

## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OSCE/LUBOMIR KOTEK



Steve Bennett (left), Director of the Kosovo Police Service School, welcomes Benita Ferrero-Waldner, OSCE CiO, and (centre) Albert Rohan of the Austrian MFA.

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# CiO pays visit to Kosovo Mission

On 22 February, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Austria's Foreign Minister, spent a long and intensive day with the Organization's largest field activity, the Mission in Kosovo. Her visit also included discussions with political leaders from the different local communities. She took the opportunity to call on Kosovo citizens of Albanian and Serb origin to stop all forms of violence in order to create better circumstances for future generations.

Her trip began with a visit to the Kosovo Police Service School in Vucitrn, 25 kilometres north of Pristina, where she was welcomed by the institution's

Director, Steve Bennett. As a symbol of support to the police training effort, the Chairperson's staff handed over a shipment of 180 pistols, provided by the Austrian manufacturer, Glock, to the first graduation class.

The Chairperson also met with the staff of the OSCE field office in the town, as well as with the Head of the Regional Centre in neighbouring Mitrovica to discuss the critical situation in that city.

Returning to Pristina, Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner spent the remainder of the day in a long series of meetings, beginning with a discussion with Dr. Bernhard Kouchner, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations

in Kosovo. She then met the two officials in the new Joint Interim Administration structure, Vjosa Dobruna and Robert Pulver, who head the Department for Democratic Governance. This was followed by other meetings with OSCE Mission staff.

She went on to meet several Kosovo Albanian political leaders: Hashim Thaci of the Democratic Progress Party of Kosovo (PPDK), Ibrahim Rugova, President of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Rexhep Qosja, leader of the United Democratic movement (LBD) and two independents, Veton Surroi, Publisher of the daily *Koha Ditore*, and Blerim Shala, Editor of *Zeri*. Later, Mrs.

Ferrero-Waldner talked to Momcilo Trajkovic, President of the Serb National Council, at the Serbian Orthodox Monastery in Gracanica.

The main themes of her meetings were the volatile situation in Mitrovica and the election preparations. All political leaders acknowledged the value of the efforts of the OSCE concerning the municipal elections to be held in the province in the autumn.

The Chairperson-in-Office stressed the importance of the OSCE role for the peace process in Kosovo in creating functioning democratic institutions, promoting human rights, establishing a stable democracy and supporting free and fair media.

“In these areas, the OSCE has the chance to prove that it is the foremost Organization in the field of creating the conditions for a better and more humane, for a pluralistic and democratic society,” she said.

#### Civil registration

In relation to elections, Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner described the civil registration process of the Kosovo population, due to be launched in March, as one of the most challenging tasks facing the Organization and called on the minorities of Kosovo to participate in this endeavour.

Before her return to Vienna, she briefly visited Media House, where a substantial part of the Kosovo media is

located. Media development and licensing form one of the main tasks of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner again took the opportunity to stress the role of free and independent media in offering objective information and in making clear the values of tolerance, democracy and reconciliation.

She was also able to announce donations by the Austrian Government to two media projects in Kosovo: a sum of around 10,000 euros (140,000 Austrian schillings) for the multi-ethnic station, Radio Contact, towards the erection of a transmission antenna, and a similar amount to the nascent Kosovo-wide Press Agency, which the OSCE Mission is developing.

## Integration of minorities a success story at OSCE-run Kosovo Police Service School

**K**osovo's new police training school is often described as one of the few examples of an institution where the different nationalities in the province are co-operating. Minorities, mainly Serbs, make up 10-15 per cent of the student core at the facility, which is run by the OSCE.

Over 350 students have already graduated from the school since it opened in September last year and are currently in field-training all over Kosovo. Two classes have already graduated, and the third course started on February 22.

“It is a challenge”, Silvana Pekocevic says bluntly. She is one of 18 Serbs in a group of 235 students currently at the Kosovo Police Service School, located in Vucitrn, a town 25 kilometres north of Pristina. Their presence there is essential to the efforts to establish a multi-ethnic police service in Kosovo.

However, Steve Bennett, Director of

the Police Service School, cautions against seeing the example of the school as larger than it is. “What we have here is situational tolerance. The students interact because they have to in order to be successful here. But it is a start.”

The start includes having up to 15 per cent minorities in each class, when the unofficial estimation is that minorities make up five per cent of the population.

“The number may be disproportionate based on the population, but not on the need,” he believes. “This is not a continuing argument but we believe there is a need to create a sense of security by training and deploying a fair number of local police officers in the minority community now in the beginning.

Silvana Pekocevic is 28 years old, a former teacher who lost her job early last summer and decided to try something totally different. She applied for the police school, only knowing that it was

meant to be the start of a new democratic police. “I did not like the police before,” she says, adding that she would probably not have believed it had she been told a year ago that she would be training to be a police officer.

Her compatriot, Ivan Ivanovic, a 21-year-old student, admitted that he had also never thought about becoming a policeman earlier. “But now I need a job and this place needs law and order,” he says.

Both Ms. Pekocevic and Mr. Ivanovic come from Strpce, a village in southern Kosovo that now has its first local police officer in field-training in the village – a graduate from the police school in mid-February.

They heard from their colleague there had been no problems at the school between the Serbs and the Albanians and that convinced them it was safe to enrol. However, not everyone in their families



*Serb students, Ivan Ivanovic and Silvana Pekocevic, are among the current enrolment at the OSCE-run police school in Vucitrn.*

is happy about them studying at the school. Friends and families are mainly concerned about their safety, but they have not been pressured to quit.

Confirms Mr. Bennett: “With regards to getting the minorities to the school, this continues to be a challenge. Their perception of the security situation is still an obstacle. But the experience with integrating minorities at the police school continues to exceed my expectations.

“Our outreach and invitation to them to visit the school in advance for a first-hand assessment of conditions and environment have been beneficial. The news of these successes of the minorities in the earlier classes also greatly helps in providing confidence for the following course generations,” says Mr. Bennett. “But the relationship between Albanians and minorities is still mainly on a profes-

sional level, very little on a personal one. Still the Albanian students have really taken the lead in reaching out to the minorities and encouraging full participation in all school activity. This is noteworthy and encouraging.”

#### **Cautiously optimistic**

The two Serbs are cautiously optimistic about possible co-existence in the future. On the social side of school-life, Mr. Ivanovic says, “We do talk to each other, I have Albanian friends here”. Ms. Pekocevic adds that there have been no problems at the women’s dormitory at the school, where Albanians and Serbs share rooms. But the past and the tension between the nationalities in Kosovo are not discussed out of the classroom.

“We need more time for reconciliation, this is only the beginning of a good

relationship,” says Mr. Ivanovic.

“Outreach in the social activities is yet to emerge,” Mr. Bennett agrees. “I did not expect a miracle; I continue to be encouraged by future potential, based on the professional interaction in the school programmes. No one knows how long this will take – some students have said generations...”

He added the United Nations Mission in Kosovo had no illusions about deploying local police cadets in areas where another ethnic group is in the majority.

“The minorities wouldn’t be here if they were not to be deployed back in their home towns and villages. I believe there is a real potential that given a specific common task, such as a major investigation or other joint police operations, these officers could work together effectively,” he said.

# On duty in Shatili: monitoring border of Georgia

OSCE observes the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation

Shatili is difficult to locate on the average map – a village of about a dozen buildings, high in the mountains of north-eastern Georgia close to the border with the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. It has no electricity or running water. In winter, it is bitterly cold and usually inaccessible by road. But to several OSCE staff members, it will be both home and office. Their mission: to observe and

(see factbox) to include observation of the border between the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation and Georgia. By providing detailed information on the traffic and events around the border, the OSCE seeks to defuse possible tensions. Shatili was chosen as the base of operations because it is the only point along the 81-km border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic where trucks with crates could cross the mountains.

The monitors also brought in all the supplies and equipment necessary for establishing a permanent base – generators, blankets, food and emergency equipment. Within a few weeks, HQ Shatili was operational and a permanent staff had been deployed. At present, up to 12 OSCE monitors are deployed in Shatili at any given time.

“We are rotated on a weekly basis,” one of the border monitors said, “When we are in Shatili, we live and work on the top floor of a family home that the OSCE is renting. The owner and his family live below us.”

Conditions still remain very difficult. There is no hot or running water available, and kerosene stoves are the only source of heating. Due to the winter weather and hazardous terrain, helicopters are the sole feasible mode of transport for the delivery of supplies or for emergency evacuation.

“When we come up to the border, each of us is responsible for bringing his own food supplies,” the monitors told the *Newsletter*, “The regularity of supplies depends on flight conditions, and here – in the mountains – even helicopter transport can become impossible. That is why we always have to maintain an emergency supply of food and fuel.”

The border patrols and the daily liaison with Georgian border monitor posts are often made difficult by the terrain. “We go as far as possible by car, and then continue on foot. But even on foot, some of our patrol areas are difficult to reach and several border posts are located on slopes that are hard to climb or descend.”

Security is a crucial factor. The monitors are unarmed, but the Georgian Government has given assurances that it will provide security for the OSCE monitors



OSCE border observers have a base at Shatili, 1,500 metres above sea-level (pictures 1 and 3). Sometimes a helicopter is the only way of ferrying in supplies to the base (2). OSCE observers also liaise with Georgian border guards (4).

report on movement across the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. Daily duty involves patrolling the mountainous stretches around the border crossing point, 3.5 kilometres from Shatili.

The operation was initiated in December 1999, in response to a request by the Government of Georgia. The OSCE Permanent Council expanded the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia

Establishing a permanent presence in Shatili took time. Initially, monitoring teams consisting of three to four observers had been flown in by helicopter from Tbilisi to Shatili. From there they travelled to the border, either in vehicles or – when weather conditions made it impossible to drive – on foot, to observe and record any movement in the area. At the end of the day, the monitors were flown back to Tbilisi.



and ensure their freedom of movement. In addition, a helicopter is on call in case of emergency.

“In difficult weather, however, even evacuation by helicopter could be impossible, so the Mission has hired local medical staff and established a medical station sufficiently equipped to stabilize a patient for up to 24 hours.”

The current phase of operations also involves establishing a permanent pres-

ence at the border itself. Two monitoring posts are to be established, one at the border crossing itself, and one at the entrance of the two mountain passes leading to the border. This, however, entails ensuring that the monitors have adequate shelter and protection. On a day-to-day basis the monitors will rely on special tents and generators to provide shelter and heating. Due to the difficult conditions, the monitors will at first rotate on a daily basis

between the base at Shatili and the posts at the border, and eventually – as the situation improves – will remain at their posts for a week at a time.

In February, an assessment team under the guidance of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship was sent to the region to explore expanding the operation.

What does it take to take to be a border monitor in Shatili? “Excellent physical and mental conditions,” one monitor told the *Newsletter*. “At 1,500-2,000 metres above sea level working conditions require special preparation and efforts. The terrain and weather conditions are very difficult, and there is an armed conflict in close proximity, on the other side of the border.”

“Also, the ability to communicate in at least English and Russian, negotiation skills, an understanding towards the local culture and habits, patience and a sense of humour,” he added. “Our safety and the quality of our working environment depend on our relations with the local authorities and population.

“But the work is very gratifying,” he said. “By being here we contribute to the objective assessment of the situation and contribute to a decreasing of tensions.”

## The OSCE Mission to Georgia

In response to armed conflicts in the country, the OSCE Mission to Georgia was established in December 1992, with headquarters in Tbilisi. The main objective of the Mission is to promote negotiations aiming at the peaceful political settlement of the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

A great deal of the Mission’s work relates to the South Ossetian region of the country. It has also worked with the parties and the international community on ways of defining the political status of South Ossetia within Georgia. The Mission also monitors the tripartite peace-

keeping forces deployed in the region, liaises with the Joint Control Commission (the quadripartite body established to direct and control the Joint Peacekeeping Forces), and collects information on the military situation.

The Mission also supports the United Nations peace-making efforts in the Abkhazia area. This involves looking at ways of accommodating the aspirations of the Abkhazians while maintaining the territorial integrity of Georgia. By appointing an officer to the United Nations Human Rights Office established in Sukhumi, the OSCE has been able to play an

active role in promoting compliance with human dimension standards in Abkhazia.

In relation to Georgia as a whole, the Mission’s mandate is to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and assist in the development of legal and democratic institutions and processes. The Mission is headed by Ambassador Jean-Michel Lacombe of France. Before the border monitoring operation, it numbered 18 international personnel seconded by OSCE participating States. For up-to-date information, please visit the Mission website at:

[www.osce.org/georgia](http://www.osce.org/georgia)

# Steps towards equality in all OSCE activities

Five years ago, women comprised only about 14 per cent of the people working in OSCE field activities. The year 2000 will be considered a milestone year as women break through some of the traditional barriers and hold a growing number of senior posts within the Organization. Women now occupy positions as Head of Mission, Director of Department, Section Head, as well as Chairperson-in-Office, Chair of the Permanent Council and President of the Parliamentary Assembly.

The principle of equal opportunities for women and men and the gender balance of the OSCE staff were concerns outlined in the Charter for European Security, signed by the Heads of State and Government at the OSCE Summit in

Istanbul. Over the past year, the OSCE Secretariat has been making increased efforts to ensure the Organization offers a productive working environment where both men and women can develop their professional potential in an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

In June 1999, the Secretariat issued an organizational directive, 'Professional working environment in the OSCE'. Under the directive, each large mission and each regional group of smaller missions has an appointed staff member who can act as



a mediator for complaints of discrimination or harassment. The first group of mediators participated in a two-day training course in December, which a second group is scheduled to undertake in the spring.

In December 1999, an Informal Group on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men met for the first time in Vienna. The group, initiated by the Chairperson-in-Office, is chaired

by the Representative of Liechtenstein and includes the Gender Advisers from the OSCE Secretariat and the Office for

Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. It will develop approaches and strategies to assist the Organization as it moves toward gender mainstreaming. This is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.

Several measures aimed at obtaining a more balanced workforce have been incorporated into the Gender Action Plan, drafted by the OSCE Secretariat in co-operation with OSCE Institutions. The plan is being reviewed by the Informal Group and will then be submitted to the Permanent Council for formal approval.

One aspect of the Gender Action Plan addresses further

## OSCE Mediators for Gender Issues

- ODIHR: ..... *Ian Gorvin*
- HCNM: ..... *Yvonne Kwakkestijn*
- RFOM: ..... *Beate Maeder-Metcalf*
- OSCE Mission to Latvia: ..... *Undine Bollows*
- OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus: ..... *Alina Josan*
- OSCE Centres in Almaty, Ashgabad, Bishkek,  
Mission to Tajikistan and Liaison Office in Central Asia ..... *Bess Brown*  
..... *Raphaelle Mathey*
- OSCE Mission to Georgia, Assistance Group  
to Chechnya and OSCE Centre in Yerevan: ..... *Maria Arioli*
- OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje: ..... *Melinda Lord*
- OSCE Presence in Albania: ..... *Timothy Isles*
- OSCE Mission to Moldova  
and OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine: ..... *Igor Bosc*
- OSCE Mission to Croatia: ..... *Paul Simon*
- OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Hercegovina: ..... *John Ging*
- OSCE Mission in Kosovo: ..... *Brita Yri*

The brochure *Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination : A Guide to the Promotion of a Professional Working Environment in the OSCE* is available from OSCE Institutions and field offices. It is also available on the OSCE website:

<http://www.osce.org/publications>

training for field staff to ensure they are sensitive to gender issues when working with people in post-conflict areas. The project is being supported by the Canadian International Development Agency, and will include publication of a manual on dealing with gender issues in the field. About 200 OSCE mission staff are now completing surveys which will be used

to collect information about gender issues in the field. This information will help to develop the content for the field manual. In the final phase of the project, regional training seminars will be held to promote the contents of the manual.

At present, women comprise 27 per cent of the seconded staff members in field activities. The OSCE has made a

commitment to promote equality between women and men as a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society, and to provide a working environment that is free of discrimination or harassment.

Information on the OSCE professional working environment is available at all OSCE Institutions and field offices, or by contacting the Gender Adviser at:

OSCE Secretariat ■ Karntner Ring 5-7 ■ A-1010, Vienna, Austria ■ E-mail: [equality@osce.org](mailto:equality@osce.org)

## This year's OSCE Ball raises almost 15,000 euros for charitable donations

The 2000 OSCE Ball, held on 11 February, raised 14,530 euros (almost ATS 200,000) which, as last year, will be used to support charities in Austria and elsewhere in the OSCE area. The event, which took place as usual in the Hofburg Palace, attracted almost 1,000 participants, including several former OSCE Delegates who flew in especially for the event. They enjoyed an evening of dancing and entertainment which went on till the early hours. Guest of honour was the Chairperson-in-Office, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Austria's Foreign Minister.

The graceful opening ceremony was performed by young Viennese couples under the direction of Frederick and Lydia Mastaire. A spectacular highlight at midnight was the arrival of a giant "birthday cake", prepared to mark 25 years of the CSCE/OSCE. It was presented to the Secretary General of the OSCE, Amba-



*Among the guests at the OSCE Ball (left to right): Walter Straub, Director of the Hofburg Congress Centre; Ferdinand Mayrhofer-Gruenbuehel, OSCE Director for Resources; Jutta Stefan-Bastl, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council; Jan Kubis, Secretary General of the OSCE; Benita Ferrero-Waldner, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office; and Jaroslava Kubis*

sador Jan Kubis, by Manfred Buchinger, Cordon Bleu Chef de Cuisine of the Vienna Intercontinental Hotel, and Walter Straub, Director of the Hofburg

Congress Centre company.

Ambassador Ferdinand Mayrhofer-Grunbuehel, Director for Resources, said the gracious support of the event by both the Intercontinental Hotel and the Hofburg GesmbH was greatly appreciated. All services and the sumptuous gala buffet dinner were provided free of charge, while the rooms were beautifully decorated with flowers in the Austrian national colours of red and white.

Proceeds from last year's ball were able to provide equipment, valued at 9,500 euros (ATS 130,000), including four wheelchairs and a large number of walkers, crutches and walking-sticks for the use of refugees in the Stenkovec camp in Kosovo.

At the same time, a sum of 7,300 euros (ATS 100,000) was transferred to the Austrian charity, *Nachbar in Not*, in support of its efforts to alleviate the Kosovo humanitarian crisis.



## News from the field

*The OSCE currently has Missions or other field activities in Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo (FRY), Latvia, Skopje (FYROM), Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The following brief reports reflect some of the work which these field operations have undertaken during the previous month.*

### **OSCE Mission holds conference on Tajik electoral process and media**

A conference on the 'Electoral Process and Media in Tajikistan', organized by the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan, was held in Dushanbe from 1 to 3 February. The Conference offered Tajik radio, television and print media journalists an opportunity to improve their knowledge of international standards and how these relate to Tajik legislation regulating, inter alia: media participation in the electoral process; electoral campaign coverage; organizational and financial aspects of media participation in the electoral process; ethical norms; freedom and responsibility; and rights and duties of journalists.

Over 150 people attended the conference, among them international and Tajik experts on legislation and the media, representatives of the Central Commission on Election and Referenda, the State Committee on Television and Radio, political parties and other authorities. The event was followed by a training seminar on the same issues for journalists from the Khatlon region, in Kurgan Teppa. A number of practical suggestions were made on how to improve the existing regulations on access to the media for the political parties and candidates.

Underlining the importance of such conferences, the participants expressed the need to organize more follow-up meetings and training, particularly in the regions where access to information is limited. A second follow-up seminar took place the following week in the Khujand region. The conference was organized by the OSCE Mission in co-

operation with the Tajik branches of the Open Society Institute and the Internews Network.

### **NGO Strategy Development meeting held in Uzbekistan**

From 15 to 18 February, the Central Asia Liaison Office organized the second NGO Strategy Development Meeting near Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It was seen as a successful and productive follow-up to the first non-governmental organizations (NGO) meeting held in December 1999; 19 of the 22 NGOs involved agreed to establish an Assembly of Uzbekistan NGOs and Initiative Groups. Participants drafted the Assembly's mission statement, formed the structure of its co-ordinating council and regional bodies and set up an e-mail list. This was the first time that they had approved the creation of such a common structure which marked a significant step in increasing NGO co-operation, co-ordination and their ability to effect change in society.

### **Latvia initiates umbrella project to advance the integration process**

The OSCE Mission to Latvia has initiated an umbrella project 'Integration 2000', aimed at stimulating the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in discussions on integration in their respective regions. The scheme has six sub-projects in different locations all over Latvia. In co-operation with regional NGO centres, the Mission has invited NGOs to submit project proposals on how they could best support multicultural dialogue and integration in

their respective regions. The Mission is funding two of the sub-projects, Dau-gavpils and Ventspils, while the Embassies of Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Finland are providing funding for similar projects in Liepaja, Jekabpils, Rezekne and Jelgava respectively.

### **OSCE to establish field office in southern Kyrgyzstan**

On 10 February, the OSCE Permanent Council approved the establishment of an OSCE Field Office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, to assist the OSCE Centre in Bishkek in carrying out its work. The new field office will function as a co-ordinating point for OSCE activities in southern Kyrgyzstan. Due to the distances and available transport routes between Bishkek and Osh, the office is regarded as beneficial and complementary to the Centre in Bishkek, which opened in January 1999.

### **OSCE and UNHCR release fourth report on Kosovo minorities**

The OSCE and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have released their fourth joint report on the situation of minorities in Kosovo, covering the period from November 1999 through January 2000. As already concluded in the last statement, the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo remains precarious. Minorities remain vulnerable to attack and do not benefit from the same quality of life as the majority. However, for some minority communities there are a few signs of improvement, such as for the



Kosovo Serbs and Muslim Slavs. Some examples of progress have also been achieved for other communities, such as the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians (copy available on [www.osce.org/kosovo/publications/ethnic\\_minorities](http://www.osce.org/kosovo/publications/ethnic_minorities)).

### **Mission Head Everts opens studios for Radio and Television Kosovo**

On 16 February, the newly-refurbished television studios for Radio and Television Kosovo (RTK) in Pristina were formally opened by the OSCE Head of Mission, Ambassador Daan Everts. He stressed the importance of the opening ceremony as a sign that the independent public broadcaster is here to stay. Under future statutes, RTK will have a legal obligation to represent adequately the different political views and parties, of particular importance in view of the elections expected in the autumn. It will also have to give adequate attention to broadcasting in minority languages. The event was attended by Kosovo political leaders, including members of the Interim Administrative Council, as well as by the head of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, Dr. Bernard Kouchner.

### **OSCE launches municipal infrastructure programme in BiH**

With a series of workshops on capital project planning and management, targeted at municipal officials and administrators throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE is launching its Municipal Infrastructure Finance and Implementation 2000 (MIFI 2000) programme. This is the second year of the programme, which is geared to providing intensive training and technical assistance for selected municipalities with the aim of enhancing the level of trans-

parency and accountability in governance. Ten municipalities participated in the 1999 MIFI programme, while 13 new municipalities are to take part this year.

The first series of workshops, which focused on capital project planning and management, brought together over 50 representatives. Participants were engaged in exercises exposing them to best-practice municipal management of material resources. Following this first workshop series, the MIFI 2000 programme will offer further seminars and on-site assistance in areas such as municipal budgeting and finance, roles and responsibilities of administrators, and the work of municipal councillors in project and financial planning. The ultimate goal of the programme is to create conditions where the quality of life can be improved and in which displaced persons may reintegrate into their former communities.

### **OSCE Moldovan Mission assists in getting help for children's ward**

On 17 January, OSCE Mission members paid a second visit to the children's ward in the psycho-neurological hospital in Bendery, Moldova, to find out the ward's most urgent needs. The Mission was given a list of urgently required medicines and hygienic articles, which was passed to the Moldovan office of *Pharmaciens sans frontières*. After a visit to the ward, the NGO proposed a \$20,000 project to reconstruct the ward's toilets, bathrooms and kitchens and is to deliver some of the needed medical supplies.

The Mission concluded that the best long-term solution would be to remove the 74 children from the ward to an alternative building, which could be constructed for that purpose in Bendery.

Mission members also contacted the Luxembourg NGO, *Association Défi*, which is implementing a project to refurbish an old sanatorium in Romanesti, to house 180 children from an orphanage in Hincesti. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Moldova have also included the children's ward on their list.

### **Armenian press informed about new OSCE Office in Yerevan**

With the assistance of the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the OSCE Office in Yerevan held a press conference on 23 February to publicize the establishment of the Office. It was attended by some 30 reporters from the print and electronic media, who were informed about the terms of the Office's mandate and introduced to members of the Office, including its Head, Roy Reeve of the United Kingdom. The information event resulted in wide, positive coverage of the OSCE Office over the course of the following days.

### **Newsletters to help reduce number of "don't knows" in BiH elections**

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is producing newsletters to help undecided voters make their choice in the municipal elections, due to be held on 8 April. Between 1,500 and 2,000 custom-made newsletters will be produced in the framework of the political party development programme, for all 40 OSCE "strategic municipalities". By including an overview of the political programmes of the parties running in the municipalities, the newsletters are also intended to foster accountability in the post-election period. Distribution was scheduled to start in the second week of March.

More information about Austrian Chairmanship is available on-line:  
[www.osze.at](http://www.osze.at)



On 3 February, **Jacques Paul Klein, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Coordinator of**

**Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council. He expressed his satisfaction with the “highly effective working relationship” between the OSCE and the United Nations. In particular, he described the UN’s co-operation with Robert Barry, Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and his staff as “close and fruitful”. Outlining the activities of the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), he commented on the situation in the region, on the role of the UNMIBH and on the regional dimension. He pointed out that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina still required the support of international organizations, in particular with respect to housing reconstruction, job creation and inclusion in European structures.

Mr. Klein reported on the progress in the UNMIBH’s three main areas of focus: police restructuring; police reform and the assessment of the judicial system. Relating to the regional dimension, he expressed his hope that the incipient European “security architecture” and the Stability Pact could prevent violent and costly eruptions in the Balkan region. Finally, Mr. Klein confirmed that the UNMIBH was planning to fulfil its mandate in two to three years and emphasized the importance of a continued and increased international engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On 24 February, **the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev**, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council. The President pointed out the complex nature of problems that his country

faced, and described the support of the OSCE Institutions on these issues as of crucial importance. He also called for direct co-operation between the OSCE and the Central Asian countries in the fight against the increase of illicit drug trafficking. He stressed that his country would welcome co-operation with the OSCE, not only with regard to elections, but also on a broader front, such as in human rights and the formation of a civil society. The President finally expressed his gratitude to the OSCE for their assistance in developing greater mutual understanding and co-operation between Kazakhstan and the OSCE, and expressed his approval of the Austrian Chairmanship’s work in relation to Central Asia.

On 25 February, **the OSCE Secretary General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe**, expressed their deep concern about the continuing reports of violations of human rights and humanitarian law in Chechnya. They emphasized the importance of a truthful response to these allegations from the Russian Federation and expressed their readiness to support the national authorities and in particular the presidential representative for human rights in Chechnya in further investigations of human rights violations. They called again on the Russian authorities to permit the international monitoring of the human rights situation. In addition, they asked for the appropriate conditions to be created for the delivery of international humanitarian assistance, and for full access to detainees and internally-displaced person.

The statement was issued at the end of the annual high-level Tripartite meeting, which brings together directors and senior officials from the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the OSCE

with the aim of sharing information and improving co-operation. This year’s meeting, held on 25 February in Geneva, focused on recent developments in South-Eastern Europe and the situation in Kosovo. The next meeting, scheduled for February 2001, will be hosted by the OSCE in Vienna.

In conjunction with the Tripartite meeting, a target-oriented **meeting on law enforcement and police** was held in Geneva on 24 February. This expert-level meeting, attended by representatives from both headquarters and field missions, compared experiences and lessons learned in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo. Participants emphasized the need for co-ordination and co-operation in developing law enforcement and police capabilities in post-conflict areas. Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Secretariat and the OSCE Missions to Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo participated in the meeting.

On 29 February, **N. P. Koshman, the Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation and its Plenipotentiary Representative in the Chechen Republic**, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council. He asked for understanding considering the complexity of the tasks confronting the Russian Federation in seeking to prevent terrorism, crime and drug trafficking from spreading beyond the North Caucasus. He expressed concern about the mass media’s interpretation of the humanitarian situation in Chechnya. Mr. Koshman described the information received by the international community as carrying an “automatic minus sign for Russia”.

He called upon the OSCE to seek a more balanced and objective judgement of the situation in Chechnya and of the

actions of the Russian Government. He welcomed the OSCE's interest in participating actively in settling the situation in Chechnya, but pointed out that international mediation between the Russian Federation and one of its "subjects" would be useless. He expressed his approval of the wish of the OSCE's Assistance Group to Chechnya to work closely with the Federal authorities on humanitarian problems and stated that the Russian authorities would be in a mood for constructive work with the Organization's Assistance Group. Finally, he mentioned his country's intention to have more

detailed discussions on these issues with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on her next visit to Moscow.

On 29 February, **the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, expressed her deep regret that the Turkmen opposition activist, Nurberdy Nurmamedov, and his son Murad were sentenced to detention in a labour camp for five and two years respectively. She recalled a statement on Turkmenistan, made by the OSCE Troika on 21 January, which urged Turkmenistan to release

prisoners held in custody on political grounds. Officially, Mr. Nurmamedov received his sentence for hooliganism, although strong indications were that he was arrested for his criticism of the Turkmen Government. The rapid conduct of the trial and the fact that neither international observers nor friends and relatives of Mr. Nurmamedov were allowed to attend it, are further worrying details. The Chairperson-in-Office requested the Turkmen authorities to review the case in conformity with international standards and OSCE commitments to the right to a fair trial.



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

#### **Reuters, 10 February**

'Diplomats from France and Belgium boycotted a speech by Austria's new Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Vienna on Thursday. The action was part of efforts by Austria's 14 European Union (EU) partners to isolate the country diplomatically, following the formation of a new Government that includes Jörg Haider's far-right Freedom Party... Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner shrugged off the action, saying: "I can't take this as a vote of no-confidence. It is not the EU that has boycotted... I don't think this will affect the efficiency of the OSCE," she told reporters. "I don't think Austria is weakened as Chairman. Whoever wants to weaken us would also be weakening the OSCE." In her speech, Ferrero-Waldner said Austria would exercise the function

of Chairman-in-Office to the full and pledged unreserved commitment to the values and principles of the OSCE, especially on human rights.'

#### **Der Standard, 23 February**

*'Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner visits Pristina as OSCE Chairperson'*

Within the OSCE Mission in Pristina, the role of the new Foreign Minister seems to be uncontroversial. Although the new Government in Vienna is being discussed privately, everyone agrees that the work within the OSCE has not been affected. This is all the more important, as in the South-Eastern European states alone... more than a thousand international OSCE mission members are active. For all these missions, Austria as the lead country has to make important decisions.'

#### **Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 26 February**

'The head of the Austrian Delegation at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Jutta Stefan-Bastl, on Friday described the Austrian Chairmanship as "morally weakened"... The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had initially assumed that the sanctions against the

blue-black Government in Vienna would not affect the role of Austria in the OSCE. This turned out otherwise, said Stefan-Bastl... There have been attempts to hamper the Austrian Chairmanship. "However," she added, "Austria has managed to withstand the first wave of attack quite well."'

#### **Reuters, 21 February**

'It is the first time in Kyrgyzstan's nine years of independence that parliament seats are being contested on a party basis and the step has been generally welcomed. But popular opposition figure Felix Kulov was prevented from contesting on a party basis, although he was allowed to stand in a constituency seat... The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe took the unusual step of issuing a statement mid-campaign to express its unease over the court's decision, which significantly reduced Kulov's chances of winning a seat.'

#### **Reuters, 24 February**

'Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko has set controversial terms for a political dialogue aimed at ending tensions in the ex-Soviet state. Opposition groups criticised the offer, saying it tied

their hands even before the proposed talks began... And it seeks to limit the role in the talks of the Organization for

Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)... The role of the OSCE would be watered down. Europe's top security

body had called for the talks ahead of a parliamentary election in the autumn to ensure a free and fair vote.'

## UPDATE

## from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

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

### ELECTIONS



#### **Office observes second round of Croatia's presidential election**

In a preliminary statement after the second round of the Croatian presidential election, held on 7 February, the Election Observation Mission concluded that the election marked further progress towards meeting Croatia's commitments as a participating State of the OSCE and as a member of the Council of Europe. However, the observers remained concerned about three issues that fundamentally impeded Croatia's democratic development: (1) the Law on Citizenship, granting the right to Croatian citizenship and the right to vote to ethnic Croats born abroad and having no permanent residence in Croatia; (2) the large number of refugees in neighbouring countries, effectively unable to assert their citizenship and therefore exercise their right to vote; and (3) the risk of discrimination and intimidation arising from the identification of voter's ethnicity on voter lists, which was retained for this election although it was irrelevant.

Other concerns related to a lack of uniformity of the electoral process. The OSCE will monitor the follow-up to the above concerns, and stands ready to continue the dialogue with the parliament, the Government and other authorities of Croatia with a view to addressing these shortcomings. The Election Observation

Mission was headed by Nikolai Vulchanov (Bulgaria). More than 200 short-term observers were deployed on election day.

#### **Election in Kyrgyzstan "did not comply with all commitments"**

In a joint statement issued by the ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) following the first round of the parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan on 20 February, the two OSCE Institutions stated that the recent changes to electoral legislation provided the potential for increased competition and party representation in the political process. However, a series of decisions preventing parties and candidates from competing in the election on a fair and equal basis – and a high degree of interference in the electoral process by public prosecutors and some state officials – marred the election. As a result, despite a generally well-administered process on election day, the 20 February parliamentary election were not in full compliance with OSCE commitments.

The Election Observation Mission was headed by Mark Stevens (United Kingdom). Ihor Ostash, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Ukrainian Parliament and a Vice-President of the OSCE PA was the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. The observation mission deployed 115 short-term observers throughout the country, including 16 par-

liamentarians from the OSCE PA. The second round of the parliamentary election was scheduled for 12 March.

#### **Election in Tajikistan constituted "important benchmark"**

The preliminary statement of the Joint UN/OSCE Election Observation Mission, covering the 27 February parliamentary election in Tajikistan, concluded that this first multi-party election in the country's history constituted an important benchmark in the implementation of the 1997 General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan.

The most significant accomplishment in this peace-building step was the inclusion of the former warring parties and other political forces in the electoral process. This contrasted sharply with the limited choice offered to voters in previous elections and marked an improvement in the democratic development of Tajikistan.

However, Tajikistan had to improve the process in order to meet the minimum standards for democratic elections. The elections took place within a new legislative framework that failed to secure these standards, in particular insofar as the independence of election commissions and the transparency of the vote count and tabulation results are concerned. The campaign period was marred by violent incidents, interference from state officials and media bias.



*ODIHR election observer in the Pamir Mountains during the parliamentary elections in Tajikistan*

The Joint Election Observation Mission, headed by Ambassador Zenon Kuchciak (Poland), was a combined effort of the ODIHR and the United Nations, in accordance with the 1997 General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. More than 80 short-term observers were deployed on election day. The second round of elections was scheduled for 12 March.

#### **ODIHR prepares for observation of Russian presidential election**

The Director of the ODIHR, Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, headed an ODIHR delegation to Moscow to meet the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation on 14 February. The ODIHR officially presented its report on the parliamentary elections held in December 1999. Preparations for the forthcoming presidential election in the Russian Federation were discussed during the meeting. The ODIHR has established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the election of a new Head of State, scheduled for 26 March. The mission, headed by Ambassador Edouard Brunner (Switzerland), has deployed 27 long-term observers and nine core team members in Moscow to follow the pre-election campaign and preparations for these elections, including media monitoring at national and local level. Some 250 short-term observers are expected to

be deployed around the Russian Federation for election day.

#### **ODIHR establishes EOM in Georgia**

An ODIHR needs assessment mission visited Tbilisi from 29 February to 3 March to assess the preparations for the presidential elections to be held in Georgia on 9 April. An Election Observation Mission was established immediately after the visit of the assessment mission. The ODIHR has provided comments on the draft Electoral Codes of Georgia and stands ready to continue its technical assistance towards the improvement of the electoral framework.

#### **Fact-finding mission looks at council elections in Montenegro**

In view of the forthcoming municipal elections in Podgorica and Herceg-Novi due in the spring, an ODIHR fact-finding mission visited Montenegro from 9 to 11 February. The elections are of particular significance as the two municipalities cover one-third of the Montenegrin electorate and may be an important indicator of public opinion. Issues investigated during the visit included voter eligibility and political party control over elected officials. A parliamentary working group is in the process of reviewing and amending the legal framework for the elections. The ODIHR will comment on the draft laws when the working group completes its assignment.

#### **DEMOCRATIZATION**



#### **ODIHR advisory panel on freedom of religion meets in Warsaw**

On 9-10 February, the contact group of ODIHR's Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief met in Warsaw to discuss the structure, mem-

bership and functioning of the panel's working groups, as well as ideas for possible projects and activities in the field of freedom of religion or belief. The contact group constitutes the core of the newly restructured panel and consists of the co-chairs of the panel's three thematic working groups (conflict prevention and dialogue; legislative issues; education/awareness for tolerance).

The Warsaw meeting reaffirmed the function of the panel, which is to serve as an advisory body to the ODIHR for advancing freedom of religion in the OSCE area. The panel proposes projects and initiatives, and keeps the ODIHR informed of important developments and concerns pertaining to freedom of religion or belief. It also makes available to the ODIHR its resources for project implementation.

#### **ODIHR and Russian MFA initiate joint anti-trafficking measures**

From 14 to 16 February, an ODIHR delegation headed by the Director of the ODIHR, Gérard Stoudmann, met with Russian authorities, NGOs and media representatives to discuss the problem of trafficking in the Russian Federation and to begin exploring areas for potential cooperation.

As one outcome of those preliminary meetings, the ODIHR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of Humanitarian Co-operation and Human Rights) agreed to work together in both the short and longer term to raise public awareness of the problem of trafficking and to assist in enhancing the national legislation available to combat trafficking.

The first activity will be an NGO-Government roundtable in late April, jointly organized by the ODIHR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The primary purpose of this meeting will be to begin a dialogue between the Government and NGOs on the problem of trafficking, to

identify priorities for action, and to explore areas for greater co-operation. In addition, the ODIHR hopes to support a public information campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of trafficking and the recruitment methods employed by traffickers.

### **Mission looks at ways to assist police force in the FYROM**

Following the support of the police forces of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYROM) during the refugee crisis last year, the ODIHR, together with the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute (COLPI) and the Open Society Institute (OSI) Macedonia conducted a needs assessment mission to the country in February to explore systematic ways of assisting the police force. The expert group spent one week with a working group of the Ministry of Interior to understand the structure and functioning of the police. It was found that while the police force is generally organized in a professional way, it suffers from a high degree of centralization.

It was agreed that assistance would be given to establish a new training college, to review current management structures and to develop capacities within the Ministry of the Interior to formulate and implement new policy principles. The long-term objective of such assistance is to develop an understand-

ing of policing as a service to all citizens as opposed to population control. A project proposal was submitted for funding to the Stability Pact Co-ordinator.

### **Another trafficked woman returns home to Ukraine**

As reported in the February *OSCE Newsletter*, the whereabouts of one of the eight Ukrainian women who had been trafficked into forced prostitution in Montenegro remained unknown after an earlier ODIHR intervention had led to the return of the seven other women. The missing woman had been further trafficked to Albania and Italy where she was eventually found in poor health.

According to information received by the ODIHR, the woman has meanwhile safely returned to Ukraine. In following up on her case, the ODIHR cooperated with the Permanent Mission of Italy to the OSCE, the NGO *La Strada*, the International Organization for Migration, and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in alerting local authorities about her situation and whereabouts, and offered OSCE assistance in ensuring her safe repatriation.

### **ODIHR holds roundtable on Roma refugees in the FYROM**

On 18 February, the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues organized a roundtable on questions relating

to the legal status of Roma refugees from Kosovo currently living in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYROM). The roundtable, which was co-organized by the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, brought together for the first time various Roma and non-Roma NGOs dealing with refugee issues, the UNHCR representation in Skopje, the Council of Europe and officials from the Ministry of the Interior.

Against the background of the imminent expiration of the current temporary legal arrangement (“temporary humanitarian protection”), the discussion focused on ways to improve the legal status of Roma refugees in the fYROM and to enhance dialogue between the various actors involved. Negotiations between the authorities and the UNHCR on the extension of the current status as well as on a new draft Asylum and Refugee Law are already underway.

One main outcome of the roundtable was that the participants agreed on institutionalizing the dialogue and including NGOs working on Roma and refugee issues in the drafting of the new Asylum and Refugee Law. In order to facilitate NGO involvement in the legislative process and in human rights work in refugee camps, in February the ODIHR Contact Point initiated the establishment of an umbrella organization comprising NGOs that deal with refugee issues.

## **NEWS** from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

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### **High Commissioner pays two visits to the FYROM**

From 7 to 9 February, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, Max

van der Stoel, visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. His visit was devoted almost exclusively to the question of the creation of an Albanian

higher education language institute. He has been engaged in this issue for some time and is now working with the parties to bring the idea to fruition. He discussed

the next steps with President Boris Trajkovski, Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski, and Foreign Minister Aleksandar Dimitrov, as well as education experts from the Government and the Albanian minority.

On 28 and 29 February, Mr. van der Stoel returned to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with two experts in the field of university education, Professor J. de Groof of Belgium and Dr. J. Farrington of the United Kingdom. They were joined by Dr. A. Kleiser, a consultant from Switzerland, designated by the Council of Europe to participate in this mission. The main focus of discussion was the text of a new draft law on higher education. The experts discussed elements of the law with a working group set up by the Minister of Education. They stressed the importance of respecting international standards and creating a law that would allow for the establishment of an Albanian-language institute of higher education. During his visit, the High Commissioner met with representatives of government and opposition parties, to gauge their views

on the university issue and how it could affect inter-ethnic relations.

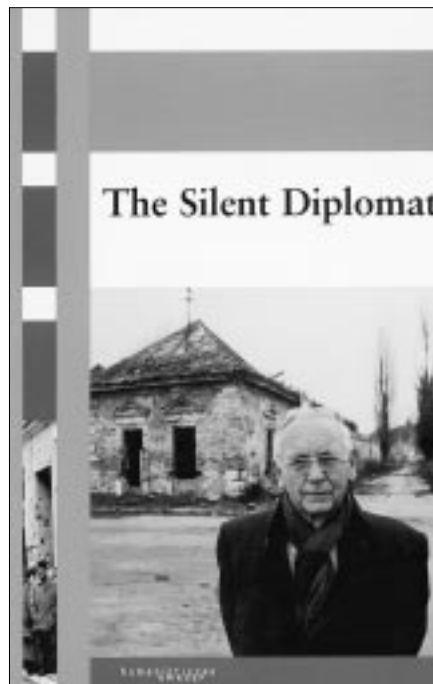
#### **HCNM holds meetings in Russia**

From 21 to 24 February, the High Commissioner visited Moscow. He met with a number of senior officials including the Russian Federation's Foreign Minister I.S. Ivanov, A.V. Blokhin, Min-

ister of Federation and Nationalities Affairs, D.O. Rogozin, Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, L.V. Drachevsky, Minister of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and S. E. Prikhodko, Deputy Chief of the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation. Discussions centred on the situation in Chechnya and the status of Russian minorities in neighbouring countries.

#### **Video on work of HCNM available**

A 52-minute documentary, directed by the award-winning Dutch film-maker, Rob Hof, and narrated by the Canadian philosopher, historian and film-maker, Michael Ignatieff, provides a unique insight into the HCNM. It examines how Max van der Stoel works behind the scenes in areas of potential conflict. The film, entitled 'The Silent Diplomat', follows him on his travels throughout the OSCE area, and tries to show who he is, what he does and what makes him successful. Copies (see left) are available on request from the Office of the HCNM.



## **REPORT**

## **from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

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

#### **Meeting establishes Parliamentary Troika on Belarus**

At a meeting in Brussels on 9 February, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe decided, in conjunction with the European Parliament, to establish a Parliamentary Troika on Belarus. Co-operation between the three institutions on Belarus includes the promotion of dialogue between political forces in Belarus and the discussion of future elections.

The first joint activity of the Parliamentary Troika would be a visit to Minsk on 1-4 March by a group consisting of Adrian Severin, Chairman of the Belarus Ad Hoc Working Group of the OSCE PA, Wolfgang Behrendt, Rapporteur of the Political Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and Jan Marinus Wiersma MEP, Chairman of the Belarus Sub-Committee of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.

#### **Follow-up Mission discusses elections in Kazakhstan**

On 15 and 16 February, Ihor Ostash MP (Ukraine), Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, headed a follow-up mission on the Kazakh parliamentary elections of October 1999. The OSCE/ODIHR final report on the Kazakh elections was discussed with the President of the Central Election Commission, the Presidents of both Houses of Parliament, the Foreign Minister and

other officials in the capital, Astana. The Kazakh representatives expressed their willingness to address, with the help of the OSCE, the shortcomings pointed out in the ODIHR report, with a view to improving the election legislation and procedures. They also approved the suggestion made by the follow-up mission to include the Kazakh Opposition, parliamentary as well as extra-parliamentary, in this process. An agreement was reached to organize a Roundtable on Election Matters, with the first session tentatively scheduled to take place in May.

### **President Degn addresses Joint Session of Romanian Parliament**

On 22 February, OSCE PA President Helle Degn addressed a Joint Session of the Romanian House of Deputies and the Senate, as part of her three-day official visit to Romania, from 21 to 23 February. She stressed the capacity of democratically elected parliamentarians to help develop modern political institutions as well as the invaluable role parliamentarians can play in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. She also underlined the special role of the parliamentary Democracy Teams.

In particular, Mrs. Degn praised the many Romanian parliamentarians who have taken an active part in the OSCE PA election-monitoring missions and thanked them for their continuing support of this programme. In her address President Degn also reviewed the Istanbul Summit, where she had again advocated that democratic control and accountability were essential elements of international institutions like the OSCE and that the organization needed greater transparency, credibility and efficiency.

During her visit, President Degn met with the President of Romania, Emil Constantinescu, and with the Prime Minister, Mugur Isarescu, as well as with the

Foreign Minister, Petre Roman. She also held talks with the Speaker of the House of Deputies, Ion Diaconescu, the President of the Senate, Mircea Ionescu Quintus and the Romanian Delegation to the OSCE PA.

Mrs. Degn's visit to Romania was part of an extensive series of visits by the President to governments and parliaments of OSCE participating States, as well as to Institutions and field activities of the OSCE. The main purpose of these visits is to discuss recent OSCE developments, to intensify inter-parliamentary dialogue and to draw attention to and support the work of the OSCE. Since her election in July 1998, President Degn has visited seventeen OSCE participating States.

### **Parliamentarians monitor elections in Kyrgyzstan**

Ihor Ostash MP (Ukraine), Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, was appointed Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to lead the OSCE Election Observation Mission for the parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan on 20 February, and to issue the preliminary statement for the OSCE.

The OSCE Parliamentary Observer Delegation consisted of 17 parliamentarians from OSCE countries, including Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.

While in Bishkek, Mr. Ostash and his delegation met with high-level Kyrgyz officials. The delegation also held meetings with representatives of political parties, the mass media and NGOs. On election day, members of the delegation visited numerous polling stations and were present at the opening and closing of the vote. The day after polling, Mr. Ostash issued a preliminary statement in conjunction with Mark Stevens, Head of the

ODIHR Long-term Election Observation Mission.

According to the OSCE statement, the 20 February parliamentary elections represented a critical event in the democratic development of the Kyrgyz Republic. Changes to electoral legislation provided the potential for increased competition and party representation. However, a series of decisions preventing parties and candidates from competing in the election on a fair and equal basis, and a high degree of interference in the electoral process by public prosecutors and some state officials marred the pre-election period. As a result, Mr. Ostash said, the parliamentary elections were not in full compliance with OSCE commitments.

### **Parliamentary Assembly Team visits Moldova**

From 29 February to 3 March, the recently established OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Team on Moldova visited Moldova to support the OSCE's effort to promote dialogue and reconciliation between different sections of the Moldovan population. Chair of the Democracy Team on Moldova is Kimmo Kiljunen (MP, Finland), Chair of the General Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on Political Affairs and Security. The delegation visiting Moldova also included the Team Members Roberto Battelli, Head of the Slovenian Delegation to the OSCE PA, and Tone Tingsgard, Head of the Swedish Delegation to the Assembly.

### **HCNM to address parliamentary seminar on minorities in Antalya**

On 12 April, the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, Max van der Stoep, will address a seminar in Antalya entitled 'New risks and challenges: Minorities in the 21st Century'. The seminar, jointly organized by the OSCE PA and the Grand National



Assembly of Turkey, consists of five sessions held over two days. Sessions on the first day of the Seminar are an 'Overview of minority issues represented in the OSCE region' and 'New risks and challenges for minority populations'. The next three sessions will be held on 13 April and deal with: 'Minority groups and strengthening economic relationships', 'Minorities and freedom of Press/speech issues' and 'Building con-

fidence through free elections and the rule of law'.

Other speakers at the Seminar will be OSCE PA Vice-President, Bruce George (UK), Second Committee Vice-Chair, Jerahmiel Grafstein (Canada), Third Committee Rapporteur, Nino Burjanadze (Georgia) and Ad Hoc Committee Chair, Adrian Severin (Romania). The Seminar, to be chaired by OSCE PA President Helle Degn, will provide an occasion for

the participants to exchange views and deepen their understanding of minority issues within the wider context of OSCE principles and the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security.

The Seminar will be preceded by a meeting of the OSCE PA Expanded Bureau on 10 and 11 April that will focus on further preparations for the Ninth Annual Session to be held in Bucharest from 6 to 10 July 2000.

## **REPORT** from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

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### **Media Representative presses cases of three harassed journalists**

Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, continued to defend Andrei Babitsky, *Radio Liberty* Correspondent in Chechnya, who went missing in January and reappeared at the end of February. On 1 February, Mr. Duve held a press conference in Vienna, drawing attention to cases of press harassment in Russia and Belarus, focusing on Mr. Babitsky and Alexander Khinstein (a reporter for *Moskovsky Komsomolets* whom the Moscow police tried to take forcefully to a psychiatric ward), as well as the case of Vasil' Bykov, a Belarus writer.

On 7 February, the OSCE Representative asked the Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov for more information on the Babitsky case, and his Office stayed in daily contact with Radio Liberty monitoring the situation until Babitsky was finally released from custody.

On 29 February, Mr. Duve voiced his concern that Andrei Babitsky was still under criminal investigation for "falsifying documents." Although recognizing it was up to the State Prosecutor to decide whether to drop the charges, Mr. Duve encouraged him to do so. After the ordeal that Mr. Babitsky had been through over the past month-and-a-half, it was justified for reasons of compassion, if for nothing else, the OSCE Representative believed.

He was also concerned with reports from Mr. Babitsky himself that he was beaten at the Chernokozovo detention centre. Although the reporter did not consider these beatings "serious," Mr. Duve expected the Russian authorities to investigate these allegations.

### **RFOM discusses media initiatives during Kosovo visit**

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media visited Kosovo on 2-

4 February, accompanied by his adviser, Alexander Ivanko. During his trip, Mr. Duve met with Kosovo journalists, OSCE Mission officials, and the KFOR Commander, General Klaus Reinhardt. He also took part in a conference on 'Ten Years of Conflict in the Balkans', organized by the Frederick Eberts Foundation and the newspaper, *Koha Ditore*.

Mr. Duve also visited the Gracanica Monastery, located in a Serb enclave just outside Pristina and spoke to the Serbian Orthodox Bishop Artemje and had a long conversation with Father Sava, one of the main moderate representatives of the Kosovo Serb community.

The OSCE Representative stressed the need to restart a Serb publication in Kosovo, independent of the Belgrade Government. He suggested establishing a weekly newsletter that would only require minimal funds. In his view, this could be done by asking a Serb journalist to work on this newsletter. Father

## **OSZE Jahrbuch 1999**

Nomos Verlag, Waldseest. 3-5, D-76530, Baden-Baden ([www.nomos.de](http://www.nomos.de))



Sava also stressed the need to bring opposition newspapers from Serbia.

### **Duve “dismayed” at threats to independent media in Serbia**

On 14 February, Freimut Duve publicly stated his great dismay and concern after learning of the threats made by Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Vojislav Seselj against journalists from the independent media. He had accused them of complicity in the murder of Yugoslav Defence Minister Pavle Bulatovic.

In comments made at a press conference, Mr. Seselj said the “gloves are off” and that the State would use all means available to get rid of independent journalists. He warned of the possibility of summary executions of independent journalists, comparing them with murderers and describing them as being worse than criminals. Mr. Seselj also called for the public lynching of independent journalists.

This was using language, the OSCE

Representative pointed out, that was more appropriate for a member of a criminal gang than a government official, and he appealed to all the OSCE participating States to use their influence on the Belgrade regime so that these threats of physical violence did not materialize. On the same day, Mr. Duve informed the Ambassadors of the Contact Group.

### **Media projects discussed at Stability Pact meeting in Budapest**

On 21-22 February, Beate Maeder-Metcalf and Alexander Ivanko, Advisers to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, took part in the Stability Pact Working Table I (Democratization and Human Rights) meeting in Budapest. Among other things, participants discussed media projects for South-Eastern Europe that could be funded via the Pact.

### **RFOM honours murdered journalist during official visit to Ireland**

On 23-24 February, the OSCE Rep-

resentative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, paid an official visit to Ireland at the invitation of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Irish Parliament. He met with government officials and parliamentarians and spoke at the School of Communications on ‘Media Freedom in Europe – the Role of the OSCE’. On 24 February, he visited the Dardistown Cemetery to honour the late Veronica Guerin, an Irish journalist who was murdered in 1996 while researching a story on the local mafia in the capital, Dublin.

### **Another journalist dies in Chechnya**

On 29 February, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media expressed his concern with reports from Russia that *ITAR-TASS* correspondent Vladimir Yatsina, who has been held hostage by Chechen rebels, was recently executed. He demanded that rebel commanders account for the whereabouts of Mr. Yatsina.

## **REPORT** from the OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat

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### **Secretary General visits three Central Asian republics**

The OSCE Secretary General, Jan Kubis, paid visits to three of the five Central Asian republics during February. On 3 and 4 February, he was in Tajikistan, in his capacity as Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Central Asia, where he had meetings in the capital, Dushanbe, with President Rakhmonov and Foreign Minister Nazarov. A special session of the Contact Group was held in which he took an active part. In addition, Mr. Kubis had a

meeting with the six registered political parties to discuss electoral concerns, prior to the parliamentary election. He also had occasion to hold discussions with the UN/OSCE Joint Election Observation Mission and the United Nation Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, as well as with Ambassadors from OSCE participating States.

His Tajikistan trip continued to Khujand on 4 February, where he took part in the opening ceremony of the OSCE field office there. At a meeting with the local government head, it was empha-



*Secretary General, Jan Kubis, speaking at the opening of the new OSCE field office in Khujand, Tajikistan.*

sized that the authorities there were looking forward to working with the Khujand field office. The Secretary General also had the opportunity in Khujand to meet the Chairman of the Commission for National Reconciliation.

The parliamentary election on 27 February provided the overall focus of Mr. Kubis's visit to Tajikistan. In all the meetings, specific areas for improvement in the electoral environment were stressed. This election marks the last significant event to be implemented in the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan.

On 4 February, the Secretary General paid a visit to Uzbekistan, where he had working consultations with Foreign Minister Komilov in the capital, Tashkent. During the discussion, it was emphasized that Uzbekistan wished to continue a dialogue and to co-operate with the OSCE. Uzbekistan sought the OSCE's understanding on issues which it deemed were of particular concern for its situation.

On 28 February, Mr. Kubis paid a further visit to the region in his capacity as Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Central Asia, this

time to Turkmenistan. In the capital, Ashgabad, he met with President Saparmurat Niyazov and Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov. He provided an update on the OSCE Chairmanship's activities envisaged for the year 2000. Other issues discussed included aspects of regional security. During his meeting with President Niyazov, Mr. Kubis also raised a number of individual human rights cases, including the recent sentencing of Nurbedy Nurmamedov and his son. Both sides agreed on the necessity to continue the dialogue between Turkmenistan and the OSCE.

The Secretary General also exchanged views on the role of the Organization in Turkmenistan with OSCE Ambassadors, who emphasized the important contribution of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabad.

#### Working visits

From 7 to 9 February, a delegation from the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) visited the OSCE Secretariat. The visit was aimed at learning more about the OSCE and its Institutions and structures.

During their stay, the delegation, headed by Simon Cherkezishvili, Deputy

Chairman, was extensively briefed on the structure of the Secretariat, its tasks and functions, as well as on current activities and projects. The visitors were received by the Secretary General and the Directors and Heads of the Departments and Sections of the Secretariat. In addition, the delegation met with the Vienna representatives of the OSCE Troika, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Chairman of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation.

On 7 and 8 February, a small team led by the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Marton Krasznai, visited both the European Union and NATO at their Brussels headquarters. The aim of the visit was to share ideas on the REACT programme, the Operations Centre and general planning issues related to crisis management. NATO presented the civil-military co-operation aspects of their 'Kosovo: lessons-learned programme' and the group had the opportunity to visit both the NATO and European Union Council situation rooms. Many useful pointers were acquired which could be applied to the Secretariat's own Operations Centre when it is implemented later this year.



#### Information on OSCE economic and environmental activities now on-line

For up-to-date information on OSCE activities in the economic and environmental spheres of security, visit the newly established website of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities at:

[www.osce.org/eea](http://www.osce.org/eea)

The website includes an overview of OSCE economic and environmental activities, details of past and upcoming events, contact information, and details on the upcoming Eighth Annual OSCE Economic Forum, to be held in Prague from 11 to 14 April.



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