

JULY 2004

OSCE
MAGAZINE

Tajiks' promised land:
A farm of one's own

Central Asia:
Not always a silk road to democracy

"Zero tolerance for intolerance":
Stemming the upsurge in anti-Semitism



Special coverage

Tajikistan's land reform programme

Sowing the seeds of a brighter future



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Editor: Patricia N. Sutter
 Contributing editor: Søren W. Nissen
 Designer: Nona Reuter
 Researchers: Ilija Dohel and Patrick Hafner
 Please send comments and contributions to:
osce-magazine-at@osce.org

Press and Public Information Section
 OSCE Secretariat
 Kärntner Ring 5-7
 A-1010 Vienna, Austria
 Tel.: (+43-1) 514 36-180
 Fax: (+43-1) 514 36-105

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Message from the Ambassador of Tajikistan

Distributing farmlands to rural families, who make up some 70 per cent of Tajikistan's population, is possibly the country's largest and most ambitious development undertaking. Our setbacks as well as our successes in implementing this initiative are a clear reflection of the push-and-pull of democratization and market forces in our fledgling State.



Although the road ahead will not always be smooth, I am confident we can all pull together and make land reform the driving force for improved standards of living for millions of our farmers and their families. After all, Tajikistan has defied all odds in the past by overcoming many of its birth pains and by picking up the pieces in the aftermath of a tragic civil war.

It is, in fact, Tajikistan's steady economic course and growing political stability in the past few years that have convinced the international community that the time is right for a new impetus to be given to the country's land reform programme.

I am pleased that the OSCE is at the centre of these renewed efforts, continuing its role as a guarantor of Tajikistan's peace. Its strategy — safeguarding farmers' entitlement to rights under Tajik law and opening up possibilities for farmers to obtain micro-credits — reflects one of the Organization's guiding tenets: that economic and human security are closely intertwined.

Recently, the United Nations issued a list of ten stories that the media have paid scant attention to, and that the world should hear more about.

Citing the case of Tajikistan's determination to rise from the ashes of war, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that the international media should not wait for a full-blown crisis to highlight troubles in a country. "The situation in Tajikistan is scarcely reported, but perhaps for another reason: Real progress is being made on the road to recovery and peace, although of course there remains much work to be done," he said.

Here, then, is the contribution of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe and the *OSCE Magazine* to the telling of that story: Tajikistan's land reform programme as a promising instance of work-in-progress, seen in all its complexity from many different angles and with all its highs and lows.

Erkin Kasimov
 Vienna,
 July 2004

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SOWING THE SEEDS OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE**

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Front cover: A farming family near the city of Kurgan Tyube, southern Tajikistan.
Photo: OSCE/Søren W. Nissen
Back cover: A cotton farm in the Vose district near Kulyab, south-western
Tajikistan, set against the Kurbonshahid mountains. Photo: OSCE/Matteo Fraschini

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ECONOMIC SECURITY

Tajiks' promised land

A farm of one's own

The Government's goal seemed simple and straightforward: to give every Tajik farmer the right to cultivate a piece of the country's scarce arable land and the freedom to choose which crops to grow and to sell. However, more than a decade after launching a nationwide land reform programme in 1992, even the authorities themselves acknowledge that the significant gains tell only part of the story. To address the bigger picture, the Government has asked the OSCE for assistance in tackling some serious concerns: fairness and transparency in the privatization process, huge debts amassed by the agricultural sector and farmers' ignorance of their legal rights.

Women working on Tajikistan's cotton farms are benefiting the least under land reform.
Photo: OSCE/Lubomir Kotek

BY SØREN W. NISSEN

Tajikistan's nationwide land reform initiative, which got under way shortly after independence, was a significant first step in a series of measures to transfer State-controlled farmland into private hands. Farmers have been given the option to either acquire their own plot of land, or to become a member and shareholder of a bigger collective farm.

The move reflected tacit recognition that restructuring agriculture was key to empowering the mostly rural population, improving food security, generating incomes and reducing poverty. Besides, the country's leaders knew that the Government's limited funds could not continue to subsidize the costs of fertilizer, seeds and equipment for unprofitable farms.

"We felt that the private sector could supply 60 to 70 per cent of the country's basic food needs," says Davlatsho Gulmahmadov,

Chairman of the State Land Committee (see interview on page 8).

However, the devastating civil war of 1992-1997 destroyed much of the agricultural infrastructure from the Soviet era. This tragedy was followed by a drought in 2000-2001, which dashed farmers' hopes of increasing their earnings anytime soon.

Despite these dramatic setbacks, huge State farms covering about 433,900 hectares have been converted into some 20,750 private farms. Known as *dehkans*, these former State farms can be either small, independent farms or large, collective farms. They are "private" in the sense that *dehkan* farmers are given considerable freedom to run the farm the way they wish and to decide what to cultivate and how to spend the farm's income, even if the State remains Tajikistan's sole landowner according to the Constitution.

The newly converted private farms represent about 61 per cent of all arable land



— which is just seven per cent of the land mass of this mountainous country. An additional 75 State farms will be placed in private hands by 2005. The remaining arable land — an estimated 30 per cent of the total — will continue to be in State hands.

Mr. Gulmahmadov says the start-up private farms have been able to provide the market with a fairly generous supply of wheat and potatoes, complementing cotton, the dominant cash crop.

However, a number of studies suggest that while land reform has achieved some success, there are serious questions about who has really benefited, especially in the cotton-growing areas.

DIRE PREDICAMENT

In a report in October 2003, a British NGO, Action Against Hunger, went so far as to say that the reorganization of farms in the cotton-growing region of Khatlon, was “a success only on paper”.

The head of the NGO, François Olive-Keravec, says that among 1,000 households interviewed in 50 villages in this south-western region, a mere 3.5 per cent of the farmers had taken advantage of their right to obtain land and run a farm independently.

Of those who did not have their own plot or did not have a share in a large farm, the vast majority of respondents said they did not know how to apply (92.2 per cent). A few had tried to apply but were turned down (3.3 per cent) and the rest (4.5 per cent) did not want to apply although they knew how to, citing concerns about the prohibitive cost of obtaining the certificate, high taxation and debts inherited from State farms, not to mention the need to borrow funds, at high interest, to get their farms up and running.

The particularly dire predicament of Khatlon’s cotton farmers has its roots in the fact that as a capital crop, cotton generates considerable income both for the powers-that-be and for the business sector.



OSCE/LUBOMIR KOTEK

As the sole landowner, the State has the prerogative to decide how much cotton each region should cultivate, as in Khatlon. The *hukumats* (local authorities) are responsible for overseeing implementation of the Government’s decisions, and they often support and cling to the old State farm structure with its built-in hierarchy which farmers find difficult to penetrate.

“Most of the farmers in the survey thought they were still working for State farms because the farms were still being run the same way as before,” Mr. Olive-Keravec says.

TRUE SPIRIT

He believes that if they were made aware of their rights, if they knew the possibilities open to them, and if land reform were implemented according to the true spirit of the law, more farmers would claim their share in a big, private, collective farm or apply to run their own farm.

The survey suggested that some farmers, given the choice, would prefer to grow staple crops both for their subsistence and for cash, while others would continue growing cotton if they could make a profit on it.

Cotton generates generous income for authorities and the business sector.

Backbreaking work in Vose district, near Kulyab.
Photo: OSCE/Matteo Frascini





OSCE/SOPHIE W. NISSEN



OSCE/ASTRID EYRENSSEL

A boy and his donkey in Nurek, south-east of Dushanbe.

As in most large farms and family plots in Tajikistan, women in Obikikk, near Dushanbe, are the main source of labour.

Under the current circumstances, however, “the few farmers who had seized the chance to run their own farms actually did not have too much room for manoeuvre”, says Mr. Olive-Keravec. “They are told to cultivate cotton but they cannot make a living out of it, mainly because they are in debt the moment they become independent.”

The debt dilemma can be traced back to the mid-1990s, when both State and private farms started turning to local businessmen who were willing to come up with the much-needed cash for cotton production. At the start of the year, a farm would purchase seeds, fertilizers, fuel and other items on credit from these private investors, on the understanding that it would pay back the credit with its cotton harvest at the end of the year.

If the value of the cotton harvest fell short of the value of the items that had been obtained on credit, the farm’s debt would be rolled over to the following year.

This has given investors considerable influence on almost all aspects of the agricultural sector. Often, investors act as suppliers of seeds and machinery, setting higher-than-market prices. They also end up determining how — and to whom — the harvest should be sold.

An Asian Development Bank report in 2002 describes how international investors channel funds to cotton-growers through local intermediary companies that are seen as having close ties with the local authorities. To avoid competition, the “spoils” are literally divided by assigning a different investor for every area.

“The few farmers who have taken the chance to be independent are in reality little more than employees, hired to use businessmen’s seeds, fertilizer and machinery to

grow cotton on the farmers’ own land,” the report says.

DISADVANTAGED WOMEN

The promised benefits of land reform have not eased the position of women, who remain severely disadvantaged. Women make up most of the seasonal workforce of the large, formerly State-run farms that have been converted into *dehkans*. They are usually left to fend for themselves and their large families while their husbands seek better income opportunities in Russia. At least 800,000 Tajik men are believed to be working abroad, either permanently or temporarily. Many women are heads of families, their husbands having been among the estimated 50,000 who lost their lives during the civil war.

During the Soviet era, these seasonal workers could at least count on a salary and supplementary social protection and health care. Now, they are paid hardly anything at all for their long days of backbreaking work in the cotton fields.

When the Action Against Hunger survey asked women why they continued working under these conditions, a frequent response was that they relied on the cotton sticks they were allowed to collect after the harvest as fuel for cooking, baking bread and heating their homes during the cold winter months.

“Clearly, women are at the bottom of the beneficiaries list,” says Mr. Olive-Keravec. “Much of the profit from the cotton harvest of the *dehkan* farms goes to local investors.”

It is these gripping stories of people living in extreme poverty that make the success of the country’s land reform programme so crucial. Together, the Government and international organizations are now tackling the problems in earnest, especially now that greater political stability in Tajikistan has

made it possible for development projects and other major initiatives to take off.

The efforts of a working group, formed in 2003 to co-ordinate the country's land reform activities, have been gathering steam. Headed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the group is composed of Tajik Government representatives, the OSCE and organizations such as CARE, Oxfam, the Aga Khan Foundation, Agro Action and ACTED.

ACTED and the OSCE are about to implement a strategy aimed at teaching farmers their legal rights, giving them access to low-interest micro-credit loans to help place

them on a sound financial footing, and monitoring more than 40 State farms to ensure that they are being privatized according to the rule of law.

The role of the OSCE and its partners calls for "a delicate balancing act", says Ambassador Yves Bargain, Head of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, since the ultimate aim is to make an impact on existing structures of land ownership and on the income disparities among the population.

"The OSCE will ensure that people know their rights as set out in national laws," he says. "We hope to do this in such a way that the advantages are clear for all to see."



Søren W. Nissen, a Danish lawyer and journalist, is a consultant in the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, assisting in the legal and human rights aspects of Tajikistan's land reform. He has worked as press secretary to the Health Mayor of Copenhagen and as head of section in the International Office of Denmark's Health Ministry. He has also served in the Danish Red Cross. He contributed this series of articles to the OSCE Magazine.

Fairness for farmers: OSCE to monitor 40 farms

"Our goal is to promote transparency," says Ambassador Yves Bargain, Head of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, describing the concept behind the Organization's contribution to Tajikistan's efforts in land reform. "In post-conflict societies, it takes time to dismantle informal power mechanisms and for the administrative system to mature. During transition periods, open procedures are the only way of monitoring whether people are being treated fairly or are being exploited or manipulated."

The OSCE participates actively in two working groups on land reform. In addition to the Tajik Government, the OSCE's main partners are the FAO and several NGOs: *Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement*, better known as ACTED (France); CARE, Action Against Hunger and Oxfam (United Kingdom); Agro Action (Germany); and Man and Nature (Tajikistan). The OSCE's activities include:

Training (April-June 2004). More than 200 farmers from five newly privatized farms were educated on legislation concerning such issues as how to obtain farmland and how to file complaints when their rights are

violated. Hundreds of information booklets were distributed.

Land reform from a human rights perspective (initial study to be completed in mid-August).

A report will identify and analyze violations of farmers' legal rights to obtain and cultivate land. The study will recommend a set of activities to prevent these violations.

Comprehensive support (autumn 2004). A ten-month programme to ensure that the privatization of farms is carried out in a fair and transparent manner will be initiated this autumn. It is being financed with €100,000 from the Netherlands and €30,000 from ACTED. Activities encompass:

- Training local authorities on organization and planning;
- Advising farmers on their legal rights and obligations;
- Providing farmers with low-interest loans (micro-credits) to support production;
- Monitoring the privatization process of 40 State farms, to be carried out by independent land rights experts;
- Offering political and legal support to farmers with justifiable complaints about the privatization process;



Land reform aims to give farmers more freedom to diversify crops.

- Ensuring that gender considerations in the law are put into practice, and working to rectify the disadvantaged position of women in the allocation of land and their under-representation in administrative bodies;
- Strengthening the ability of local NGOs and the media to deal with land reform issues;
- Raising public awareness by providing the media with reliable information.



INTERVIEW WITH STATE LAND COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Breaking down barriers to land reform

Well-informed farmers are the key

Davlatsho Gulmahmadov, Chairman of the State Land Committee: taking a hard, objective look at the results of land reform.
Photo: OSCE/Søren W. Nissen

Tajikistan's land reform programme has not delivered its promised benefits to many of the country's poor farmers. This forthright acknowledgement comes from none other than the head of the main governmental body responsible for implementing land reform. In an interview in his office in Dushanbe, Davlatsho Gulmahmadov, Chairman of the State Land Committee, examines the challenges of empowering the country's farmers and says that the Government is determined to do better with the help of the international community.



OSCE/SØREN W. NISSEN

Farming near Kurgan Tyube, southern Tajikistan.

“Our Law on *Dehkan* Farms and other related legislation made it clear who can lay claim to land for private farming, and what the *dehkan* farmers' rights and obligations are,” Davlatsho Gulmahmadov says.

“However, just as the process was getting under way, a number of enormously influential and educated individuals saw the personal gains to be made and took control of large tracts of land, renting out small plots to farmers. Some had never even lived in the area. Some used to be, and still are, heads of *hukumats* (local authorities).”

Mr. Gulmahmadov confirms what many have suspected all along: Some *hukumats*, loath to disturb the status quo, have been keeping farmers in the dark about their rights.

The farmers' lack of detailed information on a completely new and complex area makes the programme extremely difficult to implement, he says, which is why the OSCE's awareness-raising activities play such an essential role.

Another constraint is that Tajik farmers have lost much of their agricultural skills and know-how, partly because Russians were in charge of farm production during the Soviet era, and partly because of inactivity during the five-year civil war. "Farmers no longer know the range of crops they can grow, how to irrigate the fields and when to seed and harvest," Mr. Gulmahmadov says.

The varying performance levels of the leaders of *dehkan* farms, who are normally elected by members of the farm, are also proving to be a serious stumbling block to reforms. "Although many of the leaders behave responsibly, some feel deeply obligated to fulfil agreements made with local authorities who have appointed them to their posts," he says.

However, Mr. Gulmahmadov is not above self-reproach. "I believe we launched land reform far too early, without adequate planning," he says. "When you buy new equipment, you first want to test it to see how it works. Unfortunately, we skipped the testing part."

In retrospect, he believes that the Government should have started out with pilot projects, "which would have been a perfectly normal procedure before taking on an ambitious project such as this one".

The Government *did* receive funding from the international community to explore how to privatize State farms at the outset, and people were assigned to carry out specific tasks. "But we did not wait for the results and unfortunately missed the chance to gain

the expertise and experience."

"Had we done so," he says, "we would have known how to move forward more effectively, and we would have been better prepared to deal with the reality that farmers need help in informing themselves about their rights and obligations as independent farmers."

Mr. Gulmahmadov says that the current credit arrangements give rise to a host of problems. "For one thing, local businessmen, who are the farms' main financiers, set above-market prices for seeds and equipment. Other suppliers would sell at much lower prices to individual private farmers if the farmers had a chance to buy on the free market."

"I believe there is only one way out of this dilemma, which is to forgive debts incurred before land reform."

He emphasizes that international assistance is vital to lifting the barriers that are discouraging farmers from applying for land rights. "Besides releasing farmers from their debts, we need help in improving and maintaining water supply systems for irrigating the fields. We cannot expect independent farmers to deal with these factors right at the start."

He is grateful to the staunch supporters of Tajikistan's development efforts over the past decade and believes that the country's positive economic indicators eight years after the end of the civil war are encouraging signs that momentum in agricultural reform can pick up again.

"When the Government asked the international community for help in monitoring land reform, the first organization to respond was the OSCE," he says. "We hope that our joint co-operation will go far and that the OSCE will be able to attract other partners, especially in ensuring that private farmers know their rights and obligations."

Taking a respite from the fields in Nurek, along the Vaksh river.

Strawberry woman in Dushanbe.



OSCE/ANHANI EVRENSSEL

OSCE/ASTRID EVRENSSEL



MONITORING

Tajik farmers look forward to shaping their future

“Now we’ll work harder”

On a *kat*, farm leader Nurmuhammad Saitiev (centre) exchanges views with consultant Søren Nissen (left) and ACTED agronomist Bakhtior Halimov (standing, right).
Photo: OSCE/Torbjørn Bjørvatn

The results of land reform efforts in Tajikistan vary considerably from region to region and from farm to farm. While most of the farms in Khatlon, the country’s cotton-growing region in the south-west, are still grappling with a host of constraints, the prospects for a converted wine farm 20 kilometres south-east of Kurgan Tyube, also in Khatlon, are looking bright. OSCE staff from Dushanbe dropped by for a visit and found farmers exuding confidence about the future.

Nurmuhammad Saitiev looks extremely relaxed. Torbjørn Bjørvatn, OSCE Economic Officer, and I join him and five other newly independent farmers on the raised floor of the *kat*, the Central Asian equivalent of an outdoor lounge. The men, between 40 and 60 years old, exchange views with us while women and children look on curiously, listening intently.

Mr. Saitiev’s eyes sweep over the 8.5-hectare vineyard that has been allocated to him and 16 other farmers. It is far smaller than many newly privatized farms, which average about 20 hectares.

In the former Soviet Union, factories producing quality wine for export were common in Tajikistan. Today, wine processing has fallen dramatically to about one-third of what it used to be and Tajik wine is hard to find.

“During some of the fortunate periods in the past, we could harvest 25,000 tons of grapes,” Mr. Saitiev says. “Now, we cannot harvest even half this amount because we lack water, functioning irrigation systems, fertilizers, seeds — almost everything.”

Just a few weeks earlier, at their first general assembly meeting, the farmers had elected Mr. Saitiev their first *Rais* (chairman). The Law on *Dehkan* Farms recommends that the *Rais* should be “one of the farm’s able-bodied members, possessing knowledge and skills and having practical work experience in the agricultural sector”.

He says that he has heard no complaints from any of the farm members, nor have they disagreed on anything — at least not yet.

“Right now we don’t have too many advantages,” he says. “However, after a year, it should be different. Next year is a sort of test for us. We hope we can have a reasonably good harvest again.”

Despite the start-up difficulties, the farmers say they are firm believers in the farm’s future.

An elderly man, Rashimov Nurali, says: “If we work harder, we can put more money into our pockets.”

“But what about the fact that you can no longer rely on a monthly salary?” one of the visitors counters.

The farmers shrug their shoulders. “When we worked for the State, our salaries were very low anyway,” Mr. Nurali says. “We were promised about 20 somoni (€5.50) monthly, but most of the time we were paid that amount only three months later for work done over that whole period. Sometimes, to survive, we had to resort to selling some of the grapes secretly, though we knew it was illegal.”

LOTTERY

Mr. Saitiev shows us the document certifying that he and his friends are now independent farmers, that the sprawling State farm they once belonged to has been parcelled into 19 minor private farms, and that his community has managed to obtain one of them.

“Although the State owns the land, we have been given the right to use it and we are now in control of production and the daily running of the farm,” he says.



OSCE/SOREN W. NISSEN

But how did they go about dividing up the collective farm? How did they decide who was getting which piece of land?

“We assigned a number to each plot and then had a lottery,” says Mr. Saitiev.

Was everybody happy? “No,” he says with a laugh. Everyone laughs along with him. “The farmers who ended up with the poorer land were very angry, but that is how it is, isn’t it?”

“What we grow and how we grow it is now completely up to us,” adds Mr. Nurali. “We will all do the best we can.”

“I can confirm that all the men and their families are working harder than they ever did before,” Mr. Saitiev says.

And they have to, as their access to the land came with a debt inherited from the

Mr. Saitiev and his fellow farmers hope that their wine production enterprise will thrive with a great deal of hard work.



OSCE/SOREN W. NISSEN

On a farm near Dushanbe, a man cuts grass for his herd.

former State farm. The amount owed to the investors who gave the loan to the State is 2,400 somoni (€657), payable over three years. Although the amount is much smaller compared with what other farms owe, it is still a huge sum for the 17 farming families.

Despite this, Mr. Saitiev is convinced that the repayment scheme is manageable if each member of the farm fully exploits his allocation of half a hectare.

So is everyone pleased with their new status as private farmers? The men look at one another. "Yes, but we still need more water and we could use more land,"

one of the younger farmers says. "The only way out is to get help from the international organizations." Everyone nods in agreement.

"The important thing is now we can decide for ourselves on who we will sell our produce to, and how. All in all, it is better like this," another farmer says.

"Now, each one is his own master. When we were working for the State farm, we had to answer to several 'brigadiers'. Now, we only have our *Rais* and he works as hard as we do," Mr. Nurali says, giving Mr. Saitiev a confident glance.

OSCE Centre in Dushanbe: Strengthening the foundations of peace and security

The OSCE's involvement in Tajikistan's land reform programme starts a new chapter in the relationship between the Organization and the Government. The initiative also coincides with the Organization's tenth year of operations in the country.

The OSCE Mission to Tajikistan opened in February 1994, later serving as one of the guarantors of the Tajik Peace Agreement, which settled the civil war in

June 1997. The OSCE is an active member of the Contact Group of Guarantor States and Organizations, which is responsible for monitoring implementation of the General Agreement. The Group has played a major role in resolving a number of crises and deadlock situations during the post-conflict period of 1997-2000.

In October 2002, in a sign of recognition that significant progress had been achieved since the end of the civil war, the

Mission was renamed the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe. Its refocused mandate has made it possible for the OSCE to broaden its co-operation with the Government, including the practical implementation of projects in the economic and environmental sphere.

The OSCE Centre's new Economic Unit has implemented 11 projects so far, focusing on support for small- and medium-sized enterprises and addressing good

governance issues.

The Environmental Unit is promoting and supporting implementation of the Aarhus Convention, which commits Tajikistan, as a signatory, to transparency and non-governmental participation in environmental affairs.

In a first OSCE activity of its kind, the Centre in Dushanbe is co-operating with the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action to tackle a lingering legacy of war: the thousands of live landmines strewn throughout the country. An internationally-funded project trains Tajik teams in special techniques enabling them to identify dangerous zones, draw the minefields' exact boundaries and de-activate the mines.

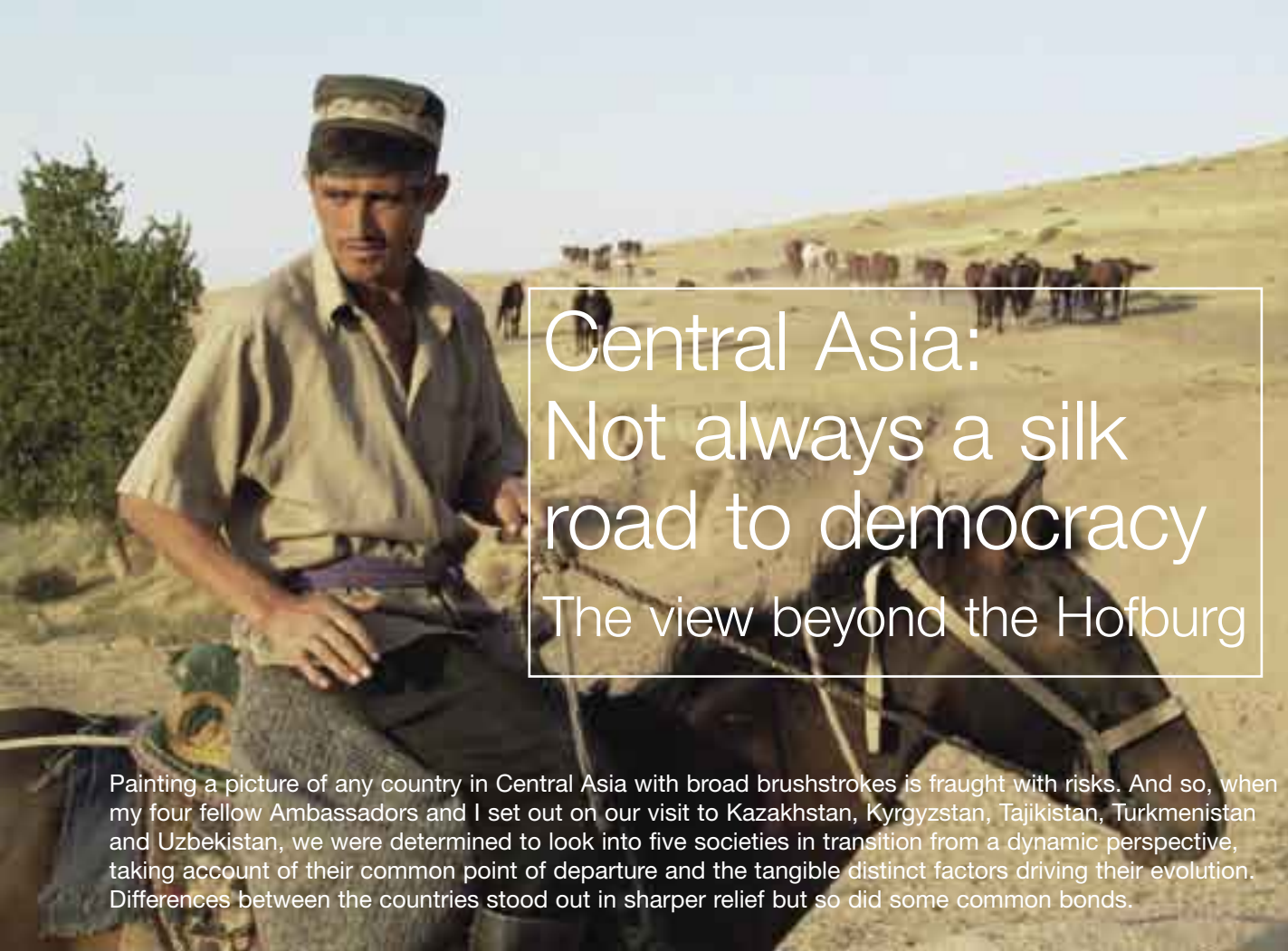
Using a cross-sectoral approach, the Centre continues to foster political dialogue, develop a legal framework, and support civil society and democratic institutions. Projects aim to reform the prison

system, foster professional and independent media and improve the electoral framework. Increased attention is being paid to preparations for general elections in 2005.

In addition, the Centre is playing a more visible role in promoting gender issues. Twenty support groups for women have been formed throughout Khatlon region and a series of seminars on women's rights have drawn participants from more than 50 districts.

With more than 90 staff members (79 national and 15 international), the Centre in Dushanbe is the largest OSCE operation in Central Asia. In the southern region of Khatlon, 14 districts are covered by field offices in the towns of Kurgan-Tyube, Kulyab and Shaartuz. Other field offices are in Garm, in the central mountainous area, and in the northern city of Khujand, in Sughd province.





Central Asia: Not always a silk road to democracy

The view beyond the Hofburg

Painting a picture of any country in Central Asia with broad brushstrokes is fraught with risks. And so, when my four fellow Ambassadors and I set out on our visit to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, we were determined to look into five societies in transition from a dynamic perspective, taking account of their common point of departure and the tangible distinct factors driving their evolution. Differences between the countries stood out in sharper relief but so did some common bonds.

A herdsman in Tajikistan.
Photo: OSCE/Lubomir Kotek

**BY AMBASSADOR FRANCISCO SEIXAS
DA COSTA**

We could hardly follow the substance of the argument through the whispering of the interpreter, but, judging from the facial expressions and body language of the people in the audience, it was obvious that the Debating Club's choice of topic of contention — to liberalize the use of soft drugs or not — had succeeded in capturing everyone's attention. Young students, acting the parts of "government" and "opposition", exchanged opposing viewpoints. The public then voted for the team that convinced them the most.

This is democracy in the making, we thought. We were in Khujand, northern Tajikistan, witnessing an initiative jointly organized by the OSCE field office and the Open Society Institute.

A second story, though, is less happy and the place where it happened is not to be mentioned, for understandable reasons. We had just finished meeting representatives of civil society, who had brought up the severe restrictions imposed by local authorities on the operations of NGOs. The speaker was no longer young, her face

revealing traces of suffering. She had been unusually courageous and blunt in describing the difficulties of living in a repressive environment.

Lowering her voice, she said: "Now, please take note of my name and trace my future. I don't know what will happen to me after this meeting with you."

These were just two of many sharply contrasting encounters that made an impression on me during a two-week trip to the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Getting better acquainted with the Central Asian reality and with OSCE field activities in the region was the idea behind the decision of our group to visit all five countries in May. The Ambassadors of Belgium, Canada, Norway and Slovenia, and I received outstanding support from staff in the OSCE Secretariat and in the five OSCE centres, and we experienced the sincere hospitality of local and national authorities, and various communities.

It is difficult, based on a stay of a few days, to paint an accurate picture of each country and the development challenges it is confronting. Societies in transition need to be seen from a dynamic perspective, tak-

Deputy Mayor Robia Rakhmatova bids farewell to Ambassador Kongshem (left) and Ambassador Puxley (centre) at the end of their visit to the town of Nurek, 60 kilometres south-east of Dushanbe.



OSCE/BOJIDAR DIMITROV



AMBASSADOR EVELYN PUXLEY

ing account of their point of departure and the tangible factors driving their diverse evolution.

All five countries we visited have a common legacy — communist dictatorship — but there are vast differences between the steps each one has already taken on the road to democracy. Some countries have laid a sound foundation with all the elements necessary for democratic values and tenets to take root: the rule of law, respect for human rights, an unthreatening environment in which people can organize themselves freely and without fear of political consequences. Others — and let's be frank — still nurture some of the inherited habits of the old days.

We wanted to learn as much as we could about each national case, to talk openly with authorities about our main concerns, and to listen to the simple hopes and dreams of civil society. We also wanted to sit down with OSCE field staff and explore how we could best help them attain their goals.

During our talks, we avoided preaching and lecturing or being judgmental. We made it a point not to adopt the artificial division of “East” and “West” of Vienna. We believe that if there is a division within the OSCE, it is between those who abide by their commitments and those who do not. This was our message.

CREDIBLE INSTITUTIONS

Viewed from the Hofburg, Central Asia often looks like a single entity, with merely idiosyncratic differences distinguishing one country from another. We know the names of places and political actors, we sit up and take notice when something comes up that threatens to weaken a country's democratic credentials, and we welcome positive developments with pleasure.

On this trip, however, we set out to clarify the differences and to examine the common bonds, constantly bearing in mind our goal of promoting the great value of looking

towards regional co-operation and fostering synergies.

In our contacts with officials, it was evident that all of them had a keen interest in having their political institutions viewed as actively engaged in the democratization process. This was an encouraging signal, but we also felt it useful to look more closely at the vital question of political succession.

We found that most of the countries had formal structures in place, with mechanisms for “checks and balances”. Laws and regulations to ensure the functioning of society had been approved, covering everything from elections, political parties and NGOs, to media and religion.

As everyone knows, however, the devil is in the detail of implementation.

In many cases, political pressure and

Ambassadors Mette Kongshem (Norway), Bertrand de Crombrugge (Belgium), Evelyn Puxley (Canada), Janez Lenarcic (Slovenia) and Francisco Seixas da Costa (Portugal) emerge from a meeting with staff of the Turkmen National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights Under the President of Turkmenistan. Behind them is the *Ruhyet* (Spirit) Palace.



UNITED NATIONS MAP

hidden informal obstacles, helped by judiciary systems too close to the power centre, blocked citizens' attempts to build independent initiatives aimed at winning public support and at making a constructive difference in people's lives.

As we travelled from country to country, I felt that a culture of openness would best be on display when political parties that wished to oppose the status quo would be allowed to do so by being able to organize themselves, by being able to draw on simple registration procedures, and by being able to take part in unquestionably free and fair elections according to international standards.

In some countries, we saw prison and judicial systems in clear need of reform, with accusations of torture not thoroughly investigated. Incidents of terrorism and violent expressions of opposition were sometimes used as a pretext for waves of severe repression of opponents and served as a convenient excuse to forget all about fundamental citizens' rights.

All too often, NGOs were still considered a breeding ground for dissent. Control of the media by the government sometimes reached scandalous proportions. Corruption seemed to have seeped into all areas of daily life. Transparency, accountability and good governance in economic and financial systems still had to be tackled head-on by many of the countries, especially those that have not yet won the full confidence of international financial institutions.

REASONS FOR HOPE

It bears repeating: The situation varies from place to place and it would not be fair to make the same diagnosis across the board. In fact, we noted that some governments' reform efforts had been considerable, steering their countries onto a steady course. We received positive signals that we will not fail to pass on to our colleagues in Vienna.

I urge the international community to make it a point to give these efforts due recognition and reward. Just to name one trend that each one of us in the group discerned in a favourable light: All the Central Asian countries are moving towards a moratorium on the death penalty.

The level of interest in co-operating with the OSCE field missions remains a reliable barometer of the governments' desire to collaborate with the wider international community.

Throughout the trip, I kept asking myself: "What kind of impact can the OSCE have on this country's future, given the



AMBASSADOR EVELYNN PUXLEY

Organization's limited resources and insufficient structures?" Gradually, some answers unfolded, and I saw for myself how even less-than-grandiose activities using relatively modest resources can prove especially relevant to the general population.

In Kyrgyzstan, we soaked up the healthy atmosphere of learning that we found at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, which brings together students from Central Asia with those from other parts of the world. We also saw how the police assistance programme in Bishkek and the legal clinic in Osh were serving as effective tools for introducing people to the democratic way of exercising authority and administering justice.

In Tajikistan, OSCE support for an independent newspaper and news agency in Khujand demonstrated how much can be done with slim resources. In the capital, Dushanbe, we were present at the launching of a new phase of the OSCE's first mine-clearing project, a joint activity with the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action.

Much, however, remains to be done. There is scope for the OSCE to play a vital role by giving some of its national projects a regional dimension, while also expanding into other areas of great concern such as combating trafficking in human beings, police reform and border management, in co-operation with international partners. The security implications of the education system's shortcomings, the impact of migration, the rights of minorities, environmental risks, property rights and land reform must remain high on the OSCE agenda in Central Asia.

A visit to the Russian military headquarters on Tajikistan's southern border with Afghanistan also enabled us to grasp the

At the Tajik-Afghan border, Ambassador Kongshem points towards Afghanistan.

likely consequences of drug trafficking on the region's stability.

VALUABLE LESSONS

Overall, I came away from my firsthand encounter with Central Asia and its people with some valuable lessons:

- "No duplication and no competition": This, in my view, must be the guiding principle of OSCE field offices, which should maintain close and mutually reinforcing co-ordination and co-operation with international partners in the field. The specific character of the OSCE's role must be stressed to avoid overlapping with the roles of development agencies.
- Let us not lose sight of the fact that the real test of efficiency is the impact and sustainability of activities on people's well-being. Let us be vigilant about the fact that a proliferation of meetings, seminars, conferences and workshops carries a risk of these being identified as the sole measure of field work. OSCE field operations should resist the temptation of engaging themselves in too many projects, or in activities with limited practical impact and a poor chance of becoming self-sustaining. However, I fully understand that this is often a by-product of attempting to balance activities in the politico-military, economic/environmental

and human dimensions.

- We need heads of OSCE field offices who have energetic personalities, charisma, enthusiasm, and the ability to motivate and mobilize staff and inspire teamwork. In some cases, I saw the right persons in the right place. An OSCE presence is not a bilateral embassy operating with routine procedures. It must strive to be an agile operation dedicated to finding creative ways and means to carry out its mandate to the full.
- Intense dialogue and ongoing co-operation with national authorities are crucial to the success of field missions. However, this should by no means be at the expense of the dynamic role that field operations are expected to play. Striking a healthy balance between these two sides is the only way for missions to fulfil their tasks and the only way for host countries to be assisted in putting into practice the norms and values they signed up to when they decided to become part of the OSCE community.

On a final note, I recommend that all my colleagues in Vienna try to visit our field operations in Central Asia. Compared with what one learns on-site, Central Asia from the vantage point of the Hofburg is just virtual reality.



The *OSCE Magazine* invited Ambassador Francisco Seixas da Costa, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the OSCE, to share his personal impressions of Central Asia after visiting the region from 15 to 29 May. Ambassador Seixas da Costa assumed his post in Vienna in September 2002, when he also chaired the Permanent Council under the Portuguese OSCE chairmanship. In 2001-2002, he was Portugal's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. From 1995 to 2001, he was Secretary of State for European Affairs. He joined his country's diplomatic service in 1975, and has served in Oslo, Luanda and London.

Germany and Uzbekistan co-operate on arms control and confidence-building

A joint project with Germany has enabled Uzbekistan to take an active part in implementing the Vienna Document, a major agreement that set the stage for military transparency, contacts and co-operation in the OSCE area. Kazakhstan started its participation last year.

The project, which focuses on the education of Uzbekistan's verification personnel, launched its first phase in Germany and Austria with a joint exercise.

Four Uzbek inspectors completed two weeks' training at the Verification Centre of the Federal Armed Forces of Germany in Geilenkirchen in early

May. An exchange of expertise and experience took place, as did practical exercises to plan and prepare for an actual inspection of an area in Austria on 10 and 11 May.



The Uzbeki team inspects a light armoured recovery vehicle in Mautern, Austria.

The project, which is supported by the OSCE Centre in Tashkent, will continue in September 2004, when more Uzbek arms control officers are to undergo training in Germany.

The Vienna Document's latest version was adopted by the Organization's Forum for Security Co-operation at the Istanbul Summit in 1999. Verification activities are an integral part of the Document's confidence- and security-building measures in the area of arms control.

“Zero tolerance for intolerance”: Stemming the upsurge in anti-Semitism

More than 800 delegates from the OSCE’s 55 participating States and their ten partner countries, including Israel, took part in the Organization’s second Conference on Anti-Semitism on 28 and 29 April. The discussions, held in Berlin at the invitation of German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, focused on the roles of government, civil society, education and the media in combating prejudice and promoting tolerance. Participants, ranging from foreign ministers to leaders of civil society, delivered a ringing condemnation of all acts motivated by anti-Semitism and other forms of religious or racial hatred.

“I was particularly moved by some of the powerful testimonies we heard from survivors of the *Shoah*”, said the Chairman-in-Office, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, who opened the conference with outgoing German President Johannes Rau. High-ranking guests included Israeli President Moshe Katsav who came as an observer.

Warning against the “murder of memory”, Minister Passy said that the words of Holocaust survivors Elie Wiesel and Simone Veil served as a reminder that this “most appalling of crimes against humanity” should never be forgotten.

Excerpts from some of the statements follow.

That the OSCE has decided to tackle this subject is right and proper. The OSCE was the first security organization to recognize the relationship between international security and human rights. This conference puts anti-Semitism in the proper context of human rights.

The Organization can point to many successes, but there is still a great deal of work to be done if the standards that the partici-



Photos: OSCE and official sources

pating States have subscribed to are to be met. Our security is indissolubly linked to the protection of our common values. The OSCE sees itself as an organization that sets standards, and encouraging respect for human rights is one of its most important responsibilities.

Johannes Rau, President of the Federal Republic of Germany

As the host of this event, we accept Germany’s historic and moral responsibility for the *Shoah*. The memory of this monstrous crime against humanity will continue to influence German politics in the decades to come.



As long as Jewish men and women do not feel safe in our countries, do not feel genuinely at home; as long as synagogues, Jewish schools and kindergartens have to be protected by the police; as long as politicians attempt to win votes by appealing to anti-Semitic resentments; as long as these factors are still present, we must join forces against the threat of anti-Semitism.

Our history makes it incumbent upon us never again to permit anti-Semitism to endanger Jews without majority of the people rising up in determined defence of their Jewish fellow-citizens and communities. This obligation is being taken very seriously by us all, not just “us”, the Federal Government and parliament, but “us” as society as a whole.

Joschka Fischer, Foreign Minister of Germany

We must send a clear message that anti-Semitic hate crimes are exactly that — crimes — and that these crimes will be aggressively prosecuted. We must not permit anti-Semitic crimes to be shrugged off as inevitable side effects of inter-ethnic conflicts. Political disagreements do not justify physical assaults against Jews in our streets, the destruction of Jewish schools, or the desecration of synagogues



Related OSCE events promoting tolerance

19-20 June 2003, Vienna. First Conference on Anti-Semitism

4-5 September 2003, Vienna. Conference on Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination

28-29 April 2003, Berlin. Second Conference on Anti-Semitism

16-17 June 2004, Paris. Conference on the relationship between racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet and hate crimes

13-14 September 2004, Brussels. Conference on racism, xenophobia and discrimination in society

and cemeteries. There is no justification for anti-Semitism.

It is not anti-Semitic to criticize the State of Israel. But the line is crossed when Israel or its leaders are demonized or vilified, for example by the use of Nazi symbols and racist caricatures. We must send the clear message to extremists of the political right and the political left alike that all those who use hate as a rallying cry dishonour themselves and dishonour their cause in the process.

Colin Powell, Secretary of State of the United States of America

We cannot ignore the new disguises of anti-Semitism if we wish to come up with an effective response. And we should probably start with education. Bias is learned in childhood. Special importance should

be placed on the promotion of educational programmes to combat anti-Semitism, and programmes about the Holocaust and about respect for all ethnic and religious groups. Parallel to this, there should be a drive to combat hate crimes fuelled by racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda in the media and on the Internet.

We are not only taking seriously the problem of anti-Semitism and the concerns of Jewish communities and other minorities throughout the OSCE area; we are also striving to implement the recommendations for concrete measures, to raise public awareness and to create “zero tolerance”



towards all manifestations of intolerance. *Solomon Passy, OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister of Bulgaria*

Anti-Semitism must be addressed by firm measures. But while we do so, we cannot and should not expect reasonable criticism and fair comment about specific Israeli Government policies to fall silent. Criticism of government policies is an essential feature of democratic political systems. The exploitation of race for political purposes by any government or any politician — be it as an offensive weapon or as a shield to fend off criticism — is quite simply unacceptable.

The European Union agrees that the OSCE’s approach to anti-Semitism should be action-oriented. We welcome the focus of this conference on practical measures including those dealing with prevention, education and protection, which should be implemented with resolve in all OSCE participating States.

Brian Cowen, Foreign Minister of Ireland, on behalf of the European Union



At the 60th meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Belarus and the Russian Federation proposed a resolution drawing the international community’s attention to the problem of the resurgence and spread of neo-Nazism, neo-fascism and aggressive nationalism, which also serve as a breeding ground for anti-Semitism. The resolution was adopted with the support of the majority of the Commission’s members.

To our surprise, European Union countries, the United States and Japan voted against the resolution. What is the conclusion to be drawn from this by neo-Nazi and neo-fascist elements and other such scum against whom this resolution was directed? *Ambassador Viktor Gaisienak, Head of the Delegation of Belarus to the OSCE*



After the United States, France is home to the largest diaspora, with the same concerns as those that gave rise to this conference. It is true, we have to admit, that France is experiencing a wave of anti-Semitism. It is also true, however, that this wave is in no way comparable with the tidal wave of hatred that 60 years ago sent 76,000 French Jews to their deaths.



The history of the Jews in France is one of a happy encounter — and of a love often wounded, often hurt, often demeaned — between an ancient people and the country that welcomed them and accepted the rich spiritual, intellectual and moral contribution that they made.

It was in France — and not elsewhere in Europe — that the Jews were first accorded the status of citizens; it was in France where they first knew the dignity of free existence; it was in France that the freedom of “all opinions, even religious ones” was proclaimed as a human right.

I have faith in the OSCE to strengthen legislation that France, for its part, has already implemented, and to guide us and combat a scourge whose consequences, in terms of atrocity and barbarity, I know more about than many. I hope that your efforts will be able to restore the true meaning of the word “fraternity”.
Simone Veil, President of the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah; Holocaust survivor

Anti-Semitism is a language of hatred, its doctrine is filled with hatred — and hatred, by its nature, always runs overboard, crossing geographical boundaries and ethnic affiliations. It is a contagious disease. He who hates one minority will hate all minorities — religious, political, ethnic, social and cultural — and is bound to wind up hating himself.



Of course, one often asks or is being asked: Why anti-Semitism? Why such hatred? Is it because the hater’s obsession is

usually with power? His only way then to assert and confirm it is by using it so as to turn free persons into victims and victims into slaves and slaves into corpses. Never satisfied, never at peace with himself, suspicious of anyone unknown, the hater will forever be looking for someone to shame and dominate and destroy. For the hater to feel alive, he needs to inflict suffering and death onto “the other”. And the Jew was to him always “the other” — whose otherness he resented and feared.

Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, American writer and Holocaust survivor

Berlin Declaration boosts credibility of OSCE’s fight against anti-Semitism

“I believe our conference has made a significant contribution to making our collective response to anti-Semitism more credible,” said Chairman-in-Office Solomon Passy at the end of impassioned two-day discussions.

Through a “Berlin Declaration”, participating States agreed to undertake specific and practical counter-measures which will be presented to the OSCE’s Ministerial Council in Sofia in December. Countries would:

- ① ensure that their national legal systems foster a safe environment free from anti-Semitic harassment, violence and discrimination;
- ② promote, as appropriate, educational programmes for combating anti-Semitism and for instilling the importance of respect for all ethnic and religious groups;
- ③ combat hate crimes;
- ④ collect and maintain reliable information and statistics on anti-Semitic and other hate crimes and make these available to the public; and
- ⑤ work with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to determine appropriate ways to periodically review the problem of anti-Semitism.

The Declaration also assigns the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights special responsibilities, including:

- ◆ following anti-Semitic incidents in the OSCE area, in co-operation with other OSCE institutions and other relevant international institutions and non-governmental organizations, and reporting findings to the Permanent Council and making them public; and
- ◆ systematically collecting and disseminating information throughout the OSCE area on best practices for preventing and responding to anti-Semitism.

The official document is on: www.osce.org/events/conferences/antisemitism2004

A yellow star changes hands



OSCE/KEITH JINKS

“My grandfather used to say that the time would come when we and the Germans would be allies again, then we would return his yellow star to them. I am happy that now I can hand over my grandfather’s legacy.”

With these words, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office presented the tiny star, set in a case, to a visibly moved Joschka Fischer. At a simple ceremony marking the end of the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism, Minister Passy also paid tribute to the German Foreign Minister’s personal contribution to the European-Jewish dialogue.

Earlier, Minister Passy told conference participants that he was proud of the rescue of nearly 50,000 Bulgarian Jews

from certain death at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. He related that the Third Reich’s Ambassador to Sofia wrote, in a secret note, that “the deportation of Bulgarian Jews is being hampered by the mentality of the Bulgarian people, who lack ideological strength and have no inborn prejudice against Jews”.

“Some may feel that the story should now be consigned to historical archives,” Minister Passy said in his address. “It is, however, my firm conviction that this would be totally wrong. Among many other unfortunate developments, the recent clashes in Kosovo have convinced me that the Bulgarian example needs to be remembered again and again.”

If you’re in the media business, I think you need to report on hate crimes in all their ugliness. But you also need to report on the joys of Jewish life and the benefits for everyone of living in a tolerant, multicultural society. If you’re in the education business, you need to make sure that citizens know all about the horrors of the Holocaust. But you also need to teach about the positive experiences of the ensuing decades in overcoming the Nazi legacy in Germany and beyond.

If you are the public consumer of media messages, you need to reject bias and demand fairness. You need to view the media with a critical eye and to distinguish between responsible and irresponsible journalism. Finally, when you encounter examples of intolerance in the media, even subtle ones, you need to speak out, whether through letters to the editor or e-mails to the producer, or simply by spreading the word in your community.

Edward Koch, former Mayor of New York City; head of US delegation to the conference



We need to implement an action plan that allows all participating States to converge their ideas on how best to implement the OSCE resolution. The follow-up plan could be labeled “The Four Mores”: more statistics, more law enforcement, more education, more restraint in the media.

As parliamentarians and organizations of civil society, our task is simple yet complicated. We must carefully and skilfully root out this endemic problem, which threatens our civic fabric. We must replace the antique thought process of anti-Semitism with this “Berlin Process”, where parliaments, composed of all parties, and all governments unite with their peoples, in one voice, and say, ‘Enough is enough!’

Senator Jerry S. Grafstein, Canada; OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Treasurer



I am reminded of the actions of Turkish leaders after the horrible Istanbul bombings last November. Not only did Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan publicly denounce the two synagogue bombings, but he also met Jewish leaders, reportedly a first in the history of the Republic. Seeing pictures from the funeral on that rain-drenched day, the caskets were draped with the Turkish flag, an honour normally reserved for soldiers or civilians who have paid the ultimate price for their country.



The message was unmistakable: Despite being a predominantly Muslim country, Turkish leaders made clear this was not an attack on Jews, but rather an attack on Turks who happened to be Jewish, who were victimized because of their religion. Turkey has set an example for us all, and with its bold moves for EU accession and continued progress toward improving the treatment of its religious and ethnic minorities, it is working to create government policies that promote tolerance and non-discrimination.

Benjamin Cardin, Congressman; Member of US Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission)

Seminars and conferences serve politicians, officials and intellectuals, but a wider public is reached by movies; Mel Gibson's film, "The Passion of the Christ", is seen by millions. I believe every Jew of my age has at some point in his life been challenged by the Gibson story. I remember how, at seven years old, I came home from school one day with a bloody nose, having had a fight with a boy who claimed that my father had killed Christ. "And what did you answer?" my parents asked. I answered: "My father is not that old."



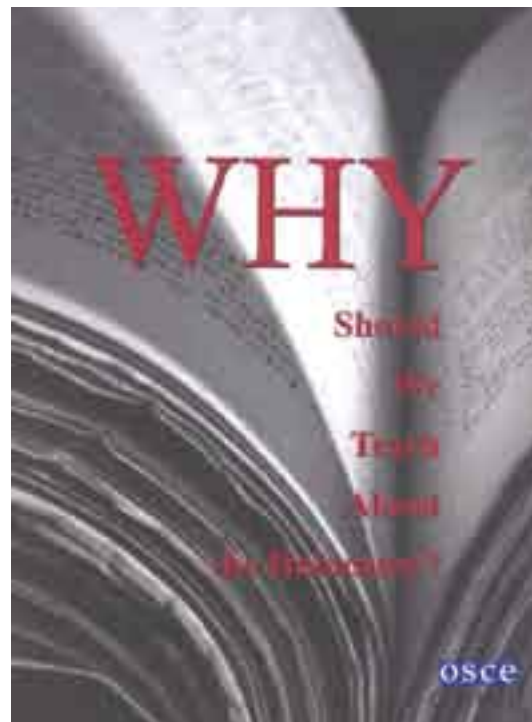
Max Jakobson, Conference keynote speaker; Managing Director of Council of Economic Organizations, Finland

Coming from a country that has given the world examples of brilliant contributions made by great Jewish scholars, musicians, authors, politicians and human rights activists to a multi-ethnic, multilingual Russia, we have a clear understanding of what anti-Semitism can do to mankind. The Russian authorities have focused their efforts on reviving Jewish communities, passing anti-discrimination laws and weaving the principles of tolerance into the fabric of society.



We welcome the determination of the OSCE to unite the efforts of democratic countries and to turn declarations into concrete actions. A strong political impulse transmitted from Vienna and Berlin should set in motion a major offensive against anti-Semitism — a political, legal, educational, cultural and civil offensive — for the sake of the ideals of democracy, European security and stability.

Anvar Azimov, Deputy Director, Department for Pan-European Co-operation, Russian Foreign Ministry



Fresh insights into the role of Holocaust education in Europe are presented in a 120-page book that was launched simultaneously in Cracow and Berlin on the eve of the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism.

Why should we teach about the Holocaust? features essays by 13 Polish authors, including a philosopher, a sociologist, a historian, a psychologist, a journalist, a theologian and a high school teacher.

"Teaching all about the Holocaust is not just a matter of teaching facts, which is why many of the authors refer to personal experiences," writes Professor Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, in the book's foreword. "Not all have ready answers, but each one is aware of the need to teach the subject for the sake of reconciliation between nations, democracy and peace."

"These essays concern everyone," says Ambassador Christian Strohal, Director of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). "They address a fundamental part of our work: promoting tolerance and anti-discrimination in order to fight anti-Semitism, xenophobia and anti-Islamism. We are reminded to do everything in our power to learn from the past and avoid repeating its horrors."

The book, first published in Polish in 2003, is a joint effort of the ODIHR and the Judaica Foundation in Cracow. It also examines the attitudes of Poland's young people towards the Holocaust and describes selected websites devoted to Holocaust-related topics. For more information, please contact office@odihhr.pl or access www.judaica.pl.

“Halting the new hatred”

What the media said

Of all OSCE events in recent years, the second Anti-Semitism Conference was one of the most closely followed by the international media. Reports and commentary from global wire services and major newspapers were often as spirited as the two-day discussions. Excerpts from a small selection of articles follow.

Anti-Semitism: A chance for Europe to check a wave of hate

NEW YORK — European leaders may finally be waking up to the severity of anti-Semitism in their countries. After largely ignoring increasing numbers of attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions for the past three and a half years, some governments have begun to acknowledge this disease and to take steps to confront it.

When representatives of the 55 nations that comprise the OSCE gather in Berlin for a second conference on anti-Semitism, they will have an opportunity to develop a plan of action that recognizes that anti-Semitism is not just an assault on Jews but tears at the fabric of democratic societies.

International Herald Tribune, 28 April, by Rabbi Andrew Baker, Director of International Jewish Affairs, American Jewish Committee, and public adviser to the US delegation to the OSCE conference



A renewed pledge to combat anti-Semitism

BERLIN — “Whatever happens after this [conference], the fact that the European community has come together saying that we need plans and strategies to prevent anti-Semitism is itself very important,” [Abraham] Foxman [executive director of the Anti-Defamation League], said. Foxman continued that the conference had also broken what he called a taboo — it labeled certain criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic.

“In Vienna nobody talked about the Israel issue,” he said, referring to a first OSCE conference on anti-Semitism a year ago. “This time, we didn’t develop criteria or identify where you cross the line from legitimate criticism to anti-Semitism, but at least it was an open issue.”

The meeting, held under tight security at the German Foreign Ministry, was the second of what promises now to become an annual OSCE effort to address the reported rise of anti-Semitic incidents in Europe. ... Some delegates, while praising the OSCE for holding the conference at all, were critical of the expected final declaration, saying that it was vague and failed to lay out concrete, enforceable measures.

New York Times, 29 April, by Richard Bernstein



OSCE to hold conference on “cyber-hate” in June

BERLIN — There are thousands of hate pages on the Internet. They represent not only anti-Semitism and the denial of the Holocaust; whoever wishes to search will find discrimination of all kinds. Most of the time, one does not have to look too long, says Juliane Wetzel who represents the Centre for Anti-

Semitism Research at the Technical University Berlin. She was part of a group of observers who learned, to their satisfaction, that in its

“Berlin Declaration”, the OSCE also cites the dangers of the Internet being used to fuel anti-Semitic hatred.

Der Standard/Austrian Press Agency, 24 April



Wiesel: Talk anti-Semitism with Muslims

BERLIN — A true dialogue on anti-Semitism in the 21st century must include Muslims as well as Christians and Jews, said Holocaust survivor, author, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel. “We should have invited Islam as well,” said Wiesel, as he spoke to the mostly top officials from the 55 countries of the OSCE.

He noted that those present were mostly of Christian and Jewish origin and that a Muslim presence was largely absent. “We should have invited the third partner; it’s not too late,” he said. Most of the speakers at the conference shied away from speaking about the rising threat of anti-Semitism among extremist Muslims.

A native of Romania who grew up in Hungary, Wiesel said he was among the many Hungarian Jews deported in April 1944. “In eight weeks, 600,000 to 800,000 Jews were shipped out to nowhere.” Sixty years ago this month, he entered the ghetto, from where he was taken to Auschwitz.

Jerusalem Post, 28 April, by Tovah Lazaroff

“Demonizing Israel is anti-Semitism”

BERLIN — US and German politicians were among the few who warned against the dangers of a new anti-Semitism, used to bash Israel, when they spoke to the OSCE. [But] some of OSCE’s 55 States were far from united on the issue as they argued, away from the cameras, over the question of whether hatred of Israel can be labelled anti-Semitic.

Jewish leaders at the conference were grateful to see OSCE leaders take a stand against anti-Semitism. But they felt they went only half-way by failing to highlight the anti-Semitism present in attacks against Israel and the threat to Jews posed by Islamic extremists.

Jerusalem Post, 29 April, by Tovah Lazaroff





Halting the new hatred

Anti-Semitism is a problem for every OSCE state, because it seeks to break down the pillars of our societies: rule of law, equality, decency, tolerance and faith. Its violence is felt by all, regardless of faith. Its most diabolical offspring is terrorism, a force that in its embrace of death tears down everything in its path. Its aim is to destroy all that is humane.

Washington Post, 28 April, by Gert Weisskirchen, member of the German Bundestag and Vice President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and Senator George Voinovich (Republican-Ohio), member of the Foreign Relations Committee



Palestinians blast anti-Semitism meeting

WEST BANK — A two-day international conference on anti-Semitism in Berlin has drawn criticism from Palestinians who have described it as a “red herring” and a “sly distraction” aimed at diverting attention from their oppression by Israel. The conference, held under the auspices of the OSCE, is expected

to issue a set of decisions and recommendations linking “some” anti-Israeli sentiments to anti-Semitism.

Clause 3 of the conference’s summary statement says that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should not be allowed to serve as a cover for the expression of anti-Semitic positions and opinions. Moreover, the 55-nation forum has effectively agreed that there is a link between criticizing Israeli actions and policies ... and expressions of classical anti-Semitism.

Only Irish Foreign Minister Brian Cowen, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, voiced a more balanced approach to the issue of racial hatred. He told the forum it was wrong to use “race” for political reasons, either as an offensive weapon or as a shield to fend off criticisms.

Aljazeera.net, 29 April

“Anti-Semitism threatens democracy”: Schröder says society duty-bound to act against racism

BERLIN — Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said that society as a whole was duty-bound to act against anti-Jewish and racial hatred. The fight against anti-Semitism could not be won by the police and the criminal law, he said at a reception organized for conference participants. He called for “an open dialogue connecting people from different civilizations and religions”. The Chancellor described anti-Semitism as “a permanent threat, which we have to meet with vigilance”.

Schröder demanded a “spirit of tolerance and of solidarity that draws a clear line between rational consideration of the policy of the Israeli Government and unacceptable incitement against Israel and Jews”.

Die Welt, 30 April



Koch encouraged by anti-Semitism conference

NEW YORK — Just back from Berlin, once the world capital of anti-Semitism, Ed Koch is encouraged by Europeans’ response to a latter-day surge of racist attacks on Jews permeating countries from Britain to the Asian steppes. In fact, says the former mayor, a just-completed meeting of 55 nations there proved so successful that Germany’s pledge to deal with the problem brought him to tears, and he has called off his personal boycott of France.

Though famously outspoken on issues of racial and ethnic tolerance, Koch admits he had never heard of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe before Secretary of State Colin Powell invited him to head the US delegation to its second annual conference on anti-Semitism in late April.

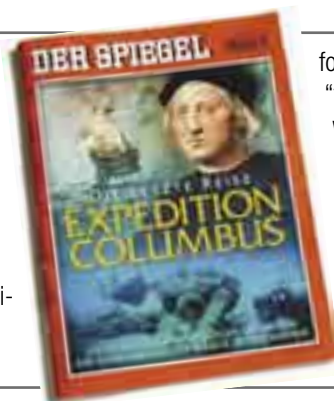
Associated Press, 4 May



Schoeps warns about anti-Semitism coming through the back door

The date is well-chosen. The OSCE Anti-Semitism Conference in Berlin begins right before the accession of ten new member states into the European Union — a topic that will preoccupy the delegates. Experts such as scientist [Julius] Schoeps fear that the EU expansion will import anti-Semitism to Europe.

The Director of the Moses Mendelssohn Centre



for European-Jewish Studies believes without a doubt that “the accession of the new Eastern European EU states will allow nationalism and anti-Semitism to enter through the back door”. Schoeps thinks that in light of the EU expansion, the OSCE Anti-Semitism conference — the second within a year — comes much too late. “Many in Western Europe are only now realizing that the anti-Semitic past in the Eastern European States ... has never really been dealt with.”

Der Spiegel, 28 April



OSCE/MIKHAIL LEVSTAFIEV

BY RICHARD MURPHY

Political dialogue, which should be at the core of the Organization, seems to need some fresh impetus, Albanian Ambassador Zef Mazi says. "I believe our Heads of State or Government should get together in 2005 to take stock of our experiences over the past 30 years, to reflect on prospects for the future, and agree on a forward-looking political declaration."

The CSCE/OSCE has reason to be proud of its contribution to the political evolution of Europe in the past three decades, especially to the development of strong common values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law, economic freedom, social justice and protection of the environment, he says.

"This was an evolution that started with the Helsinki process in 1975. The CSCE/OSCE has been the instrument for establishing dialogue and creating rules of behaviour for relations among States and of each State towards its citizens, with dialogue on all issues replacing the logic of confrontation."

One of the strengths of the OSCE has been the way in which it has given a voice to smaller and medium-sized nations: "I believe that never before in European history did these countries feel themselves a weighty force capable of contributing so much in defining the destiny of the European process," the Ambassador says. "The OSCE has played a noticeable and generally positive role in this which will be remembered."

Albania, which joined the CSCE in 1991, has a perspective of the Organization that differs from that of some of the countries that signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1975.

"We who joined right after the end of the Cold War saw the OSCE as a new endeavour, a chance for transforming relations between European states into what they ought to be at the end of the 20th century. We saw it as an organization that would focus on certain new aspects in our relations that had not been dealt with by other international accords and would introduce a new notion expressed by one word — accountability."

But the European security landscape has changed dramatically since then, not least because of the expansion of NATO and the European Union.

"I am a firm believer in the OSCE and in the important role it still has to play," Ambassador Mazi says. "But we must acknowledge that there is a degree of scepti-

HELSINKI FINAL ACT APPROACHES 30

Albanian Ambassador urges OSCE to hold summit in 2005

"CSCE/OSCE should be proud of contribution to Europe's evolution"

A summit of heads of OSCE participating States in 2005 could help to give fresh political impetus to the Organization, says Albanian Ambassador Zef Mazi. In an interview with the *OSCE Magazine*, he says the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act next year would provide an ideal opportunity for States and Governments to take stock of the achievements of the CSCE/OSCE process and set clear directions for the future. The last summit meeting took place in Istanbul in 1999.

cism about its usefulness today which we need to tackle head-on. This is where a summit meeting could play a critical role.”

The Albanian Ambassador, who has worked for the OSCE Secretariat, as well as heading his country’s Permanent Mission in Vienna, says the issues high on the agenda today are the right ones: addressing terrorism and enhancing security and stability, fighting trafficking in all its forms, combating anti-Semitism, intolerance, discrimination and racism, improving border security and management, ensuring gender equality, and helping strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law.

“But I believe the focus should now be on practical rather than normative work, with implementation by all 55 participating States of what has been consensually agreed,” he says.

“I stress the word *all*. Sometimes an outsider could be forgiven for thinking that certain problems — trafficking in human beings, corruption or violations of the human rights of prisoners, for example — exist only in countries in transition. In fact, it is clear that they exist across the entire OSCE area. It would help to undermine scepticism about our Organization if this were acknowledged candidly.

“Similarly, in considering the integration of transition countries into Euro-Atlantic structures, it sometimes seems to be taken for granted that all the norms, commitments and standards enshrined in OSCE documents are automatically being fully observed and applied in more developed countries. Again, that is not always the case. Recognizing this honestly would help to invigorate the Organization and boost its prestige in the eyes of our citizens — the people all of us are here to serve.”

Ambassador Mazi believes the OSCE’s field missions are an important asset, but for host countries — Albania has hosted an OSCE presence since 1997 — a mission is not an end in itself. It is an instrument to help a country through a period of transition.

“We need to bear in mind that as the years pass, countries gradually become more mature and their democratic institutions more stable. OSCE activities on the ground need to be able to change to reflect these progressive developments.”

Emphasizing the need to enhance the effectiveness of the OSCE’s field operations, he says: “One way to achieve this is to identify and focus on activities in key areas in which participating States request assistance. Criticism and monitoring of events

have their uses, but they are no substitute for assistance to participating States in those fields where it is requested, and in strict and full compliance with the mission’s mandate.”

Ambassador Mazi believes the OSCE will continue to have a role to play in Albania for some time to come. “The assistance it has provided so far has been invaluable and highly appreciated. The country has matured noticeably since the collapse of communism in 1992 and especially so since the social unrest in 1997. The OSCE played a major role in overcoming that situation and bringing about its progressive stabilization.”

Richard Murphy is OSCE Spokesperson and Head of the Secretariat’s Press and Public Information Section.

Ambassador Zef Mazi, 48, was appointed Permanent Representative of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna, in December 2002. He held a similar post from August 1991 to November 1997.

His knowledge of international institutions stems from his having served in important functions in his Foreign Ministry, including as Head of the CSCE Section (1989 to 1991), and as a member of the Secretariat of the OSCE (July 1998-May 2000) and of the International Atomic Energy Agency (May 2000 to December 2002).

A graduate of the University of Tirana specializing in foreign languages and literature, international relations and law, the Ambassador’s earlier career in his country was multifaceted. He worked as a Radio Tirana announcer, university lecturer, translator into English and editor. He also headed the International Relations Department in the General Directorate of PTT (post-telegraph-telephone). In June 2002, Ambassador Mazi ran for the Albanian presidency.

Helsinki Final Act

“The end of the division of Europe”

On 30 July 1975, Heads of State or Government of 35 nations, covering a vast area of the northern hemisphere stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, convened in Helsinki’s Finlandia Hall for their three-day Summit Conference.

On 1 August, the meeting culminated in the signing of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) Final Act — better known as the Helsinki Final Act.

The agreement marked the end of an intense series of diplomatic negotiations that had begun in the Finnish capital two years earlier and had continued almost unbroken from 1973 to 1975 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The agreement represented not

only a breakthrough in East-West relations during the Cold War period, through the adoption of the Decalogue of basic principles guiding relations among the participating States; it also served as the beginning of the “Helsinki process”, which became the main forum for political consultation and negotiation on a comprehensive set of issues, including questions of human rights during the Cold War.

Under the auspices of the CSCE, participating States used this process to help them fulfil their CSCE commitments. This contributed profoundly to the collapse of the totalitarian regimes in the East and the end of the division of Europe.



"VALUABLE LINKS"

Making a statement

Jewellery from the OSCE world

BY FLORENCE LE CLEZIO

A queue of visitors patiently await their turn to take a leisurely stroll through a winding row of sleek showcases suspended from the ceiling. Every stop, illuminated by delicate fibre lamps, is a delight and a surprise.

The first spotlights a fine silver filigree purse by Albania's Pal Lekaj, followed by a grey necklace made out of newsprint balls, pearls and steel wire by Germany's Theo Smeets, leading to a multicoloured glass bead necklace by the United States' Joyce Scott. The display ends with a ring by Ukraine's Orest Ivasyuta, crowned by magnetic dust.

Some 400 guests gathered at Austria's *Museum für Volkskunde* in late February for the launching of a cultural journey through the OSCE area — not only from Vancouver to Vladivostok, but also as far afield as Israel and Korea and other OSCE partner States. The brainchild of the Netherlands' Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2003, "Valuable links: Jewels from the OSCE countries", travelled for half a year, making its way from Maastricht to Vienna via Sofia.

"Anyone looking at these objects will be struck by their diversity, but they will also notice how artists from different countries have influenced each other," Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2003, wrote in the elegant exhibition catalogue. "This is also reflected in the OSCE community. Our countries are diverse, but our common values form valuable links, which are the true beauty of this Organization."

"Jewellery represents comfort and security," says Dutch Cultural Attaché Jeroen van Heerde. "When people flee from situations of conflict and violence, they make every effort to take their few pieces with them."

When the Netherlands Embassy's Press and Cultural Department asked Viennese jewellery designer Veronika Schwarzinger in August last year if she could serve as the exhibition's curator, she was enthusiastic.

"Jewellery lies close to the skin. It is the art form most intimately connected with people, and the OSCE's work is all about people," she says. "Beyond sheer aesthetics and craftsmanship, jewellery can convey powerful statements. Take the example of former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who often wore brooches to send messages."

Jordan, Rawabi Abughazaleh. "Hand of Fatima" necklace, an Islamic symbol of protection.



Bulgaria, Zwetelina Alexieva. Gold and coral ring

Photographs of ornaments courtesy of Stefan Zeisler, head of photography in Vienna's *Kunsthistorisches Museum*

Gathering and carefully choosing ornaments from 65 countries in a matter of a few months posed an irresistible challenge. As a former design student in Amsterdam, and as the owner of a jewellery gallery in the heart of Vienna's old centre, Ms. Schwarzinger knew she could count on a network of fellow artists in at least half of the OSCE countries.

Some countries surprised her, delivering more quickly than she expected. In three days, Saša Milencović from Serbia and Montenegro came up with a feather-and-bones body necklace replete with historical and contemporary meaning. Other sources entailed more time and attention. "My initial efforts to contact an artist in Azerbaijan by e-mail were not getting anywhere," Ms. Schwarzinger says.

Embassies, friends and jewellery collectors helped fill the gaps, especially in the Central Asian countries. "Luckily, this is a small family," she says, "Within seven weeks, my team and I had completed our selection."

The *Galeristin* says that several artists whom she contacted personally took the project seriously and gave it a lot of thought, consulting the OSCE website. Some translated the concept of OSCE's 55 participating States into original creations.

Austria's Susanne Hammer crafted 55 silver rings into a necklace. The Netherlands' Herman Hermsen's 55 plastic-laminated flags were transformed into pendants. Canada's Paul McClure grouped 55 magnetic pieces into brooches of *lapis lazuli*, carnelian jade and onyx, to call attention to the HIV structure and the international cooperation needed to tackle the virus.

"We told artists that they were welcome to give vent to their creativity on themes the OSCE deals with everyday," says Mr. van Heerde.

To emphasize the secure feeling of having shelter in a world teeming with millions of refugees as a result of war, intolerance and hatred, Croatia's Nenad Roban designed modern mahogany brooches, simply called "Home". He chose pearls and gold and silver elements to represent their inhabitants.

Lithuania's Sigitas Virpilaitis depicted the loss of the freedom to speak — thankfully, now in the country's past — with "Mouthpiece Silence", two silver plasters. Switzerland's Eva Afuhs submitted an old creation, a brooch out of barbed wire, "to bring the issue of violence close to the skin".



The exhibition's opening in Maastricht on 1 December on the occasion of the two-day Ministerial Council meeting went almost unnoticed, recalls Ms. Schwarzinger, overshadowed by a press conference with Georgian acting President Nino Burjanadze in the wake of Georgia's "Rose Revolution".

Once it moved to Maastricht's *Centre Céramique*, however, the exhibition attracted some 2,500 visitors within less than a month. From there, to bridge the 2003 Netherlands Chairmanship and the 2004 OSCE Bulgarian Chairmanship, the ornaments went on display at Sofia's Museum of Foreign Art where they drew double the number of people over two weeks.

"Bulgarian Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Cobourg Gotha addressed the opening in the presence of 40 journalists," Ms. Schwarzinger recalls. "It was such a successful and much-reported social and cultural event that artist Zwetelina Alexieva, who created the Bulgarian contribution — a gold and coral ring — became famous overnight."

The exhibition's final stop in Vienna was almost an afterthought but proved to be an ideal way of reaching out to the OSCE's public in its host country. By the time "Valuable Links" closed on 23 May, after three months in Austria, it had been visited

Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Cobourg Gotha, Bulgaria's former King (centre), and Netherlands Ambassador to Sofia, Baroness Henriette van Lynden, with Dutch Cultural Attaché Jeroen van Heerde at the opening of "Valuable Links" in Sofia. Photo courtesy of Yuliana Nikolova



Turkmenistan, artist unknown. Silver bracelet with carnelian stones.



More than 5,000 people visited "Valuable Links" in Sofia. Photo courtesy of Yuliana Nikolova

by as many as 3,000 people, including big groups of young people. Weekly events were organized, ranging from jewellery workshops to a briefing on the OSCE's new security challenges.

Karel Vosskühler, Deputy Head of the Netherlands delegation to the OSCE, says that the event enabled countries to present themselves on an equal footing and that it fit right into the museum's series on Europe's enlargement. "Some transition countries, who often find themselves having to clarify their political situation, offered the most shining jewels," he says.

The fact that no benchmarks were applied appealed to the Netherlands Embassy's Jacqueline Schuurmans, who also worked on the project. "Each piece had its own intrinsic value, whether antique or avantgarde, gold or perspex, extravagant

or subdued, symbolic or purely for adornment."

Ms. Schwarzinger acknowledges, however, that as an artist, she especially admires the exceptional craftsmanship of the filigree necklace of gilded silver and glass stones by Azerbaijan's Jamaladdin Eyyubov and the ingenuity behind Belgian Daniel Weinberger's whimsical "Necklace International Harmony", pieced together from the artist's everyday surroundings.

"Eyyubov's piece could never be done in the West, as it requires infinite patience and intricate workmanship," she says. "As for Weinberger's work, it contains the whole world, and when I look at it, I immediately see the creator's personality."

Florence Le Clézio is a Press and Public Information Assistant in the Secretariat.



Belgium, Daniel Weinberger. Whimsical neckpiece using everyday objects.



Kyrgyzstan, unknown artist. Century-old silver pendant with red glass stone.



Azerbaijan, Jamaladdin Eyyubov. Necklace of gilded silver using ancient filigree technique.

New Special Representative to strengthen action against human trafficking

Helga Konrad, former Austrian Federal Minister for Women's Issues, has been appointed by the Chairman-in-Office, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, as OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

"The important responsibilities that Ms. Konrad has held as Chair of the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings for South Eastern Europe, and the wide experience that she has gained, guarantee her success in her future activities," said Irish Ambassador Brendan Moran on behalf of the European Union.

Ms. Konrad has been chairing the Task Force since it was established in 2000 under the auspices of the OSCE. Its programmes have sought to promote, strengthen and streamline co-operation among countries in south-eastern Europe in combating human trafficking.

Addressing the Permanent Council on assuming office on 13 May, Ms. Konrad stressed the importance of being guided by the OSCE Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, which was adopted at the Maastricht Ministerial Council in December 2003, and by the United Nations Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

"Since human trafficking makes up a whole chain of criminal behaviour, I would address it as a continuum from countries of origin to countries of destination, involving all the relevant actors:

from governments to law enforcers, and from the judiciary to non-governmental organizations as the main service-providers for the victims," she said.

"The OSCE is well placed to help disrupt the human trafficking chain because its 55 participating States include countries of origin, transit and destination," she added. "It also has the capability to interact with the various players and stakeholders and to provide guidance on anti-trafficking management through its existing structures and institutions and through co-operation with other international organizations and agencies."

Ms. Konrad said that she intended to tackle the problem from all angles — "not just trafficking for sexual exploitation, but also trafficking into forced and bonded labour, and in particular trafficking in children and minors". She also drew attention to internal trafficking, which, she said, was on the rise.

"Currently, there is a general lack of information on — and, therefore, inadequate response to — why certain groups are particularly vulnerable and why certain individuals find themselves within these groups," she said. "There is an urgent need to develop a clearer profile of potential victims, differentiating between children and adults, and to determine the purposes for which they are trafficked, and the chain of countries and areas involved."

She said that her actions

see next page



HELGA KONRAD: STRIVING FOR SHARED SOLUTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITY

"In the years I was active as a member of government and parliament I have come to understand the need for consensual solutions," Ms. Konrad told OSCE participating States. "And in my political work at the local level and as the manager of an NGO for many years, I've come to understand the importance of shared responsibility."

Here are the highlights of Ms. Konrad's career, after studying English and Romance Philology at the Karl Franzens University in Graz and at the Sorbonne in Paris.

- 1975-1977** Teacher, institutes of adult education
- 1977-1980** Adviser on training and education, Styrian Chamber of Labour
- 1980-1993** Manager, Styrian Cultural Initiative
- 1987-1990** Member, Graz Municipal Council (City Parliament)
- 1990-1993** Member, Austrian Federal Parliament (Member, Foreign Policy Committee)
- 1993-1995** City Counsellor, Graz Municipal Government (responsible for children, youth, family, schools and health)
- 1995-1997** Austrian Federal Minister for Women's Issues
- 1995** Head, Austrian delegation to the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, Beijing
- 1996** Host, first European Union Conference on Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation, Vienna
- 1996** Head, Austrian delegation to the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Stockholm
- 1997-1999** Member, Austrian Federal Parliament (Member, Foreign Policy Committee)
- 2000-2004** Chair, Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings for South Eastern Europe

would be based on reliable studies and that she would seek close co-operation with renowned researchers and institutes.

The United States Mission's Deputy Chief, Douglas Davidson, said that his Government hoped that the OSCE's Anti-Trafficking Mechanism — comprising the Special Representative and the Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit — would have the political support and the resources necessary to have it fully operational.

"From countries with push factors creating opportunities for traffickers, to countries with pull factors driving the demand, the new OSCE mechanism should be able to communicate the range of problems and strategize effective solutions for countries in each phase of the trafficking problem," he said.

Ambassador Jivan Tabibian, Head of the Armenian Delegation, said that with Ms. Konrad's help, "our job is to put an end to a complicity of silence, a complicity of indifference, a complicity of trivializing, a complicity of relativizing, of saying, 'It is not so bad in our case, it is worse elsewhere'. Our job is to make the 'unacceptable' become 'impracticable', to make sure people who engage in trafficking cannot continue to engage in it."

Ms. Konrad said that the four-year-old Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings would now start turning over ownership of its activities to the south-eastern European governments themselves, notably to their anti-trafficking co-ordinators. As part of her new function, she would continue assisting the countries' efforts.

Ambassador Ivar Kristian Vikki assumed the post of **Head of the OSCE Centre in Almaty** on 4 April, succeeding Ambassador Anton Rupnik from Slovenia.

A Norwegian national, Ambassador Vikki served as Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia from 1999 to 2002 and as Head of the United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, from 2003 to 2004.

"A lesson that has stayed with me after my experience in the Caucasus is that one must be willing to listen and to learn," he says. "I will take a similar approach in shaping our programmes and activities in Kazakhstan, ensuring that they are firmly underpinned by our participating States' common values and commitments."

In 1997 and 1998, prior to his assignments in Georgia, he was Head of the Office for the Norwegian Refugee Council/United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia and the Russian Federation.

Ambassador Vikki was Head of the Norwegian Defence Command's politico-military section from 1982 to 1988, having served as its senior analyst from 1975 to 1981. From 1989 to 1994, he was engaged in research in international affairs.

He attended the Norwegian Foreign Ministry's International Training Programme, the NATO Defense College in Rome, the Norwegian Senior Leadership Programme and the Russian studies programme in Odessa and St. Petersburg. A graduate of Oslo University, he specialized in American and English literature. He also did exams in Russian literature, history and political science.

Ambassador Vikki has served as an OSCE election observer in the Russian Federation, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia and Georgia.



Didier Fau, a French national, has been appointed Director of the Office of the Secretary General, succeeding Hannie Pollman-Zaal from the Netherlands.

Prior to joining the OSCE on 1 May, Mr. Fau was the French Foreign Ministry's Adviser to the Political Director on G8 matters, and later, Diplomatic Adviser to the Minister of Ecology and Sustainable Development, with responsibility for European and international affairs.

Mr. Fau's involvement in the political and economic development of Europe's emerging democracies started in 1994 when he was chosen to lead the Economy and Transport Department in the European Administration of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The appointment came while he was at the helm of the French Ministry of Transport's department in Lille.

In the field, he has served in the following high-level assignments: Head of the European Commission Office in Eastern Slavonia (Croatia) and adviser to the United Nations for reconstruction



OSCE/MARK HALL LEVSTARIJEV

matters (1996-1997); Deputy High Representative for Economic Affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, working closely with High Representative Carlos Westendorp (1997-1999); Director responsible for economic matters (Working Table II) in the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (1999-2001); and the European Union's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan, based in Kabul (2002-2003).

A graduate of *Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale* with a doctorate in physics, Mr. Fau started his career in civil defence, focusing on blast effects of nuclear weapons. He once headed the French laboratory for nuclear shelters and worked at the New Mexico Engineering Research Institute in the United States.



Illustration: Shpend Kada,
Graphic Designer/OMiK

We are very impressed with the new look, the in-depth articles and interviews, and the editorial standards of the new *OSCE Magazine*. Keep up the good work. We look forward to seeing future issues.

Canadian Delegation to the OSCE

Thank you very much for the new *OSCE Magazine*. It has a very good format and very informative contents. I will use it in giving a seminar on Europe this fall.

**Edward A. Tiryakian, Professor of Sociology,
Duke University, Durham, North Carolina**

As an editor of an online journal on world politics, I would like to send my best wishes to the *OSCE Magazine* and its new look. I thought that given the increase in the number of studies on the role of your organization, you might start a review section on books about the OSCE as well as on significant OSCE studies.

Rene Wadlow

www.transnational-perspectives.org

Your publication is very useful in my research work and in my teaching of a postgraduate course on the Sociology of Military Conflict.

**Virgilio R. Beltrán, Senior Sociologist,
University of Buenos Aires**

I would like to congratulate you on the latest *OSCE Magazine* featuring education. It was the first time I read about concrete aspects of this major theme of the Bulgarian Chairmanship. It is good to have a magazine using frank language. Also refreshing was the interview with the outgoing Russian Ambassador Alexander Alekseyev. I wish you wisdom, courage and a pioneering spirit in this important editorial work.

**Col GS Hans Eberhart, Military Adviser,
Swiss Delegation to the OSCE**

I sent the online link of the second issue of the *OSCE Magazine* to various sections of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), including the public affairs staff, just to show them that there are publications who get it right. They often complain that even when a feature is done on one of our experts, there is usually no mention of funding agencies, so thank you for the generous and impressive coverage, and for crediting CIDA in "Kosovo images" in your May issue.

I would like to take the opportunity to inform *Magazine* readers that in early February, in Sarajevo, Canadian Ambassador Shelley Whiting presented the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal to eight Canadians who are or were working with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK).

The recipients were Jo-Anne Bishop (Education Adviser on Access and Non-Discrimination Issues, Sarajevo), Francesca Binda (the last International Director of Elections in the BiH Mission), Jeffrey Ford (Human Rights Officer, Prijedor), Diana Reynolds (Rule of Law Adviser, Tuzla), Katherine Reyes (Regional Education Co-ordinator, Tuzla), Daniel Saracino (Policy and Planning Adviser, Sarajevo), Kevin Waite (Legal Adviser, Sarajevo) and Robert Busse (Personnel Officer, OMiK).

Georgette Gagnon, former Director for Human Rights in BiH Mission, was presented with the same Medal by Canadian Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin in November last year. Georgette also received the Walter S. Tarnopolsky Award, an annual recognition by the International Commission of Jurists and the Canadian Bar Association to a Canadian resident who has made

an outstanding contribution to the cause of human rights. In the decade-long history of the award, she is the first woman to receive it, and also the youngest.

Former members of the Kosovo Mission received their Peacekeeping Medals from the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia on 17 June: Carolyn McCool (OMiK's first Director of the Mitrovica Region, then Director of Democratization), Michael McIvor (Head of Independent Media Support, then Senior Adviser for the Media) and Claire Trevena (Spokesperson/Head of Press and Public Information). Bernard Vrban, currently OMiK's Deputy Spokesperson, was among the medal recipients earlier this year.

The Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal was established in 1997 to recognize the peacekeeping work of Canadians deployed outside the country under the auspices of the Government. It was originally awarded only to those in the police and military but the honour has been extended to Canadian civilians serving in OSCE missions in BiH and Kosovo.

Just some background: When CIDA decided to second Canadians to the 1998-99 Kosovo Verification Mission, an executing agency was assigned to recruit and deploy civilians to civilian peacekeeping assignments on CIDA's behalf. Currently, that agency is World University Service of Canada.

**Marianne Wightman, Manager, Balkans Civilian Deployment Project, World University Service of Canada,
Ottawa**

www.wusc.ca/expertise/projects/balkans