

OSCE to Build Democratic Society in Kosovo



OSCE field assistants examine a mass grave near Kosovo Polje.

The OSCE is currently facing one of its greatest challenges: to lead the process of democracy- and institution-building in Kosovo.

“We have been given the task of filling various institutions, the entire society in fact, with modern and democratic ways of thinking and working. It is hard enough to build new institutions, but it is even harder to fill these institutions with the content and the philosophy required to make a democratic society function,” OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, said in his address to the OSCE Permanent Council.

On 1 July 1999, the Permanent Council decided on the mandate for the OSCE

Mission in Kosovo. It will form a distinct component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and be responsible for:

- Human resources capacity-building, including the training of a new Kosovo police service, judicial personnel and civil administrators;
- Democratization and governance, including the development of a civil society, non-governmental organizations and political parties;
- Media development;
- Organization and supervision of elections; and

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- Monitoring, protection and promotion of human rights, including, inter alia, the establishment of an Ombudsman institution.

The Head of Mission, Ambassador Daan Everts of the Netherlands, has been appointed Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Institution-Building. Numbering up to 700 international staff, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo will be the Organization's largest field presence.

Deployment of the Mission began immediately. The OSCE already had an Assessment Team on the ground in Kosovo and planning for the Mission had been under way for some time. As a result, the OSCE was able to rapidly build up a sizable

presence throughout the province. At the end of July, the OSCE Mission numbered 149 international and over 300 local staff. Mission headquarters has been set up in Priština, along with Regional Centres in Mitrovica, Gnjilane, Pec and Prizren.

As the Mission deployed, it became apparent the security situation in Kosovo was one of the main challenges facing the international community and the OSCE. Killings, looting and arson were widely reported throughout Kosovo. Harassment of Serb and Roma individuals persisted. The security situation of the ethnic minorities in the province remains one of the key concerns. The Mission's initial efforts have, therefore, been focused on working with other international organizations to address the security situation.

Having been given the mandate for human rights monitoring and protection, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo is involved in monitoring and investigating reports of human rights violations. OSCE human rights officers have been travelling to various communities and interviewing persons who claim to have been harassed or victimized. Over 40 individuals have also visited OSCE headquarters in Priština to report human rights violations. The data gathered during these investigations has provided the basis for a preliminary survey of the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo, prepared by the OSCE and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

OSCE human rights officers are also assisting with the documentation and verification of mass grave sites throughout Kosovo. More than 300 mass grave sites have been reported, and international forensic teams and criminal inves-



OSCE headquarters in Priština

tigators are unable to be at all the sites. The OSCE is therefore assisting local associations in documenting exhumations and reburials.

On 23 July, the killing of 14 Serbian men in the village of Gracko was reported. This was the most critical incidence of violence so far. OSCE human rights officers assisted KFOR in documenting the scene of the killings. OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Knut Vollebæk, condemned the killings, stating that "violence against Serbs and other non-Albanian groups in Kosovo must stop, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice."

The killings in Gracko highlighted the urgent need for a strong police presence throughout the province. While the immediate security situation can be addressed by the international military presence, the long-term solution hinges on the creation of a professional and credible Kosovo police service. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo will play a key role in this process. It will assist the United Nations

in recruiting and training 3,000 police officers, with the OSCE's main task being the establishment of a training facility where the police officers will receive their initial training (see separate story).

Finally, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo has been involved in the effort to set up an interim judicial system in Kosovo. OSCE personnel have assisted UNMIK and the UNHCR in locating and interviewing former judges and prosecutors. Qualified candidates are appointed to Emergency Judicial Panels, which travel to KFOR bases to interrogate individuals detained by KFOR for theft, looting, arson, rape and murder. Over 120 cases have been reviewed so far and 120 of the detained persons have been released. The Mission also is preparing plans for a Judiciary Institute to train qualified personnel for a new judiciary system that will replace the interim one.

The security situation in Kosovo is exacerbated by the lack of reliable media information in the province. Without any objective information available, rumors and unconfirmed reports of crimes and violence contribute to rising tensions and a sense of fear among the non-Albanian community in Kosovo. Overcoming this deficit will be one of the key tasks of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

The OSCE will contribute to the creation of conditions that support freedom of the press and freedom of information. The Mission will be responsible for media regulation, support for independent media, media monitoring and media laws and standards. The OSCE will also act as the Media Regulatory Commission for Kosovo, with the task of managing radio and television broadcast frequencies,

establishing broadcast and press codes of practice, issuing licences and monitoring compliance.

The first steps towards improving the media situation has already been taken. Under OSCE supervision, Radio Priština resumed limited programming on July 28. With the technical and editorial assistance from the OSCE, the radio station is transmitting 30- to 60- minute programmes in Albanian, Serbian and Turkish, on three different frequencies. The first broadcasts will provide a public news service, prepared by local journalists.

Mission staff have also established regular contacts with political parties active in Kosovo. Many parties have not been able to set up offices in Priština, due to difficulty in finding appropriate facilities. The Mission therefore is planning to create OSCE service centers that will offer basic infrastructure support to political parties. Also, the Mission, together with the Council of Europe, has contracted a team of international experts to assess the present administrative structures in the 29 municipalities in Kosovo.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo is establishing itself an important democracy-building institution in the province. By training police, judicial and administrative personnel, promoting and protecting human rights, and fostering independent media, non-governmental and political parties, the OSCE will lay the foundations for a stable democratic society in Kosovo. "Nothing can be more stimulating, but nothing is more difficult." OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Knut Vollebæk, pointed out.

OSCE to Train Police in Kosovo

Establishing a strong and credible Kosovo police is one of the major challenges facing the international community in Kosovo. The OSCE and United Nations will work together to recruit and train police officers for the new Kosovo Police Service.

The OSCE will be responsible for providing the initial training for the police officers. The OSCE Mission will set up and run a police training centre, complete with firing range and driving course. It will be established at Vucitrn, the traditional site of police training in Kosovo. The building will be cleaned, repaired and equipped for the Kosovo

Police training centre. The tentative start date for police training is 30 August.

Training candidates will be selected by the United Nations, with assistance from OSCE. About 3,000 recruits are to be trained. The first training cycle will involve 200 recruits: 160 will attend the five-week basic police officer training; 30 will attend first-line supervisor training, and 10 will attend police commander and manager training. Supervisors and commanders will attend five-weeks of basic police training and two weeks of management training. Nineteen weeks of field train-

ing follows for all officers, conducted by United Nations International Police Officers (UNIP). Recruits also receive eight hours of in-service training each week for the first year. About 10,000 applications for the Kosovo Police Service have been received so far.

OSCE is currently mobilizing a large team of trainers that will deliver all management, supervisory, police skills, in-service and transitional training. The police training facility will be run by Mr. Steve Bennett of the United States, the Director of Police Education and Training.

**For up-to-date information regarding the new OSCE Mission in Kosovo
please visit the OSCE Website at www.osce.org/kosovo**



8th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) has decided to send a “Democracy Team” to Kosovo to contribute to the rebuilding of civil society, protection of human rights, development of democracy and the rule of law. This was one of the decisions of the 8th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held from 6 to 10 July in St. Petersburg, the Russian Federation. The concept of sending a “Democracy Team” to Kosovo was welcomed by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, who addressed the Assembly on the opening day of the Annual Session: “Nobody is better equipped to develop modern political parties and political institutions than politicians from democratic countries. I therefore urge the Parliamentary Assembly to play an active role in addressing our new tasks in Kosovo.”

Nearly three hundred parliamentarians from fifty-two OSCE member States

attended, as well as observers from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Assembly, the Assembly of the Western European Union, the European Parliament, the Commonwealth of Independent States Interparliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Nordic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Japan.

The 8th Annual Session focused on “Common Security and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century”. The Session was opened by the President of the Assembly, Ms. Helle Degn of Denmark. In her opening address she stressed the duty of the PA to contribute to the organization’s work in Kosovo and the need to achieve a formal status for the Parliamentary Assembly in the OSCE decision-making process. President Degn

further emphasized the need to enhance the role of women in the work of the Organization, among other things by redressing the imbalance caused by the so-called “glass ceiling” which prevents women from reaching the top OSCE positions. Referring to the OSCE summit in Istanbul in mid-November, President Degn called on the Assembly to use the Annual Session to put forward views and recommendations.

The Opening Session was also addressed by the Speaker of the Russian Duma, Mr. Gennady Seleznev who focused his address on Kosovo. Mr. Seleznev called for further expanding the role of the Parliamentary Assembly within the structure of the OSCE, and noted that “it would be logical for the OSCE Council of Ministers, before taking very important decisions to seek the views of the Parliamentary Assembly, as proposed by President Helle Degn.”

In his address to the Opening Session the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, urged the Parliamentary Assembly to play a more active role in OSCE's tasks in Kosovo. "We must develop a pluralistic party structure. We need a political environment based on power sharing and not on power monopoly. You form part of such structures. You work in such an environment. Now we need your knowledge, your inspiration and your solidarity to help develop democracy in Kosovo." Mr. Vollebæk welcomed the concept of sending a parliamentary "Democracy Team" to Kosovo and called on the Parliamentary Assembly and its members to play their role: "...you can – better than most – help convince new political leaders that prosperity, integration and peace can only be achieved when working methods become a reality in everyday life. I urge you to make use of your privileged position in this respect to promote our common goals."

At the Opening Session presentations were also given by the OSCE Secretary General Mr. Ján Kubiš; OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Mr. Max van der Stoep; the Director of the ODIHR, Mr. Gérard Stoudmann; the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Freimut Duve; and the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Mr. Thomas Price, all of whom answered questions from the floor. The Assembly also heard presentations by the President of the North Atlantic Assembly and President Emeritus of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Javier Rupérez; the President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Lord Russell-Johnston; the Governor of St. Petersburg, Mr. Vladimir Yakovlev; President of the Assembly of the Western European Union, Mr. Lluís

de Puig and President of the Nordic Council, Ms. Gun Hellsvik.

President Degen informed the Assembly that Christiane Amanpour had accepted the 1999 OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy. Mrs. Amanpour had suggested that the funds associated with the prize – 20,000 USD – will be given to projects aiding the development of free and professional media in Kosovo. These projects will be designated in close consultation with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. The Prize is given annually by the Assembly to journalists or groups of journalists who, through their work, have promoted the OSCE principles on human



rights and democracy. Donors of the Prize are the Berlingske Fond (Denmark), Bertelsmann AG (Germany), Bonnier Group (Sweden), Southam Inc. (Canada) and Schibsted ASA (Norway).

Also on the first day of the St. Petersburg Session the traditional Meeting of Women Parliamentarians took place. In the course of the discussion appeals were made for increasing the role of women in the work of the OSCE. Moreover, that those responsible for war crimes against women in Kosovo, including rape, should be effectively prosecuted.

Joint Committee Meeting

During their meetings on 7, 8 and 9 July the three General Committees of the Assembly considered the three reports and draft resolutions that dealt with different and interrelated aspects – political, economic and human rights – of the central theme of the Eighth Annual Session: Common Security and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century. On 8 July, for the first time in the history of the Assembly, a joint meeting of the three General Committees was held. The issue of Kosovo was judged to be of such key importance to all three Committees that it should be discussed in a Joint Meeting.

St. Petersburg Declaration

On 10 July 1999, the final day of the 8th Annual Session, the Assembly adopted the St. Petersburg Declaration, which covers a wide range of political, economic and human rights issues and includes resolutions on Kosovo, the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, correcting the democratic deficit within the OSCE, the role of the OSCE in crisis prevention and conflict settlement, the trafficking in women and children, the assassination of Galina Starovoitova, a prominent Russian democracy activist,

the development of the rule of law and human rights in the Russian Federation and a resolution on the situation in Belarus.

The resolution on the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe calls upon the OSCE participating States to mobilize the necessary resources to assist the people of South-Eastern Europe, including Serbia, in their quest to achieve lasting peace as well as political and economic stability.

The resolution on correcting the democratic deficit recommends that before making major decisions, the Ministerial Council of the OSCE should be obliged to ask the opinion of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Assembly also proposes that the Secretary General of the OSCE be approved by a majority vote of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly during its Annual Session. Furthermore, the Assem-

bly requests that the Secretary General, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media report on their activities and budgetary expenditures to the Standing Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The Assembly advocates that "approximate consensus" be adopted in the OSCE decision-making process, as advocated by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly since the 1994 Vienna Annual Assembly.

The resolution on the situation in Belarus, calls for free and fair parliamentary elections to be held next year in the country in accordance with OSCE commitments. The Resolution also calls for political parties and opposition groups to have access to state-owned media.

Finally, the Assembly by acclamation re-elected Ms. Helle Degn, Chair of the Foreign Policy Committee in the Danish Parliament, as its President for a further one-year term. Mr. Bruce George (United Kingdom), Mr. Ihor Ostash (Ukraine) and Mr. Tiit Käbin (Estonia) were elected as new Vice-Presidents of the Assembly whilst Mr. Claude Estier (France) was re-elected Vice-President. Mr. Bill Graham (Canada) was elected new treasurer. From the First Committee, Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen (Finland) was elected as Chair, Mr. Alcee Hastings (U.S.A.) was elected as Vice-Chair and András Bársony as Rapporteur. From the Second Committee Ms. Barbara Haering (Switzerland) was elected as Rapporteur. Upon the unanimous recommendation of the Bureau of the Assembly, Secretary General Mr. R. Spencer Oliver was elected by acclamation by the Standing Committee to a new five-year term, which will begin next year.

OSCE Chairman-in-Office Travels to Skopje and Kosovo

The Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, travelled to Skopje and Kosovo on 7 to 9 July to get a first hand view of the situation since the OSCE deployed its new Mission. His original plan to begin his trip with a visit to Podgorica, Montenegro, had to be cancelled after the Yugoslav Government refused to issue him a visa. He was able nevertheless to hold talks with the Foreign Minister of Montenegro, Branko Perović, who made a special trip to Skopje for the meeting.

In his meetings with the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Vollebæk expressed his great satis-

faction with the efforts during the refugee crisis. In particular, he commended the Government for its moderation which had a stabilizing effect internally on what could have become an explosive situation.

Also during his trip to Skopje, Mr. Vollebæk visited the offices of the OSCE Spillover Monitoring Mission and received extensive briefings from the Head of Mission and his staff. A further meeting with representatives of international organizations provided an informative survey of international efforts for Kosovo.

On 8 July, Mr. Vollebæk and his delegation departed by helicopter to Priština where he held his first meeting with the

Commander of KFOR, General Sir Michael Jackson. General Jackson described the situation in Kosovo as a "race between order and disorder." He emphasized that the police and the civil administration structure urgently needed to be put in place to stabilize the province and deter lawlessness. He was grateful for Mr. Vollebæk's assurances that the OSCE Police Training Centre would be up and running by the end of August. He also appealed for international management of the media, which he said would be essential to objectively informing the public on UNMIK and KFOR actions. Mr. Vollebæk emphasized that it will be crucial to work towards close co-operation between the military and civilian components.

After a visit to the OSCE Mission and briefings by Head of Mission, Ambassador Daan Everts, Mr. Vollebæk met with the acting Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio de Mello. In the meeting, Mr. Vollebæk stressed the importance of tight cooperation and coordination while allowing lead agencies like the OSCE full responsibility within their respective areas. Mr. de Mello said there was already a strong sense of team spirit and that each international organization operating within UNMIK would retain its distinctiveness. Absolute priorities for both organizations would be the police, the judiciary and the media.

In the afternoon, Mr. Vollebæk departed for Pec where he planned to pay a visit to the Decani Monastery. On his way, he visited the site of a mass grave and witnessed scenes of tremendous destruction of villages along the main road.

At the monastery, the seat of the Serbian Orthodox church, Mr. Vollebæk held talks with church leaders, Patriarch Pavle



OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Mr. Knut Vollebæk, with Serbian Orthodox church leaders and OSCE human rights officers at a mass grave site.

and Father Sava. He promised them that the OSCE would work hard to promote the human rights of the Serb population and a multiethnic society for Kosovo. To demonstrate the importance of protecting Serb holy monuments, Mr. Vollebæk attended a church service and spent the night in the monastery.

Mr. Vollebæk concluded his visit the following day in Priština with a visit to Governor Andjelković, and roundtable sessions with the Serb opposition and with Kosovo Albanian leaders. He also made an address to OSCE Mission staff, offering his appreciation for the difficult task that they were undertaking.

OSCE to Play Active Role in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe

On 1 July the OSCE Permanent Council decided to place the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe under OSCE auspices. The Council expressed its readiness to “make a significant contribution to the efforts undertaken through the Stability Pact,” and “to make use of OSCE institutions and instruments and their expertise to contribute to the proceedings of the South-Eastern Europe Regional Table and of the working tables.”

According to the decision, the OSCE will work closely with the EU, the Council of Europe, the United Nations, NATO, the OECD, the WEU, international financial institutions, the regional initiatives as well as the countries of South Eastern Europe to achieve the objectives set out in the Stability Pact. The OSCE also declared its readiness to host meetings of the working tables in Vienna.

Speaking at the Stability Pact Summit in Sarajevo on 30 July, OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, reiterated the commitment of the OSCE to play an active role in the development and implementation of the Pact. He pointed out that with its field presences in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo, the OSCE is in a unique position to contribute to the

Stability Pact. "The OSCE's considerable field presence across Southeastern Europe will facilitate close co-operation with the countries of the region. The Stability Pact belongs to them – their initiatives and ideas must be encouraged and supported.", Mr. Vollebæk said. He stressed that the Pact represents a partnership between the countries of the region and the international community. The countries of the region deserve the support of the international community, but ultimate responsibility for building peace and stability in Southeastern Europe remains with the countries themselves, said Vollebæk.

Working closely with the Special Coordinator for the Pact, Minister Bodo Hombach, the OSCE will give support and input to the proceedings of the South-Eastern Europe Regional Table and the Working Tables. In light of its significant experience with human rights, democratization, election and refugee issues throughout South-Eastern Europe, the OSCE is preparing for a particularly

responsible role in the Working Table on Democratization and Human Rights, but also stands ready to support the the Working Table on Security Issues, Mr. Vollebæk said.

In his address Mr. Vollebæk also pointed out that the challenges of building peace, democracy and stability cannot be solved by governments alone and that the Stability Pact ought to be as much about linking citizens as about linking States. The OSCE has already been working towards this goal. On the eve of the Summit, the OSCE sponsored two events designed to support a major role for civil society, NGOs and opposition parties in the work of the Pact. On 28 July, representatives of three major regional NGO groups met in Sarajevo and held a press conference calling for their inclusion in the process. On 30 July, representatives of women's groups from seven countries called for a greater role for women in the Stability Pact process. The call was welcomed and supported by Mr. Vollebæk.

In closing, Mr. Vollebæk underlined the fact that the international community's effort to support the countries of the region must be translated into action. The November OSCE Summit in Istanbul will provide an opportunity to take stock of the progress in the Stability Pact process.

Strengthening the OSCE Regional Approach to South-Eastern Europe

Recognizing the OSCE's presence in the Balkan region to be a unique asset, the OSCE is currently looking at strengthening its regional activities in the area. On 1 July Mr. Vollebæk tasked Ambassador Barry, the Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina to explore ways of strengthening the OSCE's regional capabilities in South-Eastern Europe. The Chairman-in-Office asked Ambassador Barry to prepare a comprehensive report, recommending concrete measures, in time for the November 1999 Istanbul Summit Meeting of Heads of State Government.

OSCE to Establish Office in Yerevan

On 23 July the OSCE Permanent Council decided to establish an OSCE Office in Yerevan, Armenia. Welcoming the willingness of the Government to intensify OSCE activities in the Armenia, the Permanent Council agreed on the mandate of the Office, which will start functioning in the second half of 1999. The Office will work to promote OSCE prin-

ciples and commitments in the region and enhance OSCE co-operation with the Republic of Armenia. The Office will also facilitate contacts, co-ordinate activities and promote information exchange with the Chairman-in-Office and OSCE Institutions, and establish and maintain contacts with local authorities, universities, research institutions and NGOs. In

addition, the Office will perform other tasks that might be deemed necessary by the Chairman-in-Office or OSCE Institutions and agreed on between the Republic of Armenia and the OSCE.

The Office will be led by a Head of Office and staffed by a team of up to five experts seconded by OSCE participating States.

IN BRIEF



Mr. Boris Frlec, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council on 8 July. Mr. Frlec opened his address by describing the present situation of the OSCE as being at another crossroads. He was referring to the challenges of finding a lasting solution to the problems in South Eastern Europe “in the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter.” Mr. Frlec said that the crisis in Kosovo and Serbia had destabilizing effects on the Balkan region, as well as the entire OSCE area. He said that the crisis did not arise from existing religious and ethnic differences, but rather from the consequence of intolerance and the state policy of militant nationalism. Mr. Frlec stressed that war criminals should be brought to justice and autonomy for Kosovo should be ensured to restore the trust of the Kosovar Albanians in the authorities and in the State.

The important role of the OSCE in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe was commended by Mr. Frlec, who also sees the Pact as the most important and comprehensive stabilization project for the region. He expressed Slovenia’s willingness to actively contribute to this project, as well to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

A Joint Pilot Workshop on Human Rights Training for Field Missions was co-organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the OSCE from 11 to 16 July 1999 in Venice, Italy. There were twenty-five participants, the majority of which came from the OSCE.

The goal of the course was focused on two major areas, first, the development of a coherent and quality-based approach to training on human rights monitoring, and second, to train a pool of resource personnel in the field of human rights. Participants were presented elements of field human rights monitoring, such as information gathering, interviewing, reporting and the follow-up. In addition, there were presentations on special issues, such as trial monitoring, dealing with trauma victims, the administration of justice and gender issues. The participants were actively involved throughout the course in role plays and working and discussion groups.

The course enabled field monitors to meet their colleagues from other missions and share experiences with one another.

Common problems were addressed and solutions for dealing with the realities in the field were sought. Extensive materials were given to each participant which have been taken back to the missions for further use. The participants were very satisfied with the results of the course; now the four participating organizations are considering how to follow up this joint pilot workshop.

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Daniel Tarschys attended the Permanent Council on 15 July and reflected on the achievements of the OSCE and the Council of Europe in the second half of the 1990s and upcoming future challenges. Recent eruptions of violence in Kosovo and other potential conflicts have shown that the tasks of these organizations are far from complete.

The 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe was celebrated in early May, and was the occasion for the adoption of the “Budapest Declaration – For a Greater Europe without dividing lines”. This document reaffirmed the determination of member states to use the full potential of the Council of Europe as a political institution capable of bringing together all countries of “Greater Europe”. In addition, Mr. Tarschys referred to the OSCE/Council of Europe meeting on procedures for monitoring of commitments and on present and future co-operation that is scheduled for the beginning of October as an excellent opportunity to share experiences concerning monitoring and assistance.

In the May session in Budapest, the Council of Europe also decided to institute the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, to promote awareness and respect for human rights and education in the field as embodied in the human rights instruments of the Council of Europe. Mr. Tarschys emphasized that there will be a number of opportunities for collaboration with OSCE institutions, building on the co-operation that has already been established.

On 15 July, **Ambassador Wilhelm Höynck, Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office,** presented to the OSCE Permanent Council a report on enhancing OSCE activities in Central Asia. The report is part of the ongoing discussion on strengthening OSCE co-operation with the five Central Asian OSCE participating States – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The OSCE has been steadily developing its activities in Central Asia, beginning with a “programme of co-ordinated support” in 1992, the Mission in Tajikistan in 1993, a Liaison

Office in Uzbekistan in 1995, and – most recently – OSCE Centres in Almaty, Ashgabad and Bishkek in 1999. At the 1998 Oslo Ministerial Council, the participating States mandated the Chairman-in-Office to prepare a report of further ways of strengthening OSCE activities in Central Asia. The report presented by Dr. Höynck will be discussed by the participating States after the Summer recess.

On 22 July, **the Alternate Foreign Minister of Greece, Mr. Yannis Kranidiotis**, announced in an address to the OSCE Permanent Council that Greece will be available to assume the chairmanship of the OSCE in the year 2004. He emphasized that Greece would be a valuable member of the OSCE Troika in 2003, due to Greece's Presidency of the European Union during that period.

Mr. Yannis Kranidiotis also expressed support for the Stability Pact and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. He called for a rapid reintegration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the European family. He described both the Charter on European Security and the revised Vienna Document as priorities for the upcoming OSCE Summit. According to Mr. Kranidiotis, the Charter should be a concise document that presents the collective vision of the OSCE and European Security in an understandable way. In addition, it should enhance the co-operation with the OSCE's Mediterranean Partners.

On 20 July, the OSCE Permanent Council was addressed by **Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations**. Mr. Annan emphasized the fact that the engagement of international organizations in Kosovo is to be seen as a long term



Mr. Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, and Ambassador Kai Eide of Norway, Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council

issue. He said: "I know that we will be on the ground in Kosovo at least for several years, but the reconstruction of Kosovo and the region, in my judgment, will take at least ten years." The focus of reconstruction is on Kosovo, but according to Mr. Annan, regional development in the context of the Stability Pact will be necessary to guarantee security in the region. In the light of the tragedy in Kosovo, the development of a secure, multi-ethnic, democratic and prosperous societies in the region should be encouraged.

Mr. Annan also reiterated the call for the quick deployment of the civilian police in Kosovo, where security is a problem and relations are tense between returning Albanians and Serbian residents. The OSCE's role in training police and civil administrators and the establishment of a new judicial system will be an essential part of the international community efforts in Kosovo.

On July 22, **Minister Bodo Hombach, Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe**, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council and expressed thanks for the timely decision that was made to put the Stability Pact under the auspices of the OSCE. He sees the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security as providing the actual foundation of the Pact, as the agreement includes political, military, economic and humanitarian questions. Mr. Hombach referred to the singular field expertise of the OSCE in South-Eastern Europe and that it should be utilized to support the goals of the Pact.

Mr. Hombach will address regular reports from the Regional Table of the Stability Pact to the OSCE, in the form of presentations to the Permanent Council and written reports to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. He intends to call the first Regional Table to Brussels in September.

After the military conflict in Yugoslavia, peace still needs to be won, according to Mr. Hombach. The Stability Pact is an expression of this realization, and an important political tool. The central goal of the Pact is to include South-Eastern Europe in the European "mainstream" and to strengthen the national economies, upon which democracy and security rely. Another key issue described by Mr. Hombach is the importance of regional co-operation, in which countries of the region should become involved in joint projects.



News from the Field

The OSCE currently has Missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo (FRY), Latvia, Skopje (fYROM), Moldova, and Tajikistan as well as an Assistance Group to Chechnya, a Presence in Albania, an Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus and a Project Co-ordinator in the Ukraine. The following are highlights from the work of some of the field operations during the past month.

Refugee Situation Eases in Albania

More than 90% of the refugees from Kosovo have left Albania in the past weeks. The current refugee population is estimated at less than 10,000, many of them elderly, sick or with special needs.

The easing of the refugee situation has allowed the OSCE Presence in Albania to revert to tasks suspended during the refugee emergency, including democratization, political observation and mediation, environmental monitoring and the development of local projects. The Presence has, inter alia, assisted in providing technical assistance on key legislation issues, including the draft Civil Service Law. The Presence's field offices, which were instrumental in assisting the Albanian Government in dealing with the refugee crisis, have been able to resume their normal activities. In northern Albania the OSCE field offices are in many cases the only international presence, as most NGOs have left for Kosovo.

Update from Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 29 and 30 July, Ambassador Robert Barry, Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, attended the Stability Pact Summit. Ambassador Barry, who has been tasked with strengthening developing the OSCE's regional capabilities in South-Eastern Europe (see p. 8), addressed the Summit on behalf of the Chairman-in-Office. The Mission played a key

role in facilitating access to the Summit for women and civil society actors, allowing them to voice their views regarding the Stability Pact.

The final draft of the permanent election law was turned over to the Office of the High Representative on 28 July. The law introduces significant electoral reform that aims to foster more moderate politics, reconciliation and accountability of publicly elected officials. The draft law was prepared by a working group of representatives from the OSCE, the Office of the High Representative and Bosnia and Herzegovina nationals. Once comments to the draft law have been incorporated, the law will be presented to the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina for consideration and passage.

On 7 July a round table meeting, "Republika Srpska on its way towards the 21 Century", was held in Banja Luka, joining intellectuals and representatives of the government from Republika Srpska. The initiative for this meeting was taken by the OSCE, and was jointly organized by educational and intellectual institutions from the region. Issues addressed were related to multi-ethnic reconciliation, democratic developments in Bosnia, and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The roundtable concluded with the positive signal of an Appeal to Intellectuals of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Appeal stated: "The tragedy which the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina have

experienced obliges us to give full support to the consolidation of peace..."

The voter registration process for Out-of-Country voters has slowed considerably. After an increase of 12% in early July, almost 80,000 Out-of-Country voters had been registered, which represents almost half of the total registration of the same program in 1998. In the last week, the amount of documents being received by the Co-ordination Office dropped from about 13,000 documents to 1,250. This could be due to the postponement of elections and the extended registration period to participate in the April 2000 elections.

Assistance Group in Chechnya Completes Aid Programme

On 15 July, the OSCE Assistance Group (AG) in Chechnya completed its "Wheat Flour Programme". With funds provided by the United States State Department, the AG purchased wheat flour and other basic products and then distributed them in Chechnya. The programme proved to be very successful, and a large part of the Chechen population relied on the programme throughout the 1998/1999 winter. The AG is preparing a similar project for the upcoming winter.

Humanitarian assistance remains an important aspect of the AG's activities. In co-operation with other voluntary contributors, the AG is developing other pro-

jects, including assistance to children's hospitals in Chechnya and medical training. The Group continues to operate from temporary premises in Moscow, until an improvement in the security situation.

Focus on Economic Issues in Skopje

The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje has advocated a more active approach to the economic situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The efforts of the Mission in the economic sphere have been focused on promoting a long term recovery of the economy by encouraging the procurement of local companies by international organizations and donors. In many contacts with local authorities, the Mission has sought for immediate action in this area. Recommendations made by the OSCE Mission to facilitate this procurement process have been accepted by the government. Among these was the recommendation to establish an informal English-speaking task force which could contact procurement agencies to offer help with anything related to the local process. In addition, the Mission suggested that the Ministry of Trade provide a pool of translators who could act as consultants for companies struggling with responding to international tenders. Also, any relevant

tenures should be translated and published in local newspapers, instead of being channeled through the Chamber of Economy. The remaining legal and administrative obstacles for donors and non-governmental organizations should also be removed. These suggestions of the OSCE Mission were accepted by the government and additional measures were added in the same spirit. The new approach was welcomed at a meeting with all the donors and NGOs in the area.

Central Asia Liaison Office Looks to Enhance Economic and Environmental Activities

The OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia (CALO) has initiated contacts with key international organizations in Uzbekistan, with the aim of enhancing co-operation in economic and environmental activities. The CALO offered its support in the implementation of development programmes in the country. At meetings with the representatives of the World Bank and the Japan International Co-operation Agency, possible areas for co-operation were outlined, including the issue of the Aral Sea basin.

The CALO also continued its democratization work, by visiting NGOs in the

Samarkand area. On 7 July staff from the Office visited the area to gain a better understanding of the local situation, and to outline the possibilities for future co-operation.

Positive Developments in Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict

On 13 July, the OSCE Mission to Georgia attended a working meeting of the Russian, Georgian and South Ossetian representatives in Tskhinvali. The meeting focused on economic issues and included a visit to Tskhinvali and discussions on developing economic co-operation between private business sector in the region and businesses in Georgia and Russia. The meeting was a unique opportunity, as Georgian representatives had never before visited enterprises in Tskhinvali, and economic issues remain a contentious issue.

The Mission was also involved in working to set a new date for the expert meeting group on the Georgia-Ossetian settlement process, which had been postponed. Discussions indicated that the meeting might be rescheduled for September. The Mission underlined the importance of regular meetings and adherence to the previously established schedule.

REPORT 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

Hungary

On 1 and 2 July the High Commissioner visited Hungary. There he met with Mr. János Martonyi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gábor Bagi, Deputy Secre-

tary of State for South-Eastern European Affairs, Mr. Tibor Szabó, President of the Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad and Mr. Rudolf Joo, Deputy State Secretary responsible for Multilateral Affairs. The main topics of

discussion included the Hungarian minority in Slovakia (particularly in regard to the use of minority languages), the Hungarian minority in Romania (particularly in regard to tertiary education), and the situation in Vojvodina.

High Commissioner Visits London

On 8 and 9 July the High Commissioner visited London. During his visit he gave a speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA), he met with Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development and with officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and he participated in a round-table at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. He also gave a number of interviews including with BBC radio and television. Copies of the High Commissioner's speech at the RIIA are available on the HCNM homepage or from the High Commissioner's office.

Latvia

On 15 July the High Commissioner issued a statement in which he warmly welcomed the decision of the President of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, to return the State Language Law to the Saeima (parliament) for reconsideration. The Law, which was adopted by the Saeima on 8 July, had been criticized by the High Commissioner for its non-compliance with international standards, particularly as it concerned intrusion into the private sphere. This question was also discussed in a telephone conversation between the President and the High Commissioner. The President invited the legal adviser of the High Commissioner to Riga to discuss the law with her.

In his press statement of 15 July, the High Commissioner reiterated that he strongly supports the role of the state language in Latvia. He said that "the international community should support the promotion of the Latvian language through increased contributions to Latvian language training provide to non-Latvians."

Specifically regarding the law, he expressed his firm conviction that "a State Language Law can be elaborated by the Parliament which will enhance the position of the Latvian language while at the same time being in conformity with international standards."

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

From 14 to 16 July, the High Commissioner visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. He was informed that the number of Kosovar Albanian refugees had been reduced from 240,000 to 30,000. As a result, the Government is able to concentrate more on internal political developments like inter-ethnic relations, particularly in the context of higher education.

During his visit, particularly in discussions with Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski and the chairman of the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), Arben Xhaferi, the High Commissioner noted a new atmosphere of constructive dialogue on the issue of an Albanian language university. The High Commissioner indicated to his interlocutors that he would remain closely engaged in helping to find a solution to this issue. Among the people that he met were the deputy Prime Minister, the minister of foreign affairs, the minister of education, and educational experts of the (Albanian) Party of Democratic Prosperity and the DPA.

Slovakia

The Law on the Use of National Minority Languages was adopted by the Slovak Parliament on 10 July. In a press release issued on 19 July the High Commissioner put particular emphasis on

those provisions of the law relating to the use of minority languages in official communications. He said that "as a result of the new Law, persons belonging to national minorities will be able to use their language in communications with public administrative organs and organs of local self-administration in those municipalities where the minority constitutes at least twenty per cent of the population." He commented that this not only "restored an established practice which was eliminated under the previous Government, but it brings Slovakia's law in this matter back into conformity with the Slovak Constitution, applicable international standards and specific recommendations from relevant international institutions, including my own office." He said that he considered the "solution of the question of the use of minority languages in official communications to be a step forward which follows previous decisions of the Government in the field of inter-ethnic, for example with regard to the use of bilingual school certificates and improvements in the policy of cultural subsidies."

However, the High Commissioner felt that certain further steps would be necessary in the future. He concluded his press release by saying: "I hope that the Government will move without delay to settle other still unresolved inter-ethnic issues."

The Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK) voted against the Law. To explain their objections to the law and their views on inter-ethnic relations in Slovakia, three members of the SMK including Mr. Béla Bugár, Chairman of the SMK, and Mr. Miklos Duray, Honorary Chairman of the SMK visited the High Commissioner in the Hague on 22 July.

UPDATE from the ODIHR

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is located at Aleje Ujazdowskie 19, PL-00 557 Warsaw, Poland, tel.: (+48-22) 520 06 00, fax: (+48-22) 520 06 05, e-mail: office@odih.osce.waw.pl

ODIHR Office in Montenegro Re-opened

From 18 to 20 July an ODIHR delegation led by Ambassador Stoudmann visited Montenegro. The main purpose of the trip was to re-open the ODIHR Office in Podgorica, which had been established in the aftermath of the 1997 Presidential elections and temporarily closed in February due to the security situation. The Office will concentrate on supporting the development of civil society in the region and on assisting the Montenegrin authorities in bringing their legislation up to OSCE and European standards.

Talks were held during the visit with various Government officials, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Montenegrin authorities showed their determination to proceed along a democratic path and to build-up a market economy so as to eventually integrate into European and transatlantic institutions. Montenegro needs strong international support to achieve this aim.

The ODIHR delegation also visited Roma refugees recently arrived from Kosovo, as well as Serb refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ODIHR Agreement on Co-operation with Russian Commissioner on Human Rights

An agreement on co-operation was signed on 30 June between the ODIHR and the Commissioner on Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Mr. Oleg

Mironov. They agreed to exchange information, to hold bilateral consultations, and to arrange joint publications and conferences and seminars on human rights. In the context of the agreement, the ODIHR requested the Commissioner to intervene in the case of Alexander Nikitin, an environmentalist charged with treason and espionage, who has been in custody or confined to St Petersburg, without a conclusive outcome to his case, since 1995.

NGO Registration for the OSCE Review Conference

Registration of non-governmental organizations for the OSCE Review Conference, to be held in Vienna from 20 September to 1 October and in Istanbul from 8 to 10 October, will be conducted by the ODIHR.

According to the modalities adopted by the OSCE Permanent Council, NGOs dealing with the Human Dimension and economic and environmental issues are invited to fully participate in the OSCE Review Conference and will have equal access to the list of speakers. NGOs will be free to make recommendations to the participants of the Review Conference.

To register for either the OSCE Review Conference please consult the ODIHR website at <http://www.osce.odih.org> or contact:

Ms. Ania Sierant
OSCE/ODIHR
Aleje Ujazdowskie 19
00-557 Warsaw, Poland

Tel: +48 22 520 0600

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E-mail: ania@odih.osce.waw.pl or
jakh@odih.osce.waw.pl

The deadline for NGO registration for the Review Conference is 6 September 1999.

NGO Registration for the OSCE Summit

Registration of non-governmental organizations for the OSCE Summit, to be held in Istanbul on 18 and 19 October, will also be conducted by the ODIHR.

NGOs are invited to observe the OSCE Summit via video link to the NGO Centre located in the Convention Centre of the Hilton Hotel, close to the Summit venue in Istanbul. Access to the Summit venue will be restricted, but NGOs will have some opportunities to meet delegations in specially designated areas.

To register for the OSCE Summit please consult the ODIHR website or contact Ms. Ania Sierant at the address given above (NGO registration for the OSCE Review Conference).

The deadline for NGO registration for the OSCE Summit is 30 September 1999.

Registration for the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti Issues

Delegations, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are invited to register for the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma

and Sinti Issues, to be held in Vienna on 6 September 1999.

The meeting will consist of two working groups:

1. Roma and Sinti policies: from ideas to implementation – putting “best practices” in the Human Dimension into operation; and

2. Confronting crisis situations: building and implementing a platform for action to approach new problems in emergency situations.

It is hoped that the recommendations of this meeting will be carried forward to the OSCE Review Meeting.

To register for the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting please contact Ms. Ania Sierant at the address given above (NGO Registration for the OSCE Review Conference and OSCE Summit).

The deadline for non-governmental organizations to register is 23 August.



How to Become an Election Observer:

The OSCE/ODIHR recruits observers from the participating States.

When a decision is made to observe an election the ODIHR requests long and short term observers by notifying the OSCE delegations in Vienna. The procedure for recruiting observers varies from country to country, but the process is generally co-ordinated by the respective foreign ministries. As a rule it is the sending states that cover the costs of the observers. For information on national procedures for recruiting observers please contact the relevant permanent delegation to the OSCE in Vienna.

Tentative election calendar for the remainder of 1999		
COUNTRY	TYPE OF ELECTION	TIMING
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Presidential Election	September (TBD)
Ukraine	Presidential Election	October 31
Kazakhstan	Parliamentary Election	10 October
Georgia	Parliamentary Election	Autumn (TBC)
Turkmenistan	Parliamentary Election	December 12
Russian Federation	Parliamentary Election	December 19
Uzbekistan	Parliamentary Election	December(TBD)
Croatia	Parliamentary Election	End of year (TBC)
Tajikistan	Presidential Election	Autumn-Winter 1999-2000 (TBD)

TBD: to be determined

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan Election Legislation Assistance

An ODIHR delegation met with Kazakh authorities on 13 July to discuss the improvement of election legislation. The meeting, held in Astana, Kazakhstan, was part of on-going dialogue between Kazakhstan and the ODIHR on election-related issues, and was funded by a voluntary contribution from the Government of Sweden.

The discussion was open and constructive and the ODIHR was pleased to note that a number of its recommendations on election legislation had been met. The ODIHR will deploy a needs assessment mission in Kazakhstan prior to the 10 October parliamentary elections, to determine the nature and scale of a possible election observation mission.

An ODIHR delegation also met election officials in Uzbekistan from 15 to 16 July to discuss issues relating to Uzbek election legislation.



DEMOCRATIZATION

International Election Standards in Ukraine

The OSCE/ODIHR held a workshop on “Resolving Election Disputes” in Kyiv, Ukraine on 23 and 24 June, funded by a voluntary contribution by the Government of Switzerland. The workshop was organized in co-operation with the Supreme Court of Ukraine. It outlined ‘good practices’ in the field of election disputes and aimed to increase the level of understanding among judges and election officials of election appeals procedures and methods, in the light of international standards on elections and the rule of law.

During the lively discussion a number of priority issues were identified to form part of a comprehensive reform process. These provided the basis for a set of recommendations addressed to the Ukrainian authorities on the improvement of legal provisions relating to election dispute procedures and standards, as well as on the judicial and administrative practice in adjudicating election-related complaints and appeals.

National Co-ordinating Council on Action Against Trafficking, Ukraine

The inaugural meeting of the National Co-ordinating Council, chaired by Nina Karpachova, Ombudsman of Ukraine, took place in Kyiv on 15 June. The ODIHR's project partners from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ukraine attended the meeting, reporting that it was both useful and focused. Participants from key ministries, State committees and non-governmental organizations took part, and the Council's terms of reference were agreed.

At the ODIHR, the project is run by the Gender Adviser and the Migration Unit, with input from the Adviser on Trafficking Issues. The team in Kyiv includes the OSCE Project Co-ordinator and the IOM. The project will continue with further meetings and activities throughout 1999 and into 2000. Project components include legislative review, awareness raising and training programmes.

Women in Politics Training in Kyrgyzstan

Phase One of the Kyrgyzstan "Women in Politics" training of trainers programme was completed in Bishkek from 26 June to 2 July. Twenty-five participants, mainly NGO representatives from across the country participated in the one-week training, which was arranged in co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and the United Nations Development Programme's Gender in Development Bureau. The trainers were from the Active Learning Centre in the UK. The vast majority of participants rated the workshop "excellent".

Each participant will now submit a proposal to the ODIHR for a local follow-up workshop; these are to be completed

by 30 September and will be monitored by OSCE or UNDP staff wherever possible. Participants in the follow-up workshops must also complete an evaluation form, to be returned to the ODIHR.

Plans to continue the programme with further training sessions and local follow-up activities are now being finalized.

Kazakhstan NGO – Government Meeting on Prevention of Torture

The ODIHR, in co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Almaty, the Kazakh Ministry of the Interior and Kazakh Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, organized a meeting to bring together representatives of governments and non-governmental organizations to discuss the prevention of torture on 2 and 3 July.

The meeting, a part of the ODIHR's Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Kazakhstan, was attended by the Adviser to the President of Kazakhstan, the Deputy Minister and other representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, as well as representatives from the Kazakh Prosecutor's Office, the National Security Committee, Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and numerous non-governmental organizations.

Presentations were given by ODIHR experts Mr. Alan Walker, and Mr. Bill Bowring of the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex, on common problems which exist in prison systems and how they are tackled by governments and NGOs in various countries, and international instruments protecting detainees and prisoners. Participants discussed ways of improving the penitentiary system in Kazakhstan and made a number of concrete proposals including creating clear guidelines on access to prisoners, and improving the rehabilitation of prisoners.

There was a unanimous call for further meetings bringing together the Government and NGOs and for further discussion on torture prevention in Kazakhstan.

This project is funded by voluntary contributions from the European Commission and the United Kingdom.

Workshops on Registration of Permanent Residents in Georgia and Armenia

A workshop on the registration of permanent residents in Georgia took place on 4 and 5 July in Tbilisi, funded by a voluntary contribution from the Government of the United States and as part of the implementation of the Memoranda of Understanding between the Government of Georgia and the ODIHR. The workshop brought together representatives of the Georgian Ministry of the Interior, Central Election Commission, President's Office, Ministry of Justice, various political parties and international and non-governmental organizations to discuss the implementation of the Georgian Law on Registration of Permanent Residents in advance of the upcoming Parliamentary Election in the autumn.

The workshop concluded that the registration system in Georgia has a number of weaknesses, particularly in the de-registration of internal migrants at their previous places of residence, and that there is a lack of public awareness of registration procedures. The public needs to be better informed on how the new registration system differs from the old "propiska" system.

The ODIHR recommended that the cost of obtaining new identity papers for citizens of Georgia should be reduced, that penalties be increased for registration officials demanding bribes and that local

human rights NGOs should monitor and report on the implementation of the registration law.

A similar workshop took place in Yerevan, Armenia on 8 and 9 July, funded through a voluntary contribution by the Government of Norway and as part of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Armenia and the ODIHR. This workshop is seen as a first step in assisting Armenian Government in developing a concept and legislative basis for an effective system of registration of permanent residents.

The workshop was attended by representatives of the Armenian Government as well as international organizations and non-governmental organizations and was widely covered by the Armenian press and television.

Change of Staff

Ms. Alison Jolly, the ODIHR's first Adviser on Gender Issues and the Human

Rights of Women, leaves the ODIHR at the end of July to work with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.



Mr. Igor Rogov, Adviser to the President of Kazakhstan, (centre) addresses the NGO-Government meeting in Almaty

REPORT from the Parliamentary Assembly

The Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is located at Rådhusstræde 1, DK-1466 Copenhagen K, Denmark, tel.: (+45-33) 32 94 00, fax: (+45-33) 32 55 05, e-mail: osce@oscepa.dk

OSCE PA Ad hoc Working Group on Belarus Meets Belarusian Leader

Mr. Adrian Severin, Chairman of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) Democracy Team for Belarus, visited Minsk for the fourth time to have political consultations with the Belarusian leadership and opposition from 14 to 18 July 1999. Mr. Severin had substantive talks on a number of political issues with then President Alexander Lukashenko that lasted more than two hours on 15 July. During these talks, Mr. Severin discussed the recently adopted OSCE PA Resolution on the Situation in Belarus,

which calls for free and fair parliamentary elections to be held in the Republic next year in accordance with OSCE commitments. The Resolution, unanimously adopted during the St. Petersburg Annual Session of the OSCE PA, also calls for political parties and opposition groups to have access to state-owned media.

Mr. Lukashenko stated his commitment to the holding of free, fair and recognizable parliamentary elections in Belarus next year, as well as his support for a national dialogue on elections to be held between the government and the opposition. In subsequent meetings during Mr. Severin's

visit, most sides of the Belarusian political spectrum stated their readiness to enter this dialogue. In all of his meetings, Mr. Severin stressed that, "The way out of the political impasse in Belarus is to go forward, not back to 1994 or 1996."

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Nantes Conference on Subregional Economic Co-operation

Following the invitation by Mr. Laurent Fabius, President of the French National Assembly and on the proposal of Mr. Jacques Floch, Deputy, Chairman of the

General Committee on Economic Affairs of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Second Parliamentary Conference on Subregional Economic Co-operation Processes in Europe will take place in Nantes from 13 to 15 October 1999. This initiative follows upon the first conference of this type held in Monaco from 8 to 10 October 1997.

The Nantes conference, which will be presided over by OSCE PA President Helle Degn, will be organized jointly by the OSCE PA and the French National Assembly in partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The holding of a second conference brings together once again, within a forum for dialogue and cooperation, the representatives of sub-

regional organizations and European and world institutions.

The main topics to be discussed during the conference are:

Safeguarding the environment: the subregional approach for sustainable development; Conventional and nuclear energy security: subregional policies; Social cohesion within States and economic disparities in Europe: the role of subregional organizations and subregional organizations faced with the new threats: combating corruption and organized crime.

Bureau Meetings:

- Expanded Bureau Meeting, 27 to 28 September 1999, Antalya, in conjunction with a seminar on “New Risks and

Challenges: Minorities in the 21st Century”.

- Bureau Meeting, 17 November 1999, Istanbul, in conjunction with the OSCE Summit.
- Expanded Bureau Meeting, Spring 2000, Copenhagen.

Annual Sessions:

- 9th Annual Session in Bucharest, July 2000
- 10th Annual Session in Paris, July 2001
- 11th Annual Session in Berlin, July 2002

Standing Committee:

- Standing Committee Meeting, January/February 2000, Vienna.

REPORT of 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

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg

Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, took part in the 8th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg, from 5 to 7 July. He addressed the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions.

Duve Welcomes the Release of Grigory Pasko

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media welcomed the release of Grigory Pasko, a Russian journalist arrested in November 1997 and charged with spying. Duve intervened on behalf

of Pasko in 1998. Speaking at the OSCE Permanent Council on 22 July, Duve noted that “Pasko had covered ecological problems of the Pacific fleet. His publications contributed considerably to a public debate on issues of major concern such as nuclear safety and the ecological effects of toxic waste.”

Continued Focus on Kosovo

Freimut Duve continued to provide assistance on issues of media development to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. His Office worked closely with OSCE participating States, other international organisations and NGOs on ensuring support to civil society in Serbia, especially the independent media.

Assessment Visits to Romania and Moldova

At the OSCE Permanent Council on 22 July Freimut Duve spoke at length regarding his Office’s first assessment visits to Romania and Moldova. In the view of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Romania had a flourishing and extensive media environment characterised by large numbers of print and electronic media, and government officials extremely aware of the need to maintain and enhance relations with the media. The government, besides abolishing the VAT tax, a policy Duve encouraged of all governments, was working hard to get its message across and cultivate a positive relationship. Romania had come a long way in the past ten years, noted Duve.

During its last session the Romanian Parliament rejected, in a close vote, a proposal to change several provisions of its Penal Code which criminalized libel and insult offences, and risked imprisonment for journalists who had been convicted of these offences. A similar bill would soon be introduced in Parliament. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media hoped for positive results and encouraged Romania to provide an example for other countries in ameliorating long-standing provisions in the Criminal Code which threaten journalists with imprisonment for exercising their rights to freedom of expression.

Mr. Duve's Office also conducted an assessment visit to Moldova in early July. In general, the current media situation in Moldova was not much different from the other countries in the region. Speaking at the OSCE Permanent Council, Duve noted: "Once again we run into the same problems: lack of funding, lack of serious independent journalism, extensive domination of the media by political parties. Basically, the absolute majority of media are politically affiliated. However, because of a proliferation of political groups, most views are represented in the media. There is a genuine public debate in Moldova on issues of concern to the country, including the reintegration of the Transnistrian region. Journalists were refreshingly open and frank in their conversations with my Office. The Foreign Ministry representatives underlined that a lack of resources hampered freedom of expression and that often government structures pressured media through libel suits, a phenomenon not uncommon to the region."

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media underlined that in a country that was in the process of transition, there would be problems: certain sensi-

tivities might be over-looked and a tendency existed among many government officials to be overly intrusive in media matters. Fully appreciating the need for the development of the state language, Duve asked the authorities in Moldova to avoid for the time being any strict regulation of the Moldovan and Russian percentage of broadcast programming.

The assessment trip also included a visit to the Transnistrian region to specifically look into the case of Novaya Gazeta, a local newspaper harassed by the regional authorities. This case was raised at the 18 June OSCE Permanent Council. As to the background of this case, Duve said that his Office was informed in Tiraspol that the situation in Transnistria "was unique" and that in some other regional conflicts in the OSCE region, for example, one could not even have a conversation on freedom of expression and that in those places these issues "were usually resolved with two shots behind a barn." As the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media pointed out: "We were told that the people of Transnistria were in the process of building a "homogeneous democratic society," however a so-called 'fifth column' was undermining the unity of the people. The editors of Novaya Gazeta were specifically named as being part of the 'fifth column' and by their work "promoted reintegration with Moldova and this position is not supported by the people". That is why the Ministry of State Security had to take action against Novaya Gazeta. The fact that recently a local court issued a decision in favour of Novaya Gazeta was mostly brushed off."

Duve stressed that such attitudes towards one of the basic human rights did not promote democracy nor a climate of reconciliation. He also underlined that on the other hand, it would be in the spirit of rec-

onciliation and reintegration if journalists from Transnistria could be regularly accredited with the Moldovan parliament.

Azerbaijani Journalist Pardoned by the President

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media expressed his appreciation to President Aliyev for his grant of amnesty to journalist Fuad Qahramanli on 10 July. Freimut Duve visited Mr. Qahramanli during his trip to Baku in February, and had called for Qahramanli's release.

However, speaking at the OSCE Permanent Council, Duve also expressed his concern over recent developments regarding free journalism. He communicated with the Foreign Minister over these issues in considerable detail. His concerns revolved, first, around a series of recent reports of violence directed against media. The President himself seemed to have criticised these acts of violence, and Duve urged the Government to initiate investigations. Second, Duve highlighted several times the lack of licenses for independent television stations. While most of them are broadcasting without licenses, with the consent of the government, he understood that, three months before scheduled municipal elections, the head of the frequency commission in the Ministry of Communications had apparently sent letters to local prosecutors demanding that they shut down any station broadcasting without a license. In fact, several weeks ago, one such provincial station was closed by the police.

Duve also expressed his concern regarding the new media law which had passed its first reading in the Azerbaijani Parliament. This law seemed to place undue restrictions on the media and to limit access to information.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Seminar on Military Doctrine for Bosnia and Herzegovina

From 24 to 31 August 1999, a seminar on the security and defence doctrine for Bosnia and Herzegovina will take place in Vienna. It has been organised by the Austrian National Defence Academy and the OSCE Office of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dayton Peace Accords).

The seminar will be attended by about 20 political and military representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, among them one Minister and one Deputy Minister of Defence and the two Chiefs of Defence Staff of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. The participants will meet the Austrian Federal Minister of Defence, Dr. Fasslabend, and the Austrian Chief of Defence Staff, General Majcen, as well as the Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, Ambassador Kai Eide.

The goal of the seminar is to allow the representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina to benefit from Austrian experiences, regarding both national defence and international operations (humanitarian, peace support, disaster relief operations, Partnership for Peace programmes, etc.). These experiences can support the definition and organisation of a state dimension of security and defence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The most important issues that will be discussed by the participants will be the principles guiding co-operation and co-ordination between Bosnia and Herzegovina and its entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska).

PRESS PROFILE



Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 3 July

“Because the first OSCE Mission in Kosovo failed, the second one has to succeed. The first members of the new Mission have already arrived in Kosovo. Besides institutions-building, the tasks of the Mission, which will have between 500 and 700 members, will consist of training of judges, police officers and administrative officials, monitoring of human rights as well as organizing elections. The OSCE has earned valuable experience in these fields in Bosnia which will be of great help in Kosovo.”

Der Standard, 19 July

“In fact, the OSCE, which started its (unarmed) Kosovo Mission in the fall of 1998, hardly had a chance, and this not only because of the Serbian politics of escalation. When the Mission was evacuated immediately before the war, its planned strength of 2,000 had not yet been reached – at that time it was 1,400 –, because the participating states had found themselves unable to field the needed number of Mission members. The best thing to do would be to conceal the financial resources of the OSCE behind a curtain of silence, especially in comparison with military budgets. The OSCE has literally been left to starve by the governments of the OSCE countries. This inequality in resources makes all experiments in civilian conflict management meaningless.”

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