilities Shining returnee's life in remote Pakrac area

Field News

R eturnees in the villages of Cikote and Koturic have to be born survivors to be able to modestly adapt to the living conditions. These two remote villages located 20-25 km from the Pakrac urban area on two different hills share similarities beginning

with a road. They are inaccessible to two-wheel drive vehicles, except if driven by exceptional drivers - like the postman. Both villages were completely destroyed in 1991, while few of the inhabitants benefited from the Government's reconstruction program.

While some of the villages' applicants for reconstruction aid are still waiting (in a barn) for the Ministry's decision, there are other happy returnees who for some months have been enjoying living in their rebuilt palaces; New lives however with no elec-

tricity, water supply, phone, job or livestock. Many have no family and social life.As one of the "happy" returnees, Jovan, put it: "We don't even know what's happening out there in the world!" Visiting Jovan, FO staff agreed to drink coffee prepared by "Baba" without mentioning the world's madness and trying



to understand a little more about their everyday life. The relaxed atmosphere was partially due to the sunshine. Their struggle for existence however prevents them from enjoying it. Indeed, at 65years you would need to visit a doctor. You would like to meet your grandchildren. You certainly wouldn't like carry-

ing water containers for 2 km threatened by wild boars and thinking all along the way about your tractor... with an empty fuel tank!

An encouraging step has been made following a common initiative from the Pakrac town authorities and the Serbian Democratic Forum. Both agreed to relocate some of the reconstruction program beneficiaries who live in remote villages closer to the urban centre, along the main road, in sectors equipped with modern facilities, far from the middle ages. This initiative is both cost and socially effective. The community will also gain some strength, while the quality of

life may eventually improve... after the snow season.

Jelica Ivosevic and Diego de Nardi FO Pakrac

International Summer Work Camp, Korenica, August 2004 How the Portuguese occupied Korenica

uring the peaceful summer months, when even the fortnightlies were drafted according to a more relaxed schedule, FO Korenica was working in full throttle. Summer in Korenica was more interesting than usual, much to the delight of the local children as forty-five female students arrived in Korenica on 2 August for a two-week international volunteer camp. Activities focused on work with Korenica and Udbina youth club members as well as Korenica women, visiting the elderly and a task-force to clean up NP Plitvicka Jezera.

Five female volunteers from "Harmica" Zagreb Cultural Centre were on hand to help interpret during the daily activities, while FO Korenica staff assisted and co-

ordinated, ensuring that everything ran smoothly. The camp however would never have been so successful had it not been for all the local partners - Police, Red Cross, Korenica Secondary Catering School, Plitvicka Jezera Municipality... As the volunteers were accompanied by a Catholic priest, FO Korenica organized



a fruitful meeting with Gospic-Senj Bishop Msgr. Mile Bogovic as well as with the Korenica Orthodox priest. On their last weekend in Croatia, the volunteers were treated to some sightseeing in Bihac (BiH), Kornati islands, Zadar and NP Plitvicka Jezera. On the eve of their leave, the volunteers organized the "Portugal event" as a token

of their gratitude of their hosts' kindness and help. They put a lot of effort into preparing original Portuguese food. An exquisite choice of Portuguese wine was also tasted to the delight of all guests. Combined with folk poetry, dance, costume, song and hospitality, a touch of Portugal was brought to Korenica. A number of distinguished guests attended the event: OSCE Deputy Head Ambassador Robert Becker, First Secretary at the Portuguese Embassy, and the Gospic-Senj Bishop.

Packing up to go home, the sorrow and tears could not be hidden by both guests and hosts. The words of our Portuguese guests best round-up the event... "Croatia, which was an unknown country to us, now has a new

meaning. We keep in our hearts the memories of all those people who helped us and offered a real lecture on kindness. It is hard to leave but we will come back!"

Vlatka Telenta, FO Korenica

Intern's Perspective

Witnessing Local Politics in Action

s an OSCE intern, I am always interested in seeing some "local politics in action". On 19 October, I had the opportunity to attend a councillor's session in Plaski (a small municipality near Karlovac) with the CSPM Unit, where local issues were discussed.

This turned out to be no ordinary session. The purpose of our visit that day was to inform the councillors of an OSCE-sponsored training workshop that aimed at improving the communication skills of local government officials. However, it happened that one of the council members was recently dismissed by the council. His aim that day was to protest against the dismissal and with the help of the media publicize his course.

As we entered the crowded conference room, a flock of journalists flooded into the room with their bright lights and expensive camera equipment. The session soon turned into a yelling match between councillors over the legitimacy of the dismissal. Journalists were both appalled and amused recording the situation. This later became major news covered by all national media. Seeing these same people yelling at each other while watching the evening



news at dinner was a rather shocking experience for an intern. I saw what was meant to be a democratic process deteriorate into something resembling child's play.

This event shows that local self-government development is still at a rudimentary stage, and much work needs to be done to improve the process. The OSCE, therefore, has an important role as a facilitator of this development.

On 29 October, some of this same group of councillors attended the training workshop in Stubicke Toplice which was organized by the NGO SMART and funded by the OSCE Mission. The project aimed to enhance their communication and conflict resolution skills. The different roles of councillors were discussed extensively and it was encouraging to see so many councillors participating in the training. This was definitely an important first step for them to communicate with each other.

Caroline Law, Intern, FC Sisak



These colleagues have joined the Mission:

Hrvoje Lorencin, IT Assistant, MHQ; Ana Pezelj, cleaner, FO Gospic; Goran Busic, Program Assistant, FO Split; Nikolina Balija, Public Information Assistant, MHQ.

Welcome to the Mission!

These colleagues have left the Mission:

Nicholas Alexander (USA), Field Officer, FO Karlovac; Maurizio Montipo (IT), Field Officer, FO Petrinja; Diana Ivancic (CAN), Democratization Officer, MHQ; Kieren McDaid (IRL), Deputy Regional Representative/ Chief of Staff, FC Knin; Guy Bransby (UK), Head of FO Pakrac; Violeta Gonzalez (USA), Intern, FC Sisak; Caroline Law (CAN), Intern, FC Sisak; Beata Oleksy (POL), Intern, FC Knin; Jerome Merlin (FRA), Intern, FO Karlovac; Neven Oreskovic, IT Assistant MHQ; Igor Reif, Program Assistant, SO Baranja; Ana Didera, Personnel Assistant, MHQ.

Thank you for your contribution to the Mission. Best wishes for the future!



ommunity-Police Bridge Building" is a project that has met its initial goal of informing citizens on what they can expect from the recently introduced Community Policing and how the new, friendly, Contact Police officers will help to improve the quality of life in their community. This OSCE-sponsored project, worth 17,500 euro, is being implemented by Ba-ranja-based NGO PGDI in FC Vukovar AoR.

The 50,000 information brochures and leaflets distributed to citizens represent only the "visible" part of a more compre-

FC Vukovar: OSCE helping building Bridges between Citizens and Police

hensive project covering Vukovar-Sirmium and Osijek-Baranja counties.

The project was in October also presented to the media at two press conferences held in Vukovar and Beli Manastir. Both press conferences, convened by the respective local police teams, were also attended by a PGDI

representative and FC Vukovar's NPIO and Police Adviser. Presented by the Vukovar-Sirmium Police Administration and the Beli Manastir Police Station, it represented an example of good co-operation and partnership between the OSCE Mission - Field Centre Vukovar, the police and civil sector. Comprehensive and positive media reports, including interviews with FC Vukovar Police Adviser Antonio Rodrigues and NPIO Ljerka Drazenovic, showed that the local media understood the role of the OSCE in this communityoriented initiative. The project represents a part of the OSCE Mission mandate concerning the reform of the Croatian police. Given the good cooperation of the Croatian Ministry of Interior, the Mission has been assisting and supporting Croatia on its way towards EU membership. This support reflects on different levels - from international police experts' assistance to projects such as "Community-Police Bridge Building".

Each of the partners in this particular project contributed greatly throughout the entire project. The co-operation between the NGO sector and the police could also be assessed as precious as well as logical, because "Community-Police Bridge Building" is entirely meant for citizens themselves, having the aims of improving the security and quality of life in a community.

Ljerka Drazenovic, FC Vukovar NPIO