Newsletter of the OSCE Mission to Croatia

August/September 2007

# **Demining**

he fact that the war is one of the plagues of the humanity is something nobody doubts. It does not escape anyone that an armed conflict becomes crueler through the use of certain atrocious practices. For this reason, national and international legislation has always tried to establish clear rules of engagement in an attempt to limit the negative consequences of conflicts, protect civilians, combatants and their environment. One of the most ominous practices of the war is the use of mines, which have produced countless victims throughout the world as well as mutilations that forever mark the lives of those affected by them.

Unfortunately, the war in Croatia (1991-95) was not an exception in that sense. Croats and Serbs, to an almost equal extent, infested certain regions of the country with mines, principally those in which the conflict had developed, i.e. Vukovar-Sirmium, Osijek-Baranja, Lika-Senj and Zadar counties, covering an area of 13,000 km².

As soon as the war ended, the country was mobilized in an enormous demining operation centralized in the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) and different Government ministries, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This has resulted in the clearance of around 12,000 km² in the post-war period, with the cost amounting to around €300 million for detection, deactivation, as well as education and rehabilitation.

Aside from the human tragedy that mine explosions entail - and that is without any doubt their main negative consequence - this ominous practice depopulates agricultural zones, thus paralyzing the activity of the primary sector and impoverishing countries.

FACTS ABOUT MINES IN CROATIA

From 1990 untill 1995 around 13.000 km<sup>2</sup> were infested with mines, making almost 25 per cent of the land-mass of Croatia unsafe for reconstruction, development, agriculture, tourism, etc.

It is estimated that this area is covered by approximatly 240, 000 mines and an unknown number of unexploded life-threatening devices.

In the last 11 years over 13,000 mine warning signs have been placed in and around Mine Suspected Areas.

After 11 years of hard, costly and above all, dangerous work, the Mine Suspected Area has been reduced to under 1,000 km² but the mine situation can variy with new information emerging all the time (newly discovered mine fields, newly discovered maps, etc.).

When an area is being demined it is done in at least three waves. An area needs to be assesed and the mines identified. The mines have to be removed and then the area needs to be re-checked for safety.

According to the Ottawa Convention, Croatia is obliged to become a mine free country by



It is interesting to note that the cost of deactivating a mine is infinitely more costly than its installation.

Croatia must also provide for the psychological recovery of the mine victims and their relatives. In the locality of Rovinj, the reconstruction of the building of the Regional Centre for Psychosocial Rehabilitation of Children and Youth Mine Victims is near completion. It will welcome dozens of such victims annually, children and adults, in its recovery programs admirably led by Dijana Pleština, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

To reconstruct a country after a war is a difficult and expensive task. It entails overcoming physical and moral traumas on the part of those affected, the reintegration of those who had to take refuge in other countries or were displaced in their own, the reconstruction of hundreds of thousands of houses and public buildings and the re-establishment of political and social coexistence through reconciliation.

Let us add to all this the cost of demining and we will have a better grasp of the enormous reconstructive effort by Croatia that, in only 11 years, has had to perform several complicated transitions - from war to peace, from communism to free market, from federalism to independence - and position itself at the threshold of Euro-Atlantic integration.

Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, Head of Mission



#### Calendar

- **2 August** Presentation of the last Status Report to President Mesić
- **31 August** Field visit to Trogir and meeting with HoM BiH Amb. Douglas Davidson
- 10 September Visit of President of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Mr. Goran Lennmarker
- 13 September Meeting with Marina Matulović Dropulić, Minister of Environmental Protection, Physical Planing and Construction on housing care
- **13 September** Working lunch with Director of Judicial Academy, Štefica Stažnik, to discuss training of the judges
- **20 September Closing ceremony of FO Gospić**
- **21 September** Plenary Meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration with the participation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of Justice and of Development. Also with the participation of a large group of Ambassadors, namely those of Spain, Portugal, US, Russia, Finland, Norway and the EC.
- 21 September Plenary Meeting on war crimes prosecution at the Ministry of Justice EC Delegation, ICTY Liaison Office and OSCE on int. side and Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court, State Prosecutors Office and Ministry of Interior on Croatian side
- 25 September Plenary meeting with Minister Božidar Kalmeta, Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development - US Embassy, EC Delegation, UNHCR and OSCE
- **25-28 September** ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission in Zagreb
- **27 September** Roundtable on implementation of article 22 CLNM Employment in Judiciary, in Croatian Parliament
- **28-30 September** HOM attending OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Fall Meeting, in Portorož

#### **Activities**

#### **ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission**

n anticipation of the upcoming parliamentary election, Croatia, as an OSCE participating state, invited the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) from Warsaw to send a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to Zagreb.

The NAM is a small team of experts deployed to OSCE states to assess the pre-election environment and the preparations for the elections.

The ODIHR has an extensive experience in observing elections. In the last decade, it has observed around 150 electoral processes, deploying thousands of experts and observers from the OSCE region. Besides observing elections in OSCE states facing the challenges of democratic transition after 1989, the ODIHR has recently begun to focus its attention on electoral challenges in long-established democracies in Europe and North America.

On this occasion, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM included two election experts, Vadim Zhdanovich and Jonathan Stonestreet who stayed in Zagreb from 25-28 September 2007. In order to assess the administrative and legal framework for the conduct of the elections in just three days, the two NAM members had a hectic agenda of meetings with relevant Government authorities facilitated by the Mission.

met with representatives They from the Ministry of Foreign (Assistant Minister Affairs Consular Affairs, Vinko Ljubičić), the Head of the Central State Office for Administration, the Head of the Government's Office for Minorities, **Parliament** National representatives (Dep. Speaker Mato Arlović, MP Dražen Bošnjaković, MP Furio Radin and MP Milorad Pupovac), the President of the Supreme Court and President of the State Election Commission, as well as with the Head of the Council of National Minorities and other representatives minorities, Civil Society organizations (the heads of GONG, Human Rights Center and Helsinki Committee), editors and journalists from Croatian media, the members of international diplomatic community in Zagreb (including EC, UNHCR and UNDP) and the main political parties (SDP, HDZ, HSS and HNS).

The members of the NAM acquired a broad and in depth knowledge of the pre-electoral situation in Croatia through these interlocutors, permitting the ODIHR to assess and compare the effectiveness of the electoral legislation in different nations, facilitating its continuous issuing of electoral recommendations to OSCE States.

Ankica Kuna Political Affairs Assistant

## Closure of FO Gospić

■he Field Office (FO) Gospić in Lika-Senj County was first established in Korenica in autumn 1997 but was moved to Gospić three years ago. Lika-Senj County is regarded as a post-conflict area where reconciliation between major ethnic groups has been particularly problematic. Accordingly, over the past few years, Field Office Gospić has focused on issues related to the return and integration of refugees and displaced persons, the rebuilding of housing and infrastructure, the rule of law, missing persons, minority issues and war crimes prosecution.

The closing ceremony of FO Gospić took place in the office premises on 20 September in the presence of Town and County officials, including local municipal heads as well as minority representatives, and the media. On the occasion HoM and local authorities gave due recognition to past and present Field Office personnel for their "job well done". The Head of the Office, Sandra Horina, stressed that excellent co-operation with the local authorities had contributed to speedup the complex process of return and integration within the County.



Head of FO Gospić, Sandra Horina, HoM and Gospić County and Town officials, Gospić 20 September 2007

#### **Activities**

#### Roundtable on employment of national minorities

n 27 September, the Mission and the Ministry of Justice co-organized a roundtable on employment of national minorities in the judiciary, as guaranteed by the 2002 Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (CLNM). The roundtable focused on implementation of the CLNM minority employment guarantee by the State Judicial Council and State's Attorneys Council, which are responsible for the appointment of judges to high and local courts and states attorneys, respectively. The discussion also covered implementation of the 2007 Civil Service Employment Plan and its minority hiring goals, as applicable to the Ministry of Justice, including the Prison Security Service.

This was the third Mission roundtable dedicated to employment of national minorities in the public service. The second focused on State administration [See The Courier No. 125], while the first focused on administration in local and regional self-government [See The Courier No. 120].

The roundtable was opened by the Minister of Justice, President of the Supreme Court, a representative of the Chief State Attorney, and the Head of Mission. It included presentations by the Presidents of the State Judicial and State's Attorney Councils as well as the Assistant Minister of Justice, all of whom highlighted that some minorities do not invoke their minority status, which would entitle them to "priority under equal conditions" during the appointment process. The Minister of Justice noted the importance of the participation national minorities judiciary and State Administration, highlighting, however, that minorities had the right to invoke their minority status, but could not be obliged to do so. She urged minorities to exercise their rights and apply for public-sector posts. The President of the Supreme Court observed that the protection of minorities and their integration into the judiciary was positive for both minorities and society as a whole, adding that the CLNM provides the legal minimum for minority rights not a maximum. The Head of Mission

stressed that CLNM implementation was important for the integration of all minorities, including refugees, and for promoting respect for State institutions.

The President of the State Judicial Council explained the procedure for consideration of minority candidates who invoke the CLNM's priority. In the past year, four minority judges have been appointed. The President of the State's Attorney Council noted that only one candidate invoked minority status during the recruitment process, but was not hired. The Assistant Minister of Justice noted that one of 31 civil servants employed so far in 2007 was a national minority, although this individual did not invoke minority status during recruitment. No comprehensive statistics were provided with regard to the current representation of national minorities in the judiciary. However, Ministry of Justice statistics from May 2007 indicate that representation remains approximately the same as in 2002 nation-wide all minorities i.e., together constitute four per cent of judges and states attorneys while Serbs comprise 2.5 per cent. This compares to a national percentage of 7,46 percent for all minorities and 4,54 percent for Serbs.

The President of Parliament's Committee for Human and Minority Rights commented that while the legal framework for minority employment in the public sector had been established, minorities were still fearful of invoking their minority status during recruitment. He highlighted the need to establish a positive atmosphere, both in general and in the recruitment process, which would encourage minority applicants. He also called for a minority employment strategy or Action Plan to implement this aspect of the CLNM. A Member of Parliament representing the Serb minority pointed out that minorities are underrepresented in courts in refugee return areas, most higher courts, and in trainee positions.

The Minister of Justice welcomed the proposal that an annual Plan with minority hiring targets be developed for the judiciary, similar to that developed for the State administration.

Rule of Law Unit



Vesna Dovranić, Spokesperson of the Ministy of Justice, HoM, Minister of Justice, Ana Lovrin and Branko Hrvatin, President of the Supreme Court at the Roundtable on implementation of article 22 CLNM Employment in the Judiciary, in Sabor 27 September 2007.

#### Feature story

#### Visit of the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly...

n 10 September 2007, the capital of Croatia was the first stop on a regional tour to the countries of the Western Balkan of the delegation of the parliamentary wing of the OSCE, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA). The Delegation was led by OSCE PA President, Göran Lennmaker, and before moving further east for a number of meetings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it had a chance to exchange views with some of the most senior Croatian officials and politicians.

It was not the first visit of President Lennmarker to Croatia, as he has been actively involved in the affairs of international co-operation for many years. Mr Lennmarker held some important positions in charge of European and international affairs in the past, as a member of the Swedish Parliament, and as an active participant to the work of the OSCE PA since 1996, including his previous position of the Special Representative of the PA President for the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.



President Lennmarker was accompanied by the Special Representative of the PA on South East Europe, Roberto Batelli, who is at the same time minority representative in the Slovenian Parliament. He was further accompanied by the Permanent Representative of the PA to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, who has been performing the function of the Head of the OSCE PA Liaison Office in Vienna. The Liaison office serves, since its establishment in February 2003, as a link in the communication between the governmental OSCE structures in Vienna and the OSCE PA. Asa Ekwall, Head of Section for the Speaker's International Affairs of the Swedish Parliament, also joined the Delegation. The Head of OSCE Mission to Croatia was accompanied by the Head of the Mission's Return & Integration Unit, Leos Javurek.

The Delegation's visit in the region was one of the activities undertaken by the PA to complement the broader PA's efforts to promote parliamentary involvement of the OSCE participating states in the Organization's activities, and to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among their parliaments. In all its meetings facilitated by the Mission, the Delegation promoted greater parliamentary contribution to the European integration process, pointing out benefits of discussions at the parliamentary level while taking advantage of the OSCE interstructure. parliamentary More specifically, the members of the Delegation used the opportunity of visiting Croatia to discuss with Croatian representatives directly the advancements of Croatian efforts in its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, and the role the OSCE and its participating states parliaments can play there. Some other topics of relevance to the regional stability in South Eastern Europe, such as the situation in Kosovo, were also touched upon.

High on the agenda of the discussions were topics related to the fulfillment of the OSCE Mission's mandate, i. e. status of affairs in relation to refugees and prosecution of war crimes. President Lennmarker stressed the value of the OSCE as a resource capable of providing support and assistance on these topics. Mr Lennmarker quoted the example of the Baltic States where the presence of the respective OSCE Missions greatly contributed to the countries' successful path to European integration.

The Mission facilitated meetings with some of the most senior Croatian officials and politicians as well as diplomats accredited in Croatia who take an active part in the issues related to the Mission's mandate.



#### **CAPTIONS**

LEFT: President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Göran Lennmaker meets the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović.

TOP: President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Göran Lennmaker Special Representative of the PA on South East Europe, Roberto Batelli, Head of the OSCE PA Liaison Office in Vienna, Andreas Nothelle, Head of Section for the Speaker's International Affairs, Asa Ekwall and HoM enjoying the view from the Zagreb's Upper Town (Gornji grad).

**BOTTOM LEFT:** HoM and the OSCE Delegation in Parliament (Sabor)

BOTTOM RIGHT: The Croatian side at the meeting was led by Parliament Speaker, Vladimir Seks.

RIGHT: HoM with the Delegation also spoke to the State Secretary for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hidajet Bisčević, Assistant Minister, Pjer Šimunović, Serb minority MP, Milorad Pupovac, and the Ambassador of Sweden, Lars Freden.



#### Feature story

#### ...Göran Lennmaker to Zagreb

At the Delegation's meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, and her associates, the Minister highlighted that the Ministry views the Mission as an enormous asset to its work, and is proud of the spirit of true partnership achieved in the joint model of cooperation, the so-called 'Platform', which regularly brings together the Mission and the Government offices for discussions on topics of common interest. Minister Grabar Kitarović expressed her personal appreciation for the individual contribution of the Head of Mission, Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, to the work of the 'Platform', and the successful fulfillment of the Mission's mandate in general. Minister Grabar Kitarović stressed that there is a genuine political will on the side of the Government to work with the OSCE on all aspects of the Mission's mandate. To illustrate this, Kitarović summarised the activities undertaken by the Government in the process of return and the prosecution of war crimes, and reiterated specific commitments it made in these two areas. She admitted that a number of issues remain opened, but expressed her determination, and that of the Government, to address them timely and completely. The Minister underlined that the ultimate goal of this Government was not closure of the OSCE Mission, but rather closure to the outstanding issues. The Government understands the recent statements of the OSCE Chairmanin-Office, Miguel Angel Moratinos, at the Dubrovnik summit as an invitation to intensify work on the remaining issues, and therefore intends to do so in close co-operation with the OSCE.

At the seat of the Croatian Parliament (the Sabor) the OSCE PA delegation was officially welcomed by Parliament Speaker, Vladimir Šeks, and his colleagues. During the subsequent meeting, Šeks also expressed his appreciation for the OSCE assistance in advancing the remaining issues of mandate, in particular some issues related to return of refugees, and the prosecution of war crimes. Speaking in detail about the latter, Seks explored the role the parliamentarians can play in encouraging international cooperation in their prosecution, and welcomed the idea put forward by the OSCE to organize a meeting on that topic among the speakers and leading parliamentarians from the countries in the region. President Lennmarker extended his invitation to organize such meeting on the margins of the OSCA PA 2007 Autumn Meeting in Portorož in late September. Šeks accepted the invitation and kindly volunteered to explore the possibility of him and his colleagues from neighboring countries to meet on the topic on this or some other occasion.

the process marked by the 'Sarajevo Declaration'. State Secretary for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hidajet Biščević, informed the guests of practical steps the Government is intending to undertake with its partners to identify pragmatic solutions to the remaining issues under the 'Sarejevo Process'. Assistant Minister, Pier Šimunović, was also representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the table. The Delegation was able to confront the Government plans with views by the leading Serb minority MP, Milorad Pupovac, and by the Ambassador of Sweden, Lars Freden. In response to President Lennmarker's question, Mr Pupovac stated that solving of the remaining issues under the 'Sarajevo Process' would open the window for the eventual demise of the Mission, provided sufficient guarantees and corresponding monitoring mechanisms are in place. It was agreed that a pragmatic compromise needs to be found, which would be acceptable to all parties.





When outlining the current domestic political situation, the Parliament Speaker confirmed that the Sabor will be dissolved in mid October, ahead of the parliamentary elections, which are likely to be held in the second half of November. After the meeting, the Parliament Speaker offered his guests a tour around the Parliament premises.

The Head of Mission then hosted a working lunch at which the Delegation could discuss in detail issues pertaining to the return of refugees, notably

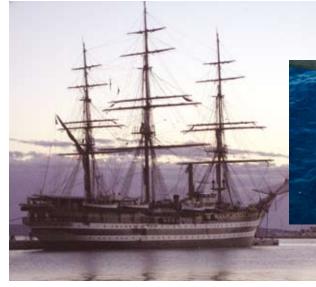
After the lunch, the President of the OSCE PA and the member of the Delegation thanked their Croatian partners for the fruitful discussions held during the visit, and the Mission for all the substantive and organizational support. The delegation then departed to Banja Luka to continue with its programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Leos Javurek, Head of the R&I Unit

#### **Photo Story**

### "Amerigo Vespucci"

meet Naval Attaches and colleagues. Enrique, an officer of the Spanish Royal Marines, in special services military situation, revived the days in 1978 when he sailed on this same vessel as a Midshipman.



he Head of the Co-ordination Unit and Executive Office, Enrique Horcajada, represented HoM who was invited to attend a reception by the Italian Embassy on board of the training vessel "Amerigo Vespucci" of the Italian Naval Academy on 11 September. He used the opportunity to determine if a Mission Field Office might be needed on board (!). To make the visit more formal, Enrique dug his uniform out of the trunk to



#### Catch & Release



atch & Release method of fishing has been in practice for decades throughout the Western Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom. Even though this approach is becoming more and more popular in Croatia, it is still limited to a relatively small number of fishing venues and it's practiced mostly by the younger generation of fishermen.

The Catch & Release practice is more then just letting the fish back into the water after you have caught one.

Effective Catch & Release fishing techniques assume the use of sufficiently strong fishing tackle in order to minimize the time of the struggle and possible exhaustion or injury of the fish, the use of appropriate landing nets and unhooking mats and, if necessary, antiseptic treatment.

The catfish shown in the photo was caught by the Mission's Distribution & Records Unit Supervisor, Sanjin Džeko, during a one-week carp fishing session on Lake Rakitje, near Zagreb. It weighs 17 kg and has 145 cm in length. After a short photo session and antiseptic treatment it has been returned safely into the water.



#### Unit in focus

#### **General Services Unit**

General Services Unit ■he (GSU) is part of the Fund Administration Unit and is responsible for logistical issues necessary to support the Mission. These daily duties need a well-balanced and tuned engine to ensure smooth and effective operations. All Mission staff need to possess adequate tools to fulfil the Mission's mandate and the GSU Team, that fine-tuned engine, ensures that. Currently General Services has thirteen staff working in the Mission's HQ Administration.



TOP: Valerija Mišić, Procurement Assistant, Ari-Pekka Hirviniemi, Head of GS Unit and Gordana Frece, Supply Assistant at the Mission's HQ in Zagreb.

transport and travel issues in the Mission. The Mission currently uses 43 vehicles. The fleet rolled 868,058 km in 2006 and fuel consumption reached 74,488 l. Generally, the Mission fleet is in very good condition because almost all vehicles have been replaced within 2-5 years. Due to warranty reasons and more important, safety and security of all staff, all vehicles are well maintained by authorized dealers in accordance with the manufacturers instructions. The Office also arranges all official travelling for the Mission in accordance with established OSCE and Mission procedures by obtaining the most suitable and economic travel itineraries, in order to provide an efficient travel service.

Beside the above-mentioned core duties, the office takes care of daily official post, HQs' petty cash, import and export customs issues for all supplies and assets, consolidation

BOTTOM: little happens without the drivers: Tomislav Špišić, Hrvoje Šandor and Mladen Berendinka and the Transport Assistant, Marijo Marjanović.

Our well-trained support-staff include: five assistants Procurement and Supply, Inventory and Warehousing, Transport and Fleet Maintenance and Travel. In addition, the four drivers and the three cleaners are all a very important part of the team. Sixteen support staff are located in the field offices including logistics/administrative assistants. drivers and cleaners. The Unit is also responsible for building management in all the Mission's premises. General Services Unit staff are obliged to follow a number of Financial and Administrative Regulations, Instructions and Rules in their daily operations. These documents issued by the OSCE Secretariat are the "Bible" for all GSU staff while its main tool is IRMA and Oracle systems where all data inputs are kept and maintained.

### Transport, Maintenance and Travel Office

This office is responsible for all



of all relevant documentation for traffic accidents in accordance with insurance company and OSCE requirements, etc.

### Procurement, Supply and Inventory Office

Common operational costs (COC) are one of the main Budget lines for the Mission which covers all other costs for the Mission except staff cost and projects. Procurement, Supply and Inventory office makes sure that the Mission has all the necessary supplies and equipment. The purchase of related items and services resulted in 604 Purchase Orders in 2006, total value approximately 13.3 million Kn.

GSU staff verifiy all services, supplies, delivery documents and invoices prior to the invoices being handed to the Finance Unit for payment. Business infrastructure has improved a lot in Croatia and the Procurement Office is not facing problems like some other OSCE missions, i.e. where and how to find reliable suppliers. The Inventory Office is tracking all Mission assets from table lamps to vehicles in a designated database. Every single movement of equipment is tracked, recorded and documented. However, as our office doesn't have a "crystal ball" for tracking, and considering the number of items in all the Mission's offices, we always face surprises in how equipment changes it's location "by itself". In close co-operation with the Secretariat Mission Support Section, GSU has played a key role in developing the OSCE asset tracking system resulting in the development of OSCE bar-coding software provided by a Croatian company.



Vera Siladi, Inventory/Supply Assistant

An important part of this supply chain is also the Warehouse where physical work of asset management takes place in the form of the receiving and inspecting, labelling with designated OSCE barcodes, issuing to the end users and at the end of life cycle, final disposal of equipment.

General Services Unit can be nicknamed as a "kind of invisible unit" as above-mentioned issues are "just there to be used" as a natural fact. The Unit's motto is "as long as we do not hear complaints and everything around us is quiet, it is the best thanks for all of us and we can be satisfied with the GSU Team's achievements".

Ari-Pekka Hirviniemi, Head of General Services Unit

### **Photo Gallery**







HoM and the President of the OSCE PA, Göran Lennmaker accompanied by the Special Representative of the PA on South East Europe, Roberto Batelli, meet Parliament Speaker, Vladimir Seks, Zagreb 10 September 2007.



HoM with the Minority and Civil Society organization's representatives, in front of the Mission's VIP Gallery, after a briefing with the OSCE's Needs Assesment Mission, Zagreb 26 September 2007.



HoM, and B&H HoM, Ambassador Douglas Davidson, accompanied by the Mission's Head of the Executive Office, Enrique Horcajada and the B&H Mission's Executive Assistant, Sophie Massal, Trogir 30-31 August 2007.



HoM, the Mission's Spokesperson, Ljerka Draženović and OSCE NAM election experts, Vadim Zhdanovich and Jonathan Stonestreet holding a meeting with editors and journalists from Croatian media, Zagreb 27 September 2007.