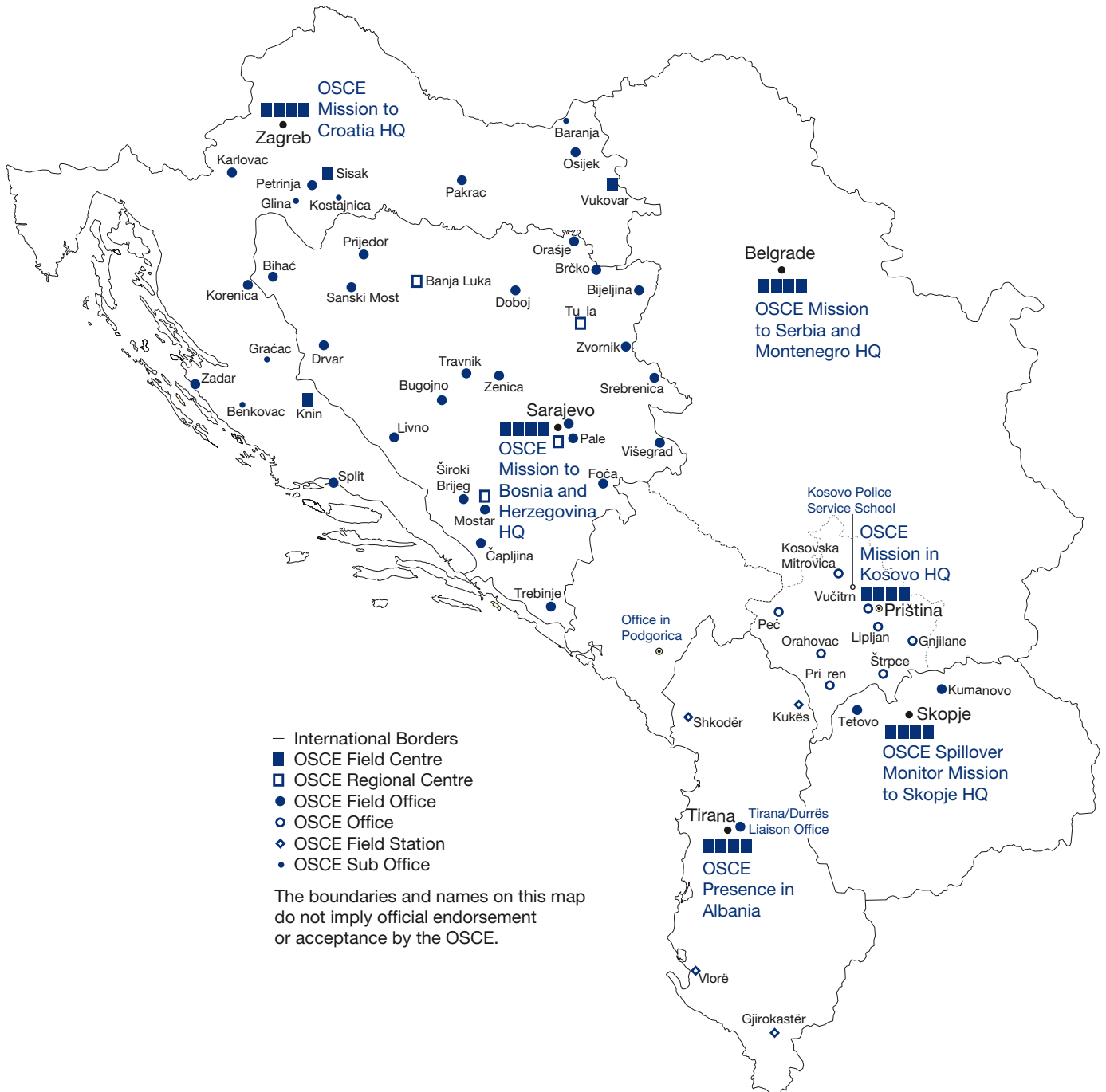


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SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE



OSCE Presence in Albania

The OSCE Presence assists Albania in its legislative and judicial reform process, including electoral and regional administrative reform, parliamentary capacity-building, anti-trafficking and anti-corruption activities, support for independent media, good governance and civil society projects, and police assistance. Since its establishment in 1997, it has made a considerable contribution to the stabilization and democratization of the country.

In 2004, electoral reform was a main focus of the Presence's activities. Together with its Albanian partners and the ODIHR, the Presence made a significant contribution to this process, which culminated in July with the establishment of an ad-hoc parliamentary committee on electoral reform. This in turn facilitated

the passage in October by the Albanian Assembly of two laws allowing for the restructuring of the country's Central Election Commission and an improved voter registration system.

The Presence-led Technical Experts Group drafted a Law on the Restitution and Compensation of Property, which was passed by the Assembly in July. The Law was expected to help resolve long-standing disputes over land ownership in Albania. Decisive progress was also made in reforming the Assembly's Rules of Procedure. This was the first step in modernizing the Assembly, a process that is expected to be completed after the 2005 parliamentary elections.

Politico-Military Dimension Activities

Boosting cross-border co-operation and the fight against organized crime.

In order to assist the Albanian Government with implementation of the Strategic Integrated Border Management Plan, the Presence expanded the regular Joint Border Co-operation Meetings. These served as the primary forum for the exchange of information between the Albanian border police, the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR).

To improve the nationwide police communications network and the ability of the Albanian border police to respond to threats posed by cross-border and organized crime, the Presence donated its radio and repeater system, worth €200,000, to the border police.



"This donation has helped modernize our border services, in particular with regard to standardizing the legal procedures for the movement of people and immigration problems," said Bajram Ibraj, Director General of the Albanian State Police.

The Presence introduced Albanian customs officials to the meetings and facilitated monthly meetings between mayors from municipalities in Albania and Kosovo.

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Supporting government institutions in fighting economic crime. A regional conference on fighting economic crime held by the Presence in Tirana in January helped promote transparency, good governance and the rule of law among participants from public and private institutions. The Presence also continued to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance's Directorate for the Fight Against Money Laundering.

Promoting economic empowerment initiatives. Targeting young Roma, victims of trafficking and rural women, the Presence began implementing the third phase of a project to equip young people with entrepreneurial skills and advise them on creating their own businesses.

Increasing citizens' responsibilities for sustainable environment. To raise public awareness of the importance of protecting the environment, the Presence produced a TV documentary on environmental 'hot spots' and their impact on public health. It also organized seminars to train local government experts on the new environmental laws.

Human Dimension Activities

ELECTORAL REFORM AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Preparing for the 2005 parliamentary elections. 2004 was marked by follow-up to the final ODIHR report on the 2003 local government elections, issued in February, and the release of the Joint Recommendations on the Albanian Electoral Code by the ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Venice Commission. This report was the first full assessment of election legislation in Albania and underlined the need for further revision of the Electoral Code and other related legislation.

To re-launch the electoral reform process, the Presence worked with the ruling Socialist Party and opposition Democratic Party towards an agreement on how to implement the ODIHR recommendations. Under the agreement, which was signed on 1 July, the Assembly established a parliamentary ad hoc committee on electoral reform. A Technical Experts Group, chaired by the Presence, was tasked with drafting the amendments to the Electoral Code in compliance with the joint recommendations.

In October, the Socialist and Democratic parties signed another agreement on the re-structuring of the Central Election Commission, resolving a long deadlock of the ad hoc committee. This agreement stipulated that the existing Electoral Code should be abrogated upon publication of final results of the 2005 parliamentary elections. It also provided for a systematic constitutional

and legal review of the electoral system for elections after 2005.

Modernizing the Albanian Assembly.

The Presence's parliamentary support project, launched in 2001, provided expert assistance in the process of reforming the Assembly's Rules of Procedure to make the institution more transparent and efficient. In order to help Albanian members of parliament to improve the infrastructure in their areas and to reach out to their constituencies, the Presence launched a pilot programme to provide training to a group of Members of Parliament's aides. A training programme for parliamentary administration staff, started in December 2002, continued in 2004. It included support in improving personnel management practices.

Supporting civil society. More than 3,000 people received training and consultancy services through a network of Civil Society Development Centres that was established by the Presence in 2001. Over 2,500 people used the office space and meeting rooms available in the Centres. The Network delivers a grass-roots development programme to local NGOs and community-based groups. The Centres registered as local NGOs in 2004 and became independent implementation partners for the Presence. A sixth centre was opened in Shkodra to extend the activities to the northern parts of the country.

Fostering civil society participation in decision-making. Working closely with the Government and Albanian NGOs focusing on disability issues, the Presence assisted with the development of a 'National Strategy on People with Disabilities' and a National Action Plan. For the first time, a donor conference gave governmental and non-governmental institutions an opportunity to present a joint project portfolio reflecting the priorities of the Strategy.

Promoting women's empowerment.

Together with the UNDP, the World Bank and UNICEF, the Presence convened an international working group on gender issues to co-ordinate support for women's organizations and key state institutions such as the National Committee on Equal Opportunities. The group and its mailing



OSCE Presence in Albania

Fostering civil society participation: the Presence helped develop a National Strategy on People with Disabilities.

list served as a major tool for the exchange of information and best practice. As a result of an initiative by the Presence, a Women's Counselling Centre was established in Kukës in the north of Albania, providing victims of domestic violence with counselling and legal aid. Through the network of Civil Society Development Centres, capacity-building on gender mainstreaming was provided to local civil society and municipal governments. In consultation with the Presence's Gender Unit, OSCE field stations ensured that gender issues were integrated into their joint work with local officials and that awareness of gender mainstreaming was raised in the regions.

RULE OF LAW AND LEGAL REFORM

Improving property legislation. Disputes over land ownership continued to complicate Albania's economic development. The Presence chaired the Technical Experts Group that drafted the much-anticipated Law on the Restitution and Compensation of Property, and assisted the Albanian authorities in drafting the secondary legislation on property. The approval of the Law by the Assembly in July was generally recognized as a major breakthrough towards final resolution of the property issue.

The Presence also included in its property project the first registration of property, a necessary step for the economic development of the country and for the proper

implementation of the restitution and compensation programme.

Supporting legal reform. To help the Albanian government complete the country's legal framework, the Presence drafted secondary legislation for the Witness Protection Law and assisted in its practical implementation. The Presence and the ODIHR also assisted the Ministry of Justice draft legislation to amend the current juvenile crime laws.

A first in Albania was the publication by the Presence of a Legal Sector Report, a resource to assess current developments in the country's legal sector. The Report describes the legislative framework and organizational status for each legal sector institution as well as the assistance given and makes recommendations for improvement.

Increasing transparency in court practices and raising trial standards. In order to increase the confidence of citizens in the criminal justice system, the Presence initiated a Fair Trial Development Project. The project involved not only observation of courts, but also concrete follow-up projects to improve the skills of people working in the judicial sector. The Presence published an interim report summarizing the findings of the five Court Observation Reports and set up a database of country-wide written verdicts from cases involving serious crimes and corruption.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Fighting human trafficking. The Presence launched a project on the pre-screening of irregular migrants and asylum seekers in 2004. The joint initiative with the Albanian Directorate for Refugees, the IOM and the UNHCR provided for detained foreigners to be referred to the appropriate procedures for asylum, assistance and voluntary repatriation, with the ultimate goal of establishing a sustainable asylum system. The Presence trained and deployed five pre-screening officers at key border-crossing points to assist the Albanian Government in fully assuming the management of the asylum system.

More than 500 people benefited from the second phase of the Women's Rights and Anti-Trafficking Education (WRATE) seminars. The seminars, an important tool for the prevention of human trafficking and the raising of awareness about domestic violence, targeted vulnerable groups such as high school students, rural women from north-eastern Albania, and Roma.

Promoting prison reform. In 2004, Albania took a step forward in improving the pre-trial detention system. Following the publication of the recommendations on the issue by the Presence in March, the Government changed the process according to which the transfer of responsibilities over the pre-trial detention system from the Ministry of Public Order to the Ministry of Justice was to be done to better reflect the needs of the Albanian pre-trial detention system. Although such a transfer has been done over one facility only, the Albanian Government has compiled a master plan that will make possible the completion of the process.

Raising awareness about workers' rights. A national conference held in December focused on key problems and priorities for improving the rights of Albania's workers and laid the foundations for a new strategy. The conference was arranged by the OSCE Presence, Albania's Office of the People's Advocate, the country's trade unions, and several other international organizations.

OSCE Presence in Albania



MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Improving media legislation. At the invitation of the Prime Minister, the Presence assisted the Albanian authorities in aligning the country's media legislation with European standards. In co-operation with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, ARTICLE 19 and the Council of Europe, the Presence provided a thorough assessment of existing and proposed media laws. This included the electronic media law, the charter of Albanian Radio and Television, the law on access to information, the print media bill, defamation legislation, and draft amendments on digital terrestrial broadcasting.

Strengthening media institutions. The Presence offered its technical expertise on a number of media-related issues to the country's broadcasting regulator, the National Council of Radio and Television (NCRT), and the Parliamentary Media Committee. In co-operation with the European Radiocommunications Office, it provided recommendations on the NCRT draft strategy for digital broadcasting.

Supporting the creation of self-regulatory mechanisms. To help strengthen ethical and professional standards in the Albanian media, the Presence encouraged the idea of establishing a Council of Media

Ethics. In July, it held a meeting for leading journalists, editors and media owners on the development of self-regulatory mechanisms and the creation of associations to protect the professional status of journalists.

Head of Presence:
until October 2004,
Ambassador Osmo
Lipponen, since then:
Ambassador Pavel Vacek
Revised budget: €3,740,900
www.osce.org/albania

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The pace of reform accelerated in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2004, and the Mission made considerable progress in its programmes. In co-operation with its international partners – in particular the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the EU Special Representative (EUSR), the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR)¹, the Council of Europe, and the UNDP – the Mission continued to work towards consolidating peace, democracy, and stability in the country.

The Mission's main focus areas in 2004 were:

- monitoring human rights protection and assisting local efforts to promote and defend human rights, consolidate the rule of law and build sustainable human rights institutions;
- promoting the development of effective, transparent and accountable government institutions;
- supporting the political engagement of citizens to increase accountability of government at all levels and encourage the development of community support;
- assisting the development of an education system that gives students access to schools free from political, religious, cultural and other bias;
- ensuring the sustainability of education reform efforts and strengthening the foundation for a modern education system;
- supporting the electoral process and helping the country's Election Commission become a self-sustaining, effective state institution;
- giving active assistance to local authorities in reforming the public administration system; and
- encouraging democratic state-level control over the country's armed forces.

Politico-Military Dimension Activities

Supporting the defence reform process.

To help Bosnia and Herzegovina comply fully with its politico-military commitments, the Mission continued to play a central role in assisting the country's authorities with the process of reforming its defence structures. Important developments in this context were the creation of a state-level Ministry of Defence in March and the appointment of

the country's first Defence Minister, Nikola Radovanović, that same month. Both events were brought about with the help of the Mission and other international organizations in the country.

As a result of this assistance, Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities continued to reduce force numbers and arms stockpiles, and introduced a new doctrine of command and control for the country's armed forces. This led to a financially more sustainable and legitimate defence capacity. The Mission also assisted the country's Defence Ministry in developing training programmes to prepare the armed forces for future participation in peace support operations.

Furthering democratic control of the armed forces. After the establishment of the Joint Defence and Security Policy Committee in December 2003, the Mission continued to assist both Houses of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Parliamentary Assembly in enhancing democratic control over the armed forces. In addition, it promoted co-operation between the Defence and Security Committees of the State and Entity Parliaments by organizing five joint meetings and a bilateral visit to the Croatian Parliament in November.

Helping establish a modern intelligence service. The Mission provided expertise for the development of a modern, state-level Intelligence Agency. It assisted in establish-



AFP/Evis Barukcic

Weapons being prepared for melt-down

The defence reform process reduced Bosnia and Herzegovina's active and reserve military personnel from 19,800 to 11,891, thereby further contributing to a huge stockpile of excess weapons. Together with other international organizations, the Mission supported a pilot project, under which 20,000 surplus small arms and light weapons were melted down. The initiative served as a model for future arms destruction in the wider region of south-eastern Europe.

Supporting implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords

As a result of the extensive politico-military reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina over recent years, the Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures – Article II of Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Accords – was terminated on 28 September (see also page 28). For almost eight years, the Mission provided technical and logistical support to the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Articles II and IV. The document ending the Agreement was signed by the Personal Representative, together with representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its two entities – Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – at a final meeting in June of the Joint Consultative Commission, which oversaw the implementation of the Agreement.

¹ On 2 December 2004, SFOR's mandate ended. The Stabilization Force was replaced by the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR).

ing state-level supervisory and control institutions for the agency and gave support for the creation of an effective intelligence community, capable of information-sharing with other Euro-Atlantic intelligence agencies.

The Mission continued to provide support to the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Article IV, which foresees measures for sub-regional arms control in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia and Montenegro).

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

An increasingly important focus of the peace implementation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the creation of a well-functioning, professional and depoliticized public administration. When the Government pledged its commitment to public administration reform to the Peace Implementation Council in March 2003, the Mission decided to assist it in this crucial process.

Reforming public administration. The Mission's assistance in this field concentrated on the development of transparent financial management structures and the implementation of modern administrative procedures within municipal government. In total, Mission advisers provided support to 90 out of 142 municipalities to improve their financial and human resource management practices and establish comprehensive internal control capacities.

Making human resource management more efficient. Bosnia and Herzegovina's municipalities spend on average 60 to 70 per cent of their revenues on administration. To reduce this figure and channel more funds towards serving the country's citizens, the Mission helped municipal administrations modify their institutional organization, correct the size of their administrative structure, and improve the selection of their staff. To develop a more results- and performance-oriented civil service, the Mission also provided the municipalities with assistance in strategic planning and progress monitoring.

Improving financial management.

Fundamental changes in the country's existing financial management systems are needed to bring the public sector to a level where it can support the needs of a modern, competitive economy. The Mission concentrated its activities in this area on addressing issues such as weak internal control, insufficient strategic planning and undue emphasis on the control of inputs rather than the efficient and effective delivery of outputs.

Based on a multi-year approach, the Mission assisted municipal authorities in implementing effective and transparent budgetary and public expenditure management and reporting frameworks. It also supported the development of enhanced

Breaking the debt spiral of Bosnia and Herzegovina's municipalities

Having assessed the public finance and human resource management practices of all the country's municipalities in 2003, the Mission moved to hands-on assistance in 2004. The assessment had shown that poor financial management was the cause of sizeable debts and arrears in many municipalities. One of them was Lukavac in the north-east of the country.

Against an annual budget of €2.3 million, the municipal administration of Lukavac, a municipality of 56,000 inhabitants, had accumulated a deficit of more than €6.1 million. The situation prevented the municipal government from spending on local infrastructure projects or other local needs.

The Mission's finance adviser conducted a review of all debts and claims and advised the municipality to prioritize the payment of employee salaries and pending lawsuits. In addition, the municipal administration received assistance in preparing a final debt repayment plan. It was based on eliminating outstanding liabilities, preparing individual repayment plans with main debtors and overall strong financial discipline regarding expenditures. With the Mission's assistance, Lukavac decreased its deficit by 70 per cent (4.3 million) by the end of 2004 and is solidly on its way to financial solvency.

financial management systems that facilitate planning, programme monitoring and evaluation while improving managerial decision-making.

In an effort to strengthen local economic development and increase internal control of municipal administrations, the Mission developed a pilot project with five municipalities. It comprises proper accounting of their fixed assets, consolidating their cadastre and asset records, and producing an updated inventory of municipal property. Other initiatives aim at establishing mechanisms to regulate financial and human resource management processes in the public sector and report inadequacies to the relevant authorities.

Human Dimension Activities

HUMAN RIGHTS

Verifying completion of the Property Return Process. Together with the OHR and the UNHCR, the Mission continued to support the process of returning properties to their pre-war owners or occupants. In 2004, it initiated checks to verify that local authorities settled all property claims. Over 200,000 such claims have been submitted and resolved since the end of the war. The Mission also monitored the situation of people requiring temporary accommodation to ensure that their housing needs are effectively and equitably addressed.

Promoting and protecting economic and social rights. To assist local authorities in progressively securing economic and social rights for all, the Mission undertook an assessment of the barriers that Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens encounter in accessing health care, social assistance and housing. These efforts focused on vulnerable groups such as returnees and members of the Roma minority, but the results of this initiative, which is planned to be continued in 2005, will ultimately benefit all.

Building strong national human rights institutions. The goal of the Mission's Human Rights Institutions Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to ensure that accessible and independent remedies for human rights abuses exist, are properly

understood and provide effective, non-discriminatory protection to all. To this end, the Mission supported the process of unifying the country's three Ombudsman institutions. The Mission also continued to monitor the implementation of decisions by the Human Rights Chamber, established under the Dayton Peace Agreement to consider complaints about human rights violations, and the transfer in 2004 of the Chamber's competencies to the Constitutional Court's Human Rights Commission.

Protecting the human rights of Roma and other national minorities. To support the rights of Roma to non-discriminatory access to healthcare, education, and housing, the Mission raised awareness and assisted the civil registration of births of Roma children in co-operation with Roma communities and municipal authorities. The Mission also facilitated the work of a task force established to develop a national action plan on the educational needs of Roma and other national minorities, ensuring the active participation of NGOs, the Ministries of Education and minority representatives. A plan was adopted by local education authorities in February calling for measures to incorporate national minority culture, history and literature into existing curricula, to reduce social and economic barriers to education facing minorities through financial assistance for textbooks and transport, and to raise awareness among Roma about the importance of education. The Mission also completed a review of the status of informal Roma settlements in order to support local efforts to assist Roma in securing tenure to the land on which they reside.

Fighting trafficking in human beings. Efforts in this field concentrated on supporting the Office of the State Co-ordinator for Anti-Trafficking and on awareness-raising campaigns. To ensure that it can draw on sufficient resources, the Mission seconded an expert staff member to the Office and provided financial support through a voluntary contribution from Iceland. In addition, it produced a comprehensive overview of the National Referral Mechanism for victims and conducted public awareness campaigns in print and broadcast media

National Referral Mechanisms: protecting the rights of trafficking victims

An integral part of the OSCE's anti-trafficking strategy, National Referral Mechanisms (NRMs) are the toolkit which helps governments establish relationships and work together with law enforcement bodies, NGOs and other stakeholders in the fight against human trafficking. The OSCE's Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings recommends that its participating States establish NRMs by building partnerships between civil society and law enforcement bodies, creating guidelines to properly identify trafficked persons, and establishing cross-sector and multi-disciplinary teams to develop and monitor anti-trafficking policies. The basic aims of an NRM are to ensure that the human rights of trafficked persons are respected and to provide an effective way for referring victims to support services.

In 2004, the ODIHR published a handbook on NRMs, which provides guidance on how to design and implement sustainable structures that aim both at prosecuting traffickers and at providing support to victims.

to alert potential victims to the problem of trafficking and inform law enforcement officials about how to identify victims.

RULE OF LAW

In early 2003, new criminal procedure codes were introduced at the State and Entity levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of comprehensive legislation initiated by the High Representative to reform the criminal justice system. The purpose of the new codes was to strengthen the rule of law and establish an efficient, accessible and equitable justice system. The new codes caused fundamental change in the procedures governing criminal investigations and the administration of justice in the courts. Among the most significant changes were the elimination of the position of the investigative judge, the shift to an adversarial trial procedure and the introduction of new procedures, such as plea bargaining. From January to August, the Mission undertook a project to assess the implementation of the new codes and monitored a total of 1,032 criminal trial proceedings across Bosnia and Herzegovina. Findings and recommendations were reported to local institutions involved in the criminal law reform process.

Reform of the judiciary. In 2004, Bosnia and Herzegovina continued its efforts to establish a fair and effective criminal justice system – one that is compliant with international human rights standards and presided over by a professional and independent judiciary.

To support these efforts, the Mission deployed 24 trial monitors to 38 courts, who then provided the local authorities with systematic reporting on criminal proceedings in the courts of Republika Srpska and the Federation as well as the country's State Court. In addition, workshops were held for judges and prosecutors to discuss the implementation of the new criminal codes, resulting in more independence in judicial decision-making and greater consistency in the application of the law.

The Mission also seconded two staff members to provide technical assistance to the Criminal Codes Implementation Assessment Team of the country's Justice Ministry and provided the Republika Srpska and Federation Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Centres with regular feedback on implementation issues that require further training efforts in adversarial procedures, evidence gathering, plea bargaining, and sentencing.

Monitoring war crimes cases. The Mission monitored and reported on war crimes cases tried by the domestic courts, highlighting obstacles that hinder the fair and effective prosecution of these cases. It assisted local authorities and the OHR in establishing the War Crimes Chamber of the State Court and participated in initiatives aimed at improving regional co-operation in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes.

DEMOCRATIZATION

Promoting transparent and accountable government. Within the framework of its Parliamentary Support Programme, the Mission helped amend the Rules of Procedure of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Parliamentary Assembly (BiH PA). This reform will increase the efficiency and transparency of the BiH PA, providing for both a harmonized legislative procedure and improved parliamentary oversight. The Programme also included assistance for the establishment of a Research Directorate at the BiH PA and a Parliamentary Press Gallery.

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina



Improving access of citizens to municipal services

Strengthening local democracy through dialogue between citizens and local government was another important initiative. The initiative included a range of outreach mechanisms to involve citizens in the process of local government reform, such as public discussions and roundtables, working bodies and commissions as well as projects developed in partnership between citizens and municipal representatives. Efforts were based on the implementation of the Freedom of Access to Information Acts (FOIA), compliance with the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the introduction of a Code of Ethics for elected officials. The performance of the 20 municipalities selected for these core programmes was encouraging. By December, the FOIA achieved an implementation rate of nearly 80 per cent in these municipalities, while the implementation rate of the Charter and the Code of Ethics reached approximately 60 per cent.

Improving legislation and regulatory frameworks. Working closely with international partners and both Entities,

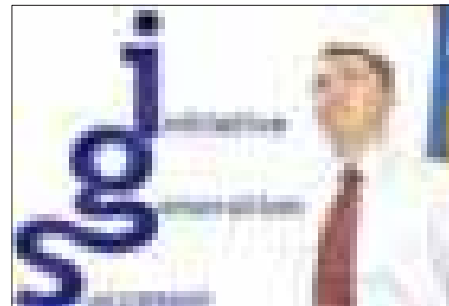
the Mission helped revise the Entities' draft laws on local self-government. At the local level, 20 municipalities and seven cantons received assistance in revising their rules of procedure, harmonizing them with the overall legislative and constitutional framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Strengthening civil society. To reverse public apathy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and convince citizens of their capacity to bring about change, the Mission encouraged over 100 citizens' groups to take a more active part in public life. This included organizing pre-election debates that focused on holding Government accountable as well as NGO campaigns for local community improvements such as cleaner streets, safer roads, and the provision of student scholarships.

The Mission also supported more than 400 partnership initiatives between citizens and local authorities that addressed issues such as youth participation in public life, gender equality, the environment, employment and education.

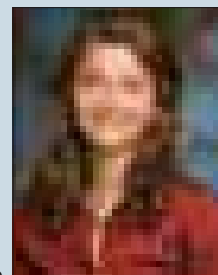
An example of an innovative partnership approach developed by the Mission is the Citizen Outreach and Participation Initiative (COPI), which was funded by the UK Government and implemented in partnership with two local NGOs. Through COPI, citizens and officials from 30 municipalities received training on municipal decision-making and learnt about tools for citizen participation, writing project proposals, how to use the FOIA, public relations, and managing conflict. Participants subsequently implemented joint initiatives on the FOIA, the environment, and youth participation, to increase the participation of citizens in local decision-making. The initiative resulted in the introduction of new policies in several municipalities. For example, the municipality of Rudo established a joint citizen-municipal commission on youth issues, which started to develop a strategic vision and an annual action plan, whereas the municipality of Ustiprača improved implementation of the FOIA by publishing municipal information guides. In several other municipalities, either information officers or youth co-ordinators were appointed to deal with full implementation of the FOIA.

Developing young leaders. The Successor Generation Initiative (SGI), devised by the Mission in 2002, continued its successful work with young people, developing their ability as leaders and helping them to put into practice projects that improve their communities. Of the 25 participants in 2004, two were elected in October as municipal councillors.



Turning ideas into projects: SGI participant organizes youth fair to provide advice on career and education options

Denita Bosto, a 21 year-old student from Bugojno and a former SGI participant, found a solution to a constant problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina: it is almost impossible



for young people to find comprehensive information about education and employment anywhere in the country.

Denita's solution: to organize a Youth Information Fair, where this kind of information is made available to all. The initiative, the first of its kind in Bosnia and Herzegovina, met with success: about 300 students and representatives of relevant authorities from across the country travelled to Bugojno, where the fair was held in October. "Youth had the opportunity to receive first-hand information about employment opportunities, professional qualifications expected for business, and study opportunities, which they found invaluable," said Denita. The fair received comprehensive and positive coverage in the media and ended with expectations that a similar event would be held in 2005.

Promoting fair employment practices and accountable businesses. As a result of the Mission's efforts in this field, the nine largest employers in the country introduced fair employment practices, benefiting more than 20,000 employees as well as potential new hires. The Mission provided technical support to businesses to encourage them to develop fair employment policies and adopt and incorporate such principles in their by-laws and internal documents. This ensured that the companies' hiring and employment process was designed according to the highest standards of modern human resources management. The Mission also worked towards strengthening the capacity of employees to hold businesses accountable for their employment practices. By distributing leaflets explaining basic labour rights and organizing roundtables and radio shows to promote fair treatment in employment and labour relations, the Mission helped employees and the wider public to advocate for fair employment policies and identify the most effective means to eliminate discrimination in employment and work relations.

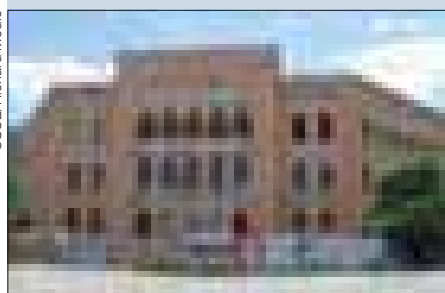
EDUCATION

Promoting an education system open to all. During the 2003/04 school year, the Mission worked closely with the Co-ordination Board for the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Special Needs and Rights of Returnee Children to continue addressing the needs of returnee children. The Co-ordination Board, comprising representatives from entity and cantonal ministries and pedagogical institutes, plays the lead role in ensuring that the Implementation Plan for the Interim Agreement, signed by all education ministers in November 2003, is carried out in full. The main goal of this co-operation is to ensure that more returnee children attend school in the area where they live. Building on achievements during the 2002/03 school year, the efforts of the Co-ordination Board included the development of a set of guidelines on appropriate, non-political, non-divisive names and symbols used in schools.

In co-operation with the Council of Europe, the Mission supported the establishment of an independent Textbook Commission,

responsible for developing guidelines for history and geography authors. Textbooks used in schools all too often view history from a single perspective and do not favour diverse viewpoints. It is hoped that such new guidelines, based on a 'multi-perspective approach' developed by the Council of Europe, will encourage the reflection of diverse viewpoints in textbooks and allow students to acquire a basic understanding of the history and geography of all constituent peoples who make up the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Working towards multi-ethnic education: Mostar's Old Gymnasium



OSCE/Richard Medic

After two years of effort by the Mission, the prestigious Old Mostar Gymnasium – an important symbol for quality education in the region – opened its doors in September, re-uniting over 200 Bosniac and 200 Croat students. War-damage and subsequent neglect had left the building in dire need of repair and the Mission lobbied heavily to obtain funding for its reconstruction as well as for extra-curricular activities. Efforts continue to help further integrate and refurbish the school and improve the level of education.

"This is a significant achievement, not only in addressing the problem of divided schools, but also in contributing to the amelioration of the quality of education."

**Ambassador Douglas Davidson,
OSCE Head of Mission**

Another step forward was taken in the field of minority education. Under the auspices of a working group co-chaired by the Mission, a National Action Plan on the Educational Needs of Roma and Other National Minorities was agreed in February by all Education Ministers on both Entity and cantonal levels.

Supporting structural reform. Following the adoption in June 2003 of the state-level Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, the Mission actively lobbied for the adoption of legislation in harmony with this Law by the authorities of Republika Srpska, the Federation's cantons and the Brčko District. The Law not only ensures equal access to education and promotes European educational standards, but also allows for greater school autonomy and increased parent-teacher involvement in educational affairs. To support the implementation of such legislation, the Mission helped develop model by-laws.

A state-level higher education law is essential for the implementation of commitments made by Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities in signing the 1999 Bologna Declaration¹ and ratifying the 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention². These commitments include facilitating degree recognition and student mobility as well as increasing the autonomy of universities. In spring, a state-level law was put into parliamentary procedure in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but political obstruction caused significant delay in its adoption. As a consequence, the Mission continued throughout the year to lobby for the adoption of a state-level framework law on higher education. A revised higher education law is expected to go into parliamentary procedure in early 2005.

Vocational training was another priority area for the Mission. Working closely with the European Union and stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it developed a draft state-level framework law on vocational education and training, which is expected to go into parliamentary procedure in early 2005. The law will also bring standards in vocational education and training into line with trends in other European countries. This will ensure student mobility and employability and, as a result, contribute to economic development.

Encouraging civic involvement in the education reform process. The Mission hosted two education forums in 2004 – one on higher education and another on vocational education – each drawing over 300 people. In addition, scores of

1 The Bologna Declaration aims at establishing a European area of higher education by 2010.

2 Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region



Participants at the sixth Education Forum

roundtable meetings as well as radio and TV shows were held, many on the development of parent and student councils. These combined efforts encouraged citizens to get more involved in their community and education, shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

Students are what education reform is all about. Amila Rujanac showed what can be accomplished when students speak up and voice their interests and concerns. As an active member of the Parent Student Council of Bugojino's Gymnasium, Amila and her classmates realized a number of different projects in 2004: campaigns against drug abuse, ecological initiatives and a *Gitarijada*, which brought together young people from different social environments through a guitar concert.

"I believe that the OSCE's co-operation with our Parent School Councils and with NGOs helps us better understand our needs and issues", Amila said. "Our aims are a very good match with what the OSCE is doing: improving education, civic society, and society in general."

ELECTORAL REFORM

Throughout the year, the Mission continued to support the country's election process. Through its two seats in the seven-member Election Commission (ECBiH), the Mission focused on the reform of electoral legislation and implementation of the Law on Conflict of Interest.

Taking charge of the voting process: Bosnia and Herzegovina holds municipal elections

On 2 October, municipal elections were held in 139 municipalities, the cities of Mostar and Banja Luka and in Brčko District. The polls broke new ground in several respects:

- They were the first elections to be fully administered and funded by the country's authorities since 1995 when the General Framework Agreement for Peace came into force.
- For the first time, mayors were elected directly (with the exception of Mostar and Brčko District).
- They were the first elections held under a new electoral regime in Mostar since its administrative unification in March 2004.
- They were the first direct elections for the Brčko District Assembly since the issuance of the Final Arbitral Award in March 1999.

The ECBiH certified a total of 27,426 candidates from 70 political parties, 18 coalitions and six lists of independent candidates. Candidates stood for 140 mayoral positions and 3,145 councillor positions. The ODIHR assessed the elections as having been conducted successfully.

The Election Commission and the Mission also participated in a working group established by the Parliamentary Assembly to refine the country's Election Law by filling legal voids, clarifying provisions and adjusting deadlines. Amendments to the Law were adopted in January and April. Most of the changes were of a technical nature referring to issues such as the com-

position and appointment of polling station committees, media rules, complaints and appeals procedures, observers, and paid advertising in electronic media.

Meanwhile, the Mission started planning its withdrawal from the ECBiH. To ensure seamless disengagement, the Mission will continue to provide support and expertise, focused on legislative reform, the implementation of the Law on Political Party Financing, and the improvement of the voter registration system.

Promoting gender equality

The Mission incorporated the principal elements of the OSCE Gender Action Plan in both the programmatic field as well as its own administrative procedures. Through its Democratization and Public Administration Reform programmes, the Mission promoted non-discriminatory and inclusive practices in the human resource management of businesses and municipal administrations. Internally, the Mission made gender mainstreaming an integral part of its programme development and implementation, and undertook efforts to provide a professional working environment for all Mission staff ensuring equality of both genders.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador Douglas Davidson
Revised Budget: €19,465,300
www.oscebih.org

OSCE Mission to Croatia

Probably one of the strongest images in Croatia in 2004 was that of Prime Minister Ivo Sanader breaking the traditional bread (*pogača*) with one of the more than 100,000 Serb refugees who have returned to the country since the end of the 1992–1995 war. This event coincided with the visit of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in May. It was the first-ever appearance by a Croatian Prime Minister at the home of a Serb returnee. For the many Croatian refugees still living in exile, undecided as to whether to return, this image said more than the proverbial thousand words.



Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader (centre) breaking the traditional bread with Serb returnees and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Solomon Passy (left)

The year 2004 was also one in which Croatia, as the first country in south-eastern Europe gravely affected by the war, was granted candidate status by the European Union. The mandate of the OSCE Mission to Croatia closely parallels the political tasks that the country needs to address for EU membership, most of which are related to normalization and reconciliation after the war. Against this background, Croatia has turned to the OSCE as an essential partner in realizing this agenda. With the signing of an agreement with minority MPs in Croatia in December 2003, the Government acknowledged the importance of refugee return and minority issues.

“Consolidating its role as a provider of independent advice and a catalyst for change, the Mission established an effective partnership with the Government.”

Ambassador Peter Semneby, Head of Mission

Human Dimension Activities

REFUGEE RETURN

As in previous years, refugee return was at the core of the Mission’s work in Croatia. The key to success in this area was the Government’s commitment to the policy that those refugees who wish to return should be able to do so under adequate conditions, which means, first and foremost, a secure environment and access to housing.

Resources to reconstruct war-damaged properties were made widely available to Serbs, and the Government increased its efforts in support of the repossession of properties occupied during and after the

war. At the end of 2004, only about 1,500 cases of occupied property remained. The Government also indicated that it would participate in a joint regional initiative proposed by the OSCE, the European Commission and the UNHCR to the Governments of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro, in order to close the refugee file within a reasonable time frame.

Another significant achievement for the Mission was the Government’s taking on board of advice on ways to remove legal and administrative obstacles hampering the return and settlement of refugees. The Mission also provided the Government with a detailed analysis on the lack of electricity

faced by many villages to which refugees have returned. As a result, some of those villages will finally receive electricity in 2005. Encouraged by this success, the Mission plans to tackle the more difficult issues of water supply shortages to return villages and other basic infrastructural needs.

Housing programmes for former occupancy/tenancy rights holders. Despite all the Mission’s efforts, one category of refugees and displaced persons remains without access to housing – those who once lived in socially-owned housing with occupancy/tenancy rights and have lost that right. In 2004, the Mission took the lead in finding a solution for this pressing issue together with the Government, the

Changing Mission structure

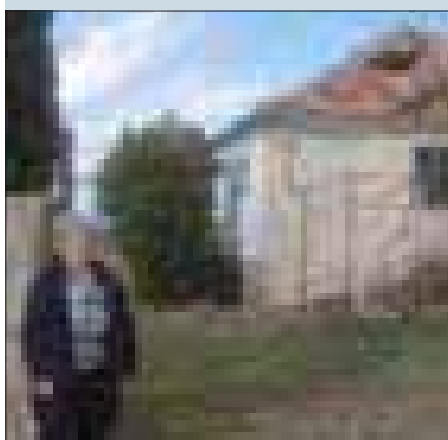
Reflecting Croatia’s progress toward fulfilling the OSCE mandate and the resulting change in the nature of the Mission’s work, the Mission began streamlining its structure in 2004. While individual case work with returning refugees was decreasing, advice and support for regional political authorities gained in importance, indicating the improving political climate in which the Mission implements its mandate.

The structural change also affected the Mission’s field presence, which was consolidated into a smaller number of relatively larger field offices, to make more efficient use of staffing resources. The OSCE Mission to Croatia now has field offices located in Gospić, Karlovac, Sisak, Split, Vukovar and Zadar.

Sofija Škorić and her husband Svetoslav, both Croatian Serbs, returned to their destroyed home in the devastated village of Biljane Donje in the Zadar hinterland in 1997, after living as refugees for two years. After a difficult first year, the UNHCR began reconstructing their home. Their hopes that they would finally be able to move back in were shattered when construction works on their property had to be stopped after a land mine exploded. With the help of the OSCE Mission to Croatia, the Škorićs applied for – and received – the state assistance for reconstruction to which they were entitled. However, acts of arson and other forms of intimidation stalled the progress until finally, all hope was lost with the further destruction of their house and the theft of newly purchased building materials.

For six years, Sofija and her husband had to temporarily live in a nearby house. They feared that this temporary arrangement would become permanent. However, the joint field trip by Croatian Prime Minister Sanader and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to returnee villages in the Zadar hinterland on 11 May proved to be a turning point. In a record five days, the Škorićs' house was rebuilt, just in time for the visit.

Sofija and her husband have since been joined by other refugees who have also decided to return to the village of Biljane Donje, which until then was completely deserted.



Sofija Škorić in front of her home in Biljane Donje

UNHCR and the European Commission. The Government's promise to implement two housing programmes for this category of refugees will be reinforced by the launch of an information campaign targeting former occupancy/tenancy rights holders residing in neighbouring countries.

The successful implementation of these programmes will mean that many refugees from Croatia's urban areas will for the first time have access to housing.

In order to create a positive atmosphere among refugees and displaced persons who wish to return home but who need a clear signal that they are welcome and can return in an atmosphere of security and acceptance, the Mission, the Government, and its international partners in September launched a public awareness campaign on 'Reconciliation and Sustainable Return in Croatia'. The campaign aims at encouraging refugees and internally displaced persons to make an informed decision on whether they want to return. It is also designed to foster a climate conducive to sustainable return by promoting the importance of tolerance and integration in a multi-ethnic society based on European values. In preparation for the project, the Mission commissioned and published a widely quoted report on attitudes toward refugee return.

RULE OF LAW

Providing expert advice for war crimes trials. The Mission asserted its role as a key source of information and advice on the conduct of war crimes trials in Croatia. As part of the exit strategy of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which foresees the transfer of ICTY cases to domestic courts, the Mission was asked to provide its expertise on such trials.

Through its extensive field presence, the Mission monitored virtually all war crimes trials in domestic courts, which resulted in three major reports. Released at a joint press conference by the Head of Mission and the Croatian Minister of Justice, the reports were widely cited – also by the ICTY's President – as a reference for the possible transfer of ICTY cases to the Croatian courts.

Another important focus of the Mission was the improvement of inter-state judicial co-operation, an activity that is particularly important and sensitive in war crimes trials. As a result of support from the Mission, Croatia's Chief State Prosecutor reached preliminary agreement with his counterparts in Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina on landmark memoranda regarding direct co-operation, a move that will facilitate both war crimes investigations and the struggle against organized crime in south-eastern Europe.

Assisting judicial reform. The Mission continued to provide assistance to the Government in its efforts to reform the judiciary. Of particular concern was the implementation of judgments by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the Constitutional Court, many of which focused on the functioning of the judiciary.

A report by the Mission, analysing all cases involving Croatia before the ECHR, highlighted the need for the country's authorities to enhance human rights protection by strengthening domestic institutions. In particular, the report recommended measures to strengthen the Constitutional Court. The report was presented to the Croatian Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, which then adopted a resolution based on the Mission's recommendations.

The Mission also continued its efforts to enhance and support the role of the Constitutional Court in its capacity of safeguarding human rights in Croatia. Since 2003, the Mission, with the financial backing and support of the Norwegian Government, has helped the Constitutional Court transform its website into an effective tool for the dissemination of information about court practice and procedure. The website contributes to increasing both the knowledge and capacity of the court's 'consumers', namely attorneys, NGOs, and private litigants. To simplify and improve access to the Court, the Mission also prepared an 'E-guide', which gives Croatian citizens information on how to file a complaint with the Constitutional Court.

With the adoption of a free legal aid system still pending, the Mission supported NGO



Supporting the repossession of property

The Panda Café and Sara Pišerija cases are possibly the most high-profile property repossession cases in Croatia. They involve the State's allocation of private businesses owned by refugees to temporary occupants. Even their mention at the UN Security Council in 1997 did not bring about their resolution.

In 2004, the OSCE Mission, through the Norwegian Refugee Council, contracted a Zagreb-based attorney to provide five refugees with free legal aid to help resolve their legally complicated repossession cases. The owners of Panda and Sara were also offered similar assistance. Otherwise, the returnees would have faced an expensive, long drawn-out legal battle which they could not have afforded.

The successes achieved during the first year were encouraging. Two of the five cases resulted in the owners having their properties returned to them, including the Panda Café case. The owners of Sara are scheduled to recover their property in early 2005.

At the same time, there have been further legal complications. In a separate court case, the illegal temporary occupants of Panda and Sara have sued the owners, demanding compensation. While the appeals lodged by the owners are still pending, it is ironic that they, who fought so long to get their businesses back, may now have to sell their properties in order to compensate the temporary occupants. These later developments also show that legal assistance will continue to be crucial for some time to come.

projects that provide free legal aid to disadvantaged groups. This initiative targets in particular cash-strapped refugees and displaced persons by helping them to claim their rights on return-related legal issues, such as the repossession and reconstruction of their pre-war property.

Promoting minority rights. In this field, the Mission continued to work with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in advising Croatia's authorities on the development of plans for minority representation in the judiciary and state administration. This is the most important part of the Constitutional Law of National Minorities adopted in 2002 that remains to be implemented.

To improve voter registration among Croatia's minority communities, the Mission ran an information and awareness-raising campaign targeting in particular the country's Bosniac and Roma minorities. The under-registration of these communities directly impacts on the level of minority representation at all levels of government. This message was also highlighted in a series of lectures held in town halls across Croatia.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

The review of the country's media legislation continued to be an important Mission activity. Together with the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the Mission asked international media experts to review several pieces of media legislation and bring them into line with international standards. The first major result was the adoption of a new law on media in April. The Government declared that future amendments to media laws, due to be adopted in 2005, will follow the experts' guidelines.

In co-operation with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Mission continued to advocate decriminalization of libel in Croatia. Although libel has not been entirely decriminalized, amendments adopted in 2004 to the country's Penal Code incorporate important parts of OSCE advice. For the first time, the burden of proof in libel cases has shifted from the defendant to the plaintiff.

DEMOCRATIZATION

Civil society development was again a key element of the Mission's work. In total, 52 projects initiated and developed by the Mission, local partners and participating States were successfully carried out in 2004, representing a total expenditure of €1.3 million.

Encompassing a broad array of issues, these projects not only supported the Mission's core activities in the field of refugee return, rule of law, and media development, but also promoted good governance and civil society in the war-affected areas and contributed to bringing ethnic communities closer together. The projects ranged from high-level nationwide activities, such as judicial reform workshops, to local grass-roots initiatives, such as a university work camp.



Mission staff distribute information on the OSCE in Daruvar, Eastern Croatia, on Europe Day, 9 May.

Promoting electoral reform. In the field of electoral reform, the Mission and the ODIHR began following up on recommendations made by the ODIHR after last year's parliamentary elections. These included the need to create a permanent body to prepare and conduct elections, improve transparency in campaign financing and management of voters' lists, and to streamline the conduct of out-of-country voting. The Mission brought together Croatia's top legal and government experts to discuss and give guidelines on electoral



Croatian police officers 'on patrol' in Brighton, England

reform – a topic particularly relevant in view of Croatia's presidential and municipal elections scheduled for 2005.

Police development. Turning Croatia's police force into a modern police service is the joint goal of both the Mission and the Interior Ministry. Helping this process along, the Mission assisted the Ministry in developing a plan for police reform and in organizing a forum on the management of police reform, with participation of the OSCE and the European Commission. The Mission also began to focus on reforms that improve the representation of women and national minorities in the police force. Additional efforts by the Mission and other international partners, primarily Germany and the United Kingdom, focused on further developing the concept of community policing in the country. This included the training of some 150 community police officers (called 'Contact Officers') and a visit to the UK for Croatian police staff, who worked alongside their British counterparts to study the local model of community policing, which aims at establishing a community approach to crime prevention. Highlighting the importance of well-organized

human resource management – the key to any effective police force – the Mission worked with the German police to exchange good practices and experience in this area. The Mission sponsored a five-day training workshop on this topic, run by two expert human resource managers from the German police. The workshop was followed by a Mission-sponsored study visit to the Interior Ministry of the German Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt for five high officials of the Croatian police, who were acquainted with the management of human resources in a modern European police force.

The Mission promoted the improvement of regional and international police co-operation. In addition to co-ordinating international assistance offered to the Croatian police, the Mission also provided advice on a variety of security and human rights issues, such as the detection and prevention of human trafficking.

Promoting women's participation in public life. The Mission continued to support two extra-budgetary projects that aim at empowering women to increase their participation in political and public life.

Financed by the Italian Foreign Ministry and implemented by the Gender Task Force Offices of the Stability Pact for South East Europe, the projects have been ongoing since 2001. Both projects contribute to raising awareness among women on the need for their greater involvement in politics.

In 2004, the first-ever regional meeting of NGOs dealing with anti-trafficking and anti-corruption issues in the Stability Pact region took place. Supported by the Mission, the initiative was organized by the Women's Room Centre (ACTA) and received funding by the ODIHR. The meeting succeeded in helping ACTA members establish future strategic and operational action plans.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador Peter Semneby
Revised Budget: €10,404,300
www.osce.org/croatia

OSCE Mission in Kosovo

The serious outbreak of inter-ethnic violence in mid-March 2004 represented a setback for Kosovo on its way to lasting peace – and overshadowed the rest of the year. Despite all obstacles, the OSCE Mission continued its efforts to help Kosovo on its path from a

troubled past to a stable future based on peace and tolerance between the different communities. Although it often played a quiet role, the Mission's efforts yielded concrete results: democratic self-government is forming and beginning to take hold in Kosovo.

“The ‘Standards for Kosovo’ describe a Kosovo where public institutions are representative and democratic, where the rule of law is effective, respected and accessible to all, where those IDPs who wish to are free and able to return to Kosovo without hindrance, threat or intimidation, where all individuals, regardless of ethnic background, can travel and work safely, and use their languages (and where that use is respected) anywhere and in any institution of Kosovo, where the framework for a functioning market economy is in place and where the Kosovo Protection Corps operates strictly within its mandate; furthermore, the standards describe a Kosovo where Pristina is participating in successful dialogue with Belgrade and where Kosovo is in stable and peaceful relationships with its regional neighbours. In short, a truly multi-ethnic, stable and democratic Kosovo which is approaching European standards.”

Quoted from: Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan

Since its establishment in 1999 as Pillar III of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the OSCE Mission has been striving to prepare the groundwork for the building and consolidation of democratic institutions while fostering the rebuilding of ties between Kosovo's communities. In 2004, the Mission's main objectives were the strengthening of local ownership of the ‘Standards for Kosovo’ process laid down in December 2003. This process sets out specific goals that Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) have to meet before Kosovo's final status can be addressed.

The Mission focused its activities on four areas:

- building the capacity of governmental and non-governmental institutions;
- monitoring and promoting human rights and the rule of law;
- development of the media; and
- continued training and specialization of the Kosovo Police Service.

Human Dimension Activities

ELECTIONS

In October, 1.3 million Kosovans went to the polls to elect a new central Assembly. After having organized three successive cycles of elections since 1999, the Mission for the first time turned over key responsibilities to a local election management body, the Central Election Commission Secretariat (CECS).

Handing over the baton. The CECS was created in 2003 as the operational arm of the Central Election Commission. Based in Prishtinë/Priština, the Secretariat has a technical, non-political mandate and is equipped with sufficient resources and capacity to provide fair electoral administration.

“The OSCE, with its seasoned field presence, is uniquely qualified to play the leading role in the critical process of local capacity-building and monitoring the transfer of responsibilities to Kosovo's institutions.”

**Søren Jessen-Petersen,
Special Representative
of the UN Secretary-General, UNMIK**



For the 2004 Assembly elections, the OSCE Mission played an advisory role, passing on its electoral know-how and operational responsibilities to the emerging CECS. This marked an important step forward for Kosovo's institutions to take over ownership and manifested the OSCE's commitment to successively transfer the electoral process to the people of Kosovo. The CECS is financed by the Kosovo

Consolidated Budget and its entire staff is made up of Kosovans. All future elections will be carried out by the CECS.

Preparing the electoral groundwork. To increase local ownership of the electoral process, the Elections Working Group – a consultative forum hosted and chaired by the Mission and composed of representatives of the main local political and civil forces – recommended to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General the electoral framework for the 2004 election.

Many of the tasks outlined by this framework were taken over by the CECS, including co-ordination of the polls on election day and planning with municipal commissions and polling staff. Other responsibilities included the certification of political parties, candidates and other groups standing for election, public information activities, observer accreditation and distribution of electoral material. In the final push to the election, the CECS and the Mission made a special effort to ensure that all displaced persons were able to take part in the poll.

DEMOCRATIZATION

Supporting central government institutions. A key programme to support central governance in Kosovo is the Assembly Support Initiative (ASI), begun in 2001 by ten international partners and led by the OSCE Mission. The Initiative played a central role in developing Kosovo's Assembly as an institution. In 2004, the ASI partners continued their series of training seminars on parliamentary work and policy issues in Kosovo and abroad. Many programmes focused on developing parliamentary life and offering technical support to Assembly Committees in the legislative process.

The Initiative encouraged international working visits and public hearings, and offered advice and a capacity-building programme to the Assembly Secretariat. To help minority communities reach common positions on issues affecting their constituencies, the Initiative promoted the role and participation of these communities in the Assembly. In addition, an eight-month long capacity-building programme was organized, including working visits for the PISG political advisers to Vienna and Brussels and, following the Assembly elections in October, a two-month orientation programme for the newly-elected Assembly members.

Supporting municipal governance. To improve good governance practices at the local level, the Mission provided advice to municipal officials in using legislation and administrative procedures that encourage effective accountable government. Various programmes were implemented to strengthen and enhance their skills in formulating and executing policy decisions. In the Prishtinë/Priština and Lipjan/Lipljan regions, for example, the Mission and the Regional Enterprise Agency worked with the Policy and Finance Committees on budget and economic development issues. Support was given in creating municipality-gearred brochures in all languages. All people in these communities benefit as they become more familiar with the services the municipality provides for them. Furthermore, it highlighted the fact that the municipality is there to serve the people and not vice versa.

Involving Kosovo's youth in decision-making processes

An important initiative to improve young people's understanding of local policy-making processes and community issues is the Mission's Youth Assemblies Project, created in 2003. Involving Kosovo Albanians, Serbs, Roma, Ashkali and Turkish young people, the project aims at improving their interaction with local and central government institutions.

In August, the Mission organized the first of two four-day retreats with participants of these Assemblies to widen the network of young people involved in the initiative. More than 240 members of ten Youth Assemblies from throughout Kosovo travelled to neighbouring Montenegro, where they discussed election processes, tolerance and the role of central government institutions. A highlight was the simulation of a session of the Kosovo Assembly, during which the young participants presented and voted on draft legislation.

"It is imperative that young people in Kosovo come to understand both their own role and importance in political developments and the day-to-day implications of governance," commented Matthew Minns, the Mission's Project Manager in charge of the programme.

In an effort to promote their roles as essential anti-discrimination mechanisms, the Mission continued work with the Communities and Mediation Committees. These are mandatory municipal committees, which serve as an anti-discrimination mechanism to ensure that the rights and interests of all communities are protected while encouraging active engagement by minority community members. Financial and in-kind support, such as capacity-building sessions, was given to the Municipal Assembly outreach project, which aims at encouraging the electorate to establish a better contact with those elected. The Mission also carried out the 'Your Municipality, Your Future' programme, a series of workshops with secondary school students, designed to increase their involvement with municipal structures.

Promoting the link between local institutions and the public

The Mission's continuing commitment to good governance at the local level helps ensure that legislative bodies are responsive to the needs of their constituencies. As part of these efforts, the Mission's office in Strpce/Shterpce organized a field trip for municipal representatives from Feri aj/Urosevac in June. Municipal assembly members, UNMIK officials and local media representatives visited the local villages of Dubrave/Dubrava and Babljak/Bablak to gain a first-hand impression on the living standards there and to give citizens an opportunity to express their concerns directly to their local leadership. For many assembly members, this was the first time they had truly seen the poor living conditions of people within their responsibility, and they immediately began discussions on actions to take to improve the conditions in visited areas.

Promoting civil society participation.

To support the growing engagement of civil society in public activities, the Mission continued its work with grassroots initiatives that promote citizens' rights and democratic values within communities and municipal structures.

With support from the Mission and the European Agency for Reconstruction, a Youth Reconciliation Initiative was established and entered into a partnership with a network in Peje/Pec to increase political awareness among young people. Through initiatives such as the production of a multilingual newsletter, the project helped young people to get active in policy decision-making processes at the municipal level.

Activities in this field included the Civic Dialogue project created in 2002, which connects NGOs and other groups from Kosovo and Serbia proper through non-political activities and reconciliation projects on issues such as gender equality and co-operation with NGOs working on and with media outlets. The Mission's network of NGO Resource and Com-

munity Centres provided assistance to local civil society groups in the design and implementation of grassroots projects that support best practices in civil society participation throughout Kosovo. As part of the Mission's policy to increase local ownership of responsibilities, the Centres have successively been handed over to local civil society groups.

Supporting minority communities. An issue of particular concern to the Mission are the challenges Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children face in the field of education. In co-operation with the PISG Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Mission sponsored a project that prepared for the inclusion of Romani language classes in the school curricula, catch-up classes to help integrate these children into the school system, and the training of potential teachers in the Romani language. The Mission's education programme also included awareness-raising campaigns among parents to emphasize the importance of pre-school and school education and of vocational training.

The Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which entered into force on 1 February 1998, is the first legally binding multilateral instrument devoted to the protection of minorities in general. The Framework Convention can serve as a model and legal benchmark for the legislation and practice of Council of Europe member states and of states willing to become members, with regard to their treatment of minorities.

The Mission continued to be a leading force in the promotion of minority language rights, through its involvement in the UN-led Task Force on Language Compliance. In September, the Mission hosted a '*Pax Linguistica*' conference on language diversity in Kosovo, which aimed at offering constructive support to the PISG institutions on improving the implementation of official language policy. The event was attended among others by international experts and representatives of Kosovo's communities and NGOs.

In addition, capacity-building seminars were organized to help minority NGOs draft a 'shadow report' on how civil society representatives themselves see human rights standards implemented by governmental authorities, as suggested by the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Advising the Office of the Prime Minister

A key activity under the Mission's good governance programme is its support for the Advisory Office on Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunity and Gender and the Advisory Office on Communities set up in the Office of the Prime Minister. Representing an important entry point for the Mission's institution-building work within the central institutions, the Offices assist the Prime Minister in carrying out the transfer of powers from UNMIK on human rights as well as on ethnic minorities issues. Support was also provided on a wide range of other topics to the Prime Minister's Office, such as on the implementation of laws; government strategy and policy; citizen participation; standards implementation; anti-discrimination in employment and services; gender issues; the fight against human trafficking; and the protection of cultural heritage.

Sustainable refugee return and reconciliation.

Refugees returning to Kosovo continue to face a number of serious obstacles. The Mission concentrated its efforts on initiatives that help returnees to remain in Kosovo, establish themselves and build working relationships with their neighbours. This work included improving the conditions for returnees, ranging from equal access to basic services and employment to property questions. Government institutions were encouraged to provide the necessary services and protection, free from discrimination.

The Ethnic Communities Sustainability Fund (ECSF), established in January by the Mission and funded through voluntary contributions by OSCE participating States, supported the reconciliation and integration processes of smaller communities through small but effective inter-ethnic and tolerance-building projects such as peace-

building and social education activities in Gjilan/Gnjilane and a bus line offering services to Kosovo Bosniacs and Kosovo Serb returnees in Prizren. Efforts focused on the local level and brought together communities to address common concerns through alternative means. In the Štrpce/Shtërpçë municipality, ECSF support was used to organize dance and aerobic fitness activities that bring Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbian children together in a mutually beneficial and fun atmosphere.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The protection and promotion of human rights remained a top priority for the Mission. To fulfil this aim, it conducted capacity-building training for local institutions and active monitoring to help overcome inadequate remedies for violations. Issues were brought to the attention of the relevant authorities, with the Mission recommending sustainable remedial measures and public reporting on the status of the respect for human rights. The Mission continued to promote and instil a human rights culture among thousands of students, educators, the PISG and NGO officials.

Human rights capacity-building for Kosovo's institutions. In parallel with the transfer of powers from UNMIK to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which entails their subsequent taking over of responsibility for human rights protection, the Mission developed a new strategy that provides for the inclusion of its human rights expertise as an integral part of the local government structures.

A central part of the strategy is the deployment of human rights experts to work in municipalities throughout Kosovo. By the end of 2004, such experts had been deployed to 17 municipalities in Kosovo. In addition, an expert was also assigned to the Office of the Prime Minister to help develop institutional mechanisms for ensuring gender equality and human rights protection. The Mission gave technical expertise and support to the Advisory Office on Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunity and Gender to help implementation and awareness-raising of Kosovo's Anti-Discrimination Law.



The Mission helped establish human rights clubs for secondary school students in 14 Kosovo municipalities.



'Global Motion' on stage

Increasing tolerance through the arts: 'Global Motion'

An alternative reconciliation activity is the 'Global Motion' project, an initiative funded by the Italian Government through the OSCE Mission to empower Kosovo's youth to address critical social issues that affect their communities through the arts. Young people from different backgrounds learn to work together, creating and performing artistic material, gaining skills such as creative and critical thinking, self-expression and tolerance.

The Mission's capacity-building programme also used workshops and training seminars to train public officials on human rights and help them incorporate a human rights-compliant methodology in their daily work. The Mission also helped set up human rights clubs in 14 municipalities aimed at conveying human rights attitudes to secondary school students. The clubs enabled them to develop a critical understanding of human rights through informed debate, which they then shared with classmates and in their communities.

Monitoring and reporting on human rights concerns. The Mission continued to monitor the human rights situation in Kosovo. Special attention was given to the protection of human rights with regard to law enforcement and judicial systems, non-discrimination issues, property questions, protection from and prevention of human trafficking, and domestic violence.

Reporting focused on the judicial system, paying special attention to municipal courts. Recognizing the improvements to the criminal justice system since 1999, which enabled the Mission to hand over responsibility to local monitors, efforts were extended to cover the civil and

administrative courts. Responsibility to monitor these courts remained exclusively with international human rights monitors.

The Mission also published an update to a catalogue of legal remedies under Kosovo legislation, giving Mission and government officials the tools to improve the monitoring of their implementation and effectiveness.

Following the March riots, the Mission compiled a comprehensive report on human rights challenges, outlining the key human rights problems stemming from these violent events. This included the access of minorities to Kosovo's justice system, the monitoring of the legal system, property rights, the effect of parallel institutions, and the responses by the authorities.

Combating trafficking in human beings.

The Mission's technical and financial support was instrumental in drafting the first Kosovo Action Plan on Anti-Trafficking, which is hoped to be launched in spring 2005. The Mission's human rights officers served as regional counter-trafficking focal points, monitoring Kosovo's Centres for Social Work and Trafficking and Prostitution Investigation Units, and screening presumed victims.

The Mission continued to support shelters for victims in need of short-term safe housing. Through its field offices, it ran awareness-raising programmes on trafficking-related issues through roundtable discussions, conferences and seminars, newspaper articles, newsletters, and radio interviews.

RULE OF LAW

Supporting Kosovo's legal community.

In this field, the Mission continued its capacity-building programme for present and future members of Kosovo's legal community and worked with existing institutions to enable the legal experts to eventually take on such projects themselves. Activities fell into the following three categories:

- supporting the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates;
- supporting legal aid NGOs to offer free legal aid services in civil and administrative matters; and
- fostering the development of the Judicial/Bar Exam.

To buttress their sustainability, the Mission also continued building the capacities of the institutions that it has founded, the Kosovo Judicial Institute and the Kosovo Law Centre.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening media development.

Fostering the development of Kosovo's media remained an important priority for the Mission. Activities concentrated on advancing formal journalism education, improving the educational component in media programmes, and promoting broadcasting for minorities.

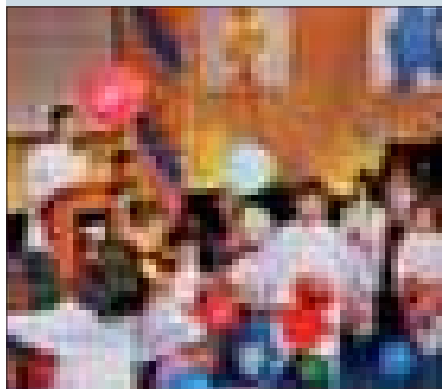
Laying the groundwork for a more professional media, the Mission developed training programmes for media managers focusing on marketing and quality programming. With a view to institutionalizing journalism training in Kosovo, the Mission led efforts to establish a professional media institute. As a first step, a feasibility study was undertaken to help determine how a mid-career training programme would best serve journalists. The final terms of the media institute are expected to come to fruition during 2005.

Sesame Street on Kosovo TV – teaching tolerance and understanding to children

Bert, Ernie and Big Bird have made it onto Kosovo's TV screens. Since December, one of the world's most successful TV programmes for children, Sesame Street, can be watched by Kosovo's children in their own languages. Brought to Kosovo by the OSCE Mission, UNICEF and Kosovo's public broadcaster, Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK), the series helps pre-school children develop critical skills in literacy, numeracy and understanding of their own culture and those of their neighbours.

The live film segments were produced locally and are based on an educational curriculum developed with both ethnic

OSCE Mission in Kosovo



Albanian and Serbian content advisers. They celebrate diversity, showing children's daily lives, family relationships and cultural elements such as festivals, language, dance and music.

Broadcast in Albanian as *Rruga Sesam* and in Serbian as *Ulica Sesam*, the programme is shown on RTK and three Serbian language televisions. A total of 52 episodes in each language are planned.

Other media support projects included:

- RTV Herc, a multi-ethnic and bilingual broadcasting initiative in the town of Štrpce/Shtërpçë. The initiative received financial help and training to create a team of Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian staff that produces a quality information programme for both communities.
- The Kosovo Media Network (KOSMA) connecting 27 Kosovo Serb radio stations. It received equipment and training

to be able to produce and communicate news in their own language.

- A 'police and media' programme to improve communication between police officers and journalists was devised. The sessions included the set up of realistic crisis scenarios, riot control activities, and protection of crime scenes.

POLICE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Providing basic training for police officers.

The goal of the Kosovo Police Service School to help create a new police force in Kosovo took another step towards completion in 2004. Over the year, the School trained a further 665 new Kosovo Police Service (KPS) officers, bringing the total number of basic recruits who have successfully completed the training to 6,925. Of these, 16 per cent are women and 17 per cent represent minority communities. It is planned to meet the final target number of 7,300 basic recruits in 2005.

KPS officers were trained in the practices and principles of democratic policing and human rights, including modern techniques to deal with domestic violence, awareness in human trafficking and community policing. Many of the instructors are local KPS officers who themselves went through the training course. To create a sustainable police service, the officers were instructed on supervision and management techniques. Advanced and specialized police training classes included investigation techniques for homicides and organized crime. The School addressed these issues through an increased number of specialist courses, which focused on criminal investigation, the tasks of border and boundary police, forensics and drug surveillance.

The Kosovo Police Service School began its work in 1999. It represents both a unique success story for Kosovo and a shining example of best practices used for police education and development in post-conflict areas. Since 2004, KPS officers patrolling Kosovo outnumber their UN Civilian Police counterparts and by all accounts are performing their new duties in an exemplary manner.



More than 660 new Kosovo police officers graduated from the OSCE-established Kosovo Police Service School.

Promoting gender equality

The Mission continued to support programmes and projects that promote equality between women and men and the protection of the rights of women as essential components of a sustainable democracy. This included work in the areas of victims assistance, capacity-building and awareness-raising as well as legislative and policy development.

In domestic violence issues, the Mission continued to press for a multi-sector response to gender-based violence, encourage regional networks and strengthen the Kosovo-wide referral mechanisms. A new domestic violence policy was issued in January 2004, while anti-trafficking procedures were extended to foreign victims. The Mission also conducted two awareness campaigns in support of gender issues. The first one targeted high school students and focused on dating and domestic violence. The other, entitled 'Violence Can Be Stopped, Accept Protection', addressed the general public and offered the services of a helpline to victims.

In addition, the Mission made efforts to raise awareness and build capacities on gender issues at the Kosovo Police Service. A total of 170 KPS officers participated in a specialised course on domestic violence investigation, designed for officers who investigate gender crimes and domestic violence. The Mission also worked with KPS officers on the proper handling of domestic violence cases and created notebooks containing relevant legislation and policy as well as contact information for direct assistance.



A helpline poster for victims of domestic violence

Reaching out to Kosovo's communities.

The Police School's outreach work include activities aimed at strengthening the relationship between the police and youth and increasing safety in the community. In July, the School organized a three-day youth camp for future leaders, which provided young Kosovans of all communities with an opportunity to develop mutual trust and respect. Some 150 secondary school students took part in the activity, worked together to learn more about community policing, non-violent problem-solving methods and civic responsibility. The initiative formed part of the School's efforts to improve the relationship of Kosovo's young citizens with the police forces, particularly following the participation of many young people in the March violence. The students also learned about establishing and running a democratically elected student council in their schools.

In addition, the School helped set up Community Safety Action Teams, which strive to widen traditional policing focusing on crime to encourage community empowerment and ownership in safety. Its objectives are to assist the relationships between police, local governance and the community, while helping reduce crime and improving life and safety in the community through co-operative projects and strategies.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador Pascal Fieschi
Revised Budget: €42,607,700
www.osce.org/kosovo

OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro

The activities of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro in 2004 were marked by a number of successes in areas that represented important challenges for the country and its two constituent republics. Throughout the year, the staff of the Mission's headquarters in Belgrade, Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Office in Podgorica, Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro), and its presence in southern Serbia as well as the law enforcement training centres in both republics continued to support overall democratic reforms.

The Mission focused in particular on the consolidation of progress in maintaining stability and fostering inter-ethnic integration in southern Serbia, a region with diverse ethnic Albanian and Serb communities. Despite the unrest in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro, in March, the region remained calm.

Politico-Military Dimension Activities

Conflict prevention in southern Serbia.

The ethnic Serbian and Albanian communities in southern Serbia were at the centre of the Mission's conflict prevention activities. Efforts were aimed at giving the ethnic Albanian community a stake in the work of their local authorities, breaking down feelings of mistrust between the various ethnic communities, and creating local judicial and security structures that work for everyone in the municipalities.

The Mission continued assisting the authorities in implementing the 2001 'Covic' peace agreement aimed at re-integrating the ethnic Albanian community. To prevent tension, a range of structures, such as the government-appointed Southern Serbia Co-ordination Body, were set up to enable community and political leaders, senior police officers and representatives of the local administration address any problems that might arise. In addition to these initiatives, the Mission promoted multi-ethnic policing in the region, which also helped reduce tensions between the communities and the security forces.

To better inform the public about these issues, the Mission provided training and technical assistance to local broadcasters that developed multilingual programmes. Students from minority communities were offered specialized training courses that allowed them to work for the local authorities, the judiciary and municipal assemblies. One highly effective project, which

focused on providing tutoring for legal students preparing for the bar exam, was attended by a total of 76 ethnic Albanian and Serbian students.

Reforming the police forces. One of the most significant tasks of the Mission is the reform of Serbia and Montenegro's police forces through its Police Development Programme. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in November buttressed the already existing close working relationship between the Mission and the Serbian Interior Ministry.

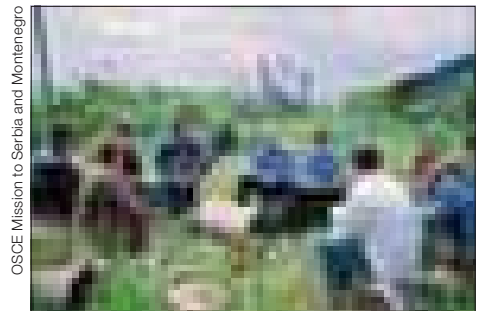
The Development Programme introduced modern curricula and targeted different levels of serving officers. Using the 'train-the-trainers' concept, it included courses in trainer development, community policing and management techniques. A total of 396 Serbian and Montenegrin officers were trained in 2004.

To strengthen internal oversight of the police and avoid corruption within the ranks, the Mission organized specialist training seminars and study visits for Serbia's Inspector General's Office and provided it with modern IT and technical equipment.

The promotion of community-policing was also a major focus for the Mission. In Montenegro, the Mission carried out a number of surveys among the police and the general public on the concept, initiated pilot projects in all of the Republic's seven security centres and developed an overall community policing strategy for Montenegro.

In Montenegro, the Mission played a key role in encouraging the major opposition parties to return to Parliament after a lengthy boycott so that urgent political and economic reforms could be discussed in the proper forum.

Much of the day-to-day effort of the Mission was centred on supporting the ongoing reforms in Serbia and Montenegro, including the advancement of human and minority rights, the fight against corruption and organized crime, and the reform of the media. Other activities included strengthening the capacity of Serbia's legal staff to conduct domestic war crimes trials in accordance with international standards.



OSCE police trainers and Serbian police officers meet community representatives during a Citizen Advisory Group meeting.

In Serbia, the concept was introduced as a pilot project at ten security centres. It is planned that the experiences gained during these pilot periods would serve as a basis for a Serbia-wide strategy on community policing, due to be introduced in 2005. Evaluations of the progress incurred by the community policing concept are periodically made by experts to determine the reaction of the local population.

Similar to efforts by neighbouring countries, Serbia and Montenegro is preparing itself to transfer control of its borders from the Defence Ministry to the Interior Ministry. To build up the capacity of the border police forces, the Mission organized specialist training seminars on issues such as the combat against trafficking and smuggling, and helped with the development of a migration management strategy.

In support of the Ohrid Process, the Serbian Interior Ministry co-hosted in July an international conference on joint training

measures, bringing together representatives from all the former Yugoslav states and their neighbours. The Montenegrin Internal Ministry held a follow-up seminar in September, which emphasized control of the so-called 'blue (maritime) borders'

The Ohrid Process

In May 2003, the OSCE, the EU, NATO, and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe initiated the so-called Ohrid Process, named after the town in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia where the plan was adopted. The Ohrid Process is a joint effort by the countries of south-eastern Europe and their international partners to address the very sensitive issues of border security and management, building on a common platform proposed by the four international organizations involved.

Continuing the fight against corruption.

According to the Corruption Perception Index 2004 published by *Transparency International* – a leading global NGO devoted to combating corruption – Serbia and Montenegro occupied rank 97 of 145 countries surveyed. To help improve this situation, the Mission continued to assist the Serbian Government's Anti-Corruption Council with legal advice and expertise. It organized several international conferences to encourage regional co-operation and an

exchange of experiences. These brought together government officials and NGOs as well as representatives of the ILO, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the UNDP.

Combating organized crime. The fight against organized crime remained a top priority for the Mission in 2004. The Mission continued to follow a number of high-profile trials in Serbia and Montenegro, including those of the suspected assassins of the late Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić, former President Ivan Stambolić, and Duško Jovanović, Editor-in-Chief of the Podgorica daily newspaper, *Dan*.

One example of effective international co-operation in the combat of organized crime was the relationship established between the Serbian Interior Ministry and the Italian anti-Mafia Directorate, following an OSCE-brokered visit to Belgrade by its Prosecutor in July. Future bilateral assistance co-ordinated by the Mission in this context is expected to include the setting up of an effective database and the holding of training seminars conducted in Italy for organized crime investigators.

The Mission provided expert assistance with the drafting and implementing of witness protection laws in Serbia and Montenegro, urgently needed for the effective prosecution of organized crime cases and local war crimes trials. In Montenegro, such a law is already in force and could become an important instrument in bringing the criminals responsible to justice. In addition, 210 police officers from Serbia and Montenegro received training in modern forensic techniques.

War crimes. The requirement for Serbia and Montenegro to fulfil its international obligations regarding the ICTY was a recurrent theme of the Mission's information strategy in the country. Without full co-operation with the ICTY, the state union cannot advance on its path towards integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

As part of its assessment of the Serbian judiciary's capacity to conduct local war crimes trials according to international standards, the Mission monitored a number of such trials in Serbia. In the

context of an OSCE-facilitated process to enhance inter-state co-operation in war crimes proceedings, the Mission hosted an expert-level meeting of judges and prosecutors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro in November, which produced a number of recommendations on witness issues.

"It is not an act of weakness to deal with war crimes and the horrors of the past. On the contrary, it is an act of courage and a demonstration of inner strength. It is the best way for Serbia and Montenegro to enter the family of European democracies with full self-confidence. War crimes are therefore not only about the past, but also about the future."

**Ambassador Maurizio Massari,
Head of Mission**

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Improving the business climate. The Mission's activities in this area focused on fostering economic and business development by promoting a stronger partnership between local authorities, the business community and various local representatives of the international community. Under the Youth Entrepreneurship Seminar (YES) programme, more than 180 young entrepreneurs from throughout the country participated in a series of workshops that conveyed to them the fundamental principles of starting a small business.

To create a permanent place where young entrepreneurs can turn for advice, the Mis-

OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro



The Mission published a manual on fighting corruption in February.

OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro



A participant at the YES/Human Trafficking Awareness-Raising Programme in Niš

sion assisted the establishment of business incubator centres in Kikinda, Knjaževac, and Smederevska Palanka. These centres, which are located in municipalities with a similar economic and social structure and a comparably high rate of unemployment, provide workspace, coaching, and support services to young entrepreneurs and early-stage businesses. They are considered a strong tool to support sustainable economic and human resources development, contributing to security and stability in the region.

Bringing development to Niš. In May, the Mission and the Serbian town of Niš signed a document outlining a strategic partnership for sustainable development. The Mission committed itself to providing the expertise to prepare a framework strategy for the town's economic and environmental development, concentrating on local industries such as tourism and food production. These areas were considered central for the creation of employment in the area. The strategy, the first of its kind in Serbia, also allows Niš to participate in regional and Europe-wide initiatives and programmes, since it takes into account the common economic, environmental and cultural interest of neighbouring countries.

Human Dimension Activities

Assisting the return of refugees. Together with the UNCHR and the respective delegations of the European Commission, the three OSCE Missions in the region proposed in September a 'road map for returns' to the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro. Highlighting the remaining obligations of the States in facilitating the return of refugees, the initiative offered their governments assistance to translate the broad political commitment into concrete progress on the ground. This assistance, which has been offered since 2002, consists of legal advice to both governments and NGOs on international legal standards for the protection of refugees and returnees.

Independence of the judiciary. Advocating an independent judiciary system that lives up to international standards, the Mission supported the drafting of legislation that guarantees the independence of

judges and prosecutors. In this context, it welcomed the changes made to three laws in Serbia in 2004, namely the Laws on Judges, on Prosecutors, and on the High Judicial Council. While these changes marked a positive development, structural reform for an improved legal framework remains essential. Bringing the Laws on Judges and on the Public Prosecutors' Office into conformity with international law remains a priority.

The Mission also supported the Judges Association, the Public Prosecutors Association, and the Judicial Training Centre. This included the training of judges in issues relating to war crimes trials and exchange programmes with other European associations.

Assisting prison reform. Prison conditions in Serbian jails remain dire due to overcrowding and the low quality of medical facilities for prisoners, among other reasons. To garner international donor support for improving prison conditions, the Mission and the Ministry of Justice held a donors' conference inside Belgrade's Central Prison to show to potential donors the need for major infrastructure investments. International donor organizations also attended the event to evaluate the Government's reform plans. The Serbian Government is seeking funding for the construction of three new high-security prisons.

Building on the success of a series of prison warden training seminars held by the Mission since 2001, the Ministry of Justice opened Serbia's first prison staff training academy in September. The Mission is planning to assist the academy, which is located in Niš, in developing a curriculum for the training of new and existing prison staff, reflecting Serbia's commitment to international conventions on the treatment of prisoners.

Supporting parliamentary and local self-government. The Mission continued organizing training seminars for local municipal staff on the provisions of the Serbian Law on Local Self-Government adopted in 2002. The programme also included training on effective management strategies and negotiation skills as well as on the promotion of gender equality at all levels of government. With assistance by the Mission, especially on lobbying parliamentarians and giving legal advice, the

Assembly of Vojvodina adopted a decision on gender equality, which represents the first formal effort in this direction in Serbia.

"If I were the Prime Minister of Serbia..."

In an effort to foster political awareness among young people, the Mission organized an essay competition for high school students in May. The jury, which comprised prominent journalists and human rights defenders of Serbia and Montenegro, gave the awards to the three students whose essay, under the title "If I were the Prime Minister of Serbia...", represented best their original thoughts and ideas on political leadership and democracy. More than 1,000 students from 100 high schools in Serbia participated in the competition. The awards included publication of their essay in the national daily newspaper, *Danas*, a study visit to the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, and a generous contribution to the schools' libraries.

Protecting the rights of national minorities. Most of the Mission's assistance in the field of minority rights protection focused on training programmes for members of the National Minority Councils, which took place between 2001 and 2004 under the State Union Law on National Minorities and Ethnic Communities. Almost 50 members of 11 election councils were trained in public advocacy, consultation processes, team management and leadership skills.

A specific target group among Serbia and Montenegro's minority groups is the Roma community, which faces particularly grave socio-economic problems, including high levels of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty. The Mission supported the elaboration of a National Strategy for the Integration of Roma, which was adopted by the Roma National Council in April but remains to be adopted by the Government. The assistance included a comprehensive training programme for members of working groups on the issue, aimed at transforming strategy plans into concrete action plans and project proposals. The working group members were either representatives delegated by the respective Ministries or the Roma National Council, or independent experts belonging to the Roma minority.

The Mission also organized technical and editorial training for Roma media outlets and helped them produce Roma language programmes for multilingual broadcasters.

The fight against human trafficking.

With only one in ten victims of trafficking identified as such by the authorities in Serbia and Montenegro, the development of a comprehensive National Referral Mechanism was crucial to moving ahead with the fight against trafficking in human beings. To support the identification, protection and referral of victims to the appropriate institutions, the Mission helped develop such a mechanism in both republics.

Since organized crime is a regional phenomenon that does not recognize any borders, the Mission supported the exchange of technical expertise and sharing of best practices on anti-trafficking measures and shelter management. In addition, it provided specialized training on the problem to judges and prosecutors as well as to police officers, social workers, government staff, and NGO representatives. The Mission also monitored more than a dozen human trafficking court cases.

Promoting gender equality. The Mission continued to play an active role in supporting the creation of institutions that help develop gender equality at all levels of government in Serbia and Montenegro. Following the establishment of gender focal points in 30 municipalities by the Mission, 12 additional municipalities across Serbia joined the project at their own initiative. These new municipalities received basic gender equality training in 2004 and are scheduled to be included in the Mission's capacity-building programme in 2005.

The Mission also continued to implement the 'Women Can Do It III' seminars in 17 municipalities of Serbia, which form part of the OSCE's project on Municipal Gender and Equal Opportunity Focal Points (GEOFP). The project is aimed at prominent women from local self-government, local political parties, and municipal institutions as well as businesswomen. Its goal is to empower and train these women, facilitating gender mainstreaming in local decision-making bodies and promoting women's participation at political decision-making levels.

OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro



Gender workshop

In advance of the local elections, the Mission conducted five gender-awareness training sessions for women candidates for local assemblies. The sessions took place in co-operation with the GEOFP and significantly contributed to the focal points' political visibility and recognition as well as their continuous work in the post-election period.

Supporting media development. The Mission's activities in this field concentrated on strengthening the regulatory bodies of the electronic media in both republics. This included particular efforts to resolve the dispute over the members of the Serbian Broadcasting Council, which has been an issue since 2003. The Serbian Parliament approved an amendment of the Broadcasting Law allowing for the re-nomination of the entire Council. Once the Broadcasting Council is appointed, the next steps in the process of transforming the state broadcaster, Radio TV Serbia (RTS), can be implemented.

The Broadcasting Law stipulates that municipal broadcasters need to prepare for their privatization, which is due to take place in the coming years. To assist them with this process, the Mission organized training on technical, editorial and managerial skills for broadcasters from various language communities. The goal of this initiative is to help them improve the quality of their broadcasts and develop a variety of business plans so they can become economically self-sustainable.

The Mission also assisted Montenegro's state broadcaster in the process of transforming itself into a largely self-sustainable

public broadcaster. Individual media outlets received training on journalism and media management, with some courses focusing on specific topics such as reporting on Parliament, financial topics and minority issues.

In the legal sphere, the Mission provided expertise to the drafting of a Freedom of Information Law, which aims at making the Serbian Government and official institutions more transparent to the public. The Law was adopted by the Serbian Parliament in November. It gives individual citizens the right to request information on the functioning of the State and provides the media with another important source of information.

Reaching out to local communities

Throughout the year, the Mission continued its successful 'outreach programme', which consists of regular visits by the Head of Mission and OSCE staff to different communities in Serbia and Montenegro. The visits serve as opportunities to meet local government officials and representatives of the media, civil society, religious groups and police. They also help the Mission staff to familiarise themselves with the situation on the ground and outline the projects under implementation.

In 2004, such visits took place to Kikinda, Zrenjanin (Vojvodina), Kruševac, Aleksandrovac, Čačak, Novi Pazar (Central Serbia), Bijelo Polje, and Herceg Novi (Montenegro). As part of this programme, the Mission donated books worth approximately €1,000 to 15 high schools throughout the country. The books cover a number of subjects depending on the individual needs of the respective high schools and were given to the school libraries for use by the pupils. "We hope that this will encourage reading among the young and improve their chances for better grades," Ambassador Massari said.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador Maurizio Massari
Revised Budget: €9,834,300
www.osce.org/sam

OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

Despite significant progress in the longer-term policy objectives of the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the Government's activities in 2004 – strongly supported by the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and other international partners – were coloured primarily by two unforeseen events which gripped the nation: the tragic death of President Boris Trajkovski on 26 February and the 7 November referendum on territorial organization called for by the opposition following the adoption by Parliament of a law redrawing the country's administrative boundaries. The mature response from both the Government and the opposition, however, ensured that delays in larger policy objectives did not threaten to throw the country off course. The country not only submitted its formal application for EU membership, but also

broke the impasse in passing vital legislation on decentralization. These unexpected events also tested the Mission's resources and flexibility, starting from increased security monitoring and confidence-building activities to supporting the ODIHR with its election monitoring work. The Mission was able to provide this support without losing its focus on core activities. In part, this was possible due to intensified co-ordination within the international community and with the country's authorities in key areas of activity regarding the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The focus was particularly on judicial reform, equitable representation of the country's communities, decentralization and education.

Politico-Military Dimension Activities

Continuing support to comprehensive police reform. Backing the Government's long-term Police Reform Strategy, the Mission continued to consolidate activities focused on community-based policing and training programmes at the Police Academy. Other priorities included support to the Border Police and joint work with the Interior Ministry on its community policing outreach programme through media skills training courses and public information campaigns.

At the top of the Mission's agenda in this area was specialist training. Support to the Police Academy in basic and advanced training continued, as did 'train-the-trainers' courses and support for curricu-

lum development. Coaching for police officers on drugs identification, human rights, and trafficking in human beings continued throughout the year. The trafficking course focused on multi-disciplinary training seminars, which included judges, police staff, prosecutors and NGO representatives.

Maintaining its focus on capacity-building, the Police Development Unit concentrated on further developing the Citizen Advisory Groups and strengthening their sustainability. These Groups were created over the last two years by the Interior Ministry to give a broad range of citizens and local police officers an opportunity to exchange information and discuss issues of mutual concern. The Mission organized a training class for more than 300 members of these Groups on issues such as local self-governance, partnership-building, problem-solving

and project proposal writing. It is hoped that this will help them play a major role in ensuring the delivery of quality police services at the municipal level.

Expanding police training to a new generation of border guards

In December 2003, the Government adopted the Integrated Border Management Strategy, which moved responsibility for the control of the country's 850 km of border from the Defence Ministry to the Interior Ministry. Until the end of 2005, when the handover of border security to the Interior Ministry is planned to be completed, the OSCE Mission will include some 1,000 new police cadets in its border police programme at the Police Academy in Idri ovo.

At a ceremony marking the first border control transfer in May, OSCE Mission Head Ambassador Carlos Pais welcomed the move. "It is always a good sign when it is not necessary for the army to be involved in securing the border and when this task can be transferred to the police," he said.

By September, the Ministry had taken control of the borders with Greece and Bulgaria. At the same time, more than 550 police cadets underwent training at the OSCE-supported Police Academy. The Mission's Police Development Unit also trained border police management staff to enhance the managerial skills of senior officers and further improve the staff's effectiveness and efficiency.



Children watch as the Rapid Deployment Police Force demonstrates an action preparation drill at a police open day at Veles in May.

Recognizing the need to bring the police closer to the citizens, the Mission, together with the Interior Ministry and the Netherlands Embassy, organized five community police open days throughout the country. Thousands of children attended the events, familiarized themselves with the role and duties of the police and took part in various educational activities, with topics ranging from road traffic safety to the dangers of drugs.

Close-up on policing at prime time

For six months, media specialists from the Mission and a small TV crew travelled around the country in search of stories showing police officers in action. Whether it was intervening against illegal fishing on Ohrid Lake, pickpockets working the markets, seatbelt safety and winter driving, all gathered material was turned into several two-minute spots, which became part of the Interior Ministry's national public information campaign *Odblisku* ('Take a closer look') to highlight the importance of community policing and the benefits it yields for the local communities. Many of the spots, more than 50 of which were produced in 2004, were broadcast on primetime in both Macedonian and Albanian languages on 24 local and national TV stations throughout the country. They presented, among others, the role of sniffer dogs, the fight against juvenile drug abuse, environmental protection and basic self-defence.

Strengthening confidence-building

measures. The Mission's Confidence-Building Unit (CBU) continued its conflict prevention and early warning efforts and implemented a number of projects to promote reconciliation between the country's communities and the building of a multi-ethnic society.

A particular focus was put on education issues, which were recognized as a potential source of inter-ethnic tension and intolerance. The CBU reacted to specific sources of tension by implementing conflict resolution initiatives and general confidence-building support projects aimed at encouraging long-term integration and reconciliation. This included multi-ethnic professional development courses for school staff, starting with a pilot project

to teach Albanian to ethnic Macedonian school teachers. The Mission also supported the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in advising the recently legalized Tetovo University before its opening in fall 2004. An expert was sent to participate in the commission that legally established the Tetovo University as the third State university.

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Garnering support for the decentralization process. Continuing its activities in support of the decentralization process, as stipulated by the Framework Agreement, the Mission's Public Administration Reform Unit – a successor to the earlier Public Administration Support Unit – strove towards demystifying this development for the general public. In co-operation with other national and international partners, the Unit carried out a multi-faceted programme that included training courses for local leaders and citizens as well as assistance to the Government in running a public education campaign highlighting the benefits of a decentralized system.

The Unit also commissioned studies on inter- and intra-municipal co-operation in the context of the planned transfer of competencies from central to local government, which represent an important step in the decentralizing process. The study on inter-municipal co-operation explored the extent to which such collaboration could be a viable option for more efficient and effective public services at the municipal level. The study on intra-municipal co-operation was undertaken in the context of the Ministry of Local Self Government's interest in strengthening 'neighbourhood self-governments' or village councils. The studies laid the foundation for future engagement by the Mission in this area.

The Mission also provided technical and material support to the Municipal Gender Equality Commissions, under a project launched at the end of the year. The Mission's Public Administration Reform Unit, in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Unit for the Promotion of Gender Equality and the Union of Women's

Organizations of Macedonia (UWOM), aims to enhance the capacities, mandates and profiles of Gender Equality Commissions so that they can be transformed into effective and sustainable bodies of local government on the municipal level. The project coincided with governance reform initiated in 2004 within the framework of the Law on Local Self-Governance. It also reflected progress in the area of the OSCE's gender empowerment initiatives, moving on from national level initiatives to municipal capacity development.

Providing hands-on advice for local councillors. To give newly elected local officials, such as councillors, the tools to better understand their roles and the responsibilities their function carries, the Mission funded the publication of a guide containing practical and hands-on information and advice. The first of its kind in the country, this handbook was planned to be distributed to some 1,500 newly elected municipal officials following local elections, scheduled for March 2005.

Human Dimension Activities

Rule of law monitoring and long-term programme development. Given that the security situation in the country remained stable throughout the year, the Mission continued its move away from general rule of law monitoring, concentrating increasingly on longer-term programmes with a focus on institution- and capacity-building, the fight against human trafficking and judicial reform. However, the Mission's Rule of Law Unit continued to monitor individual allegations of abuse by law enforcement officials, war crimes cases, and other high-profile arrests and trials. Although there were a few new high-profile cases in 2004, their overall number significantly decreased in 2004 relative to preceding years.

Through close co-operation with the Ombudsman's institution and the Interior Ministry's Sector for Internal and Professional Controls in supporting their reform efforts, the Mission saw an increase in public willingness to seek redress through the rule of law. As a result, some progress was noted in the effectiveness and engagement of these domestic human rights complaint mechanisms.

To increase the awareness of representatives of the judicial system of their obligations stemming from international anti-torture conventions, the Mission organized a high-profile training seminar in April, which was attended by some 50 judges, prosecutors and members of the Interior Ministry. The keynote speaker was UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Theo van Boven.

Continuing institution-building. An important component for the building of sustainable rule of law institutions and a requirement of the Framework Agreement is the establishment of six regional Ombudsman offices in the country. The Mission co-ordinated international support for this endeavour and, despite some delay for political reasons, the offices were opened in November. They are due to become fully operational in early 2005. However, at the end of 2004 six new deputies still needed to be appointed.

A coalition to bring about fairer trials

For one year, the OSCE-sponsored NGO coalition, *All for Fair Trials*, observed trials throughout the country not only to identify shortcomings but also develop constructive suggestions to improve the judicial system.

“This is a real network – a grassroots movement that can effect real change,” said Lukas Bojarski, a lawyer who also works as a trainer with the Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. “This coalition not only exercises the rights of civil society to monitor the fairness of court proceedings, but also provides feedback to help reform the judiciary.”

Following the publication of its final report, a working group of judges and law experts was established to ensure that the report’s recommendations were included in the judicial reform process.

To manage complaints of alleged police abuse, the Rule of Law Unit established the *Human Rights Support Project*, an NGO network that began handling most of the new individual cases. It was planned to expand the network in 2005 to cover the entire country, in an effort to ensure the

sustainability of the Mission’s institution-building efforts.

Reforming the judiciary. The Mission fostered public debate among professionals and experts on the National Strategy on the Reform of the Judiciary through public consultation conferences held by the NGO, *Association for Citizens’ Tolerance and Co-operation*. The Mission’s Rule of Law Unit chaired the Judicial Reform Information Group and supported a project of the Association, which surveyed the opinions of judges and legal staff in basic courts throughout the country on the problems and the need for judicial reforms. Survey results will be issued to guide the Mission’s activities in this area and will be shared with the relevant State bodies.

The Unit also completed a comprehensive analysis on the present situation of equitable representation of minorities in the judiciary. Its report outlines detailed recommendations on measures that authorities can implement to improve the participation of members of non-majority communities in the judicial system. The report serves as the basis for the Unit’s further engagement in promoting a more representative judiciary.

In addition to these projects, the Mission initiated a pilot project to provide free legal advice to marginalized communities in the former crisis areas in order to improve their understanding of and trust in the legal system. About 450 people have taken advantage of the legal aid offered by local lawyers.

Combating human trafficking. On the basis of the OSCE’s Action Plan and the Government’s National Plan of Action to combat human trafficking, local and international partners focused in 2004 on three areas of activity:

- establishing a witness protection framework;
- strengthening the capacity of NGOs to raise awareness and assist victims; and
- improving prosecutorial and investigative efforts in trafficking cases.

Together with the Judges Association’s Centre for Continuing Education, the Mission sponsored a series of specialized train-

ing seminars for legal professionals and law enforcement officials. A total of seven workshops, benefiting some 240 participants, focused on improving prosecution of trafficking cases and ensuring fair trials in cases involving human trafficking.

Moving the country closer towards fulfilling its international commitments, the Mission helped establish the first NGO-managed safe house in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, addressing the immediate needs of trafficked persons, particularly minors. The importance of assisting the country in its anti-trafficking efforts is also demonstrated by the Mission’s on-going sponsorship of an SOS helpline for citizens, which is managed by the local branch of the NGO, *La Strada*.



Promoting gender balance. In support of the OSCE Action Plan on Gender Issues and the Government’s National Action Plan for Gender Equality, the Mission supported the efforts of national partners such as UWOM and the Government’s unit for promotion of gender equality to improve the gender balance in the electoral process. One result of these efforts is an amendment to the Law on Local Elections passed in 2004, which stipulates that a 30 per cent quota of women is required in both the upper and lower halves of all candidate lists. These efforts, the ‘Woman Can Do It II’ initiative, are scheduled to continue in 2005 due to the postponement of the municipal elections.

Following the publication of the country report on the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by the authorities, the Mission funded the drafting and publishing of an NGO ‘shadow report’ to assess whether the treatment of women in the country is in compliance with the UN Convention.



With support from the Minister of Education, the OSCE *Point Magazine* – a multi-ethnic monthly publication for and by young people – opened its own well-equipped office in September. Published in both Albanian and Macedonian languages, *Point* has a regular team of students from all over the country and a monthly circulation of 13,000 copies. According to the magazine's manager, Violeta Josifovska, *Point* has come a long way from the early days of secondary school recruits. "The students now working at *Point* not only write articles and take photos, they also work closely with the editors on the contents and the layout," says Josifovska proudly. "Some of the kids even work on the marketing of the magazine, as we try to move away from relying on donors' purses towards self-sustainability."

Focus on media development: reforming the state broadcaster. The Mission continued to work on the transformation process within the state broadcaster, Macedonian Radio and Television (MRTV). The main activities consisted of on-the-job-training seminars at the MRTV training centre with the TV news teams, the staff of the radio station's six language departments and of the documentary and educational programme departments. In addition, the Mission held capacity-building seminars with the employees of the MRTV archives and the online service department.

Improving the legal environment for media. Working closely with the Council of Europe and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the Mission supported the drafting of a new law on broadcasting, which would ensure the independence of the Broadcast Council and allow for the

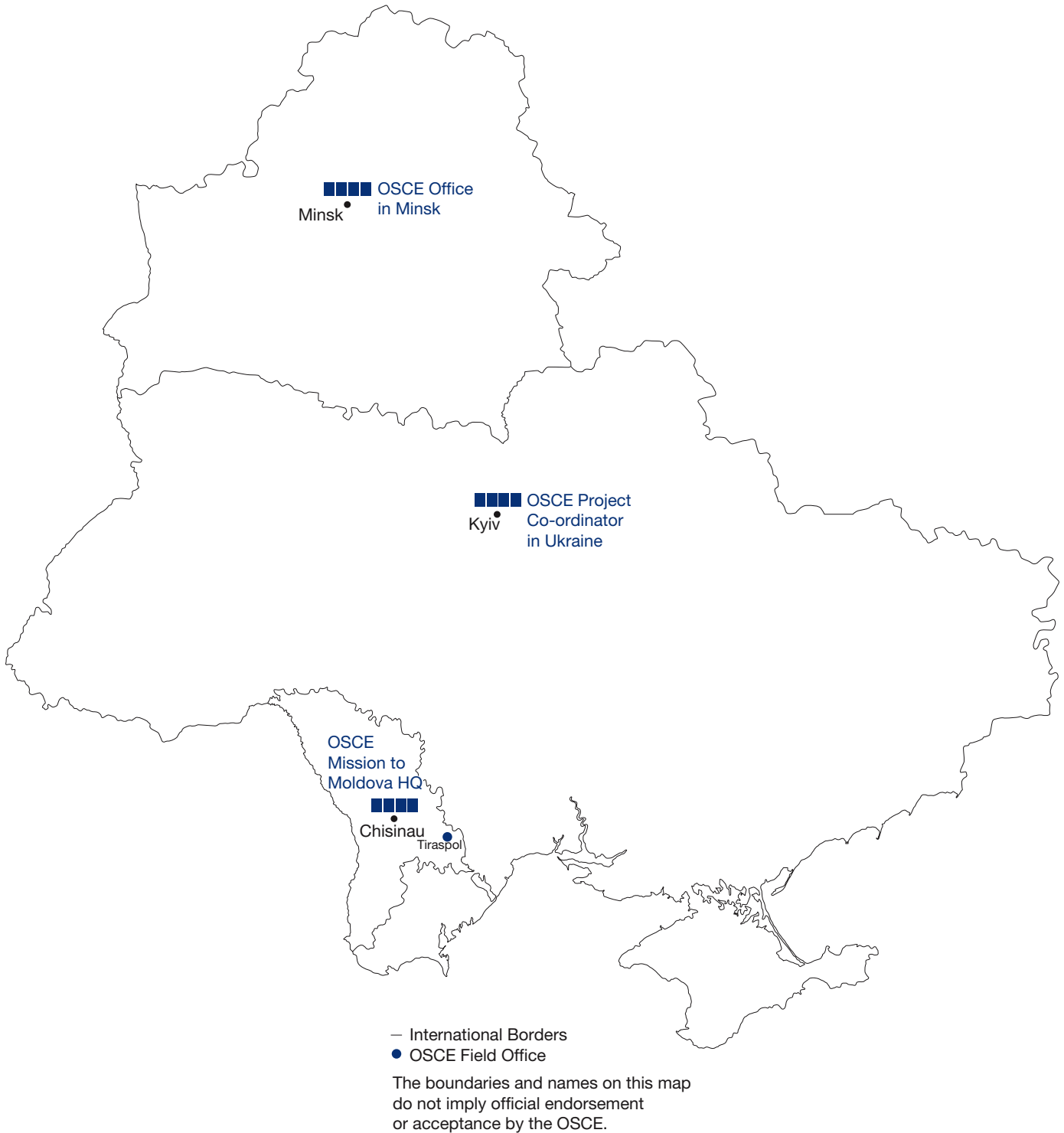
legal transformation of the state broadcaster into an independent public broadcaster. Such a new law would also improve the legal environment in which private broadcasters have to operate.

Improving media professionalism. Institutionalizing professional journalism training that is sustainable and accessible to journalists from various backgrounds continued to be a key priority of the Mission's media development activities. The Mission's Media Development Unit provided support to an internationally recognized, one-year certification course for young and mid-career journalists at the Macedonian Institute for the Media and to a summer practical laboratory course at the Journalism Department of the State University in Skopje. The goal of the certification course, which began in August, is to assist the media in preparing professional journal-

ists to embrace the challenges of modern journalism and to participate in creating a modern, professional media community in the country.

Head of Office:
Ambassador Carlos Pais
Revised Budget: €13,745,600
www.osce.org/skopje

EASTERN EUROPE



OSCE Office in Minsk

The mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk provides for assisting the Belarusian Government to further promote the building of institutions, consolidate the rule of law, develop relations with civil society and support the country in addressing economic and environmental issues.

Keeping in mind its mandate, the Office in co-operation with the Belarusian authorities implemented a number of projects in the

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Strengthening economic development.

Together with a number of partners, the Office held several meetings and seminars to advocate the reform of legislation on SMEs, with the aim of improving the general investment climate in Belarus. Partners included the International Education Centre, the National Law Drafting Centre, the Ministry of Economy and the Financial Investment Advisory Council.

In November, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities visited Minsk to chair a session on SME legislation that focused on issues such as micro-lending opportunities and the minimizing of administrative restrictions. The event resulted in the adoption of recommendations for a new draft law regulating state support for SMEs. During his visit, the Co-ordinator also discussed with Belarusian government officials further projects in the field of combating money laundering and the fight against corruption.

Tackling environmental issues. Trans-boundary water issues featured high on the Office's agenda. To help harmonize the procedures for monitoring the water quality of the Neman River, which flows through Belarus and Lithuania, the Office organized a working session with the Belarusian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and the Lithuanian Environment Ministry. Building on an existing analysis by experts from Belarus, Lithuania, and the EU, the session resulted in a detailed action plan that provides for the development of co-ordinated water quality monitoring standards in both countries.

field of the economic-environmental and human dimensions. It developed a good working relationship with the authorities and civil society representatives and endeavoured to create a framework for dialogue and co-operation. In addition, the Office followed the situation in Belarus, in particular regarding the functioning of civil society.

OSCE Office in Minsk



Tourism fair in Minsk

Bringing tourism to rural Belarus

Throughout the year, the Office in Minsk supported a project that helps develop rural tourism in Belarus. Launched by the local NGO, *Agro&Eco Tourism*, the initiative produced a catalogue of more than 45 houses that offer bed and breakfast facilities in rural Belarus. The catalogue was presented at a three-day exhibition on the tourist business in Belarus held in Minsk in November. This presentation produced a lively public response by tourist companies and information agencies and immediately increased the demand for information about such activities. The idea of *Agro&Eco Tourism* is simple and effective: "Inform people about tourism opportunities in Belarus and then respond to their requirements." The initiative presents an opportunity to revive the Belarusian countryside and to bring employment to areas that otherwise enjoy little economic development. The Office contributed to the idea by providing financial assistance for the inspection of houses, assessment of their quality and categorization. Several workshops sponsored by the Office were organized for hosts, focusing on improving the quality of services.

In view of the country's need for laws that adequately protect the environment, the Office supported a team of lawyers from the Belarusian State University and the local NGO, *EcoPrava*, who prepared a detailed analysis of the gaps in the law and a commentary on the existing legislation. The commentary was reviewed by the National Law Drafting Centre and presented for discussion at a public forum in November. The initiative marked the first step by Belarus to harmonize its legislation in the area of environmental protection.

Supporting rehabilitation of Chernobyl-affected areas.

In May, the Office organized a small grants competition to promote the implementation of the CORE Programme, a rehabilitation project for areas in Belarus affected by the Chernobyl disaster. The programme aims at improving the living conditions of people in the Bragin, Cherkhorsk, Slavgorod and Stolin regions. It focuses on health care, education, socio-economic development, radiological quality, and the involvement of local initiatives. More than 40 project proposals were submitted to the competition, five of which were selected to represent each of the regions. These included assistance for people with disabilities and for a children's health centre as well as a project to restore a fruit orchard. Following approval by the CORE Project Assessment Committee and the Approval Board in November, the Office submitted the project proposals for registration with the Ministry of Economy.

Human Dimension Activities

Promoting human rights education.

To convey basic human rights principles to the young people of Belarus, the Office and the Ministry of Education prepared a

textbook for secondary school students. Fundraising by the Office helped cover a substantial part of the production costs. The Office continues to co-operate with the Ministry and civil society institutions in providing methodological support to school teachers working on human rights programmes.

Strengthening the rule of law. The Office continued its support for a joint project by the EU and the ODIHR that aims at making alternative punitive measures work more effectively, thus ultimately decreasing the high prison population in Belarus. Several training seminars for probation officers and roundtable meetings for judges and prosecutors were organized by the Office and the Interior Ministry's Department for Punishment Execution. The initiative also included two study tours for judges and probation officers to Poland and Latvia, where they were able to gain an insight into the countries' community service. Following these visits, the participants prepared a set of recommendations for the Interior Ministry and local authorities in Belarus, outlining concrete steps to make community service more effective and broaden its use.

The Office also held a competition on alternative sentencing for experts to encourage a scientific discussion and introduce practical recommendations on the use of non-custodial measures. Out of ten participants, three winners were selected and received a monetary prize.

Promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. In an effort to strengthen contacts between national minorities and religious communities and their relationship to the Belarusian authorities, the Office and the Committee on Religions and Nationalities under the Council of Ministers prepared two books promoting tolerance and non-discrimination.

The first publication provides information on the customs and culture of national minorities in Belarus. The other is a compilation of active religious organizations in the country, covering their work and history as well as the regulations that apply to religious activities. Both publications are due to be published in early 2005 and distributed among repre-

sentatives of national minorities and religious organizations, besides government officials working in these fields.

Development of the media. The Office organized a study-tour for Belarusian journalists to the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, where they also attended the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference. In addition, the journalists visited Austrian TV and radio stations and interviewed a number of OSCE representatives. Their reports were published in the Belarusian independent press.

Fighting domestic violence. A two-day conference in July, sponsored by the Office, generated fresh attention in the media and among the Belarusian public about the problem of domestic violence against women and children. More than 70 local and international participants discussed a variety of topics linked to the prevention and fight against domestic violence, including a draft law on the issue that had recently been reviewed by a parliamentary commission. The event proved to be a good example for successful co-operation between Belarusian governmental agencies, parliamentarians and NGOs to jointly address this particular problem. The conference participants adopted a set of recommendations and pledged to continue their work with the parliamentarians towards the adoption of the draft law.

Human rights monitoring. The Office supported the ODIHR election observation mission for the Belarusian parliamentary elections in October. Parallel to these elections, a referendum on the extension of the presidential term was held in Belarus. The elections and the referendum were followed by protests and subsequent arrests by the police, including of senior opposition politicians. All these events were closely monitored by the Office.

The Office also followed the situation of several prominent persons, such as Professor Yuri Bandazhevsky, former Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Mikhail Marinich, and the chairman of a market vendors strike committee, Valery Levonevsky as well as his deputy Alexander Vasilyev, and expressed its concern publicly about the cases.

OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev



Dealing with individual complaints. The Office received approximately 200 individual complaints of alleged human rights violations, mainly regarding the actions of law enforcement agencies. Complaints included both civil and criminal cases, many related to alleged violations of the right to a fair trial and the treatment of prisoners. The Office's findings and concerns were regularly brought to the attention of the Belarusian authorities. Prompt replies were generally offered. On several occasions, the relevant body took remedial action in response to the intervention by the Office.

Head of Office:
Ambassador Eberhard Heyken
Revised Budget: €942,100
www.osce.org/belarus

OSCE Mission to Moldova

During the first half of 2004, the OSCE Mission to Moldova worked to re-energize the political settlement negotiation process between the Moldovan Government and the Transnistrian authorities. The second half of the year was dominated by efforts to contain the crisis in relations between the two sides, precipitated by the July closure of Moldovan Latin script schools operating in Transnistria.

Political settlement negotiations were deadlocked at the beginning of the year after a last-minute decision in November 2003 by Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin not to sign the so-called 'Kozak Memorandum', a settlement document brokered by the Russian Federation. With the active participation of the OSCE Chairmanship and Russian and Ukrainian co-mediators, the Mission joined in intensive diplomatic efforts to restart the negotiation process. Formal political settlement negotiations resumed in May.

Political-Military Dimension Activities

Political negotiations. The political settlement negotiation process was disrupted by a series of, at times potentially explosive, disputes between Chisinau and Tiraspol over competing powers or overlapping jurisdictions of local administrations. For example, the presence of Moldovan government institutions in the Transnistrian-controlled right bank city of Bender remained a constant source of friction.

In February, Transnistrian authorities attempted to eject Moldovan police from the building they share in Bender with Transnistrian militia. City authorities also pressed for the removal of Moldovan penitentiary facilities located in Bender. From July to September, Transnistrian authorities prevented Moldovan farmers from harvesting their fields situated in Transnistrian-controlled territory. A number of new Transnistrian 'border,' 'customs,' and 'migration service' posts in the Security Zone (a narrow strip along the Nistru River separating the two sides) were also established and, in September, Transnistrian militia confiscated the assets of Moldova Railways in Bender and other points in Transnistrian-controlled territory.

The most disruptive development, however, was the Transnistrian decision in

Unfortunately and without warning, in mid-July the Transnistrian authorities forcibly closed several Moldovan Latin-script schools in Transnistrian-controlled territory. This triggered a fresh crisis in relations between Chisinau and Tiraspol and prompted Moldovan negotiators to suspend their participation in the settlement talks. A number of other contentious issues exacerbated by the school crisis also disrupted the political settlement process.

The Mission, the Chairmanship, and the co-mediators made major efforts during the latter part of the year to resume a dialogue between Chisinau and Tiraspol to address these unresolved practical disputes. By late autumn, the situation stabilized sufficiently for the Bulgarian Chairmanship to invite both sides to send representatives for consultations with the three mediators. However, at the end of the year, the political settlement talks remained stalled and the conflict still deeply frozen.

Henk Wenker



In mid-July, the Transnistrian authorities closed down the Moldovan schools on its territory that teach in Latin script.

mid-July to close the Moldovan schools in Transnistrian territory teaching in Latin script. In response, the Moldovan side suspended its participation in the five-sided political settlement negotiations.

Together with co-mediators from the Russian Federation and Ukraine, the Mission went to extraordinary lengths from mid-July well into autumn to ameliorate the school crisis and to find and implement a solution. The Mission also sought to defuse tensions between the sides concerning freedom of movement, farmlands,

and railways. Bulgarian First Deputy Foreign Minister Petko Draganov made an emergency visit to Moldova in late July to bolster these efforts. In September, former Bulgarian President Petar Stoyanov was appointed Special Envoy for Moldova of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and entered discussions with the leadership of both sides to help ease the tensions.

The Mission's activities resulted in an agreement by Chisinau and Tiraspol to accept the invitation of the Bulgarian Chairmanship to political consultations in Varna in early

November. These consultations, however, failed to produce agreement on further action. Meanwhile, the Mission continued its efforts aimed at resolving a number of specific disputes between the two sides.

The Joint Control Commission. As the body responsible for implementing the July 1992 Ceasefire Agreement and supervising the Joint Peacekeeping Forces in the Security Zone, the Joint Control Commission (JCC) spent much of the year seeking to avert incidents and mitigate possible effects of the disputes over schools, railroads, access to farmlands, freedom of movement, and the police in Bendery. Mission military members participated in all JCC meetings and supported the Commission's activities to avert clashes and decrease tensions.

Withdrawal of Russian Federation arms and equipment. Only one train containing approximately 1,000 tons of ammunition was removed from the Operative Group of Russian Forces depots in Transnistria in 2004. Approximately 21,000 metric tons of ammunition remain to be removed, together with more than 40,000 small arms and light weapons and approximately ten trainloads of miscellaneous military equipment. The Mission continued to co-ordinate technical and financial assistance to the Russian Federation for these activities.

Strengthening confidence-building. For many years, the Mission has been participating in discussions on promoting military transparency and increasing trust between the parties to the conflict. During the first half of the year, Mission experts drafted a set of 14 proposed agreements on confidence-building and security measures. These were presented to the Moldovan and Transnistrian leaders by the Chairman-in-Office in June.

The proposals feature draft agreements on possible reductions in military forces and armaments. The package also included proposals for increased contacts, monitoring of weapons manufacturing facilities, joint training on peace-support operations, joint disaster relief operations, and common procedures for eliminating surplus ammunition and small arms. The initiative met with interest from both parties and preliminary consultations have been held with experts from the co-mediators, Russia and Ukraine.

Human Dimension Activities

Protecting language rights. The Transnistrian action to close the Moldovan Latin script schools came despite agreements on local registration and operation of these schools brokered in 2003 by the Mission and the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (see also section on the High Commissioner on National Minorities on page 113). Tiraspol's action enraged authorities and public opinion on the right bank of the Nistru River, posing the threat of a confrontation. Along with its co-mediators, the OSCE Mission intervened to stave off an even greater crisis. Mission members maintained an almost round-the-clock presence at key locations on the left bank, and through constant contact urged restraint and conciliation.

While seeking to ensure that cooler heads prevailed on the spot, the Mission also redoubled efforts to mediate a solution between education authorities from both sides that would allow the six Moldovan schools to operate normally. Transnistrian authorities eventually permitted temporary registration of the schools with local authorities, which enabled most of the schools to begin the new academic year, albeit with up to a month's delay. By the end of 2004, only the school in Tiraspol had failed to re-open; many of its 550 pupils had to travel to Moldovan-controlled areas to take lessons.

Monitoring human rights and freedom of religion. The Mission continued to receive and respond to a large number of individual human rights complaints from both sides of the Nistru. Complainants either received advice on the appropriate local institutions to approach, or the Mission directly addressed the respective authorities requesting clarification or redress of violations. In selected cases, the Mission monitored court sessions.

Special attention was paid to the remaining members of the Ilascu group convicted by Transnistrian authorities of alleged crimes during the 1992 conflict. In particular, the Mission intervened successfully for Andrei Ivantoc, who conducted a hunger strike in January to protest conditions of

his detention. In co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Mission convinced Transnistrian authorities to improve the conditions of Mr. Ivantoc's incarceration, which persuaded him to give up his hunger strike.

Capacity-building through promoting human rights. The Mission supported a variety of small-scale projects to promote human rights and tolerance among the population on both sides of the Nistru and in particular among national minorities. Another target group was the NGO community from both sides, which participated in OSCE human rights seminars. For example, the project 'Young envoys of peace creating a common future' aimed at increasing mutual trust by involving youth and students from both sides of the Nistru River in a dialogue on creating a future common state.

Combating human trafficking and promoting gender issues. The Mission's Anti-Trafficking Unit continued to liaise between local and international anti-trafficking efforts in Moldova. It organized and hosted monthly technical co-ordination meetings and maintained a database of ongoing projects to improve links and help funding efforts. The Mission also provided



La Strada, which produced this handbook, is a key partner of the OSCE Mission in the fight against human trafficking in Moldova.

advice and assistance to the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and co-chaired the sub-group on legislation, which initiated and supported the drafting process for the new anti trafficking law.

In co-operation with international partners, the Mission supported the Moldovan Ministry of Interior in developing anti-trafficking training courses for police officers. The Mission also conducted training seminars for Moldovan consular officials, judges, and prosecutors. A series of workshops aimed at strengthening the professional capacity of social workers to assist trafficked persons was particularly successful and resulted in a best practices guide for social workers engaged in the fight against human trafficking.

The Mission played a key role in the formalizing and launching of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The basic aims of NRMs are to ensure observance of the fundamental rights of trafficked persons and provide effective ways of referring victims to services. To support reintegration of trafficking victims, the Mission provided university and vocational scholarships in addition to direct assistance to trafficked persons. Close to 130 victims benefited from the programme this year.

Promoting equal opportunities in Moldova, the Mission supported the drafting of the Gender Equality Law and lobbied for its adoption. The drafting process was led by UNIFEM under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. In October, the Mission facilitated a visit of the Chairperson of the Stability Pact Gender Task Force, Sonja Lokar. The Mission also helped organize a series of meetings with the board of the project 'Women Can Do It' and with party leaders, at which Ms. Lokar advocated the inclusion of more women in the party lists for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Freedom of the media. The Mission actively promoted freedom of the media on both sides of the Nistru. The year began with a bitter dispute over temporary closure of the municipal broadcasters Antena-C radio and Euro-TV, whose licences were suspended in February. The Mission, the Special Representative

OSCE Mission to Moldova



Demonstration on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May, in Moldova

of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (SRSG-CoE), and many of the diplomatic missions accredited in Moldova made considerable efforts to convince the authorities to retract this suspension, with the result that both stations resumed broadcasting in April.

In March, the Mission and the SRSG-CoE presented a set of generally-accepted guidelines for public broadcasters to Moldovan state broadcasting officials. These guidelines were subsequently endorsed by Moldovan President Voronin and incorporated in the statute of the national broadcaster Teleradio Moldova (TRM), while it was in the process of being transformed into a public broadcasting institution.

This transformation did not go smoothly, as a number of journalists formerly employed at TRM charged political interference in the process. In addition, an independent monitoring project asserted that TRM broadcasts favoured the ruling party. For several weeks in late summer and early autumn, the disgruntled employees staged protests inside and around the main TRM facility. The Mission and the SRSG-CoE tried to mediate the dispute between the

former TRM journalists and the company administration. Eventually a dialogue was established and protests abated. However, not all of the issues raised were successfully resolved by the end of the year.

The Mission also continued to monitor closely the media situation in the Transnistrian region, where independent journalists face continuous threats, repression, and reprisals from security forces, police, and judicial authorities. Mission members attended court proceedings in cases brought against independent journalists. The Mission also intervened and protested in several cases involving actions by Transnistrian authorities against independent journalists and NGOs.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador William H. Hill
Revised Budget: €1,389,200
www.osce.org/moldova

OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

The mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine is to plan, implement and monitor projects in co-operation with relevant Ukrainian authorities and the OSCE and its Institutions. In 2004, projects in all three OSCE dimensions were supported or implemented.

In preparation for the 31 October presidential election, the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights of Ukraine, in co-operation with the Co-ordinator's office, launched a project that aimed at further strengthening the electoral process in Ukraine. The project included co-ordination of election-related activities of numerous actors with Ukrainian officials and activities such as training for journalists and judges, voter education and awareness-raising for out-of-country voters.

Political-Military Dimension Activities

Helping demobilized soldiers adapt to civilian life. To assist former military personnel affected by the downsizing of the country's armed forces in their transition to civilian life, the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine helped the Ministry of Defence organize seminars that provide the participants with much-needed information on their rights and entitlements. In 2004, some 300 former officers took part in these events, which covered issues ranging from housing and pension questions to civilian rights and employment opportunities. During the sessions, representatives of regional employment centres discussed possibilities for re-training and re-qualification. Using the 'train-the-trainers' scheme, the seminars encouraged the participants to convey the information they learned to others in their regions of origin.

The Co-ordinator's office also supported an initiative that focused on the re-education of former military staff to equip them with the skills needed to more easily find employment outside the military. The Co-ordinator's office – in co-operation with the Ministry of Defence and the National Co-ordination Council on Resettlement and Conversion Issues – organized specialized training courses for senior officers recently discharged or due for discharge in the near future. Topics covered in these courses included business management, economics, strategy, marketing and sales,

human resources, and business accounting. An important component of the initiative was also helping the participants find civilian employment. A total of 165 persons had completed the training sessions by the end of December, and three-quarters of them had found employment by the end of the year.

Helping the authorities improve the electoral process and democratic institutions. In preparation for the presidential election on 31 October, the Project Co-ordinator developed a programme to assist the Ukrainian authorities with the improvement of the electoral process. (For more on the OSCE's engagement in the 2004

Other important activities cut across the human and the politico-military dimensions and included efforts to assist Ukraine in the fight against human trafficking through prevention as well as victims assistance programmes. These projects dovetailed with projects to help recently demobilized military personnel in their transition into civilian life, in particular with regard to education and employment.

The office also implemented comprehensive programmes in the field of rule of law and in the economic and environmental dimension. It supported economic development programmes aimed at attracting foreign direct investment and helping entrepreneurs starting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

presidential election in Ukraine, see page 22.) In co-operation with government agencies on both national and local levels, and especially the Central Election Commission and the Ombudsman for Human Rights of Ukraine, a comprehensive action plan was drawn up, addressing among other things the role of the mass media during elections, electoral procedures and the rule of law. The action plan gave the Project Co-ordinator a leading role in all these areas. The project involved the co-ordination of activities in all of the country's regions between and among the relevant government agencies, the international community and civil society.

PH/L/Serhiy Kotelnikov



Demonstration in Kyiv following the 31 October presidential election

In addition, the Project Co-ordinator supported a number of concrete activities in support of the elections, such as:

- assisting local authorities in updating voters lists;
- assisting the CEC in elaborating and producing the official manual for polling station procedures;
- organizing training sessions for election commission members;
- helping develop training sessions for journalists;
- training media lawyers;
- assisting the preparation of a manual for judges to help resolve electoral disputes;
- informing citizens about their legal rights as voters;
- co-ordinating voter education campaigns; and
- supporting the out-of-country voting process.

In September, the Project Co-ordinator began elaborating a one-year long follow-up assistance programme, which includes civic education efforts, initiatives to improve the access of citizens to information services of government agencies and a project to increase public participation in the decision-making process.

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Supporting local business development.

To improve conditions for entrepreneurs and assist small business development at

the regional level, the Project Co-ordinator initiated a local economic development project, which is being implemented with the Eurasia Foundation in co-ordination with state-run employment agencies of the three Ukrainian *oblasts* (regions) of Rivne, Dnipropetrovsk and Chernihiv. In 2004, the project trained 525 unemployed people in business skills, how to gain access to vital information, and financing for SMEs. Some 1,150 individual entrepreneurs received free advisory and information services to help them with business-related issues. In addition, the initiative provided 295 businesses with one-time start-up payments of roughly €405 per person. Since the beginning of the project, a total of €120,000 from local budgets was spent on start-up entrepreneurs under the aegis of this project.

Stimulating the economy through progressive development models. Modern development models such as industrial clusters were at the core of a new project initiated by the Project Co-ordinator in 2004. Recognizing that such models can stimulate local economic growth by creating new market linkages, increasing employment opportunities and improving competitiveness in the market place, the Project Co-ordinator's office and the Ukrainian International Market Support Foundation commissioned and financed a comprehensive study on the economic potential of ten Ukrainian regions. The goal of the survey was to highlight potential high-growth sectors and identify comparative advantages where industrial clusters

or other progressive development models could be used. The report was published in December and distributed to the Ukrainian authorities, NGOs involved in economic development and the international donor community.

Community development. With the help of the Project Co-ordinator, the city of Rivne in the central northern part of the country conducted a detailed study on the reform of its public utilities sector. Based on this study, a reform project was formulated, for which Rivne received a grant equivalent to approximately €125,000 from Ukraine's Foundation for Local Self-Government. The office also assisted Rivne in creating an Investment Promotion Agency to help the region attract direct foreign investment through the development of its infrastructure and promotional activities.

Another community development project carried out by the Project Co-ordinator was to help the former military base of Zherebkovo in southern Ukraine to be converted into a civilian community. The goal of the initiative was to foster the socio-economic development of the Zherebkovo community by supporting the improvement of the infrastructure for SMEs, establishing a dialogue between the local business community and the authorities and designing a long-term local economic development strategy. The office organized training seminars for local leaders on NGO management practices and helped create a credit union that gives local entrepreneurs access to financing.

Human Dimension Activities

Preventing and fighting trafficking in human beings. This activity is a top priority of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. The office assists the Ukrainian Government in implementing a comprehensive national programme to combat human trafficking. The programme includes protection and reintegration of victims, training the country's law enforcement personnel and judicial authorities to help the prosecution of the criminals, and prevention through the spread of information.



Street vendors in Kyiv

Among many important activities is the support of anti-trafficking NGOs, which provide hotline services all over Ukraine and conduct information campaigns. Between January and August, more than 10,000 persons used the hotline services, receiving information about trips, work and study abroad in the context of trafficking awareness. Together with the Ministry of Family, Youth and Children's Affairs, UNICEF, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the British Council, the Project Co-ordinator conducted an assessment study on human trafficking. The study, which was finalized in October, gives a comprehensive overview on the current situation relative to trafficking to, through and from Ukraine, and evaluates current anti-trafficking programmes and projects in the country.

In November, the Project Co-ordinator hosted 60 NGOs from 35 countries to a training seminar on the role of hotlines in the fight against trafficking in human beings in Ukraine and best practices in this context. The event, which was funded by the European Commission and the ODHR, concluded with the establishment of an NGO network in countries of origin, transit and destination of trafficked persons. These NGOs are using their new contacts in their daily work in fighting trafficking and assisting victims.

Helping Ukraine's courts to enforce European human rights convention. One of the Project Co-ordinator's projects in the field of rule of law was the production of a guide containing and analysing the case law of the Strasbourg Court as well as relevant constitutional and doctrinal developments in the sphere of human rights. The guide was distributed to representatives of the judiciary during a series of seminars and is used to help the Ukrainian courts enforce the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Sharing legal expertise on human rights standards. In partnership with the Committee for European Integration of the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine (Parliament), the Project Co-ordinator supported a team of legal experts that renders opinions concerning proposed legislation at the request of Ukrainian legislators. The team

considered its conformity with international human rights, standards of the Council of Europe, the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, OSCE principles, legal requirements of the European Union's Second and Third Pillars and the Copenhagen criteria on EU accession. The team also responded to requests for recommendations for improving legislation.



Human rights film festival

A programme on human rights awareness and education due to be carried out in 2005 throughout Ukraine began with a human rights film festival that took place in December in Kyiv. The festival organizers and their partners included the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine as well as the UN organizations in Ukraine, the NGO *Transparency International*, the British Council, and the IOM.

The Kyiv film festival took place from 9 to 13 December and was attended by some 7,000 persons. In total, 33 films were shown, related to the themes of women, children, HIV/AIDS, and vulnerable groups in 18 different countries. The same event is scheduled to take place in Lviv, Donetsk, Kharkiv and Odessa in spring 2005.

Helping implement the new Civil and Commercial Codes. These Codes entered into force in January 2004. To reconcile inconsistencies between the Codes and ensure uniform application, the Project Co-ordinator undertook a project that

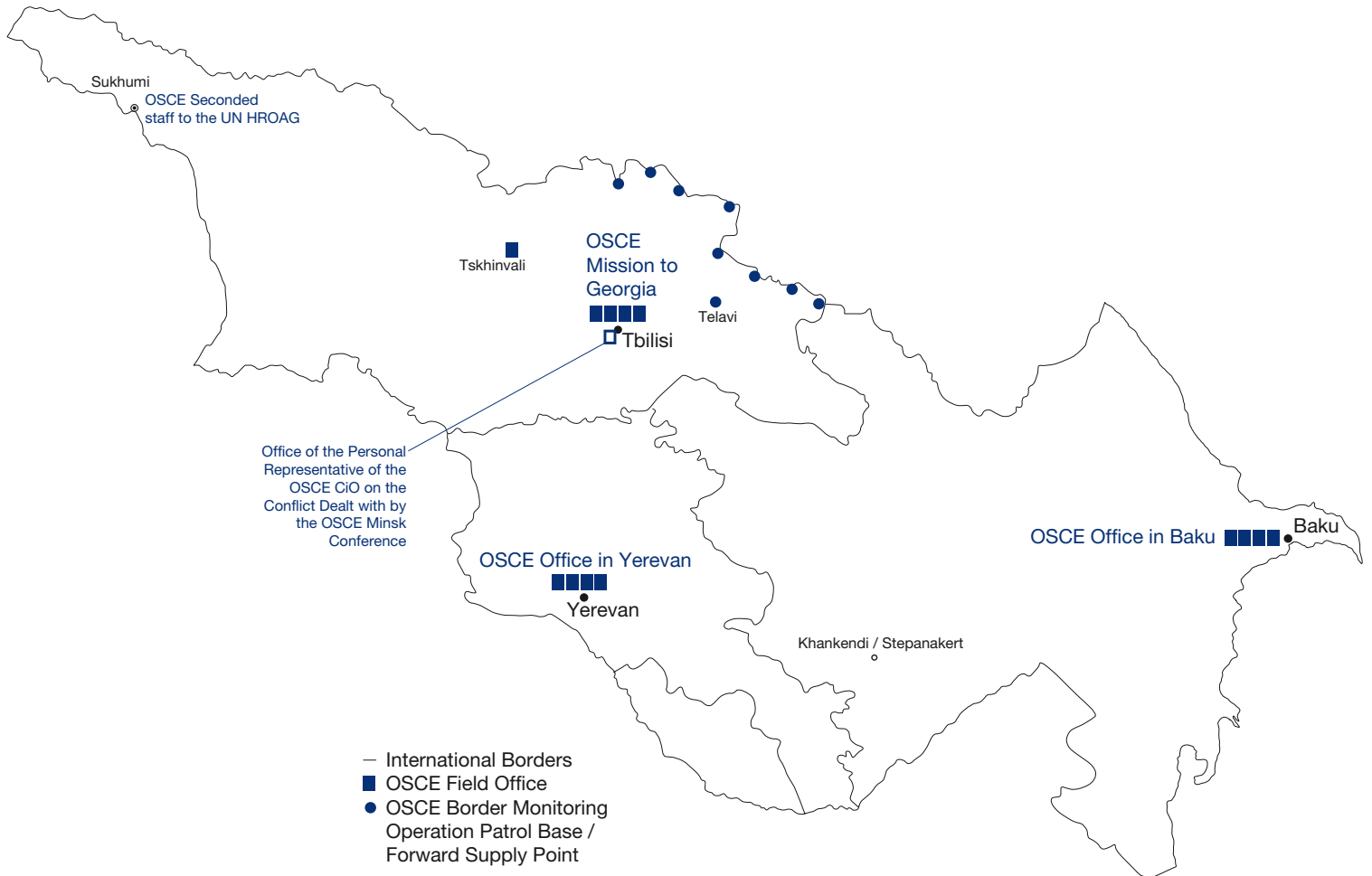
assists judges, law enforcement personnel and practitioners with the implementation of the new legislation. The project included the preparation of a document that highlights the contradicting legal provisions and includes practical guidelines. The initiative also comprised information seminars for judges in appellate courts. It was carried out in co-operation with the Ukrainian judiciary, in particular the Supreme Court.

Establishing fair selection procedures for judges. At the request of the Judicial Academy of the State Judicial Administration, the Project Co-ordinator supported the development of evaluation tools to test the qualifications, knowledge, and skills of judges applying for positions in administrative courts. After the Judicial Academy approved the proposed methodology, which includes examination questions, case studies, and tasks in legal writing, the Co-ordinator's office also drafted a study guide for the judges in administrative courts.

Another project in this field, devised and implemented by the office, focused on assisting the Ukrainian authorities in developing and introducing courses on the rule of law courses to law faculties throughout the country. Partners in this effort were the Ministry of Education and the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

Project Co-ordinator:
Ambassador David Nicholas
Revised budget: €1,085,000
www.osce.org/ukraine

CAUCASUS



Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE CiO on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference

- International Borders
- OSCE Field Office
- OSCE Border Monitoring Operation Patrol Base / Forward Supply Point

The boundaries and names on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the OSCE.

OSCE offices in Georgia as of December 2004

OSCE Office in Baku

2004 saw a considerable increase in the activities of the Office in Baku. Addressing many of the challenges Azerbaijan faces in its development, the Office's tasks stretched from anti-terrorism efforts across small business support and law enforcement training to media development and human rights.

The Office assisted Azerbaijan's Government in drafting legislation against trafficking in human beings and corruption. It

expanded awareness-raising projects on human rights and civil society development to the country's rural areas. Responding to the OSCE's focus on education in 2004, the Office also offered legal training to lawyers and environmental education to young Azerbaijanis.

Political-Military Dimension Activities

Preparing for Police Assistance Programme. The Office's police-related activities, in preparation for the introduction of the Police Assistance Programme due to begin in 2005, made significant progress. The newly-renovated police school in Baku was provided with more than 2,000 books, computers and other equipment, and the Office assisted with the drafting of a curriculum based on modern principles of community policing. The school is scheduled to open in late 2005.

To enable police officers to efficiently register and research crimes, the Office helped the city of Baku with the set-up of a website, where the public can find information about the country's police services and the rights of individuals. An internal local crime database, accessible to police officers on duty throughout the city, was established.

The Office also contributed to the training of the Azerbaijan Pipeline Protection Service (a branch of the army) by introducing human rights observance based on local law and principles of community policing into their training programmes. These human rights elements were provided by the Human Rights and Police Training Consultancy, *Equity International*, contracted to the pipeline consortium leader, British Petroleum (BP). More work on this theme was provided by the Office in the form of seminars in municipalities which introduced police, civil society and the municipal authorities to the mutual benefits of co-operation and the principles of community policing. A major programme on 'Civic Education for Police and NGOs', which took place in the 13 rural districts that abut

the pipeline, sought to encourage increased interaction and meaningful co-operation between police officers, municipal authorities, NGOs and the community at large.

Supporting the fight against terrorism. Together with the UNODC and the Azerbaijan Government, which has now become party to 12 international anti-terrorism instruments, the Office held a series of seminars in order to address the implementation of government legislation reflecting the obligations imposed by these instruments. Seminars looked at the legislative implications of the adoption of such instruments and offered an insight into the methodology that might be employed in implementing legislative change. The Office will play a role in developing practical solutions to the obstacles identified and in providing support to implement them in the coming year.

Free legal service for military servicemen and conscripts. During the draft months of April, June and October, the Office and the NGO, *Lawyers of the 21st Century*, offered free legal assistance to military servicemen, conscripts and their family members. The service was provided by law students and recent law school graduates in the offices of the legal aid clinics in Baku and Ganja, established with the Office's support. On request, the clinic's lawyers also acted as legal representatives before state institutions and courts.

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Supporting economic development. Outside Baku, practical business resources for entrepreneurs are scarce. To help remedy this problem, the Office organized

training courses for entrepreneurs in the country's rural areas. In co-operation with the German development agency, *GTZ*, the Office continued its Youth Entrepreneurship Seminars programme, teaching more than 250 young people about business fundamentals. Special courses on legal registration, taxes, business plan development and micro-credit opportunities were held for female entrepreneurs.

In May, the Office and the International Finance Corporation sponsored a conference to promote financial leasing among leaders from the governmental, banking and commercial sectors. Earlier in the year, the Government had modified legislation to encourage the development of the leasing industry to make capital investment more accessible to Azerbaijani entrepreneurs.

To support the development of tourism in Azerbaijan, the OSCE sponsored an assessment report on the tourism industry prepared by the US-based *Citizen Development Corps*. Together with the British Council, it also held a conference on tourism to encourage inter-agency co-operation and best practices in sustainable economic development.

Good governance and anti-corruption. As part of its good governance programme, the Office organized a management training course for members of the Secretariat of the State Programme for Poverty Reduction Strategy, the key government agency dealing with economic development.

Before the entering into force of the State Programme on Combating Corruption on 1 January 2005, the Office and the Azerbaijani Young Lawyers Union organized a series of roundtable meetings and a public awareness-raising campaign on anti-corruption strategies.

The Aarhus Convention: helping citizens participate in environmental issues

On 25 June 1998, the UN Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted in the Danish city of Aarhus. Known as the Aarhus Convention, this document represents an entirely new kind of environmental agreement, linking environmental rights and human rights.

The Convention, which entered into force on 30 October 2001, establishes the relationship between people and governments in environmental matters. The Convention is not only an environmental agreement but also addresses government accountability, transparency and responsiveness. Implementation of the Convention's provisions takes place through five working groups, which cover the topics of compliance, pollutant release and transfer registers, genetically modified organisms, electronic information tools and access to justice.

The OSCE has advocated the ratification and implementation of the Aarhus Convention by its participating States since 1999, organizing awareness-raising campaigns, national and regional seminars and supporting the establishment, registration and operation of environmental NGOs. Since 2002, the OSCE has been supporting the development of Aarhus Centres in participating States. The role of an Aarhus Centre is to provide a meeting place and a link between the government and civil society and assist governments in fulfilling their requirements under the Aarhus Convention.

Informing the public about environmental issues. The Office and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources opened an Aarhus Centre in Baku during September 2003, which now draws more than 200 visitors a month. It houses a library and computers, which citizens can use free of charge to consult the Internet on environmental issues. In 2004, some 60 public meetings on environmental topics were held in the Centre, including several public hearings on draft laws and environmental education programmes for children sponsored by the Office in Baku.

Promoting renewable energy sources. Although rich in oil and gas, Azerbaijan faces serious energy shortages outside Baku. This not only prevents the country's balanced economic development but also threatens its environment, since people

often resort to cutting down trees for fuel. To promote the use of renewable energy sources, the Office initiated a new outreach project known as the 'Energy Bus'. The 'Bus' is a mobile education tool that uses models and other information tools to demonstrate how affordable and easily attainable renewable energy technologies such as bio-gas, bio-mass and saw-dust burners can be adapted to provide the rural communities with much-needed energy. It is envisaged to travel to more than 150 villages in Azerbaijan in 2005.

International co-operation on environmental issues. Within the framework of the NATO Science for Peace Programme, the Office continued to assist the Project on South Caucasus River Monitoring aimed at assessing the quality and quantity of the waters of the Kura and Araks river basin. The Project is now in its third year of implementation.

In line with its efforts to assess environmental and security challenges and to promote sustainable development, the Office provided support to the OSCE-UN Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). Together with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the Office and the OCEEA organized national consultations on the ENVSEC report on the southern Caucasus involving governments,

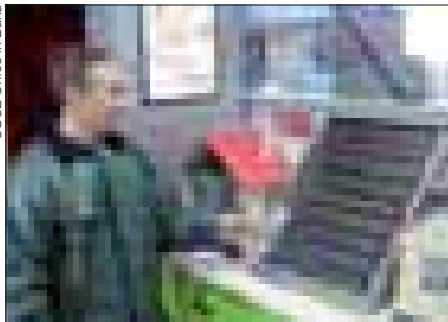
academia, and civil society. The initiative led to the preparation of a preliminary work programme by the Azerbaijani authorities addressing such issues as water management, public environmental awareness, and community environmental projects.

Human Dimension Activities

Supporting the Constitutional Court. To help the staff of the Constitutional Court handle the increasing number of individual complaints, the Office organized a consultancy visit by the former Director of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany. It also held training seminars for practicing lawyers and civil society representatives on Constitutional Court proceedings and the requirements for submissions to the Court.

Monitoring of trials following the 15 October 2003 incidents. Together with the ODIHR, the Office continued its Trial Monitoring Programme in Azerbaijan, which was created in summer 2003 to provide a tool to foster fair trial and enhance the capacity of the judiciary in administering the law. Under the Programme, the Office observed the trials of all 125 persons that came under criminal charges after the clashes between protesters and police that occurred in the immediate aftermath of the 15 October 2003 presidential election. The trials were monitored from the perspective of their compliance with national and international standards and the right to a fair trial.

By October, the OSCE had trained 20 local monitors and co-ordinated their subsequent trial monitoring and reporting of all post-election trial procedures. This first phase of the programme ended with the compilation of a Trial Monitoring Report based on the findings of the monitors and of a foreign barrister. The Report contains recommendations for the Government regarding the accessibility of trials to the public, legal representation of the accused during the proceedings, allegations of torture and ill-treatment, and the independence and impartiality of the tribunals. The Office and the ODIHR plan to discuss the findings of this document with the Government to address perceived needs in the judicial system and to provide a platform for future co-operation in the development of the judiciary.



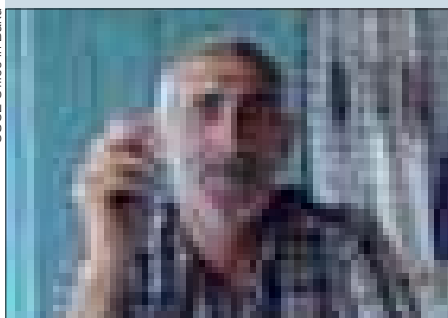
Demonstrating alternative energy sources: the 'Energy Bus'

Assessing local elections. With assistance from the ODIHR, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and representatives of the participating States

Providing free legal support to vulnerable groups

Shirad Qarabagli, a pensioner, is involved in a legal dispute over housing. His first impulse was to hire a lawyer, but he had second thoughts when he found out how high the costs were. A brief meeting with a lawyer cost him one-fifth of his pension, and the cost of a single day's representation in court an easily exceeded it. Many other Azerbaijanis face a similar predicament – a lack of legal knowledge and means to pay for such advice puts them at a disadvantage, limiting their access to the judicial system.

OSCE Office in Baku



To address this imbalance, the OSCE Office in Baku and the Azerbaijani Young Lawyers' Union established a legal aid line, which offers free legal advice and representation to the most vulnerable groups of the population, including single parent families, households with many dependent children, pensioners, unemployed and asylum seekers, among others. Close to 120 individuals have already found help at the legal line since it was opened in June. In addition to housing and property issues, the line has helped clients handle problems related to family law, resolve labour disputes and settle claims to social benefits.

The legal aid project has helped Shirad to effectively protect his property rights in court. "I had no money to hire a professional lawyer. Then I decided to ask the line for help. Well, I had some doubts that they will be able to help me, since there were so young. I'm glad that I was wrong, they did a great job helping me."

in Azerbaijan, the Office co-ordinated the observation of the December 2004 municipal elections and carried out an assessment of the electoral process. A week prior to election day, the Office produced a series of public service announcements, which were aired on most popular radio networks throughout the country. Several stations ran live programmes on polling day encouraging people to participate live on the radio after they had voted.

Rapid reaction on human rights violations. The Office supported the establishment and operation of a 'rapid reaction group' within the Ombudsman Institute, responsible for immediate response to each reported complaint of human rights violation in detention facilities. The group is expected to respond to calls within a few hours, the objective being the reduction of the number of human rights violations and law infringements at preliminary detention facilities. The initiative is aimed at buttressing the rule of law among law enforcement agencies by following up each confirmed case.

Combating human trafficking. On 6 May, the Azerbaijani President adopted a National Action Plan for the fight against human trafficking. The plan had been prepared by the Office, together with the IOM and the Council of Europe. As a follow-up to this landmark decision, the Office developed projects with local NGOs to raise public awareness and to provide protection for potential victims. It also helped establish two NGOs that are in charge of running a national toll-free helpline and the country's first shelter for victims.

Monitoring of NGO registration status. While the Law on Registration of Legal Entities and State Register of Legal Entities, adopted in January, was a step forward towards ensuring freedom of association, NGO registration remained difficult in 2004. Following consultations with the Ministry of Justice, the Office monitored the implementation of the new law with special regard to NGO registration. A group of legal advisers was hired to observe the registration process at the Ministry and to render free consultations to applicant NGOs.

Supporting the media. As part of its activities to support a free and independent

media, the Office co-hosted a conference on mass media, the judiciary and the rule of law. In addition, it held a seminar on lessons learned from elections held in the area of the CIS, aimed at identifying ways to better protect reporters against beatings and harassment during demonstrations and pickets. The event was attended by journalists from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

The Office, together with the Interior Ministry and the local NGO, *Press Council*, began distributing special vests to reporters who regularly cover political demonstrations and street clashes. It is expected that the vests, which are brightly coloured and carry the word 'Press' on the back, will help distinguish journalists from the crowd during street protests.

In the field of media legislation, the Office was very active in lobbying for the adoption of two important laws pertaining to free and independent media, the Law on Public Television and on Freedom of Information. To promote changes to the law governing the protection of reputation, which had been the source of numerous libel cases against the print media during the year, the Office organized several roundtable meetings.

Raising political interest among school children

Over 50,000 Azerbaijani school children showed off their knowledge of political affairs at a nationwide competition sponsored by the Office in Baku. This 'Olympiad', which was organized together with the local NGO, *Kainat* (Universe), encouraged the pupils to find out more about the activities of international organizations – including the OSCE – and to learn about the importance of civil society and democratic institutions. In the second phase of this project, the competition finals were televised on state TV, which helped bring the discussion before a wider audience.

Head of Office:
Ambassador Maurizio Pavesi
Revised budget: €1,512,600
www.osce.org/baku

OSCE Mission to Georgia

Overall, events in 2004, notably in Ajara and the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, moved at a rapid pace, impacting directly on the work of the Mission and requiring it to respond quickly to events on the ground. The Mission completed two phases of the Georgia Elections Assistance Programme (GEAP), implementing a comprehensive package of technical assistance in time for the 4 January presidential election and 28 March parliamentary elections.

Following the elections, the Mission actively engaged in assisting the new Government in various aspects of its democratic reform programme, involving the Mission's economic-environmental and human dimension staff in further substantial work with their governmental and civil society counterparts.

Throughout April and the early days of May, the confrontation between the Government in Tbilisi and the authorities in Batumi became the main focus for the Mission's political and human dimension teams. The Mission followed the developments on the ground closely by rotating mission members regularly to Ajara. Following the successful resolution of the

crisis, the Mission was able to increase its human dimension activities in the region.

Promoting the peace process during the heightened Georgian-Ossetian crisis also required increased attention from the Mission. In May, the Georgian Government deployed Interior Ministry troops into the zone of conflict to close down contraband routes. The South Ossetian side declared mass mobilization. Both sides introduced additional armed forces into the zone of conflict and established illegal checkpoints. In August, the two sides engaged in offensive operations and the situation deteriorated further resulting in hostage-taking and casualties on both sides.

The Mission, as a participant in the Joint Control Commission (JCC), met regularly with the JCC Co-chairmen, and focused on the reaffirmation of the need to resolve the conflict through exclusively peaceful means as well as on the urgency of removing unauthorized units from the zone of conflict. Throughout the year, Mission Monitoring Officers observed the Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPKF) activities and helped improve their control and communications structures.

Political-Military Dimension Activities

THE GEORGIAN-OSSETIAN CONFLICT

Rapid response for peaceful resolution.

In responding rapidly to events on the ground, the Mission was active in the JCC, which is co-chaired by Georgia, the Russian Federation, North Ossetia and South Ossetia. With regard to its monitoring role, the Mission deepened co-operation with the JPKF, which consist of a Georgian, a Russian and a North Ossetian battalion.

In particular, the Mission succeeded in:

- promoting, in co-operation with the JPKF, the cease-fire brokered in mid-August by the JCC;
- engaging actively in a series of JCC meetings aimed at injecting impetus to the political process for a peaceful resolution and at preventing renewed violence;
- promoting confidence between the sides in order to defuse tension;
- producing, with the four sides, a number of concept papers that propose ways of moving the political process forward;
- co-ordinating preparations to implement a project for the rehabilitation of



OSCE Mission monitors with an Ossetian officer, a Georgian officer and a Russian officer of the JPKF on patrol in the zone of conflict (from left to right)

the zone of conflict and for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) funded by the European Commission with a grant of €2.5 million to re-build confidence and foster transparency and market economy practices; and

- facilitating the launch of the official JCC newsletter, aimed at promoting objective and transparent accounts of the JCC's work.

The Mission participated in the 5 November meeting of the Georgian Prime Minister, Zurab Zhvania, and the South Ossetian leader, Eduard Kokoity, which marked a key political event in the peace process. They reaffirmed their commitment to the peaceful settlement of the conflict and set a timetable for the urgent demilitarization of the zone of conflict.

The Field Office in Tskhinvali – a focal point for dialogue and monitoring operations

The Mission's Field Office in Tskhinvali continued facilitating the Mission's efforts to maintain the negotiation process between the sides to the conflict by organising and hosting meetings and consultations at different levels, including those conducted with JCCA activities and the Steering Committee on economic rehabilitation.

The Office provided an operational base for the Mission's monitoring activities and support to the JPKF. This became particularly important with the resumption of a tentative military confrontation during the summer crisis, to which the Mission reacted by increasing its monitoring capacities. The Field Office also served as a focal point for diplomats and foreign journalists.

Transparency and military monitoring.

The Mission continued monitoring the JPKF in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. OSCE Mission Monitoring Officers accompanied JPKF monitoring patrols in the zone of conflict, but also patrolled independently and liaised with local military and civilian authorities.

Following the August cease-fire, the Mission increased the number of Monitoring Officers and set up a permanent observation post at the junction of strategic roads in the zone of conflict. From the so-called *Pauk* (Russian for 'Spider'), the Monitoring Officers observed and reported on developments on the ground. This verification of developments by an independent presence served as an important confidence-building measure.

Voluntary handover and transparent destruction of weapons. The Mission has supported the JPKF programme of voluntary handover of arms and ammunition since it began in 2000. Within the framework of this initiative, communities that hand over weapons to the JPKF benefit from small-scale projects to improve the local infrastructure. Projects running until summer 2004 included the refurbishment of an out-patients' centre, road and canal

repair, furnishing schools with computers and providing nursery facilities.

At the end of April, engineers of the Russian battalion of the JPKF destroyed all the weapons and ammunition that had been collected, in the presence of representatives of the Georgian and South Ossetian sides and representatives of accredited embassies and the media. OSCE Monitoring Officers were present throughout the whole process to confirm the total destruction of all the collected weapons and ammunition.

From May, the security situation grew steadily worse in the zone of conflict, and the programme eventually had to be put on hold.

THE GEORGIAN-ABKHAZ CONFLICT

In July, the peace process led by the UN almost came to a standstill after a maritime incident occurred near Sukhumi.

The Abkhaz side stepped back from an agreement to let the UN Observer Mission to Georgia deploy international civilian police officers to train and equip law enforcement bodies in the conflict zone, resulting in only a partial deployment of the police officers to the conflict zone in the Georgian-administered Samegrelo region. Still lacking consent by the Abkhaz side, there was no progress in 2004 regarding the opening, in Gali, of a branch office of the UN Human Rights Office Abkhazia, Georgia, with the participation of an additional, seconded OSCE officer.

THE BORDER MONITORING OPERATION

In 2004, the Border Monitoring Operation (BMO) continued to help build confidence and security in its area of operation. Building on experience gained over previous years, the Mission carried out its mandate more comprehensively and efficiently.



To fulfil the mandate, the BMO had eight primary patrol bases along the border, one permanent border patrol in Assa Valley and one forward supply point at Telavi airfield. In May, 11 permanent observation posts were established at key points along the observed 280 km border. During 2004, monitors reported over 800 cases of individual or group border crossings and movements into and out of the non-delineated area. This figure includes air raid and groups of people with pack animals.

Increased flexibility. The BMO injected increased flexibility into its operations by creating a Mobile Reserve Team and by widening the areas in which patrols, both static and mobile, operated. This Team provided a rapid deployment patrol, capable of moving to any location and setting up operations at short notice. Static and mobile patrols often overlapped their areas of operations to give better coverage. This promoted the effectiveness of the operation by giving monitors an increased knowledge of the ground where they worked. Rapid relocation to observation posts was mainly done by helicopter.

Increased efficiency. To help increase their efficiency, border monitors were equipped with and extensively trained on high-resolution day and night photographic and observation equipment. The BMO continued to improve its equipment handling techniques, which, when combined with increased knowledge of the ground, added to its overall effectiveness. Patrols used up-to-date portable modem communications with increased performance capability, enabling them to send reports and photographs from remote mountain locations.

As a result of lack of consensus on the extension of the BMO, all observing and reporting ceased on 31 December 2004.

DESTRUCTION OF SURPLUS MILITARY STOCKPILES

Stockpiles of munitions, in whatever condition, are a lethal hazard and might become a source of materials for terrorists. The Mission's involvement with these projects is in line with the OSCE participating States' commitment to combat terrorism as well as to address environmental threats to security.

Further improvements were made to equipment and buildings at the Recycling and Destruction Centre, which was established in 2004. By July, large quantities of munitions were being transported to the Centre from other bases. Several hundred tons of unstable and damaged bombs, missiles, cluster bomb packs and shells were destroyed.

Neutralizing dangerous chemicals. Further stages were completed in the Mission's project to reduce the toxic waste pollution

caused by the dumping of petrol, oil and lubricants, and remains of spent munitions contaminating the land of former Soviet bases. The Mission oversaw the neutralization of approximately 60 tons of collected dangerous and other unwanted chemicals including the solidified remains of napalm.

After assessing the extent and nature of contamination on designated sites and drawing up a works schedule, the Mission cleared the sites of remains of exploded ordnance and chemical debris. By year's end, the process of decontaminating the land had begun.



Recycling and destroying tons of unviable munitions left on former Soviet bases

This live shell from the obsolete 100mm KC-19 anti-aircraft artillery system is one of approximately 10,000 shells to be dismantled in 2005. Some 23,000 shells of this type have been successfully dismantled so far. Several OSCE participating States responded to calls from the Georgian Government to assist by funding the programme.

ACTION AGAINST TERRORISM

In response to the OSCE Chairmanship's wish to prioritize anti-terrorism measures, the Mission assists the Government in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1373 and the universal conven-

tions and protocols on anti-terrorism. In November, together with the Secretariat's Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) and the UNODC, the Mission organized a workshop in Tbilisi on ratification and implementation of these Conventions and Protocols.

Mission assistance during 2004 related to counter-terrorist capacity-building aimed at strengthening the co-operation between anti-terrorism departments of different Georgian state agencies and relevant international and regional organizations. Georgian specialized departments were encouraged to develop a common system of information gathering, analysis, storage and retrieval relating to convicted or suspected terrorists and criminals.

The Mission assisted the Georgian efforts to counter terrorism by offering a document of best practice compiled from the experience of OSCE participating States.

The Mission facilitated the participation of Georgian officials in a series of workshops and conferences on issues such as travel document security, border management and security as well as strategies to combat illicit trafficking and criminal use of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear substances and weapons.

The Mission provided assistance to the Georgian State Border Defence, with information about new machine-readable passport technology.

POLICE DEVELOPMENT

Offering new impetus for police reform.

After a series of visits by the Secretariat's Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU), the Government and the OSCE signed a Memorandum of Understanding in October. In addition, the so-called 'Needs Assessment and Formulation of an OSCE Police Assistance Programme for Georgia' was launched.

The Mission also appointed a Police Adviser, whose main responsibility is to assist the Interior Ministry in formulating a vision, values and objectives for the reform of policing in Georgia and creating a strategic plan to deliver these aims. The Adviser helps

strengthen the Ministry's personnel management system and develop a new concept and model for basic police training. It is also planned to introduce modern community policing concepts as the foundations of the reform of the police force.

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Focusing on economic security. The main focus of the Mission in the economic and environmental dimension was the fight against corruption, the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, and assistance to the Government to develop economic strategies. The results of the Mission's efforts included the following:

- To promote the Government's fight against money-laundering, the Mission organized a workshop on effective analysis of financial data that brought together experts from the UNODC, the World Bank and Interpol as well as relevant officials from ministries and the banking community.
- Through its Young Entrepreneur Seminar (YES) Programme, the Mission provided business training for 100 young people in Gardabani and Marneuli, which is home to large minority populations and suffering from high unemployment.
- The Mission began to assist the National Security Council in an analysis of the country's privatization plan. Sound economic growth and political security will be the focus of an extensive review to be carried out in 2005.

Addressing issues of environmental security. The Mission conducted training seminars for government officials on the Aarhus Convention, ratified by Georgia in 2003. It continued to support the development of an Aarhus Centre, which is aimed at building partnership and trust between the Government and civil society sectors working on environmental matters.

The Mission also worked on identifying environmental problems that can result in instability and potentially in conflict. Assisted by the OCEEA, the Mission supported the OSCE-UN Environment and Security (ENVSEC) initiative in develop-

ing a preliminary work programme that identifies geographic and thematic areas of environmental concerns for Georgia.

Natela Grigalashvili



Scientists from Tbilisi State University take river samples for the NATO Science for Peace Programme. The Mission continued to support the programme to monitor water quality at ten stations along the Kura river, testing samples for contamination by heavy metals, physiological properties, and organic compounds. The project has created baseline environmental data that is essential for constructive international dialogue on the environmental risks.

Human Dimension Activities

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Integrating human rights principles into society and legislation. The Mission continued to promote international standards of human rights, focusing this year on law enforcement bodies, national human rights institutions, and communities in potential conflict areas.

In the area of law enforcement, the Mission helped the Government implement the National Action Plan against Torture 2003–2005. The Mission set up a procedure to combat torture and ill-treatment by:

- conducting, with relevant state bodies, unannounced monitoring visits to police stations and prisons;

- organizing training sessions for law enforcement staff on international anti-torture standards;
- building up a network of both state and civil human rights advocates; and
- increasing its anti-torture activities with the Public Defender's Office.

To support the Government in implementing its OSCE commitments, the Mission strengthened the national human rights institutions and dealt with individual human rights complaints. In addition, the Mission trained the staff of all six regional branches of the Public Defender's Office and arranged roundtables on current key human rights issues. It also supported the Public Defender in drafting a law on the rights of internally displaced persons.

Human rights activities in areas of potential tension. The Mission arranged training for ethnic Armenian and Azerbaijani teachers on how to teach human rights in those regions of Georgia that have large ethnic minority populations. Following the end of the Ajara crisis, the Mission started comprehensive human rights training, advocacy and awareness-raising activities in all of Ajara.

To further promote human rights and to build up confidence in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, the Mission established a human rights Sunday-school, arranged weekly joint human rights sessions for Georgian and Ossetian children, and trained human rights teachers. Another project aimed at training Ossetian law professionals and Georgian and Ossetian law students had to be suspended due to the security situation in the zone of conflict during the summer. In Abkhazia, Georgia, the Mission supported human rights television programmes and civil society organizations.

Strengthening the fight against trafficking in human beings. In order to improve the local capacity to combat human trafficking, the Mission worked with government officials and NGOs. This work included support in drafting a law to fight trafficking, expected to be passed by Parliament in 2005, and the redrafting of a national action plan against human trafficking. These two drafts were drawn up

by local experts, guided by the OSCE and international expertise.

Promoting gender equality. The Mission helped a coalition of women's NGOs and government representatives develop a national action plan on gender equality. To increase awareness among police, teachers, and doctors, the Mission financed a series of training courses on domestic violence.

RULE OF LAW

Together with the ODIHR, the Mission financed training for 20 prison security staff to improve the professionalism of prison officers. This was organized with the help of international and local experts.

The Mission supported the initiative of the Justice Ministry in setting up a legislative basis for the draft execution code. It also began looking at ways of assisting the practice of using alternative sentences as a means of reducing the number of prisoners.

To raise awareness of the need for Georgian legislation to comply with international standards, a Legal Discussion Forum was held twice a month with the support of the Mission. Legal professionals taking part in this Forum submitted their recommendations to the Justice Ministry.

When the Ministry gave consideration to amending the constitution, the Mission provided expert opinion on the draft amendments, in co-operation with the Venice Commission to the Council of Europe.

DEMOCRATIZATION

The Georgia Elections Assistance Programme. Following a meeting at the margins of the Maastricht Ministerial Council, at which States pledged funds for elections assistance to Georgia in December 2003, the Mission laid the groundwork for and administered the Georgia Elections Assistance Programme (GEAP). It was set up to facilitate the provision of funds pledged by participating States to various implementing partners for a comprehensive package of technical assistance activities in time for both the presidential and parliamentary elections.

The first phase of the GEAP – the 4 January presidential election – focused on setting up an adequate mechanism for managing and monitoring project implementation with maximum transparency for donors and other interested parties.

In its second phase – the 28 March parliamentary elections – the Programme further strengthened the assistance provided for the presidential election and focused on building capacity within Georgian electoral institutions.

Strengthening Georgia's democratic institutions. After the elections in early 2004, the Mission focused on helping strengthen democratic institutions, assisting the Government in efforts to ensure that:

- Parliament can represent the voters effectively. The Mission actively supported the formation of a new code of ethics for Members of Parliament to guarantee they are publicly accountable.
- local government can meet the demands of the local population. The Mission supported the Council of Europe in developing a national association of local councils to provide them with a discussion forum. It also supported the publication of the Tbilisi city budget to make sure that the budgeting process is transparent.
- the media is free to provide unbiased information. The Mission implemented a media development project with Ajara state TV. In addition, it raised awareness among Georgian media professionals of national media legislation and international standards of freedom of expression and provided training for media professionals in Abkhazia, Georgia.

In October, media professionals contributed to the declaration of the First South Caucasus Conference on Freedom of the Media. This gathering of Georgian, Azerbaijani and Armenian journalists and international experts was organized in Tbilisi by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Mission. In total, some 50 participants, including journalists from the three South Caucasus countries, international experts, and NGO representatives, attended the event.

Involving communities in peace-building processes. To reach beyond the divisions in Georgia's conflict areas, the Mission encouraged local NGOs and the media to become more active in community development activities. The Mission created a small grants programme for NGOs that work for the benefit of both the Ossetian and Georgian communities living in the zone of conflict. To further increase the flow of information between the communities across the conflict line, the Mission also worked to establish a joint Georgian-Ossetian newspaper and Internet site.

After completing an assessment of NGOs in Abkhazia, Georgia, the Mission provided a training programme to strengthen their longer-term planning capacity. In Sukhumi and Tbilisi, teams of disabled youth from both sides received financial support to develop jointly their training skills to raise public awareness of the problems facing the disabled in their communities, through civic advocacy and public education activities.

Head of Mission:
Ambassador Roy Reeve
Revised Budget: €20,688,900
www.osce.org/georgia

OSCE Office in Yerevan

In 2004, the OSCE Office in Yerevan continued to increase its activities in the politico-military and the economic-environmental dimensions, while maintaining its work in the human dimension.

Important new initiatives undertaken by the Office included promoting freedom of assembly in Armenia – an area where the Office has taken the lead role – and a programme to strengthen the country's Parliament. Support for electoral reform and media

development also continued to be high on the Office's agenda. The Office further bolstered its efforts to promote foreign investment in Armenia and continued to support activities combating money laundering and promoting local economic development. The Office continued with a large-scale Police Assistance Programme and initiated another major programme aimed at recycling/disposal of rocket fuel component (*Melange*) stocks.

HIGHLIGHTS

Combating corruption. The Office continued to assist the Armenian authorities and civil society in their efforts to improve and implement the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. It co-ordinated an international working group on anti-corruption and represented the international community in the Anti-Corruption Monitoring Commission, created by Presidential decree on 1 June to monitor the implementation of the Strategy. To mobilize civil society in the fight against corruption, the Office also supported the creation of an anti-corruption NGO coalition and held a conference in September on the role of mass media in combating corruption. The conference was attended by some 30 journalists and representatives of the presidential administration, the National Assembly, the Prosecutor's office, and civil society.

Promoting electoral reform. Together with the ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Venice Commission, the Office provided recommendations for amending the Armenian Electoral Code and facilitated public discussion on the issue. Throughout the year, the Office continued to promote the improvement of electoral standards in

line with key recommendations made by experts from the ODIHR and the Council of Europe.

The Office continued to chair the International Working Group on Elections, which promotes the exchange of information, better co-ordination of activities and co-operation among international agencies in providing election-related assistance.

Supporting the National Assembly. To strengthen the professional capacity of parliamentary staff, the Office carried out this new programme with the assistance of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. This initiative was implemented in two phases, the first one consisting of a comprehensive training course for 24 expert staff from three Standing Committees and two Departments followed by a week-long exchange visit to study the work of the Hungarian National Assembly. By strengthening the skills and knowledge of the expert staff, the project contributed to facilitating a more effective law-making process in Parliament.

Promoting freedom of assembly. The most important activity of the Office in this field was the promotion of legislation to ensure the right to freedom of assembly. In this regard, the adoption of the Law on the Procedure of Conducting Public Gatherings, Rallies, Demonstrations and Marches by the Armenian Parliament in April was a major breakthrough. The Office continued its work to promote further improvements to the law and its effective implementation to guarantee that the right to freedom of assembly is fully respected.

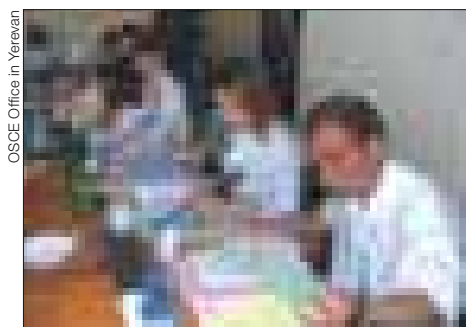
Recycling/disposal of rocket fuel component (*Melange*). Following the request of the Armenian Government for

technical and financial assistance for the recycling/disposal of rocket fuel component (*Melange*) stocks, the Office supported the elaboration of an independent scoping study by an international group of experts. The study identified the quantity and characteristics of the *Melange*, the processing technology for its ecologically sound transformation into liquid fertilizer, the human and technical resources available in-country, and provided a preliminary cost and time-frame for the project's implementation. The project is implemented across both the economic and environmental and politico-military dimensions.

Political-Military Dimension Activities

Reforming the police forces. Building on a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2003, the Office pursued its efforts to develop the Police Assistance Programme for Armenia, which was officially approved by the Armenian Government in September. Its goal is to strengthen trust and confidence between the police and society and to contribute to the development of community-oriented policing. Under the Programme, the following areas of policing will be supported by the OSCE: strengthening the Police Training Centre for induction training, the development and introduction of a community policing model in the Arabkir District Police Department, and the implementation of a modern emergency response system in the Yerevan City Police Department.

In co-operation with the OSCE Secretariat's Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU), the Office helped organize an in-depth needs assessment study, which included visits by expert teams from Russia, Sweden



Participants at one of the OSCE-initiated parliamentary training courses in Yerevan

and the Netherlands. In addition, study tours for two senior Armenian police commanders to Moscow, Hamburg and Malmö were arranged to assess different modern command- and control-systems.

Parliamentary oversight of the armed forces. Together with the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Armenian National Assembly, the Office organized a workshop to launch and promote a handbook on 'Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector'. The handbook, which was published in March 2003 by the DCAF and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, is designed to help parliamentarians, parliamentary staff experts, government officials, military and police officers improve their knowledge of the oversight role and authority that parliaments exert over the security sector. The Office sponsored the translation and printing of 1,000 copies of the handbook.

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Combating money laundering and suppressing financing of terrorism. The Office continued to facilitate the process of developing a legal framework to combat money laundering and the establishment of a Financial Intelligence Unit under the Central Bank of Armenia by providing professional expertise and financial support.

As a result of the activities of an interdisciplinary working group supported by the Office, a draft law on this issue was elaborated with the help of European experts. The Law was adopted by the National Assembly in December. The Office in Yerevan and the OCEEA organized a study tour for national experts to Vienna in December to strengthen co-operation and improve co-ordination among international actors in the fight against financing of terrorism, corruption and money laundering.

Promoting local economic development. The Office supported the elaboration of a strategic document on the socio-economic development of the Syunik province, one of the remotest border provinces of Armenia. It was prepared by a national consultancy group hired by the Office, while local

authorities and public stakeholders took an active part in the discussion and clarification of the priority issues of the document. The final document as well as the local 'Yellow Pages', issued with the support of the Office, were presented to the public in Syunik for their comments in December.

Attracting foreign investment. Several projects were undertaken to assist the Armenian authorities in their efforts to attract foreign investment to the country. The Office supported the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development in organizing an International Investment Forum in London in March, where Armenia's Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine was presented to international investors. It also sponsored the participation of one member of the Armenian delegation at the CIS Economic Forum in St. Petersburg in June.

Showcasing journalists' excellence

For the second time since 2003, the Armenian Aarhus Centre and the OSCE Office in Yerevan organized a competition for journalists working on environmental and human rights issues. On the occasion of Human Rights Day on 10 December, 11 journalists from different regions of Armenia received financial awards for their outstanding reporting on these issues in TV and print media.

"The main objective of the 2004 competition was to raise public awareness about the universal right to a safe environment," said Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin, Head of the OSCE Office after handing out the awards.

In the 'Press' category, the first prize was awarded to a journalist working for the newspaper, *Business*, from Syunik province. His article covered the problem of illegally cut trees in the forests in his region and contained an analysis of the causes and consequences of an unprofessional approach to forest utilization.

Supporting the Aarhus Centre. The Office continued its support for the Aarhus Centre, a public environmental information office in Yerevan. Established in 2002 in the premises of the Nature Protection Ministry with the Office's assistance, the Centre

moved to a new location in October. The Office also helped the Centre maintain its official website (www.armaarhus.am) and implement several environmental initiatives in Armenia. These included projects on environmental education for schoolchildren, raising awareness among the public about sustainable development, environment and security issues, as well as relevant international conventions and the implementation of national legislation.

International co-operation on environmental issues. The Office continued its support for several international environmental projects in the region, such as the OSCE-NATO Project on South Caucasus River Monitoring, an initiative that assesses the quality and quantity of the waters of the Kura and Araks river basin, which is now in its third year of implementation.

An important new initiative supported by the Office in 2004 was the OSCE-UN Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). In co-operation with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Nature Protection, the Office and the Secretariat's OCEEA helped the Armenian authorities prepare a preliminary work programme that addresses some of the environmental security threats identified in an ENVSEC report on the southern Caucasus. These include water management issues, problems related to rapid urban growth and pollution through uncontrolled industrial activity.

Human Dimension Activities

Supporting reform of the penitentiary system. Capacity-building and training seminars were the main elements of the Office's efforts to assist the Armenian authorities in reforming the country's penitentiary system. Special training classes were sponsored by the Office, the ODIHR and the international NGO, *Penal Reform International*, to help members of a newly-created monitoring board increase transparency in the running of penitentiary institutions.

The Office and the ODIHR also organized a study tour to Croatia for senior prison officials to give them a first-hand insight into the country's social rehabilitation and staff training techniques. As the institu-

tional framework for the implementation of alternative sanctions in Armenia is undergoing comprehensive review and reform, the Office contracted a local NGO, *Advanced Social Technologies*, to carry out an analysis. The report focused on the implementation of alternative sanctions such as community service and correctional labour.

Providing information on alternatives to military service. The Office continued its assistance to the Ministry of Defence, which after the adoption of the Law on Alternative Service, worked on the implementation of the Law, including preparing the required by-laws. At the Ministry's request, the Office provided it with an expert paper on alternative service options and liability issues for those selecting alternative service, based on the experience of other OSCE countries.

Handling individual human rights complaints. In close co-operation with the Armenian authorities, the Office continued to handle individual complaints of alleged human rights violations, as it has done since 2000. Through a defined procedure of receiving complaints and processing them in a database, the Office also obtained a better overview of the human rights situation in the country and assisted the authorities in tackling some of the identified problems.

Campaigning for human rights awareness. Continuing a project begun in 2002, the Office sponsored a human rights awareness-raising campaign, which targets the general public in the capital and remote regions. In 2004, the campaign focused on mechanisms for human rights protection at the domestic and international levels corresponding to the main areas of the OSCE's human dimension activities. In 32 TV presentations, the project presented subjects such as combating trafficking of human beings, the judiciary, fair trial issues, children rights and freedom of belief. The coverage of the project was wider than in 2003 because the format of live TV talk shows offered the possibility for people to phone in questions to experts. On average, 20 calls per broadcast were received in the TV studios.

OSCE Office in Yerevan



Gender training in Yerevan

The fight against trafficking in human beings. As one of the three co-chairs of the International Working Group on Anti-Trafficking – together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UNDP – the Office played a central role in the co-ordination of efforts to fight human trafficking in Armenia. The Group exchanged information on anti-trafficking activities and monitored the implementation of Armenia's National Plan of Action on the fight against human trafficking.

The Office implemented a project that analysed gaps in the legal framework and developed recommendations to introduce a consistent legal framework for the effective criminalization of trafficking and victim and witness protection. In addition, two local NGOs received technical assistance for a survey on the extent of trafficking in the country.

Addressing gender issues. Together with the ODIHR, the Office continued its efforts to further the role of women in Armenia's society. This included assisting the Government in developing a National Plan of Action on Women's Advancement and support for a 'train-the-trainers' project on women's rights and leadership. Another joint initiative focused on the introduction of academic courses on gender issues at secondary and higher education levels and promoted the institutionalization of gender studies as an academic subject.

Supporting freedom of the media and freedom of information. The distribution of broadcast frequencies and alleged

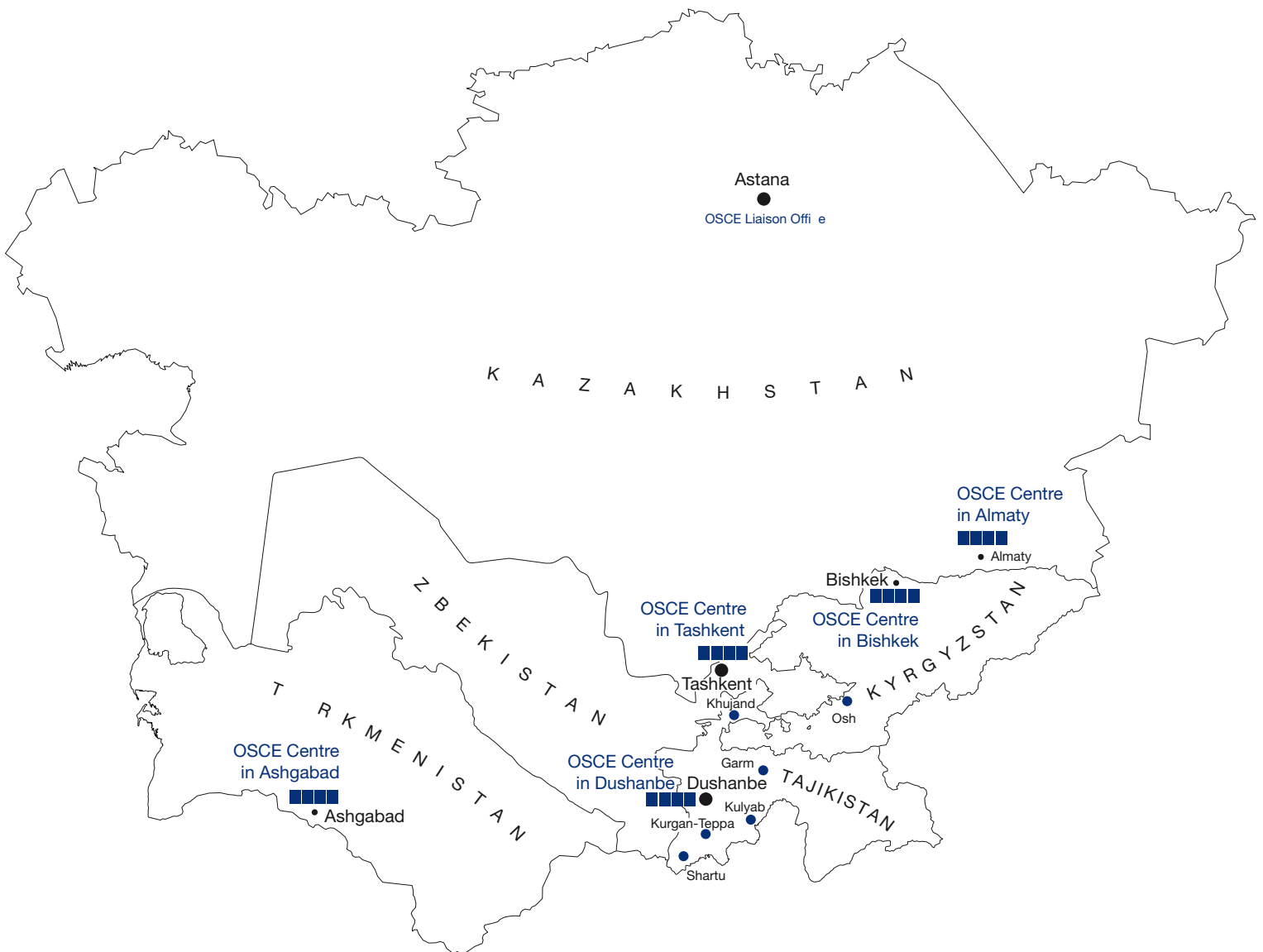
violations of the rights of journalists and media outlets were the most important media-related issues the Office dealt with in 2004. In co-operation with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Office continued to follow and report on the state of media in the country.

To observe the implementation of the Law on Freedom of Information adopted in 2003, the Office launched a project under which a network of monitors was established in three regions of Armenia. A total of 219 complaints were received from citizens concerning their right to receive information and, after intervention by the local Freedom of Information Centres, information was received in 134 cases. The monitors' role was also to raise awareness among officials and the public about the provisions of the Law.

With regard to media legislation, an informal working group chaired by the Office met regularly to exchange information and develop recommendations on legislation related to media and freedom of information. The Office also supported a joint project by the OSCE and the American Bar Association/Central and East European Law Initiative to train advocates and reporters on media legislation.

Head of Office:
Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin
Revised Budget: €1,227,700
www.osce.org/yerevan

CENTRAL ASIA



- International Borders
- OSCE Field Office

The boundaries and names on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the OSCE.

OSCE Centre in Almaty

Responding to new challenges in 2004, the OSCE Centre in Almaty increasingly focused on long-term activities that cut across all three OSCE dimensions. However, promoting security and stability in the region as well as furthering democratization and improving respect for human rights remained at the core of the Centre's work.

Combating extremism was tackled with an emphasis on respect for human rights. Acknowledging that freedom of the media is crucial to democratic development, the Centre expanded its training programme for journalists, including a focus on young regional journalists, gender issues, and environmental reporting. As part of its activities to address threats that undermine democratic development and the rule of law, the Centre offered workshops and

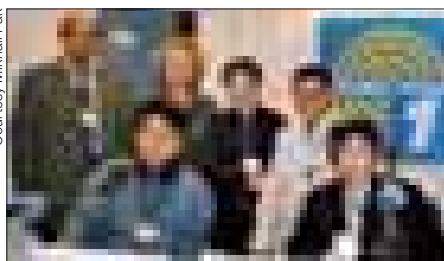
training seminars for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and government officials. Topics discussed ranged from international treaties to best practices on combating corruption, money-laundering and terrorism-financing.

The Centre continued its efforts in the field of environmental protection by promoting an awareness-raising campaign on radioactive hazards near the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. It also worked towards raising public participation on environmental issues in the Caspian Sea area. A one-year programme for Kazakhstani teachers was launched to help them better educate their pupils on environmental issues.

Political-Military Dimension A Activities

Combating terrorism and extremism. To promote best practices in the fight against terrorism and extremism, the Centre held several roundtables on combating the emerging threat of extremism while emphasizing respect for human rights. These events were organized with the support of the ODIHR and the OSCE Secretariat's Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU). The Centre also helped organize an exchange of law enforcement officials among all the Central Asian States in close co-operation with other OSCE Centres in the region. Together with international experts, they exchanged views on best practices to control the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Another of the Centre's projects focused on Kazakhstani police officers who were trained on how to protect human rights during counter-terrorism actions.

Courtesy Mikhail Pak



Some 400 young journalists from all corners of Kazakhstan attended master classes in journalism, which the Centre organized in 2004 in 15 regional cities. Among the participants, 11 were selected for a two-week professional internship in Poland. One of them was a young reporter from *Teks* radio station, Aliya Sydykova. "Polish journalism is among the best in Europe and what we learned is indispensable for our future work. Being in Poland on the eve of its accession to the European Union was a historic event and a challenge for any journalist", said Ms. Sydykova.

Developing the media

Access to information and a professional media sector are key elements of developing democracies and thriving civil societies. In 2004, the Centre continued giving support to the independent media by training young journalists from Kazakhstan's regions on how to cover economic, social, and environmental issues. This included specific issues such as human trafficking and gender stereotyping, topics which otherwise might have remained unreported. In order to provide regional journalists with easier access to the Internet, the Centre helped establish two Internet cafés in Pavlodar and Tarbagatay.

Economic and Environmental Dimension A Activities

Despite rapid economic growth over recent years, there remains a considerable gap between economic progress and overall living conditions in Kazakhstan, particularly in rural areas. In addition, economic hardship among Kazakhstanis is compounded in certain areas by ecological damage, affecting the health and livelihood of the population.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

In 2004, combating corruption and money-laundering became top priorities for the Centre. To introduce judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers to international legal standards, the Centre organized a number of training seminars. It also continued work



Training of Kazakhstani police officers

Zahkar Sviridenko



Kazakhstan's oil industry: loading facilities on the Caspian Sea

on trans-boundary water issues and its support for projects that aim at stimulating SMEs, with a special focus on female entrepreneurs.

Water management. Water represents an increasingly important strategic commodity and potential source of conflict in Central Asia. Efforts in joint water management are thus of crucial importance to the stability of the region. In 2004, the Centre in Almaty continued to assist an interstate working group whose task it is to establish a joint Kazakhstani-Kyrgyzstani water commission. This commission, which will deal with the joint management of the Chu and Talas rivers flowing from Kyrgyzstan to Kazakhstan, is expected to begin its work in January 2005.

Information campaign on the Land

Code. Bringing a combined approach to rule of law issues and the support of small enterprises, the Centre facilitated a broad information campaign in all regions on key provisions of the new Land Code adopted in 2003. The initiative included a series of information meetings, which were attended by several thousand farmers who came to learn how to acquire land in accordance with the Land Code.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Kazakhstan is suffering from environmental damage, which in many areas reduces the quality of life in the country's regions and represents a danger to individuals. Preventing oil spills in the Caspian Sea near Atyrau, Kazakhstan's oil industry centre, is a particular challenge for policy-makers. In this context, one of the Centre's key activities continued to be the further promotion of the Aarhus Convention in close co-operation with both the Government and civil society.

Public hearing on oil spills. In order to increase public participation and engage NGOs in the decision-making process on environmental issues, the Centre held a public hearing in Atyrau on the clearing up of oil spills in the Caspian Sea. As a result, the participants forwarded several policy recommendations to the relevant environmental authorities, addressing the deteriorating state of the environment in and near the Caspian Sea.

Information campaign on radiological safety. In August, the Centre and the Almaty-based NGO, *National Forum for Radiation Protection and Ecology*, launched an information campaign on basic radiological safety and personal conduct in contaminated areas near the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. The campaign included lectures and the distribution of videos,

posters, and brochures to the inhabitants of 28 remote villages.

"Nu lear s ientists and resear hers in large numbers – yes, they have all been here, but this is the first ampaign di- re- ted at those of us who live in remote areas. This goes to the ore issue: how to behave rationally and how to live next to ontaminated areas."

Sarzhai villager at a lecture on radiological safety rules

Environmental education for secondary schools. The Centre sponsored a year-long programme to promote environmental education in Kazakhstani secondary schools. This included a study of the country's present environmental legislation, which was presented in November at a conference in Almaty attended by 47 secondary school teachers from all the five Central Asian States.

Human Dimension Activities

Combating trafficking in human beings. Kazakhstan adopted an action plan on the combat and prevention of trafficking in human beings in February and ratified several key conventions to improve national legislation and raise public awareness on trafficking. The Centre is a member of

the Inter-Departmental Commission on Anti-trafficking chaired by the Minister of Justice. The Commission provides expertise on the development of Kazakhstan's anti-trafficking legislation.

A series of training seminars organized by the Centre in Shymkent and Petropavlovsk provided civil servants and journalists with basic training on the fight against human trafficking, drawing on action plans put together by regional authorities earlier in the year.

Strengthening the rule of law. In close co-operation with the ODIHR, the Centre held a number of events to help improve the professionalism among law officials and institutions in Kazakhstan. Through workshops and training seminars, it promoted discussions on how to ensure fair trials through forensic expertise and on the introduction of jury trials.

Human rights training for law enforcement officials. To help police officials better fulfil their tasks taking into account international human rights standards and practices, the Centre conducted a pilot training course for officers and teaching personnel. It is planned that the participants will become training focal points in their respective police stations.

Reforming the penitentiary system. Following an OSCE roundtable on the public monitoring of penitentiary institutions held in September 2003, a working group was formed to develop legislation regulat-

Strengthening democratic election processes

In September, Kazakhstan held elections to the *Majilis* (lower house of Parliament). Working closely with the country's Central Electoral Commission, political parties and civil society representatives, the Centre focused its attention on promoting OSCE standards as part of the process to amend Kazakhstan's election law. In the regions, the Centre helped open five advisory centres that provide voters with practical assistance, legal advice and information on the elections and the political candidates.



An election official shows voters in Astana how to use the electronic voting system.

Awareness-raising for the elections

Civil society and youth activities used to be rare in southern Kazakhstan. In recent years, the Centre co-operated with *Elections 2000*, an NGO from the Zhambyl region, to address this issue. From 2003 to 2004, the Centre supported training courses to promote electoral education and civic awareness among young voters. The initiative envisaged a long-term impact and was implemented with success. While only 40 students participated in local election observation in 1999 in this region, a total of 300 went to observe polls during the 2004 parliamentary elections.

ing this issue. It includes government representatives, local NGOs, the Centre and the ODIHR. The initiative is part of the Centre's increasing focus on improved protection of the constitutional rights of prisoners sentenced to death, life or long-term imprisonment and follows up on Kazakhstan's decision in 2003 to introduce a moratorium on the death penalty.

The Centre also addressed the issue of alternative prison sentencing in the country, which itself represents a major contribution towards humanizing the prison system and has led to a significant drop in the prison population. To obtain first-hand impressions on the state of the implementation of penitentiary reform, the Centre undertook several visits to penitentiary institutions.

Raising gender awareness. To raise the public's awareness of gender issues, the Centre held several seminars for journalists on the rights of women. The training sessions were followed by an essay

competition among participants on the participation of women in the decision-making process. Together with NGOs and the Government, the Centre also developed a strategy for increasing women's participation in politics.

Head of Centre:
Ambassador Ivar Vikki
Revised budget: €1,497,000
www.osce.org/almaty

OSCE Centre in Ashgabad

2004 saw a number of high-profile visits by OSCE representatives to Turkmenistan, including the Chairman-in-Office, his Personal Envoy for Central Asia, Martti Ahtisaari, and his Special Envoy to Turkmenistan, Younal Loutfi. In addition, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and a group of OSCE ambassadors travelled to the country. The Centre in Ashgabad considers that these visits contributed significantly to “melting the ice” between the host country and the Organization.

Some positive steps on the part of the Turkmen government were taken in 2004. Turkmenistan revoked its exit visa regime, which had been re-introduced following the assassination attempt on the President in 2002. The country also eased the registration of religious groups, continued with its legislative reform process, and rescinded criminal liability for involvement with non-registered civic organizations.

Promoting the rule of law, democratic and market reforms, basic human rights and freedoms, however, continue to remain challenging tasks. Further involvement of Turkmenistan in the OSCE’s activities would be appreciated.

The Centre’s priorities in 2004 remained focused on its conflict prevention role, promoting stability, democracy, good govern-

ance, socio-economic development, environmental awareness and human rights in the country. In co-operation with Turkmenistan’s authorities, the Centre intensified its efforts to strengthen the dialogue and implement its programmatic activities, while closely following developments in the country.

Co-operation with the international donor community expanded considerably. The Centre participated in joint projects in all three dimensions with the European Union’s TACIS programme, which provides technical assistance to countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Other joint initiatives were implemented together with the UNDP, the IOM, USAID, and the UNHCR. More joint projects are planned for 2005.

Defining the OSCE’s role in the region

Since 2001, the Centre in Ashgabad has been holding seminars on the role of the OSCE in the region. These events, which run under the title “What is the OSCE?”, are held throughout the country and contribute to a better understanding of the Organization’s mandate and its underlying principles, structures, and institutions. Particular attention is being given to the Centre’s activities and projects.

Political-Military Dimension Activities

Training border and customs officials.

As a means to share international experience and practice with Turkmenistan’s border and customs officials, the Centre organized a series of two-day training seminars in 2004. These events focused on the fight against trafficking in drugs, small arms and light weapons and human beings. They also touched upon the legal framework for border and customs control and co-operation with other ministries and agencies at home and abroad as well as on specific problems concerning procedures at border and customs posts.

In co-operation with the country’s State Customs Service and the EU TACIS programme, the Centre held three-month training sessions for customs officials to improve their English language skills and knowledge of computers. This helps them improve their communication skills with foreign visitors and maintain a computerized database.

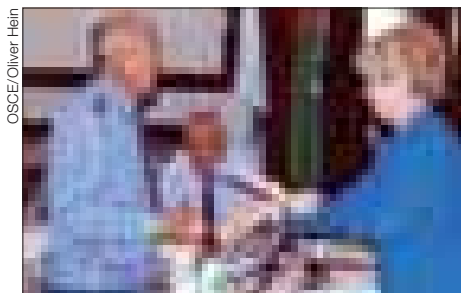
Combating terrorism. In July, a two-day seminar organized by the Centre focused on the global fight against terrorism. The meeting, which was held in co-operation with the Foreign Ministry and the Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU), looked at the political, economic and social aspects of terrorism and the relevant UN and OSCE principles, documents and bodies that deal with the fight against terrorism. The presentations emphasized regional and international co-operation.

Controlling the flow of small arms and light weapons. To familiarize law enforcement officials and military representatives

from the region with the ‘OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons’ and its recommendations, the Centre organized a workshop in Ashgabad. The event, which was prepared with the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) and Turkmenistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, brought together participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Media development

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May, the Centre participated in an Internet chat with members of the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX). A total of 11 journalists and alumni from the IREX Internet Access and Training Programme (IATP) gathered at IATP access sites in three cities in Turkmenistan and discussed issues related to freedom of the press. The interest in the chat and the questions from the participants encouraged the Centre to look at follow-up activities in coming years.



Head of Centre Ambassador Badescu (right) hands over a certificate to a participant at an OSCE small arms workshop.

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

As in previous years, the Centre's main activity in this dimension was in the field of developing SMEs and raising public awareness of environmental issues.



A farmer in Turkmenistan's Ahal region signs for a micro-credit provided as part of an OSCE project.

Supporting economic development.

Turkmenistan's economy continued to grow at the macro level in 2004. To further stimulate job creation and promote the development of private entrepreneurship, the Centre supported several training courses for small business representatives organized by Turkmenistan's Union of Entrepreneurs. The courses included seminars for businesswomen to help them improve their practical business skills and a programme specifically catering for young entrepreneurs. The Centre envisages further co-operation with the Union, but considers that it needs to undergo a reform process before new initiatives can be envisaged. An external consultant was engaged to provide a thorough review and analysis of the Union's work as well as recommendations on how to reform and improve it.

As part of a cost-sharing initiative with the EU TACIS programme, the Centre supported a small micro-credit fund for

four pilot Voluntary Farmers' Associations. The selected farmers were trained in basic business skills, including business planning and loan management. The Centre also provided office equipment and supplies to the four associations. The project was warmly welcomed and appreciated by the farmers, who would otherwise not have had any access to credit facilities.

Raising public awareness of environmental concerns. To make Turkmenistan's public, and in particular its pupils and students, more aware of environmental issues, the Centre supported a project undertaken by the country's Ministry of Nature Protection, which included the drafting and publishing of textbooks and guide books for teachers on the implementation of the National Environmental Action Plan. The Ministry's centre dealing with the implementation of this Action Plan received training material, and a training seminar was arranged for the Action Plan's national co-ordinator. The Centre also funded the design, publication and distribution of desk and wall calendars advocating environmental values, which were distributed to civil servants and politicians throughout the country. In addition, the Centre supported the production of a series of TV spots on the issue.

Human Dimension Activities

Supporting legislative reform. The Centre continued to offer OSCE legal expertise and advice on best practices for the country's legislative reform. In co-operation with the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, it prepared a collection of Turkmen legislative acts on human rights subjects, which it planned to publish in Turkmen, English and Russian.

Democratization and civil society

activity. To help develop a new strategy on further civil society participation in the country's public life, the Centre organized meetings with representatives of the international donor community and the emerging civil society. It also provided local NGOs with advice on how to deal with the country's new legislation on public organizations.

Dealing with human rights cases. The Centre continued to receive a significant number of individual complaints, particularly on the demolition of houses due to the construction of new buildings. A number of cases were brought to the attention of Turkmenistan's authorities. The Centre also gave legal advice in cases related to the rights of other vulnerable people.

In February, the Centre hosted a launching ceremony of the Russian translation of the report 'Human Security Now', the English original of which was published by the New York-based Commission on Human Security.

Gender issues. Women's rights and gender issues at large remained high on the Centre's agenda. As part of its activities in this field, the Centre helped Turkmen citizens to participate in conferences that focused on gender issues and provided legal expertise on the topic.

Promoting capacity-building in Turkmenistan

To support the work of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, the Centre in Ashgabad contributed to the Academy's master programme with presentations on its activities in Turkmenistan. It also facilitated the participation of Turkmen officials and citizens in a number of important OSCE events and supported the Central Asian Youth Network (CAYN). (For more on this, see sections on the OSCE Centres in Bishkek and in Tashkent.)

Head of Centre:
vacant (until July 2004);
Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu;
as of 10 January 2005:
Ambassador Ibrahim Đikić)
Revised budget: €979,500
www.osce.org/ashgabad

OSCE Centre in Bishkek

Bringing about positive change to people's daily lives by protecting individual rights, facilitating access to justice and supporting democratic transformation processes remained the overarching goal of the Centre in 2004. To improve its efficiency, the Centre further harmonized its activities with the policies and programmes of the Kyrgyz Government, the country's civil society organizations, and the UN offices present in Kyrgyzstan. Striking a balance between the interests of the Government and civil society continued to be a challenging task.

Priorities in 2004 included supporting election processes, addressing the issues of rule of law and good governance and fostering media development. High on the Centre's agenda were also the fight against corruption, reform of the police structures, and activities in the economic and environmental dimension. In addition, the Centre continued to implement three important extra-budgetary

projects: the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, the Police Assistance Programme and the Election Support Programme.

The OSCE field office in Osh

Located in the south of Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE Centre's field office in Osh engages mainly in activities falling under its conflict prevention mandate. In 2004, it advocated the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, with a particular emphasis on addressing torture and mistreatment in detention as well as trafficking in human beings. There was also a focus on border management and on the monitoring of inter-ethnic relations and the situation of uranium waste sites in the region. In the period prior to the local elections on 10 October, the office cooperated closely with local election commissions and political parties and hosted a number of election coordination meetings.

Political-Military Dimension Activities

Reforming Kyrgyzstan's police forces.

In its first, 18-month-long phase, the OSCE's Police Assistance Programme in Kyrgyzstan focused mainly on improving professionalism and operational capacity among Kyrgyzstan's police forces. With the support of the OSCE Secretariat's Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU), the Centre began preparations for a second phase, covering issues such as

legislation, professionalism, management, organization, human rights, community policing and training. It is expected that the programme will serve as a basis for the comprehensive reform of the Kyrgyz police over the next years.

Border management activities. In cooperation with provincial authorities, the field office in Osh closely monitored the border situation and the on-going border demarcation process between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, including the

de-mining process in the region. A pilot project initiated together with the French NGO, *Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement* (ACTED), began identifying and addressing cross-border issues between Jalal-Abad province in Kyrgyzstan and Andijon province in neighbouring Uzbekistan. In order to strengthen the dialogue across borders, the field office sought to work border management components into various other project initiatives.



Sniffer dog 'Boy' helps fight against drug trafficking

Kyrgyzstan's new mobile police groups, created under the OSCE Police Assistance Programme, were joined by new team members: sniffer dogs such as 'Boy' are specially trained to assist the police to find heroin and other illegal substances. In April, a sniffer dog helped find 44 kilograms of heroin in a passenger train near Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan. The heroin was being transported to Bishkek and was destined to reach the Russian Federation via Kazakhstan. This was the second heroin seizure made with the help of dogs trained under the Assistance Programme.

Strengthening media development

Both on a national and regional level, the Centre continued its efforts to support the development of Kyrgyzstan's media. It worked towards involving civil society more broadly in this field by encouraging initiatives to participate in projects that promote democracy and good electoral practices on radio and TV. The Centre also set up a media project, which includes observation of coverage of election-related issues in the Kyrgyz media. Other initiatives in the field of media development included providing rural media representatives with information on how to establish a radio company and giving support to the Osh TV company, an independent outlet in southern Kyrgyzstan. A series of training seminars for journalists in all regions helped raise awareness of Kyrgyz media legislation and the rights of journalists.

for small businesses. The findings were thoroughly analysed and resulted in a set of recommendations to improve the legal framework, which was presented to the Kyrgyz Government, local business community representatives and international donor agencies. In particular, there were specific recommendations to improve enforcement of certain business licensing regulations, which will help spur robust growth of SMEs. It is also expected that the Kyrgyz Government will take these survey findings into account when formulating and implementing an action plan to attract foreign direct investment.

Promoting female entrepreneurship was another important part of the Centre's work in the economic dimension. In cooperation with local NGOs, the Centre hosted a series of nation-wide seminars that looked at how to create more jobs for women in the country's rural areas.

Legal reforms in the economic field. To create a safe environment for economic development, the Centre supported project activities to speed up legal reforms in the field of good governance and the fight against corruption. In cooperation with the UNDP and USAID, the Centre provided the Kyrgyz Government with international experts to assist it in identifying key directions for developing an efficient anti-corruption strategy and an action plan.

Together with the Secretariat of the Consultative Council on Good Governance, the Centre held a workshop on national and international legal instruments and best practices to raise public awareness on the technical and legislative requirements for the ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption.

Strengthening environmental security: Managing the Mailuu-Suu nuclear waste dumps. Co-operating closely with the World Bank, the Centre supported project activities to handle the environmental threat created by the unsecured radioactive waste site in Mailuu-Suu. This included helping arrange a visit by experts from the International Atomic Energy

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Developing small business. The Centre implemented several projects aimed at stimulating the growth of SMEs in Kyrgyzstan, which are a crucial factor for the country's socio-economic progress. Together with a national partner, *PROMA Agency*, the Centre surveyed local companies about the operational environment



A stall at Bishkek's central food market



A resident of Mailuu-Suu speaks up during an OSCE awareness-raising event.

Agency (IAEA), who collected firsthand information on the risk for the local population. Another of the Centre's projects in this field targeted residents of the area, who were made aware of the hazards resulting from exposure to radiation, as well as local environmental NGOs who took part in an advocacy-training workshop.

Promoting protection of the environment. To further advance national and regional strategies for sustainable environmental protection, the Centre organized a series of seminars that sought to improve the understanding of both authorities and civil society of the Aarhus Convention provisions. In October, an Aarhus Information Centre was opened in Osh to increase public awareness of the Convention and to facilitate access to environmental information for local citizens.

Human Dimension Activities

Fostering political awareness among the young. To encourage young persons to be politically more conscious and active, the Centre supported several activities, such as a national forum where pupils and students could debate election-related topics. Together with partners from several governmental offices and national and international NGOs, the Centre supported the publication of civic education textbooks and teachers' manuals in Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek, which helped raise awareness for political processes among the young.

Promoting human rights. Addressing the issue of human rights in the mental health sector, the Centre organized two intensive training seminars on basic human rights for 60 professionals working in psychiatric facilities throughout Kyrgyzstan. Young NGO activists were the focus group of another of the Centre's initiatives, which supported regional summer and winter

schools on human rights monitoring and reporting. In the southern part of the country, the Centre, together with local NGOs, organized events on advocacy and human rights awareness, such as a human rights festival in Osh.

Strengthening the rule of law. As part of the OSCE's efforts to assist Kyrgyzstan with the reform of its criminal executive system, the Centre and the ODIHR held a number of conferences and regional training seminars. These events focused on topics such as the reform of the criminal legislation, the decriminalization of certain offences, public monitoring of the penitentiary system and the introduction of alternative means of punishment in order to reduce the number of prisoners. The field office in Osh also organized workshops and training seminars for NGOs and members of law enforcement agencies on monitoring techniques for detention facilities and on how to lobby local judicial and police authorities to grant NGOs access to detention facilities.

Supporting democratic election processes

The Centre supported the Kyrgyz Government in its preparation for the 10 October local elections and the parliamentary vote due on 27 February 2005. It focused on assisting the country's Central Election Commission (CEC) and supporting and monitoring the work of civil society organizations and the media. Together with the NDP, which was in charge of the election support programme, the Centre initiated a mechanism by which all election-related support activities are systematically co-ordinated. Special emphasis was put on voter education, legal advice, logistical support to the CEC, codes on electoral ethics, and the training of election commissions, judges and attorneys. Promoting the participation of women and young people was given high priority.



OSCE Academy in Bishkek

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek

Founded in December 2002, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek is a study and research institute that provides training programmes for experts and scientific research on regional security issues with a focus on Central Asia. Following the graduation of 25 students who participated in a six-month long pilot master course, the Academy began a one-year master programme in political science in September. In total, 30 students from all five OSCE Central Asian participating States as well as several other countries enrolled in the programme.

www.osce-academy.net

Head of Centre:

Ambassador Markus Mueller

Revised Annual Budget: €1,831,300

www.osce.org/bishkek

OSCE Centre in Dushanbe

One of the top priorities of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe in 2004 was its de-mining programme. Under the Mine Action Programme, created in 2003 in response to a request by the Tajik Government, a total of 6.2 hectares of land have been cleared in central, southern and eastern Tajikistan. A major achievement was the hand-over of the first plot of cleared land to a local community near the country's border with Afghanistan, representing a significant improvement in the lives of more than 30,000 people.

The Centre also expanded its activities in the economic dimension, with the priority on assisting the Tajik Government in its land

reform programme. Other important initiatives were aimed at economic development, fostering of political dialogue and security, media development, human rights and democratization issues, and gender awareness and environmental protection.

The parliamentary elections scheduled for February 2005 provided the background for many of the Centre's activities in the politico-military and human dimensions. These included projects to modernize Tajikistan's electoral legislation, public debates between government officials and civil society representatives, and training seminars on election reporting for journalists.

Political-Military Dimension Activities

Contributing to the fight against terrorism. As part of its anti-terrorism activities, the Centre supported the participation of three Tajik officials from the Foreign Affairs and the Interior Ministries in a regional workshop on the financing of terrorism. The workshop was held in Turkey in February by the UNODC as part of its Global Programme against Terrorism, under which it delivers technical and legal assistance

to help counter terrorism. The workshop presented best practices in the field of preventing the financing of terrorism.

Another four mid-management officials from the Tajikistan State Border Protection Committee and the Interior Ministry participated in a two-day workshop on travel documents and border control in Tashkent, as envisaged by the OSCE's Bucharest Plan of Action and Bishkek Programme of Action on preventing and combating terrorism.

The Centre also continued to assist Tajikistan's Foreign Ministry in preparing the ratification and implementation of the 12 UN conventions and protocols on anti-terrorism, as called for by the 2001 OSCE Ministerial Council. In July, the Centre sent a legal expert from the Foreign Ministry to Vienna for the juridical preparation of the document for ratification.

Fostering political dialogue and democratic processes. To provide a forum for open political discussion, the Centre

Supporting media development and improving access to information

Several of the Centre's initiatives in 2004 were directed towards improving journalists' access to information, particularly in view of the 2005 elections. The Centre funded the establishment of a resource centre in Dushanbe, which provides free access to the Internet and specialized literature, legal support, and computer and language classes. It opened its doors in October and hosts a constantly increasing number of journalists, averaging 130 per month.

Other media initiatives sponsored by the Centre included training seminars for journalists in election reporting and the publication of the OSCE *Biblioteka Zhurnalista* (Journalist's Library), a series of professional books for journalists specialized in investigative reporting, election coverage, journalists' rights and media legislation. In addition, the Centre helped create a number of independent newspapers and magazines in Russian, Tajik, and Uzbek, including

OSCE Centre in Dushanbe



Nafosat, which was set up to support the Uzbek minority's journalists. To give the inhabitants of 57 remote districts in Tajikistan better access to the news, the Centre helped several NGOs install notice boards carrying copies of state and non-state newspapers and government information.

Following the closure of the independent printing house *Jionhon* on 19 August for alleged tax evasion, the Centre took a public position with regard to the

situation of freedom of the media in the country. In a press release, the Head of Centre, Ambassador Yves Bargain, said that "the closure made impossible the publication of several newspapers which used the services of this company, thereby hindering the development of freedom of the media in Tajikistan". He also said that "the repeated and varied difficulties faced by some of [the newspapers] can be seen as a worrying backward step in the field of freedom of the media in Tajikistan".

In September, the Centre assisted the Representative on Freedom of the Media to organize the Sixth Central Asia Media Conference in Dushanbe. It attracted more than 130 journalists from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and concluded with the adoption of a declaration on the decriminalization of libel. (For more on this conference, see the section on the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.)

supported the Social Partnership Club, a body that brings together representatives from government, political parties and civil society. The Centre also facilitated a series of seminars on law and religion to encourage dialogue between religious leaders and local authorities and helped produce two guidebooks in Tajik, Russian and English on the work and role of political parties, institutions, and civil society.

Harvesting the first results of the Centre's de-mining efforts

In September, the OSCE-initiated Mine Action Programme handed over the first plot of land cleared of landmines and unexploded ordnance. The cleared land was turned over to the local community of Dusti-Kumsangir district near the Tajik border with Afghanistan, allowing for the rehabilitation of the Kumsangir water pipeline. This will provide more than 30,000 inhabitants with clean water and help boost the local economy, for example through the renewed cultivation of cotton fields.

The beginning of Phase II of the Centre's Mine Action Programme was marked by a dramatic budget increase, which rose from €500,000 in 2003 to more than €1.9 million. Of this sum, a total of €560,000 was allocated by the OSCE for both years, and the remainder by other donors. The implementation partner, the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, trained a total of 85 operational personnel in surveying, marking and demining land in central, southern and eastern Tajikistan. Apart from the Centre in Dushanbe, the governments of Canada, Japan, Norway, Sweden and Belgium gave financial support to the programme.

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

Supporting Tajikistan's land reform.

The Centre's most ambitious economic project in 2004 was its programme to assist the Tajik Government in its land reform process. Since 1996, Tajikistan has reorganized most large state and collective farms, covering altogether about 433,900 hectares, converting them into some 20,750 cooperatives known as *dehkan*

farms. These farms cover 61 per cent of all the arable land in Tajikistan. A total of 62 state and collective farms are scheduled for reorganization in 2005.

The goal of the Centre is to improve the transparency in Tajikistan's land reform efforts. The Centre is an active participant in two working groups on land reform and organizes training seminars for farmers on their rights and obligations in the reorganization process. To study the reform programme from a human rights perspective, it commissioned an analytical study on the issue, which is expected to result in recommendations to the Government on how to prevent violations of farmers' legal rights to obtain and cultivate land.

The Centre also initiated two pilot projects in five districts in central and southern Tajikistan – Fayzobod, Rudaki, Vakhsh, Bokhtar, and Dangara – where information material in Tajik was distributed to the local population. It is hoped that such efforts will bring about fairness and transparency in the reorganization process.

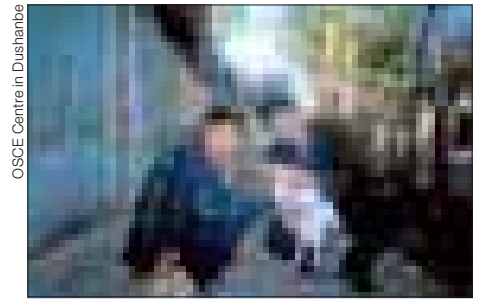
Improving public participation in environmental matters.

Implementing the provisions of the Aarhus Convention continued to be an important goal of the Centre's activities in the environmental field. Projects in this area included providing international legal expertise to the local authorities, initiating campaigns to raise public awareness on the issue, and promoting public participation in the decision-making process both on national and district level. Through the Dushanbe Aarhus Information Resource Centre, journalists were able to gain easier access to information on environmental issues. Together with the Tajik State Committee on Environment and Forestry, the Centre also organized two regional workshops on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention, attended by more than 100 participants.

Addressing the danger of radioactive waste.

Radioactive pollution is affecting some 10 million people living in the basin of the Syr-Darya River, an area in northern Tajikistan with a dramatically higher cancer rate than the national average. In November, the Centre in Dushanbe organized the first international conference that openly

addressed the problem of radioactive waste and its effects on the health of the population in this region. The Centre also gave financial support to a project that included the drafting of a map of highly radioactive sites in northern Tajikistan, the installation of warning signs and several awareness-raising campaigns.



Promoting economic development in rural areas

Farmers in the remote mountain village of Nurabod in central Tajikistan were full of praise for a project initiated by the Centre in Dushanbe, which taught them how to market their produce more effectively, gave them technical advice on how to improve the health of their livestock and orchards and showed them better techniques for drying fruit and preserving vegetables.

"We had to walk for two hours through difficult terrain to reach the school where the course was held, but we were glad we did it, because it was the first time such an opportunity was offered to us," said one of the 120 farmers who profited from the programme.

In addition, the Centre actively promoted the OSCE-UN Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC), which evaluates environmental problems to help prevent their turning into security threats. In Tajikistan, the initiative focused on the monitoring of radioactive dumps and other sources of radioactive wastes.

Human Dimension Activities

Promoting human rights. To further raise awareness and respect for human rights, the Centre sponsored the publication of a Tajik Human Rights Dictionary and a booklet covering human rights in pre-trial

detention and dealing with the prevention of and remedies for ill-treatment and torture. The publications were distributed to a wide range of NGOs, academic circles, and government offices. The Centre also opened a legal consultation centre in the southern Tajik town of Shaartuz to provide public information on human rights and support advocacy activities in this remote area of the country.

Helping reform the prison system. In support of Tajikistan's efforts to reform its prison management, the Centre conducted a variety of activities focusing on alternative sentencing and co-operation between civil society and prison administration. An important achievement of these efforts was an agreement between prison administration and Tajik NGOs to draft a standard co-operation agreement on the rights and obligations of all parties.

Supporting legal and judicial reform. In April, Tajikistan's Parliament enforced amendments to the Criminal Code and a moratorium on the death penalty was signed by the Tajik President in July. The Centre welcomed this move and focused its activities on reinforcing the role of lawyers and the independence of the judiciary in the country. Together with the Tajik National Bar Association and the Association of Judges, the Centre organized two conferences on these topics, attracting more than 200 participants from throughout Tajikistan. In addition, the Centre held several training seminars on human rights in pre-trial detention centres and during investigative processes, which were attended by a total of 250 officials from the General Prosecutor's Office and the Interior Ministry.

Assistance for labour migrants. Every year, some 350,000 Tajik nationals migrate in search of seasonal work to support their families. As most have very little knowledge of their rights and obligations, the Centre and the IOM set up a resource centre in Dushanbe to help labour migrants obtain the information they need to make informed decisions. In the southern Tajik town of Vakhsh, an information point was opened as a pilot project for rural areas. The resource centre provided direct advice to more than 5,000 people, organized five

training seminars for government officials and civil society representatives throughout the country, and published a total of 170,000 information brochures. In addition, it successfully lobbied for the introduction of labour migration lectures in secondary school curricula.

Training journalists on anti-trafficking issues. Trafficking in human beings is a growing problem for Tajikistan. In particular women, desperate to find work abroad, become victims of criminal groups, who forcibly bring their victims to work in countries in the Middle East, Asia or Europe. To improve the media coverage of human trafficking issues, the Centre organized training seminars on sexual exploitation and forced migration for journalists from different regions of Tajikistan. It is hoped that the initiative will improve professionalism among journalists and motivate them to cover and investigate trafficking cases.

Striving towards gender equality. The Centre continued its lobbying efforts for the adoption of a Law on Equal Opportunities and helped improve the text of the Bill. Its adoption represents a major step towards fulfilling Tajikistan's international commitments and implementing the 2001 to 2010 State Programme on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women in Tajikistan.

Capacity-building through local resource centres for women. An important initiative in the field of capacity-building was the establishment of six resource centres for women throughout the country through financial support given by the OSCE Centre. The resource centres organized seminars on human rights and gender issues and small businesses run by women. They also provided women with free legal, medical and psychological consultations.

A series of 30 seminars on women's rights in Islam, which were held by the Centre's field office in Khujand, proved to be highly popular. Discrimination against girls and women under the pretence of Islamic values resurfaced in Tajikistan after the collapse of the Soviet Union. By analysing and interpreting the *Sharia* (Islamic law) and comparing it to provisions of the secular

Supporting the election process

In preparation for the parliamentary elections scheduled for February 2005, the Centre focused its attention on modernising the electoral legal framework, in compliance with OSCE principles and commitments.

On the basis of recommendations made in 2000, the Centre and the ODIHR helped the Tajik Government organise a conference on election matters in April 2003, which resulted in the drafting of two alternative laws on parliamentary elections. The final text of the law on election was approved by Parliament and signed by the President in July 2004.

The Centre funded a number of publications carrying analytical data on the parliamentary elections and information on the state institutions, political parties and other election-related issues. To encourage the electorate to go to the polls, a number of TV and radio advertisements were sponsored. The Centre also supported countrywide activities to promote the participation of women in the political decision-making process and trained potential female candidates on electoral campaigning and political work.

legislation, the seminars offered hundreds of women and men a balanced perspective on the rights of women in Tajikistan and showed them the difference between customs based on tradition and those that are part of religious law. As the project launched a fruitful debate on this issue all over northern Tajikistan, the Centre decided to expand the project to the south of the country.

Head of Centre:
until October 2004:
Ambassador Yves Bargain
as of February 2005:
Ambassador Alain Couanon
Revised budget: €3,829,200
www.osce.org/tajikistan

OSCE Centre in Tashkent

In 2004, the Centre's priorities included the fight against terrorism and the promotion of border security, strengthening the development of civil society, the rule of law and human rights, fighting human trafficking and supporting education, establishing a framework for restructuring the Uzbek economy towards a market-oriented system, and raising public awareness of environmental issues.

Politico-Military Dimension Activities

Security issues in the politico-military field remained a priority for the OSCE and Uzbekistan. In 2004, security concerns raised by the Uzbek authorities, including the fight against terrorism, combating arms trafficking and strengthening border security, became key issues of the Centre's politico-military dimension activities.

Preventing and combating terrorism. The Centre developed a long-term programme to assist Uzbekistan in preventing and combating terrorism. Together with the OSCE Secretariat's Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU), it conducted a regional workshop on travel document security that focused on effective measures to prevent terrorists from passing undetected through border controls.

Central Asian Youth Network

In order to increase tolerance and understanding among young people in Central Asia, the Centre in Tashkent, together with the other OSCE Centres in the region, established the Central Asian Youth Network (CAYN). Students affiliated with the Network learn OSCE principles and commitments, write research papers about the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and participate in discussion groups on the CAYN webpage (www.cayn.net). Papers produced by the different groups were presented and discussed at a conference, and best papers received awards. The project will continue in 2005.

Promoting border security. The Centre organized several training sessions for Uzbek customs officials and border guards in Uzbekistan and Austria. This was part of a border management capacity-building programme that followed up on a previous initiative in Termez-Hayraton in 2002 and 2003. The main goal was to improve the professional competence of mid-level border guards and customs officials in seizing illegal small arms and light weapons and in identifying falsified travel and customs documents.

Vienna Document. Following the acknowledgement by the Uzbek Ministry of Defence in late 2003 that the country needed to meet its obligations under the Vienna Document, the OSCE Centre was asked to help strengthen Uzbekistan's Arms Control Department. Its assistance included sending Uzbek officers to military training sessions at the German Arms Control Centre in Geilenkirchen, Germany, as well as on an inspection visit to Austria.

Media development

The Centre provided legal expertise on media-related legislation to advocate and promote Uzbekistan's full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments on freedom of expression and of media. The Centre organized meetings and seminars to further public debate on these issues between the government and journalists. It also maintained a Tashkent-based Internet café that provides journalists with free access to the Internet and other information resources and supported a legal clinic for journalists, which offers media professionals free legal consultations and representation in court.

Economic and Environmental Dimension Activities

In 2004, the Centre significantly increased its activities in the economic and environmental dimension in Uzbekistan, addressing issues such as SME development, migration and ecology.

Migration. To facilitate the development of a legal framework regulating migration-processes within Uzbekistan, the Centre in Tashkent supported a Working Group on Migration Issues. The Working Group conducted research about Uzbekistan's internal migration, identified objectives and priorities of migration policy applicable to Uzbekistan, studied the official migration policies in other CIS countries and analysed main international documents regulating international migration processes. The group elaborated a concept paper on migration and drafted a law on migration.



OSCE/Helmut Gram

Uzbek border guards and customs officials verifying travel documents

Training of arbitrators. In order to promote the development of an economic arbitration system in Uzbekistan, the OSCE Centre and the *Legal Problems Research Centre*, an NGO, trained lawyers and NGO representatives as arbitrators. The aim is to ensure the efficient and timely review of commercial disputes among entrepreneurs, to encourage the development of small businesses and to increase the confidence of foreign investors in Uzbekistan's legal system.

TV shows for business people

Under the title 'Entrepreneurs and the Law', a new series of TV shows provided up-to-date information about the country's business legislation and the rights of entrepreneurs. The shows were launched by the OSCE Centre and Uzbekistan's Supreme Economic Court.

Encouraging development of small business. The Centre continued its work to assist the development of sustainable SMEs. It conducted a series of training seminars and established an SME Information Centre to promote entrepreneurial skills among young people and in particular women. Together with the Uzbek Chamber of Trade and Industry, the Centre produced a handbook on Modern Trends of Business Development in Uzbekistan to give business people easier access to information on SME legislation.

Raising environmental awareness.

As part of its work to strengthen public participation in environmental decision-making in Uzbekistan, the Centre and the UNDP helped set up an Environmental Information Centre in the premises of the State Committee for Nature Protection. Reaching out to Uzbekistan's regions, the Centre conducted meetings in *Mahallas* (local neighbourhoods) all over the country to raise environmental awareness and improve legal education and social development among the local population.

Teaching schoolchildren about water protection. A new initiative by the OSCE Centre and the Interstate Co-ordination Water Commission for Central Asia focused on how to protect Uzbekistan's scarcest resource: water. The Centre drafted

a curriculum for secondary schools and held workshops on water management issues.

An integrated approach towards environmental protection. Through the environmental NGO, *Armon*, the Centre conducted seminars on environmental issues, identified potential local leaders for grassroots environmental initiatives, created a database of environmental information, conducted media campaigns to increase public participation in environmental protection and provided free legal consultations.

Human Dimension Activities

The Centre worked closely with state agencies and NGOs to promote the country's human dimension commitments. It supported the parliamentary reform process, which culminated in December 2004 in the election of a bi-cameral parliament. The Centre also contributed substantially to media development in Uzbekistan and addressed key issues such as access to information.

Prison reform. Following recommendations made by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture on the country's prison system, the Uzbek authorities authorized NGOs to monitor places of detention. With the OSCE's support, prison staff was trained in international prison standards and the prison administration established a training centre.

Promoting education. Education being a key priority for the 2004 Bulgarian OSCE Chairmanship, the Centre trained representatives of government agencies, educational institutions and NGOs on international human rights standards and protection mechanisms as well as on

Elections

In preparation for the 26 December 2004 parliamentary elections, the Centre trained registered political parties in election campaign techniques, educated domestic long-term election observers and introduced journalists to media coverage techniques. It also ran a training programme for young voters to increase their legal knowledge about elections.



Participants at an OSCE women empowerment workshop in Uzbekistan

monitoring women's rights. Special attention was given to educating national human rights trainers. The Centre and Uzbekistan's law faculties also developed a programme to support legal education at law schools.

Empowering women. In line with the OSCE's new Gender Action Plan, the Centre developed a gender programme aimed at increasing women's participation in public and political life. A series of leadership training courses informed women about their rights and improved their communication and advocacy skills.

Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings

In line with the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, the Centre launched a comprehensive anti-trafficking programme. To raise awareness, it trained law enforcement officials, NGOs and journalists and supported the establishment of an inter-agency working group to prevent and combat trafficking.

Head of Centre:
until May 2004:
Ambassador Ahmet Erozan
as of 1 February 2005:
Ambassador Miroslav Jenca
Revised budget: €1,543,100
www.osce.org/tashkent

OSCE Representative to the Estonian Expert Commission on Military Pensioners

The main task of the OSCE Representative is to participate in the work of the Estonian Expert Commission on Military Pensioners, which makes recommendations to the Government on the issuance of residence permits to former military personnel in Estonia.

Activities and developments

Review of applications for temporary residence permits. The Commission was successful in further reducing the number of short-term residence permits (from one to three years) to about 300. The number of longer-term (from four to five years) residence permits reached 9,600. This meant there were now approximately 9,900 holders of valid temporary residence permits. Since the Commission took up its work in 1994, a total of 285 requests have been rejected. There was only one refusal in 2004. Many more applicants were granted permits on the basis of humanitarian exception than had previously been refused.

Permanent residence permits. The revised Aliens' Act excludes the issuance of permanent residence permits to military pensioners as of 1 January 2004. On the basis of the previous law, which permitted the granting of permanent residence permits, several hundred pensioners had applied, 193 of whom have so far been

refused. Fifteen of them went to court, and their cases were pending. An additional 196 requests have not yet been decided upon.

All of the military pensioners who asked for a permanent residence permit and were refused were given five-year permits. Permanent residence permits were granted to 531 people on contractual lists, who no longer figured as dependents. A total of 1,339 persons were transferred to civilian status.

Problem cases. The Commission continued to try to solve a number of complex cases of residence claims. In most cases, these concerned military pensioners not on contractual lists, with foreign passports and Estonian spouses, and who received US resettlement vouchers and had not left Estonia as they had pledged to do. Out of 1,817 former US voucher recipients, the great majority had left the country. There were 212 people remaining with a valid residence permit.

In total, 23 participants of US voucher programmes were refused residence, while a further 18 were given notice to leave the country. These decisions were appealed to court by 12 people, whose cases were pending. Resolving this issue is time consuming and will only be done on a case-by-case basis.

OSCE Representative: Uwe Mahrenholtz | Revised budget: €123,300

OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners

As in previous years, the OSCE Representative provided assistance in the implementation of the 1994 Agreement between the Latvian and the Russian Governments on social guarantees for military pensioners of the Russian Federation and their families residing in Latvia.

In accordance with Article 2 of this Agreement, the OSCE Representative's tasks are:

- to consider, together with the Latvian and Russian parties, appeals on matters involving the rights of military pensioners;
- to participate in the adoption of recommendations and decisions on the basis of consensus; and
- to consider, at the request of either party, questions relating to the application of the Agreement's provisions.

In 2004, a total of 17,876 people were eligible under the Agreement, 562 less than in 2003. At the time of the Agreement in 1994, a total of 22,320 people were eligible.

OSCE Representative: Helmut Napiontek | Revised budget: €12,200

Activities and developments

Focus on the individual. To a large extent, military pensioners' recent appeals related to social questions were resolved by the respective Latvian local administrative bodies in co-operation with the relevant Russian authorities. Long-pending individual cases, which were brought to the attention of the Commission and were mostly related to the status of residence, were solved to the extent possible.

Interpretation of the Agreement's provisions. Differing legal interpretations on some of the Agreement's provisions on housing issues have become increasingly important as this issue affects military pensioners and their families more frequently. Based on a legal examination, the Commission is considering a common approach for further handling problems related to housing issues. Changes in the application procedures for social benefits, such as those adopted by the Riga City Council, may soften potential hardship situations for affected pensioners in the future.