

OSCE

NEWSLETTER

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

El Mundo



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José Luis López de Lacalle (left) and Georgiy Gongadze, who have been awarded the OSCE PA Prize for Journalism and Democracy – after their deaths

Murdered reporters share 2001 OSCE PA prize for journalism and democracy

Posthumous award signals international trend towards “censorship by killing”

Two investigative journalists, who were both murdered during the course of careers spent supporting human rights and democratic values, have been jointly awarded this year’s Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Prize for Journalism and Democracy. The decision to split the prize and, for the first time, to award it posthumously was taken during the Bureau meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), held in Copenhagen on 19 and 20 April.

The prize will be received in the names of the Spanish journalist, José Luis López de Lacalle, and the Ukrainian journalist, Georgiy Gongadze. Both were the victims of unrelated killings, and both had made enemies in the course of their professional work.

In recommending the two journalists for the award, the Chairman of the OSCE PA General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, the German parliamentarian Gert Weisskirchen, said:

“These were outstanding journalists who tried to further the values of the OSCE by intervening in conflicts and secretive political environments through their writing. By awarding this prize, we will be sending a signal against the unfortunate growing international trend towards censorship by threats and killings.”

The prize, amounting to \$20,000, is awarded annually by the OSCE PA to journalists who, through their work, have promoted the OSCE’s principles regard-

ing human rights, democracy and the unimpeded flow of information.

Mr. López de Lacalle was a columnist and member of the regional editorial board of the Spanish daily newspaper, *El Mundo*, as well as being a founding member of the *Ermua Forum*. He openly opposed the use of violence for political ends and strongly advocated peaceful dialogue in the struggle between Basque separatists and the Spanish State. His weekly column, *Fog and Light*, is believed to have earned him the enmity of Basque extremists.

On 7 May 2000, Mr. López de Lacalle was killed by the Basque extremist group, *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA), in the small town of Andoain. He had refused offers of protection from the Basque autonomous police.

The other posthumous recipient of the award, Georgiy Gongadze, was the editor of *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, an on-line publication founded in April 2000, which has a reputation of being generally critical of the current administration in Kyiv. Mr. Gongadze had a long and distinguished career in investigative journalism, uncovering corruption in a closed political environment.

Mr. Gongadze had also worked as news director of *Radio Continent* and co-hosted a television programme. Although he worked closely with the Ukrainian Opposition, he was said to have no political affiliation.

On 16 September 2000, Georgiy Gongadze disappeared. A protracted dis-

pute ensued over the investigation into the circumstances of his disappearance. This was compounded by initial confusion over the identification of a headless body that was found near Kyiv on 2 November. Subsequent DNA testing by scientists from two countries – Russia and the United States – has confirmed that the body discovered was that of Mr. Gongadze. This month, Ukrainian prosecutors informed his relatives of the findings and intend to hand over the body to them for burial.

Protection for journalists

On several occasions, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, voiced his concern over the fate of the journalist, and on 8 February, he issued a report to the OSCE Permanent Council on the Gongadze case, urging the authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into the murder.

“Those in power must realize that protection of investigative journalists is protecting their country’s future,” said Mr. Duve.

Almost a year earlier, on 2 December 1999, Mr. Gongadze had been a participant in an OSCE round table on the use of libel law in Ukraine, which the Representative organized in Kyiv, with the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine and the Council of Europe. On that occasion, the journalist had read out a statement signed by a large number of his colleagues regarding the state of the media in the country.

The Prize for Journalism and Democracy was established by the OSCE PA in 1996, largely on the initiative of Mr. Duve (then a German *Bundestag* and OSCE PA member). Its purpose is to promote the principles of free journalism, as laid down in the OSCE Budapest Declaration of 1994.

The first recipient was the Polish journalist, Adam Michnik, followed by the group *Reporters sans frontières* in 1997. The British journalist, Timothy Garton Ash, received the prize in 1998, and Christiane Amanpour of CNN in 1999, while last year the award went to the Russian journalist, Andrei Babitsky.

The 2001 Prize for Journalism and Democracy will be presented on the opening day of the OSCE PA’s Tenth Annual Session, which will take place in Paris from 6 to 10 July.

The Prize is supported by the dedicated and generous assistance of the following donors: Bertelsmann AG, Germany; Bonnier Group, Sweden; Den Berling-ske Fond, Denmark; the George and Thelma Paraskevaides Foundation, Cyprus; Southam Inc., Canada; and Shipsted ASA, Norway.

For more details of the award, contact OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Radhusstræde 1, 1466 København K, Denmark; tel.: (+45) 33 37 80 40 fax: (+45) 33 37 80 30 e-mail: osce@oscepa.dk website: www.osce.org/pa/

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Balkans incidents remain major source of concern to Chairman-in-Office

Praise for conduct of elections in Montenegro but setbacks seen elsewhere

Concern about serious developments affecting the situation in several countries of south-eastern Europe was voiced repeatedly last month by the OSCE's Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana. The brightest light on the horizon was the favourable response of the international community to elections held in Montenegro, one of the two constituent republics of Yugoslavia.

Visiting the former Yugo-slav Republic of Macedonia on 5 April, accompanied by Ambassador Robert Frowick, his Personal Representative, the CiO reaffirmed the support of the Organization for the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

He encouraged both ethnic communities, the Albanians and the Macedonians, as well as the authorities and civil society, to rely on the support and assistance of the recently-strengthened OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje.

"I am impressed by the resolve shown by both Macedonia and the ethnic Albanian political parties to start a comprehensive dialogue on the issues that are causing tensions in the country", said Mr. Geoana. "The OSCE strongly supports this dialogue, and we stand ready to assist in every way possible. The OSCE remains fully committed to co-ordinating with the EU and NATO in order to assist and facilitate a productive political dialogue."

However, an upsurge in violence shortly before the end of the month again brought condemnation by the Romanian Foreign Minister, who strongly attacked the fatal assault, reportedly by ethnic Albanian extremists, against Macedonian security troops operating near Tetovo on 28 April.

"Those who have again acted to destabilize the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by resorting to armed force have made a grave error. Their

necessary to overcome the current situation", added Mr. Geoana.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was not the only Balkan country causing concern to the OSCE during April. On 7 April, the Chairman again had to strongly condemn organized violence, in this instance being used against international representatives and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) law enforcement officials, in Mostar and other parts of the country.

The violence flared up after action by the authorities to investigate allegations of corruption and illegal activities at a bank, the Herzegovacka Banka. The operation involved the bank headquarters in Mostar and several branch offices throughout the country. During the action in Mostar, a riot injured several people and throughout the day extremists organized riots in various parts of the country, which unfortunately resulted in several injuries among local civilians, police, soldiers and other international officials. International property and offices were targeted specifically for vandalism or destruction.

The CiO received assurances from the OSCE Mission to BiH that proper measures had been taken to ensure full protection of the personnel deployed in the area.

He issued a call to all local authorities and political leaders in BiH to assist in ensuring that security was restored and



Chairman-in-Office Geoana gives interviews to journalists

actions will inevitably prove to be profoundly counterproductive", he said.

Offer of support

"The OSCE calls upon all concerned to restore stability promptly in order to carry forward the promising political dialogue already underway. The OSCE firmly supports the courageous efforts of those political leaders presently seeking to close ranks in a new coalition government capable of making the decisions

that all violence ceased. Those instigating the attacks would be held responsible for their behaviour and for any harm inflicted upon individuals, local or international. He also demanded that all those who had violated the law be prosecuted.

In mid-April, the CiO's attention was turned towards Kosovo, where the shooting of a Russian KFOR soldier brought instant condemnation: "I am horrified by this cowardly murder of an international peacekeeper. Nothing justifies such an attack against someone who is working in Kosovo as part of a mission to heal the wounds of war."

Heightening the level of tension in the province, a bomb explosion occurred a week later in the centre of Pristina, accompanied by a shooting at one of Organization's field offices. The Roma-

nian Foreign Minister firmly condemned the terrorist attacks in Kosovo, while urging the international community to remain determined in its quest to build a multi-ethnic society.

"Bombs and shootings will neither intimidate us nor prevent us from continuing our important work in rebuilding this shattered province for all those who desire to live in peace," he said. At the same time, he called on all political leaders in the province also to condemn extremism and terrorism and to demonstrate the necessary restraint in order to avoid escalating the violence and tension.

Montenegro Elections

Almost the only welcome news during the period reflected the satisfactory conduct of parliamentary elections on 22

April in Montenegro, one of the two constituents of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Foreign Minister Geoana said he was pleased with the assessment by the International Election Observation Mission that the elections were generally in line with international commitments for democratic elections.

Describing the elections as being of the utmost importance for the overall stability, not only of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but of the whole region as well, he said, "I would encourage the new government that will be formed as a result of these elections to enter into a dialogue as soon as possible with the Federal Government in Belgrade, according to democratic principles, on an agreed lasting re-definition of the relations within the Federal Republic."

Putting the 'J' into the Joint Interim Administrative Structure

By Robert Schupp

In the field of post-conflict rehabilitation, Kosovo's Department of Democratic Governance and Civil Society may be unique, since rather than establishing democratic structures, it tries instead to inculcate democratic values.

Some 20 departments were set up under the agreement of 15 December 1999 to establish a Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS) for Kosovo. Most of them mirror traditional European ministries. However, the Department of Democratic Governance and Civil Society (DDGCS) is different. It aims to ensure that the values it represents – human rights, equal opportunity and democratic governance – are incorporated into the interim government arrangements for Kosovo.

The DDGCS is the only JIAS department directly supported by the OSCE. Established in July 2000, it operates

under the supervision of Daan Everts, the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK). It is charged with observing the work of the whole JIAS structure and advising the other departments on questions of human rights and governance practices.

According to Mr. Everts, the Department was developed as a way to incorporate key democratic values into Kosovo's emerging governmental structures. "All too often," he said, "human rights and other such values are left solely to outside bodies."

As with all the JIAS departments, the DDGCS is run by co-heads – one inter-

national expert and one local expert – who also serve as members of what has been referred to as the "Council of Ministers," a bi-weekly meeting between all JIAS co-heads and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General. The Kosovar Co-Head, Dr. Vjosa Dobruna, a paediatrician and human rights activist, has received numerous international awards over the past ten years for her health-care and human rights work in Kosovo, while her OSCE counterpart, Robert Pulver, has worked in both Kosovo and Albania on rule of law and democratization issues.

In addition to its array of responsi-

bilities, the DDGCS is making strides to create a department that will be staffed mainly by the people of Kosovo and to more heavily involve Kosovo's civil society in law and policy formulation. The DDGCS staff call this task "putting the J (that is, joint) into JIAS." But with salaries relatively low for Kosovar staff, many work more out of dedication to the principles the Department upholds than for the remuneration.

Since most of the department's functions are shared between OSCE mission members and professional Kosovo counterparts of all ethnicities, the DDGCS is often cited as a model of joint Kosovo-international administration. According to Dr. Dobruna, teamwork accounts for that. "There clearly is a helpful collaboration among the experts in the Department," she said.

In order to enable it to cover all aspects of its wide-ranging task, the DDGCS is composed of three specialized bureaux dealing with human rights, equal opportunities and democratic governance, as well as two offices.

The Human Rights Policy Bureau advises other JIAS departments on human rights issues and has helped draft regulations on such subjects as trafficking and domestic violence. The Bureau also helps the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) develop legislation



OMIK Department of Democratic Governance and Civil Society co-heads, Robert Pulver (left) and Vjosa Dobruna

and practices that are in accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards.

The Equal Opportunity Bureau strives to ensure that all groups of society – including women, minorities and disabled persons – enjoy equal opportunities in all aspects of public life, from equal access to employment and job advancement, to education, housing, and public services.

Party registration

A third unit, the Democratic Governance Bureau, is mandated to encourage transparency, accountability, public participation and other principles of good governance in the JIAS and in Kosovo's emerging self-governing structures. For instance, last year this Bureau advised the UNMIK on the applications by political parties for registration as legal entities. The effort resulted in the registra-

tion of 25 parties in Kosovo to take part in the OSCE-run October 2000 Municipal Elections. The DDGCS is now assuming full responsibility for the registration of political parties in Kosovo.

According to the Department's international Co-head, Robert Pulver, the main aims of the Department's two offices – the NGO Office and the Media Office – are to facilitate links between NGOs and Kosovo's governing structures and to strive to ensure a continued positive environment for media development.

"The role of the NGO Office is to promote a healthy NGO sector, which is a pre-requisite for the development of democracy," said Mr. Pulver. "Meanwhile, the Media Office can help formulate government media policy with an eye towards protecting the independence of the media."

Given already impressive results of the DDGCS, the Department is prepared to be equally active in establishing democratic governance policies and practices in Kosovo's emerging self-governing structures, after Kosovo-wide elections are held. So rather than remaining an anomaly, the DDGCS may well provide other countries with a model for incorporating the values it represents into a governing structure.

Robert Schupp is Senior Public Affairs Officer, OMIK.

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NEWSLETTER

OSCE supports new Stability Pact initiative for south-eastern Europe

The ‘mobile.culture.container’ aims to encourage young people to assess the future as the project travels through Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia

By Alexander Nitzsche

The citizens of a number of towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia will this summer be experiencing an unusual initiative. For several weeks, their towns will host a rather unconventional project – the ‘mobile.culture.container’. Between June and October, a 20-metre-wide circular tent town, resembling a circus big top, will welcome people from Tuzla, Osijek and Cacak who want to become engaged in a wide variety of cultural and artistic activities.

The innovative project, which was put together by the OSCE-supported foundation ‘Defence of our Future’ with basic financing provided by Germany, is intended as a creative venue, a place for ideas and a place for continuity and relaxation.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, who chairs the foundation and who conceived the project, emphasizes however that the initiative, which will run for two years, is more than just a stage for artistic performances:

“People in south-eastern Europe are asking what future they will have in Europe. With this project, we want to give them a concrete vision”, he said.

Opposing “hate speech”

Mr. Duve sees an important part of his OSCE mandate as being to combat the use of hate speech in the media: “With this in mind, we want to address the issue of hate speech, starting already at the secondary school level”, he explains.



Freimut Duve, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, at last month’s presentation of the project

“In the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, we explicitly want to work against any kind of group identification and instead promote the idea of a citizen’s identification”.

So the main target audience of the project is young people living in south-eastern Europe. Several tools and methods have been designed to achieve the aims of the culture container, which is to engage youth in discussion about their future in Europe – their personal future and the future of their war-torn countries.

“Although this is not some sort of youth project, we want to convey to them the message that Brussels is not just a cash-point, but that it took two wars to make the

European Union possible”, said Mr. Duve.

The project is designed to give older schoolchildren a place to come to reflect, or to produce their own newspapers. It will be a place for exhibitions, dancing, listening to music, writing, reading, chatting and perhaps also a theatre, a video laboratory or a café.

The 12 team members, most of whom come from south-eastern Europe themselves, will start their journey in Vienna, where the containers have been assembled. But they will make their debut on 6 June in Tuzla, in the north of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Once on the road, their tasks will be to organize debates and discussions between the young people, give advice on the use of the Internet and the video lab, take care of press and public relations work and assist the project director.

The team will spend a few weeks in each town, though the schedule is not inflexible: they might also stop at other nearby towns, if invited by the mayor. In order to operate efficiently, the project requires some local assistance at every stopover. Not only are electricity and water connections needed, but also, more importantly contacts with the local schools, teachers, parents, town councils, press representatives and artists.

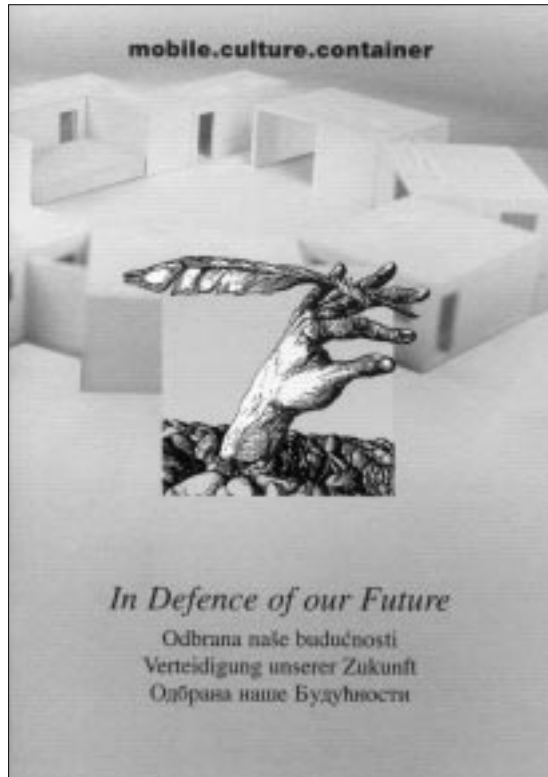
“This project has been a very personal idea”, said Mr. Duve. “There can be no prosperity without peace. There can be no peace without overcoming hatred. This is why we have designed the culture container for the young people in the post-war towns of the Balkans”.

Some very basic questions lie at the

heart of the idea. What does the personal future of young people in this region look like? How can lasting peaceful co-existence be achieved? How can the region move closer to the united Europe? What are the prospects in a world which is at present undergoing a technical revolution? And what skills will people need in the future?

On a typical day, the project will employ a range of approaches to try and answer these questions. In the mornings, school classes will be invited to discuss the future, and will be given the opportunity to produce their own school newspapers as platforms for the free expression of their own thoughts and opinions. The Internet café will be open during the communal discussions and during the afternoons, so that the young users can document their own work and explore the Internet to carry out research for their newspapers or to establish contact with other institutions, Internet cafés or school projects around the world.

The Internet will also be used to



Cover page of the project's brochure

maintain contact with the project team when the container is “hibernating” in Vienna during the winter months.

The team will be constantly on the lookout for directors, actors, choreographers and dancers, as well as musi-

cians and bands who want to perform on the small stage.

It is planned that the containers themselves, initially painted white, will be transformed over the months into an art exhibition on wheels. The project team will invite artists not only to exhibit their works, but also to decorate the outside of the 15 containers and thus to give everyone a taste of the rich artistic talent in south-eastern Europe.

The project co-ordinators hope that the ‘mobile.culture.container’ will also leave something behind in the towns it is visiting. “We hope that – if people are interested and the hardware can be acquired by the culture container – local Internet cafés and the planned school newspapers can be left in the towns”, said Mr. Duve. However, these local projects would have to be kept alive

and run independently at the operators’ own expense.

Alexander Nitzsche is Public Information Officer (Kosovo) in the OSCE Secretariat

OSCE and Council of Europe hold annual high-level meeting in Bucharest

Co-operation between the two bodies stressed as “2+2” becomes “3+3”

Key issues of mutual concern were the focus of the annual “2+2” meeting between high-level officials from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe (CoE), held in Bucharest on 11 April. The host, Romania’s Foreign Minister, Mircea Geoana, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, welcomed the Chairman of the CoE Committee of Ministers, Latvian

Foreign Minister Indulis Berzins, as well as the Secretaries General of the two organizations, Jan Kubis and Walter Schwimmer.

A “trilateral approach” was introduced by the participation of the Presidents of the respective Parliamentary Assemblies, Adrian Severin and Lord Russell-Johnston.

The participants concentrated on issues such as the evolution of the situa-

tion in south-eastern Europe. They expressed their concern over an alarming increase in violence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo and southern Serbia. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office described concrete steps aimed at easing tensions in that area, including active consultation with other international organizations regarding the specific contributions they might make.

The Council of Europe spoke about receiving the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's membership application and all the participants stressed their full support for the country's efforts to become a truly democratic European State. They also expressed the hope that the present parliamentary and governmental majority in Bosnia and Herzegovina would speed up the process of democratic transition and accelerate that country's accession to the Council.

Dialogue on Chechnya

On Chechnya, the representatives of both organizations reiterated their strong view that the Chechen conflict could be settled only through political dialogue. They expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the OSCE Assistance Group had not, so far, been able to return to Chechnya. They discussed the activities of the

CoE experts in the Office of the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Human Rights in the Chechen Republic, as well as the recent visit by the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya and its plans.

The prospects for positive developments in Nagorno-Karabakh were also discussed, and the participants welcomed as a sign of progress the recent Key West round of consultations.

On the situation in the eastern part of the Republic of Moldova, which remains "frozen", the participants expressed their regret that no significant progress had been made on the issue of the withdrawal of Russian troops and equipment. They expressed concern over the steady deterioration in the economic and social situation in the country. During the discussions it was agreed that while the OSCE should take the lead in matters pertain-

ing to a settlement of the political situation, the Council would consider further assistance to Moldova, including a recent joint support programme with the European Commission for judicial reform, the formation of democratic institutions and civil society.

With regard to Belarus, the participants expressed concern with respect to the further deterioration in the political climate. They urged the Government to encourage the development of a strong civil society and to fulfil the necessary conditions for free and fair presidential elections.

The participants emphasized the importance they attach to concrete cooperation between the two organizations with the aim of helping to build a Europe without dividing lines, where the rule of law, democracy and human rights are fully respected.

Discussion on minority education intensifies in Estonia

By Johanna Helin

The OSCE Mission to Estonia supported the dialogue on educational models and school reforms with two events in March. It organized a round table for education experts on multicultural school models and assisted in the organization of a major conference on minority education in Estonia

In Estonia, as in other countries, education is one of the keys to successful integration of society. Over recent years, the OSCE Mission to Estonia has organized and supported various seminars and conferences on education issues in order to facilitate the dialogue and flow of information on various teaching models.

The discussion has intensified this spring with discussions in the Parliament's Cultural Committee and public debates organized by the Mission and the

Presidential Round Table on National Minorities.

On 19 March, the Mission, together with the Estonian Ministry of Education and the Danish Cultural Institute, jointly organized a round table on multilingual and multicultural education models. Discussion focused on how to create an educational environment where pupils can develop and preserve their national identity and learn to respect that of others. This event, financed by the German Federal Foreign Office, was a follow-up to

the trip of Estonian education experts, organized by the Mission in November 2000.

A number of recommendations came out of the round table, including practical ways to improve communications between people working in the education sector, how to promote the ideal of multiculturalism in school, how to include parents in the decision-making process, and how best to develop teacher training and the teaching of Estonian in kindergartens. Specific recommendations



Representatives from the Russian Teachers Association listen to presentations on education models for minorities

focused on the support of education carried out by minority associations.

These recommendations were a good preparation for the education conference, which took place two weeks later, on 30 March in Tallinn, on the Estonian education system and national minorities. This one-day event was organized by the Presidential Roundtable on National Minorities, again with financial assistance from Germany, and drew more than 200 participants.

The Minister of Population Affairs,

Ms. Katrin Saks, spoke on education as part of the state integration programme, under which education accounts for the major share of activities and money.

The Head of the Parliamentary Cultural Committee, Mart Meri, and fellow committee member, Mihhail Stalnuhhin offered different views on the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools. This law is probably the most disputed in the field of education, with its stipulation that, in the academic year 2007/8, those upper-secondary schools using

Russian as the language of instruction should start teaching 60 per cent of the subjects in Estonian.

While optimists believe this to be possible in most schools in Estonia, the planned reforms have been criticized by others, who either deem it impossible to implement the law in time or who oppose the idea of bilingual education altogether. There also continues to be widespread dissatisfaction with the deadline among teachers in Russian schools.

Panel discussions were held for researchers discussing their views on education reforms as well as for teachers, officials from the Ministry of Education, experts in teacher training, minority representatives and experts working in foreign language training projects.

For the Mission, it was particularly positive to note that all these sensitive and complicated issues were debated in a friendly and constructive manner, despite clear differences of opinion. Events like these offer the potential to bring the theory and practice of education and integration together in a useful and positive way.

Johanna Helin is Press, Social and Education Adviser in the OSCE Mission to Estonia

Journal of Conflict, Security and Development

A new publication has appeared that examines the relationship between security policy and development and is dedicated to bridging related disciplines, offering a forum for the cross-fertilization of ideas and perspectives.

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News from the field

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

OSCE signs MoU on defence budget audit with BiH Federation

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the Government of the Federation of BiH have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) concerning the organization, planning and execution of an audit of the budget of the Federation's Ministry of Defence for 2000.

"We welcome this progressive step toward greater transparency and accountability", said the outgoing OSCE Head of Mission, Robert Barry. "This move by the Federation Government demonstrates its understanding that the people have a right to know what it is doing with their money".

The main aim of the agreed audit is to create transparency in defence expenditures and help identify where further controls and improved oversight mechanisms are required. The Mission expects that the enhanced transparency will ensure good governance and greater parliamentary control in defence matters, increase military accountability to civilian authorities, and further the process of confidence- and security-building, as laid down in the Dayton Peace Accords.

Mission to BiH holds seminar on gender equality in legislatures

The OSCE Mission to BiH organized a seminar, 'Strategic steps towards gender equality', on 6 April focusing on gender equality in the country's Parliament and the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA). The seminar looked at the formation, operations and future work of the committees established in

BiH to achieve gender equality in these two legislative bodies.

"The establishment of the Committees to Establish Gender Equality in the BiH Parliament and the RSNA signals that the country's legislative bodies are serious about putting women's issues on the agenda. We are looking forward to the establishment of a similar committee in the Federation's House of Representatives," said Sverre Johan Kvale, Director of the Mission's Democratization department.

Among the participants were former and current female parliamentarians from state and entity parliament, as well as members of the BiH Parliament and the RSNA Equality Committees.

OSCE launches assistance project to facilitate judicial reforms in the FRY

At a workshop held on 9 April, the Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) launched an assistance programme aimed at facilitating judicial reforms in the country. The programme will include support for structural changes in the courts and the prosecutor's office, the eventual establishment of institutions such as an Ombudsman's office, training activities and prison reform.

"Structural reforms take time and require funds. The international community is ready and willing to support the Yugoslav authorities in utilizing resources in the best possible manner in order to promote rule of law and improve human rights", said Stefano Sannino, Head of the FRY Mission. The discussions held at the workshop, which was jointly orga-

nized by the Mission, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe, focussed on the identification of needs and priorities for the reform and strengthening of an independent judiciary in Yugoslavia. The workshop was attended by prominent government officials, high-ranking judges and prosecutors, and prominent representatives of non-governmental organizations and the international community.

New OMIK radio programme "With us, for us" goes on air

On 15 April, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo's new weekly radio programme "Me ne, per ne" ("With us, for us") went on the air on more than 20 Kosovo radio stations. The 15-minute show, which is co-produced by the OSCE and the Swiss-based NGO, Media Action International, features stories about OMIK's daily work in the province. It examines the Mission's efforts to promote democracy, respect for human rights and support for the rule of law.

Topics will include the OSCE's role in police and prison-officer training, the judicial system, as well as trafficking and property rights. The programme will also look at issues such as women in politics, civil service training, the rights and responsibilities of parties and politicians, working with NGOs, media training and elections.

Events held in Kosovo mark International Roma Day

On the occasion of International Roma Day, 8 April, the OMIK sponsored

several related events in the Prizren municipality. The events, which comprised dance, music and a theatre performance in the Romani language, were staged by local Roma non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The theatre performance was the first play in this language staged in Kosovo since 1998. The event marked the 30th anniversary of the International Roma Day celebration in Kosovo, and

provided an important opportunity to celebrate Roma identity and culture and to raise awareness of their rights in the province. The OMIK supports Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the province, co-ordinating its efforts with the ODIHR.

KPSS holds mini-marathon for “Cops for Kids” project

The OMIK-run Kosovo Police Service School (KPSS), together with the United Arab Emirates contingent to the Nato-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) based in Vushtrri/Vucitrn, held a 10-kilometre “Run for Kosovo” on 28 April. The



Kosovo police on last month’s fun run through Vushtrri/Vucitrn

money raised by this initiative was donated to the “Cops for Kids” project, established by the KPSS to raise funds for children’s projects and orphanages in Kosovo. The cross-country run, which was open to everyone, started at the KPSS premises and finished at the school with an awards ceremony, at which the Director of the Police School and the Commander of the KFOR contingent officiated.

Abkhaz and Ossetian drug specialists renew contacts at OSCE conference

After several years of intermittent contacts, Abkhaz and Ossetian drug spe-

cialists met for the first time on 17 April at a regional conference on narcotics organized by the OSCE Mission to Georgia and the Georgian ‘Research Institute on Addiction’ in Tbilisi. The physicians familiarized themselves with the work of narcotic drugs services in the regions, supplementary treatment methods for drug addicts, and the current situation regarding drug expertise. They

also looked at ways to promote further co-operation.

“A sustainable and dynamic process can only be ushered in if such initiatives become part of comprehensive and long-term projects,” said Jean-Michel Lacombe, Head of the OSCE’s Mission to Georgia.

The conference was part of the OSCE’s efforts to assemble various professions across the former conflict lines in Georgia. Previously, the Mission has organized training programmes for journalists in the South Caucasus and a training seminar for Abkhaz, Georgian and Ossetian narcotics experts in Warsaw.

PRESS PROFILE
Excerpts from international media coverage of the OSCE and its activities over recent weeks.

BELARUS

Reuters, 17 April

‘The OSCE on Tuesday rejected

Belarusian allegations that its training of local monitors for this year’s presidential election amounted to recruiting spies. In the latest stand-off between the OSCE and Belarusian authorities, the group rejected criticism by (the) head of the Belarusian KGB about the international assistance given to train monitors. “The programmes were, and continue to be, transparent and have nothing to do with espionage or political militancy,” the OSCE’s Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus said in a statement.’

Reuters, 26 April

‘A senior official of the OSCE on Tuesday cancelled a visit to Belarus because its Government refused to issue a visa to an aide. Western countries and some international institutions have expressed concern about the lack of democratic reform and poor human rights situation in Belarus, a former Soviet state. The OSCE said its Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, had been due to meet independent and state-employed jour-



nalists on a visit to Belarus on April 25 but had cancelled the visit after a senior aide was denied a visa. "He cannot accept a severe interference in the independence of his OSCE institution by a participating State," the 55-nation security and human rights watchdog said in a statement.'

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 27 April

'The relations between Belarus and the OSCE have been tense for a long time. The OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Minsk, which is headed by the German Hans-Georg Wieck, is constantly being verbally attacked by the Belarusian authorities. In January, President Lukashenko called the 14,000 election observers who are being trained by the OSCE mission for the upcoming elections an "army of fighters and collaborators" paid by the West, whereby he used the word boyeviky, which in Russia is reserved for Chechen rebels. The chairman of the Belarusian KGB has threatened the organizers of the election observation with expulsion.'

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Reuters, 19 April

'A change in the rules for last year's election in Bosnia by the OSCE encouraged radical Croats in their push for self-rule, a European parliamentarian said on Thursday. Doris Pack, chairman of the European Parliament's Foreign Policy Committee, was the first public figure to openly criticise the OSCE rules, which Croat nationalists cite as a major motive for launching a self-rule campaign last month. "I would like to stress clearly that election rules for the last general elections were not fully democratic and I hope something like that will not happen again," Pack, on a three-day visit to Bosnia, said after meeting Bosnian officials... OSCE officials in Bosnia argue

the rule was necessary to fill a vacuum in that part of the law and reject the allegation that it encouraged self-rule.'

KOSOVO

Reuters, 18 April

'A car bomb exploded near the Yugoslav government office in the Kosovo provincial capital Pristina on Wednesday and NATO peacekeepers said one man was killed and four people were wounded... "We condemn yet another act of senseless terrorism in Kosovo," the OSCE, part of the post-war international mission running the separatist province, said in a statement. "Violence like this aims to undo any progress we make. But we will not be deterred. We are working to build a democratic future for Kosovo where there is no place for terror and butchery," OSCE Ambassador Daan Everts said in a statement.'

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 6 April

'The OSCE has been present in Macedonia since 1992. Although the mission has been unable to prevent the spillover of violence from Kosovo, it has according to its own assessment been able to function as an early-warning system. The OSCE mission members are above all monitoring the minority situation, the human rights situation and the media landscape... The international management of the Macedonian crisis is firmly in the hands of the EU. NATO is playing the dominant role in Kosovo. On the other hand, little is heard or seen of the OSCE, which has had a field mission in Macedonia since 1992. The OSCE is concentrating on the long-term process of stabilization of society and it has achieved quite a lot in that regard... perhaps the biggest success of the OSCE has

been in the educational field. After many years of confrontation about higher education in the Albanian language, further aggravated by the establishment of a "para-university" in Tetovo, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoep, managed in endless talks to achieve a compromise. Now, the private South East European University will open in Tetovo in October, with the teaching language being Albanian, but also English. The project is being financed by Western governments.'

TALKS ON NAGORNO-KARABAKH

The New York Times, 3 April

'Secretary of State Colin L. Powell opened peace talks here today on a long-standing conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, hoping that the sun-splashed setting of this resort and the presence of America's principal diplomat would help nudge the presidents of the two countries toward a settlement. The talks have sputtered on and off under the auspices of the OSCE. The conflict is over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave that is in Azerbaijan, but occupied by Armenia.'

Financial Times, 4 April

'The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan began talks in the US yesterday in what is being hailed as an historic opportunity to resolve a 13-year-old territorial dispute that has claimed at least 25,000 lives. Robert Kocharyan, President of Armenia, and Azerbaijan's President Haydar Aliyev met in Key West, Florida, for US-brokered talks to try to settle their claims on the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh... Details on the talks are vague, however. The Minsk Group, the body set up by the OSCE to supervise the talks, has imposed a media blackout. Nevertheless officials familiar

with the thrust of the negotiations say the two sides are close to agreement.'

Le Monde, 5 April

'The mediation is being conducted by the US, Russia and France, members of "the Minsk Group" of the OSCE, which has been tasked with finding a resolution of the conflict. This is the seventh meeting of the two presidents.'

Reuters, 6 April

'The presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia made excellent progress in peace talks over the Nagorno-Karabakh region which ended in Florida on Friday, international mediators said. "We are much closer to peace than we were before this conference," said Ambassador Jean-Jacques Gaillarde, who headed the French mediating team at the talks in Key West. "We achieved more progress here than we had expected," said Special Ambassador Carey Cavanaugh, who headed the US delegation to the talks. The mediators said a new round of talks would be held in Geneva in June... The US, French and Russian mediators, acting under the auspices of

the OSCE, are preparing "a new comprehensive proposal for peace" to be discussed in Geneva, Cavanaugh said.'

Izvestiya, 9 April

'Over the course of four days in southern Florida, the leaders of the Trans-caucasian republics discussed the possibilities for resolving the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. They were assisted in devising a formula for a mutually acceptable compromise by delegations of diplomats and experts from Russia, the US and France – countries belonging to the so-called Minsk Group of the OSCE.'

TRANSJNIESTRIA

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 5 April

'The new President (of Moldova) stated that an agreement with the separatist Transdnestrian region was one of his priorities. This Slav-dominated region separated from Moldova in 1992; the war between the Moldovan Army and the Russian-backed separatists has claimed around 1,500 lives. Woronin

welcomed the fact that the political leaders of Transdnestria had refused to participate in a meeting on a resolution of the Transdnestrian problem which had been planned by the OSCE in the Slovakian capital Bratislava. Transdnestria was an internal matter of Moldova's. The OSCE has for years been trying to resolve the conflict.'

STABILITY PACT FOR SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

Financial Times, 6 April

'Efforts to reconstruct and democratise the Balkans through the Stability Pact set up by the international community after the Kosovo war need a thorough rethink to become more effective, an independent report says... The report's thinking appears to coincide with that of many policymakers in the region. Mircea Geoana, Foreign Minister of Romania, present holder of the rotating chairmanship of the OSCE, the pact's parent body, said: "We should try to learn why (the pact) didn't work properly, try to rationalize the pact and... give it some strategic direction."'

UPDATE from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

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ELECTIONS **Observer team issues favourable view of Montenegro elections**
An International Election Observation Mission concluded the 22 April parliamentary elections in Montenegro, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was generally in line with international commitments for democratic elections. The observers noted that the election was

marked by the participation of a broad spectrum of political parties, a pluralistic media landscape and exceptional transparency regarding public access to voter registers and the publication of detailed voting results at all levels. The legislative framework provided a largely adequate basis for democratic elections.

The positive assessment confirms the progress observed during last year's local by-elections, though some short-

comings remain. Problems noted by the international observers include the control of election mandates by political parties and a small number of errors in the voter register, as well as a few instances of political pressure on state employees, police involvement in campaign activities and inflammatory rhetoric. The print media also failed to observe the pre-election campaign silence.

The Mission stressed that, given the



overall strength of the electoral framework, the few remaining problems could not impact significantly on the results of the election. The international mission was a joint undertaking of the ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. An ODIHR long-term observation mission, headed by Nikolai Vulchanov, was established on 28 March. On election day, 174 short-term observers were deployed, including 40 parliamentarians from the OSCE PA and the PACE.

Needs assessment mission to Bulgaria

In view of the parliamentary elections in Bulgaria scheduled to take place on 17 June, the ODIHR sent a needs assessment mission to Sofia from 9 to 12 April. On the basis of the mission's recommendations, the ODIHR will establish an observation mission for the elections and request eight long-term observers and 80 short-term observers from the OSCE participating States, in addition to seven core staff at headquarters.

Election observation report issued

The ODIHR has released a final report on the parliamentary elections in Moldova (25 February 2001). The report is available on the ODIHR website at www.osce.org/odihr/elecprep.htm



ODIHR promotes legal reform efforts in Yugoslavia

The ODIHR, together with the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and the Council of Europe, held a workshop on judicial reform on 9 April in Belgrade. The workshop reviewed reform efforts and plans

regarding the judiciary and prosecuting service. Priorities were discussed with the participating government representatives, judges, prosecutors, NGOs and international organizations.

It was concluded that reforms have just begun and that serious efforts need to be undertaken quickly, in particular with regard to the salary situation, reform of the personnel structure, re-organization of workload and training. Rapid progress is needed simultaneously in all these fields, in order to prepare the legal system for the numerous challenges ahead, which might include the prosecution of war crimes, corruption, new forms of criminality and adjudication of restitution and compensation cases.

Round table held in Belgrade on trafficking in human beings

A round table discussion assessing the situation of trafficking in human beings in Yugoslavia was initiated and organized by the ODIHR and the OSCE Mission to the FRY in Belgrade on 19 and 20 April. High-level officials from both national and federal levels opened the event, at which key government and NGO actors involved in the fight against trafficking met for the first time to begin a dialogue on developing a national anti-trafficking strategy.

The participants convened in working groups on prevention, protection and prosecution where they identified needs and set priorities for taking further measures. The Government in particular, but also non-governmental and international representatives, showed a strong commitment to the development of a co-ordinated strategy against trafficking.

It was agreed that the OSCE Mission would take on the lead co-ordinating role for national anti-trafficking activities. The Mission will also organize the next meeting of all key actors on this issue at the beginning of May.

Romanian NGOs set up anti-trafficking network

An anti-trafficking network was created by Romanian NGOs at a round table meeting organized by the ODIHR in Sinaia from 4 to 7 April. Seven NGOs, active in combatting trafficking, from different regions of Romania participated in the meeting. The network will provide the framework for the development of recommendations for a national plan of action for Romania, which is currently under preparation. The participating organizations identified co-operation, information sharing and developing a common strategy as priorities.

Stability Pact anti-trafficking group holds meeting in Vienna

The Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings under the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, chaired by Helga Konrad (ODIHR), met on 27 April in Vienna for the second time since its establishment last year. In his opening remarks, ODIHR Director Gerard Stoudmann called on all actors to support the Anti-Trafficking Task Force and to strengthen it by providing additional human and financial resources. He stressed that the credibility of the Task Force was heavily dependent on sufficient funding of its Action Plan.

Minister Konrad provided information about the achievements and future plans of the Task Force. During the subsequent discussions, Austria confirmed its commitment to support the Task Force and to fund the establishment of a shelter for trafficking victims in Belgrade.

Regularly updated information on the activities of the ODIHR-chaired Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings is now available online. The new website can be visited at

www.stabilitypact.org/antitrafficking-taskforce

ODIHR supports creation of an anti-trafficking infoline in Minsk

With support from the ODIHR, an anti-trafficking information telephone line (infoline) has been established in Minsk by the Belarusian YWCA as part of its joint project with the Polish NGO, La Strada. In its first three months of operation, the infoline received 437 calls and responded to questions about migration, work and marriage abroad. While the infoline has been set up specifically as a counselling service to raise awareness and prevent trafficking, its providers also knew that they might eventually receive calls asking for assistance for victims of trafficking.

By way of illustration, the infoline recently received such a call from the boyfriend of a Belarusian woman who had been taken by traffickers to Bosnia and Herzegovina and forced into prostitution. She had managed to use a client's mobile phone to call her boyfriend in Belarus and to give him information about her situation and location in Bosnia. Her boyfriend was able to turn to the infoline for help and the YWCA took steps to follow up on the case. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Minsk was informed and shared the information with the IOM in Bosnia, which co-ordinated with local actors to find the victim and three other women trafficked from Belarus. In early April, all four women were voluntarily repatriated to Belarus.

Anti-trafficking hotline network established in Ukraine

The ODIHR and the Office of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine have supported the Ukraine branch of the NGO, La Strada, in establishing a nation-

wide anti-trafficking hotline network in the country. The network currently consists of six NGOs: apart from La Strada Ukraine in Kyiv, there are five grassroots NGOs in Kharkiv, Lugansk, Odessa, Sevastopol and Ternopil. Another regional NGO, located in Uzhorod, will soon be added to the network.

After receiving training from La Strada, the regional NGOs now provide hotline consultations, collect data on trafficking in human beings, conduct public awareness raising activities and co-ordinate with state authorities and other local NGOs to provide direct social, medical and legal assistance for trafficked women.

ODIHR assists with reform of Ukrainian registration system

From 29 March to 2 April, the ODIHR launched the first phase of a new project which is aimed at assisting with



Participants in the ODIHR workshop on the new Tajik Criminal Procedural Code discuss drafts of the law

the reform of the registration system in Ukraine. A group of Ukrainian officials involved in registration system reform visited Denmark to get acquainted with the Danish model of population registration. On the Danish side, the visit was organized by the National Association of Local Authorities, one of the ODIHR's most prominent partners for registration

system reform projects in the 'Newly Independent States'.

The Ukrainian officials visited the Copenhagen Registration Office, the Copenhagen Metropolitan Police Office, the Data Protection Agency, the National Social Appeals Board under the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Danish Immigration Service. As a result of the visit, participants identified key elements of the Danish system that could serve as a model for the new Ukrainian legislation.

Tajikistan is helped to meet its international human rights obligations

On April 18, the ODIHR held a round table meeting on reporting to the UN Human Rights Committee, jointly organized with the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan and the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan. The country committed itself to prepare a state report on its compliance

with this main UN human rights treaty when it ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1993.

The participants from a number of ministries, the Supreme and the Constitutional Court as well as representatives from non-governmental and international organizations stressed the need to create an open and transparent reporting process. An ODIHR expert, Professor Bill Bowring,

pointed out that a proper reporting process had to be used to identify existing shortcomings in compliance with the treaty. The reporting process should also help to develop policies to improve the human rights situation in Tajikistan.

The meeting, which was part of a broader legislative reform project agreed in a memorandum of understanding

between Tajikistan and the OSCE, concluded with a recommendation to the Government to create an inter-ministerial co-ordination commission for the preparation of the state report. This commission should have the authority to obtain all the necessary information for the report.

The meeting was preceded by a two-day workshop on the draft Criminal Procedural Code with the working group on the elaboration of this new law. Two ODIHR experts, Professor Bill Bowring and Professor Stefan Trechsel, participated in these discussions and provided information about the requirements under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

ROMA AND SINTI



First regional meeting under ODIHR programme on Roma of SE Europe

A first regional meeting under the new joint ODIHR-Council of Europe programme on Roma of south-eastern Europe (see *OSCE Newsletter April 2001 page 19*) was held in Bucharest from 28 to 30 April. The meeting, organized by the ODIHR in co-operation with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Roma Centre for Social Interventions and Studies, brought together participants from governments and international organizations, as well as a large

number of elected Roma representatives and NGO activists from all across south-eastern Europe.

One major outcome of the meeting was to establish the basis for a 'Roma-to-Roma' process of self-organization at regional level: Roma NGOs, experienced in Roma rights advocacy, will assist in the establishment of Roma civic associations in communities which are particularly affected by crisis or post-crisis situations. Target groups include Roma in the Presevo valley (Serbia), young Roma and Roma women in Prizren (Kosovo), Roma refugees and internally displaced persons in other parts of Yugoslavia, and Roma refugees who have returned to Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

NEWS from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

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Concern over former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia remains a high priority for HCNM

Reflecting the importance of current developments, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoel, made three more visits to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia last month. From 1 to 4 April, he was in Skopje to organize a meeting on the coming census in Macedonia. It was later agreed that the census would be postponed until the first half of October.

During his visit, the High Commissioner also discussed the preamble of the country's Constitution, an issue that remains contentious with ethnic Albanians who object to the formulation of 'Macedonia as a national state of the Macedonian people'. The use of Albanian in official communications and decentralization in line with the new law

on local self-government were also raised.

A priority in resolving the current tensions is inter-ethnic dialogue. Mr. van der Stoel discussed various possible ways forward in this regard with Foreign Minister Srgjan Kerim and his OSCE colleagues. It was also the main topic of discussion with Arben Xhaferi, leader of the main Albanian party, the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). Both men agreed on the need for substantive dialogue to begin as soon as possible, in order to avert a new wave of violence and the further polarization of Macedonian society.

Mr. van der Stoel returned to the country a week later, on 10 and 11 April, to follow up on these issues and to oversee the start of ground-levelling for the future campus of the South Eastern European University (SEE). He also attended the first meeting of the university's

donors' committee, which received the financial and activity reports for January to March 2001. The new institution, which will provide education in Albanian and Macedonian as well as English and other "world languages", is scheduled to open its doors in October 2001 (see report in *OSCE Newsletter, March 2001, page 17*).

From 24 to 26 April, Mr. van der Stoel was again in Skopje, where he was received by President Boris Trajkovski and met with a number of interlocutors to see what steps could be taken to build confidence between the Albanian and Macedonian communities. Some progress was noted, for example on renewed support for the University project, agreement on Channel 3 of Macedonian television providing programmes in minority languages, and the decision to postpone the census. However, underlying

tensions remain and Mr. van der Stoel again stressed the urgent need for comprehensive inter-ethnic dialogue.

High Commissioner addresses meetings in Zagreb and Baden

On 5 April, Mr. van der Stoel addressed a conference in Zagreb organized by the Serb National Council. The event was

designed to give support to the draft Constitutional Law on Minorities. The High Commissioner's office has been involved in assisting in the drafting of the law.

From 6 to 8 April, the High Commissioner's office organized a conference in Baden, Austria. The conference, organized in co-operation with the Ministry of National and Ethnic Communities of the

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, brought together minority representatives and government officials dealing with minority issues. The aim was to better acquaint them with international standards regarding the protection of persons belonging to national minorities. On the margin of the conference, a fruitful discussion took place on the draft law on minorities in the FRY.

REPORT from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

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PA President Severin finds wide support in Central Asia for planned forum

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Adrian Severin travelled to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan between 26 April and 5 May, as part of his first visit to the Central Asian region. During the trip, he had meetings with the three Heads of State, the Speakers of Parliament, as well as other high-level representatives from the executive and legislative branches. He

also met representatives of political parties, media outlets and non-governmental organizations.

Mr. Severin's goal was to assess the situation in the region and to encourage the Central Asian countries to play a more active role in the OSCE in general and in the OSCE PA in particular. With this in mind, he was pleased to find broad support among all his interlocutors for a new initiative of the OSCE PA – the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum.

Such a body, which would bring together the parliaments from the Central Asian States as well as those from



Left: PA Vice President Tiit Kabin, (MP Estonia), who led the OSCE Election Observation Mission in Montenegro

other OSCE participating States and from the Partners for Co-operation, would seek to address issues related to Central Asia through regional co-operation, a topic high on Mr. Severin's agenda.

"The obstacles to a more effective regional approach in the fight against poverty, terrorism and religious extremism are in themselves a source of instability which must be addressed properly," he said during the visit.

Encouraging the Central Asian parliaments to play a more active role in addressing domestic and regional problems, Mr. Severin also urged the author-

ities to work more closely together and to increase mutual trust with the OSCE centres in their countries, in an effort to improve the effectiveness of the Organization's work in the field.

While recognizing the importance that each country has placed on promoting economic development and regional security, he nonetheless underlined the importance of strengthening democratic processes at the same time. The PA President indicated his intention to return to the region

in the autumn to visit Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Parliamentarians lead OSCE election monitoring in Montenegro

PA Vice President Tiit Kabin, (MP Estonia), acting as Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, declared Montenegro's parliamentary elections, held on 22 April, to have generally complied with international democratic standards. "The overall electoral process was pluralistic, accountable and transparent," he said during the presen-



Michel Voisin (MP France), has been proposed as Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs

tation of the OSCE Election Observation Mission's preliminary findings.

The OSCE team, which included an OSCE PA delegation of 40 parliamentarians from 16 OSCE participating States, concluded that a broad spectrum of political parties had participated in the elections within a pluralistic media landscape, and that there had been exceptional transparency of public access to voting registers and the publication of detailed voting results at all levels.

While confirming that substantial progress had been made, Mr. Kabin acknowledged some remaining shortcomings. Political parties had controlled the election mandates, there were small errors

in the voter register, and a few instances of political pressure on state employees as well as police involvement in campaign activities. Despite these irregularities, he emphasized that the polling and vote count were largely in accordance with the law, and that the high voter turnout indicated public confidence in the electoral process.

OSCE PA President Severin requests MPs to take on special roles

During the Expanded Bureau meeting of the OSCE PA, held in Copenhagen on 19 and 20 April, PA President Adrian Severin asked three members of the Assembly to address topics of importance to the body.

OSCE PA Vice-President Bruce George was asked to carry out and in-depth analysis of how national parliaments deal with OSCE issues and how national delegations engage both in participating in the activities of the Assembly, and in promoting the achievements of the Assembly in their own parliaments. He was asked in particular to analyze how each of the Parliamentary Assembly's legislatures scrutinizes and influences decisions of the executive on national security issues in the OSCE area.

In response to the Ukrainian Delegation's request for the OSCE PA to assist in improving the socio-political situation in Ukraine, President Severin asked Third Committee Chair, Gert Weisskirchen, to assess the current political and social situation in Ukraine. He was asked to travel to Ukraine to appeal to the Ukrainian Parliament to find solutions to the current crisis, and to urge the various institutions and the Opposition to find ways to strengthen mutual confidence.

Finally, Mr. Severin asked the Head of the French Delegation to the OSCE PA, Michel Voisin, to consider becoming his Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs, in order to develop stronger links with the OSCE PA's Mediterranean Partners.

Head of OSCE Office in Yerevan visits PA Secretariat

On 7 and 8 May, the Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan (Armenia), Roy Reeve, visited the International Secretariat of the OSCE PA and had consultations with the Secretary General, Spencer Oliver, and other senior staff. Mr. Reeve also spoke at a joint OSCE PA/Danish Institute of International Affairs (DUPI) round table discussion at the DUPI Office in Copenhagen, where he gave a presentation on the role of the Organization's field missions, focusing on the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

NEWS from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

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RFOM reviews activities in 2001 before the Permanent Council

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, spoke at the OSCE Permanent Council on 5 April,

where *inter alia* he discussed the activities of his office since December. He raised the current state of the media in several participating States: Georgia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan,

Russia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Mr. Duve stressed that his office wanted to focus on media and minority issues in conjunction with the

High Commissioner on National Minorities, with a view to organizing a meeting later this year. The OSCE Representative planned, in addition, to continue paying attention to the situation of public broadcasting in Central and Eastern Europe as a structural issue.

Representative focuses on worsening media situation in Belarus

During April, the Representative on Freedom of the Media devoted much of his attention to the deteriorating media situation in Belarus. On 12 April, Mr. Duve addressed the Belarusian Foreign Minister, Mikhail Khvostov, stressing his continued concern about problematic developments that are affecting the

media climate in that country. However, the OSCE Representative's planned visit to Minsk, due to have taken place later in April, was cancelled because his Senior Adviser, Diana Moxhay, was denied a visa.

At the Permanent Council on 26 April, Mr. Duve presented his view that this decision by the Belarus Government was a severe interference in the independence of the institution of the OSCE Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

"I firmly believe that no OSCE participating State should dictate for or against any of the staff members of an OSCE institution. I cannot accept this interference by the Government of the

Republic of Belarus, for to do so would set a precedent which would weaken the working conditions of OSCE institutions," said the Representative.

Ukraine radio station denied licence

Radio Continent, a leading independent radio station in Ukraine, was denied a licence on 16 April by the National Television and Broadcasting Council. On 19 April, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media intervened with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Anatoly Zlenko, stressing his concern with the fate of Radio Continent, and emphasizing that he had previously recommended that it should receive a new licence.

REPORT from the OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat

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SG attends Nagorno-Karabakh peace talks in the United States

At the invitation of the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Process, the Organization's Secretary General, Jan Kubis, attended OSCE-sponsored talks held in Key West, Florida, from 3 to 6 April. The talks were part of a process aimed at working towards a resolution of the long-standing dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region within Azerbaijan which was occupied during the 1990s by Armenian forces.

Visit paid to UNHCR in Geneva

On 18 April, during a trip to Geneva, the Secre-

tary General made a courtesy call on Ruud Lubbers, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The short meeting focused on Central Asia and the Caucasus. Secretary General Kubis also

met Assistant High Commissioner Jessen-Petersen and with the staff of the Emergency Response Unit to discuss the new approaches that both the OSCE and the UNHCR are developing to issues such as staffing, security, and rapid response capability.

Secretary General makes trip to three participating States in Central Asia

At the invitation of Foreign Minister Imanaliev of Kyrgyzstan and Foreign Minister Nazarov of Tajikistan, the Secretary General visited the two countries between 24 and 26 April. He was received by the respective Heads of State, President Akayev and President Rakhmonov and had



The new Head of the Permanent Mission of the Holy See, Monsignor Leo Boccardi, presents his credentials to Secretary General Kubis on 10 April. He succeeds Monsignor Dominique Rezeau in this position.

talks with other top officials. He also met representatives of various political parties and civil society, OSCE ambassadors and representatives of international organizations.

The primary aim of the visit was to assess and discuss various external and internal aspects of security and stability in the individual countries as well as in the region, specifically in the light of the situation in Afghanistan and its spillover effects, as well as last year's military activities in Central Asia and reports of similar activities this year – and to assess the eventual impact of these developments on security and the activities of the OSCE there.

In both countries, the Secretary General discussed matters related to their co-operation with the OSCE and its missions, including the concerns of both sides in relation to all OSCE dimensions. He looked also at the preparation for the forthcoming visit of the Chairman-in-Office to the region.

In the discussions, the Tajik officials addressed the OSCE Secretary General on the general political climate in the country during the period of post-conflict stabilization. They informed him of the most recent important foreign policy steps undertaken by the Tajik Government in the last period, and provided an assessment of the situation in the region as well as on the further strengthening of the relations between the OSCE and Tajikistan. Mr. Kubis in turn reaffirmed the support of the international community in supporting Tajikistan during this post-conflict period.

By mutual agreement, the Secretary General then met on 27 April in Tashkent with Foreign Minister Kamilov of Uzbekistan, with whom he discussed a similar range of topics. Among other things, it was agreed to explore further possibilities of enhancing OSCE activities in the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE in Uzbekistan and in its different regions, such as in Karakalpakia.

New online:

OSCE video documentary

The Press and Public Information Section has now made the English language version of the OSCE video documentary, 'For Human Dignity' available online on the OSCE website at:

www.osce.org/publications/video.

The documentary explains how the OSCE evolved from the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which began in 1973, into the largest regional security organization in the world and describes the work of the Organization's 4,000 staff in its missions and other field activities.

For easier viewing, the video is available in clips and in several video formats. A limited number of copies are available upon request to universities, research centres, international and non-governmental organizations, government agencies, and broadcasters. Requests may be submitted online.



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