

Institutions

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights spearheads the OSCE's work in the human dimension. It acts to protect human rights, develop democratic societies with an emphasis on elections, strengthen the rule of law and promote genuine respect and mutual understanding among individuals as well as states.

Monitoring commitments

One of the fundamental elements of ODIHR's mandate is to monitor the compliance of participating States with their human dimension commitments. While the Office's most visible monitoring activity is election observation, it also pays close attention to how States are living up to other commitments.

In 2007, ODIHR deployed some 3,000 observers from 49 participating States to 16 election missions, including more than 20 long- and nearly 90 short-term observers financed through ODIHR's Fund for Enhancing the Diversification of Election Observation Missions.

Monitoring elections is not an end in itself. Follow-up to observation missions and to the

recommendations made in reports is the essential objective. In an attempt to launch a discussion on the most efficient follow-up practices, including the possibility of regular reporting on the implementation of recommendations, ODIHR distributed a discussion paper among the participating States outlining a possible framework for follow-up activities.

ODIHR also tackled torture and ill-treatment in criminal justice systems. It sent a survey to all field operations to document experiences in combating these phenomena, to identify systemic obstacles to torture prevention, to pinpoint areas where ODIHR could support field operations in anti-torture activities and to collect information on other initiatives in this field. The results will be used for a future publication. ODIHR's anti-torture work emphasizes the promotion and implementation of the *Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture*, and it provides targeted support strengthening domestic monitoring programmes.

In 2007, ODIHR completed long-term projects monitoring criminal trials in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Final reports, including recommendations, were published and shared with the relevant authorities and the public. Under another trial-monitoring project initiated in 2006, more than 30 jury trials were observed throughout Kazakhstan in 2007.



Election observation and assessment missions

Country	Type of Election	Date	Type of Mission
Serbia	parliamentary	21 January	observation
Albania	local	18 February	observation
Estonia	parliamentary	4 March	assessment
France	presidential	22 April and 6 May	assessment
Armenia	parliamentary	12 May	observation
Ireland	parliamentary	24 May	assessment
Moldova	local	3 and 17 June	observation
Belgium	parliamentary	10 June	assessment
Turkey	parliamentary	22 July	assessment
Kazakhstan	parliamentary	18 August	observation
Ukraine	parliamentary	30 September	observation
Poland	parliamentary	21 October	assessment
Switzerland	parliamentary	21 October	assessment
Croatia	parliamentary	25 November	limited observation
Kyrgyzstan	parliamentary	16 December	observation
Uzbekistan	presidential	23 December	limited observation



↑ Women participate in the ODIHR training workshop on promoting women's leadership and increased role in decision-making at the local level. The workshop for a women's network from regions in Azerbaijan and a women's network from regions in Kyrgyzstan took place in Bishkek from 12 to 18 April. (Eric Gourlan)

← Polling-station officials count ballot papers in the 22 July parliamentary elections in Turkey. (OSCE/Jonathan Stonestreet)

↓ Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly publication cover (OSCE)

ODIHR monitored the situation of human rights defenders and advocates throughout the OSCE area and published a report in December. The report identifies four areas of particular concern: physical attacks on human rights defenders; the curtailment of the freedom of association; the failure to respect and protect freedom of assembly; and restrictions placed on the right to liberty and freedom of movement.

Providing training and expertise

Throughout the OSCE area, there are individuals working in governments and non-governmental organizations or simply as private citizens dedicated to the Organization's goals. ODIHR supports such groups and individuals by providing expertise and training to build their skills as they visit prisons, observe elections, monitor human rights abuses, combat domestic violence, man hotlines for victims of trafficking, support political pluralism or fight for the freedom to express their opinions.

ODIHR conducted three regional courses for short-term election observers at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, and provided support to national efforts by training Austrian, German, Norwegian and Russian observers to participate in election missions.

In order to develop strategies for ensuring that human rights are respected in the fight against terrorism, ODIHR conducted training courses for government officials in Ashgabad, Baku and London.

In Kazakhstan, ODIHR trained government officials on national referral mechanisms, an interagency framework aimed at protecting victims of trafficking. Also in Kazakhstan, ODIHR and the Union of Advocates selected 26 criminal lawyers to participate in a training course to improve their skills.

ODIHR conducted training in Armenia and Tajikistan that was aimed at improving the ability of human rights defenders to monitor and report on human rights issues, and carried out training courses for ombudsperson institutions in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

ODIHR implemented a programme of activities requested by Georgia's six main political parties to follow up a 2005-2006 pilot of a methodology for the parties' self-assessment. The programme included workshops on local party leadership, strategic planning, party funding and training for a cross-party cadre of trainers.

In co-operation with the Presence in Albania, ODIHR assisted the Albanian Government with its planning of the modernization of its population registration and address systems.

ODIHR continues to assist the Women's Non-governmental Organization Coalition in Georgia in developing its capacity to advance women's political participation and foster policy measures for equality of rights and opportunities among women and men. In 2007, ODIHR conducted workshops for the Coalition on strategies for developing public information and media campaigns on gender equality.

ODIHR, the Office of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine and experts from the Austrian Federal Police conducted the first training workshop on the role of police in preventing and combating domestic violence for the heads of precinct police from all 27 regions of Ukraine.

ODIHR has been training police officers to recognize and combat hate crime for several years. In 2007, ODIHR trained officers from Ukraine, Poland and Serbia. It also organized a train-the-trainers seminar for police experts from 13 countries, which concluded with the first annual meeting of the Regional Law Enforcement Network on Hate Crime Prevention and Investigation. In addition, ODIHR and a board of experts from throughout the OSCE region developed a training curriculum and a guide for non-governmental organizations on monitoring and reporting on hate-motivated incidents.

ODIHR began co-operating with Azerbaijan's Education Ministry on teacher training and curriculum development regarding education in human rights and promoting mutual respect and understanding.

Legislative support

ODIHR provides expertise and assistance to participating States in developing legislation that complies with OSCE commitments. In 2007, ODIHR commented on legislative acts concerning freedom of assembly, freedom of association, political parties, public opinion polling, migration and constitutional amendments.

ODIHR's legislative database (www.legislationline.org) was overhauled with a comprehensive update on various topics, including trafficking in human beings, terrorism, freedom of information and non-governmental organizations.

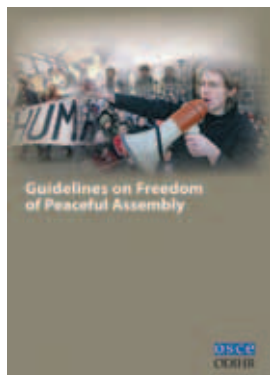
ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Venice Commission published six legal reviews of electoral legislation.

ODIHR also extended legislative support through its Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief, and by offering comprehensive analysis of legislative processes.

Publications

The Office publishes numerous reports in order to provide states and their citizens with information about the Office's activities, as well as about state compliance with OSCE commitments. In addition, ODIHR publishes handbooks, manuals and guidelines on specific issues in a variety of languages.

In 2007, ODIHR published a *Handbook for Long-term Election Observers*, providing an overview of the role and responsibilities of long-term observers in observation missions. ODIHR published its first annual report on hate crime, which provides an overview of patterns pertaining to hate-motivated incidents and examples of effective state responses. The Office published a manual called *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools* in order to assist participating States whenever they promote the study of religion and belief in schools. ODIHR co-operated with a number of organizations in publishing guidelines on teaching about anti-Semitism and commemorating Holocaust memorial days, and it also supported the development of a resource book aimed at increasing awareness about Muslim communities in Spain. The Office published *Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly*, and ODIHR's Panel on Freedom of Assembly,



which drafted the guidelines, provided assistance to participating States wishing to introduce or improve legislation in this area.

Several other books were completed and will be published in 2008, including a manual on human rights and counter-terrorism; a handbook on the human rights of armed forces personnel, which was produced with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces; and a trial-monitoring reference manual based on the experience of ODIHR and the OSCE's field operations in South-eastern Europe.

Conferences and meetings

ODIHR organizes numerous conferences, meetings and roundtables every year. While some of these are mandated human dimension events, others take a variety of formats, including bilateral meetings with government officials, working group sessions, roundtables for government officials and non-governmental organizations, regional seminars or high-level OSCE-wide conferences. Regardless of the format, these meetings provide governments, as well as interested groups and individuals, with invaluable opportunities to share information, raise important questions and make decisions.

In 2007, human dimension meetings were dedicated to the following issues: freedom of assembly, association and expression; promoting and protecting human rights; combating the sexual exploitation of children; and effective participation and representation in democratic societies.

The latter is a particularly important subject among Roma and Sinti communities, which have a limited record of participation in public life. To consider this issue in more depth, a special day on the political participation of Roma and Sinti was held at the *Human Dimension Implementation Meeting*. Recommendations were formulated to address issues such as low voter turnout and political parties' lack of interest in reaching out to this constituency.

ODIHR also facilitated roundtable discussions between state authorities and Roma representatives to assist States in implementing the *Roma and Sinti Action Plan*. At an OSCE conference in Bucharest on combating discrimination, ODIHR organized a side event on forced evictions of Roma. ODIHR staff held meetings in Italy with non-governmental organizations working with Roma and Sinti children vulnerable to exploitation. In response to reports of police brutality, staff from ODIHR, the Office of the High Commissioner for National Minorities and the Strategic Police Matters Unit visited Romania to raise awareness of the issue and encourage measures to eradicate this practice.

ODIHR has been working with participating States for several years to promote the development of national strategies to protect victims of trafficking. ODIHR staff made visits to Belarus, Turkey, Russia and the United Kingdom in 2007 in this regard. The Office also organized a workshop in Barcelona in December that addressed the question of compensation for trafficked persons.

ODIHR was one of the organizers of three workshops in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on

the implementation of United Nations *Security Council Resolution 1325* on women, peace and security.

Together with the Spanish Chairmanship, ODIHR organized a conference on victims of terrorism in September in Vienna, addressing such topics as the definition of a terrorist victim, support, issues of justice and how the international community can co-operate to improve the situation of victims.

Also in support of the Chairmanship, the ODIHR helped prepare the *High-level Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding* in Bucharest in June and the conference *Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims* in Cordoba in October.

Head of Office:
Ambassador Christian Strohal
Approved budget: €14,939,900
www.osce.org/odihhr

➤ High Commissioner Knut Vollebaek talks to teachers in a minority-language school in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, on 12 October. (OSCE/Dmitri Alechkevitch)

→ The High Commissioner on National Minorities supported the translation and re-broadcasting of Georgian national news into Armenian to better inform ethnic Armenians in Javkheti about social, economic and political developments in the country. (OSCE/Gia Chkhatarashvili)

High Commissioner on National Minorities

Ethnic tension has proven to be a major source of conflict in the OSCE region. To address ethnic tensions and to prevent the conflagration of inter-state conflicts over national minority issues, the post of the High Commissioner on National Minorities was established at the Helsinki Summit of the CSCE, the forerunner of the OSCE, in 1992.

Since taking up his post on 5 July, the High Commissioner has visited the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia, signaling his priorities and concerns.

The High Commissioner has always paid particular attention to relations between states and their so-called ethnic kin abroad. Tensions often arise when states take unilateral steps to protect or support their ethnic kin outside their sovereign jurisdiction. With this in mind, the High Commissioner decided to elaborate a set of recommendations aimed at clarifying how states can support and extend benefits to people sharing the same culture and ethnicity, who are citizens of another country, in ways that do not strain inter-ethnic or bilateral relations. The recommendations are expected to be published in 2008.

Throughout the year, the High Commissioner took note of the intensified debate on the subject of integration. Following up on last year's study of integration policies in diverse societies, the High Commissioner carried on his examination of how all participating States can benefit from the existing experience of integration of national minorities.

The High Commissioner also followed up on the initiative of his predecessor to organize discussions in Central Asia on regional co-operation on national minority education. Experts discussed teacher training in Astana in February, language teaching in Bishkek in June and textbooks and curricula in Tashkent in November.

Country reports

Croatia. The High Commissioner continued to follow the implementation of the *Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities* closely and focused on the issue of proportional representation in the state administration and the judiciary. The High Commissioner also followed the re-integration of students

from different ethnic backgrounds in a number of eastern Slavonian schools.

Estonia and Latvia. Meeting with authorities during several visits, the High Commissioner's political and legal advisers discussed ways to promote the further integration of minorities into public life and provided legal advice on naturalization and the implementation of education reforms.

Georgia. During a visit to Georgia in November, the High Commissioner confirmed the success of two programmes developed by his predecessor in the Armenian-populated Samtskhe-Javakheti region and the Azerbaijani-populated Kvemo-Kartli region promoting the integration of the Armenian and Azerbaijani minorities into Georgian political, social and cultural life. He decided to continue their implementation.

The High Commissioner supported the mainstreaming of inter-ethnic issues into Georgia's community police training curriculum and the drafting of a syllabus for the Tbilisi-based Police Academy on policing in multi-ethnic societies.

He welcomed the adoption of the *Law on Meskhetian Repatriation* in July and expressed his readiness to assist the Georgian Government in its implementation.

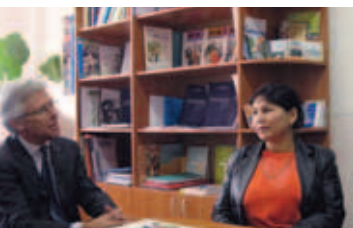
In Abkhazia, the High Commissioner launched the second phase of a project that trains Georgian- and Abkhaz-language teachers in modern, interactive teaching methods.

Kazakhstan. The High Commissioner assisted Kazakhstan in striking a balance between advancing knowledge of the state language and ensuring the linguistic rights of national minorities. To do so, he organized two training courses on modern methods of training adults in the state language and teaching minority mother tongues and he supported an in-service teacher training facility for language teachers in minority schools in south Kazakhstan. During his visit to Kazakhstan in October, the High Commissioner agreed to expand upon these initiatives and also spoke with the authorities about ways to improve national minority participation in electoral processes.

Kyrgyzstan. The High Commissioner assisted Kyrgyzstan in promoting the integration of minorities in the fields of education, language, policing and broadcasting. On a visit to Kyrgyzstan in October, the High Commissioner welcomed the amendments to the election law introducing multi-ethnic party lists.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. During a visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in May, the High Commissioner discussed concerns about the implementation of the *Ohrid Framework Agreement*, including the issue of equitable representation of all communities in public services. In a public address at the multilingual South East European University in Tetovo, the High Commissioner raised issues surrounding education in a multi-ethnic society. He planned a winter camp for secondary school students belonging to different ethnic groups.

Moldova. The High Commissioner supported efforts by the Moldovan authorities to promote the teaching of the state language to national minorities, since this is essential for their integration into wider Moldovan society. A project offering lessons in the state language free of charge to civil servants in areas such as Gagauzia and northern Moldova, populated



predominantly by persons belonging to national minorities, continued this year. The project is fully supported by the regional authorities. The High Commissioner also assisted professors of journalism to develop a course curriculum in diversity reporting.

Montenegro. During the long process of drafting the new Constitution, which was beginning as the High Commissioner visited Montenegro in April, the High Commissioner provided assistance and expertise on issues relevant to national minorities. He has now started advising the Montenegrin Government on the Constitution's implementation.

Romania. The High Commissioner continued to follow developments concerning the draft laws on the status of national minorities and the draft law on Romanians abroad. He reaffirmed his commitment to helping the parties engaged in fostering academic excellence in a multicultural environment at the multi-lingual Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca.

The High Commissioner appointed two members of his staff to assist with the Romanian-Ukrainian initiative to jointly monitor the situation of the Romanian minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian minority in Romania. The second round of monitoring missions covering different regions took place in May and June.

Serbia. The High Commissioner visited both Belgrade and Pristina in September. He focused attention on the need to integrate minorities more fully into the judiciary, police and education sector in Vojvodina and southern Serbia. The High Commissioner called for constructive engagement from all sides to put conditions in place for a significant return of Serbs to Kosovo. He also raised the issue of Kosovo's smaller ethnic communities.

The High Commissioner paid considerable attention to building reconciliation between the two largest communities in Kosovo. He was involved with the promotion of transitional justice in Kosovo in close co-operation with the International Centre on Transitional Justice. Local politicians, policy-makers and opinion leaders from both the Kosovo Albanian and the Kosovo Serb communities met for a second round of confidential talks in Stockholm in February, following up on a first meeting also in Stockholm last year. Participants agreed that the process of reconciliation was closely linked to the question of the status of Kosovo, and where possible, the process should be taken closer to the region and ideally within Kosovo itself. The High Commissioner continued efforts to build support to push forward this process, both through Kosovo's institutional structure as well as by generating public discussion.

Tajikistan. The High Commissioner traveled to Dushanbe and, for the first time in the history of the institution, to the northern region of Soghd in May. He visited minority-language schools and met national minority leaders. He also sought the views of Tajikistan's leadership on the situation of Tajik-speaking minorities outside Tajikistan.

Turkey. The High Commissioner continued to develop contacts with the Turkish Foreign Ministry with the aim of creating a dialogue with the Turkish authorities.

Turkmenistan. The High Commissioner paid a visit to Turkmenistan in April and continued his dialogue with the Turkmenistan authorities on minority-language education, population resettlement and freedom of association.

Ukraine. In Ukraine, inter-ethnic relations in Crimea and the integration of Crimean Tatars into Ukrainian society remained a priority for the High Commissioner, including problems of housing, infrastructure, employment, education and land property rights. The High Commissioner also encouraged the amendment of Ukrainian minority-related legislation to bring it into line with OSCE commitments and Council of Europe standards.

In the continuation of the training project launched by the High Commissioner last year to sensitize Crimean civil servants and representatives of ethnic communities to questions of inter-ethnic tolerance, a second round of in-depth workshops was held.

Following a visit to Ukraine in May by an independent expert from Latvia who accompanied a delegation from the Office at the High Commissioner's request to study the situation of mother-tongue and state language education for national minorities in Crimea, the High Commissioner explored ways to help address this complex issue. He sought to initiate a dialogue in Crimea on international standards and best practices in the area of policing.

*High Commissioner:
Knut Vollebaek from 5 July,
succeeding Rolf Ekeus, whose mandate ended on 30 June
Approved budget: €2,852,800
www.osce.org/hcnm*

↓ Delegates of the Romanian-Ukrainian Commission are greeted by students from a Ukrainian-language school in Romania's Maramures region on 4 June. (OSCE/Klemens Buescher)



Representative on Freedom of the Media



↑ Nuriddin Karshiboyev (left) of the National Association of Independent Mass Media, Tajikistan; Oleg Panfilov (centre) of the Centre for Journalists in Extreme Situations, Russia; and Tamara Kaleeva (right) of the Foundation for the Protection of Freedom of Speech Adil Soz, Kazakhstan, at the Central Asia Media Conference in Dushanbe on 1 November (Nozim Qalandarov)

The task of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media is to observe media developments in the 56 participating States relevant to the OSCE's commitments on freedom of expression and free media.

In 2007, the Representative intervened with Governments of OSCE participating States on more than 100 occasions and issued more than 50 public statements. The Office organized two regional conferences, conducted four training sessions and published close to a dozen books and special reports.

Some of the more notable themes and activities in the work of the Office are outlined below.

Regional conferences: focus on media self-regulation

The Office continued to provide support to regional journalism by organizing the South Caucasus and the Central Asia Media Conferences in October and November, respectively. Regional journalists, media professionals and representatives of non-governmental organizations, as well as international and regional experts, gathered to discuss the current media situation in their countries.

The focus of this year's conferences was media self-regulation. The participants of both conferences assessed the effectiveness of various self-regulatory mechanisms – such as ethics codes, press councils and ombudspersons – and adopted declarations on media self-regulation. They also discussed how self-regulation can enhance journalistic professionalism and reduce the number of law suits filed against the media for committing professional mistakes. The events would not have been possible without contributions from the Governments of Austria, Germany, Ireland, Sweden and the United States (U.S.).

Legal assistance

The Office continued to provide legal assistance to the OSCE participating States in order to improve their

media and information legislation in line with OSCE commitments.

In Kazakhstan, the Office reviewed the draft Law on Mass Media and the *Law on Publishing*.

The Office reviewed the Croatian draft Law on Data Secrecy, resulting in the adoption of an improved version of the law in accordance with some recommendations made by the Office.

The Office also made comments on the Belarusian draft Law on Information, Informatization and Protection of Information, which the Representative presented to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, Ethnic Relations and the Media during his visit to Belarus.

The Office submitted to the Speaker of Moldova's Parliament a review of the country's new *Audiovisual Code* and the *Regulation on Broadcasting Licenses*.

Finally, co-hosting a seminar at the European Parliament in Brussels, the Office was consulted in the drafting of the European Union *Directive on Audiovisual Media Services*.

Country visits

During a visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina in February, the Representative met with then High Representative and European Union Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Christian Schwarz-Schilling, Chairman of the country's Council of Ministers Nikola Spiric, Prime Minister of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik and President of the Republika Srpska National Assembly Igor Radojicic, as well as with members of the Communications Regulatory Agency, the Press Council, the Association of Electronic Media and the country's Association of Journalists. Following the visit, the Representative presented a report entitled *The State of Media Freedom in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Public Service Broadcasting*.

During an April visit to Azerbaijan, the Representative met with President Ilham Aliyev to discuss the situation of media freedom in the country. He also met with Nushiravan Mahharamli, Chairman of the National Television and Radio Council, to address the suspension of the licence of the private television and radio broadcaster ANS.

During his visit to Kazakhstan to attend the *Eurasia Media Forum*, where he spoke out against media monopolization and criminalization of journalism, the Representative met with Dariga Nazarbayeva, member of Kazakhstan's Parliament and Head of the country's Congress of Journalists, to discuss a draft media law prepared by journalists' organizations.

Publications

The Office produced several publications during the year:

Media as a Business documents results of the regional conferences conducted by the Office in Central Asia and the South Caucasus;

Governing the Internet: Freedom and Regulation in the OSCE Region, published in July, provides an overview of Internet governance in the OSCE region and a compilation of reports on the subject from some OSCE participating States. The publication was made possible by contributions from France and Germany;

"Media self-regulation is [...] a civil-society endeavour developed by media professionals. Public authorities can best support the development of media self-regulation by guaranteeing freedom of expression and pluralism while refraining from regulating media content."

—Dushanbe Declaration on Media Self-Regulation, Tajikistan, 1 and 2 November.

Freedom and Responsibility- Yearbook No. 8 chronicles activities undertaken by the Office during the year 2006.

In addition, the Office compiled six special reports on a wide range of subjects and presented them to the Permanent Council. Among the themes covered were: accreditation of journalists; registration of media outlets; handling of journalists during political demonstrations; access to information in the OSCE area; and support of professional media through peer-to-peer exchanges. The latter report was compiled in response to a request by the Brussels Ministerial Council in December 2006 regarding "media twinning".

Violence against journalists

Tragic events throughout 2007 in the OSCE region showed that violence against journalists was a recurring challenge to media freedom worldwide. On top of numerous incidents of threats, harassment and beatings of media professionals, the year saw the murders of journalists Alisher Saipov in Kyrgyzstan, Hrant Dink in Turkey and Chauncey Bailey in the U.S.

The Representative took note with satisfaction of the international community's efforts against this dangerous trend. The United Nations adopted *Security Council Resolution 1738* condemning attacks on journalists in conflict situations in December 2006. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe promptly followed up by passing *Resolution 1535, Threats to the lives and freedom of expression of journalists*. The Office endorsed both documents.

Libel and insult

The Office continued to promote decriminalization of defamation and its complete transfer to civil courts.

To date, seven OSCE participating States do not have criminal sanctions for libel and insult: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Estonia, Moldova, Ukraine and the U.S. (at the federal level). Several participating States have abolished imprisonment as a form of punishment for defamation. However, prosecutions of journalists for libel and insult continued in a number of participating States throughout the year.

In 2007, the Office supported efforts to decriminalize defamation in Albania, and requested the Irish Government remove the remaining criminal provision from the draft Defamation Bill.

Internet

The Office of the Representative participated in the UN-led *Internet Governance Forum* in Rio de Janeiro, where it held a workshop on *Freedom of Expression as a Security Issue*, organized with the Council of Europe and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The Office also attended the *Computers, Freedom and Privacy* conference in Montreal, where it made a presentation on Internet content regulation in Europe.

In 2007, the Office became one of the founding members of the UN's Dynamic Coalition on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media on the Internet. The 2007 Internet project was funded by Ireland and Germany.

Tolerance and non-discrimination

The Office continued to campaign against the silencing of media coverage of sensitive issues in the name of tolerance in democratic societies. The Representative addressed this issue in several speeches, notably in Moscow at the *World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists*, in Baku at the Organization of the Islamic Conference's meeting on *The Role of Media in the Development of Tolerance and Mutual Understanding* and in Warsaw at the *OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting*.

Access to information

On the eve of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May, the Representative announced the completion of a survey on media access to information in the participating States. The survey examined freedom of information laws, rules on classification of information, punitive laws on breaching secrecy, and the protection of journalists' confidential sources. The survey showed that, although most governments have become more open in recent years, many of them still define state secrets too broadly, punish journalists for publishing leaked secrets and do not offer adequate protection to anonymous sources. This leads to inaccessibility of important information to the public. The results of the survey were the basis for the Office's contribution to the process of drafting the European Convention on Access to Official Documents, which was under debate at the end of the year by the Council of Europe's Committee on Human Rights.

Training projects

Training courses aimed at developing better relations between the state and the media and increasing the access of journalists to information held by government bodies have become a trademark of the Office. This year, it held such training courses in Belarus on 4 and 5 June, in Ukraine on 12 September, in Armenia on 19 and 20 September and in Tajikistan on 11 and 12 December. The events were aimed at increasing the level of trust between public officials and journalists and at combating challenges to professional journalism such as corruption.

In addition, the Office organized a training seminar for Moldovan judges on libel and insult legislation, held on 8 and 11 October. Participants improved their knowledge of Moldovan defamation legislation and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

Representative:
Miklos Haraszti
Approved budget: €1,260,200
www.osce.org/fom



Participants in the seventh Central Asia Media Conference view publications of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. (Nozim Qalandarov)