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NEWSLETTER

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica signs the Helsinki Final Act and other key CSCE/OSCE documents during the Eighth Ministerial Council

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Ministerial Council agrees on OSCE's Balkan role and welcomes initiative to reduce small arms

Final Declaration dropped as negotiations end in stalemate

A declaration on the role of the Organization in South-Eastern Europe and the acceptance of a ground-breaking document to curtail the flow of small arms and light weapons were among the major fruits of the Eighth Ministerial Council held in Vienna last month. However, as the Foreign Ministers and representatives of the 55 OSCE participating States were unable to achieve consensus on all the elements of the Ministerial Declaration,

it was left to the current OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (CiO), Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, to provide a summary of what had been achieved over the course of the two-day meeting.

The Russian Federation made an Interpretative Statement saying that it did not consider itself bound by any of the conclusions or recommendations contained in the summary. An American Interpretative Statement followed,

emphasizing that insofar as the Chairperson's remarks were a repetition of commitments or obligations previously undertaken under OSCE agreements or the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, they remained binding.

In her closing remarks at the final Plenary Session on 28 November, Ms. Ferrero-Waldner stressed the importance of the admission of Yugoslavia, whose President, Vojislav Kostunica, had addressed the Council before demon-



OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Foreign Minister, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, holds a press briefing after closing the Eighth Ministerial Council

strating his country's acceptance of OSCE norms and values by signing the key documents of the Organization, the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, and the Charter for European Security.

The CiO also stressed the unity of participating States over the adoption of the Vienna Declaration on the 'Role of the OSCE in South-Eastern Europe' (see story on page five).

To emphasize the fact that Austria's period of Chairmanship had coincided with the 25th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, she noted the Ministerial Council had reaffirmed that this cornerstone document, together with other subsequent OSCE documents, "established clear standards for participating States' treatment of each other and of all individuals within their territories."

However, in reviewing progress on common efforts to meet the challenges to security and stability in the OSCE region, she went on to voice the deep concern of Ministers over areas where participating States' commitments, including some made at last year's Istanbul Summit, had yet to be fulfilled:

"[Ministers] stressed the need to

intensify the efforts of the OSCE with regard to the resolution of regional conflicts, in particular those unsettled conflicts where over years no tangible progress had been achieved," she said.

Her summary first ranged over parts of the OSCE region where Ministers welcomed the OSCE's contribution to meeting concrete challenges to security and stability. While expressing concern over

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An overview of the Festsaal of the Hofburg Palace, the setting for the Plenary Sessions of the Eighth Ministerial Council

the lack of progress in the peace process surrounding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, she nevertheless commended the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairmen and her Personal Representative to lessen tensions in the region and to help prepare support measures to implement a political settlement.

She also spoke warmly of the OSCE's expanded engagement with Central Asia, which was one of the Chairmanship's particular priority areas during 2000:

"The support of the OSCE for rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, development of democratic society and economic reforms would contribute to stability and prosperity in the region," she said.

She warned, however, that: "Ministers shared the concerns of the five Central Asian participating States with regard to threats to stability and security, resulting from international terrorism, violent extremism, organized crime, drugs and arms trafficking, including those which arose from the unstable situation in Afghanistan."

"Divergence of views"

In other areas, particularly in respect of the situations in Georgia, Moldova and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation, Ms Ferrero-Waldner spoke of a "divergence of views" emerging, "both as to the evaluation of the extent of progress made since Istanbul and on the role of the OSCE."

"A political solution to the conflict in Chechnya and a dialogue is essential", she said. "The immediate return of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya in order to start its activities on the basis of its existing mandate, as reconfirmed in Istanbul, was requested."

On Georgia, she said Ministers had welcomed the increasing co-operation between that State and the OSCE, and had noted the success of the monitoring oper-

ation on the border with the Russian Federation, but concern was expressed over the effect of introducing a unilateral visa scheme on the population in the border areas.

On the Tskhinvali-South Ossetia region of Georgia, the incoming Chairmanship of Romania was asked to make use of the present CiO's experience, in cooperation with the Russian Federation, in order to achieve progress in the political negotiations.

The lack of movement in the withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldovan territory caused Ministers growing concern, said Ms Ferrero-Waldner, and the Russian Federation was called upon to exert its influence on the local authorities in the Trans-Dniestrian region of that State to peacefully remove the obstacles posed to the withdrawal and the visit of an assessment mission.

In the resolution of this problem, she reaffirmed Minister's insistence that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova should be ensured.

On Belarus, it had been stressed that

progress in the four specific areas indicated by the Parliamentary Troika was necessary to pave the way for free and democratic presidential elections in Belarus. In this connection, the efforts of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in the democratization process were appreciated.

New challenges

Among the new challenges facing the OSCE, particularly improving human security, the CiO mentioned the deep concern expressed about the broad scope of problems affecting children in the OSCE region.

"Based upon the Istanbul Summit mandate – after holding this year's

Human Dimension Seminar on children and armed conflict – an OSCE document on the promotion and protection of the rights, interests and welfare of the child, in particular of children affected by armed conflict, was negotiated, but regrettably has not found consensus so far," she said.

Concern about another flagrant



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Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel (R) greets the Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov (L) before the Ministerial Council



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US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, talks to the Foreign Minister of Germany, Joschka Fischer, before the first session in the Festsaal

human rights abuse, trafficking in human beings, did, however, result in a decision on enhancing the OSCE's efforts to combat this serious crime, and brought praise for its leading role in the respective task force of the Stability Pact.

Ministers also welcomed the adoption by the Forum for Security Co-operation (which met just before the Council), of an OSCE document on small arms and light

with Ministers praising his tireless work since his appointment in 1992. But a decision on the extension of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media was deferred for six months.

Ministers also acknowledged the interest in the Mediterranean dimension and welcomed Thailand as a new Partner for Co-operation (*see story on page 5*).

Following the CiO's summary, the

States and, consequently, are not based on the consensus principle.

"The Russian Federation does not consider itself bound by any of the conclusions or recommendations contained in the summary. Equally, it does not consider it possible for the said conclusions and recommendations to be taken into account in the future work of the Organization and its bodies," he said.



OSCE / LUBOMIR KOTEK

Delegations attending the Third Plenary Session held on the second and final day of the Ministerial Council

weapons (*see story on page six*).

OSCE efforts in other human dimension problem areas including refugees, migrant workers, terrorism, racism and xenophobia were also discussed and reviewed by the Ministers. Steps to promote the safety of journalists were considered. However, there was no consensus on the options concerning the legal capacity, privileges and immunities for the OSCE.

A successor was selected to Max van der Stoep as High Commissioner on National Minorities (*see story on page 3*),

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, E.P. Gusarov, addressed the Council and stated that:

"The propositions and conclusions contained in the summary on a whole range of questions connected with the OSCE's activities and the assessment of the situations in various participating States do not correspond to the actual circumstances and fail to reflect the entire spectrum of opinions of OSCE participating States. These propositions and conclusions are not in line with the understandings negotiated by all participating

The Ambassador of the United States to the OSCE, David Johnson, also made a statement, agreeing that the CiO's remarks were not made on the basis of consensus and insofar as they were novel, did not represent binding commitments on the participating States.

"But insofar as they were a repetition of commitments or obligations previously undertaken under the OSCE or under the Final Act, or other aspects of the CFE treaty, they remain commitments and obligations of us all," he added.

Ministers adopt Vienna Declaration on OSCE role in South-Eastern Europe

During the Eighth Ministerial Council meeting in Vienna, the Foreign Ministers and representatives of the 55 OSCE participating States adopted a Declaration on the role of the OSCE in South-Eastern Europe. In this statement, they address developments in the past months in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia, and acknowledge the role of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. Their declaration also notes the results of the Zagreb Summit held on 24 November, and comments on the implementation of Articles II, IV and V of Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The Ministers warmly welcomed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the OSCE and applauded the democratic change in Belgrade. “We congratulate the people of Yugoslavia on their determination to vote for those who offered a democratic, tolerant and peaceful future. The commitment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the principles and standards of the OSCE, as well as its readiness to cooperate with European institutions, regional and sub-regional arrangements and with its neighbours, offer new perspectives for peace and prosperity in South-Eastern Europe...”

Recognizing the important work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in supporting free elections, the Ministers noted that: “Elections both at national and local level held in several countries in South-Eastern Europe this year have resulted in major contributions to peace, reconciliation and justice throughout the region”. They welcomed the peaceful conduct of elections in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and looked forward to the ODIHR playing an active role

in the forthcoming elections in Serbia.

With regard to the OSCE engagement in Kosovo, the Vienna Declaration states that: “The recent local elections represent an important step towards representative local authorities for the inhabitants of Kosovo and have enabled them to demonstrate political responsibility... We call on all in Kosovo to put an end to violence and to avoid its spreading as well as to work together towards a democratic and multi-ethnic society based on reconciliation and justice.”

Regarding the developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the past months, the representatives of the OSCE participating States noted the generally positive trends regarding minority returns, which should be sustained and supported. They acknowledged that the work of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina had been essential to the success of the recent elections.

“We note with satisfaction that in these elections multi-ethnic and pluralist parties have made some gains. We call on all elected officials to speedily form fully effective governmental bodies. We consider it of utmost importance that the Bosnian citizens start taking over the responsibility for their own future”, the document reads.

The Vienna declaration also acknowledges the “major positive developments that have taken place in Croatia after free and fair elections early this year. The Croatian government has achieved considerable and substantial progress in fulfilling its international commitments... We particularly welcome that the new authorities have taken essential measures to improve regional co-operation and show a clear determination to implement the Dayton Agreement.”

The Ministers reaffirmed their commit-

ment to the Stability Pact, stressing the importance of regional co-operation as a means to foster good neighbourly relations, stability and economic development. Taking note of the recent Zagreb Summit, they add: “The recent historic changes are opening the way for regional reconciliation and co-operation. They enable the countries in the region to establish new relations, beneficial to all of them, for the stability of the region and peace and stability of the European continent. They also give impetus to a lasting resolution of the problem of refugees and displaced persons and respect for states’ international borders.”

Finally, the Vienna Declaration welcomes the work of the OSCE in assisting in the implementation of Articles II and IV of Annex 1-B of the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords, and its contribution to creating a framework for peace and stability in South Eastern Europe.

“We support measures under Article II such as transparency of defence budgets, information exchange on military structures and other co-operative activities that help to increase mutual confidence and stability in the region; and efforts under Article IV in the field of arms control”, the statement says.

With regard to the negotiations on Article V of the same document, the Ministers called upon the States involved to aim to conclude their work on the basis of their mandates by the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council at the latest: “The new political situation generated by the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the OSCE and Vienna Document provides a fresh impetus to the negotiations on regional stability under Article V of Annex 1-B of the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords.”

OSCE agrees package of measures to fight spread of small arms and light weapons

Document represents ground-breaking achievement

By Marina Bartl

A far-reaching agreement to combat the spread of small arms and light weapons was adopted by the OSCE Forum for Security and Co-operation (FSC) last month, and was immediately welcomed by the Eighth OSCE Ministerial Council. For the first time, a concrete international initiative has been taken to tackle this growing problem. According to United Nations estimates there are currently 500 million small arms in circulation.

The OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the result of almost 11 months of negotiation in the FSC, sets real norms and measures for monitoring the spread of military-type weapons in the OSCE region. The participating States are now committed to actively responding to “the accumulation and uncontrolled spread of these weapons.”

Among other measures outlined in the document, they have agreed to exchange information on exports and imports of small arms and light weapons within the OSCE region. They will combat illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons by prosecuting illegal manufacture, marking small arms and destroying or marking any unmarked weapons. New standards for licensing and documentation for import, export and transit have also been established, among other measures.

Field activities

The document also contains a menu

of activities that could involve the OSCE in the field, such as support in reducing and destroying small arms stocks and assisting in voluntary weapons collection programmes. Such activities, however, need the permission of the host country, and must be specifically detailed in the review of existing or new Mission mandates by the Permanent Council.



Small arms and light weapons remain a problem in post-conflict areas

Small arms and light weapons are the weapons of choice of today’s internal conflicts. “The uncontrolled spread and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is a serious problem worldwide,” said Counsellor Paul Flaherty from the UK Delegation, Co-ordinator of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

These arms are cheap, portable, long-lasting and widely available around the world. Conflicts become increasingly difficult to solve with the availability of such weapons – a vicious cycle of violence is created, which can undermine peaceful means of conflict resolution.

The civilian population remains the greatest victim in conflicts where small arms and light weapons are used – up to 90 per cent of all victims of war are killed by small arms, and most of these are women and children.

Widespread availability

The lack of international regulation has contributed to the widespread availability of small arms and light weapons. Illegal arms traffickers have little difficulty shipping weapons to conflict zones, and they are often “recycled” after wars end and find their way back to the criminal market.

“In the past, most countries focused on controlling major conventional weapons. However, there are many gaps in legislation on small arms and light weapons,” said Katherine Joseph, FSC Support Officer for Small Arms. The OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons addresses both illicit and legal arms trade, and closes some gaps in international regulation.

Most of the world’s small arms exports come from participating States of the OSCE. The region also includes states that are affected by a high number of small arms and light weapons. Weapons from Afghanistan are trafficked through Central Asia, and small arms are widespread in the Caucasus and South-Eastern Europe. In Albania, the Government is now undertaking to destroy 100,000 weapons stolen from army depots during the anarchic period that accompanied the pyramid selling crisis in 1997. Some OSCE Missions,

particularly those in Georgia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, are well-placed to contribute to efforts aimed at reducing the spread of these weapons.

The small arms issue was first raised within the OSCE in 1996, but the Organization did not seriously address the problem until 1998, when the delegations of Canada, Norway, Netherlands

and Switzerland, in association with the British American Security Information Council (BASIC), a non-governmental organization, co-hosted a seminar on small arms. At the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, a decision was taken to launch broad discussion among OSCE participating States. Combating the uncontrolled spread of small arms,

increasing transparency on transactions and fighting illicit trafficking were areas identified for discussion.

Marina Bartl is Assistant Web Editor in the Press and Public Information Section of the OSCE Secretariat

November general elections in BiH “fairest and best organized ever”

Results fell below expectations of analysts

By Peter Clarey

Some two million voters turned out to vote in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s third general elections since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in December 1995. This time voters went to the polls on 11 November to elect representatives at the state (Bosnia and Herzegovina), entity (Republika Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and cantonal levels. Elections were also held for the President and Vice-President of the Republika Srpska (RS) and for the Srebrenica municipal government.

High praise earned

International and local observers have hailed these elections – the last to be administered by the OSCE Mission to BiH – as the fairest and best organized ones since the end of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. Both the Council of Europe and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly had high praise for the process, stating that the “administration and conduct of the elections had improved from all previous elections in BiH and they were of a high standard”.

The OSCE Head of Mission, Robert

L. Barry, credited this success to the tireless efforts and organization of BiH’s 45,000 election workers.

These elections witnessed two important innovations to the election system: multi-member constituencies and the preferential voting system for the President and Vice-President of the RS. And, as during the April municipal elec-

tions, voters used the open list to elect representatives at all levels. These reforms, initially introduced under the draft Election Law, promote accountability and moderation and bring BiH one step closer to European electoral standards.

In the run-up to Election Day, the Mission predicted that these elections



OSCE/BiH

Citizens cast their ballots in the last post-war elections scheduled to be administered by the OSCE Mission to BiH

would be the hardest fought since 1996. The prediction was borne out in the weeks preceding the elections, with nationalist rhetoric taking centre stage at the expense of real campaign issues, like jobs and the economy. The Provisional Election Commission, together with the Election Appeals Sub-Commission, worked together to curb hate speech and challenges to the Dayton Peace Agreement. The BiH media demonstrated their professionalism, refusing to join up and beat the nationalist drum, and complying with election rules.

The November elections saw the continuing diversification of the BiH political scene, with some opposition parties strengthening their positions in the political scene of the country. However, this diversification is insufficient in many analysts' eyes.

While the big nationalist parties in

the RS and the Bosnia-Croat regions of the country have scored well, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), a leading opposition party in the mould of European social democratic parties, made significant gains in the Federation. The SDP has doubled its vote take since the 1998 general elections, and now trails the leading Bosniac party – the Party for Democratic Action (SDA) – by only one vote in the Federation House of Representatives. This shift suggests that many voters in the BiH Federation are moving away from war-time politics, in which the SDA was the standard-bearer for many, and are voting for other political parties.

With a sizeable increase of votes cast for the Party for Democratic Progress (PDP) and the Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), the political scene in the RS also continued to diver-

sify. However, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), founded by Radovan Karadzic, the former wartime leader of the Bosnian Serbs, indicted for war crimes, will be the largest party in the RS National Assembly, but will need to seek a coalition partner. The moderate changes in RS illustrate that voters are beginning to move away from a situation where one party dominates.

While the elections did not meet the high expectations of some analysts, they do signal a step forward for the citizens of BiH, who voted in free and fair elections that were marred by neither violence nor obstruction. The election results suggest that, however slowly, more and more citizens of BiH are turning their backs on nationalist politics.

Peter Clarey is a Public Information Officer in the OSCE Mission to BiH

CiO opens conference on trafficking in human beings during visit to Albania

The Chairperson-in-Office (CiO) of the OSCE, Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, travelled to Albania on 13 November to demonstrate the OSCE's continued strong support for the country's reform process. In meetings with the Albanian leadership, she commended the Government for its "remarkable progress toward democratic change".

"I believe that if Albania continues along this path," she said, "it will have a bright future as a member of the European family of democracies."

Ms. Ferrero-Waldner also opened a conference on trafficking in human beings, organized by the Friends of Albania Group, which co-ordinates international efforts and aid. The conference was aimed at raising



Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Chairperson-in-Office

awareness and identifying solutions for containing, if not halting, this transregional crime.

"The Government of Albania should continue to be committed to developing a national strategy that focuses on enforcement and interdiction as well as on prevention and protection of the victims," she said.

The CiO also commended the Government on the holding of the local elections on 1 October, which she said represented a significant step forward:

"They were not perfect, and reports of irregularities should be taken seriously and addressed. But the fact that the people could cast their ballots without fear of violence or intimidation makes them so much better than those before."

OSCE Office plays co-ordinating role on anti-corruption in Armenia

Project wins full support of President and Prime Minister

By Roy Reeve



A meeting of the International Working Group on Anti-Corruption in Armenia, led by Roy Reeve, Head of the OSCE office in Yerevan (standing)

Shortly after beginning its operations, early this year, the OSCE Office in Yerevan was asked by the international community to take the lead in co-ordinating the anti-corruption activities of donors. The fight against corruption is a high political priority in Armenia. The Government's commitment to taking action has been fully supported by international financial institutions, as well as bilateral and multilateral donors. But, to date, this activity has proceeded on a case-by-case basis and has lacked an overall strategy and plan of implementation.

The aim was therefore to present a coherent package of measures to the Government of Armenia and find a mechanism to carry the work forward in

a more effective and efficient manner. The Office also established links with the Secretariat of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in order to engage their resources and expertise in the future work.

The first step was to gather together the international players. An informal working group was created. Its membership included representatives of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, European Commission, United Nations Development Programme and the embassies of France, the USA, United Kingdom, Germany and the Russian Federation.

The group agreed that the best way forward was to propose to the Armenian Government the establishment of a joint

international/governmental task force to draw up an anti-corruption strategy for the country. This approach would result in an effective, targeted strategy and would make the best use of national and international experience and resources.

The OSCE Head of Office discussed this idea with both the President and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. Both gave their full support to the proposal. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was given the task of bringing together representatives from all relevant Ministries to join the task

force. The first meeting was held in mid-November and work is now underway to draw up an agreed list of the changes that are needed in legislation and institutions to combat corruption in the country effectively.

As work progresses, the task force will also include representatives from the National Assembly, civil society and the media in the task of drawing up the agreed strategy. These inputs will be crucial to the successful accomplishment of the task ahead.

Roy Reeve is the Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan

Getting in the vote: final task for Swiss Headquarters Support Unit to OSCE

Role comes to an end after four years aiding Mission to BiH

By Magdalena Lesjak

It is 2.30 in the morning in Mostar. The telephone rings in the hotel. It's the Regional Centre of the OSCE in Mostar on the line to say that the counts in the first polling stations have been completed and asking if the Swiss Headquarters Support Unit (SHQSU) can start at once with the transport of voting ballots. So began the last operation of the SHQSU.

On 11 November, OSCE-organized parliamentary elections were held across the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), as well as presidential elections in the Republika Srpska. Transport arrangements for all the election material – everything from voting slips to fully-equipped polling stations – was handled by the SHQSU, an unarmed Swiss military unit comprising 46 people under the command of Lt. Col. Jean-Philippe Gaudin.

Intense preparations had already begun in June, with the distribution of furniture for the election offices. For this purpose, the SHQSU worked closely with the Election Services section of the OSCE Mission to BiH, in order to co-ordinate the provision of transport as efficiently as possible.

Some 250 tons of material were first transported from Budapest to Sarajevo, and then, shortly before the elections, under the protection of

local and international police moved to the municipal districts. For the Out-of-country voting system some voting papers were even brought to Vienna, Zagreb and Belgrade.

Before polling day, the generating equipment in all the field offices had to be checked, in order to avoid any possible power-cuts. Each regional centre was also fitted out with a fully-equipped polling station, complete with generator so that voting could continue through any emergency.

Within three days of the polls closing on 11 November, all the voting slips had been collected and brought back to Sarajevo for the final tally of results.

This OSCE election support operation was the last task for the SHQSU, a unit which had begun work in 1996 following a decision by the Swiss Federal Council to make a military unit available to the OSCE Mission to BiH. Its duties end offi-

cially at midnight on 31 December 2000.

Over a period of four years, the SHQSU supported the OSCE with a fleet of 240 vehicles, a flight service, a transport service and a postal service, and even provided medical care for all OSCE Mission members in BiH. Besides establishing a headquarters in Sarajevo, regional bases were also set up in Mostar, Tuzla, Bihac und Banja Luka.

After the transport service, the other services used most intensively by the OSCE were the postal and repair services. The SHQSU had earlier provided support to the elections in 1996, 1997 and 1998, as well as the local elections earlier this year. Two Swiss officers remain at the disposal of the OSCE until the end of 2000 to handle logistical tasks.

This last SHQSU operation – contributing to an election that was praised as the most efficient and best organized held since the end of the conflict in Bosnia

– showed yet again the extraordinary success of the co-operation between the OSCE and the SHQSU, an achievement that has been rightly recognized by the international community.

Magdalena Lesjak is Press and Information Officer/ Legal Adviser for the SHQSU in Sarajevo.



Officers of the Swiss Support Headquarters Unit unload material for the November general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Successful observation flight conducted over BiH supports confidence-building measures

By Daniel Saracino and Lieutenant Colonel Emil Schreiber

The Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995, which brought an end to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), contained an annex mandating the OSCE to help elaborate and implement three distinct instruments: an agreement on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) in BiH (Article II); a sub-regional arms control agreement (Article IV); and finally a regional arms control agreement (Article V). The CSBM Agreement was concluded in Vienna on 26 January 1996 and entered into effect immediately. It provides for a comprehensive set of measures to enhance mutual confidence and reduce the risk of conflict – such as exchange of military information, the notification and observation of certain military activities, restrictions on deployment, etc. This article describes a recent exercise conducted under its terms.



OSCE/BIH

The Czech 'Open Skies' Aerial Observation Flight team before boarding their Antonov-30 aircraft

In October, the OSCE helped facilitate the latest Aerial Observation Exercise over the territory of BiH, as part of the measures being undertaken to build confidence between the former antagonistic parties. The exercise was carried out by the Czech 'Open Skies' department, using their Antonov-30 aircraft. MI-8 helicopters from the armed forces of each of the Entities (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska {FBiH and RS}) flew in tandem with the fixed-wing aircraft.

Aboard the flight were military rep-

resentatives from the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Stability Force (SFOR), the two Entities, and the State of BiH itself, as well as the OSCE Mission to BiH.

Flight planning was conducted in Sarajevo with the assistance of Czech, Danish and Entity experts. 'Open Skies' observers from France, Romania and Hungary also participated in the events. The flights produced over one kilometre of film and hundreds of pictures, which were evaluated during a follow-up seminar in Prague. The film and photos taken during the flight are factual and objec-

tive and help to build mutual understanding between the parties to the CSBM Agreement.

This exercise was carried out as a risk reduction measure to enhance confidence- and security-building under Measure III in Article II of Annex 1B of the Dayton Agreement. With these types of flights, the parties to the Agreement, are attempting to develop a mechanism for consultation and co-operation with regards to 'unusual military activity' and for 'hazardous incidents of military nature'.

Five demonstration flights in BiH

had been conducted between 1997 and 1999 by several States Parties to the Treaty on Open Skies (Hungary, Romania, Germany, the United States, Russia and France). The aircraft and aerial observation equipment used were those adopted by the Treaty on Open Skies. As a result of those missions, the military personnel of FBiH and RS were trained for aerial observation. Although the current aerial observation flight regime is not part of the Treaty on Open Skies, it can trace its origins back to that treaty.

Having prepared the experts on aerial observation with the aim of furthering

transparency between the parties in BiH, a decision was taken by the Joint Consultative Commission to establish an aerial observation system in BiH. Ultimately, helicopters in the Entities' fleets are to be used as the observation platforms.

The OSCE had to face many challenges in attempting to organize and coordinate this worthwhile confidence-building measure. Co-operation and coordination between the OSCE and SFOR, which manages the airspace over BiH, was essential to the success of this exercise. Effective collaboration

between the Office of the Personal Representative for Articles II & IV and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina made this endeavour a success.

The result was that the supporting nations were pleased with the results and parties to the Agreement demonstrated their professional teamwork and excellent co-operation with the international organizations and supporting states involved.

Daniel Saracino and Lt. Col. Schreiber are Regional Stabilization Officers in the OSCE Mission to BiH.

'Kosovo in pictures' photo exhibition held at Eighth OSCE Ministerial Council

Aside from its more formal meetings and debates, the Eighth OSCE Ministerial Council in Vienna on 27 and 28 November also provided the ideal forum for the staging of an unusual photograph exhibition. Entitled 'Kosovo in pictures', the exhibition

of more than 70 pictures taken by the Czech photographer, Lubomir Kotek, illustrates in vivid colors the day-to-day work of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK). The OSCE Secretariat's Press and Public Information Section took the initiative to display these photos at the

Press Centre of the biggest OSCE event during 2000, in order to interest journalists and representatives of attending delegations in the work of the Organization's largest Mission.

'Kosovo in pictures' builds upon a previous exhibition of photographs taken



The Eighth Ministerial Council provided the occasion for the exhibition



A new trainee police officer graduates from the OSCE Police Service School in Vushtrri/ Vucitrn, Kosovo

by Lubomir Kotek during the first year of the Mission, which describe pictorially the OSCE work in the fields of human rights and rule of law, media affairs, democratization, the work of the Vushtrri/Vucitrn Police School, and how all this affects the life of the province's population.

Nearly six months and one successful set of municipal elections later, the collection has shifted its emphasis to the OSCE's voter registration and election work in the province. From the reg-



Participants at a pre-election rally fill the streets of Pristina

istration process, with the taking of finger prints and digital pictures in the most remote rural parts of Kosovo, up to the last political party rallies before election day, Mr. Kotek has achieved a series of photos that represent life in Kosovo 2000 in its most minute details.

Mr. Kotek is a Czech photographer, born in Prague in 1958. Having trained as a documentary photographer, he worked for the news agency Agence France Presse and as a free-lancer for numerous Czech newspapers, weeklies

and agencies. He has been involved in several humanitarian aid projects to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya and Kosovo. Since September 1999, he has worked as the official photographer for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. The photo exhibition 'Kosovo in pictures', of which several pictures are shown here, will soon be available on-line on the OSCE website at

www.osce.org



Last details being prepared for election day on the streets of Kosovo



OSCE election staff explains the voting procedures to Kosovar citizens



News from the field

The OSCE currently has Missions or other field activities in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), Latvia, Skopje (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The following brief reports reflect some of the recent work which these field operations have undertaken.

Humanitarian aid project of Assistance Group to Chechnya extended

The Assistance Group to Chechnya's humanitarian aid programme, 'Psychomedical Therapy and Sojourns', aimed at Chechen children living in a camp for internally-displaced people, has been extended until this month. The programme, which originally started in July and has been financed by the Austrian Chairmanship, was due to conclude at the end of September. But as board and

lodging costs for the sojourns in Prielbrusie (Kabardino-Balkaria) were cheaper than anticipated, the treatment in Znamenskoe was extended by three months. The project provides psychomedical assistance to 100 Chechen children and 40 mothers living in the Yuzhny camp in Znamenskoe. These are people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders as a result of the hostilities in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation.

Stability Pact Gender Task Force holds training session

A training session under the auspices of the 'Women can do it' project was held in Zagreb from 3 to 5 November. The aim of the project, part of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe's Gender Task Force, is to empower politically-active women. The session gathered about 25 women from various political parties, non-governmental organizations and trade unions from central and north-west

Croatia, who are expected to conduct further training sessions in the field. Further training sessions for other regions, including southern and eastern Croatia, are expected to be held in advance of the local elections in spring 2001.

OSCE Mission in Kosovo trains new municipal representatives

Following the first democratic municipal elections held in Kosovo, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) has organized and conducted the first round of post-election training for the province's new Municipal Assembly members. Through OMIK's Institute for Civil Administration in Pristina, this training programme functions as an important element in the process of establishing local government structures and enabling their members to commence their work. The training was held at the beginning of November in each Kosovo municipality. Twenty teams of OSCE trainers guided the Assembly members in two-day seminars through their new roles and responsibilities, including issues such as local economic development; education, health care, water and sanitation; and local infrastructure and planning. The programme is part of OSCE's role to strengthen local government structures in Kosovo.

First youth conference held in Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 6 and 7 November, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) organized the first BiH Youth Conference in Sarajevo. The event was attended among others by the Secretary General of the European Youth Forum, representatives of the Croatian non-governmental youth organization, GONG, and members of the NGO CESID from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The conference's main aim was to identify common ground and to strengthen the

contact between youth political party branches and those representatives of local youth NGOs that were registered candidates for the 11 November general elections in BiH.

New Kosovo judges and prosecutors attend OSCE training seminars

In co-operation with the Council of Europe, OMIK has been involved in training more than 100 recently-appointed judges and prosecutors in November, through its Kosovo Judicial Institute. In two-day sessions, participants from the Peja/Pec, Prizren, Prishtine/Pristina, Mitrovica/Mitrovica and Gjilan/Gnjilane regions were trained in criminal procedure, the relationship between the investigating judge, the public prosecutor and the police; property rights, and the functions of the newly-established Ombudsperson Institution. This was the second round of training seminars for judges and prosecutors who were sworn into office in August and September this year. The training seminars are presented by Kosovo and international legal experts and are designed to help the participants develop their professional skills and knowledge in key areas of their work.

OSCE co-organizes Human Rights Conference in Tajikistan

The OSCE Mission to Tajikistan, together with the Office of the Regional Prosecutor of Sughd province, held a conference on 9 and 10 November on 'Human Rights in pre-trial investigation and arrest'. The event, which was funded by Austria, Switzerland and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), was organized in the city of Chkalovsk, near Khujand. Attendees included civil society representatives from all Central Asian countries except Turkmenistan, representatives of law and order institutions from

Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and members of all OSCE presences in the region. On the agenda of the conference were topics such as the norms and standards regarding human rights during pre-trial investigation; prevention of torture and violence; the role of the Ombudsman institution in guaranteeing Human Rights; and the role of civil society in monitoring human rights and the investigation process.

Tenth class graduates from OSCE Kosovo Police Service School

On 18 November, the tenth class of police cadets graduated from the OSCE-run Kosovo Police Service School in Vushtri/Vucitrn. This brings the total number of police officers successfully trained by the OMIK to 2,539. This class consisted of 293 cadets of whom 41 are non-Albanian and 53 are women. After the completion of their eight-week long basic training course, they spent a further 19 weeks of in-service training with international police officers of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, as well as an additional 80 hours of classroom tuition provided by OSCE police instructors at regional training centres throughout the province. Meanwhile, the 319 students of the eleventh basic course completed their sixth week of training, and the 301 students of the twelfth course finished their second week. OMIK aims to provide democratically-oriented basic police training for at least 4,000 locally recruited police officers.

Ombudsperson Institution formally inaugurated last month in Kosovo

On 21 November, the newly created Kosovo Ombudsperson Institution was inaugurated in a formal ceremony in Pristina. The foundations for this new institution, which will operate independently of the OSCE and the other pillars of the United Nations Mission in

Kosovo, were laid by the OMIK. In July, Marek Antoni Nowicki from Poland was appointed to the position of Ombudsman. He will be assisted in his work by one international and two Kosovar deputies. The main tasks of the office are to accept and investigate complaints against the authorities concerning alleged abuses of power and human rights violations. The service of this multi-ethnic institution is free of charge and can be used by individuals, groups or organizations. All complaints received are treated confidentially.

OMIK opens its ninth NGO resource centre

As a further move to contribute to the goal of building democratic institutions through support for local grassroots initiatives, OMIK opened a new NGO resource centre on 24 November, the ninth of its kind. Located in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, the centre is designed to give local non-governmental organizations access to office and training facilities and resources. By establishing these centres, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo is trying to create a favourable environment for the establishment and development of local NGO

and civil society structures, and generally to promote greater participation of Kosovo citizens in public life. Services to the NGOs, which include the use of meeting rooms, telephones, and copy machines as well as specific training, are provided in both Albanian and Serbian.

OSCE AMG in Belarus begins seminars for public defenders

As part of the project 'Training of public defenders and support to the independent legal sector', the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus started a series of seminars for members of human rights organizations, advocates, journalists and city authorities on 25 and 26 November. The series, which began in Glubokoye and Molodechno, will also include seminars for public defenders in 15 other cities and towns of Belarus. Two leading human rights NGOs – the Belarusian Helsinki Committee and Legal Assistance to the Population – have been selected to hold these seminars. These NGOs have jointly published a handbook for public defenders, which is being distributed at the seminars, and to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, the Constitutional and Supreme

Courts, and other government institutions. It focuses on both theoretical and practical aspects of the role of public defenders in court proceedings. The seminar programme, which is funded by the European Union and the ODIHR, is expected to be completed by February 2001.

OMIK appoints National Co-director for the Kosovo Law Centre

A National Co-Director has been appointed by OMIK for the Kosovo Law Centre. From 1 December, Professor Gani Oruqi will lead the Centre alongside the International Co-Director, Dr Sebastian von Muenchow, who has been in charge of the institution since its opening this May. Professor Oruqi is an expert for family law at the Law Faculty of the University of Pristina and has been engaged in the negotiations on the Law Faculty curriculum reform in Kosovo. The OSCE established the Kosovo Law Centre in conjunction with local and international partners. The Centre serves as a legal think-tank, which is neutral and strictly non-political in nature. National and international experts work side-by-side at the Centre.



On 2 November, the **NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson**, addressed the Permanent Council of the OSCE in Vienna. In his speech, the first by any NATO Secretary General to the OSCE's main decision-making body, he emphasized the developing ties between the two organizations. "NATO-OSCE relations are a strategic imperative. We live in a time when democratic norms are acquiring an ever greater weight in interna-

tional relations. The OSCE remains the standard bearer of these norms... But like NATO, it cannot achieve its goals in isolation... That is why the strategic partnership between our two institutions is becoming ever more valuable," Lord Robertson told the Permanent Council.

With regard to co-operation on the ground between both organizations, Lord Robertson said: "Bosnia and Kosovo have demonstrated that our two institutions not only pursue common goals, but can actually pursue them in common... in NATO, the OSCE will find a strong and co-operative partner.

Because NATO, too, has broadened its agenda -- and it has done so in line with the objectives shared by the OSCE", he added.

The **OSCE Permanent Council** formally welcomed Thailand as the ninth Partner for Co-operation on 9 November. Alongside Japan and Korea, Thailand is the third Asian country to join the OSCE's group of Partners for Co-operation. In a letter of 11 October, the Thai Government had expressed its wish to develop more structured contacts with the OSCE and to develop and actively

promote the goals of the Organization. On 27 November, in a speech at the Eighth Ministerial Council meeting, Thailand's Foreign Minister, Dr Surin Pitsuwan, thanked the OSCE States for their confidence in his country.

"Thailand has long been an advocate of co-operative security, of promoting formal and informal links on political and security matters between regions through co-operation", he said. "This has been the driving force behind our desire to be a Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE which we view as bringing benefit to both parties". As the only South-East Asian country with formal links to the OSCE, Thailand expects to provide fresh perspectives on a number of issues, from regional security to transnational crime. "We are looking forward to working closely within the framework and machinery of the OSCE", Dr Pitsuwan said.

The **OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (CiO)**, Austrian Foreign Minister, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, issued a statement on 13 November welcoming the peaceful and orderly conduct of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), held on 11 November. "These elections represent an important contribution to the continued implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords", she said.

The CiO noted with satisfaction that a solid majority of the citizens of the country had participated in the polls, while more than 40,000 BiH citizens had assisted in the organization of the elections. "The participation of a high number of domestic observers and other civic groups represents an important step towards the local ownership", Ms Ferrero-Waldner said. She called upon the new holders of office to

implement the election results at all levels and to ensure an efficient and orderly transfer of power.

The **High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)**, **Wolfgang Petritsch**, addressed the Permanent Council on 20 November, one week after the holding of the third OSCE-supervised general elections in the country. He congratulated the OSCE Mission to BiH on the successful conduct of the elections, and summarized the tasks lying ahead for the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Attention now turns to the implementation of the election results", he said. "The first priority is to establish assemblies and governments... as soon as possible."

Mr. Petritsch emphasized that it was high time for the institutions in BiH to show an increase in political will to adopt a constructive attitude. "It is essential for BiH to speed up the pace of reforms if it is not to lag behind even further the rest of the countries in the region", he stated. "The key strategic areas... remain the same: economic reform, refugee return and the consolidation and strengthening of institutions, especially at State level."

On 23 November, the **European Union Commissioner on External Relations, Christopher Patten**, delivered an address to the Permanent Council, focussing on the growing partnership between the OSCE and the EU. This was the first time a member of the European Commission had addressed the OSCE Permanent Council. In his speech, Mr. Patten stressed the existing relationship between the two organizations was making a real difference to the everyday lives of many people

across the European continent.

"Our people and your people work alongside each other every day, sometimes in conditions of danger, often in harsh and difficult environments", the EU Commissioner said. "Let me place on record our admiration for the tireless work carried out by OSCE field missions, staffed by dedicated personnel, who are right at the front-line in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Europe owes them a great deal."

During his address, Mr. Patten noted that both organizations had been working increasingly closely together in recent years, particularly in the Balkans. Mr. Patten commended the OSCE's work in the areas of elections, democratization, human rights and rule of law.

Permanent Council

The **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia** has appointed Minister Counsellor Branka Latinovic as Head of its Mission to the OSCE. She took up her new duties on 9 November.

The **Permanent Mission of Spain** to the OSCE has informed the Permanent Council that its Head, Antonio Cosano, completed his duties on 30 November. Until the arrival of a new Head of Mission, Servando de la Torre, Deputy Head of Mission, acts as Charge d'Affaires ad interim.

The Foreign Ministry of the **Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**, a Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE, has appointed Dr Muhyieeddeen Touq as Head of its Permanent Mission to the OSCE. He succeeds Dr Mazen M. Armouti in this position.





Kurier, 25 November

‘Today, after the admission of the democratic latecomer Yugoslavia, the OSCE family has 55 members. The yearly council in Vienna on Monday will be a Who’s Who of world politics... Much handshaking for a better world, or at least the old continent, is assured... The emphasis of the Austrian chairmanship has been the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. If its success would be judged after the travel activities of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister Ferrero-Waldner, there would be cause for congratulations. However, the goal which her predecessor Wolfgang Schüssel (as Foreign Minister in the former coalition) set for the Chairmanship has been missed – not necessarily because of anyone’s fault. Mr. Schüssels definition of success was: “If we at the end of 2000 would be able to state that there are fewer crisis areas than at the beginning of the year, then we would have achieved a huge success.”’

Die Presse, 27 November

‘The OSCE has two basic faults: the decision-making is by consensus, and there are no possibilities of sanctions against wrongdoers in its own ranks. However, it would be wrong to immediately denounce the OSCE as “a politically toothless wailer” because of that. Its structure alone makes the OSCE an organization that can work efficiently only in the background. The best example of that is the host of OSCE mission members in the field, who according to a high-level OSCE diplomat are working in conditions marked by “mud, despair and insecurity”. And who

also achieve a lot. However, the untold number of smaller and bigger successes that they are able to reach often remain unknown to the general public. In spite of that, however, an OSCE Chairmanship – this year it is Austria – will always be judged according to its visible successes, which have been absent or occurred in a very limited number in the year 2000.’

Der Standard, 27 November

‘When judging the Austrian Chairmanship, one can perceive what the OSCE is able to do and what it is not able to do. Its biggest value is that it exists: as a permanent negotiating forum on the basis of (at least verbally) agreed common principles and values, as mediator in conflicts and as an instrument for non-military crisis management.’

Reuters, 28 November

‘Foreign ministers from the 55-nation OSCE failed on Tuesday to agree on a declaration on resolving the Chechnya conflict because of Russia’s objections. But ministers ending a two-day meeting of the OSCE urged Moscow to seek a political solution... Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who chairs the OSCE, said it had not been possible to reach consensus on a final declaration on Chechnya, Georgia and Moldova. Instead, she issued a “chairperson’s statement” summarizing views expressed at the meeting, which said ministers had called for the immediate return of the OSCE mission to Chechnya... Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yevgeny Gusev said Ferrero-Waldner’s statement did not reflect the full range of views expressed at the meeting.’

BBC, 28 November

‘A meeting of foreign ministers of the 55-nation OSCE has ended in failure because of Russia’s objections to paragraphs on Chechnya, Georgia and Moldova.’

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 28 November

‘The yearly meeting of OSCE foreign ministers ended on Tuesday in the Hofburg in Vienna without a common final declaration. In spite of several postponements of the concluding session and intense negotiations during the two preceding nights and during the second conference day, the representatives of the 55 participating States failed to reach consensus on a common text... Nevertheless, they managed to reach agreement on an OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the adoption of which had been preceded by eleven months of negotiations in Vienna.’

Kurier, 29 November

‘A visibly disappointed OSCE Chairperson appeared on Tuesday before the press: With barely concealed anger, Benita Ferrero-Waldner... announced an incomplete result of the negotiations. The OSCE meeting in Vienna ended a few hours later without a final declaration... The negotiations had lasted “the whole night through”, explained the Foreign Minister, however it had proved impossible to reach a common declaration on the for Russia sensitive crisis regions: Moldova, Georgia and above all Chechnya... The unsatisfactory result of the meeting shows once again the basic weakness of the OSCE: it can only be active when in consensus but is more and more being confronted with conflicts within states, in which the governments concerned do not want any involvement from the outside.’

Die Presse, 29 November

‘The normality of the OSCE is much greyer than what a family picture with grinning foreign ministers seems to tell... Through no fault of the Austrians themselves, the OSCE under Austrian chairmanship has slid into a crisis.’

Die Presse, 29 November

‘The failure to reach agreement on a

final declaration was interpreted in different ways in OSCE circles: on the one hand, there were regrets, on the other hand, it was said that, “no common declaration is better than a washed-out, weak statement.”

Der Standard, 29 November

‘Consensus is good, conflict is better. Namely where the consensus principle becomes a fetish, which justifies any compromise, however bad. In this sense the OSCE Vienna Ministerial Council was a downright success. The struggle about a final declaration, which never materialized, made the issues under dispute much more transparent than would have been the case with a consensus declaration. If this happened more often in the future, it would benefit the organization.’

Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 30 November

‘In Russia, yet another foreign policy problem has appeared; namely, Moscow’s relationship to the OSCE has become complicated again. As a matter of fact, what happened at the OSCE Ministerial Council is rather not a new conflict, but a return to an old one of almost a year ago ... Actually, the issue is not Chechnya ... [it] simply reveals negative tendencies which have an obvious anti-Russian direction and which other countries would hardly like if their own interests were jeopardized.’

The Organization has in fact forgotten other important tasks and goals which were set by the CSCE at the dawn of its activities, and focussed entirely on human rights problems in Russia and some other CIS states, with the emphasis on the Chechnya problem ... The results of the foreign ministers’ meeting give cause to multifaceted reflections. On the one hand, regret is being expressed that there was no agreement on a final joint declaration, on the other hand it is being said that this is for the better, because it is better to have no declaration than to work out an ambiguous surrogate. That might indeed be the case, [the meet-

ing was] no catastrophe, and the Vienna lesson might help the OSCE to start tackling real tasks and problems.’

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

Reuters, 6 November

‘Yugoslavia has submitted a request to join the OSCE, its chairwoman said on Monday, in the latest step in the country’s march away from international isolation. Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner told reporters in Belgrade that Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica had presented her with a letter accepting an OSCE invitation to apply for membership of Europe’s security and human rights watchdog... Ms. Ferrero-Waldner said the OSCE, which has taken a lead role in helping to build democracy in former communist states, would provide monitors for Serbian parliamentary elections in December and would open an office in Belgrade.’

BBC, 7 November

‘President Vojislav Kostunica on Monday handed over a letter to Austrian Foreign Minister and OSCE chairwoman Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who is part of a team visiting Belgrade. In it, he acknowledges that Federal Yugoslavia was only one of the successor states to the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia – a vital condition for membership of the OSCE.’

Die Presse, 11 November

‘At his country’s OSCE admission ceremony in the Hofburg in Vienna on Friday, Yugoslavia’s new Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic assured that Yugoslavia will face the consequences of ten years of war: settle the conflicts, make peace with its neighbours, take back those who had left the country during the war. The first step by Belgrade however was to be its reintegration into European structures. Belgrade had

asked the OSCE to observe the Serbian parliamentary elections on 23 December, and in addition to that, it welcomed a rapporteur from the OSCE. The admission to the OSCE was enthusiastically celebrated. The OSCE Council was united in its assessment that this was an event of historical proportions.’

Süddeutsche Zeitung, 11 November

‘After the UN, now also the OSCE has admitted the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as member state. This decision was taken by the Permanent Council of the OSCE on Friday at a special session in Vienna... The admission into the OSCE was decided, as prescribed, by consensus. After the ceremonial decision, the flag of the former Yugoslavia at the OSCE headquarters in Vienna was taken down and the one of the so called rump-Yugoslavia hoisted.’

AZERBAIJAN

BBC, 7 November

‘The European security organization, the OSCE, says Azerbaijan’s parliamentary elections on Sunday were marred by serious irregularities. The head of the OSCE’s observer mission in Azerbaijan... told a news conference that 150 monitors had documented ballot-stuffing, intimidation of opposition party members, and the manipulation of turnout figures. She also said the counting process was completely flawed.’

Financial Times, 7 November

‘International observers yesterday condemned “serious irregularities” in Azerbaijan’s weekend parliamentary elections in which President Haydar Aliyev’s ruling party won a landslide victory... In a hard-hitting report, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, which together deployed 150 election observers, said: “Voting was marred by numerous instances of serious irregularities including a completely flawed counting

process, manipulated turnout figures, production of either false protocols or no protocol at all, multiple voting and series of apparently identical signatures on the voters lists.”

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 7 November

‘Altogether the criticism by the observers turned out to be extremely sharp, which is all the more noteworthy especially since the OSCE, during such missions, often wraps its misgivings into roundabout diplomatic phrases, in order not to step on anybody’s toes.’

BOSNIA ELECTIONS

Reuters, 10 November

‘The OSCE has run a total of six elections of various kinds in Bosnia, and this is intended to be its last... The OSCE has introduced some changes to the electoral rules and regulations, incorporating the provisions of a draft election law that Bosnia failed to pass this year.’

Reuters, 12 November

‘Parliamentarians from the OSCE and the Council of Europe on Sunday praised the conduct of Bosnia’s weekend general elections, which are due to be the last post-war polls organised as well as monitored by the OSCE. But they also cited allegations that some parties had tried to incite hatred or organise fraud and efforts to undermine the Dayton peace agreement that ended Bosnia’s 1992-5 war and called on the newly-elected politicians to pass a crucial election law.’

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 14 November

‘Not even the third OSCE organized and monitored elections brought desired results in the Serb Republic and in the compactly Croat populated Western Herzegovina. Both nationalist parties have again seen good results, despite the change of governments in Zagreb and Belgrade.’

Der Standard, 14 November

‘The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the parliamentary elections on Monday was characterized by rejoicing among the victorious nationalists in the Serb and Croat areas and by words of admonishment from the OSCE. The head of the OSCE mission, Robert Barry, requested constructive work from the parties... The Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, emphasized that the OSCE would continue to support moderate forces in the building of civil society, economic reforms, law and order and common institutions.’

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 14 November

‘In the Serb Republic, the nationalists achieved a big victory, thereby inflicting a humiliating defeat on Western diplomats... Milorad Dodik, the presidential candidate favoured by the West, managed to reach only 26 percent, and his independent Socialists had to be content with only 11 percent of the votes in the parliamentary poll. That was the bill for a not very successful government; the OSCE campaign against corruption might have done particular damage to Dodik and his team.’

Süddeutsche Zeitung, 18 November

‘The conflict between the Bosnia mission of the OSCE and the nationalist Serb and Croat parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina has intensified. The mission stroke 13 elected candidates of the Croat Democratic Party HDZ from the lists... With these sanctions, the OSCE punishes the HDZ for an illegal referendum, which the party had organized among Croat voters.’

KOSOVO

Die Presse, 10 November

“‘These elections will go into history as the best that ever have been held right after the end of a conflict.’ Daan Everts, head of the OSCE mission in Kosovo, on Thursday

in Vienna, was drawing his conclusions about the end-October municipal elections in Kosovo. There had been no violence, said Everts, hardly any invalid votes, with 79 percent a high turnout of voters, and impressingly correct voters lists, which the OSCE had prepared with painstaking effort. Everts said that he had been especially impressed by the atmosphere among the Kosovo Albanian population on election day. They had arrived in their best Sunday dress, already at seven in the morning formed queues outside the polling stations and had in many cases to stand waiting for several hours.’

KYRGYZSTAN

The Economist, 4 November

‘Askar Akaev, who has been president of the former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan since 1990, was re-elected for yet another five-year term this week with a nifty 74,5 % of the vote... The OSCE, which monitored the election, said the Kyrgyz presidential election failed to comply with its standards for democratic elections, condemning the process in even harsher terms than it used for the country’s dubious parliamentary elections in February and March.’

MOLDOVA

Reuters, 20 November

‘The OSCE said on Monday talks on resolving a dispute over Moldova’s separatist Trans-Dniestrian region and the withdrawal of Russian troops were deadlocked. “The OSCE mission to Moldova regrets that the negotiation process for a lasting settlement of the Trans-Dniestrian problem has not made significant progress,” a mission statement said. The mission said it had proved impossible to assemble representatives of the parties to the conflict.’

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ELECTIONS



Parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan fall below international standards

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) observed the 5 November parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan. The International Election Observation Mission, a joint undertaking by the ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), concluded that the elections, while marking some progress over previous elections, fell short of international standards. In a statement of preliminary findings and conclusions, the international observers also noted that significant improvements will have to be achieved in order to meet standards for democratic elections.

The ODIHR long-term election observation mission, deployed on 4 October, was headed by Nikolai Vulchanov (Bulgaria). On election day, the Observation Mission deployed more than 200 short-term observers, including 21 parliamentarians from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) and 18 from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Serious deficiencies were noted in the implementation of the election legislation. The registration of candidates for the single mandate constituencies was substantially flawed and effectively barred approximately half of the candidates from running. The elections were marred by numerous instances of serious

irregularities, in particular a completely flawed counting process. Observers reported ballot stuffing, manipulated turnout results, pre-marked ballots and production of either false protocols or no protocols at all. The international observers appealed to the authorities to urgently investigate in an open and transparent manner all irregularities and to take appropriate action immediately.

Nonetheless, the international observers noted that progress had been made in particular with regard to enhancing political pluralism. The elections took place within an improved legislative framework. The newly amended election legislation provided for multi-party election commissions at all levels. In contrast to previous elections, all political parties were eventually able to register for the proportional ballot, although the late registration of eight of them did affect their ability to conduct a full campaign. The media provided for a diversity of political views, although the state-owned media clearly spoke in favour of the incumbents.

As a result of violations, the Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan announced repeat elections in 11 constituencies to take place on 4 January 2001. The ODIHR will deploy an observation mission for the re-run elections.

Romania's rounds of polling meet commitments for democratic elections

The ODIHR observed the 27 November presidential and parliamentary elections in Romania and concluded that they were conducted in accordance with OSCE commitments for democratic

elections. The ODIHR Election Observation Mission, headed by Linda Edgeworth (USA), found these, the fourth general elections since the 1989 overthrow of the Ceausescu regime, to be further evidence that democratic elections are firmly entrenched in Romania. Based on a limited observation on election day (42 short-term observers), the voting process and counting were found to have been carried out in accordance with the legal and procedural requirements.

Important features promoted an electoral process in Romania that was accountable, transparent, free, fair and equal. Noteworthy were the politically inclusive election bureaux, the broadly pluralist contests, the transparency of the election results tabulation, media that gave voters access to a broad range of information, and public-service broadcasts that provided contestants with fair and balanced treatment.

While noting the overall strengths of the electoral framework in Romania, the ODIHR found shortcomings that remain to be addressed, in particular the absence of a standing electoral body. The system of amending laws through emergency ordinances and decisions of the Government, the overly restrictive rules for domestic election observer organizations, the extensive use of supplemental voter lists and the inadequate treatment of signatures on petitions in support of presidential candidates were also noted.

First Gender Focal Point included in an Election Observation Mission

The ODIHR Election Observation Mission included for the elections in

Romania for the first time a gender issues specialist to analyze all stages of the electoral process from a gender perspective, including political party policies and attitudes to women candidates and women voters. Consideration of gender issues will be integrated into all future election observation. Women's representation is generally extremely low in the transitional countries of the OSCE region and the particular concerns of women citizens are often not included in party platforms. Inclusion of gender issues in election observation will therefore generate information and recommendations on meeting the OSCE commitments to promote equal participation of women in all aspects of political life.

ODIHR to observe parliamentary elections in Republic of Serbia

In preparation for the National Assembly elections in the Republic of Serbia/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia scheduled for 23 December, the ODIHR sent a needs assessment mission to Belgrade from 13 to 16 November. On the basis of the mission's findings, the ODIHR decided to deploy an Election Observation Mission in the Republic of Serbia.

On 23 November, the Mission, headed by Nikolai Vulchanov (Bulgaria), opened its office in Belgrade with ten election experts, and 12 regional offices with 24 long-term observers throughout Serbia. A total of 150 short-term observers have been requested from the participating States to observe election day.

Final report on FYROM elections

The ODIHR released its final report on the municipal elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, held on 10 September. The report is available on the ODIHR website at

www.osce.org/odih

DEMOCRATIZATION

Workshop held on women's leadership and network building in Kyrgyzstan

A workshop on women's leadership and network building was organized by the ODIHR in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, from 14 to 17 November. The 50 participants included women from all regions of Kyrgyzstan, among them NGO representatives, women members of parliament and representatives of the State Commission on Women and Family Issues. Many of the NGO representatives had become active in women's rights and gender equality work only recently, following ODIHR training seminars in the summer of this year.

The first part of the workshop focused on capacity-building, women's empowerment, strengthening of leadership skills and broadening knowledge on gender equality and women's rights for women leaders from the regions. The second half concentrated on network building, development of cooperation between women NGOs from all regions and women MPs, and lobbying on gender policy and equality of opportunity.

One session of the workshop was devoted to discussing draft laws on gender equality and domestic violence, prepared by two NGOs from Bishkek. This gave the opportunity to improve and develop the drafts further, and to agree on lobbying techniques and mechanisms. The ODIHR had provided expert advice on both laws which will be considered in the final drafts.

The participants also succeeded in establishing concrete working relations, identifying a networking methodology and developing a common understanding of the women's movement and gender policy.

Training workshop on women's rights held in Kazakhstan

A training and strategy workshop for Kazakhstani women NGO leaders and media representatives was held by the ODIHR from 20 to 22 November. The

training included techniques for lobbying for gender equality legislation and approaches to working with the media to create public understanding and support for women's rights. Participants worked to identify common long- and short-term goals for work on gender issues and plans for lobbying for gender equality legislation.

New working relations between the media and NGO representatives were also developed. NGO participants made recommendations for the continuation of the ODIHR regional training project on women's rights awareness, which has provided legal literacy training to women in five regions of Kazakhstan.

ODIHR assists with establishment of Armenian Ombudsperson institution

The ODIHR in November continued its assistance with the establishment of an Ombudsperson institution in Armenia. An ODIHR expert attended a workshop organized by the OSCE Office in Yerevan, the Ministry of Justice, and the Council of Europe to discuss comments on the draft Ombudsperson law. The comments, provided earlier this year by the ODIHR and the Council of Europe, had identified deficiencies in the draft law.

During the open and very frank discussions, the Ministry of Justice reiterated Armenia's willingness to create an independent Ombudsperson institution. ODIHR and Council of Europe experts discussed with the authorities a number of possible improvements to the law, including the suggestion to transfer the power to elect and dismiss the Ombudsperson from the President to Parliament.

Together with the OSCE Office in Yerevan, the ODIHR also participated in a round table briefing for NGOs about the nature and purpose of an Ombudsper-

son institution, in an effort to strengthen civil society support for the idea of establishing an independent human rights institution.

Training seminars held for prison authorities in Armenia

In mid-November, the ODIHR conducted two training seminars for prison governors and officials of the Ministry of Justice, two key groups for the reform of the penitentiary system in Armenia. The Ministry of Justice co-organized the training seminar.

Armenia has recently decided to transfer the penitentiary service from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Justice. The transfer represents an important step in conceptually separating those responsible for custody from those responsible for investigation and prosecution. The seminars addressed the role and substance of international standards for the penitentiary service and the underlying rationale and philosophy. By using this approach, the ODIHR seeks to support efforts by the authorities in Armenia to ensure that the transfer is not only a formal one, but leads to a genuine modernization and demilitarization of the penitentiary service.

ODIHR assists with establishment of new FYROM police academy

Continuing its support for the establishment of the new police academy and its curriculum, the ODIHR sent two police experts from the United Kingdom to Skopje from 6 to 16 November. The experts reviewed the progress made since their last visit earlier this year.

The experts assisted in the identification of the subjects to be addressed under the different modules of the academy's draft curriculum. The opening of the new institution with a new curriculum is currently planned for September 2001.

The visit is part of a support programme for the police of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), which is implemented jointly by the ODIHR, the OSCE Spillover Mission to Skopje, the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute, Budapest, and the Open Society Institute Macedonia.

Montenegrin mayors pay visits to Austrian municipalities

The ODIHR Office in Montenegro organized a visit to Austria by mayors and deputy mayors from 19 out of 21 Montenegrin municipalities, from 19 to 26 November. The municipalities of Montenegro had few international contacts in the last decade, and the visit was intended to open up the possibility of project partnerships between Montenegrin and Austrian municipalities. During the visit, concrete co-operation projects in fields such as environmental protection and medical care were initiated. The ODIHR Office in Montenegro will continue its assistance to the municipalities and follow up on suggestions made during the visit. The programme was co-organized by the Federation of Cities of Austria.

Training held for women's rights and anti-trafficking project in Albania

Project trainers for the women's rights and anti-trafficking education project, developed by the ODIHR and the OSCE Presence in Albania, received a five-day course of intensive training to prepare them to work with identified target groups. They will be working to combat trafficking and the abuse of women's rights through the prevention, dissemination of information and protection of victims. The trainers will work closely with OSCE field offices in three pilot areas and also with selected target groups in Tirana. Discussions during the training also highlighted the need for greater government action to address women's

rights and unequal status, as well as the linkage between women's unequal and subordinate status and the prevalence of trafficking.

NGO-Government round table held on trafficking in Romania

In the first event of its kind in Romania, the ODIHR, together with the Romanian Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized a round table in Bucharest on 30 October aimed at combatting trafficking in human beings. A number of high-level officials gave presentations at this well-attended conference, among them the Minister of Justice, Valeriu Stoica, and the Secretary of State, Mihai Razvan Ungureanu, as well as Nadia Constantinescu, Counsellor at the Ministry of Justice, and ODIHR Deputy Director, Peter Eicher.

The participants identified key areas for further reflection and action, particularly the need for co-operation and information-sharing in efforts to combat this human rights abuse. Participants suggested institutionalizing their dialogue, and considered establishing an interdisciplinary forum through which all relevant actors would be invited to develop a national strategy to combat trafficking in human beings. Furthermore, the participating NGOs discussed the creation of a network to co-ordinate and unify their efforts in developing anti-trafficking programmes.

ODIHR continues assistance for reform of Ukrainian border service

In November, the ODIHR continued its assistance to the border service of Ukraine. Two training visits of Ukrainian border service staff to Poland were organized in close co-operation with the offices of the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine and the International Organization for Migration in Kyiv. The first visit focused on the role of human rights in the work of border

guards and on the experience of reorganizing the Polish border service, which had been transformed from an integral part of the military into a law enforcement agency under the Ministry of the Interior.

The aim of the second training trip was to introduce Ukrainian border service staff to the border guards training system in Poland, particularly to training on the law and human rights in the Polish Border Guards Training Centre. During both visits, the inclusion of human rights issues in the regular training of Ukrainian border guards was discussed.

ROMA AND SINTI ISSUES

European network established at first-ever meeting of elected Roma officials

A European network of parliamentarians, mayors and local councillors of Romani origin was established at a meeting of elected Roma officials, organized by the ODIHR and the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held in Prague on 30 November and 1 December.

The meeting provided a first opportunity for the nearly 100 participants from mostly Central and Eastern European countries to exchange experience

and discuss strategies to improve the participation of Roma in the political life of the countries they live in. With only five members of parliament, some 20 mayors and about 400 local councillors, the Roma are still vastly under-represented in public office across Europe, although they constitute significant minorities in many countries.

It was also decided to institutionalize the discussion initiated by the meeting through the establishment of an expert working group, which was tasked with developing concrete guidelines to implement the recommendations.

NEWS

from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) is located at Prinsessegracht 22, NL-2514 AP The Hague, The Netherlands, tel.: (+31-70) 312 55 00, fax: (+31-70) 363 59 10, e-mail: hcnm@hcnm.org

OSCE Ministerial Council agrees on selection of candidate for next High Commissioner

In a decision taken at the OSCE Ministerial on 28 November, the Ministers and representatives of the participating States expressed their gratitude to Max van der Stoel "for his excellent service as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities as well as his readiness to continue in his position". They decided to extend, "as an exceptional measure, the appointment of Mr. van der Stoel until 30 June 2001". They also decided to appoint Rolf Ekeus as his successor for a period of three years, beginning 1 July 2001.

Mr. Ekeus is best known for his term as Executive Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) from 1991 to 1997. From 1997 to 2000, he was Swedish Ambassador to the United States. Previous diplomatic postings included Bonn, Nairobi, New York and the Hague. Between 1984 and 1988 he was Ambassador and Per-

manent Representative of Sweden to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, including Chairman of CD negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Con-

vention, 1984 to 1987. He is also familiar with the OSCE, having been the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the its predecessor, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, between 1988 and 1992.



Max van der Stoel has been High Commissioner since the post was created in 1992

Van der Stoel receives three awards

On 24 November Max van der Stoel was awarded the BeNeLux Europa Prize for his service to Europe and the Benelux region. During the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Vienna on 27 November, he was awarded the OSCE Medal for distinguished service to the OSCE during his eight years as High Commissioner on National Minorities. At the Ministerial, Mr. Van der Stoel was also awarded the Order of Friendship from the Government of Kazakhstan.

HCNM speaks on prospects for preventing ethnic conflicts

On 6 November, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van

der Stoel, delivered a speech to an international conference on 'Preventing ethnic conflict in Central-Eastern Europe' in Warsaw. In it he drew on his eight years of experience as the High Commissioner and provided some lessons from his experiences. He also made some cautionary remarks.

He warned against complacency, saying: "There is a growing sense that inter-ethnic conflicts are waning. The explosion of excessive nationalism is seen as a product of the collapse of Communism and now that we are moving out of the period of post-Communist transition, the worst is over. I hope that this is true. But I have some concerns."

For example, he noted the importance of keeping "an eye open for any back-sliding on commitments that have already been undertaken". He said that "finding ways of enabling minorities to have a greater say over decisions that affect them without causing deep divisions in society will be one of the biggest challenges for this region in the years ahead."

He underlined the importance of long-term integration strategies noting that "enacting legislation to protect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities should not be regarded as some sort of short term process of scraping over the bar to fulfil certain minimum criteria". He also emphasized the need for further investment in conflict prevention. The full text of the speech is available on the HCNM section of the OSCE website:

www.osce.org/hcnm

International Board established for education institute in FYROM

Throughout November, discussions continued on the business plan for the new private Institution of Higher Education in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The High Commissioner has been closely involved in the development of this institution which is being designed to increase the possibilities for members of Macedonia's Albanian minority to study in their mother tongue at the tertiary level.

On 13 November the High Commissioner met in Zurich with education experts from the Albanian community in FYROM to finalize the business plan (which is being developed in co-operation with international education experts). On 29 and 30 November the first meeting of the Institution's board met in Zurich. It is made up of seven international education experts and chaired by Mr. Van der Stoel. At the same time, a foundation was created in Switzerland to act as the legal framework for international funds pledged to the project. The foundation will develop a legal structure in Macedonia to develop and steer the higher education institution.

HCNM discusses range of minority issues during visit to Slovak Republic

The High Commissioner visited the Slovak Republic on 20 and 21 November in order to discuss a range of issues concerning national minorities. Teacher training for minority teachers is a contentious issue and one which the High

Commissioner learned more about during a visit to the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. In discussions with the university executive, as well as staff and student representatives, the High Commissioner was informed about the existing structures and programmes at the University which are designed to teach potential teachers in minority languages (particularly Hungarian).

In subsequent discussions with Government Ministers, particularly the Minister of Education, Milan Ftacnik, the High Commissioner discussed possibilities for improving teacher training in minority languages in line with the Government Programme of 1998 which says that, 'the Government will guarantee the improvement of the educational level of citizens belonging to minorities to the nation-wide average and solve the problem of preparation of teachers for schools with teaching languages of minorities, theologians, and cultural and educational staff in minority languages by creating an appropriate institutional level within existing universities.'

During meetings with Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda, Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan, the Chairman of the National Council Jozef Migas, Deputy Prime Ministers Csaky, Miklos, Hamzik and Fogas and representatives of the Hungarian Coalition Party, the High Commissioner discussed a range of issues including public administration reform, the Roma, and Slovakia's accession to the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages.

Latest edition of OSCE Handbook

Updated to 1 July 2000

English version available on-line at

www.osce.org/publications/handbook

Hard copies also available from the OSCE Secretariat,
Kärntner Ring 5-7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria



REPORT

from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is located at Rådhusstræde 1, DK-1466 Copenhagen K, Denmark, tel.: (+45-33) 37 80 40, fax: (+45-33) 37 80 30, e-mail: osce@oscepa.dk

Parliamentarians Monitor Elections in Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina

During November OSCE Parliamentarians monitored elections in Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The parliamentarians concluded that the Azerbaijani elections fell short of international stan-

dards whilst the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina marked a significant improvement on all previous elections

The 21 members of the OSCE parliamentary team observing the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan on 5 November concluded in the preliminary statement, that although progress had been made, especially with regard to political pluralism and in connection with the media situation, the elections fell short of international standards. The most serious problems mentioned were the registration of single candidates, the lack of a transparent appeals process, and manipulation of the electoral procedures, as well as voter turnout.

Mrs. Paula Kokkonen (MP, Finland), Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for the elections in Azerbaijan, said afterwards that "The elections were marred by numerous instances of serious irregularities, in particular a



The CiO Special Representative, Paula Kokkonen, observing the elections in Azerbaijan

completely flawed counting process."

After the elections, the Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan declared its willingness to address problems related to the elections and in this connection the results in a district in Baku were annulled due to reports of fraud.

Prior to election day, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) Delegation, consisting of Members of Parliament from thirteen Member States, met with the President of Azerbaijan, the Speaker of Parliament, representatives of the political parties, the Chairman and two Secretaries of the Central Election Commission, representatives of the media, the Head of the OSCE Office in Baku, the Ambassadors from Russia, France, Italy and US, representatives of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), and the European Institute for the Media as well as with ODIHR

core staff in Baku and the OSCE long term observers. On election day, the OSCE Parliamentarians visited polling stations in and around Baku.

BOSNIA

"These elections mark a significant improvement to all previous elections and are an important step forward in

the long and difficult way to consolidate democracy and fully implement the Dayton Agreement", said OSCE PA Vice-President Bruce George, who led the nineteen member OSCE parliamentary team observing the general elections in Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH).

In the statement on the 11 November 2000 elections the parliamentary observers, from eight Member States, further congratulated the OSCE and, in particular, the thousands of citizens of BiH for their excellent performance in organizing these general elections. The statement called on the newly elected leadership of BiH to depart from narrow nationalism and the policy of confrontation and to build coalitions capable of making the institutions function according to the principles of democracy and human rights.

Prior to election day the parliamentarians were extensively briefed by rep-

representatives of political parties and organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The briefings also included meetings with High Representative Wolfgang Petrisch, Head of the OSCE Mission Ambassador Robert L. Barry, Foreign Minister Jadranko Prlic and Stabilization Force (SFOR) Commander Lieutenant General Michael L. Dodson.

During Election Day the parliamentary observers visited more than 300 polling stations in Banja Luka, Zenica, Sarajevo, Pale, Mostar, Foca, Gorazde, Vlasenica, Tuzla and Srebrenica.

OSCE PA President Severin Addresses Eighth OSCE Ministerial Council

On Monday 27 November, President Adrian Severin addressed the OSCE Ministerial Council in Vienna. Mr. Severin began by noting the profound changes that had taken place in the European security environment since the fall of the Berlin Wall, resulting in new challenges, threats, and opportunities for the OSCE. President Severin emphasized that co-operation between OSCE states was more important now than ever as the organization had moved beyond the simple role that it played during the Cold War as a link between two opposing camps. "It is wrong to speak today about 'enlargements'," said Mr. Severin, "since our goals must be reconciliation and unification." The new

imperative of the OSCE was to define a new system of Euro-Atlantic collective security through "the integration of the former enemies into new cooperative structures, as well as their conversion into true partners."

Because of the critical significance of co-operation in the post-Cold War environment, Mr. Severin underlined the dangers of double standards and the temptation of some states within the OSCE to see themselves as judges or teachers. "None of us," he said, "is beyond reproach in terms of meeting our shared values and standards." The President also urged caution in this regard with the workings of the OSCE Institutions. Although the OSCE was in many

of more than 300 directly elected parliamentarians," concluded President Severin, "we are pleased to provide the democratic foundation which is so crucial for the success of the OSCE. I hope that this approach will not pass unnoticed and will not remain unused."

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Bureau meets in Vienna

Chaired by President Severin, the Assembly's Bureau held a meeting in Vienna on 26 November. After welcoming remarks by the President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Dr. Heinz Fischer, the Bureau was addressed by the OSCE Chairperson in Office, Austrian Foreign

Minister Ms. Ferrero-Waldner, who briefed the parliamentarians extensively on recent activities of the OSCE Chairmanship and took questions from the floor.

The members of the Bureau also heard reports on the recent parliamentary election missions in Belarus, Azerbaijan and Bosnia



OSCE PA President Adrian Severin (right) and Secretary General Spencer Oliver

and Herzegovina as well as a report on the recent Democracy Team visit to Kosovo. Secretary General Spencer Oliver reported on activities of the International Secretariat. Prior to the meeting the Bureau Working Group on the Rules of Procedure, chaired by Vice-President Bruce George, considered a working draft containing the various recommendations for changes in the Rules of Pro-

cedures. The members of the Bureau also heard reports on the recent parliamentary election missions in Belarus, Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as a report on the recent Democracy Team visit to Kosovo. Secretary General Spencer Oliver reported on activities of the International Secretariat. Prior to the meeting the Bureau Working Group on the Rules of Procedure, chaired by Vice-President Bruce George, considered a working draft containing the various recommendations for changes in the Rules of Pro-

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cedure as put forward since October by various members of the Assembly, members of the Bureau, secretaries of delegation and staff of the secretariat. The next phase in the process will be the Bureau's co-sponsoring of proposals for consideration by the Standing Committee at the next meeting in February 2001.

PA President Severin Addresses NATO Parliamentarians

At the session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in Berlin on 21 November, President Severin delivered a speech on the relationship between the OSCE and NATO, and the part that their two Parliamentary Assemblies had to play. Beginning by emphasizing the flu-

idity of international politics at the dawn of the 21st century and the increased role required of both NATO and the OSCE, Mr. Severin then went on to describe the complementary nature of the two institutions. "The realm of the OSCE is confidence-building and transparency, conflict early-warning and prevention," said Mr. Severin, "...The realm of NATO, as a military alliance, is essentially to make peace through force where the OSCE is unable to keep it through negotiation."

As examples of the potential benefits of close cooperation, Mr. Severin pointed to both Bosnia and Kosovo. In both cases, it was NATO that possessed the military might and political will necessary to force an end to the bloodshed and provide the security necessary to

allow the OSCE to subsequently embark upon the arduous task of nation-building.

Given the need for collaboration between the two organizations, Mr. Severin explained the pivotal role that both the NATO and OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies had to play. Not only were the two Parliamentary Assemblies valuable forums for inter-parliamentary dialogue, but "as the directly-elected representatives of our constituent populations and members of our national legislatures," stated Mr. Severin, "we are all in positions to promote the integration of OSCE initiatives with those of NATO, both through the rallying of public opinion and through individual government's action."

NEWS from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media is located at Kärtner Ring 5-7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria. Tel.: (+43-1) 512 21 45-0, fax: (+43-1) 512 21 45-9, e-mail: pm-fom@osce.org

Berlin meeting reviews the dangers to journalists in conflict areas

During the last two decades most of the journalists killed were casualties of non-international conflicts. This type of "terror warfare" has considerably changed the conditions on the ground not only for military personnel but also for civilians, including journalists. New media techniques and the global media market also put "pressure of presence" on journalists, by the demand to have news in real time, inevitably putting journalists increasingly in harm's way.

Based on this changing reality, Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a joint Round Table on 6 November on the protection of journalists in

conflict areas. The participants included leading media professionals and officials from OSCE participating States, from the United Nations and the Council of Europe. The Round Table ended with the adoption of the 'Berlin Declaration', summarizing the results.

Central Asian Media Conference produces Dushanbe Declaration

More than 90 journalists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, along with OSCE media officers and media specialists, met in Dushanbe on 14 and 15 November for an international conference, organized under the auspices of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve.

The aim of the conference was to

encourage an exchange of views on problems of the media in Central Asia as well as co-operation in this field among the countries of the region. A total of over 100 participants included journalists and representatives of non-governmental media organizations, as well as the OSCE media officers from the region and international experts. Among them were the Chairman of the National Association of Independent Mass Media in Tajikistan, Nuriddin Karshyboev, and the Head of the Department of Mass Media in the Presidential Cabinet, Abdulrajab Abdu-manonov.

The Conference, opened by Mr. Duve, provided a unique opportunity for interaction and exchange of views among the representatives of the mass

media of the Central Asian countries on the basic problems and potential for regional co-operation. Participants observed a minute of silence in memory of Maksudjon Huseinov, a Tajik journalist who died in the days preceding the conference.

The conference focused on libel legislation, media law, new technologies and the role of the media in the development of civil society. The quality of the presentations showed deep understanding of the issues as well as the professional commitment of the participants.

The journalists set up a joint working group with media professionals from the four participating States to organize further co-operation. The Conference ended with the adoption of the 'Dushanbe Declaration on Freedom of the Media'. This can be viewed (in both English and Russian, on the website of the OSCE, the address of which is:

www.osce.org/fom

International organizations meet to review obstacles to free speech

At a meeting in London on 29 and 30 November, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and the Organization of American States Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression met with representatives of NGOs, journalists associations and human rights experts. A joint statement issued by the three experts identified two key areas where states must take action: the killing of those exercising their right to freedom of expression and the use of defamation and libel laws to limit free speech.

Peace initiative book launched: 'The Caucasus – In Defence of the Future'

At an event on 28 November, on the margins of the Eighth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Vienna, the new publication, 'The Caucasus – In Defence of the Future,' was presented

to the public. It is the second in the 'In Defence of the Future' series founded by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and is entirely devoted to the Caucasus region. The first volume, 'In Defence of the Future – Searching the Minefield', is a collection of essays by intellectuals from regions devastated by war and violence in former Yugoslavia. The co-editors of the Caucasus book are Freimut Duve and the OSCE Personal Representative to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Caucasus, Ms. Heidi Tagliavini.

Video conference held on Ukrainian media issues

On 15 November, Alexander Ivanko, an Adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, took part in a video conference on the current media situation in Ukraine. The conference hooked up media experts from Kyiv, Washington and Vienna to discuss issues of concern for Ukrainian journalists and editors.

REPORT from the OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat

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Address on Central Asia to the OSCE Permanent Council

On 2 November the Secretary General, Jan Kubis, reported to the Permanent Council in his capacity as Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Central Asia on his activities since April 2000. He informed the Council about the main regional developments, highlighted areas of OSCE focus and described activities in all three dimensions of the OSCE. He also briefed on his specific activities in the capacity of the Per-

sonal Representative for Central Asia, and concluded with some recommendations and follow-up guidelines.

Visit to Brussels

On 7 November 2000 the Secretary General visited Brussels at the invitation of the French European Union Presidency for the yearly address of the OSCE Secretary General to the EU working group on the OSCE. He also took the opportunity to meet Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and

Security Policy/Secretary General of the WEU. Later, he met the Secretary General of NATO, Lord Robertson. Mr. Kubis also had talks with the director and staff members of the Policy Unit of the Council Secretariat of the EU, and with the director and staff members of the General Affairs and Multilateral Relations Directorate of the European Commission, reconfirming and strengthening the excellent working relationship between the EU and the OSCE at headquarters level and in the field.

Eighth Ministerial Council

During the Eighth OSCE Ministerial Council, held in Vienna on 27 and 28 November, the Secretary General had a number of bilateral meetings, in particular with Foreign Ministers of all five Central Asian member states, with the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Frechette, the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, Azeddine Laraki, and the Representative of the European Commission, Mr. Valenzuela.

Meeting with the EU Commissioner for External Relations

On 23 November, the Secretary General met the EU Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, in the margins of the Permanent Council session. During the meeting the successful co-operation with the European Commission, both in the field as well as with the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) and the Office of the Co-ordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities, was confirmed. The development of civilian conflict prevention and crisis management capabilities within both the OSCE and the EC provided new openings. Both partners agreed on the need to develop pragmatic co-operation between the CPC and the respective units in the EC and EU, in the field of training and in other areas, both through increased consultations and information exchange (especially when planning their respective activities and operations) and through regular working-level contacts.

Other visits and meetings

On 3 November, the Secretary General made a presentation at the closing session of the annual meeting of the Atlantic Treaty Association in Budapest, where he underlined the importance of co-operation between the OSCE and NATO.

On 9 November, the Secretary General attended the meeting of the Committee of

Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe. At the margins of the meeting he held consultations with the two organizations in the FRY.

On 17 and 18 November, Mr. Kubis attended the Fifth Anniversary Commemoration Conference of the Dayton Peace Accords in Dayton, Ohio, where he also delivered a keynote speech.

On 20 November, he had consultations at the State Department in Washington and a meeting with some representatives of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate as well as with academic circles dealing with Central Asia.

OCEEA holds seminar in Kazakhstan on good governance in economic matters

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), in co-operation with the Government of Kazakhstan, and in close consultation with the current and incoming OSCE Chairmanships and with OSCE field offices in Central Asia, held the first Preparatory Seminar on 'Transparency and good governance in economic matters', in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 2 and 3 November.

The seminar, opened by Erlan Idrisov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, was attended by more than 180 participants. They represented the governments of Kazakhstan and the four other participating States in Central Asia, as well as numerous international organizations, NGOs, OSCE participating States, the OSCE Chairmanship, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Secretariat.

Early feedback from participants, as well as from moderators and lead speakers, was very positive. Discussions in the three Working Groups, which dealt with national, regional and global instruments for promoting transparency and good gov-

ernance, as well as with the role of civil society and public education, underlined the close interrelationship between transparency, good governance and economic performance.

The seminar formulated a number of recommendations which, together with the following two preparatory seminars, will serve as a guide towards the Ninth Economic Forum, to be held in Prague from 15 to 18 May 2001.

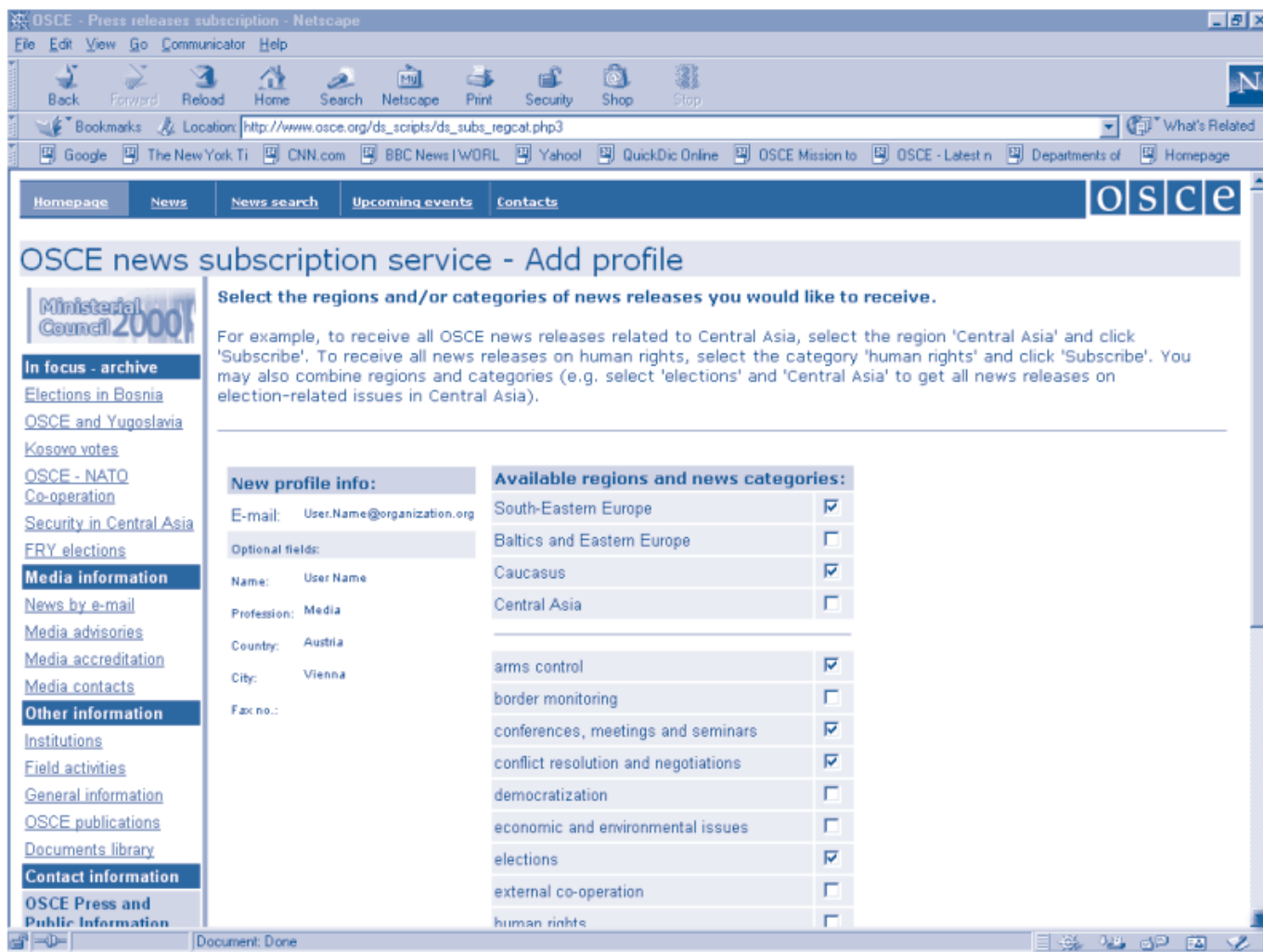
PPIS makes automatic news service available on website

The Press and Public Information Section OSCE website has introduced a news subscription service, which enables web visitors to automatically receive official OSCE news releases by e-mail immediately on publication, filtered according to their individual preferences. To sign up for this new service, visitors simply need to fill in a form available on the site by providing an e-mail address and selecting individual categories of interest from OSCE sources, regions and areas of involvement.

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For further information on this or other aspects of the website (illustrated on page 30), contact the Press and Public Information Section of the OSCE Secretariat, tel.: +43 1 514 36 180 or e-mail:

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A screenshot of the latest feature added at the OSCE website, the news subscription service

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Publications	Publisher/ Editor	Language(s)
OSCE Newsletter (monthly) Volume VII (2000), Volume VI (1999), Volume V (1998), Volume IV (1997), Volume III (1996), Volume II (1995), Volume I (1994)	OSCE Secretariat	Since January 1998 in all six OSCE official languages (English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish) 1994-97 in English and Russian
Fact Sheet (revised October 1999) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is the OSCE? ¹ ■ The OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat ■ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights² ■ Representative on Freedom of the Media ■ High Commissioner on National Minorities ■ OSCE Parliamentary Assembly² ■ Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina³ ■ Mission to Croatia³ ■ Mission in Kosovo³ 	OSCE Secretariat	¹ 'What is OSCE?' is available in all six OSCE official languages. ² Also available in Russian. ³ Also available in local languages.
OSCE Handbook general information on OSCE, Third Edition (March 1999) - updated June 2000	OSCE Secretariat	English Also available on-line at: www.osce.org/publications
Survey of OSCE Long-Term Missions and other OSCE Field Activities (January 2000)	OSCE Secretariat/ Conflict Prevention Centre	English
The Secretary General's Annual Report on OSCE Activities (1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999)	OSCE Secretariat	In all six OSCE official languages
OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Semi-annual Reports	ODIHR	English and Russian

Publications	Publisher/ Editor	Language(s)
<p>Other publications on democratization and human rights are available at the ODIHR website: (www.osce.org/odihr/publications.htm)</p>	ODIHR	English
<p>Bibliography on the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities: Documents, Speeches, Related Publications. Third Edition, March 1997</p>	The Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, The Hague	English
<p>The Role of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in OSCE Conflict Prevention – An Introduction June 1997</p>	ibid.	English Russian
<p>Chronological Review from 1973 to 1998 of CSCE/OSCE official publications <i>List of bound versions of documents issued at the conclusion of a review, follow-up and other major CSCE/OSCE events including the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures</i></p>	Prague Office	English
<p>Reference Manual – Decisions Compilation 1993-94, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999</p>	Prague Office	English



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