

ODIHR ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 1995

1. RULE OF LAW

The Warsaw-based ODIHR office assists countries of the former Soviet Union and neighbouring states with writing constitutions, modernising judicial systems and law codes, and writing human rights legislation. In consultation with jurists from Central Asia, Transcaucasia, the Baltic States, and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, ODIHR organised several Rule of Law Conferences in 1995.

ODIHR co-sponsors its programmes with other international organisations, foundations, bar associations, and non-governmental organisations. Several of the 1995 events are co-sponsored with the European Commission for Democracy Through Law, known as the Venice Commission, with which ODIHR has conducted collaborative programs in the past.

Conferences usually last three-four days and are designed so participants can freely share experiences from several countries, with ample time for interaction and comment. Discussion leaders represent various professional viewpoints and juridical backgrounds. Informal contact and substantive attention to issues raised by representatives of emerging states are hallmarks of these events, which are held in numerous countries of central Europe and the former Soviet Union. During the past year CSCE\ODIHR organised conferences in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Poland, Romania, and elsewhere.

The Rule of Law programme also helps countries writing constitutions, criminal and civil codes, media, citizenship, minority rights, electoral and other laws with human rights-human dimension aspects.

SEMINAR ON CONSTITUTION OF

June 14-15, 1995

The seminar was jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan and the ODIHR. It was designed for the parliamentarians and jurists and held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. More than fifty persons, jurists, journalists, parliamentarians in the Majlisi Oli, members of opposition and government political parties, and NGO representatives met for two intensive days of discussions on Separation of Powers, an Independent Judiciary, and International Human Rights Norms at Dushanbe's Institute for Strategic Studies auditorium.

Prof. Frowein provided a detailed commentary on the Tajikistan constitution, offering several suggestions about how language could be clarified to make separation of powers more evident, strengthen judicial independence, and provide justifiable human rights norms.

Following the conference, the delegation met with Mrs. R. Musaeva, head of the Majlisi Oli's parliamentary committee responsible for constitutional issues, the Committee on State Building, and other officials for a detailed discussion on constitutional reform. The President's Principal Adviser, Abdulrahman Dostoyev, also met with the delegation for substantive talks.

SECOND ANNUAL WARSAW JUDICIAL

5-10 June 1995

Sixty jurists from nineteen of central and eastern European and Central Asian countries debated legal reform issues at the second Annual Warsaw Judicial Symposium, June 5 - 10, 1995. Focused explorations of specific topics, case studies, a mock trial and evening gatherings of small groups probing issues with resource leaders were symposium features. The gathering was organised by the Organization on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; Warsaw, Poland. At the Director's reception, special awards were presented to the Constitutional Court of Kazakhstan (for courage), to the Supreme Court of Georgia (for judicial excellence) and to the Supreme Court of Estonia (for excellence in judicial education).

Topics included: Separation of Powers and an Independent Judiciary; How independent can a judiciary be ? Why does it matter? The Judicial Conference (USA) and the National Council on the Judiciary (Poland) as ways of preserving judicial independence; Standards of professional judicial conduct; Judicial discipline Prosecutor and Judge, Friend or Foe?; Constitutional, Supreme, Administrative, High Courts of Arbitration, their contribution to an independent Judiciary; Human Rights and the European Convention; The OSCE and Human Rights.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE JUDICIARY,

May 29-30, 1995

More than 50 Georgian Supreme and district court judges, law professors, and attorneys held two days of intensive discussions on "The Judiciary in a Changing World," in Tbilisi's historic Supreme Court building. Topics included: An Independent Judiciary, its Relations with the Executive and Legislative Branches; Relations with the Ministry of Justice, Procurator, Investigating Authorities, Attorneys; Judicial Ethics, Judicial Discipline; International Human Rights Norms, Their Applicability to National Law and Local Judges; Issues in Judicial Administration, Relations Among Courts, What is the Most Effective Way to Organise Courts?

There was considerable discussion of the question of foreigners' and citizens' rights under the European Convention, the relationship of international human rights conventions and their implementation by domestic courts, the changing role of the procurator in various countries of the former Soviet Union, and habeas corpus standards, especially in political and emergency cases; conflicts of state and national constitutions, protection and immunities of judges, judicial salaries and emoluments.

THE JUDICIARY IN A CHANGING WORLD,

2-3 April, 1995

More than 40 Latvian Judges discussed "The Judiciary in a Changing World" -Latvian Supreme Court sponsored seminar in Riga, Latvia.

Topics included: An independent Judiciary, its Relations with the Executive and Legislative Branches; Relations with the Ministry of Justice, Procuratura, Investigators, Attorneys; Judicial Ethics and Judicial Discipline; International Human Rights Norms and their applicability to National Laws and Local Judges.

EXPERT MISSION ON HUMANITARIAN AID AND RULE OF LAW ISSUES, CHECHNYA, RUSSIA

21 February - 2 March, 1995

The ODIHR Representative travelled to Moscow and Chechnya on February 22 - March 1, 1995, as a part of the OSCE Human Rights Assistance Group. The tasks of this mission were: to examine the possibilities of relevant information to deliver humanitarian aid, to ensure that co-operation with the relevant authorities of the Russian Federation makes undisturbed delivery of humanitarian assistance possible; to consult on the possibility of setting up/operating a national human rights body to investigate, in co-operation of the relevant authorities of the Russian Federation, human rights violations; discuss possibilities of OSCE assistance in the field; and to discuss possibilities of co-operation with and assistance to setting up local administration, including local government in the Chechen Republic, including training and legal advice.

EXPERT CONSULTATION TO THE RUSSIAN

15-20 January, 1995

The Russian Federation asks for assistance in its judicial reform programs -- seminars, publications, expert consultations, and short-term training programs for judges with western counterparts. From January 15 to January 20 1995 the representatives of the ODIHR met with representatives of the Russian Federation's Foreign and Justice ministries, Constitutional and Supreme courts, the Presidency, Ministry of Justice and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to explore future avenues of Rule of Law co-operation.

EXPERT CONSULTATION TO SUPREME COURT OF LATVIA AND ESTONIA

10-12 January 1995

OSCE\ODIHR has not held any programs in Baltic countries until 1995, although we have discussed such possibilities. Discussions with judicial institutions in Latvia and Estonia have produced several concrete regional seminar suggestions.

In Latvia it was a seminar on "The Changing Role of the Judiciary," with a Polish, Spanish, and a German high court judge, emphasising issues of judicial ethics discipline, the relationship of the judiciary to the executive and legislative branches, the media, and the independent bar, plus international human rights norms and their applicability to the local judge.

In Estonia: Two specific regional seminars were requested by Estonia, a Seminar on Inter-ethnic Relations in the northern city of Johvi, planned for April 6-9, and a September 1995 small seminar on the Supreme Court's role as a constitutional chamber. There are large numbers of Russian-speaking people in the region, often outnumbering Estonians, and relationships are complicated by history, culture, policy, and language.

One of the recommendations of the Mission was to circulate English language versions of 16 constitutional decisions the Supreme Court has taken to international experts for evaluation. Both Latvian and Estonian jurists asked for multiple copies of ODIHR's *forthcoming Handbook on International Human Rights Accords for the Judiciary* (in Russian), stating that, while local languages were preferable, everyone understood Russian.

2. ELECTIONS

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KYRGYZSTAN

5 and 19 February 1995

The first democratic elections to the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan were monitored by approximately 60 observers from OSCE states and NGOs throughout the country. An ODIHR representative was present 10 days before the first round of elections, and with the assistance of two election experts seconded to the Central Election Commission through ODIHR by the Swiss Government organised support activities for the 60 observers, including briefings, support materials, translation of laws and statistics, as well as liaison with Kyrgyz authorities in a wide range of issues and dealing with the press. The second round was monitored by a group of Swiss observers who reported to ODIHR. Close co-ordination with the UN Special Representative for these elections and with OSCE Embassies made possible the deployment of observers throughout most regions.

Apart from a few exceptions, observers had access to all polling sites and procedures and received all necessary information from polling officials. Freedom of information and association were not been curtailed; political parties were organised and functioning freely, and there was a general sense that authorities were serious about implementing democratic reforms, in particular in the field of elections. It was concluded that these elections could be considered as generally reflecting the will of the people.

LOCAL REFERENDUM ON THE INCLUSION OF CERTAIN LOCALITIES IN GAGAUZIA, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

March 5, 1995

The purpose of the above-mentioned referendum was for Gagauz-populated localities of Moldova to decide on their inclusion in the autonomous territorial entity of Gagauzia.

A group of twenty observers, made up mostly from representatives of embassies of OSCE member states in Chisinau and including as well a Council of Europe delegation, monitored the referendum. National teams were given a specific area comprising an average of six polling stations to observe all day, thus allowing optimal conditions for a comprehensive coverage. ODIHR and the OSCE Mission to Moldova co-ordinated the deployment of observers. Election procedures were generally speaking well complied with, although traditional family or proxy voting was reported, mostly in rural precincts. There were no visible signs of deliberate intimidation or wilful attempt to put pressure on voters. Some concern was raised about the procedural integrity of the process. Ultimately, this did not seem to threaten the validity of the process. The main remaining question is whether a referendum was held in all the localities where, although less than fifty per cent of the population, the Gagauz could have collected enough signatures needed to hold a referendum.

Results showed a strong vote in most localities in favour of inclusion in Gagauzia.

LOCAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

April 16, 1995

These were the first local elections since Moldova proclaimed its independence in 1991. With the assistance of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the ODIHR established an office in Chisinau shortly before the elections. It was noted that, at all levels, the electoral authorities implemented the electoral law in a competent and dedicated manner. On Election day voters showed discipline and a great sense

of responsibility. Although observers identified some irregularities and breaches of procedure, in general, the polling stations functioned in a good manner and were well organised and peaceful.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

May 14 and 28, 1995

For the first time since independence, parliamentary elections were held in the Republic of Belarus on May 14 and 28. An ODIHR representative made a preliminary visit to Belarus from March 28 to 31. Another ODIHR representative was present in Belarus from April 27 to May 15. ODIHR representatives returned to Belarus from May 22 to 26 on the occasion of the second round. Observers from 17 OSCE participating states participated in the ODIHR briefing and de-briefing on the occasion of the first round. Seven participating states were represented on the occasion of the second round. Observers from several other international organisations and parliamentary associations also observed the first round and, to a lesser extent, the second round. The total number of accredited international observers was in excess of 200.

It was concluded that the electoral process leading to the May 1995 parliamentary elections in Belarus fell short of the commitments contained in paragraph 7.7 of the Copenhagen Document of the OSCE with respect to political campaigning. The provisions dealing with secrecy of voting were not strictly enforced. Taking into account the deficiencies of the electoral legislation, the voting itself was, despite some irregularities, conducted in a generally adequate manner.

The ODIHR made specific recommendations on: (1) the need to clarify the interpretation of certain dispositions of the Election Law, and (2) the provision of more significant amounts of broadcast time and of newspaper space to political parties and candidates, on a free and equal basis.

FRAMEWORK FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ELECTION MONITORING

In the process of updating the ODIHR's original mandate with respect to free elections, the Budapest meeting tasked the ODIHR with the preparation of a framework for the co-ordination of election monitoring. After consultations with relevant international organisations, a draft framework was presented to the Permanent Council in May. A first attempt at the implementation of the framework was conducted in Armenia on the occasion of a joint OSCE/United Nations operation for the observation of the July parliamentary elections. It is expected that adjustments and revisions will continue to be made to the framework in the coming months, as additional experience is acquired through the observation of elections in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Russia.

HANDBOOK FOR ELECTION MONITORS

The Budapest Review Conference also tasked the ODIHR with the preparation of a handbook for election monitors. Discussions are under way with experts that were involved in the preparation of previous handbooks and that have an expertise in the field of election monitoring methodology. The first version of the ODIHR handbook is expected in the near future.

3. HUMAN DIMENSION

At the Budapest meeting, OSCE participating States, expressing concern at mass migratory movements in the OSCE region, decided to expand their co-operation with appropriate international bodies. In this respect, they noted efforts undertaken by the UNHCR in preparing a regional conference to address the problems of refugees, displaced persons, other forms of involuntary displacement and the returnees in the countries of the CIS and other interested neighbouring states and decided to contribute to this process “by establishing, after consultation in the informal Financial Committee, a temporary position, financed by voluntary contributions for a migration expert.”(Ch. IX, par.10) As mandated by the Budapest document and at the invitation of the UNHCR, the OSCE has taken an active role in the preparation of the above-mentioned conference.

Together with IOM and UNHCR, OSCE took part in preparatory meetings and drafted background documents in view of the first experts meeting on 18-19 May 1995 in Geneva which agreed *inter alia* on a workplan for sub-regional meetings, drafting committees on a declaration of principles and programme of action, and further consultations. The objective of the Conference is to provide a broad forum particularly for affected countries and to acknowledge, analyse and discuss problems of involuntary and disorderly mass population movements in the CIS and neighbouring regions.

The process involving the CIS, neighbouring and interested States, international organisations, hopefully international financial institutions, and possibly NGOs will

(a) combine asylum, human rights and humanitarian principles and migration policies with economic, development co-operation and security policy considerations;

(b) address the root causes of the problems, early warning, preventive diplomacy, emergency preparedness, legal framework, relief and solutions, protection and assistance. The final conference is expected to take place in the first half of 1995.

The OSCE-ODIHR has been particularly active in the area of national human rights institutions: In Sarajevo, it has assisted the OSCE mission which is to support the work of the three Bosnian Federation ombudsmen with a training seminar for the ombudsmen, bringing in Warsaw representatives of western and eastern European ombudsmen offices as well as interested international organisations for an exchange of views and sharing of experiences. A network of ombudsmen “Friends of the Bosnian Ombudsmen” was established to provide the ombudsmen with expertise on specific cases or situation, and a second training seminar is planned before the end of 1995.

In Tajikistan, following positive answer by the Tajik authority to the OSCE Permanent Council request it establishes a national human rights institution, ODIHR has advised the Tajik government on an ombudsman office by providing background document and reviewing draft legislation. Currently, the ODIHR is preparing a draft manual on national human rights institution to assist OSCE states in the establishment of such institution.

4. CONTACT POINT FOR ROMA/SINTI

The Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) within the ODIHR was activated by decision of the CSCE Budapest Meeting 1994.

After thorough consultation with the Office of the OSCE HCNM, several Romani associations as well as other international organisations, in particular the CoE and UNHCR, including a special consultative meeting organised by the ODIHR in early March in Warsaw, the following main objectives were indicated for the activities of the Contact Point:

- among issues related to Roma to focus attention on addressing discrimination and violence against Roma and Sinti;
- dissemination of information on Roma and Sinti issues, including information on implementation of commitments pertaining to Roma and Sinti;
- encouraging development of Roma and Sinti organisational capacity and assisting co-operation of Romani and Sinti associations and organisations;

Regular consultations on current activities of the CPRSI were organised on the occasion of the OSCE seminars in April in Warsaw and in May in Bucharest. Workshop on networking of contacts and co-operation with Romani and Sinti associations is being prepared to take place in October in Warsaw in conjunction with the Roma related discussion at the Implementation Meeting. The CPRSI was also represented at several meetings organised by Romani associations. Another thematical consultation organised jointly by the ODIHR, Office of the HCNM and the CoE on causes of violence against Roma and Sinti will take place later this Autumn.

In its Clearing House function the CPRSI substantially increased information on Roma and Sinti issues. It appeared in the ODIHR Bulletin and since August in the special bi-monthly CPRSI Newsletter. The CPRSI Leaflet and Programme of Activities in 1995 were also circulated.

A questionnaire aimed at collecting of a basic information about Roma and Sinti in the OSCE region, was circulated among all the participating States. In relation to it a handbook on domestic on international institutions tasked with addressing Roma and Sinti related issues will be prepared later this year.

The CPRSI has communicated NGOs dealing with legal issues on a possibility of creating network providing legal advice and assistance to Romani associations as well as Roma and Sinti individuals.

As a result of an agreement with the Project on Ethnic Relations the two interns from Romani associations (from Spain and Romania) will complete three month internships in the CPRSI in Warsaw. The first internship already resulted among others in preparation of a comprehensive mailing list of Romani and Sinti NGOs and study on Romani NGOs organisational capacity.

The Gypsy Theatre PRALIPE gave a special performance in Warsaw of its presentation based on "Romeo and Julia" on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the CSCE.

5. SEMINARS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

SEMINARS

The two large-scale human dimension seminars were decided for 1995. First one, on Building Blocks for Civic Society: Freedom of Association and NGOs took place on 4-7 April in Warsaw and was attended by 286 participants, which is the highest number since seminars were initiated in 1992. One-half of the participants were representatives of all together 123 non-governmental organisations.

The second Seminar on Rule of Law will take place in on 28 November-1 December.

The report on how to increase the effectiveness of human dimension seminars was prepared. as recommended in the CSCE Budapest Document 1994, and presented at the Permanent Council Meeting in May.

The ODIHR was also actively involved in preparation and running of the International Seminar on Tolerance, organised jointly by the OSCE and the CoE in co-operation with UNESCO on 23-26 May in Bucharest.

The Seminar on Drafting Human Rights Legislation dedicated to the participating States from Central Asia was organised on 19-21 September in Ashgabat. Preparation for another seminar of the same type on Drug Trafficking and Crime Prevention to be held in Bishkek most probably in 1996, has been initiated together with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and Crime Prevention & Criminal Justice Unit.

The ODIHR in co-operation with the CRCI will organise a Regional Seminar on International Humanitarian Law in November in Riga, which is expected to be attended by representatives of all three Baltic republics.

A Round Table on Non-Discrimination of Women and Law will take place in December in Warsaw to evaluate international standards and commitments pertaining to women and practical issues they face in Central and Eastern Europe.

IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

The ODIHR has been preparing the second Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues which will take place on 2-19 October in Warsaw.

Reports on implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments as well as working papers on practical functioning of mechanisms and procedures enhancing compliance with commitments will be presented to the participants.

6. MEDIA

The activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in the field of media are three-fold and concentrate on:

- observing the media campaign prior and during elections;
- raising awareness on the Human Dimension issues, including media issues, through seminars;
- collecting information on the implementation of the OSCE commitments with relation to media;
- running a Media Clearing House of organisations - governmental and non-governmental - working in the States of OSCE to enhance the free media.

ELECTION MONITORING

Monitoring of the media campaign prior, during and after the elections was always an important part of the whole election monitoring process. The ODIHR wishes to strengthen this aspect of its work, which will be guided by the new Framework for the Co-ordination of Election Monitoring.

SEMINARS

In 1995 the ODIHR organised two seminars on this topic in different regions of OSCE, aiming to provide training in business of operating a newspaper for media managers/journalists, and also to allow the media professionals the opportunity to share their experience and lessons learned from working in emerging market economies.

Seminar on Print Media Management in Moldova, 11-13 May 1995

This seminar was organised in co-operation with the Independent Journalism Centre in Moldova. The following countries sent the participants to this seminar: Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, Georgia, Armenia. For logistical reasons the participants from Azerbaijan could not come, although invited.

Seminar on Print Media Management in Kyrgyzstan, 11-13 September 1995

The seminar was organised in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan for the Central Asian States: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Participants from Azerbaijan were also invited. This seminar was organised in co-operation with the Media Resource Centre, sponsored by the UNESCO Regional Office in Kazakhstan.

MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF OSCE COMMITMENTS

In 1995 the ODIHR sent a Note Verbale to the OSCE participating States asking them to provide the Clearing House with the information on media issues. Based on the replies and also on the reports submitted to the Office by international organisations and non-governmental organisations, the ODIHR Media Section has analysed the implementation of the OSCE Commitments in the media field. The report, covering the period of two years, has been presented to the Permanent Council in July, and also during the Implementation Meeting in October.

MEDIA CLEARING HOUSE ACTIVITIES

During the Budapest Summit (December 1994) the Ministers decided to task the ODIHR to act as a clearing house for the exchange of information on media issues in the region, and encourage governments, journalists and NGOs to provide the ODIHR with information on the situation of the media.

In order not to duplicate the efforts of other organisations working in the field of media, we decided to concentrate the activities of the ODIHR Media Clearing House on the issues related to implementation of the commitments of OSCE participating States. In practical terms it means that ODIHR collects and provides upon request:

- the reports on the implementation of Human Dimension commitments with relation to the media in the OSCE participating States,
- information on national legislation on media and
- codes of ethics of journalists.

The Media Clearing House will in addition, create and maintain a cross-reference data base of the assistance available to all of those who want to call to the attention of international community problems in the area of media or simply to enable to know where to seek assistance with their particular problem.

7. ODIHR PUBLICATIONS

ON THE OCCASION OF 20TH ANNIVERSARY

In 1995 the ODIHR published two books: *Human Rights and the Judiciary - collection of documents*, edited by Fred Quinn and Andrzej Rzeplinski, and *OSCE Human Dimension Documents*, edited by Dr Dominick McGoldrick. In the foreword to these books it was mentioned that they were issued on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

In addition, the ODIHR has produced the 20th Anniversary poster, also available in a postcard size, and distributed it to the Delegations in Vienna, to the Missions and to those organisations which requested them.

The ODIHR has published also the ODIHR pamphlet, which contains also the updated description of the ODIHR mandate, to include Roma and Sinti Contact Point and Media Clearing House.

ODIHR Bulletin

As in previous years, the ODIHR will produce four issues of the OSCE ODIHR Bulletin. At the end of 1994, the Office has decided to introduce some changes to its publications. In order to fulfil the role of the Bulletin (which was outlined in the first issue) we decided to broaden the "News" section, to include the "NGO pages" and "ODIHR Mandate" (description of our mandate in various fields). The changes reflect the change of the overall policy of the OSCE to bring the non-governmental organisations closer to the OSCE process, as an invaluable source of information about the implementation of the Human Dimension commitments. In our Bulletin we want to inform the broad audience what is the role and the functions of our Office, and keep it up-to-date with the ODIHR activities, also with respect to NGO Liaison activities.

Publications of the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti

CPRSI Newsletter: We have noticed a growing demand, especially on Roma organisations side, for a new publication, dedicated mainly to Roma issues. Therefore in August 1995 the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues started producing its bi-monthly CPRSI Newsletter which, among other things, lists the reports on the implementation of OSCE Commitments related to Roma, received by the ODIHR.

CPRSI Pamphlet: In addition, the ODIHR has produced a leaflet outlining the definition and the role of the CPRSI, as well as the description of its activities.

8. INFORMATION

INTERNAL INFORMATION

Having in mind the recommendations of the Internal Working Group on Documentation, the ODIHR created a database of the titles of the documents available in the office. The content of the ODIHR database was sent to the Prague Office, together with the electronic version of all ODIHR-originated documents (reports from elections, missions, seminars, etc.).

CLEARING HOUSE

Information Collected: In order to speed up the process of searching for information we are being requested to provide, the ODIHR created a database of information received by the office. The documents have been divided into 6 broad categories:

- OSCE main documents (from Summits, Follow-up meetings etc.)
- ODIHR archives (reports from ODIHR activities such as election observations, missions, ODIHR' organised seminars etc.);
- Country-by-Country Election data (reports send to us by other organisations concerned with election procedures);
- Country-by-Country reports related to Human Dimension issues (divided further into the group of problems they deal with, such as: rule of law, nationalism, media issues, freedoms etc.);
- Country-by-Country legal documents (we collect the election laws, citizenship laws and constitutions, together with the analysis of the drafts of these);
- Reports related to Roma and Sinti.

Most of our documents have been put into the database, however, we envisage the process of entering data to last until the first quarter of 1996.

Information shared: The most significant achievement of the ODIHR with respect to providing information available in the Clearing House was the preparation of several reports on the situation of the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the participating States, which are presented at the OSCE Implementation Meeting in October 1995. The materials available in the Clearing House were taken as a base for those reports on the implementation status.

In addition, the ODIHR provides information to individuals or organisations which write to us asking for documents and materials related to their field of interest. In 1995 the ODIHR provided responses to approximately 120 inquires.

9. PUBLIC RELATIONS

SPREADING AWARENESS OF HUMAN DIMENSION

In 1995 the ODIHR made a serious effort in order to spread awareness on Human Dimension commitments, problems, unsolved issues. This was a year of 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act and the Office decided to mark this year with several activities aiming to bring the Human Dimension issues to the public attention.

Translation of OSCE Documents: In addition to publishing the English version of the OSCE Human Dimension Documents in book form, the Office co-ordinated the translation of several key OSCE Documents into non-OSCE languages: Latvian, and Estonian. Projects are currently underway for translations into Tajik and Georgian.

If the 1996 budget allows we intend to continue this activity and - in addition to issuing the OSCE Human Dimension Documents book in Russian - we intend to translate main OSCE Documents into the languages of at least 5 countries of the Newly Emerging States

Compilations of OSCE Documents: Since CSCE/OSCE documents address a wide range of issues, it is often difficult for the individual to understand the full significance of specific human rights. This is why the ODIHR has undertaken to compile commitments related to themes such as: media,

migrant workers, refugees, national minorities, non-governmental organisations, human contacts, ethnic and religious discrimination, sex discrimination, Roma and Sinti.

In this manner we wish to contribute to the fulfilment of the recommendation made by the participating States in the Helsinki Decisions of 1992 : “the drawing up of compilations of existing CSCE Human Dimension commitments in order to promote greater understanding of the implementation of these commitments” (Chapter VI, paragraph 60).

Essay competition: In Spring 1995 the ODIHR announced the essay competition among Warsaw secondary schools. The essay was to be written in one of the OSCE languages and consist of 2-6 pages. The topic was: Human Rights - Tolerance. Two best works were published in the Autumn issue of the OSCE ODIHR Bulletin.

MEDIA INVOLVEMENT

Media policy: The ODIHR has prepared the Policy Paper with respect to it's Public Relations policy. It has been decided that the way to inform the press about the activities of our office, in addition to informing the international press through the Vienna office, will be arranging informal briefings with journalists of various polish newspapers and foreign correspondents living in Poland.

It has also been decided that media will always be invited to the ODIHR organised seminars - those which do not have limitations on the number of invitees.

Media briefings: In 1995 several informal briefings have been organised in on such occasion as elections in Armenia, elections in Georgia, etc. In addition the October Implementation Meeting was the occasion for several meetings with the press representatives.

10. NGO LIAISON

The work of the NGO Liaison Advisor in 1995 has covered a wide range of activities that can be divided into the following categories:

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

- Human Dimension Seminar “Building Blocks of Civic Society: Freedom of Association and NGOs,” held in Warsaw, 4-7 April brought together 123 non-governmental organisations. In addition to assisting Moderators and Rapporteurs, the NGO Liaison Advisor co-ordinated sub-meetings with NGOs and NGO document distribution.
- The NGO Liaison Advisor has informed more than 200 NGOs of the 1995 Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues and is currently overseeing the collection, collating and dissemination of NGO Registration lists and NGO Written Presentations.. A very high level of participation is expected, and NGO activities such as meetings with Heads of Missions, delegations, ODIHR Director will be co-ordinated by the NGO Liaison Advisor, who will also oversee distribution of NGO documents during the Meeting.
- The NGO Liaison Advisor frequently attends non-OSCE Conferences and Seminars of relevance to the ODIHR mandate. These have included:

- 14-15 January, Sofia: “Religious Tolerance in a Human Rights Perspective,” Co-organised by Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Krassimir Kanev, Head and Citizens for Religious Tolerance, Emil Cohen, Head;
- 23-24 June, Vienna: Workshop: “Global System of International Peace and Security and European Regional Arrangements,” International Institute for Peace;
- 30 June - 2 July, Warsaw: “Security Services in Civil Society: Oversight and Accountability,” Centre for National Security Studies, Foundation for a Civil Society and Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights;
- 6 - 11 August, Warsaw: V World Congress for Slavic, Central and East European Studies;

NGO DEVELOPMENT AND OUTREACH

A training workshop was organised by the NGO Liaison Advisor in Vilnius, 7-11 June, “Capacity Building and Communication for NGO Leadership” that was designed to impart to human rights-oriented NGOs in the Baltics professional organisational, communication and administrative skills, plus a basic understanding of the OSCE and the role NGOs play in it. Additional workshops of this nature are planned; the next training may take place in Tbilisi. Skopje and Ljubljana are also prospective sights for workshops.

The ODIHR hosted a reception in early January for local human rights-oriented NGOs in Warsaw. The event served to alert the attention of NGOs to the April Human Dimension Seminar and to the ODIHR’s general programme of activities for 1995.

The NGO Liaison Advisor has been receiving weekly requests for information exchange and for database reports. Meetings and consultations have been held in person or by post, E-mail, telephone and fax with NGOs from the CIS, Baltics, Central and Eastern Europe, but also from Western Europe, the US and Canada (e.g. a human rights summer school in Canada turned to the ODIHR for recommendations on scholarship candidates among E. European NGOs).

On a continuing basis, the NGO Liaison Advisor collects information in order to update and widen the scope of the NGO/Research Institute database, which now numbers approximately 1,000 organisations.

ODIHR AND OSCE SUPPORT

The NGO Liaison Advisor has often represented the ODIHR and the OSCE, for example, at meetings convened by Council of Europe, UNDP, the President of Lithuania, Mr. Brazauskis, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden..

In support of the work of other OSCE institutions, the NGO Liaison Advisor has assisted: the Chair in Office with references to NGOs; the Economic Forum preparations with NGO lists for participation; by preparing summaries of NGO reports on cases of human rights violations; with Mission support, including a visit to the Mission in Georgia; in contributing to the Secretary General’s report on NGOs; in arranging translations of key OSCE documents into Latvia, Estonian, Georgian languages; providing consultations on NGO participation in media, migration, rule of law programmes; and has attended the 18 June meeting in Vienna with OSCE Delegations, Heads of Missions and Conflict Management NGOs (including Institute for Resource and Security Studies).

CONTACT POINT FOR ROMA AND SINTI ISSUES

The NGO Liaison Advisor, in addition to attending all Warsaw consultations on the development of the CPRSI, has assisted in the development of a Roma/Sinti NGO database and has initiated a new project within the CPRSI for the collection and dissemination of information on Legal Aid Centres in OSCE participating states that provide free counsel in cases involving human rights violations against Roma/Sinti and other groups. Requests for such information have been sent to all OSCE points of contact and to relevant NGOs. Results of the survey will be published in the CPRSI Newsletter. On the basis of this research, the ODIHR intends to pinpoint areas where free legal aid centres are lacking, and to take measures to assist in the establishment of such centres.

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