



National Minorities

It would be interesting to study the origins of the numerous national minorities in the countries of Central and Southern Europe, which represent a phenomenon that is not known in other parts of the continent and the world, where they are referred to either as nationalities, regional cultures or simply as immigrants. It is my perception that the very fact of having accepted, including constitutionally, the existence of minorities and the forging of specific and expansive rights which is by no means inexpensive for them, involves in itself a democratic surplus for the country in question since it adds complexity to the task of governing the nation. The number of minorities in Croatia is 22. According to the 2000 Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and the Rights of Ethnic and National Communities or Minorities in the Republic of Croatia, Croatia has the following national minorities: Albanian, Austrian, Bosniak, Bulgarian, Montenegrin, Czech, Hungarian, Macedonian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenian, Slovak, Slovenian, Serb, Italian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vlach and Jewish. Their total number is 331,383 which constitutes 7.47% of the country's population (2001 Census). It includes former citizens of other independent countries, close-by or distant, who settled in Croatia at some point in their history. It is important to remember that the concept of a national minority must necessarily be dynamic, because its number could grow with the arrival of new inhabitants, or decrease, owing to absolute integration of some of them in the future. It is also necessary to clearly delineate the differences between minorities and immigrants. In fact, there are already numerous foreign residents in Croatia who do not have a minority status. In the future, with Croatia's accession to the European Union, it is not to be discounted that this number of immigrants will increase, as is the case in other European countries where the average immigrant population reaches 15%. It is probably only a matter of time when "new populations" will demand and expect their cultural, social and political rights, social and political rights, just as minorities do. Most of the 22 minorities in Croatia settled in the country throughout the centuries in which the configuration and borders were different: Italy and Germany did not exist as unified states, the Austro-Hungarian Empire encompassed a great space in Central Europe and the Balkans changed its political configuration repeatedly. As a consequence, minorities such as the Italians, Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, etc, are well-settled in the country and their level of well-being and assimilation is comfortably above average. At present, on the contrary, there are two minorities in Croatia which are facing difficulties in the exercise of their values. One

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L-R: HOM, Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, Ratko Gajica, Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities and Antun Palarić, State Secretary of the Central State Administration Office speaking at the roundtable on promoting minority employment.

of them is the Roma minority and its problems are akin to those they have in other European countries and the rest of the world: poverty, marginalization, illiteracy, racial discrimination etc. The other one in question is the Serb minority and its main difficulty stems from the very fact of becoming a new minority which did not exist before the 1991-95 war, since the Croatians of Serb ethnicity were well integrated in the Socialist Republic of Croatia within the Yugoslav Federation, in the same way that those of Croat ethnicity were integrated in the Socialist Republic of Serbia. The agony of the horrors of war naturally did not help the integration of Serbs into their newly independent Croatian mother country and facilitate the reconciliation with their neighbours, which is an indispensable process, but also a process that requires years of peaceful coexistence, mutual effort and prosperity, aside from the effective operation of the courts. At present, it is important that firm action is undertaken on the part of the State, through the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities, as well as on the part of the Ministry of Education and citizens, so that separate schools and the preservation of diverse languages and cultures serves as an advantage as opposed to a disadvantage. In order that the cultural diversity enriches and does not disrupt the coexistence within the country, the State needs to include all its citizens in the realization of tasks and objectives in all professions and offices throughout the country. In the same manner in which marvellous islands enrich the country, although their maintenance is expensive (transport costs, communications, electrification, water supply etc.) national minorities must be one of the keys of Croatia's wealth from a cultural and social aspect, as well as from the political and economic point of view.

Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, Head of Mission

Calendar

6 November - HOM meets with Minister of Culture Božo Biškupić on media legislation.
7-8 November - HOM, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Pjer Šimunović and Spanish Ambassador Manuel Salazar on a field visit to Knin, Split and Zadar.
9 November - Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria and Chairman-in-Office of OSCE, Solomon Passy visits MHQ.
13 November - Plenary meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
16-17 November - HOM attends Igman Initiative summit in Miločer, Montenegro.
21 November - visit of a group of Spanish journalists to MHQ.
27 November - Roundtable on promoting minority employment, organized by the Mission and the Central State Administration Office.
30 November - HOM attends Conference titled "Croatian challenges in judicial reform and fight against corruption and organized crime" in Zagreb.
6 December - Extended Senior Staff Meeting at MHQ.
9 December - OSCE stand on Zagreb's main square on the occasion of International Day of Human Rights.
11 December - Round Table on Voters List in Croatian Parliament organized by the Mission and the Central State Administration Office.
12 December - Final Event of the Children Together Project in Vukovar and Osijek.
14 December - President of the Constitutional Court, Petar Klarić, at the MHQ.
14 December - Meeting of the Working Group on War Crimes between OSCE, EC Del, ICTY and the Justice Ministry, Chief State Prosecutor, Supreme Court, as well as the Interior Ministry.
15 December - MHQ Christmas Lunch.

Activities

Croatian Press Council established

From 27-29 October, in the premises of the International Centre for Education of Journalists (ICEJ) in Opatija, a three-day conference on the establishment of the Croatian Press Council (HVZM) was held. Journalists, media experts, representatives of publishers and journalists' associations and unions adopted a declaration defining the Council as an autonomous, national and self-regulatory institution. "It is fundamental to provide for the Croatian Press Council independence from state authorities and protection from commercial or any other individual interests," reads the Declaration. All the participants agreed that the Council's most important task is to promote credibility, quality and the reputation of the public media and to serve the public interest. The Council will adopt a code of ethics and define professional and ethical standards. In the future, this body will also settle complaints by mediating between the damaged party and the editorial board. If necessary, it could also pass penalties, but only of a moral nature. Croatian Journalist's Association (HND) President, Dragutin Lučić-Luce supported the establishment of the Council, adding that the media scene in Croatia needs a body which would help the affirmation of the public media. "The cases of xenophobia, social intolerance and hate speech which still appear in domestic media have to be carefully monitored and publicly condemned and the media have to reach higher level of discipline in that context," he stated. He also expressed hope that the Council will contribute in this process by developing its influence and its

public strength. Croatian Radio and Television (HRT) Director General, Mirko Galić, also gave his support to this initiative, saying that, although the media freedom in Croatia is pretty high, this freedom still needs to be organized in some way. "The freedom of the public word is sometimes misused and in that case it jeopardizes other people's liberty to protect their interests," he said. In his opinion, the main goal for this body is to prevent voluntarism in all its activities and to reach the highest level of objectivity, by staying out of reach for the authorities. He added that the establishment of the institution of the Media Ombudsman would also be necessary. The main initiators of establishment of the Croatian Press Council are the Croatian Journalists' Association (HND), the Association of Press Publishers, the Association of Radio and Newspapers (HURIN) and the Croatian Helsinki Committee (HHO) Media Council.

Petra Martić, Public Information Assistant



Declaration on establishment of Croatian Press Council was adopted at the conference in Opatija, 27-29 October 2006.

Fourth Igman Initiative meeting

Between 16 to 17 November, OSCE Mission Head, Ambassador Fuentes, attended a Presidential session of the Igman Initiative, along with his OSCE counterparts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. This was the 14th annual meeting on developing good neighbourly relations between signatory countries to the Dayton Agreement. The summit held for the first time in newly independent Montenegro, in the coastal resort of Miločer, is the fourth at the Head of State level following the previous three held in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Igman Initiative was launched by a group of 100 NGOs in Zagreb in 2000 and was sponsored by 'Freedom House'. The President of Croatia, Stjepan Mesić, the President of Montenegro, Filip Vujanović and the Serbian representative of the rotating Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nebojsa Radmanović were present at the meeting. President Milan Tadić of Serbia was unable to attend, but signed the joint presidential statement. In the presidential statement, entitled 'The Countries of the Dayton Agreement on the Path to the EU – Results and Obstacles', the four Heads of State made pledges on a wide range of issues; including facilitating refugee return, integrating national minorities, co-operating with the ICTY and supporting the efficient prosecution of domestic war crimes. Specifically on the issue of refugees the statement reads: "We will not allow individuals or institutions at a lower level to actively or passively undermine the political will at the highest level to enable the return of refugees and displaced people." The four Presidents also announced their commitment to facing the truth about events from the past and strengthening their respective country's capacity to adjust legislation, practice and institutions with those of the European Union and other bodies.

Enrique Horcajada, Head of Political Unit

Goodbye to Belgium, Welcome to Spain

The end of 2006 approaches and with it the Ministerial Council in Brussels and the end of the Belgian Chairmanship-in-Office, marked by its initial directives on the development of transport, the fight against organized crime in all its various forms and the eradication of corruption, three unfortunately deficient fields in some OSCE participating States and, in particular, in those States in which the Organization has its Missions.

With regard to the Balkans, the Belgian Chairmanship has focused its interest on two principal problems of the region, the issue of refugees who have not returned to their countries of origin, and the monitoring of war crime trials: throughout 2006, Belgium has encouraged the resolution of both issues through the "Sarajevo" and "Palić" processes.

The Belgian Chairmanship has also paid careful attention to Croatia. Together we managed to determine the level of progress with regard to mandate-related issues. Belgium understood and valued the negotiating Platform created by the Mission in Zagreb that finally resulted in the closure in December 2006 of four out of the six Units included in the mandate signed between Croatia and the OSCE in 1996.

Belgium passes the baton to Spain who will preside over the OSCE in 2007. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miguel Angel Moratinos, and his closest associates Bernardino Leon, Jose Pons, Jose Angel Lopez Jorin, Fernando de Galainena, Enrique Asorey and Jose Luis Lozano in Madrid, as well as Carlos Sanchez de Boado and his team from the Spanish Delegation in Vienna, are names which will become very well-known to the great OSCE family as of January.

The comprehensive issues on which the Spanish Chairmanship will focus will be those which presently preoccupy the European public opinion, that is to say:

- Migrations. They are perfectly acceptable and beneficial for the host country and the country of origin if they take place in an orderly and legal manner. They can be disastrous if they occur outside these channels, and we must take into consideration that in a quarter of a century, immigrants will represent 20% of the overall EU population.
- The fight against terrorism, a plague that changed the significance of 9/11 and struck hard at countries like the US, United Kingdom, Spain, Turkey, etc.
- The energy challenge; European dependence on supply from outside its boundaries.
- Environment, climate change, global warming, the use of hydro resources.
- The Alliance of Civilizations, oriented towards surpassing the atmosphere of distrust and lack of understanding developed in particular in the wake of the attack against the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in September 2001.
- The development of the Southern Mediterranean, one of the more radical contact points between the North and the South, together with the Rio Grande and the 38th parallel in Korea.



Plural society is one of the 2007 Spanish Chairmanship's mottos.

- Relations with Asia, an emerging continent loaded with great vitality. Aside from dealing with these significant and more global issues, regarding South East Europe, the OSCE presided over by Spain will have to continue resolving issues which have remained unfinished in 2006, fundamentally, with regard to the Balkans, the development of the "Sarajevo" and "Palić" processes.

As far as Croatia is concerned, and once the closure of the Political, Media, Police and Civil Society units has taken place, Spain will need to actively encourage progress in the fulfilment of Croatia's commitments regarding the issue of refugees, by realising their return and reintegration into their country of origin - mainly Croatia - or their assimilation into the host country - primarily Serbia.

It will also be necessary to complete the judicial reform and to provide all possible support to the Hague Tribunal and the local courts conducive to fair and correct conduct of war crime trials.

On a more global scale, Spain needs to pay attention to the frozen conflicts and the OSCE reform initiated during the previous and the current Chairmanships. Indeed, what Spain needs to try to do is to give impetus to the Organization both in its daily operations, as well as its general orientation that maintains the force and prestige gained in the 20th century while obtaining the end of the Cold War and the beginning of European reunification.

Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, Head of Mission

Activities

The Platform • The Platform • The Platform •



Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and close associates speak with the OSCE Mission to Croatia Head, Ambassador Jorge Fuentes on fulfillment of the remaining issues of the Mission's mandate, 8 September 2006. (Photo by: Minister of Culture, Božo Biškupić, who also attended the meeting.)



The Croatian Government's obligations towards ensuring rule of law are discussed at a monthly Plenary Session, at the Justice Ministry.



International Community representatives and Development Minister Božidar Kalmeta at one of monthly Plenary Sessions discussing outstanding issues related to refugee return.



Focus of the roundtable held in Parliament, on 27 November 2006, was the promotion of minority employment.



HOM, PM Ivo Sanader, Parliament Speaker Vladimir Šeks, State Administration Office Head Antun Palarić, Foreign Minister Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and Justice Minister Ana Lovrin at the Roundtable on Financing of Political Parties, Parliament, Zagreb, 11 September 2006.



R&I Unit at a working meeting for Principal's meeting with the Development Minister Božidar Kalmeta, 6 December 2006.

The Platform • The Platform • The Platform

Within the framework of the OSCE mechanisms and activities, as well as other regional and sub-regional organisations and initiatives, the Republic of Croatia actively cooperates with neighbouring countries and countries in the region on many issues of common concern and interest. Issues such as: organised crime and corruption, transport, infrastructure, energy, economic development and free trade. Regional cooperation, together with integration into the EU and NATO, are the pillars of Croatia's foreign policy. It is our sincere hope that our Chairmanship of the South East European Cooperation Process, as well as of the Quadrilateral in 2006/2007, will provide a positive contribution to the development of regional cooperation as well as realization of the ambitions of countries of the region to join Euro-Atlantic integrations, based on individual achievement. Over the past number of years, the Republic of Croatia has proven its commitment to cooperating with its neighbors in two politically sensitive areas; refugee related issues through the Sarajevo Declaration and interstate judicial cooperation on war crimes prosecutions through the Palić Process. It is these two final chapters of the post-war legacy that we hope to put behind us and resolve most expeditiously.

Last but not least, I would be remiss if I did not comment on the OSCE field operations. Croatia has benefited from excellent cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Croatia and its Head, Ambassador Fuentes. We have jointly established an innovative consultative mechanism, known as the "Platform", which includes monthly meetings at the ministerial level aimed at facilitating the systematic monitoring of progress in all areas covered by the Mission's mandate, leading to the consequent closure of several of its chapters. This will enable us to better focus our joint efforts on accomplishing the remaining goals of implementing housing care programs for returnees and reform of the judiciary. We are convinced that in 2007, this cooperation will bring positive results in the two remaining areas, thus leading to a successful accomplishment of the Mission's mandate.

Statement by
Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović
Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
of the Republic of Croatia
at the 14th Ministerial Council of the OSCE in
Brussels, 4 – 5 December 2006.



Resolution of the remaining five Mission's mandate related issues, are discussed at Plenary Sessions at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

What is the Platform

Early in 2006, Prime Minister Sanader and the Head of Mission met to explore ways to advance the fulfilment of the Mission's mandate. A special negotiating framework between the Mission and the main stakeholders in the Government was thus conceived, called the Platform composed of three legs, namely three separate monthly plenary sessions.

The first leg consisted of the ongoing monthly meetings with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Tourism and Development dealing with refugee return.

The second leg was a regular meeting with the Ministry of Justice, Chief State Attorney, and representatives of the judiciary to address issues related to the prosecution of war crimes.

The third leg consisted of meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the resolution of the remaining five-mandate related issues. Under these three Plenaries, there are dozens of monthly working groups, seminars, roundtables, etc that provide substance to the platform.



One of many media trainings supported by the Mission and organized by the International Center for Education of Journalists, 22 November 2006.



Sharing best practice and improving internal communication was a focus of Workshop for Community Policing Coordinators, Bjelolasica, 3-5 October 2006.



Members of Civil Society Working Group discuss topics related to the further progress of legal and institutional framework for civil society, 18 November 2006.

Closure of Four Units

In the 2006 Review (also known as the “Mid-Term Review”) submitted to the incumbent Belgian Chairmanship on 9 June, the Mission provided a detailed description of the situation in all areas of the current Mandate. This was the first report of this kind since one carried out in mid-2001. Earlier in the year, in January, Prime Minister Sanader and the Head of Mission met to explore ways to advance the fulfillment of the Mission’s mandate. Complementing the already existing monthly meetings with Minister Kalmeta dealing with refugee return, the Platform was subsequently conceived; it was to be composed of three legs, namely three separate monthly plenary sessions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Tourism and Development. During the course of the regular Foreign Ministry plenary meetings (the first being held on 23 February), the Mission identified specific objectives to be met by the Croatian authorities in the mandate, supported by Mission activities where appropriate. Accompanying working groups at the expert level closely monitored and promoted their implementation. [In the May/June 2006 edition of *The Courier*, a separate article was devoted to “The Platform.”] It is this negotiating platform, primarily through the work of the MFA plenary meetings that has triggered a positive impulse to implementing the mandate in the four programmatic chapters of Political, Media, Police and Civil Society and Project Management (CSPM). After the first three MFA plenary meetings, when the time came to draft the 2006 Review, the Mission concluded that progress related to Croatia’s fulfillment of international commitments and obligations had been sufficiently advanced in these four specific programmatic areas to warrant their closure by the end of 2006. However, the two remaining Units dealing with Return and Integration of Refugees and Rule of Law, though continuing to witness improvements, will require further progress in specifically defined areas before mandate objectives can be considered met. The respective plenary meetings dealing with these outstanding issues will continue in 2007. In the four mandate areas mentioned above, with few exceptions, the objectives identified have been met or are in the process of completion. Remaining problems have been reduced to comparatively few in number, and are clearly identified; they also appear to be subject to irreversible processes and subject to organizational and institutional conditionality which assures that positive reform should continue. Implementation of outstanding issues will, nonetheless, be appropriately monitored by the Mission, using remaining staff and resources. In this regard, the remaining network of Field Offices ensures that the Mission will continue to be well informed and be able to monitor these programmatic areas at the local level. The Mission has determined that Croatian authorities and their institutions are now sufficiently strong to develop these programmatic areas further. Due to OSCE support, many NGOs are now vigorous and capable of carrying out a “watch dog” role. Increasingly, their activities are accepted by the Croatian authorities with whom they have signed Charters of Cooperation. Other international organizations, specifically the European Commission and the Council of Europe are also equipped to continue monitoring and assisting in the resolution of residual issues in these programmatic areas;



Mission's Headquarters located in Zagreb.

At the budget hearing in Vienna on 31 October, discussions with the delegations surrounding the Mission’s 2007 Programme Outline (PO) clearly highlighted the closure of these four programmatic Units. At the hearing, “EU/Finland welcomed the closure of four Units by the end of 2006”, with similar if not stronger sentiments expressed along the same lines by the US Delegation. The overriding observation by other interested participating States highlighted the focus the Mission will place in 2007 on Rule of Law issues (including war crime trial monitoring), refugee return and minority rights.

Looking ahead

The closure of these four units reflects the level of development in Croatia in the respective areas to a point where Croatian institutions and organizations can continue reforms and developments with minimal or no international involvement. Contact with the government, the public and with OSCE Institutions with regard to three of the four units will necessitate the retention in the HQ of a small number of advisory and reporting staff. Additionally, a limited number of technical project management staff will be assigned to the Rule of Law and Return and Integration units in 2007 to develop, implement and monitor projects in those two programmatic areas. By the end of 2006, the Mission will i) close the Police Unit, eliminating all remaining field positions, with a police advisor remaining in the Head of Mission’s office to provide advice and liaison to the police; ii) close the Media unit, eliminating all remaining field positions with a press spokesperson with support staff attached to the Head of Mission’s office; iii) close all remaining political positions in the field and retain a political reporting and advisory team in the Head of Mission’s office; iv) close the Civil Society and Project Management Unit. Management of projects in the areas of RoL and R&I in connection with other mandate issues, will be carried out by staff in those units and by the Head of Mission’s unit. In conclusion, the changes and transformation in the structure and personnel of the HQ and FOs as a result of the conclusion of these four areas will not affect the continuation of self-sustainable and democratic progress in these areas in Croatia, which will be ensured through a proper functioning of a system of internal checks and balances.

Enrique Horcajada, Head of Political Unit
and
Mark Fawcett, Head of the Executive Office

Civil Society Project Management (CSPM) Unit

The Project Management (PM) team of 15 trained national staff professionals and assistants plus the Head of Unit manages 74 projects generated by the Mission, local partners and NGOs for one million in 2006. Engaged in project development, implementation, monitoring, financial reporting and evaluation, the team helps move Croatia forward in the six mandated areas. Projects involve technical assistance, the added value of the field presence, setting the Mission apart from traditional donors by tailoring implementation to provide a certain quality assurance. The team also develops Civil Society (CS) through a set of civil society and good governance projects, the Unit's strategic objectives. This encourages NGO networking, capacity building of institutions and cooperation with local and regional authorities to increase transparency, accountability and citizen participation. CSPM staff further strengthened democratic practices by organizing exchange visits of officials from Croatia's different regions. This year CSPM Unit and the MFA co-chaired six meetings of 11 experts from governmental, non-governmental and international organizations, constituting the civil society working group, one pillar of the negotiation platform. Five issue-areas were put forward as benchmarks in January as a basis for joint



The Mission's Civil Society Project Management Team

action in (1) the legal and institutional framework (2) a national strategy (3) charters on cooperation (4) NGO support infrastructure and (5) support to the national Local Democracy Academy. The remaining issue (4) was taken on by the Government Office for Associations, National Foundation for CS Development and Council for CS. Strengthening these three institutions was an integral part of the Unit's work, which has come full circle. Projects moved both the mandate and the plenary CS agenda forward 'in the field' and across regions. This effort by CSPM team gained the Mission credibility and contributed to more sustainable work of the sector, leaving behind new partnerships and networks. CSPM Unit

Charters on co-operation between local authorities and NGOs

Since 2004 significant progress has been made with Charters on Cooperation between Local Governments and NGOs, now signed by more than 30 local and regional authorities, establishing clear and binding frameworks and defining rights, obligations and procedures between NGO's and authorities in the spirit of implementing the Programme on Cooperation between the Government and the Non-profit Sector. Encouraging steps have recently been taken to establish institutional structures and organizational networks to support the development of civil society through partnership between local self-government and local citizens' associations in many parts of the country. These new forms of cooperation provide a structure for the sectors to jointly develop local communities. As part of the Mission's effort to encourage the signing of Charters on Cooperation, a series of promotional events took place across the country in war-affected areas in November and December, including signing of Charters and completing the drafting process. A scheme of best practice sharing was facilitated by OSCE Field Offices through exchange visits of local authorities to different parts of the country to encourage citizen participation, transparency and accountability, i.e. the values set out in Charters. This approach of facilitating Croatian authorities to take the lead in endorsing their own best practices met with some degree of success and was presented to Missions in the region as a tool to promote democratization on the ground. A Regional Forum in Slavonia and more than 30 county and local NGO co-ordinations evolved as part of Charter development processes, and a new CARDS programme to promote civil society-government partnership will build on OSCE and other IO activities. The role of OSCE was regarded by local counterparts as having been essential in supporting Charter processes across the country, a message underscored by the Head of Mission and the Prime Minister as a civil society priority in the wider framework of the OSCE plenary meetings.

Good Governance

From its very beginning the OSCE Mission to Croatia placed a lot of emphasis on support in the area of good governance. In the beginning, this was done through small, grassroots initiatives, as the whole system of the local self-government was relatively new: Croatia faced a major reform of the local self-government in 1993, while Eastern Croatia was peacefully reintegrated as late as in 1997. Croatia has more than 570 cities and municipalities and a significant number are staffed by officials unable to adequately perform the assigned tasks. At the next stage, Mission, particularly through its field office in Sisak, started to conduct municipal councilors training in 2004. This project aims at further institution-building support, and advancing the efficiency of the decision making process. In addition, an increased efficiency in the functioning of a local self-government unit would facilitate steady establishment of trust, inter-ethnic tolerance and introduction of good governance concept, as key factors contributing to a stable, transparent and secure society. Due to needs and number of municipalities this activity is still ongoing. In 2006, with the establishment of the Academy for Local Democracy, a central institution that will provide education and training to local government officials and employees, the Mission has proposed and Central State Administration Office (CSAO) has accepted, an NGO-run project designed to increase the Office's training capacity. The project gathered a working group of around 20 members, including professors, educational institutions, the CSAO, distinguished representatives from local authorities across the country, as well as NGO experts who developed a model of curriculum on the subject of civil society and local authorities. Future co-operation, more specifically a proposal to involve the CSAO in Mission-supported 'good governance' co-ordination meetings, has also been welcomed. The Mission finds it encouraging that the CSAO is actively pursuing co-operation with the civil society sector, finally recognizing the significant contribution NGO experts can make to the reform of local self-government.

Photo gallery



New singing duo - Foreign Affairs Minister and HOM - was born during the trip to Istria, organized by the Foreign Affairs Ministry, 29 September - 1 October 2006. (Photo by: Cristina Fuentes)



Presidents of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro attended the Igman Initiative summit titled "Countries of the Dayton Accord on the road to the EU", Miločer in Montenegro, 16-17 Nov. 2006.



Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria and Chairman-in-Office of OSCE, Solomon Passy visits MHQ, 9 November 2006.



The extended senior staff meeting at MHQ, 6 December 2006.



Roundtable on voters registration lists, organized by the Mission, Central State Administration Office and GONG was held in Parliament on 11 December 2006.



"Children together" - ceremony awarding the best works of the art and literary workshops, which aimed at fostering closer ties between children from ethnically diverse backgrounds, Vukovar 12 December 2006.