

News/Events

From 18 to 20 May, 5 OSCE Ambassadors visited Kyrgyzstan. The agenda of the visit included meetings with Kyrgyz political leaders, journalists and civil society, as well as visits to the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and OSCE Osh Field Office. (cont. page 4)

Personal Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, paid a four-day visit to Kyrgyzstan from 9 to 12 June, during which he was received by President Askar Akaev, Kyrgyz Ombudsman Tursunbai Bakir uulu and Chairman of the Central Election Commission Sulaiman Imanbaev. Mr Ahtisaari also had an open and critical exchange of opinions with the representatives of leading political parties of Kyrgyzstan gathered in the OSCE Centre in Bishkek on 9 of June 2004. Mr. Ahtisaari was interested to know how the local party leaders see the situation regarding preparations for the forthcoming elections.

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Activities of the Centre

On 21 May, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Centre in Bishkek held a roundtable on the ongoing reform of the criminal justice system of Kyrgyzstan. At the event, which brought together local government officials, parliamentarians and lawyers, ODIHR presented the findings and recommendations of its experts who reviewed the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code of Kyrgyzstan and drafted amendments to these Codes. "We will encourage our Kyrgyz counterparts to take further steps to implement their commitments and ensure fairness, professionalism, and adherence to human rights standards at every stage of the criminal process," said Ambassador Markus Muller, Head of the OSCE Centre.



(Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, Personal Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, speaks at the international UNESCO Conference "Eurasia in the 21st century: Dialogue of Cultures or Conflict of Civilizations," Issyk-Kul, 10 June 2004.)

On 3-4 June, the international conference "Development of Public Monitoring of the Penitentiary Institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic" was organized by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and the ODIHR in collaboration with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Justice, Penal Reform International, Soros Foundation and Centre for Legal Support of Inmates. During the conference, representatives of state institutions and NGOs discussed approaches to the development of public monitoring of Kyrgyz penitentiary institutions.

Given the significance of the upcoming elections in Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, together with UNDP, has designed and launched a co-ordination mechanism for international donors, organizations and NGOs interested in assisting Kyrgyzstan in the conduct of fair and transparent elections. The coordination plan covers the period up to June 2006 and includes regular meetings and co-operation between Kyrgyz election authorities and NGOs, the creation of database and working groups on specific issues.

IN FOCUS

Fighting corruption is a major challenge facing developing countries due to the social and economic difficulties of the transition period—and Kyrgyzstan is no exception. Corruption in the country has reached a level that threatens to impede development, destabilize society and undermine the authority of the Government and confidence of the international community. Corruption has also drained the state budget of significant and much-needed revenues, thus directly impacting the welfare of the Kyrgyz population. From 7 to 11 June, the representatives of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek participated in the events of the Anti-Corruption Mission, initiated by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. It has been working in Bishkek under support of 3 international organization partners—UNDP, OSCE and USAID. Mr. Markus Muller, Head of the OSCE Center in Bishkek, emphasized, "The aim now is not to further analyze the problem, as we have already done this for many years. It is now time to move forward with solutions the Government can implement immediately."

Background information

The central idea behind community policing is to develop a police force that works with the public in preventing and solving crime. The community policing project in Kyrgyzstan – a pioneer project in Central Asia – is crucial in opening channels of communication and developing a more transparent and co-operative relationship between police and the public.

After this first training session, participants were enthusiastic about the project. “This is very important for us,” said Mamatsabyr Ensebaev, a senior officer from the Pervomaiskiy Police District in Bishkek. “It would help foster co-operation and understanding between police and civil society if similar courses were held in the future.”

“It is the beginning of a small revolution in Kyrgyzstan because the project introduced a new understanding that police work is a public service,” said Markus Muller, Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. “Small revolutions can change people’s lives.”

Police Assistance Programme in Kyrgyzstan (Community Policing project)

Working towards community policing in Kyrgyzstan

A three-week pilot phase of the Community Policing project (April 26-May 14) was hosted by the Police Academy in Bishkek. General Ishimov, Rector of the Police Academy, emphasized the need for police to learn how to prevent conflicts and to focus on finding peaceful solutions when they arise. The project also focuses on improving the police image.



(Participants introduce community policing is a central goal of a policing programme in Kyrgyzstan.)

The trainees themselves were asked to evaluate their own openness to new policing ideas. Police trainer Mehmet Erdem brought with him valuable experience from the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission in Skopje, where the OSCE has carried out a successful three-year police-training programme. Police instructors from the Kyrgyz Police Academy, their Kazakh colleagues and local instructors from the Bishkek Police Department participated in this training.

Trainees visited leading television, radio and newspaper companies - a unique opportunity to strengthen relations and to discuss ways of realizing the programme’s goals through the media. Some trainees had the opportunity to discuss policing issues live on Kyrgyz television and radio.

The trainees also showed some of their presentations to children and teachers from Bishkek School No. 48. “Kids are our future and their positive ideas are the foundation for our society’s development,” said Police Lieutenant Bekchoro Aliyaskarov. “Children need to be prepared for the future and not be afraid of the police when they need help.” At the end of the presentation, police officers organized a football match with children from the school and handed over a new football to the school’s winning team.

Urban Karlsson, the international expert in charge of the project, explained that it would take time for the objectives of the project to be achieved. “If we want to achieve real results, we need to carry out more training events at different levels and in different regions.” It is hoped that the idea of community policing will spread throughout Central Asia using the positive example in Kyrgyzstan.

Upcoming events

The 3rd Steering Committee meeting will be held at the PAP on 25 June at the Police Academy in Bishkek. The day after, 26 June, the Police Academy is organising the graduation ceremony that will close the academic year. It will be held in the presence of officials, the police cadets, the law students with their families and the steering committee members.

This ceremony will be an occasion to inaugurate the training centre for conflict prevention and public disorder management and the centre for criminal investigations, respectively in construction and renovation under the umbrella of the OSCE Police Assistance Programme for Kyrgyzstan.

Strengthening the Police Academy is one of the main projects of the Police Assistance Programme. Its main goal is to modernize the syllabus of the Police Academy and to introduce new curricula, such as human rights enforcement, civilian oversight of the police, community policing and peace, along with the public order policing.”

Important Visits

Visiting the OSCE Academy in Bishkek on 11 May, Kyrgyzstan's President Askar Akaev said he is committed to making the Academy a "centre of excellence," which educates future Central Asian leaders and generates analysis and research resulting in practical policy recommendations.

"The OSCE Academy should become a real symbol of democratic development of the Central Asian region and play a significant role in the democratization process in Kyrgyzstan," Akaev said.

"It is important to show potential donors that the Kyrgyz Government has been and is fully supporting the Academy," said the Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, Ambassador Markus Müller. "In this way, Kyrgyzstan supports regional co-operation in Central Asia and works in a pragmatic way towards the goal of regional security."

Activities of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek

Twenty-five students from Central Asia and Europe received their certificates on 5 June, after completing the first 18-week postgraduate course at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. They are the first major alumni to make up the junior experts network of the OSCE in the region. The course provided the students with practical know-how in the political sciences, focusing on Central Asia and regional co-operation. "The most important thing is that in real life you stand for the values which you have discussed in the classroom," said Ambassador Markus Müller, the Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, addressing the graduates at the ceremony.



(The Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, Ambassador Markus Müller, hands over a certificate to a student who has completed the first postgraduate course at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek.)

"This course was our first step towards establishing the Academy as a truly regional, sustainable project for which we count on our alumni support in future," added Annette Kraemer, the institution's director.

Courses at the OSCE Academy are taught by lecturers and professionals from the Central Asian region, as well as from European partner institutes, international organizations, embassies and NGOs. The overall programme consists of eight practical modules, providing specializations in conflict management training in all three OSCE dimensions.

Call for Applications for the "Master in Political Science (Central Asia)" (2004/2005) at the "OSCE Academy in Bishkek"

The "OSCE Academy in Bishkek" invites applications for its "Master of Political Science (Central Asia)," subject to availability of funding. **Applicant Eligibility:** a) Successful completion of an academic degree after at least 5 years of higher education (MA, MSc, Diploma) with an above-average grade point from a Central Asian or foreign institution of higher education or with an above-average reference of professional work in security-related professional areas; b) Adequate command of Russian and English; c) Citizenship of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan or other OSCE participating States or Partners for Co-operation. The course of study is open to individuals who are nationals from outside the OSCE area who meet the admission criteria a) and b).

Important Visits

On 19 May, Ambassadors from five OSCE participating States visited the Academy, met with the students and discussed relevant issues on the OSCE agenda. Mr. Janez Lenarcic, Ambassador of Slovenia (Chairmanship in 2005) said, "This Academy has become a symbol of regional co-operation." Mette Kongshem, Ambassador of Norway, started off with a statement, emphasizing the increasing importance of Central Asia for the OSCE itself.

During the discussion, students of the OSCE Academy acknowledged the importance of regional cooperation and underlined that the OSCE Academy could play a very significant role in promoting the principles of regional security, stability and tolerance. Being a unique educational institution, the OSCE Academy is called on to facilitate the process of democratic development in Central Asian countries through efficient and effective cooperation between the young specialists, pointed out the students of the OSCE Academy during the discussion with the OSCE Ambassadors.

Francisco Seixas Da Costa, Ambassador of Portugal, stated encouragingly to students and staff: "In a way, we have also become the Ambassadors of the Academy, in promoting the Academy."

Activities of the OSCE Osh Field Office

On 3 May, the representatives of the Osh Field Office attended a one-day lecture/seminar organized by the Department of World Languages of Osh State University under joint support of the OSCE and the French Consulate in Kyrgyzstan.

Tashkent-based Central Asian Institute researchers arrived in Osh to address the students and teachers on the risks of ethnic conflict, border issues and public health.

Geographer Daniel Balland (France) made an interesting presentation on the Central Asia borders, touching upon the historical background and peculiarities of enclaves between Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

For any information related to activities of the OSCE Osh Field Office, please contact:
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Activities of the OSCE Osh Field Office

On 10 June 2004, the OFO made a field trip to project sites of the joint project "Promotion of Cross-border and Interethnic Cooperation in Jalalabat Province," supported by the OSCE and implemented by ACTED. The field trip included meetings with local authorities of the Burgondu village administration and villagers of the near-border area Kurama (Jalalabat Province). The joint trip was organized to identify the most vulnerable villages that are exposed to cross-border issues with neighboring Uzbekistan and infrastructure problems. The project team briefed the villagers about the soon-to-be implemented project and identified concrete cross-border issues to be tackled.

On 11 June 2004, the OFO visited the Aravan district of Osh Province to attend a seminar and training organized by Osh Resource Center "Interbilim." The activity, named "Women's Empowerment in Conflict Resolution in the South of Kyrgyzstan," is supported by the OSCE OFO. Local Aravan women, women clubs and NGOs were invited to this training to also discuss the possible ways to increase women's participation in conflict resolution processes at the grassroots community level.

On 20 May 2004, five OSCE Ambassadors representing Canada, Norway, Portugal, Belgium and Slovenia paid a one-day trip to Osh within the framework of their Central Asian tour. The Ambassadors met with Osh Governor Naken Kasiev, visited the OSCE/ODIHR Student Legal Clinics and had an extensive meeting with Osh-based NGO members and local journalists. The meeting was devoted to issues such as trafficking in human beings, detention, interethnic relations, cross-border challenges, regional security and government-civil society cooperation.



(Five OSCE Ambassadors and Mr. Jerome Bouyjou, Human Dimension Officer in the OSCE Osh Field Office (left), during the visit of OSCE Ambassadors to the holy Sulaiman mountain in Osh.)

Activities of the OSCE Osh Field Office



(Workshop participants examine opportunities for influencing future plans over the Mailuu Suu uranium threat.)

On 26 and 27 May, the OSCE Osh Field Office supported the initiative of the Civil Society Support Centre in organizing a workshop in Jalalabat, which called for a more active role for civil society in forthcoming plans to resolve the ongoing uranium threat posed by the Mailuu Suu mining site.

The workshop concentrated on how civil society could devise an advocacy strategy to ensure that it could influence the big players in the immediate future. In doing so, it is envisaged that the World Bank and the government's project for Mailuu Suu will be more appropriate to local needs, have more transparency and see more of the money actually spent on Mailuu Suu itself rather than diverted to national projects that offer no benefit to Mailuu Suu residents.