

OSCE

NEWSLETTER

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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Walter Schwimmer (left), Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in discussion with (l to r) the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Mircea Geoana, Yugoslav Foreign Minister Svilanovic, and the Head of Mission, Stefano Sannino outside the Belgrade office

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OSCE raises flag of Mission in Belgrade

Opening of Mission to FRY office symbolizes strength of OSCE support

On 16 March, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana, visited Belgrade to officially open the office of the Organization's Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The flag-raising ceremony took place on the lawn outside the main building of the office complex in Dedinje, south Belgrade. In brilliant March sunshine, the flags of the OSCE and the Council of Europe were hoisted outside the building jointly housing the offices of the two organizations.

The ceremony was also attended by the Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia,

Goran Svilanovic, as well as by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Walter Schwimmer.

"It is of deep symbolic significance that our two organizations are housed in the same building," said the Chairman-in-Office. "Our common house represents the common European house, and we have now opened the door for Yugoslavia to enter."

Later the same day, he had talks with the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Vojislav Kostunica; the Prime Minister of Serbia, Zoran Djindjic, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Nebojsa Covic. The main issues

covered were the tense situation in southern Serbia and the crisis at the border between Kosovo (FRY) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

In his discussions with the Yugoslav leaders, Mr. Geoana emphasized the need to implement a regional approach to resolve the crisis in south-eastern Europe. To reporters in Belgrade, he said: "As the problems are crossing the borders, so should the solutions."

Specifically, he mentioned the possibility of enhancing co-operation between international organizations active in the region and offered the support of the OSCE to act as a catalyst in this process.

“All of us in the Mission feel very welcome here”

The Head of the new Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Stefano Sannino from Italy, gave this interview to the OSCE Newsletter

Newsletter:

Your Mission has now officially opened its doors in Belgrade. Can you please describe the main activities undertaken in these first weeks?

Mr. Sannino:

The Mission has been given a mandate to support the consolidation of individual institutions and assist a democratic transformation within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This mandate is very broad; hence we have tried in the first place to define our priorities a bit further. This meant discussions with the Yugoslav authorities both at the federal level and the level of the republics. We also met with civil society actors – non-governmental organizations, media representatives, etc. – and with representatives of the international community.

We have focused on identifying a certain number of key areas where we would like to develop our activities. More specifically, we have established our priorities keeping in mind the interests and objectives of the international community but also the priorities of the Government in Belgrade. I am glad to be able to say that this was very easy because there is no discrepancy between the interests of the various parties.

Newsletter:

Do you have some concrete examples of what has been achieved so far?

Mr. Sannino:

I think we have been very active in trying to help the current authorities with the establishment of a democratic society, based on the rule of law. We, that is all the members of the Mission, have worked hard to show the new authorities in Belgrade that OSCE advice and expertise is available when it comes to drafting legislation, but also when it comes to developing credible institutions needed to ensure the implementation and enforcement of those laws.

In the first few weeks since the existence of the Mission, difficult and sensitive issues, such as judicial reforms and the problem of trafficking in human

beings, have been addressed. At the same time, the OSCE Mission to the FRY has had to leap on a train that was already pulling out of the station, as events in this country are sometimes moving very fast. Because of the urgent problems in southern Serbia, for instance, we have paid a considerable amount of attention to the development of confidence-building measures in that region.

Newsletter:

The Mission is still very young. What do you think lies ahead now for your office?

Mr. Sannino:

We have to concentrate on a number

OSCE MISSION TO CROATIA / BURRIDGE



RAPID DEPLOYMENT: On 13 March, the second batch of four cars from the OSCE Mission to Croatia transited the Lipovac border crossing on their way to support the OSCE Mission to FRY in Belgrade. The cars, part of a total of 12 destined for the new Mission, are surplus to requirements since the OSCE Police Monitoring Group in the Danube region of Croatia ceased operations late last year. (By Andy Burrige, Public Affairs Officer, OSCE Mission to Croatia).

of very specific matters: consolidation of the legal framework and assisting in the implementation of the rule of law, in co-operation with the Council of Europe. Then there are the democratization activities, strengthening the public sector and reform of the public administration and the parliamentary component, strengthening of the political parties and non-governmental organizations. We shall also concern ourselves with police reform and the fight against organized crime. And we will focus on the media situation in the country, in an effort to help along the process of developing a media scene worthy of a democratic society.

OSCE/MISSION TO FRY



Stefano Sannino, new Head of Mission

Newsletter:

How has the co-operation with the local authorities been so far on these issues?

Mr. Sannino:

All of us in the Mission feel very welcome here. The ministers and other officials on all levels have always been available to us for meetings, and have shown willingness to co-operate in very concrete terms.

I am glad that we have been able to work as a team, and hope that we will continue to do so.

OSCE responds quickly to border crisis in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Steps up monitoring, boosts staff and sends Personal Representative of CiO

In a quick response to the outbreak of violence along the northern border of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, carried out by groups who included fighters infiltrating from the neighbouring province of Kosovo (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), the OSCE has stepped up its border monitoring activities and boosted the staff of its mission in Skopje. With a series of moves throughout the month, propelled by decisions of the Permanent Council, the OSCE signalled its strong support for the efforts of the Government in Skopje to defend the country's sovereignty. The Permanent Council also welcomed proposals by the Romanian Chairmanship of the OSCE to send a Personal Representative to assist in establishing a political dialogue with indigenous leaders, aimed at promoting reforms in the republic.

The upsurge of fighting, which began at the end of February, led first to a statement by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana, on 1 March, in which he urged all parties to desist from measures which would lead to an escalation of fighting. He also voiced his grave concern over the resultant displacement of people living near the border, and condemned the violent actions saying:

“These can only complicate the fragile equilibrium in the region and thus obstruct attempts of settling the existing problems there.”

A special session of the Permanent Council was held on 6 March, during which its Chairman, Romanian Ambassador Liviu Bota, again appealed to all parties to cease the violence and enter a political dialogue.

On 6 and 7 March, both the Chairman-in-Office (CiO) and Ambassador Bota issued statements expressing their strong concern over the further escalation of violence. The CiO added his deep regret over the loss of lives due to the activities of extremist groups in the area, and commended the Government in Skopje for having shown self-restraint in dealing with the situation.

“I strongly request the immediate cessation of violence and call on all parties to isolate the extremists active in the region”, said Mr. Geoana.

Mr. Bota's statement affirmed the strong support of the OSCE for “the independence, the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the inviolability of its borders”, while adding that the Permanent Council had instructed the

OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje to “develop the monitoring activities of its mandate and to keep permanently in contact with the authorities in Skopje on the ways and means the OSCE can contribute to the normalization of the situation and make appropriate proposals for action.”

On 15 March, Foreign Minister Geoana and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoel, who has played a longstanding role in dealing with inter-ethnic relations, together strongly criticized the “unprovoked acts of violence by groups of extremists”.

“Stability and security are under growing threat for the people in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, said the OSCE CiO. “It is time for us to use all democratic means to put a stop to these violent actions, and to protect the rights and freedoms of the citizens of this country”.

Mr van der Stoel added: “Recently, the chances of finding solutions for inter-ethnic differences have greatly improved (in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). It would be a tragedy if the ongoing peaceful dialogue would be replaced by armed struggle.”

Personal Representative

On 21 March, the OSCE CiO announced his intention to appoint Robert H. Frowick as his Personal Representative for the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Besides assisting in promoting dialogue, his mandate also included close co-ordination of pro-active OSCE activities with the European Union

and NATO, as well as with other international organizations.

Mr. Frowick, a US citizen, was the first Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje after its establishment in 1992.

Welcoming news of the appointment, Carlo Ungaro, Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, said, “The selection of Ambassador Frowick, with his personal knowledge of prior political actors and the situation in the area, fills a vital role in facilitating the complex political and inter-ethnic dialogue that is taking



Robert Frowick (centre) speaking at the press conference on 30 March, flanked by Carlo Ungaro (left) and Ambassador Bota, PC Chairman

place.”

One day later, the OSCE Permanent Council decided to temporarily strengthen the OSCE Mission to Skopje by doubling the number of international personnel from eight to 16. Foreign Minister Geoana stated that the OSCE was prepared to participate, together with other international organizations, in a co-ordinated effort aimed at settling the crisis in the north of the country, against the background of the escalation of violence and taking into account the OSCE responsibilities in the region.

The additional staff members were to work particularly in the border area, with a view to strengthening the capabilities of

the Mission to monitor and report developments there.

On 30 March, the Permanent Council met for a special session to discuss the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Speakers included the newly appointed Personal Representative of the CiO, the High Commissioner, and the Head of Mission.

All speakers emphasized the need for an intensified political dialogue and the acceleration of a democratic reform process in the country.

At a press conference following the PC session, Mr. Frowick said he had met with the political representatives in the country, and was encouraged by the signals that indicate the willingness to engage in a political dialogue to deal with the situation.

“What we are trying to do now, together with the European Union, NATO and other international organizations, is to stimulate a productive

dialogue to address some long-term concerns in the country for more equality in society... it is going to take some time to calm things down... Although there are differences in the approaches, the overall goals are remarkably similar. That is why there is still hope.”

Mr Ungaro added, “The reaction of CiO, Secretariat and Permanent Council to the need to increase the Mission was immediate and very gratifying; the positive effects could be felt immediately. The now enlarged Mission is destined to play a leading role in the weeks and months to come.”

OSCE launches REACT programme

Web-enabled application provides mechanism to recruit States' expertise

By Bonnie Landry and Barrie Meyers

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has launched its Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams (REACT) programme, designed to set new standards for the rapid recruitment and deployment of skilled personnel into current and future field operations.

"This programme has been eagerly awaited by OSCE participating States," said OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis. "It will greatly improve the operational capacities within the OSCE and will provide us with a mechanism to rapidly deploy civilian and police expertise into our field operations. It will assist all OSCE participating States as we continue our important work in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation."

The concept for establishing REACT was set out in the Charter for European Security, adopted by OSCE Heads of State or Government at the November 1999 Istanbul Summit.

As developed by the REACT team during the course of 2000, the programme includes three basic components:

- standards based on precisely defined qualifications for the work carried out in OSCE field activities, to better focus the recruitment and selection process;
- efficient management of the documentation used in the recruitment and selection process that helps overcome impediments to rapid selection of personnel for field assignments; and
- pre-selection/pre-deployment training that ensures that those selected will be operationally prepared to carry out their duties on arrival in the field.

Rigorous standards have been defined for the professional competence of staff at all levels. The fields of expertise are human rights, rule of law, democratization, elections, economic and environmental affairs, press and public information, media development, political affairs, administration and support (communications, information technology and information management, security, transporta-

tion and/or submit online applications to the designated contact points within their participating State. Those who wish to be considered for REACT, must be available for deployment within two, four or eight weeks following notification of final selection.

The generic pre-selection/pre-deployment training standards provide participating States with a tool that can assist in developing training programmes. The standards cover the skills and knowledge that those assigned to OSCE field activities will need to be operationally prepared and effective when they reach the field operation.

Interest in REACT

The Secretary General also noted that other international organizations, such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the Council of Europe, have also expressed interest in using the REACT programme and learning from OSCE experiences in developing and using it, as a potential source of inspiration for their own use.

"This augurs well for compatibility, interoperability and should, among others, provide for better and mutually supportive use of expertise and other resources", he said.

Information on the OSCE REACT programme is available on the OSCE website:

www.osce.org/react

Bonnie Landry is the Online Manager, OSCE Secretariat. Barrie Meyers is the senior adviser on REACT implementation to the Director of Human Resources.



The web-enabled REACT system can be viewed on the OSCE website

tion, supply and logistics, procurement, budget and finance, general administration, human resources management, training, buildings management), general staff/monitoring functions, military affairs and civilian police.

To streamline the recruitment and selection process, a web-enabled mission staffing information application and system has been established, providing an electronic medium for sharing information between OSCE field missions, the Secretariat and participating States.

Through the OSCE public website, individuals who wish to be considered for

Bringing a more modern approach to the public sector in Kosovo

Through its training methods, the OSCE's Institute for Civil Administration is introducing a new way of thinking in the province

By Laura O'Mahony

Kosovo's new Institute for Civil Administration (ICA) has only been up and running for a year but already it is making a big impact. Established by the OSCE to provide training for members of Kosovo's civil service, its goal is to professionalize the public sector, which is undergoing major reorganization and reform, and move it towards modern European standards of government, based on the rule of law, provision of good quality services and efficient management.

For the past year, the Institute has been providing short-term, in-service training to municipal employees from all over Kosovo. More than 1,000 civil servants took part in the ICA courses last year. This year, it began training staff working in the joint administrative departments, which form part of the interim administration. Up to 1,500 staff are expected to benefit.

OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO



ICA trainees, Sokol Elshani (left) and Miradije Meha, follow an IT course

Municipal leaders

Seminars, which last for one or two days, and longer programmes, which last for about five weeks, are both designed to provide flexible, responsive training on specific issues and emerging topics in public management. They also seek to impart the core skills required by modern public service managers.

The Institute has also been supporting

Kosovo's newly-elected and appointed local politicians through intensive seminars on the roles and responsibilities of the municipal assemblies. In 2001, specially-tailored training is being conducted for the municipal assembly presidents and chief executive officers.

For the politicians, this means looking at issues such as conflict resolution, economic development, citizens' participation in local government, and the role of the opposition in the new assemblies. The civil servants have also been focusing on

participate. "If we are doing a series of seminars, for example, on project management or on budgeting," said Bjorn Ahren, the ICA's Chief of Studies, "we will generally do a total of five seminars for Kosovo Albanian staff and two for Kosovo Serb staff at different locations around Kosovo."

New ideas and approaches

The training presents the participants with new ideas, theories and ways of approaching their work. For example,

Sokol Elshani is back in the public sector after an absence of more than ten years, during which he spent some time in Germany. He is now working in the interim administration's Department of Reconstruction. For Mr. Elshani, the difference between the old system and the new one is very clear.

subjects such as small business development, the role of the Ombudsperson, personnel management, public finance, decision-making and chairing meetings.

Most of the training is carried out at the ICA's current base in Ferizaj/Urosevac in central Kosovo. But the trainers also travel around Kosovo to enable a greater number of people, as well as those from Kosovo's ethnic communities, to

"The old system was very centralized and authoritarian," Mr. Elshani said. "We had the skills to do the job but our responsibilities and the opportunities for staff to input into the decision-making process were very limited. As a result, motivation was lacking. Today, there is much more consultation between managers and staff and a much greater sense of teamwork."

Miradije Meha, who works in the same department, found the training on the importance of motivation very useful: "Now we have to go back and find ways and means to motivate our own staff. Motivation is crucial if staff are to produce quality work, meet deadlines and develop good relationships with each other and with the clients on whose behalf they are working."

As well as changing work practices, Kosovo's public sector is also learning about new technology. The central departments are all computerized. Gradually, the municipal structures are also being equipped with computers. So far, about 600 municipal employees have received basic computer training.

Francesco Mugheddu, who co-ordinates the ICA's computer training programme, said few of the trainees had used computers before. "It was a new experience because some had no information technology experience at all. As a result, almost all the courses have been basic courses – introduction to computer science, the use of Word and spreadsheets. For those in the 30 - 40 age group, it was easier to adapt and they actually helped their older colleagues."

Trainer Elisabeth Schlossstein, a lecturer in public administration from Germany, has seen it all before, closer to home. "When East and West Germany were reunited, we also started a reconstruction programme, as we are now doing here in Kosovo. Public servants in eastern Germany underwent similar courses in administration to those we are providing to Kosovo's civil servants."

Ms. Schlossstein has just finished giving

a course with her local counterpart, Ramadan Berisha, who previously worked with the OSCE-run Kosovo Police Service School.

"The management course I was giving there for supervisors was very similar to the one we've just done with the ICA", said Mr. Berisha. "In it, we focused on the importance of communication, motivation and leadership. Management is a fairly new subject in this part of the world. These ideas are very relevant to the situation here at the moment."

Mr. Ahren said demand for the ICA training courses was very high. "There is interest in everything and people are now beginning to ask us for training in specific areas. If we can't do it, we can put them in touch with other organizations that can. In order to meet the demand, we will start running more one- to two-day seminars

of the ICA's priorities in 2001 will be to initiate a long-term training programme for those wishing to make a career in the civil service. Initially, the programme will consist of a 12-month course of formal education in modern public administration theory and management, for which the Institute is developing the curriculum and teaching materials.

Co-operation with University

"In-service training will continue to be the need over the next few years," said Mr. Ahren. "For the long term programme, we need to have close co-operation with Pristina University. The idea is that people would gain their basic degree and then go on to do a further year studying public administration."

During 2001, the OSCE hopes to set up a core centre for the Institute in or near

Pristina, to enable it to develop better links with other institutions. "The challenge is to create something together with local people," he said. "We need to find more counterparts – lecturers and administrators for the Institute – so that it will be sustainable."

Sustainability is key to the ICA's future. So far, it has

been funded entirely by the OSCE. The hope is that, eventually, it will become less reliant on international support. The ICA's success will be assured when it becomes a self-sustaining training institution, managed and funded by people from Kosovo itself.

Laura O'Mahony is a Press Officer in the OSCE Mission in Kosovo



OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO

Elisabeth Schlossstein, an ICA trainer, holds an in-service training course

on request. What we plan to do is offer a 'smorgasbord' of courses and then say: you can choose which ones you feel you need."

The 'in-service' training approach can, however, only meet the most urgent needs. With the average age of municipal employees in Kosovo estimated at 45, local administrations will require a fresh intake of staff in the years to come. One

The making of the OSCE video

English language version goes online at OSCE website

The OSCE video, For Human Dignity, which was released on 31 January, has already proved an immediate success in terms of both feedback and demand for copies of the 30-minute feature. The video looks at both the transformation of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe into the OSCE, and the current activities of the Organization. There has been particular interest among its Delegations, Missions, Institutions, and the foreign ministries of participating States, as well as private institutions, non-governmental organizations and individuals, such as researchers and journalists.

Production of the video took five months of intense work in the latter half of 2000. The team from the Munich-based film company, Preview Pro-

ductions, travelled to various locations in order to obtain pictures and interviews, including Vienna, Bonn and Warsaw, as well as several towns and villages in Kosovo. They were shooting scenes to illustrate a script prepared by the Press and Public Information Section in the Secretariat. The video also includes extensive archive footage of the CSCE period.

At an early stage of the preparations, it was reluctantly decided that the original

idea of having the video team travel to several OSCE Missions and field activities was unrealistic, mainly for budgetary reasons. This helps to explain why the focus in the field activities section of the video is almost exclusively on the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. OMIK was chosen as being representative of many elements of the spectrum of OSCE field activities, because of the breadth of its mandate and the size of its resources.

Encouraged by the favourable

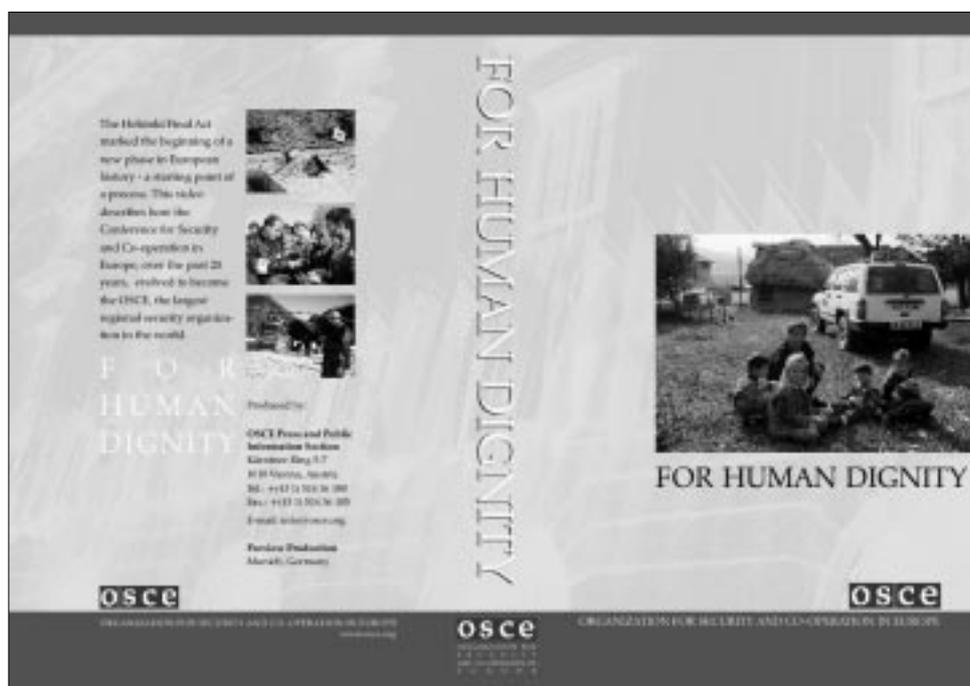
can be summarized in these words from an OSCE mission member: "The video will be a useful tool for presentations to universities and institutes and during other meetings with students and those interested in learning more about the Organization."

The video was scripted and edited in English, the working language of the OSCE, but preparations are underway for a Russian-language version, intended mainly for the benefit of the vast potential

audience that can be reached via the OSCE missions in the CIS States. There are also plans for a digital video disk (DVD) edition.

In the meantime, the English language version of the video is now available online on the OSCE website

This can be found at the URL:



Cover design of the new OSCE video film

response to the video, the OSCE is currently discussing future plans. Concepts being examined include producing videos on specific OSCE issues and activities, Institutions or missions. In any case, it is clear that an updated version of the general video would need to be issued in the not very distant future, and that hopefully this will become a regular feature of OSCE public information activities.

Positive responses already received

www.osce.org/publications/video

For easier viewing, the video is available in clips and in several video formats.

A limited number of copies is available upon request to universities, research centres, international and non-governmental organizations, government agencies, and broadcasters in PAL, NTSC and BETA formats. Requests may be submitted online.

OSCE focuses on efforts to promote freedom of expression

Conference calls for study of ways to enhance early warning capacity

Freedom of expression, one of the basic tenets of the Organization, was spotlighted at an OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting in Vienna on 12 and 13 March, attended by 200 participants representing governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all parts of the OSCE region.

They met in Vienna to discuss three issues: legal and non-legal frameworks, including criminal defamation laws; the role of free speech in advancing the objectives of the OSCE; and broadening access to new information technologies.

At the opening of the meeting, Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, suggested that the sit-

uation in the OSCE region regarding freedom of expression had not improved over the past few years.

“On the contrary, in some participating States we have seen renewed attacks on free journalism with certain governments believing that independent journalism poses a threat to them.”

So-called “censorship by killing” and other forms of censorship, the chilling effects of criminal defamation laws in certain countries and questions concerning the regulation of and limited access to the Internet were among the many issues discussed during the meeting.

Participants also highlighted best practices which could be used by other countries. There was broad consensus that the

OSCE could play a more active role in promoting freedom of expression, including through legislative and technical assistance to governments, by providing training and by promoting better access to new information technologies.

It was also suggested that the OSCE should enhance its early warning capacity in the field of freedom of expression.

A full list of recommendations was distributed to all participants and is available via the website of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

www.osce.org/odihhr

or that of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

www.osce.org/fom

Korea and OSCE discuss use of security co-operation tools in NE Asia

Lessons drawn from experience of the Organization’s CSBMs regime

The first joint conference with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to be held in Seoul since the Republic of Korea became an OSCE Partner for Co-operation* in 1994 took place from 19 to 21 March, and focused on the applicability of OSCE confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) to north-east Asia.

The event was organized by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Romanian OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat, and co-chaired by the Deputy Foreign Minister, Choi Young-jin, and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman, Constanin Ene.

The specific issue under discussion – within the general framework of OSCE's

comprehensive approach to security, encompassing human rights, human contacts, culture, as well as economic and environmental issues – was the role of the OSCE’s CSBMs and how the instruments and tools successfully applied by the OSCE to reduce the risk of armed conflict in Europe might contribute to peace and stability in north-east Asia and the Korean Peninsula.

The opening session was addressed by the then-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, Lee Jung-Binn and the Secretary General of the OSCE, Jan Kubis. The Organization’s Chairman-in-Office (CiO), Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana, addressed the closing session.

Foreign Minister Lee underlined the fact that the conference was a valuable opportunity at this time of change in the security environment in north-east Asia to enhance common awareness of the necessity of addressing security challenges through regional security co-operation. He added that in line with the OSCE CSBMs, the countries of north-east Asia needed to take a significant step toward the launch of a regional dialogue.

Secretary General Kubis said that the event was a reflection of the increasing interest in Asia and in particular in north-east Asia in the work of the CSCE/OSCE and its achievements in the comprehensive and co-operative approach to security.

In the closing session, the OSCE CiO

emphasized the fact that enriching discussions and an intensive dialogue on matters of common interest contributed to strengthening partnership.

“The OSCE model could serve as a reference point from which many lessons may be learnt,” he said. In the spirit of “cross support between the two regions”, the key message of this conference was to further develop the multifaceted dia-

logue between the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation by continuing to be creative in searching for appropriate forms of co-operation, he concluded.

Study visit

The well-attended Conference brought together more than 100 senior officials and experts from the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation (Japan, Korea and Thailand), representatives from the Mediter-



Secretary General Kubis (right) meets Foreign Minister Lee and CiO Personal Representative Ene at the OSCE-Korea conference in Seoul

anean Partners for Co-operation, and the NGO community. ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) members – China and Vietnam – also participated as guests of the host country.

The day after the conference, the Republic of Korea organized a study visit to the Joint Security Area, Panmunjom. Briefings were held by the ROK/US Combined Forces Command that evolved from the United Nations Command. A visit was

also organized to the camp of the Swedish and Swiss Delegations to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Panmunjom.

The consolidated summary of the Conference, which includes the concluding summary by the Co-Chairpersons, is available on the OSCE website.

**The OSCE maintains special relations*

with a number of non-member States. In Asia, these are Japan, Korea and Thailand. They are known as “Partners for Co-operation” and they participate in a number of OSCE activities, including meetings, with a view to maintaining dialogue and an exchange of information on issues of mutual concern. Currently, an informal working group meeting is discussing recommendations concerning future partnerships.

Albania hosts ODIHR women’s rights and anti-trafficking education project

ODIHR funds and designs the WRATE approach to human rights

By Penny Martin

An evaluation conference organized by the OSCE Presence in Albania to mark the conclusion of the pilot phase of WRATE – the Women’s Rights and Anti-Trafficking Education project, has shown the value and need for continuing training in this area of human rights. In late April, another ‘training of trainers’ will be held with a tighter focus on rights training and interactive training techniques.

The purpose of the WRATE project was to raise the awareness of Albanian women of their human rights, both under international conventions and domestic law, and to show how domestic violence and trafficking are abuses of those rights.

The project was designed and implemented in co-operation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which also provided the funding.

The project began in November last year, with a ‘training of trainers’ session, conducted by Barbara Limanowska and Agnieszka Czupczynska of the National Women’s Information Centre in Warsaw. The national consultant to the project was Eglantina Gjermeni, Executive Director of the Women’s Centre in Tirana, who also participated.

The intensive five-day training session, opened by the Head of the OSCE

Presence in Albania, Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, included specialized training on human rights, domestic violence, and trafficking. There were also practical sessions on planning, conducting, and reporting for interactive training workshops.

Each evening was spent discussing women's rights issues specific to Albania and the Balkans. Guest speakers included Makbule Ceco, the Albanian Deputy Prime Minister, Madeleine Rees of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in BiH, and Lara Griffith, the ODIHR's Gender Adviser.

There were 18 participants in the training, 12 of whom were identified and recruited by the OSCE field stations located in the project pilot locations of Berat, Shkodra, and Durres. Two participants from Tirana were selected because of their positions in organizations with access to strategic target groups, including an established network of 8,000 rural women. The remaining participants were OSCE national staff assistants.

Target groups

The WRATE trainers organized a total of 32 training workshops between December and early February for target groups that had been identified during the training of trainers: teachers, rural women, secondary school students, social workers, attorneys, and local government officials. A total of around 250 women (as well as a few men) participated.

All of the WRATE workshops were

observed by members of the Presence, either from HQ or from the field. Both observers and participants completed evaluation forms, while the trainer submitted reports after each workshop.

The participants' evaluations showed overwhelming appreciation for the content and delivery of the training, with repeated requests for more. They valued the information given them to them about women's rights in Albania, and they welcomed the opportunity to freely discuss these issues.

Many of the participants were unaware of their rights and of the obli-



Participants at the ODIHR-funded WRATE gender seminar in Albania

gation of the Government to protect those rights under international conventions that have been ratified.

Many of the participants could personally relate to the abuses of domestic violence and trafficking, but were unaware that Albanian legislation does exist that can be used to prosecute the perpetrators of these abuses. Prosecutions are very rare, which led many to believe that the laws are not in place.

A comprehensive analysis of Albanian legislation, prepared by the Legal Counselor's office, was an effective tool in proving that there is not an absence of law, but an absence of the rule of law.

Evaluation conference

Barbara Limanowska and Eglantina Gjermeni facilitated the February evaluation conference, which had several purposes, including assessing the WRATE; to provide a forum for the WRATE trainers to discuss the challenges faced while planning and conducting their workshops; identify any needs for supplemental training and information for the trainers and to determine how to meet those needs; to discuss how the project will be implemented going forward, as ODIHR has committed to funding the project through 2001.

Another training of trainers was due to be held in late April.

When the WRATE trainers have completed their supplemental training, a schedule of training workshops will be prepared for the rest of 2001.

Several requests have already been received for training workshops, from bilateral missions and national organizations

that have heard about the WRATE project. After April, when project trainers are more skilled and have more experience, the OSCE will facilitate work with other organizations. The Presence will work with The Women's Centre to organize a training of trainers dealing with issues of domestic violence and gender.

The Presence will also deploy trainers to conduct workshops in all OSCE field stations, to raise awareness about women's rights throughout Albania.

Penny Martin is NGO Officer and Gender Adviser in the OSCE Presence in Albania



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, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Yugoslavia. The following brief reports reflect some of the recent work which these field operations have undertaken.

Kosovo's CEC is reconstituted with view to province-wide elections

On the recommendation of Daan Everts, Head of OMIK, the new UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Hans Haekkerup, reconstituted the province's Central Election Commission (CEC) on 9 March. It will prepare and issue electoral rules to establish the procedures for the conduct of Kosovo-wide elections.

The CEC, which will again be chaired by Mr. Everts, will include nine local and three international experts, with one seat temporarily vacant for the Serbian representative. The CEC is responsible for making recommendations to the SRSG on the basic rules necessary for the conduct of elections, including the selection of an appropriate electoral system. It is also charged with supervising the conduct of the election process to ensure that it is administered in a free and fair manner.

On 30 March, the CEC began a series of information seminars, across the province on electoral systems. The presentations were aimed at providing local opinion leaders with an understanding of how electoral systems are chosen and how they work. The participants represented a broad cross-section of Kosovo society at the regional level, including representatives of political parties, non-governmental organizations and media outlets.

Kosovo municipal assembly officials attend training in Norway

Officials from Kosovo's municipal assemblies took part in a special training

course held from 19 to 23 March, facilitated by OMIK. A total of 26 chief executive officers (CEOs) were involved in the programme, which forms part of a comprehensive series of training programmes co-ordinated by the OSCE-run Institute of Civil Administration which are being aimed at assisting the new local government structures. The training course, which focussed on issues such as the functions of CEOs and the distinction between politics and administration in local government, was organized by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities and funded by the Norwegian Department of Foreign Affairs.

Workshop on property issues takes place in Kosovo

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) and the Kosovo Judicial Institute held a workshop on housing and property issues in March. Its goal was to find solutions to clarify jurisdictions of the different institutions relating to property. The workshop, officially entitled 'The jurisdiction between the Housing & Property Directorate and the Kosovo Courts', aimed at untangling some of the administrative problems facing property issues in Kosovo. Participants included representatives from the Directorate, OMIK's Department of Judicial Affairs, and 21 judges from the regions of Kosovo, all with a background in property law.

Environment talks held in BiH

From 7 to 9 March, the Mission to BiH organized a series of environmental

round tables at OSCE-supported political resource centres throughout the country. The discussions at these public meetings were based on a Swiss-produced film that featured the cleaning of the Bosna River by local children. With this initiative, the Mission aims to enhance public concern and understanding of ecological problems and to promote active public participation in combating various forms of environmental pollution.

Mission to BiH sponsors training for government spokespersons

On 14 and 15 March, the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted training seminars for spokespersons of the BiH ministries. The training introduced fundamental press and public information skills, necessary for the ministry staff to improve their ability to reach out to the public and to promote an open, transparent and fair process of government. "This training is a step toward making sure there is a well-informed public, and helping ministries understand the difference between Freedom of Access to Information and general press work", said Regan McCarthy, the Mission's Director of Media Affairs. The training was attended by, among others, representatives of the BiH Presidency, the office for the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries.

Mission to Croatia holds regional economic forum

On 21 March, the OSCE Mission to Croatia organized an economic forum aimed at facilitating business contacts

and developing joint commercial projects, investments and economic co-operation at local, national and international levels. The forum was held in the central Croatian town of Hrvatska Kostanjica, as part of a general OSCE effort to assist with the revitalization of the economy and the normalization of life in war-affected areas of the country.

Deputy Head of Mission, Robert Becker, said, "... it is only through human initiative and financial investment that the necessary economic revitalization will take place". Some 100 participants attended the forum, including businessmen from Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina, financial institutions, Croatian local and state authorities, and representatives of embassies and international organizations.

Skopje marks Women's Day

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje held a round table meeting on 7 March to discuss issues such as violence against women, poverty and women, and women in politics. The aim was to provide a forum for debate and promoting the advancement of women in society. The event, which was organized by several women's organizations and offices in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was attended by women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from across the country, as well as representatives from governmental bodies and international organizations. The Council of Europe and the embassies of Canada and Norway supported the meeting.

Yerevan Office now on website

Current information on the structure, mandate and activities of the Office in

Yerevan of the Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is now available online. The website features latest news releases from the Office, information on upcoming events, projects and overall activities carried out by the Office. It is available at

www.osce.org/yerevan



The OSCE Office in Yerevan is now accessible online

Experts review draft laws in Ukraine

The OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, in co-operation with the Legal Reform Committee of the Ukrainian Parliament and the Council of Europe, held a round table discussion on 6 March, during which experts and lawmakers reviewed Ukrainian draft laws. The discussion focused on the principal provisions of the proposed legislation, which must ensure independence and proper functioning of the judiciary as a separate branch of state power, as well as being the main body in the system of citizen's rights protection. The debate showed good prospects of adopting modern legislation on judiciary, compatible with the

standards of a democratic state, governed by the rule of law.

Presentation made to University of Uzbekistan

The OSCE Centre in Tashkent organized a special presentation on the OSCE in March for the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at the National University of Uzbekistan. The event prompted a lively discussion about the current challenges and future prospects in Central Asia for the OSCE. The keynote speakers were Josiah Rosenblatt, Deputy Chief of Mission and Anthony Schinella, Political Officer of the United States Mission to the OSCE. The presentation also provided the officials with an opportunity to speak with about 70 students of history, journalism and law, and gain a unique perspective about contemporary events in Uzbekistan.

Mission Head tours Karategyn

From 27 to 29 March, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan, Marc Gilbert, went out to three districts of the Karategyn Valley, including Gharm, Dzhirgatal and Darband. It was his first visit to Dzhirgatal, the most remote district of the Valley. He met senior representatives of the Hukumats (local authorities), representatives of the judiciary, militia, and the United Nations Area Manager there, and distributed over 1,000 books to schools in need of support. In his discussions, he focused on the current political and social situation in the Karategyn Valley and future concrete steps in the field of human rights and social assessment.

The Mission Head also met with representatives of the civil society in Gharm and Dzhirgatal, including women's support groups.



IN BRIEF

Addressing the **OSCE Permanent Council** in Vienna on 1 March, **Hans Haekkerup**, the new **Special Representative in Kosovo of the United Nations Secretary General**, made clear his intentions to hold Kosovo-wide election this year. "However, the legal framework for provisional self-government in Kosovo has to be in place before the elections", he said. The central institutions which would be created with these elections must also be defined before a decision could be made on the exact date for the vote, Mr. Haekkerup stated. He said that these institutions would be critical in stabilizing and developing Kosovo. Mr. Haekkerup asked the Permanent Council to support the OSCE Mission in Kosovo in starting its necessary build-up towards elections, and thanked the Mission for "the significant contributions it has made in the development of democracy and rule of law in Kosovo."

On 2 March, the **OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Mircea Geoana, Foreign Minister of Romania**, expressed his concern over the conclusions of the Croat National Congress held on 3 March in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. "The extremist rhetoric at the Croat National Congress, as well as the decisions on the

creation of illegal parallel institutions of government in the cantons under Croat control, threaten the positive developments (in Bosnia and Herzegovina)", he said in a press release. "These conclusions contravene the constitutions of both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and are, thus, in clear violation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace", he added. In condemning the actions, he called on all political forces to observe the constitutional provisions.

The **Permanent Council**, the Ambassadorial members of the **OSCE Troika** and the **Greek Foreign Minister George Papandreou** came together on 5 March for a special session to discuss the situation in southern Serbia and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, along the border with the province of Kosovo. It was agreed that the situation was urgent and further deterioration should be prevented. The need for co-ordinated action among international organizations present in the area was stressed. The members of the Troika are Ambassador Liviu Bota (Romania), Ambassador Dr. Jutta Stefan-Bastl (Austria) and Ambassador Joao de Lima Pimentel (Portugal).

A statement denouncing the holding of local elections in Abkhazia, a break-away region of Georgia, was issued by

the **CiO** on 9 March. These elections were due to take place the following day without the participation of inhabitants who were forcibly expelled from the region during the 1990s. "This represents a violation of their fundamental right to vote", said Foreign Minister Geoana. "The illegitimacy of these so-called elections might undermine the peace process and create obstacles for an early and comprehensive settlement of the conflict."

On the occasion of the International Day on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March, the **OSCE Chairman-in-Office** said that combating intolerance and discrimination would be one of the OSCE's top priorities in 2001. "I am very concerned about the spread of intolerance, xenophobia and racism across the whole OSCE region", he said, "This fast growing problem is a constant potential source of conflict and a threat to individual and collective security in Europe. I urge all OSCE countries to redouble their efforts to implement the commitments they have undertaken to fight against intolerance and discrimination." The OSCE is to review the implementation of OSCE commitments in this field and develop recommendations on what the OSCE States can do to further promote tolerance and non-discrimination at a special OSCE conference to be held on 18 and 19 June in Vienna.

Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy
at the University of Hamburg/IFSH

OSCE Yearbook 2000

now available in German from Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft
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tel: +49 7221 2104-0



PRESS PROFILE



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

BELARUS

Reuters, 7 March

‘Belarus, expected to hold a presidential election in September, has failed to make any progress on improving democracy, a high-level European delegation said on Wednesday. Officials from the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, said conditions remained little changed since October last year when parliamentary elections were held... "Unfortunately there is very slow movement to democracy," Adrian Severin, president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, told a news conference. The delegation urged Belarus to embrace democratic reform and conduct fair and free presidential elections.’

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 27 March

‘Relations between Belarus and the West, which does not recognize the referendum (of 1996), have been tense ever since. A new dispute surrounds the order by the Belarusian government banning foreign financial support to non-governmental organizations that are politically active. In addition to that, foreign organizations like the OSCE would not be allowed to train election observers.’

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Financial Times, 2 March

‘Strained relations between Croats and international administrators in Bosnia-Herzegovina are set to become worse after the country’s leading Croat

politician said his people no longer recognised the government... Croats, the smallest of Bosnia’s three main ethnic groups, have become increasingly unhappy since last October, when the OSCE changed rules on the election of Croat representatives shortly before November’s general elections.’

Die Presse, 8 March

‘The OSCE Ambassador in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Robert L. Barry, on Monday characterized the separatist moves by nationalist Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina as "the most dangerous threat to date" to the Dayton agreement. On Sunday, nationalists in Mostar proclaimed a Croat Government of their own. "This is a clear violation of the Dayton agreement and must be punished accordingly", said Barry.’

Der Standard, 8 March

‘The Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ambassador Robert Barry, on Wednesday told the press in Vienna that such a violation of the Dayton Agreement could not be tolerated. Barry even foresaw legal proceedings against the HDZ leadership. The decision to separate (from the Federation) violates 35 paragraphs in the Bosnian penal code.’

GEORGIA

Interfax, 28 February

‘Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze on Wednesday thanked the OSCE for monitoring his country’s borders with Chechnya. Shevardnadze was speaking with Romanian foreign minister Mircea Geoana, head of the OSCE, who had arrived on Wednesday for a visit to Tbilisi... He said he had asked Geoana to extend the monitoring to Georgia’s border with Ingushetia, a Russian internal region also bordering Chechnya.

OSCE mediation in Georgia’s conflict with its breakaway region of Southern Ossetia had also been fruitful, Shevardnadze said. He said the OSCE had increased its mediating efforts in another conflict in Georgia as well, that in the region of Abkhazia.’

Die Presse, 7 March

‘The OSCE mission at the border (between Georgia and) Chechnya, which is headed by an Austrian, is a small success story... (a maximum of) ten unarmed OSCE observers... have the task of monitoring the 81.5-kilometre long border between Georgia and the separatist Caucasus republic day and night... This OSCE mission became necessary when the second Chechen war caused a huge refugee flow – also towards Georgia... "What is special with this mission, says Brigadier Lubenik, is that we only monitor and report – and not control." In addition to that, the mandate is exclusively restricted to Georgian territory.’

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

Reuters, 7 March

‘Romania’s Foreign Minister, Mircea Geoana, offered cautious backing on Wednesday to a NATO proposal to let Yugoslav forces into a buffer zone close to borders with Kosovo and Macedonia. Geoana, who is also Chairman of the OSCE, said deploying Yugoslav troops "would probably be a logical next step" to halt violence in the border areas.’

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 17 March

‘The Mission of the OSCE on Friday officially started its activities in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav Foreign Ministry announced that the OSCE and Yugoslavia had signed an agreement in Belgrade; at the same time, the office of the OSCE in Belgrade was opened. The

OSCE is tasked with assisting the new democratic government in Yugoslavia to adapt the laws of the country to European standards.'

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Financial Times, 2 March

'In a clear change of line by western officials, the OSCE said it would "understand" any armed action by Macedonia against ethnic Albanian fighters operating in a border village on Macedonian territory... Carlo Ungaro, OSCE ambassador, said Macedonia's security was clearly being threatened but he hoped any action would be taken in co-operation with Kfor, the Nato-led peacekeeping force in neighbouring Kosovo. "We appreciate the restraint shown by Macedonia's army and police to two weeks of provocation," he said. "After today's turn of events we will understand and support a reasonable military response by the army and police to try to control the situation." An OSCE statement issued later said a joint patrol of OSCE, European Union Monitoring Mission, UN refugee agency and British embassy, had encountered a Macedonian army vehicle that had just hit a landmine.'

Reuters, 4 March

'The OSCE said it would support armed action by Macedonia against guerrillas operating in a village on the border with Kosovo after three soldiers were killed in the area on Sunday. OSCE Ambassador Carlo Ungaro told Reuters Macedonia's security was being threatened. "We appreciate the restraint shown by Macedonia's army and police to two weeks of provocation," he said by telephone.' "After today's turn of events we will understand and support a reasonable military response by the army and police to try to control the situation."

BBC News, 5 March

'Renewed fighting has broken out in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, between security forces and ethnic Albanian guerrillas near the border with Kosovo... Earlier, the OSCE said it would support a measured military response by Macedonia... OSCE representative Carlo Ungaro described the ethnic Albanian insurgents as infiltrators whose aim was destabilisation... The BBC's Balkans correspondent says the guerrillas are anxious to know how Nato will react to their campaign. They will be bitterly disappointed by the remarks.'

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 6 March

'The armed clashes in the border area between Macedonia and Kosovo escalated again on Sunday... Also on Monday, heavy fighting was reported, including grenade launcher fire. OSCE military (sic!) observers were unable to prevent a worsening of the situation, which has been tense for weeks.'

Der Standard, 6 March

'A special session of the OSCE Permanent Council had been called for Tuesday to discuss the crisis in the border area between Serbia, Macedonia and Kosovo... The Chairman of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Liviu Bota, appealed to all parties to cease the violence and enter a political dialogue.'

Reuters, 22 March

'Condemnation of the rebels has been almost universal. The 55-member OSCE slammed "Albanian extremists" and said the government's response had been appropriate. It said it would double its observer mission to 16 to monitor Macedonia's borders.'

Der Standard, 23 March

The Permanent Council of the OSCE has decided to strengthen the border

monitoring role in Macedonia (of the Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje). As the Chairman of the Permanent Council, Romanian Ambassador Liviu Bota said on Thursday, the OSCE in this way "as one of the first international organizations was reacting to the escalation of violence in Macedonia." The number of (international) mission members will be doubled from eight to 16 during the coming six months.'

NAGORNO-KARABAKH TALKS

Reuters, 29 March

'The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan will swap the rugged Caucasus mountains for the sultry heat of Florida next week when the United States brokers talks aimed at resolving the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. The two sides have failed to strike a deal to end the 13-year conflict over the territory that killed 35,000 people before a 1994 ceasefire. Recent peacemaking efforts by the OSCE could not break the stalemate over Nagorno-Karabakh, which is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, but partly occupied by Armenian forces... Meetings brokered by the OSCE in January and earlier this month in Paris failed to make headway.'

Reuters, 29 March

'The April 3 talks will be held in Key West, Florida, under the auspices of the OSCE... "I have heard the opinion of the co-chairmen of the Minsk Group of the OSCE that the sides in the conflict are nearer than ever to peace. I think there is a basis for these optimistic statements," (Azerbaijani President) Aliyev told reporters. The OSCE formed the Minsk Group, chaired by the United States, France and Russia, to try to bring peace to Nagorno-Karabakh.'

UPDATE

from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

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

Russian President's special envoy for human rights in Chechnya visits ODIHR

Vladimir Kalamonov, the Russian President's Special Representative for Human Rights in Chechnya, visited Warsaw from 13 to 16 March at the invitation of the ODIHR. He had an extended meeting with Gerard Stoudmann, Director of the ODIHR, which included a review of the co-operation projects undertaken between the two institutions in the field of technical assistance and training for Mr. Kalamonov's staff, and an exchange of views about measures to improve the human rights situation in Chechnya.

It was agreed to begin planning an evaluation visit to Chechnya by the ODIHR Director and an expert team, on the basis of which further consideration would be given to joint projects in the areas of training, judicial assistance, and rehabilitation for child victims of the Chechnya conflict.

Later during his Warsaw visit, Mr. Kalamonov opened a training course in human rights standards and case management for members of his staff working in Chechnya. Twelve staff members had been brought to Warsaw for the course, the last in a series of three, which was run for the ODIHR by the Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights.

Mr. Kalamonov also met a number of Polish officials, including the Ombudsman, Professor Andrzej Zoll, and members of parliament.



Technical Mission visits Cyprus

The ODIHR sent a Technical Mission to Cyprus from 13 to 16 March to assess the environment for the 27 May parliamentary elections in the light of OSCE commitments. Taking into consideration the legislative, administrative, political and human rights framework in place and the high level of trust and confidence in the electoral process, it was decided not to deploy an election observation mission for the parliamentary elections.

ODIHR election expert sent to Albania

On 13 March, the ODIHR sent a long-term election expert to Tirana to work with the OSCE Presence in Albania on election issues in advance of the parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in June.

New ODIHR publications on elections

In March, the ODIHR published two election-related handbooks: Guidelines for Reviewing a Legal Framework for Elections, developed in collaboration with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), and Guidelines to Assist National Minority Participation in the Electoral Process, developed in co-operation with International IDEA and the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Both publications are available in English and Russian, in hard copy form as well as for downloading from the ODIHR website at

www.osce.org/odihhr/library.htm

ODIHR sends observers to monitor elections in Montenegro

The ODIHR has deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to monitor the 22 April parliamentary elections in Montenegro (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). The Mission, with a core team of six election experts headed by Nikolai Vulchanov, has made its headquarters in Podgorica. In addition, ten long-term observers have been deployed throughout Montenegro.

The role of the EOM will be to assess the election process's compliance with the commitments of OSCE participating States outlined in the OSCE Copenhagen Document of 1990, as well as with relevant Montenegrin legislation.

Some 150 international short-term observers will be deployed just before polling day to observe election-day procedures including voting, counting of ballots, hand-over of polling station results, and vote tabulation at all levels. On the day after the election, the international observers will issue a statement of preliminary findings and conclusions. A comprehensive final report on the parliamentary elections will be issued by the ODIHR approximately one month after the completion of the electoral process.



ODIHR and EC agree to continue joint programme for Central Asia

The ODIHR and the European Commission (EC) are to continue their successful co-operation in advancing human rights and democratization in Central Asia. The agreement, signed by the two organizations in March, marks the beginning of the latest in a series of similar joint undertakings.

The second joint programme on Central Asia includes projects in the areas of legislative reform, prison service training, assistance to national human rights institutions, human rights monitoring training and assistance to civil society.

“The programme is designed to mobilize and generate national potential which we hope will continue to contribute to the development of sustainable democracy in Central Asia”, said ODIHR Director Gerard Stoudmann.

As the programme builds on the experience and recommendations of the previous programme, many projects are a continuation or a logical next step to the activities started in 1999 and 2000. The projects will be carried out by the ODIHR in co-operation with OSCE field operations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The first Central Asia programme was successfully completed last year, followed by a democratization programme on Belarus and, most recently, a large-scale programme on Roma and the Stability Pact (see below), which is

largely funded by the European Commission.

ODIHR launches human rights training for NGOs in Caucasus and Central Asia

In March, the ODIHR launched a human rights monitoring and reporting training programme for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The first training sessions took place in Armenia and Azerbaijan at the end of the month. Over the next few months, more courses will be held in these countries, as well as in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

“The projects have been designed to

ations active in the respective countries.

In Armenia, the first training session was conducted by trainers from the Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, an NGO with extensive experience in the professional training of human rights activists. Lectures, working group discussions, case studies and role plays focused on the techniques of monitoring and reporting on human rights, including interview skills, how to gather information and how to write accurate reports. The objective was to improve the participants’ monitoring and reporting skills in order to make their human rights work more effective.

The second phase of the training will focus on reviewing the work performed



Participants in ODIHR human rights monitoring workshop in Armenia.

by the participants between the sessions, on the effective use of monitoring reports both at domestic and international levels and on examining specific problems encountered during the monitoring.

At the end of the training process, NGO participants will present human rights monitoring projects, some of

improve monitoring and reporting capacities of local human rights NGOs”, says Arturo Rodriguez, the ODIHR NGO Adviser. “The programme also aims at increasing the number of national human rights monitors and improving co-operation, information sharing and networking between human rights activists.”

The programme is based on a successful pilot project conducted in Uzbekistan last year and implemented in close co-operation with the OSCE field oper-

which will be supported in the course of their implementation by the OSCE and the Polish Helsinki Foundation.

Focus on law on internally displaced persons in South Caucasus

In March, the ODIHR started a regional project aimed at assisting Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia with reviewing the compliance of their legislation with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. As a first step, a meeting was organized in Tbilisi on 28

February to outline the main problems faced by internally displaced persons in the three South Caucasian countries.

It aimed to identify major legislative gaps, and to discuss the project's next phase: the preparation of studies on the compliance of the domestic legislation of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. These studies, to be prepared by teams of national experts, will serve as a basis for the project's concluding conference, and for discussions with the respective governments.

The project, a follow-up to last year's regional workshop on internal displacement in the South Caucasus, is implemented in co-operation with the Washington-based Brookings Institution and NGOs from the three countries of the Southern Caucasus. The Georgian Young Lawyers Association serves as the local co-ordinator for the project.

Last year's workshop, the ongoing project, and the ODIHR's role in these efforts all received prominent mention in the recent report to the UN Commission on Human Rights of Francis Deng, the UN Secretary-General's Representative on Internally Displaced Persons.

ROMA AND SINTI

ODIHR and CoE launch large-scale programme on Roma in SE Europe

The ODIHR and the Council of Europe (CoE) have started implementing a large-scale programme under the mantle of 'Roma under the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe'. Under this joint programme, which is largely financed by the European Commission, the ODIHR focuses on three main objectives:

- to address the difficulties of Roma in crisis or post-crisis situations;
- to generate a "Roma-to-Roma" process of self-organization, sustainable

community development and participation in civil society; and

- to train and empower Roma, women and men, as activists and community workers.

To reach these goals, the ODIHR will organize a series of round tables with Roma representatives, local authorities, and representatives of the majority population to promote confidence and reconciliation. Through training courses, the ODIHR will prepare community mediators to be employed as "Roma contact points" at local levels.

Networking meetings between Roma and Roma-related groups are aimed at managing the internal multi-culturalism of Roma populations and supporting the development of common interests for co-operation on certain key issues such as the respect for the human rights of Roma or their representation in elected bodies. A special focus will be on the training and empowerment of Roma women, a particularly vulnerable group in crisis and transition situations.

Round table in Skopje focuses on Roma in crisis situations

As one of the first initiatives under the new programme on 'Roma under the Stability Pact', a round table on Roma in crisis/conflict situations was held in Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 26 March. The round table meeting was attended by some 40 participants, including Roma NGOs, government representatives, and international organizations. Against the background of increasing ethnic tensions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the devastating effects past conflicts in the region have had on Roma, the discussions were dominated by the appeal of Roma representatives to maintain peace, to promote inter-ethnic confidence and to support the country's democratic institutions. The Roma participants reaffirmed

their will to maintain good relations with all ethnic groups living in the country.

There was consensus among the Roma participants that better self-organization of the Roma community was crucial for a coherent and more effective involvement in the country's political debates. The decentralization of public administration, like in the case of Shuto Orizari, a large Roma municipality which was granted local autonomy, was highlighted as good practice by several participants. It was also suggested to create an office or inter-ministerial commission on Roma issues within the governmental structure of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, possibly modelled after the example of similar institutions established in a number of OSCE countries.

Other recommendations included the proposal to appoint contact points within Roma associations in order to improve the exchange of information among the NGO community, as well as with the OSCE and other international organizations.

Roma NGOs have been established by ODIHR Office in Montenegro

As part of its activities in the field of democratization, the ODIHR Office in Montenegro organizes monthly meetings of representatives of Montenegrin minorities, including Roma. The meetings are aimed at providing assistance to Roma representatives in establishing priorities for activities and projects, in the drafting and implementation of projects, and in raising public awareness. They are also intended to encourage Roma representatives to co-operate in defending their common interests.

The Roma community in Montenegro has shown great interest in these activities and is eager to move ahead on these issues. First tangible results have been achieved with the establishment of Roma NGOs, one in the coastal town of Bota Kotoriska, and another in Niksic.

NEWS from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) is located at Prinsessegracht 22, NL-2514 AP The Hague, The Netherlands, tel.: (+31-70) 312 55 00, fax: (+31-70) 363 59 10, e-mail: hcnm@hcnm.org

High Commissioner encourages dialogue among parties in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

During March, the High Commissioner was actively engaged in trying to prevent a further exacerbation of inter-ethnic tensions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Between 1 and 3 March, Max van der Stoel visited Skopje where he had talks with President Boris Trajkovski, Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski, Foreign Minister Srgjan Kerim, representatives of the Albanian community, and ambassadors from a number of OSCE States.

The High Commissioner was concerned about the violence in and around the village of Tanusevci, close to the border with Kosovo. He sought more information about the root of the problem and discussed how a wider spread of violence could be avoided. When shooting from the hills overlooking Tetovo was reported on 14 March, the High Commissioner decided to return to Macedonia to get a general impression of the evolution of the crisis.

In a joint press release with the OSCE's Chairman-in-Office, the Romanian Foreign Minister, Mircea Geona, Mr. van der Stoel said that everything possible should be done to prevent armed conflict. He also noted that, "recently, the chances of finding solutions for inter-ethnic differences have greatly improved. It would be a tragedy if the ongoing peaceful dialogue would be replaced by armed struggle".

The High Commissioner, who has visited Macedonia on more than fifty occasions since 1993, is very familiar

with the political issues and personalities in the country. He put this to good effect in his contacts with government ministers and Albanian representatives during the March crisis. He urged both sides to exercise restraint and to focus on dialogue and reform in order to build better relations between the country's Macedonian and Albanian communities.

During a visit to Skopje on 16 and 17 March, Mr. van der Stoel had a lengthy discussion with Arben Xhaferi, leader of the main Albanian party (DPA) which is part of the governing coalition. He urged Mr. Xhaferi, and other leading figures of the ethnic Albanian community, to take a firm public stand against the violence. He also tried to identify issues on which dialogue could be intensified.

The High Commissioner made clear his intention to continue with the implementation of the project for a South European University in Tetovo, of which he is the International Board Chairman. This project, which Mr. van der Stoel spearheaded last year, is designed to create a privately funded university that will conduct much of its curriculum in Albanian.

On 23 March, Mr. van der Stoel broke off a visit to Latvia to brief the Chairmanship and the Permanent Council on his views of the crisis in Macedonia. He met with the Chairman-in-Office in Bucharest on 27 March to discuss the OSCE's response to situation. Further consultations were held in Vienna on 30 March and the High Commissioner remains closely involved in seeking long-term inter-ethnic stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

HCNM visits Belgrade and Sandjak

The High Commissioner visited Belgrade on 19 March in order to continue a dialogue with the Serbian authorities on minority-related issues in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. During his meetings in Belgrade, he was informed about developments in the Presovo area of southern Serbia. The next day he travelled to Novi Pazar, capital of Sandjak. There he met with representatives of the Bosniac population. He discussed with them their concerns and desiderata, including greater self-government.

HCNM urges acceleration of naturalization process in Latvia

On 22 and 23 March, the High Commissioner visited Riga, Latvia, where the slow pace of naturalization was a central theme of his discussions. At present 23 per cent of the population remains stateless. Mr. van der Stoel discussed ways of accelerating the naturalization process. He also encouraged the Government to ratify the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Consultations held in Strasbourg with Council of Europe

On 28 March the High Commissioner visited Strasbourg to participate in a series of meetings at the Council of Europe, including an exchange of views with Secretary General Walter Schwimmer, the Ministers' Deputies, and senior representatives of various directorates and divisions.

Both Mr. van der Stoel and Mr. Schwimmer felt that in view of the pre-

sent circumstances, the Government in Skopje ought to postpone the population census planned for the end of May.

Prior to Mr. van der Stoel's arrival in Strasbourg, a full day of working level consultations took place between his

staff and representatives of the Council of Europe regarding a variety of issues and situations of mutual concern.

Mr. van der Stoel's visit coincided with that of Rasim Ljajic, the Minister for National and Ethnic Communities of

the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with whom an exchange of views also took place. Among other things, discussions focused on the current situations in the FRY and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

REPORT from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is located at Rådhusstræde 1, DK-1466 Copenhagen K, Denmark, tel.: (+45-33) 37 80 40, fax: (+45-33) 37 80 30, e-mail: osce@oscepa.dk

OSCE PA President Severin meets EP and PACE presidents in Strasbourg

On 15 March, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Adrian Severin, visited Strasbourg at the invitation of the President of the European Parliament (EP), Nicole Fontaine. During a working lunch, several topics of mutual interest were discussed including election monitoring and the parliamentary dimension of the Stability Pact. President Severin proposed creating a tri-parliamentary working group involving the OSCE PA, the European Parliament and the PA of the Council of Europe, which would coordinate activities related to election monitoring missions. The lunch was also attended by OSCE PA Vice-President Tana de Zulueta and Secretary General Spencer Oliver, as well as EP Vice-Presidents Renzo Imbeni and Jan Kees Wiebenga.

In the afternoon a meeting took place in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Headquarters between President Severin, Vice-President de Zulueta and Lord Russell-Johnston, President of PACE. The idea that

each institution (OSCE PA, PACE, EP) should appoint a member to join each of the working tables of the Stability Pact was discussed and agreed. These appointees will ensure that the parliamentary dimension is represented in the implementation of the Stability Pact.

Following this meeting the Secretaries



PA President Adrian Severin meets Russell Johnston, President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly

General of the three parliamentary assemblies, Spencer Oliver, Bruno Haller, and Julian Priestly met at Mr. Priestly's invitation on the premises of the European Parliament. It was the first time that these senior officials had met together to discuss issues related to the parliamentary

dimension of international organizations, as well as the prospects for further enhancing the existing co-operation between the three parliamentary bodies. It was agreed that election monitoring was a key area for such co-operation, and that the establishment of a working group among the three bodies would constitute an important framework for the monitoring of elections. The three agreed to meet on a more regular basis to discuss areas of current and future co-operation.

PA President Severin pays visit to Skopje and Kosovo

On 19 March, PA President Adrian Severin addressed the Second Conference of Parliaments of south-eastern Europe in Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In his speech, Mr. Severin addressed the background

of much of the conflict that has gripped the region, citing the painful process that south-eastern Europe has had to undergo since the fall of totalitarian regimes. The only way to overcome the current difficulties, he said was to "promote a strategy of common projects," to replace the

“identity crisis and conflicts with the solidarity of interests.”

Mr. Severin added that the OSCE’s involvement in the region was based on the realization that there was a “strong and inseparable link and interaction between the promotion of peace and stability, the development of economic prosperity, and the implementation of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.” He argued that what south-eastern Europe needed was the integration of values and integration of economies, which meant developing infrastructure and furthering economic co-operation in the region. Mr. Severin also made clear his pleasure that some of his prior fears regarding the isolation of Yugoslavia had not been realized, acknowledging Yugoslavia’s return to the OSCE which made both parties stronger.

Turning to the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Severin said, “We must do our utmost to stop such acts of violence,” asserting that peaceful means was the only way to solve disputes. In order to defend the territorial integrity of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, it was essential to strengthen control of the borders, and non-military institutions to control the borders must be developed. The entire Kosovo Liberation Army also needed to be disarmed, and there had to be measures to ensure an alternative civil life for former fighters. In the long-term, it was essential to build up a just society where all members felt equal and safe. He assured the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that the OSCE would continue to be at their disposal.

Following his address to the conference Mr. Severin paid his second visit to Kosovo on 21 and 22 March. He held extensive meetings with leading international officials and local political representatives, including the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Daan Everts and the Principal Deputy of

the UN Special Representative, Ambassador Gary Matthews, as well as Dr. Ibrahim Rugova of the LDK and Hashim Thaqi of the PDK. Afterwards, he visited the Serb enclave of Gracanica as well as Mitrovica and also met with the presidents of a number of municipal assemblies.

Concluding his four-day visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and to Kosovo, PA President Severin issued a statement in which he said, “As long as the political and democratic process is in place and the international community is present [in south-eastern Europe] there are no excuses for violence... I urge all sectors of the Macedonian society to co-operate peacefully and to pursue constructive dialogue to build inter-ethnic confidence.”

The full text of his statement is available on the OSCE PA website at:

www.osce.org/pa

PA delegates address Preparatory Seminar for OSCE Economic Forum

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was represented at the Third Preparatory Seminar for the Ninth OSCE Economic Forum, held in Bucharest on 27 and 28 March, by President Adrian Severin and Jerzy Osiatynski, Head of the Polish Delegation to the PA. Mr. Osiatynski was a lead speaker in the working group dealing with the dangers of weak institutions. In his presentation, he outlined that economic transition offered ample opportunities for the abuse of public office for private gain and for the ‘capture of the State’. Weak institutions, in sum, bred corruption while undermining governments’ abilities to enact and implement policies in areas where government intervention was needed, Mr. Osiatynski emphasized.

In his address, Mr. Severin expressed the need for transparency and good governance in economic matters, as emphasized by the Assembly in its 2000 Bucharest Declaration. He recom-

mended that the OSCE Economic Forum, to be held in Prague in May, pay special attention to the importance of developing small and medium size enterprises in transitional economies. In particular, he referred to the need to study and analyze the ways and means, both institutional and political, by which OSCE participating States might create incentives for cross-border establishment of small and medium size enterprises.

PA President Severin makes working visit to Albania

During a two-day working visit arranged at the invitation of the President of the Albanian Parliament, Skender Gjinushi, PA President Adrian Severin held meetings with the President of Albania Rexhep Meidani, as well as with several political party leaders. During these talks Mr. Severin put special focus on the current situation in the country in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections later this year.

“The local elections in October 2000 were assessed as having been an important step forward for Albania. However, it is now extremely important to ensure that further progress is made in preparing for and running free and fair elections in June 2001.” said Mr. Severin.

The general situation in south-eastern Europe and the efforts to restore peace and security in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was also on the agenda. Mr. Severin noted that: “...the Albanian Government, as well as the main political forces of the country, have strongly been in favour of political dialogue in Macedonia and condemn any use of violence. A peaceful future can only be achieved if the different peoples of the Balkans learn to live together with mutual respect for one another.”

“Albania continues to make good progress in her democratic development,” he concluded following the visit to Albania.

Severin addresses International Colloquium on Racism

“The OSCE PA is deeply concerned with the threat that racism, as a source of tension and interethnic conflicts, represents for the peace and stability in the area.” Mr Severin stated in his closing address to the

International Colloquium on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance held in Bucharest from 26 to 28 March.

Mr. Severin warned the participants that many latent conflicts and conflict situations have their origin in discriminatory and intolerant practices and expressed his belief in

the importance of addressing this problem.

“All of us in the Human Rights Hall, representatives of international organizations, of the State and civil society, theorists and practitioners, have a common goal: to fight racism, to nurture equity, justice and the respect for human dignity”, he said.

NEWS

from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media is located at Kärtner Ring 5-7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria. Tel.: (+43-1) 512 21 45-0, fax: (+43-1) 512 21 45-9, e-mail: pm-fom@osce.org

Representative offers expertise to Kazakhstan on its new media law

Following a request from the OSCE Centre in Kazakhstan, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, contracted a legal expert to review the draft media law in Kazakhstan. This first legal review compared the bill with existing OSCE media commitments and other international media obligations and standards, providing suggestions on “best practice” examples from other OSCE participating States. However, the media law, which was passed by the Lower House of Parliament in March, still includes many of the problematic issues discussed in the legal review.

RFOM makes more interventions in defence of press freedom in Russia

Following his earlier appeal in the case of Anna Politkovskaya, a reporter for the newspaper, Novaya Gazeta (see OSCE Newsletter, March 2001, p. 21), the OSCE Representative again intervened on 7 March with the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov. Ms. Politkovskaya had been detained by Russian troops at one of the checkpoints in Chechnya in February. With great concern, Mr. Duve learned of the alleged mistreatment of the reporter by

officers from the 119 Paratrooper Regiment, who were apparently informed that she was a bona fide journalist. According to media reports, she had been physically and mentally tormented for hours, even threatened with summary execution. Her story was widely reprinted throughout Europe. The Representative looked forward to receiving a comprehensive report by the authorities regarding her detention.

On 31 March, thousands of people gathered in Moscow to voice their concern regarding the future of free media in Russia. This rally, organized by the Union of Journalists, showed the sense of urgency towards tackling the dangers to freedom of expression, felt to have emerged recently.

Of major concern was the status of NTV, Russia’s only non-government-controlled national television channel. Without going into all the legalistic and financial aspects of the current dispute, the OSCE Representative has stressed on several occasions the need to ensure the channel’s editorial independence.

The station had been the object of a take-over bid by state-controlled Gazprom-Media, which immediately appointed a new board of directors and dismissed the Editor-in-Chief, Evgeniy Kiselev.

Media situation worsens in Kyrgyzstan

On 15 March, the OSCE Representative intervened with the President of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akaev, regarding the worsening media situation in that country. Mr. Duve received information that self-censorship was becoming more prevalent, as well as the use of criminal libel laws and other bureaucratic means to harass and pressure the independent media, including the Asaba and Res Publika newspapers and the Osh regional television station. The Representative expressed regret at these unfortunate trends in a Central Asian country, which once showed great promise in the area of media freedom.

Representative issues report on Georgia

On 16 March, Freimut Duve distributed his fifth country report to the OSCE participating States. The report is dedicated to Georgia and follows similar documents already issued on Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. The report stressed that “even though the overall standard of Georgian media is by no means exemplary, it should be stated that it compares favourably with the media situation in many other CIS countries.”

Concern at fate of public radio in Bulgaria

On 21 March, police moved into the building of the Bulgarian National Radio and barred the station's journalists from their studios. Later that day and on the following day, seven journalists were dismissed. The conflict at the radio station concerned the appointment of new management. OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media raised the issue of Bulgarian Public Radio with the Foreign Minister, Nadezhda Mihailova, in a written

communication on 26 March. Mr. Duve's Office intends to organize a meeting on the transformation of public media in Central and Eastern Europe later this year.

Duve seeks information on beating of journalist in Belarus

The OSCE Representative was informed last month that Dmitry Yegorov, a correspondent with the private newspaper, *Birzha Informatsii*, was detained and severely beaten by police in Grodno. The reporter was covering a

news event in conjunction with the 83rd anniversary of the 1918 Belarusian National Republic. On 27 March, in a letter addressed to the Foreign Minister, Mikhail Khvostov, the Representative emphasized that despite declarations that the journalist was on assignment, he was apparently deprived of his camera, pager and tape recorder. "There are reports that the Grodno police inflicted three beatings on (Mr. Yegorov) who was also subjected to verbal abuse and threats." Mr. Duve asked for additional information.

REPORT from the OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat

The OSCE Secretariat is located at Kärntner Ring 5-7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria. Telephone: (+43-1) 514 36-0, Fax: (+43-1) 514 36-96, e-mail: pm@osce.org

Workshop in London looks at Brahimi Report on peace operations

At the invitation of the Centre for Defence Studies and the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the Secretary General, Jan Kubis, attended an international workshop in London on 6 March on 'Public Security and the Rule of Law from a European Perspective'. Its main objective was to consider the findings and recommendations of the Brahimi Report on United Nations Peace Operations from the perspective of European experience.

The meeting was attended by Lakhdar Brahimi, chairman of the panel which prepared the report, and by a number of other high-level UN and government participants engaged in peace operations, as well as by representatives of development agencies, international organizations

academic circles and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It was a part of a series of similar regional discussions.

The Secretary General also used his

Secretary General pays working visits to Korea and Japan

On 20 and 21 March, the Secretary General visited Korea to participate in the OSCE-Korea Conference in Seoul, where he addressed the opening session and gave several interviews. The Conference was organized by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Romanian OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat (see news feature earlier in this issue).

After the conference, the Republic of Korea organized a study visit to the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom, where

participants could witness for themselves a division dating from the Cold War that still exists today. Briefings were held by the ROK/US Combined Forces Command that evolved from the



Secretary General Jan Kubis is interviewed by Korean press at the Swiss camp near the border area with North Korea

presence in London to hold brief working meetings at the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office with the heads of its OSCE, Eastern and Eastern Adriatic departments.

United Nations Command. A visit was also organized to the camp of the Swedish and Swiss Delegations to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission.

Prior to the conference in Seoul, the Secretary General had been invited for a working visit to Japan from 14 to 18 March, which also gave him an opportunity to get acquainted with the history and culture of the country and its people. He gave an interview to daily newspaper Asahi Shinbun and also met the OSCE Troika and other Ambassadors.

All his meetings and discussions reflected the keen interest of Japan to further develop its co-operation with the OSCE, guided by the approach of cross-support. Co-operation in south-eastern Europe and in Central Asia was frequently mentioned as the two areas where this co-operation could be meaningfully furthered. Academic and research institutions also expressed their strong interest in OSCE activities and experiences in the field of confidence-building, conflict prevention and post conflict rehabilitation and development as well as in modalities of OSCE's co-operation with other international organizations and NGOs.

The successful conference, co-organized by Japan and the OSCE, focused on Central Asia, which took place last December in Tokyo, was highlighted as a good example of co-operation in the areas what are of interest and relevance for Asian Partners for Co-operation.

Throughout the meetings the Secretary General was highly appreciative and grateful to the Government of Japan

for its contribution to the activities of the OSCE – be it political, financial or by seconding members to OSCE missions – and encouraged the authorities to continue with this co-operation and support.

Meeting held with Baltic Commissioner

On 30 March, the Secretary General met with Ms. Helle Degn, Commissioner of the Council of Baltic Sea states (CBSS) for Democratic Development, at her request. The main topic of their discussion was the promotion of co-operation between the OSCE and CBSS.

Seminar held in Bucharest for Ninth OSCE Economic Forum

On 27 and 28 March, the OSCE, in co-operation with the Government of

inarians for the Ninth OSCE Economic Forum, to be held in Prague from 15 to 18 May. The seminar was jointly prepared by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the Chairman-in-Office. More than 170 participants from OSCE participating States, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Office of the Representative on the Freedom of the Media, numerous representatives of OSCE field missions, several international organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as the business and academic communities attended the event.

Opening the seminar, the Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana, focused on the interplay of different actors in promoting good governance and transparency. Discussions dealt with the dangers of

weak institutions, and participants analysed how the OSCE, through its political bodies, its field missions and its co-operation with international organizations, could be of use in the promotion of good governance practices. It was agreed that a sound political and institutional framework was essential for achieving a sustainable and prosperous economic and social development. Participants underlined that institutions were a key factor in economic development as well as security, and hence they should be

transparent and flexible.

The OSCE was also called upon to increase its liaison function by facilitating co-operation between governments, local authorities, international organizations, NGOs and the business sector.



Bucharest seminar prepares for the Ninth Economic forum

Romania, hosted a seminar on 'Transparency and good governance in economic matters; institutions, governance and economic performance', in Bucharest, Romania. This was the third and last in a series of preparatory sem-

Participants suggested that the OSCE deepen its role with regard to promoting regional co-operation through the promotion of regional projects. The link was drawn between the promotion of civil service reforms and good governance/prevention of corruption.

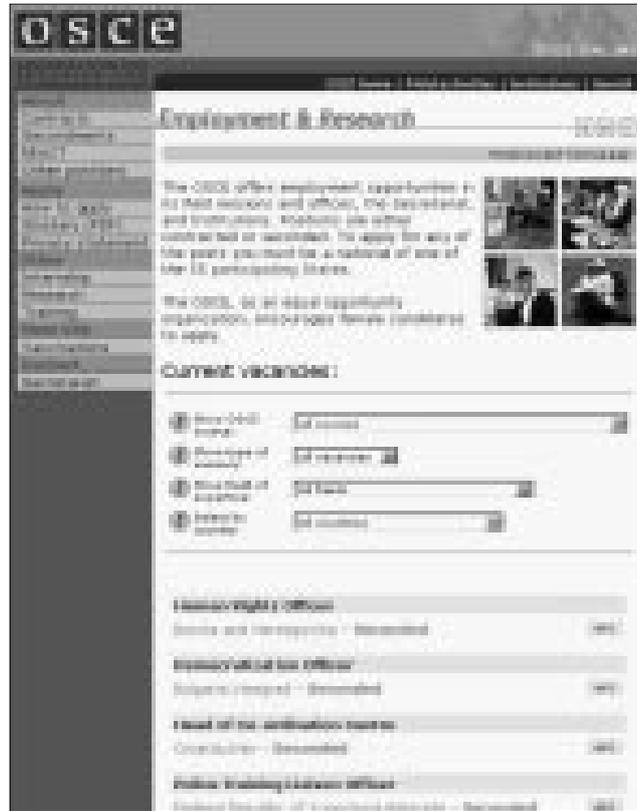
For instance, there was consensus that lack of transparency in decision-making processes undermined the democratic nature of institutions. Therefore it was suggested that the OSCE help increase public access to information and documents, and increase its attention concerning the role of the media as a promoter for the spread of economic information.

It was suggested that the OSCE could, in co-operation with relevant international organizations, consider setting benchmarks for best practices in regard to good governance and transparency. Delegates also stressed the importance of the institutional strengthening of the OSCE's economic dimension.

Finally, it was suggested that future discussions could incorporate a more detailed analysis concerning the experience of western countries dealing with

lack of transparency and corruption.

New OSCE employment web pages developed by PPIS and DHR



New on the OSCE website: employment and research page

A new area of the OSCE website has been developed and made available by the Online unit of the Press and Public Information Section in conjunction with

the Department of Human Resources. Individuals who are interested in working for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe can now find listings of current vacancies and apply online through the new OSCE Employment website. Employees generally work on fixed-term contracts or are seconded by one of the OSCE participating States. Applications for fixed-term contract positions are sent directly to the Secretariat in Vienna.

Applications for seconded positions are sent directly to the applicant's national government contact point, where they are screened prior to being submitted for nomination to a vacant post.

The OSCE operates more than 20 field operations in south-eastern Europe, eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. People who work for the Organization must be nationals of one of the 55 OSCE participating States.

The new employment page can be found at:

www.osce.org/employment



PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS

available upon request at the Vienna or Prague Offices of the OSCE Secretariat*
and via the OSCE website (www.osce.org/publications)

* Rytirska 31, CZ-110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Publications	Publisher/ Editor	Language(s)
OSCE Newsletter (monthly) Volume VII (2000), Volume VI (1999), Volume V (1998), Volume IV (1997), Volume III (1996), Volume II (1995), Volume I (1994)	OSCE Secretariat	Since January 1998 in all six OSCE official languages (English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish) 1994-97 in English and Russian
Fact Sheet (revised January 2001) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is the OSCE? ¹ ■ The OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat ■ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights² ■ Representative on Freedom of the Media ■ High Commissioner on National Minorities ■ OSCE Parliamentary Assembly² ■ Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina³ ■ Mission to Croatia³ ■ Mission in Kosovo³ 	OSCE Secretariat	¹ 'What is OSCE?' is available in all six OSCE official languages. ² Also available in Russian. ³ Also available in local languages.
OSCE Handbook general information on OSCE, Third Edition (March 1999) - updated June 2000	OSCE Secretariat	English and Russian
Survey of OSCE Long-Term Missions and other OSCE Field Activities (January 2000)	OSCE Secretariat/ Conflict Prevention Centre	English
The Secretary General's Annual Report on OSCE Activities (1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000)	OSCE Secretariat	In all six OSCE official languages
OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Semi-annual Reports	ODIHR	English and Russian

Publications	Publisher/ Editor	Language(s)
<p>Other publications on democratization and human rights are available at the ODIHR website: (www.osce.org/odihr/publications.htm)</p>	ODIHR	English
<p>Bibliography on the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities: Documents, Speeches, Related Publications. <i>Third Edition</i></p>	The Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, The Hague, March 1997	English
<p>The Role of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in OSCE Conflict Prevention – An Introduction</p>	ibid. June 1997	English Russian
<p>Chronological Review from 1973 to 1998 of CSCE/OSCE official publications <i>List of bound versions of documents issued at the conclusion of a review, follow-up and other major CSCE/OSCE events including the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures</i></p>	Prague Office	English
<p>Reference Manual – Decisions Compilation 1993-94, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 1999 and 2000)</p>	Prague Office	English



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Kärntner Ring 5-7
A-1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel.: (+43-1) 514 36-180
Fax: (+43-1) 514 36-105
E-mail: info@osce.org

Keith Jinks, Editor
Alexander Nitzsche, Deputy Editor

For more information on the OSCE
see the OSCE Website:
<http://www.osce.org>