

## CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE'S ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2003

### 1. Introductory remarks

The OSCE in 2003 has adapted itself to new security risks and challenges and refined its instruments to be able to meet new challenges ahead. During the year the OSCE has had to demonstrate its ability to respond effectively to the demands of an ever-changing security environment. The institutions and missions of the OSCE have demonstrated their ability to make a difference on the ground through the numerous activities they have developed. In many cases the OSCE has co-operated in the year 2003 with other international organizations that deal with European security, human rights and/or economic issues. In view of the broad spectrum and complex nature of security and/or other issues and in line with its **Platform for Co-operative Security**, co-operation with other organizations and institutions has been promoted as it makes the performance of the OSCE more effective and more efficient.

The Netherlands Chairmanship of the OSCE has worked in 2003 on the basis of the outcome of the Porto Ministerial and other achievements of the Portuguese and previous Chairs. Building upon the commitments of OSCE participating States the Netherlands Chairmanship has formulated its **objectives and priorities** for the year 2003. The **CiO** presented, among others things, the following priorities and objectives to the Permanent Council on 13 January 2003:

- A re-balancing of the dimensions of the OSCE;
- A geographical re-balancing;
- The combat against trafficking;
- Propagation of OSCE activities and standards in Central Asia and other regions;
- An intensive diplomatic and political endeavour to bring frozen conflicts closer to solution;
- Consultations to bring the discussion on new threats and challenges to a satisfactory conclusion;
- Reinforced co-operation with other international organizations, as well as a strong effort to ameliorate co-ordination within the Organization, were among the priorities of the Netherlands Chairmanship of the OSCE for the year 2003.

An interim report on the activities of the Netherlands chair was presented to the PC in June. Directed by the various Porto tasks, the Netherlands Chairmanship instituted groups of

friends in Vienna to work on issues that at the time were to be decided upon at the **Maastricht Ministerial Council Meeting** in the Netherlands, 1 and 2 December 2003.

The Chairmanship communicated its activities to all participating States in a weekly brief. In the same spirit of transparency and openness, this Chairman-in-Office's Activity Report intends to inform **the participating States** about the activities of the CiO and the Netherlands Chairmanship. The CiO has travelled extensively through the OSCE area to propagate OSCE commitments and standards. Target-oriented high-level meetings were held with representatives of participating States and other international organizations.

The Netherlands, in chairing the OSCE, has done its utmost to uphold the dignity and responsibility of the OSCE, to be supportive to its participating States, to foster the conditions for consolidating the international position of the OSCE and to adapt its agenda to today's security risks and political challenges. Our hope is that this report bears witness to these efforts.

## **2. From a discussion on threats to a new strategy**

An important endeavour of the OSCE community this year has been the development of a comprehensive strategy to address threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century. Consultations on the new strategy were based on a Russian-American non-paper of the autumn of 2002, which identified the main threats and challenges for the OSCE. A group of friends was formed to tackle this issue. After intense consultations on a wide range of subjects, the Maastricht Ministerial Council Meeting has agreed on the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Stability and Security in the Twenty-first century. This strategy recognizes that the evolving security environment creates new challenges for all, including for the OSCE. The strong points of the OSCE — its broad membership, its multidimensional concept of comprehensive security, its co-operative stance and tradition — will help the Organization to meet these challenges. The new OSCE strategy contains the OSCE's response to inter-State and intra-State conflicts, terrorism, cross-national criminal activities, discrimination and intolerance, to threats arising from economy and the environment and to specific threats of a politico-military nature. The new strategy aims to contribute to a more cohesive and effective international system for responding to global threats and challenges.

## **3. Combating trafficking in human beings**

The Netherlands Chairmanship suggested to the participating States that the combat against trafficking in human beings should be made one of the OSCE's priorities in 2003. Trafficking in human beings is a scourge of our times, a threat to security and stability and a violation of human dignity. The OSCE encompasses a wide range of countries of either origin, or transit, or destination of victims of trafficking. Furthermore, the OSCE, with its three-dimensional structure, is in a good position to tackle subject matters related to either prevention, or protection of victims or prosecution of perpetrators. The efforts of the Netherlands Chairmanship have focused on supporting the work already done in the OSCE through institutions like the ODIHR and the field operations, and have involved other parts of the Organization, such as the OCEEA and the SPMU. Their specific input and background expertise was intended to ensure a comprehensive approach in tackling and re-enforcing the combat against trafficking in human beings.

The Eleventh Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum was devoted to Trafficking in Human Beings, Drugs, Small Arms and Light Weapons: National and International Economic Impact. The Second Preparatory Seminar to the Economic Forum was exclusively devoted to the theme of Trafficking in Human Beings, particularly focusing on its economic aspects. The theme of trafficking in human beings was further elaborated in many events and projects through ODIHR and OSCE field operations. Themes of the **Annual Police Experts Meeting** in Vienna on 18 and 19 September organized by the SPMU included the protection of victims, the prosecution of criminals and the need for further police co-operation, particularly at a regional level, in combating trafficking. The OSCE further intensified its co-operation with other relevant international organizations (the **United Nations (UN)**, the **Council of Europe (CoE)**, the **European Union** and the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**) in 2003 in the field of combating trafficking.

### **OSCE Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**

On 24 July 2003, pursuant to the Bucharest Ministerial Decision No. 6 of 2001 and the Porto Ministerial Declaration of 2002, the participating States, through the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking, adopted the **OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings** (PC/DEC No. 557). The Action Plan was the result of intensive consultation on the part of the Informal Working Group. The result was a comprehensive document encompassing commitments of participating States in the field of (1) investigation, law enforcement and prosecution, (2) prevention of trafficking in human beings, and (3) protection and assistance. The document furthermore gives guidance, offering a perspective on the ways in which various parts of the organization, its institutions, and the field offices can better contribute to the combat against trafficking. The Maastricht Ministerial Council Meeting has endorsed the OSCE Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

### **Mechanism for combating trafficking in human beings**

At the Opening Session of the Eleventh Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum in Prague in May, the CiO presented the proposal to establish a mechanism for combating trafficking in human beings. The objectives of this mechanism are (1) to assist participating States in the implementation of commitments related to combating trafficking in human beings, (2) to ensure co-ordination of OSCE efforts in combating trafficking in human beings across all three dimensions of the OSCE, (3) to strengthen co-ordination among the relevant authorities of the participating States and between the OSCE and other relevant organizations, and (4) to raise the public and political profile of the combat against trafficking in human beings. The Ministerial Council in Maastricht has established an OSCE mechanism to provide assistance to participating States to combat trafficking in human beings. The OSCE mechanism consists of a Special Representative and a special unit.

## **4. The fight against terrorism**

Another important task of the Netherlands Chairmanship was to ensure that the OSCE continues to reinforce the **fight against terrorism** in 2003. This was why a Group of Friends was established, under the chairmanship of Iceland, to deal with implementation issues. The Chairmanship notes with satisfaction that the Maastricht Ministerial Council Meeting took important decisions in this field, among others on Travel Document Security, on the establishment of an Anti-Terrorism Network and the decision which endorsed and underlined

the importance of the FSC Decision on MANPADS. To reinforce the OSCE's stance in the combat against terrorism, the OSCE convened a number of seminars on terrorism in the OSCE area. This was done with the support of the anti-terrorism unit in the OSCE Secretariat. The CiO attended a major anti-terrorism meeting organized by the UN on 7 March 2003, the aim being to improve co-ordination between regional organizations. Portugal, as a member of the OSCE Troika, in consultation with the Netherlands as Chair of the OSCE, organized a follow-up conference to the first Lisbon anti-terrorism conference in September of 2003. The aim was to take stock of the implementation of anti-terrorism measures of the OSCE.

In its fight against terrorism, the OSCE should remain on guard for the risk of any concomitant **erosion of human rights**. The Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) organized a conference, with support of the Dutch Chairmanship, on Human Rights and Combating Terrorism, on 18 September 2003 in The Hague. The seminar's speeches and a concise summary of its debates have been collected in a booklet that has been made available to OSCE capitals and to delegations in Vienna.

The Chairmanship also noted with satisfaction the work of the **Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU)** at the Secretariat. Now fully staffed, it turns out to be an essential focal point for anti-terrorism activities and new initiatives, notably the proposal for an anti-terrorism network of the OSCE.

## **5. OSCE peacekeeping operations**

The Ministerial Council in Porto tasked the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation with reviewing the OSCE's role in peacekeeping operations. In addition, possible options for deployment should be considered, based on the decisions of the OSCE Helsinki Summit in 1992. It was decided then that the OSCE must be able to conduct peacekeeping operations, possibly with the support of organizations such as NATO, the EU, and the CIS. This decision is generally thought to have paved the way for the OSCE to conduct small-scale peacekeeping operations. Discussions held in the Group of Friends that the Netherlands set up to review this matter at the beginning of this year, chaired by Finland, confirmed that most participating States do not favour large-scale military peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the OSCE. A workshop on this subject that the Netherlands Chairmanship and Finland organized in Vienna reaffirmed that a majority of participating States do see merit in small-scale OSCE peacekeeping operations. The overall conclusion was that Helsinki '92 still proves a sufficient base for OSCE activities in this field. The letter from the Chairperson of the Permanent Council to the Chairman-in-Office, Appendix 13 of the journal of the Eleventh MC in Maastricht, reports on Peacekeeping.

## **6. Political and Military Dimension**

### **Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC)**

The Netherlands Chairmanship has built on the work of previous chairmanships in its efforts to enhance interaction and co-ordination between the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation. In this regard, the Chairmanship welcomes the results of the first **Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC)**. The purpose of the ASRC is to review and discuss, on an annual basis, the fulfilment of OSCE commitments in security policy and arms control. The first ASRC took place in Vienna on 25 and 26 June 2003. The

conference consisted of a general plenary session, followed by parallel working groups on combating terrorism, comprehensive security, potential security risks, and conflict prevention, all of which opened with keynote speeches. This structure was adopted to encourage debate between representatives of participating States, the staff of delegations in Vienna, and outside experts. The ASRC can make an important contribution to review and update the newly adopted OSCE strategy.

The Netherlands Chairmanship closely followed the activities of the Personal Representative for the Article II/Annex 1B, Dayton Peace Accords on confidence- and security-building measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Article IV/Annex 1B, Dayton Peace Accords on sub-regional arms control. The Chairmanship supported and recognized the work of the States Parties for the full implementation of these agreements.

### **Ammunition and explosives stockpiles**

The Chairmanship welcomes the OSCE document regarding the security risks arising from **stockpiles of ammunition and explosives** for use in conventional armaments in surplus or awaiting destruction in the OSCE area. In 2002, the FSC agreed to include dangers arising from surplus stockpiles of ammunition on its agenda for 2003. After the successful conclusion of a workshop on this issue in Vienna on 27 and 28 May 2003, a draft document was introduced into the FSC by France and the Netherlands. Consultations and negotiations led to the successful adoption of the current document in the FSC. The Chairmanship believes that an OSCE mechanism dealing with surplus stockpiles of ammunition will enhance security in the OSCE area. The Ministerial Council in Maastricht endorsed the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition.

## **7. Economic and Environmental Dimension**

The Netherlands Chairmanship, in its efforts to re-balance the three OSCE dimensions, focused on strengthening the **economic and environmental dimension** and on linking its work to other dimensions. The Chairmanship put subjects and themes on the OSCE agenda which are equally important to all OSCE participating States

### **Eleventh OSCE Economic Forum**

Pursuant to PC Decision No. 490, dated 25 July 2002, the theme for the Eleventh OSCE Economic Forum was **Trafficking in Human Beings, Drugs, Small Arms and Light Weapons: National and International Economic Impact**. This theme provided an opportunity to expand the area of attention of the Economic Forum to other dimensions, in particular with regard to trafficking in general and to the economic aspects of trafficking. Furthermore, discussions in the preparatory seminars and the Economic Forum consistently underlined that trafficking was a matter of concern to all participating States. It was generally accepted that reinforced co-operation — both within the OSCE and between the OSCE and other organizations and institutions — would be necessary in order to make the combat against trafficking more effective.

The First Preparatory Seminar on **Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons: National and International Economic Impact** took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 11 and 12 November 2002. The content of the seminar was complementary to the work of the FSC. During the seminar the need to implement and enforce existing agreements was emphasized.

Furthermore, information-sharing took place on issues such as brokering, production and destruction of surpluses of small arms and light weapons (SALW). Follow-up of the conclusions of the seminar took place in the Economic Forum, the FSC and in a follow-up seminar reviewing the role of brokers in the illegal arms trade, organized jointly by Norway and the Netherlands in Oslo (22 to 24 April 2003). These two countries launched an initiative on the development of regional instruments to improve the control of brokering in SALW, which was one of the recommendations of the seminar. At a side meeting of the Maastricht Ministerial Council Meeting the Best Practices Handbook on SALW was presented to delegations and NGOs.

**Trafficking in Human Beings: National and International Economic Impact** was the theme of the Second Preparatory Seminar, which took place in Ioannina, Greece, on 17 and 18 February 2003. This seminar concentrated on the economic aspects and impact of trafficking in women and minors for sexual exploitation, and on trafficking in human beings for exploitation in industry. The focus on economic aspects, the push and pull factors behind the trade, the financial aspects (such as the money trail and the value-added chain of trafficking profits), as well as the discussion on the root causes of trafficking were useful additional elements in a discussion which is, internationally in particular, dominated by rightful attention to the protection of victims and the prosecution of perpetrators. The conclusions of the seminar provided valuable input for the Economic Forum and for the work of the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking in establishing the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. This Action Plan was endorsed by the Maastricht Ministerial Council Meeting.

The Third Preparatory Seminar **Trafficking in Drugs: National and International Economic Impact** took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 17 and 18 March 2003. It focused on issues such as the effect of trade in heroin, synthetic drugs and precursors. It was established that the more vulnerable OSCE economies tend to be hardest hit by the disruptive effects of the financial and economic consequences for their economies. Weak institutional structures facilitate drug-trafficking. Following this third seminar, the OSCE strengthened its relations with the UNODC in an effort to establish its role in their joint fight against trafficking in drugs.

Conclusions and suggestions from the three seminars indicating the possibilities for synergies in the fight against the various types of trafficking provided the input for the **Eleventh OSCE Economic Forum**, which took place in Prague, from 20 to 23 May 2003. The Economic Forum focused on anti-trafficking in relation to the role of the business community, to the role of governments and finally to the role of the OSCE in combating the various forms of trafficking from the perspective of the economic aspects and impact. The Economic Forum provided useful input for OSCE participating States to establish public-private partnerships in combating trafficking and to continue work on the economic aspects of trafficking. Furthermore, the proposal to establish a special mechanism for combating trafficking in human beings was officially put forward by the **CiO** in Prague.

Apart from the main theme, the Eleventh Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum also provided an opportunity for the review of the implementation of commitments made by the OSCE participating States in the economic and environmental dimension. For this, **UN ECE** provided an outstanding background document and shared ideas on further development of indicators for the future review of commitments. A side event was organized on the co-operation between the **OSCE** with **UNEP** and **UNDP** in the framework of the initiative on

Environment and Security in Southeast Europe and Central Asia, when a link was established with the Ministerial Conference on “Environment for Europe”, which took place in Kiev simultaneously with the Eleventh Economic Forum. During this side event the results of environmental security assessments were presented and ideas on follow-up co-operation were shared.

Pursuant to PC/DEC 539 of 10 April 2003, the **OSCE Conference on Globalization** took place in Vienna on 3 and 4 July 2003. The main purpose of the conference was to discuss the role of the OSCE in maximizing the benefits and addressing the risks and challenges of Globalization. Furthermore, on 26 September 2003, the Chairmanship organized a **Special Meeting of the Permanent Council on the Integration Processes** in the OSCE region.

### **Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee of the Permanent Council**

The Netherlands Chairmanship further increased the number of meetings of the Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee, which proved to be an important tool for information-sharing and preparing PC decisions.

### **OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension**

Following the **Porto Decision No. 5** calling for the development of a new OSCE strategy document in the economic and environmental dimension, two informal groups of friends were established. The first group, chaired by Belarus, focused on the substance of the new document, while the second group, chaired by the Netherlands, discussed procedures. Furthermore, input was provided to the elaboration of the strategy document at a conference, organized by the UN ECE in Villars, Switzerland, 7 and 8 July 2003. The Strategy Document identifies the challenges and threats in the economic and environmental dimension as well as responses and actions to address them (including further developing co-operation, strengthening good governance, and ensuring sustainable development and the protection of the environment). The document was adopted by Ministers at the Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council in Maastricht.

## **8. Human Dimension**

The activities of the CiO in the human dimension are manifold. A number of activities follow the regular pattern of the events organized according to the regular schedule of the OSCE activities in the human dimension: the **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM)**, the **yearly ODIHR seminar and the three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings (SHDM)**. Other activities are the result of decisions taken at Ministerial Council meetings, such as the organization of the **Conferences on Anti-Semitism and on Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination**, as well as the work on the **Roma and Sinti Action Plan**. Furthermore, the human dimension plays an important role in the activities of the CiO in regional issues. While these are to be found in the respective regional parts of this report, special mention should be made here of the invocation of the Moscow Mechanism by ten participating States in the case of Turkmenistan, including the trip of the CiO to that country in this regard.

In the context of the regular OSCE activities, three SHDMs were organized, in co-operation with the ODIHR, devoted respectively to Roma and Sinti, to Freedom of Religion or Belief and to Prevention of Torture.

The first of these meetings was organized in Vienna on 10 and 11 April. The theme “Roma and Sinti” was chosen to give the opportunity to all interested parties, including international organizations and NGOs, to give input for the work on the **Roma and Sinti Action Plan**, the elaboration of which had been entrusted to the ODIHR by the 2001 Ministerial Council Meeting in Bucharest (Decision No. 7). The discussions at the SHDM proved to be a useful input for the further work on the Action Plan. A working group was subsequently set up to continue the work in drawing up the required Action Plan, with the result that this plan was endorsed by the Maastricht Ministerial Council Meeting.

The second SHDM took place in Vienna on 17 and 18 July and was devoted to **Freedom of Religion or Belief**. It showed that, although progress has been made in this field, there are still areas and situations where freedom of religion or belief is not taken for granted. Problems that were stressed included registration, and the role of the media in promoting tolerance.

The third SHDM was devoted to the **Prevention of Torture** and took place in Vienna on 6 and 7 November. Though all States condemn torture, it still occurs in many places and it remains necessary to be pro-active and to stay vigilant in the fight to prevent this.

The annual Human Dimension Seminar in 2003 was devoted to **Women’s Participation in Public and Economic Life** and took place in Warsaw from 13 to 16 May. The meeting offered a good opportunity to highlight the work done in the field of gender issues by the OSCE and the ODIHR. It also was used to review the OSCE Gender Action Plan.

As urged by the **Ministerial Council in Porto**, the Chairmanship organized two special Conferences on issues addressed in its **Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (Decision No. 6)**. The first of these two conferences was on anti-Semitism and took place on 19 and 20 June in Vienna. This conference underlined the importance of the continuing struggle against this phenomenon, which unfortunately is recurring in the OSCE area in present times on a larger scale than before.

The Conference on Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, which took place on 4 and 5 September, likewise in Vienna, drew attention to the various aspects of this issue, which, in particular in recent years, has unfortunately become more topical.

Both conferences stressed the need for continuous attention on the part of the OSCE and the participating States and the need for the collection of data on occurrences, bearing in mind both the specific background of these phenomena as well as their similarities.

The **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM)**, which took place from 6 to 17 October in Warsaw, was the second one organized according to the new modalities. After a first week in which a comprehensive review of all OSCE commitments in the field of the **Human Dimension** took place, the second week was devoted to three specially selected subjects — Racism, Xenophobia, Discrimination and Anti-Semitism, National Minorities and Migrant Workers. Another day was devoted to the project work of the ODIHR. At the HDIM



broad support was noted for, *inter alia*, the Roma and Sinti Action Plan, the idea of a special mechanism in the field of trafficking in human beings, as well as for the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.

Following interest expressed by some participating States, the Chairmanship and UNHCR organized a one-day informal briefing for Delegations on 21 October on **Internally Displaced Persons**. The briefing discussed existing protection arrangements and the role of the UN and OSCE in this field.

At the request of ten participating States, the Human Dimension Mechanism was invoked according to § 12 of the Moscow Document of 1991 and the rapporteur, Professor Decaux, submitted his report on 25 February 2003. On 3 March the CiO visited Turkmenistan and urged President Niyazov and the Turkmen authorities to engage fully in this Mechanism. The report was discussed in the Permanent Council of 13 March.

## **9. Internal Co-ordination and Operational Capacity of the OSCE**

### **OSCE Troika**

The OSCE Troika format is an important tool for co-ordinated action and mid-term planning. In 2003 the **OSCE Troika** met at foreign minister level twice (January and July). OSCE Ministerial Troika meetings involve, in addition to the three Troika Ministers, the heads of institutions, the Secretary General and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly. The latter presented, at both occasions, a brief outline of their respective work programmes, together with an indication of their planned events and travels for the following six months. The Troika meetings were also used for an evaluation of information-sharing, co-ordination and co-operation between the CiO, Secretariat, institutions, PA and field missions. Finally, the Chairmanship initiated discussions on specific situations (country or regional) and thematic priorities.

### **Co-ordinating with the Institutions**

The Netherlands Chairmanship has been working in close collaboration with the **ODIHR** (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights), the **HCNM** (High Commissioner on National Minorities), and the **RFoM** (Representative on Freedom of the Media). In the course of 2003 there were numerous contacts, on working level and on the level of high officials. When appropriate the CiO met with or contacted the heads of institutions. The heads of institution participated in the Ministerial Troika meetings.

In addition, in May 2003 the Netherlands Chairmanship organized a co-ordination meeting in The Hague to which the OSCE heads of institutions, the Secretary General and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly were invited. The aim of the meeting was to further improve co-ordination and co-operation between CiO, secretariat and institutions.

### **Co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE**

The Netherlands Chairmanship has continued the development of a closer and more intense relationship with the **OSCE Parliamentary Assembly** (OSCE PA) . The **CiO** regarded a closer relationship with the OSCE PA a priority.

The CiO had several meetings with the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Bruce George. Apart from the Ministerial Troika meetings with the heads of institutions, and during two appearances of the CiO at the PA's winter and summer assemblies, the CiO and Mr. George met in one-to-one meetings to discuss ways to improve the co-operation between the OSCE and the OSCE PA. Discussions focused on the common objective of enhancing co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the other OSCE institutions and organs.

The CiO welcomed, in this context, the decision of the PA to open a **liaison office** in Vienna. The PA's liaison office and its representative, Ambassador Nothelle, has proven to be an excellent means of bringing about more effective co-operation and exchanges of information.

The CiO addressed the first winter session of the PA which was held in Vienna on 20 February 2003. The CiO also addressed the twelfth Annual Session of the PA, which took place in Rotterdam on 5 July on the theme "The Role of the OSCE in the New Architecture of Europe". The CiO commended the PA for choosing such a timely topic, both in view of an enlarging EU and NATO, and because of the new emerging threats confronting Europe.

### **Contacts with non-governmental organizations**

In the view of the Netherlands Chairmanship of the OSCE vibrant civil societies — societies that provide opportunities for people to make their views and concerns heard — are crucial for the development of democracies throughout the OSCE region. Civil society and political participation are conducive to democratic development. Non-governmental organizations, both at the national and the international level, play an important role here.

During 2003 the Netherlands Chairmanship held regular consultations with the International Helsinki Federation (IHF) and its Dutch affiliate the Netherlands Helsinki Committee. At the joint initiative of the IHF and the Chairmanship a meeting with international NGOs was held in Vienna on 12 May. It was strongly recommended that future Chairs should hold similar meetings in their tenure. Parallel to the Ministerial Council Meeting in Maastricht, a NGO meeting was organized under the title "OSCE Priorities and Perspectives from Civil Society". More than 100 representatives from NGOs from all over the OSCE region participated in the NGO meeting.

### **Border management/Ohrid Conference**

In accord with the Porto Declaration, the Chairmanship put the improvement of border management high on the agenda in 2003. Particularly, the Chairmanship focused on the **Ohrid Conference on Border Security and Management** (22 and 23 May 2003) and its follow-up. At this conference, initiated by NATO, the EU, the OSCE and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the countries of South-Eastern Europe agreed upon the Common Platform on Border Security and Management proposed by the four partner organizations and on the "Way Forward Document". Subsequently, an OSCE expert team conducted an in-depth needs assessment in the region. The expert team also consulted the EU Commission and NATO. The Assessment Team's report proposes to focus the OSCE's contribution to the implementation of the Way Forward Document on a number of cross-boundary issues, including harmonization of legislation, effectiveness of cross-border agreements and standardization of equipment.

## **OSCE police-related activities**

The Netherlands Chairmanship supported the efforts of the **Senior Police Adviser** and the **Strategic Police Matters Unit** to enhance the Organization's police-related activities. The OSCE was involved in police training and reform, most notably throughout Serbia and Montenegro, including in Kosovo, and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In addition, a large-scale police reform programme was launched in Kyrgyzstan. This programme, for which a donors' conference was initiated at the end of May, may be seen as a precursor to police capacity- and institution-building initiatives, begun in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Armenia. It may be of interest to other countries. Together with the UN Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), a joint training programme for 10 Georgian and 10 Abkhaz police officers started in 2003. These 20 police officers are being trained at the OSCE Kosovo Police Service School.

The Chairman of the Permanent Council addressed the annual meeting of the OSCE Police and Law Enforcement Experts, held in Vienna on 18 and 19 September, which focused on the theme, "How may co-operation between national law enforcement, non-governmental and international institutions be made more effective in preventing and combating trafficking in persons, especially women and children?".

## **10. Regional issues**

### **Southern Caucasus**

2003 was a year of important developments for the **Southern Caucasus** region. Elections were held throughout the region. Presidential elections were held in Armenia on 19 February and 5 March, parliamentary elections were held in Armenia on 25 May, presidential elections in Azerbaijan were held on 15 October, and on 2 November parliamentary elections took place in Georgia. The OSCE, through the ODIHR and through the activities of the field missions, played a prominent role in monitoring these elections. The ODIHR and the missions also played an important role in assisting the authorities in ensuring that their election legislation was reformed. Regrettably, the elections held in 2003 in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan fell short of international standards. In this region, improvements will be needed to ensure consolidation of democratic institutions and progress in election practices. The **CiO** visited Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan on 21 and 22 October.

In January 2003 the **CiO** re-appointed his Personal Representative for the Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Group and appointed Ambassador Roy Reeve as Head of Mission of the OSCE Mission in Georgia, and, later in the year, appointed Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin as Head of Mission of the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

The OSCE's activities in **Georgia** were particularly challenging. The Chairmanship's OSCE Task Force visited Georgia in September and prepared for the visit of the **CiO** on 21 and 22 October.

In regard to the South Ossetian negotiating process, the Chairmanship hosted the **Tenth Meeting of the Experts Group on Political Issues** in Kijkduin, The Hague in the week of 13 to 17 October. For the first time the EU Special Representative for the Caucasus

Heikki Talvitie participated in the meeting as an observer. At this meeting there were still strong differences between the sides on the key issues of the political settlement, and prospects for resumption of discussions on the status of South Ossetia seem bleak in the short and medium term. It is, however, positive that, although unable to agree upon the text of a protocol of the meeting in The Hague (for the first time), the sides reiterated their commitment to continue the political dialogue, despite profoundly divergent views on the key issues. In addition, the sides repeated their firm intention to continue to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict. More positive have been the discussions on the implementation of projects under the EUR 2.5 million European Commission (EC) grant, earmarked for the implementation of projects in the areas of rehabilitation and refugee/IDP resettlement. Following the signature of an agreement between the Mission and the EC on 26 August, the OSCE Mission has entered into detailed discussions with UNDP and UNHCR as to who will be responsible for the design and implementation of the actual projects. A list of projects for EUR 1.3 million has already been agreed with the parties and work is now in hand to identify the projects for the remaining EUR 1.2 million and to develop a mechanism for monitoring progress involving all parties.

The OSCE Mission has also tried to enhance the work of the **Special Co-ordination Centre** (SCC) by presenting proposals to the Georgian and South Ossetian sides regarding the establishment of joint police patrols. Both sides responded positively to the idea, which was also strongly supported by the Joint Peacekeeping Force. Two visits were made by a member of the Senior Police Matters Unit to the region in the latter part of 2003.

As regards elections in Georgia, the OSCE Mission chaired a Technical Working Group tasked with assisting the Georgian authorities in the elaboration of the election code. Many of the measures identified by the international community as important for the success of the elections were included in the Election Code, which was adopted by the Georgian Parliament between 5 and 14 August. Major involvement of the OSCE Mission and the OSCE Chairmanship in 2003 was the assistance in the selection process of the Chairman of the CEC. This led to the creation of an Ad Hoc Advisory Commission from the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The Mission provided logistical and secretarial support to the Commission throughout most of the month of August. On 31 August, President Shevardnadze appointed one of the three potential candidates identified by the Commission.

On the conflict in Abkhazia, the Chairmanship followed with the closest attention the development of events and supported the efforts of the United Nations in the peace process, namely in terms of conflict resolution and human rights. Progress has been made on the proposals by UNOMIG to enhance the law enforcement bodies of the Abkhaz and Georgian sides in the Gali and Zugdidi districts respectively. Twelve UN civil policemen have been deployed in the conflict zone, and some twenty Georgian and Abkhaz police officers underwent training at the **OSCE Kosovo Police Service School**.

The work of the **Border Monitoring Operation** of the OSCE Mission to Georgia (BMO) continued to make a significant contribution to stability and confidence in the region. This year saw the enhancement and enlargement of the BMO to the Dagestan segment of the border with the Russian Federation. Throughout 2003 the BMO has proved to be a very useful and necessary tool for building confidence and security between Georgia and the Russian Federation.

With regard to the resignation of Georgian president Shevardnadze, on 23 November, the CiO praised the people of Georgia for ensuring that the change in their country's leadership was accomplished without violence. The CiO noted that both demonstrators and security forces acted with admirable restraint. He voiced his respect for President Shevardnadze's brave decision to step down in order to avoid a further escalation of tension. The CiO also offered assistance to the new leadership in the preparation of new elections in Georgia.

At the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Maastricht on 1 and 2 December 2003 pledges of financial support were made by the participating States to support Georgia in conducting democratic presidential and parliamentary elections in the year 2004. In response to these pledges, a mechanism for the immediate provision of funds needed for the implementation of the programme has been set up by the OSCE Secretariat. International technical and financial support to the country's electoral process will be channelled through this fund, the so-called "Georgia Election Assistance Programme". The international assistance to the election programme consists of various projects, first of all for the presidential elections scheduled for 4 January 2004, addressing, among other things, administrative, as well as professional needs of election administrative bodies. The principal aim is to contribute to the promotion of much-needed confidence in the electoral process between voters and the political elite in Georgia.

**In Armenia** the OSCE's activities in 2003 were influenced and affected by two major factors. The first has been the expansion and reorientation of the OSCE Office to make effective use of the additional core funding from the 2003 Budget Decision. The second factor has been the succession of elections — local, presidential and parliamentary — which took place in Armenia.

The first round of presidential elections on 19 February as reported by the **OSCE/ODIHR EOM and the CoE observation mission** was marked by a number of irregularities, both during the pre-electoral campaign and on the voting day, but especially during the vote counting process. The second round of elections on 5 March was also marked by violations. The general assessment of the presidential elections by the ODIHR Election Observation Mission and by the CoE observers was that: "Presidential elections in Armenia fell short of meeting international standards".

The quality of the voter lists has been widely recognized as one of the shortcomings in electoral matters in the country. The OSCE facilitated and supported the project on improvement of voter lists in Armenia, which took as its means standardization and systematization of the population registers in local communities. The Office also assisted the Central Electoral Commission by arranging procurement and delivery of transparent ballot boxes, which were used in all polling stations of Armenia for the first time. The use of these ballot boxes contributed to the general transparency of the electoral process and was assessed by the OSCE and CoE observation missions as a progressive step. The parliamentary elections held on 25 May again "fell short of meeting international standards". Much needs to be done for the next electoral cycle.

In the field of Media Affairs the OSCE continued to follow the case of the broadcasting agencies A1+ and Noyan Tapan, which were closed down by the authorities. The CiO was among those who appealed to the authorities to review this decision.

During the visit of the OSCE CiO on 21 October the Nagorno-Karabakh issue was raised, as were as the previous elections and the media situation.

**In Azerbaijan** the OSCE continued to promote the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments in all OSCE dimensions with a special focus on the rule of law and good governance as overall priorities. The OSCE closely followed developments related to compliance with OSCE principles and commitments, commenting on them and maintaining dialogue with relevant authorities. The OSCE also continued to develop and carry out projects with the aim of supporting the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments.

The presidential elections on 15 October as reported upon by the **OSCE/ODIHR EOM and the CoE observation mission** were marked with a number of significant irregularities, both during the pre-electoral campaign and on the voting day, but especially during the vote-counting process. The general assessment of the presidential elections of the ODIHR EOM and the CoE observers was that “Presidential elections in Azerbaijan fell short of meeting international standards in several respects”.

During the visit of the OSCE CiO on 22 October the Nagorno-Karabakh issue was raised as well as the aftermath of the presidential elections.

The lack of significant progress towards reaching a settlement in the **Nagorno-Karabakh** negotiating process 2003 is a matter for concern. The elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2003 prevented any progress being made. During his visit to Armenia and Azerbaijan the CiO emphasized to both Presidents the utmost importance of renewing talks on this issue. The Presidential elections held in Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2003 now offer a window of opportunity for a renewal of the talks between both countries. The CiO also had meetings with the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group and gave full support to their efforts to achieve a consolidated and peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The activities of the Personal Representative of the CiO on the Conflict Dealt with by the Minsk Conference were instrumental in building trust and understanding through the implementation of a series of confidence-building measures in the area of conflict.

## **Northern Caucasus**

With regard to Chechnya, the Chairmanship oversaw an orderly closure of the Assistance Group. The Chairmanship has been engaged in a dialogue with the Russian Federation aimed at agreement on a long-term OSCE programme of technical co-operation in Chechnya. This co-operation would, on the one hand, be based on real needs in the Chechen Republic and, on the other hand, on OSCE expertise and experience, reflecting all three dimensions of the OSCE. It would make optimal use of the OSCE institutions and take into account activities by domestic and international organizations. A number of meetings have taken place, some of which were on a technical level, with participation from the OSCE Secretariat and institutions. Nonetheless, it had to be concluded (taking into account, *inter alia*, the situation on the ground) that an agreement along the lines that had been agreed upon, was no longer feasible before the end of 2003.

## **South-Eastern Europe**

**South-Eastern Europe** continued to represent a priority for the Chairmanship. The OSCE, in particular through its field missions and the ODIHR, continued its efforts to ensure compliance of elections with the highest international standards. In 2003, ODIHR observed elections in Montenegro (presidential elections on 9 February and on 11 May), Albania (local elections on 12 October), Serbia (presidential elections on 16 November) and Croatia (parliamentary elections on 23 November). In general, these elections were a step forward towards the consolidation of democratic institutions and practices in South-Eastern Europe.

In January 2003, the CiO re-appointed the Personal Representative for Articles II and IV of the Dayton Agreement, as well as the Personal Representative of the CiO for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The CiO also appointed a new Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje.

The CiO visited Serbia and Montenegro on 22 April, the day on which the State of Emergency was lifted in that country. On 23 April the CiO visited Kosovo/Serbia and Montenegro.

In **Serbia and Montenegro**, the OSCE mission continued to provide assistance to the ongoing reform and democratization process, developing programmes and activities in a variety of areas: judicial and penal reform, human rights, return and re-integration of displaced persons and refugees, institution-building and media development. The OSCE mission played a much-valued role in assisting the authorities in the reform and restructuring of the internal security forces, both through the mission's police-training programme and through the support given in defining priorities and co-ordinating international aid. The fight against corruption was a key priority in 2003 with reform of legislation being a central element in this area. In this regard, the OSCE provided practical assistance towards full implementation of applicable laws.

In 2003, the OSCE Head of Office in Podgorica was upgraded to the level of Deputy HoM giving the Office a higher status in Montenegro in line with its increasing role.

In **Kosovo/Serbia and Montenegro**, the Chairmanship further supported the activities of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and its assistance to **UNMIK** with regard to the policy of promoting standards and their implementation in Kosovo society, in the context of greater acceptance of responsibilities by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government.

The OSCE CiO participated as international "guarantor" in the official opening of dialogue, between delegations from Belgrade and Pristina. This inaugural meeting took place in Vienna on 14 October.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the OSCE mission continued its key role in the field of human rights and rule of law, most notably with regard to property law implementation. Substantial completion of the property law implementation process is expected by the end of the year, and will represent a milestone in the post-conflict history of the country. Major results were achieved in promoting a thorough reform of the education system of the country. The mission also played a leading role in the field of security co-operation and defence reform. Its contribution to the proposed reform of the armed forces, which is currently under parliamentary discussion, to their peaceful reduction, and to increasing transparency in

military budgets, is essential to the creation of effective democratic control over affordable armed forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In **Croatia**, the OSCE continued to implement its key mandate in the fields of return of displaced persons and refugees, human rights and rights of national minorities, judicial reform, media development and police-related reforms. In July the mission presented a Status Report to the Permanent Council, assessing progress in mandate-related issues. This report emphasized that the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU and the government's EU membership application, presented in February 2003, had contributed to reinforcing co-operation between the mission and the government. Three key issues in the mission's mandate — refugee return, human and minority rights and the application of the rule of law — are part of the political criteria for accession to the EU. The Chairmanship followed developments regarding the co-operation with the ICTY, which is a key condition for Croatia's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

Although some localized incidents continued to occur in the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the overall trend of gradual improvement in the situation was further consolidated. The OSCE mission continued, in close co-operation with the government and international partners, to play an active and valuable role in the efforts to preserve peace and stability and to support the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

2003 saw the successful completion of a number of mission activities, including the training of 1,000 non-majority police cadets. The Field Training Programme was handed over to the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). The mission continued its assistance to the MoI through specialized courses related to the Framework Agreement and the implementation of community-policing activities, in particular through Citizens Advisory Groups (CAGs). Other main activities of the mission include support to the Ombudsman Institution, reform of Macedonian Radio and Television and the creation of a domestic trial observation network. General confidence-building initiatives retained their great importance. In 2004, the mission will continue to support the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. With active involvement of the Chairmanship and the Secretariat, the mission has fully supported the planning for the EU Police Mission "Proxima" in a spirit of joint purpose and excellent co-operation between the EU and OSCE.

In 2003, the OSCE Presence in Albania continued its activities in the fields of democratization, human rights and rule of law and security co-operation. In particular, the Presence played a major role in 2003 in assisting the work of the Bi-Partisan Committee on Electoral Reform as well as assisting Albanian authorities on the issue of property restitution. On both sides, the Presence played the role of a facilitator, while contributing legal and other expertise. The Presence delivered the draft on property restitution to the Speaker of the Albanian Assembly on 27 October prepared by a technical experts group working under the Presence's guidance. During 2003, the Presence also prepared its long-term project analysing the functioning of the judicial system in Albania. This will soon be completed and will serve as the basis for further work in this area. The Presence has continued to support the implementation of the Albanian government's National Strategy on Trafficking in Human Beings.

Dr. Erhard Busek, the Special Co-ordinator of the **Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe**, visited Ambassador Everts, Personal Representative of the CiO, to exchange views



on issues of mutual interest and concern and on modalities for practical co-operation. The Chairmanship welcomed the priorities and the clear working agenda set out by the Special Co-ordinator, as well as the specific activities carried out in 2003. The OSCE continued to co-operate closely with the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe on a wide range of issues, including the follow-up to the Ohrid Regional Conference on Border Security and Management and the Stability Pact's Migration Asylum Return Refugee Initiative (MARRI).

## **Ukraine**

In March the Chairmanship appointed Ambassador David Nicholas as OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. The Project Co-ordinator has taken up several project activities. For this purpose the Project Co-ordinator reorganized the office and created a project database. The Project Co-ordinator has presented an ambitious plan to assist and co-operate with Ukraine in a number of areas including rule of law, media freedom, combating trafficking, development of SMEs, and electoral reform. The **OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine** enjoys a good relationship with the authorities in Ukraine and receives support at all levels. The Chairmanship considers it important that the Office of the Project Co-ordinator will be able to continue this co-operation and expand its work.

## **Belarus**

Following the Permanent Council decision of 30 December 2002 the OSCE Office in Minsk opened on 1 January 2003. The Chairmanship appointed Ambassador Eberhard Heyken as Head of the **OSCE Office**. Ambassador Heyken took up his duties in Minsk on 10 February. Subsequently, four international staff members were deployed. At the request of the Chairmanship Ambassador Heyken reported in March on the developments related to the functioning of the Office and addressed the PC on 2 April and 13 November. In consultation with the Belarus authorities the Office has identified and implemented project activities in the field of the economy and environment, institution-building, and the rule of law and civil society. At the same time the Office has actively monitored the commitment of the Belarusian authorities to their obligations in the framework of the OSCE. Reports on restrictive measures against civil society, NGOs and independent media are of deep concern to the Chairmanship. Civil society, NGOs and media should be allowed to be part of and make their contribution to Belarusian society. In this regard Belarus should be encouraged to bring its legislation as well as its application into conformity with OSCE commitments and standards. The OSCE Office in Minsk stands ready to assist the Belarusian authorities in this field. The Chairmanship attaches great importance to the continued OSCE presence in Belarus.

## **Moldova**

The Chairmanship has intensified the efforts to bring the Moldovan/Transdniestrian conflict closer to a solution. In January 2003 the CiO strengthened OSCE involvement by appointing **Ambassador Adriaan Jacobovits de Szeged as Personal Representative for Moldova**. The Personal Representative attended the monthly rounds of the political negotiation process in Moldova. Furthermore, Ambassador Jacobovits de Szeged, together with OSCE Head of Mission to Moldova Ambassador William Hill, conducted consultations in several OSCE participating States and participated in a variety of seminars on federalism.

The first half of the year showed promising progress, both in the negotiating process and in the field of ammunition withdrawal as a part of the Istanbul Commitments 1999. President Voronin's initiative in establishing the Joint Constitutional Commission to draft a new constitution for a reunified Moldova on a federal model was broadly welcomed and supported. In the March to June period a considerable amount of ammunition was withdrawn from Transdniestria. The CiO visited Moldova on 2 April and, in addition, had other meetings with President Vladimir Voronin on three separate occasions to discuss the prospects for a settlement. In the fall the mediators finalized a document with recommendations on State structure, division of competencies and guarantees to serve as a basis for the further work of the Joint Constitutional Commission. Furthermore, an extra Russian effort to come to an agreement on the Transdniestrian problem was noted. The CiO consulted with several participating States on the Memorandum on the Basic Principles of the State Structure of a United State proposed by the Russian Federation. The consultations showed that there was no consensus on supporting the document and that the OSCE were to take a neutral stance if the parties would come to an agreement. Moldova considered it premature to sign the memorandum. In the event of a settlement it should be consolidated by an international presence under OSCE supervision. The Chairmanship has explored possible options, all focused around a broadly based multinational operation under the aegis of the OSCE to support peace and stability.

Furthermore, the Chairmanship has committed itself to making a significant contribution to the fight against trafficking in human beings. The OSCE Mission to Moldova launched a two-year project in Moldova to help with victim assistance and reintegration. Although this year has shown much progress in negotiations towards an agreement, a lot of work remains to be done.

## **Central Asia**

During its chairmanship, the Netherlands has emphatically drawn attention to the participating States of Central Asia, and to the challenging process of **political and economic transition** that they are undergoing. Although Central Asia is not a conflict region as such, the region needs attention from the OSCE because of the necessity, as expressed by the Central Asian participating States, of pursuing a path of political and economic reform. In addition, stability and security in the Central Asian region is directly influenced by developments in Afghanistan.

During its Chairmanship, the Netherlands has aimed to strengthen the relationship between the OSCE and Central Asia at the political level by keeping in regular contact, both in the participating States and with delegations in Vienna, and by discussing all issues of concern in an open and transparent manner. While recognizing the different characteristics of each of the five Central Asian States, an overall important aim of the Netherlands Chairmanship was to involve the Central Asian countries with the OSCE and to create awareness of what the OSCE can offer them. The Chairmanship aimed at improving the balance between the three dimensions of the OSCE with regard to activities in the countries of Central Asia, with the understanding that this should not mean less attention to the human dimension, but more inter-linking between the three dimensions.

The Netherlands Chairmanship has also pleaded for a strengthening of the activities of the various OSCE institutions and structures in the OSCE Secretariat through such means as increased co-ordination and coherence, with a view to strengthening governmental and

non-governmental institutions in the participating States of Central Asia. A shift of resources in the OSCE budget 2003 was carried out in order to strengthen efforts of the OSCE in Central Asia and got the underpinning of OSCE activities in the region off to a good start.

The Netherlands Chairmanship has worked towards increasing co-operation between the OSCE and the **EU**, and international organizations such as the **UN** and the **EBRD** amongst others.

The **CiO** visited Central Asia two times: Turkmenistan at the beginning of March 2003 and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in July 2003. The **CiO** was received by the five Heads of States. In all these countries the priorities of the participating States and the OSCE Chairmanship were discussed, such as the fight against terrorism and various forms of trafficking (including on small arms and light weapons, drugs, and human beings), strengthening the rule of law, democratization, respect for human rights, and economic transition.

The **CiO**'s appointment of Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, the former President of Finland, as **Personal Envoy for Central Asia** reflects the importance given by the Netherlands Chairmanship to continuing engagement with the participating States in Central Asia. Mr. Ahtisaari maintained contacts at the highest political levels in all five countries.

In **Turkmenistan** the purpose of the **CiO**'s visit and of the subsequent follow-up visit of President Ahtisaari was to strengthen the dialogue between the OSCE participating States and the Turkmen authorities. This was particularly timely during the visit of the **CiO** as the implementation of the Moscow Mechanism, invoked by ten participating States, required the collaboration of the Turkmen authorities. The report and the reply of Turkmenistan were discussed in the Permanent Council. The **CiO** and his Personal Envoy furthermore discussed the need to strengthen civil society, access to detention centres for family members or independent international organizations, as well as political reform and the importance of education.

In **Kazakhstan** the **CiO** and the Personal Envoy in his subsequent visit discussed several legislative amendments, including that to the law on elections, which is still being reformed. The laws on the media and NGOs were the subject of discussion as well. At the invitation of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and its Foreign Minister Kassymzhomart Tokayev, who had made an official visit to the Netherlands in November 2002, the Chairmanship sent two experts to their country in March 2003 to report on the legal proceedings against the well-known journalist Sergei Duvanov, which had attracted a great deal of international attention. The report was issued in April 2003 and was subsequently discussed in the Permanent Council in May. In June, the **CiO** was represented at the **OSCE PA Trans-Asia Parliamentary Forum** which took place in Almaty.

In **Kyrgyzstan** the **CiO** and the Personal Envoy made a plea for the further strengthening of conditions for democracy, rule of law, free media and participation of national minorities in public life. The Personal Envoy stressed the importance of the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections and the need for ongoing democratic reforms and the strengthening of the rule of law. In this context, the Chairmanship supported the development of the **OSCE Police Assistance Programme**. The Chairmanship pointed out that inclusion of representatives of civil society in police reform would facilitate the acceptance of the programme by the Kyrgyz population. On 19 May, a pledging conference

was organized in Vienna to raise funds for a substantial police assistance programme (€3.8 million). In August an MoU between the OSCE Head of Centre and the Kyrgyz authorities on the implementation of the programme was signed in Bishkek.

In **Tajikistan** the CiO and the Personal Envoy pleaded for a moratorium on the death penalty with the ultimate goal of full abolishment. Among the issues discussed were de-mining, both inside the countries as well as in border areas, the fight against drug trafficking, the need for political reform, particularly the need to strengthen dialogue and co-operation between political parties, and the preparations of the next parliamentary elections in 2005. The importance of regional co-operation was discussed as well.

In **Uzbekistan** the CiO and the Personal Envoy discussed, among other things, regional co-operation, registration of parties ahead of next year's election, and dialogue between the government and the opposition. On the issue of trafficking, the **third preparatory seminar for the Eleventh Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum: "Trafficking in drugs: national and international impact"** was successfully organized and held in March in Tashkent.

In line with the extra attention that the Dutch chairmanship has decided to devote to Central Asia, a Dutch diplomat was posted to the Italian embassy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, at the end of 2002. One of his tasks was to identify areas for OSCE-related projects. Various projects are currently being implemented.

## **11. Co-operation with other international organizations**

The Dutch chairmanship attaches great importance to improving co-operation and co-ordination between the OSCE and other international organizations. New plans have been developed at the political and official level, for instance to improve co-ordination with the EU. Both the Greek and Italian Presidencies agreed to hold meetings between the **OSCE Troika** and the **EU Troika**, primarily to discuss topical issues. These meetings took place at the margins of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in February and September of 2003. At the GAERC the Netherlands provided information on and drew attention to OSCE matters relevant to the EU. At the policy level, the Chairmanship of the OSCE maintained close ties with the EU Presidency, the Council secretariat and the European Commission. The other EU member States were kept informed about relevant developments within the OSCE and the Organization's policy plans. The aim was to encourage the forming of EU positions that support the OSCE's policy. In Vienna too, a great effort has been made to achieve co-ordination with the EU. **EU High Representative** Javier Solana addressed the Permanent Council in Vienna in July, at the invitation of the Dutch chairmanship.

The Dutch representatives at **NATO** regularly drew attention to events within the OSCE. In June a co-ordination meeting of the **CiO** with **Secretary-General Robertson** was arranged on the fringe of the NATO ministerial. Operational level consultations are held regularly to co-ordinate policy and are attended by representatives of the entire OSCE Troika. In Vienna, the weekly NATO Caucus meetings were held. NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson addressed the Permanent Council in October.

Harmonization with the **Council of Europe** takes place on a daily basis. Certain dossiers, particularly those in the Human Dimension and the work of the ODIHR, overlap

with the Council of Europe's concerns and make close co-ordination essential. Ministerial-level meetings between the OSCE and the Council of Europe take place twice a year. They are attended not just by the chairmanship of the OSCE and that of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, but also by the Secretaries-General and the presidents of the parliamentary assemblies of the two bodies. The first meeting, convened by the Netherlands as CiO of the OSCE, took place in February 2003. The second meeting, convened by Moldova as Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, took place in November 2003.

A further event in February was the tripartite meeting, in Geneva, between representatives of the **OSCE** (including the chairmanship), the **Council of Europe** and the **UN**. It was also attended by representatives of the European Commission, the EU Council secretariat, the ICRC, and the IOM. In 2003 consultations with the UN centred on ways to combat terrorism and the various forms of trafficking.

Besides maintaining existing ties within the OSCE area, the Organization also needs to conduct a dialogue with other organizations. **The Organization of the Islamic Conference** (OIC) is willing to engage in a political dialogue with the OSCE. Following tentative preliminary contacts, the OSCE (including the chairmanship) was represented at the Islamic Conference Summit in Teheran at the end of May. The purpose of this dialogue is not just to propagate the OSCE's ideas, but also to learn about the views and attitudes expressed within the OIC, thus encouraging dialogue with the Islamic world. The countries of Central Asia, in particular, firmly supported these initiatives on the part of the Chairmanship.

## **12. Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation**

In 2003 **Mediterranean and Asian Partners** (MPCs, APCs) were invited to OSCE meetings in which the States concerned had special interests. In addition, the Partners for Co-operation were invited to a number of OSCE events (Annual Security Review Conference, ODIHR seminars, workshops, the Economic Forum) and were given briefings on OSCE activities by heads of institutions or missions. Parliamentarians from Partner States were invited to attend the Parliamentary Assembly's annual and winter sessions. Partners were also involved in operational activities, such as short-term visits to OSCE Missions, election observation and secondment to missions. A meeting between the **OSCE Troika** and **Foreign Ministers or their representatives from Partner States** was held on 30 November, on the eve of the Ministerial Council.

Representatives of the Chair took part in two separate informal, open-ended contact groups (one on Mediterranean-related issues, the other on Asia) at the level of experts that have been established in the framework of the Permanent Council and met periodically to conduct a dialogue with the States concerned in order to facilitate the exchange of information on subjects of mutual interest. The **Mediterranean Contact Group** was chaired by Bulgaria. The **Contact Group for the Asian Partners** was chaired by Portugal.

Meetings were held to focus on the regional considerations of the respective partners. Korea held a workshop on the applicability of OSCE-instruments (CSBMs) in East Asia in September and Jordan hosted the annual Mediterranean Seminar in October. Representatives of the Chair took part on both occasions.

In the course of 2003, the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the Contact Group with Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, in close consultation with the Netherlands Chairmanship and with the support of the External Co-operation Section of the OSCE Secretariat, concentrated its activities on the following issues:

### **Contact Group meetings with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation**

The regular meetings of the Mediterranean Contact Group provided the opportunity for participating States and the six MPCs both to advance the dialogue and to discuss and exchange ideas on a number of issues pertinent to both sides of the Mediterranean. A total of six meetings of the Contact Group were held in 2003. They were preceded by meetings of the Contact Points that discussed the agenda of the Contact group meetings and explored other forms of co-operation.

The Contact Group meetings continued to serve for ongoing dialogue and the development of joint activities between participating States and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, as well as among the MPCs themselves. An exchange of views on the current activities of the OSCE figured prominently on the agenda, as well as other issues such as: the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE (presented to the MPCs by the President of the Assembly, the Rt. Hon. Bruce George, M.P.), the first ever Annual Security Review Conference, the Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, the tasks undertaken in the Economic and Environmental Dimension, the field activities of the Organization and the role of the Conflict Prevention Centre.

### **Attendance of meetings of the Permanent Council, other OSCE institutions and different events**

The Mediterranean Partners were regularly invited to the meetings of the Permanent Council, especially when special guests addressed the plenary, or when there were particular topics of interest. Particularly noteworthy was the address by H.E. Mr. Habib Ben Yahia, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia in March, in which he stressed the necessity to further strengthen and develop co-operation in the wake of the new threats and challenges to security and stability. A useful exchange of ideas took place at the meeting of the Ambassadors of the OSCE Troika and the Secretary General with H.E. Mr. Bouteflika, President of Algeria, during his visit to Vienna, as well as during the discussions with the Algerian Minister for Maghreb and African Affairs, Mr. Abdelkader Messahel, who was interested in exchanging information and possible co-operation with the OSCE on the "African Centre on the Research and Study of Terrorism" to be based in Algiers.

The Mediterranean Partners were given the opportunity to provide input into the work of the Organization. Their representatives participated in topical conferences on anti-Semitism, as well as on racism, xenophobia and discrimination. Partners for Co-operation took part in the first OSCE Annual Security Review Conference and in the conference on globalization. In addition, Partners were invited to contribute to the elaboration of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century. The strategy, while addressing the cross-dimensional nature of new threats and challenges, also reflects close ties between participating States and Partners for Co-operation.

The Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean, established by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, convened for the first time in Rome in October 2003 and brought together Parliamentarians from the participating States and the MPCs. As usual, representatives of the MPCs were invited to attend the Economic Forum in Prague, the HDIM in Warsaw, the Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings and the Human Dimension Seminar. Representatives of MPCs were also invited to participate in election observation, to visit missions and to submit candidates for mission members in OSCE field activities.

Ministers of the MPCs were invited to attend the Ministerial Council Meeting in December 2003 in Maastricht, with a meeting of the OSCE Troika ministers with their colleagues from the MPCs being held on the eve of the Council.

### **Annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminar**

The 2003 Mediterranean Seminar on the topic: “The comprehensive approach to security: The OSCE experience and its relevance for the Mediterranean region” was held in Aqaba, Jordan on 20 and 21 October. The Seminar was inaugurated by Mr. Shaher Bak, Jordan’s Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and Dr. Solomon Passy, Bulgaria’s Foreign Minister. Around 120 participants from participating States and MPCs, academic institutions, international organizations and NGOs attended the seminar. The Seminar provided the opportunity to exchange views on confidence-building, poverty reduction, as well as on democratic institution-building and civil society development as important prerequisites for prevention of conflicts. The fact that this seminar took place in Jordan, one of the MPCs, conveyed a strong and positive political message, especially in view of the current situation in the Middle East.

The Consolidated Summary of the proceedings of the seminar reflected many interesting proposals that deserve further study and consultation, including: outreach activities to the capitals of the Partner States, the establishment of a Conflict Prevention Centre in the Mediterranean, access of the MPCs to the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation, and the development of co-operation between the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission and interested MPCs. It was emphasized that the OSCE’s common values could serve as basis for further dialogue between the OSCE participating States and the Mediterranean Partners.

### **Contact Group with the Partners for Co-operation in Asia**

OSCE activities with the Partners for Co-operation in Asia were enhanced during 2003. The Contact Group meetings with the Partners for Co-operation in Asia were launched bringing together the Asian Partners and OSCE participating States to discuss issues of common concern. The agendas of these meetings covered all the major issues related to security in the OSCE area, opening the door for a two-way approach in discussions and future exchanges of information and practices, in particular in areas where OSCE experience might become more relevant to the regions of the Partner States. The Partners’ own experience and concerns in different areas were carefully studied during the meetings.

The Asian Partners actively participated in Contact Group meetings and other joint activities by, *inter alia*, submitting proposals for discussion and follow-up. The presence of experts from the Asian Partners, from the capitals and external Permanent Missions,

contributed to deepening the debates and focusing in more detail on issues related to their main interests.

During the Contact Group meetings, Partners were regularly informed by a representative of the OSCE Chairmanship, on the progress of discussions leading up to the Ministerial Council meeting. They were also provided with reports of the working group meetings, and were invited to attend and contribute in writing to discussions on the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century.

Afghanistan, which became a Partner for Co-operation in April 2003, was welcomed to a meeting of the Asian Contact Group on 5 May 2003. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mr. Abdullah Abdullah, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council on 5 December 2003.

Four meetings of the Asian Contact Group took place in 2003. Topics for discussion included: trafficking in human beings, drugs and small arms and light weapons; follow-up to the 2001 OSCE-Korea Conference on Applicability of OSCE Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs); the OSCE Asia Academic Network; the OSCE-Japan Conference on conflict prevention; an overview of CSBMs, including a briefing by the Chairman of the Forum for Security Co-operation (at that time, Germany); and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). Furthermore, discussions focused on gender equality, OSCE field activities in Central Asia, preventing and combating terrorism and the work of the OSCE Secretariat's Anti-Terrorism Unit, as well as Korea's Policy for Peace and Prosperity and a Multilateral Security Mechanism in North-East Asia.

The Partners were regularly invited to meetings of the OSCE Permanent Council. The Republic of Korea was also invited to address the PC and FSC on the outcome of the Workshop on CSBMs held in Seoul. Thailand was invited to address a joint PC/FSC meeting on anti-personnel landmines.

The Republic of Korea and the OSCE organized a workshop entitled "Applicability of OSCE CSBMs in North-East Asia Revisited" on 22-23 September 2003 in Seoul. More than 30 OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation participated in the event, including the five parties involved in the dialogue process with North Korea, whose diplomatic representative in Vienna was later informed about the outcome of the meeting.

On the eve of the Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht, a meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Troika with counterparts from the Asian Partners for Co-operation took place during which discussions focused on new threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century, and on relations between Partners for Co-operation and the OSCE, including OSCE-Partner State activities in 2004. The OSCE Ministerial Troika and Partner States welcomed:

- the launching of the meetings of the Asian Contact Group in 2003, which provided a platform for dialogue and co-operation, and also expressed interest in the Group's further development into a forum for follow-up of recommendations made at the Contact Group and for other joint activities of the OSCE and Partner States;



- the envisaged adoption of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, and the Permanent Council decision on expanding further areas of co-operation;
- the more frequent participation of Partner States in the meetings of the PC and FSC;
- the forthcoming 2004 OSCE-Japan Conference on conflict prevention and the “back-to-back” ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); Workshop on preventive diplomacy;
- the deepening of relations between the OSCE and the ARF;
- the enhancement of the OSCE Asia Academic Network;
- further co-operation on subjects of common concern, including new threats and challenges to security.

### **Outreach Programme**

The Bulgarian Chairmanship is looking forward to working together with MPCs on this new evolving mechanism of co-operation, which brings OSCE expertise to the Partner countries, to their officials, experts, the public and to academia. The outreach programme is one way of disseminating and exchanging information, with the largest possible number of participants in the Partner Countries on the OSCE acquis. It is envisaged that the first activity of this kind will take place in the coming months in Algeria for the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) on the topic of “Freedom and Responsibility: the Media.” Similar activities covering other topics and other groups of countries will follow.

Despite all positive and encouraging developments, there is a need to continue to consider ways of enhancing the OSCE Mediterranean dialogue. The potential for increasing dialogue and co-operation was discussed at the Aqaba Seminar. Subsequent discussions in the Preparatory Committee, both in Vienna and in Maastricht, on the basis of a draft decision tabled by the delegation of Turkey, have ultimately resulted in the adoption of Permanent Council Decision No. 571 on Furthering Dialogue and Co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation and Exploring the Scope for Wider Sharing of OSCE Norms, Principles and Commitments with Others. This decision foresees work in 2004 on, among others, the identification of additional fields of co-operation and interaction with Partners, the sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with others, including adjacent areas, and procedures for future application for partnership.