

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe



OSCE/Alexander Nitzsche

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New OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Portuguese Foreign Minister Jaime Gama (right), with the Chairman of the Permanent Council, Joao de Lima Pimentel

Portugal takes over OSCE Chairmanship

Fighting terrorism is the OSCE's priority in 2002, says the new Chairman-in-Office, Portugal's Foreign Minister Jaime Gama, in his first speech to the Permanent Council

The new Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Portuguese Foreign Minister Jaime Gama, singled out the fight against terrorism and the implementation of the Action Plan adopted at the Bucharest Ministerial Council meeting as the top priorities for the 2002 Chairmanship.

"In my capacity as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, I plan to appoint a Personal Representative on Terrorism", he said in his inaugural speech to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna on 17 January.

"This Personal Representative will be responsible for driving forward the initiatives laid out by the Bucharest

Action Plan", he told the 55 OSCE delegations. Mr. Gama also announced that Portugal was contemplating the elaboration of a draft proposal for a possible OSCE Charter on Terrorism.

Troika changes

The Chairman-in-Office (CiO) commended his predecessor, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana, for the excellent Romanian Chairmanship in 2001, and welcomed the Netherlands into the OSCE Troika. The Netherlands will take over the OSCE Chair in 2003.

In his speech, Mr. Gama said that the Portuguese Chairmanship would strive

to strengthen the comprehensive approach of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe by promoting a greater articulation and complementarity between the three OSCE dimensions: human, politico-military and economic and environmental.

"The concept of a comprehensive approach to security has been proven right and has become ever more significant *vis-à-vis* the new challenges we are all faced with and are responsible for overcoming", Mr. Gama said. "We will count on the assistance of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, of the Office for Democratic Institutions and

Human Rights (ODIHR) and of the Representative on Freedom of the Media.”

The human dimension constitutes the basis of all of the OSCE’s activity. It should be interpreted in its vast sense: the right of all citizens to live in democratic societies which are guaranteed by the rule of law.

“As for the economic and environmental dimension, we shall seek to advance the role of the Organization in identifying threats to security that evolve from economic and environmental factors. In this context, we believe that the theme which has been retained for the Economic Forum, ‘the co-operation for the sustainable use and the protection of the quality of water’, will allow all participating States to share their experience on a very topical issue for security in the twenty-first century.

“The concept of a comprehensive approach to security has been proven right and has become ever more significant *vis-à-vis* the new challenges we are all faced with.”

“Concerning the politico-military dimension, we will aim, as foreseen in Bucharest, at strengthening this dimension and at developing areas of co-operation and greater synergy between the Forum and the Permanent Council.”

Co-operative security

Mr. Gama also stressed that Portugal was committed to carrying further the concept of the Platform for Co-operative Security. “We hope to make this concept even more operational by reinforcing modalities of dialogue and collaboration between the OSCE and other international organizations in the realm of conflict prevention, civil crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation”, the CiO said.

Foreign Minister Gama emphasized that under his tenure, an appropriate

involvement of citizens in OSCE activities would be a fundamental objective. “In this spirit, we will work with representatives of the civil society and with OSCE’s Parliamentary Assembly, as this institution plays a key role in bringing the OSCE closer to the people. I look forward to attending the first winter session of the Parliamentary Assembly in Vienna, in February.”

The development of all these goals would also certainly contribute to the discussion on the reform of the OSCE, Mr. Gama said, and informed the Permanent Council that the Chairmanship aimed at presenting a report on the evolution of this issue to the Ministerial Council, which is scheduled to take place at the end of this year in Porto, Portugal. “Our goal is to ensure that the OSCE is capable of adapting to the evolving security environment and to continue to be the efficient tool as proved so far”, the CiO said.

Turning to the OSCE field activities, Foreign Minister Gama stressed that his Chairmanship would closely follow the Organization’s ongoing conflict prevention and resolution efforts in the Caucasus as well as developments in Central Asia, in Eastern Europe and in the Baltics.

“As far as Moldova is concerned, Portugal has had the overall responsibility of conducting negotiations on behalf of the OSCE since the beginning of 2001, by delegation of the Romanian Chairmanship. I have appointed as my representative an Ambassador-at-Large to closely follow the matter. Several meetings ... were held during last year. We are grateful for the other mediators and the Moldova government’s help in seeking a political solution for the conflict.”

With regard to the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, Mr. Gama welcomed the commitment of the Azeri and Armenian parties to the cease-fire and said that the Chairmanship would give its full support to the efforts carried out by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group in view of the political resolution of the conflict.

Speaking about Chechnya, the Chairman-in-Office said that he would seek to strengthen the work of the Assistance Group through the current mandate, and

would offer political support to the Russian authorities in their efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.

“Our goal is to ensure that the OSCE is capable of adapting to the evolving security environment and to continue to be the efficient tool as proved so far.”

As for the OSCE’s engagement in Central Asia, Mr. Gama told the 55 OSCE delegations that the OSCE had an excellent opportunity in the region to strengthen its activities in all three dimensions and to implement the principles identified under the concept of the Platform for a Co-operative Security. “In this respect, further co-operation with other international organizations and institutions is to be encouraged”, he said.

Closure process

Mr. Gama underlined that the Portuguese Chairmanship would pay particular attention to the closure process of the missions in the Baltic States. “This closure does not imply that the OSCE will no longer closely follow the respect of the rights of the minorities in these countries. ... The existing co-operation with the High Commissioner on National Minorities and with ODIHR will be enhanced”, he said.

Mr. Gama also announced that the OSCE under his Chairmanship would continue to support the work of the Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus.

Regarding the OSCE’s field activities in south-eastern Europe, Mr. Gama stressed that this region would remain a priority in 2002. He identified the consolidation of peace in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as the most immediate challenge. “The OSCE plays an instrumental role in promoting confidence and building up new capacities, by accompanying the sensitive

re-entry of the police force into former conflict areas and by strengthening a multiethnic police force and bringing it closer to European standards”, he said.

He informed the OSCE Delegations that he would travel that same day to Skopje to witness first hand the OSCE contribution in the peace process.

The full text of Foreign Minister Gama’s address to the OSCE Permanent Council can be found on the OSCE website at: www.osce.org/cio

Bishkek conference defines next steps in the OSCE’s counter-terrorism efforts

By Alexander Nitzsche

After the 11 September attacks against the United States, the OSCE decided to focus more strongly on its counter-terrorism work. The Bishkek International Conference, which had already been planned since early 2001 following an initiative of Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev, brought the international community’s efforts against organized crime and terrorist activities in Central Asia into the spotlight

On 13 and 14 December, more than 300 representatives from some 60 states and a wide range of regional and international organizations gathered in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, for a major conference focusing on measures to prevent and counter terrorism. In the discussions, there was broad consensus that international and national action needed to be comprehensive, taking into account all aspects related to terrorism.

The ‘International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism’, was organized by the OSCE and the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) as a follow-up to a similar event in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in October 2000.

Following the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the Conference served as a broad-based platform of international action on preventing and countering terrorism. Participants included representatives of the 55 OSCE participating States, the United Nations family, NATO, the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as states from outside the OSCE region.

“The Bishkek Conference reflects the growing concern of the entire world

about the conflict potential in the Central Asian region”, said President Akaev in his opening speech. “Poverty, unemployment, drug trafficking [and] human trafficking ... will always be an attraction for international terrorists and used by them to commit their terrible acts.”

Ten days after the conclusion of the Ninth OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Bucharest, the Bishkek International Conference was the first opportunity for expert discussion of practical

ways to counter and prevent terrorism and to implement the OSCE’s far-reaching Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism. The Conference participants adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Action, which identifies a broad range of concrete measures against terrorism, including money laundering, illicit drugs, arms trafficking, computer- and other high technology crimes, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.



OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis with Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev at the Bishkek International Conference

OSCE/Alexander Nitzsche

“This Conference has taken on a special significance given the new climate of international solidarity against terrorism and the associated dangers from organized crime and drug trafficking which are known to finance terrorist networks”, said the outgoing OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana. “The established wisdom about unity and power translates now into solidarity and co-operation”. (see box)

“It is time for concerted international, regional and national efforts”, said Pino Arlacchi, the then Executive Director of ODCCP. “The first line of defence is prevention... Now, we need to move to the next stage, which is concrete action. My organization in co-operation with OSCE stands ready to support these efforts.”

In their final Declaration, the Conference participants confirmed that the struggle against terrorism required joint and comprehensive efforts of the international community, in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and OSCE commitments. They also expressed their determination to combat terrorism while fully respecting human rights and the rule of law.

They firmly rejected identifying terrorism with any particular religion or culture and any unacceptable attempts by terrorists and violent extremists to present their cause as a struggle between religions or cultures.

The Bishkek Programme of Action identifies specific measures to combat and prevent terrorism, paying particular attention to the challenges faced by the countries in Central Asia.

The Programme underscores the importance of technical and financial assistance to the Central Asian states, strengthening their border control services, encouraging sustainable economic development in the region, and undertaking joint training and operational activities.

Other concrete measures identified by the Action Programme are:

- to enhance national interagency cooperation between anti-terrorist agencies and agencies fighting crime, including drug trafficking, through an exchange of operational information;
- to foster regional and international cooperation between anti-terrorist agencies and agencies fighting crime, including the trafficking of arms and illicit drugs;

- to adopt national anti-money laundering legislation and create corresponding structures, e.g., Financial Intelligence Units;
- to work toward rapid ratification and implementation of relevant international instruments, including the 1999 UN International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism;
- to increase funding for relevant research conducted by appropriate institutions; and
- to prevent the destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

The Programme of Action also took up a suggestion by the Kyrgyz President, Askar Akaev, to begin a dialogue between the OSCE and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The full text of the Bishkek Declaration and Programme of Action as well as related background information are available on the OSCE website at:

www.osce.org/bishkek_conference

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Geoana: “OSCE must show continued political solidarity in the face of security threats”

In his last public appearance as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana outlined to the participants of the Bishkek International Conference his views on the next steps that need to be taken to effectively prevent and counter terrorism.

... Ten years ago, the Central Asian states began the process of building their modern societies, based on values and ideals of well being, freedom and security shared with the rest of the OSCE community. More than three months have passed since these values were brutally challenged. The Central Asian states had been sending signals of their concern with this threat even before 11 September. The Tashkent Conference last year and the decision to set up the Centre for Fighting Organized Crime here, in Bishkek, show that some steps were taken to face that threat.

What all of us here have learned from our recent experience is that more needs to be done... I stated in Vienna on 21 September that I believed there was a three-track approach to deal with the growing spectre of terrorism.

This focuses on political solidarity; the need to address the root causes of threats and risks to stability and security; and the ability to bridge sub-regional and regional initiatives... It is time now to put these new programmes into operation.

We, the OSCE, must show continued political solidarity in the face of the threats to security in Central Asia from

organized crime and drug trafficking, through increased attention to these issues.

We, the international community, must make renewed efforts to help the Central Asian states build modern and prosperous societies, based on the rule of law and respect for human rights. We can encourage continued political reforms by supporting democratization programmes, for instance on judicial reform, or free media or on the role of women. We can contribute to economic reforms by offering assistance for transition programmes, by facilitating aid, and

by providing support to strengthen border control services.

I believe the best way to deliver this support and assistance is through the development of a Partnership for Modernity between the Central Asian states and the international community. I envisage a joint effort by the UN family, the OSCE, the European Union and NATO, the World Bank, the IMF and other regional development banks as well as relevant regional organizations, like the SECI Center for Combating Transborder Crime based in Bucharest...

Finally, some thoughts as Romania leaves the Chair of the OSCE.

...If the OSCE is to be considered a valid and effective conflict prevention organization, we must pay attention to the warning signals long before violence starts. This implies a real commitment to common standards of behaviour, including especially those governing the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities.

The OSCE cannot afford to function as a 'closed shop'. I am not proposing that we expand our membership. But we do need to consider how to develop partnerships with those countries bordering our OSCE space, especially in the light of our recent experience with terrorism.

I suggested in Bucharest last week that we might want to consider a dia-



Mr. Geoana speaking at the Bucharest Ministerial Council meeting, shortly before the Bishkek Conference. Next to him is Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase.

logue with Afghanistan once a stable democratic and representative government is in place. President Akaev reminded us yesterday of his proposal for a dialogue between the OSCE and the Organization of Islamic Conference.

My colleague, Adrian Severin, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, is already taking steps to organize a Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum and has suggested extending our

Partnership for Co-operation to China. We are encouraged by the Chinese delegation's statement yesterday signalling their readiness to co-operate and join our efforts against terrorism.

There is a long way to go. Stability is easily destroyed, but not so easily restored. Our response to the concerns of our Central Asian friends can only be strengthened if we are better informed about developments in the region as a whole.

Mandates of OSCE missions in Estonia and Latvia are not renewed into 2002

The OSCE Missions in Estonia and Latvia have not been extended beyond the end of 2001. In December, their respective Heads of Mission recommended to the Permanent Council to regard the Missions' mandates as having been fulfilled.

According to the decision of 13 December 1992 establishing the Estonia Mission, its objectives included the further promotion of integration and better understanding between the communities in Estonia, covering questions of citizenship, migration, language, social services

and employment. It was also to consider ways and means of transferring its responsibilities to institutions or organizations representing the local population.

The Mission, which started its work on 15 February 1993 in Tallinn, based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Estonia signed that day, later established field offices in the cities of Johvi and Narva.

The Latvian Mission, agreed upon by the then Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) on 23 September 1993, began its work in Riga

on 19 November that year. The MoU with the Government of Latvia was signed on 13 December 1993.

The Mission's mandate was to address citizenship issues and other related matters and provide advice on such issues, as well as to gather information and report on developments relevant to the full realization of CSCE principles, norms and commitments.

It was also stated in the Permanent Council meetings in December that the ending of the Missions was not intended to signal the end of interest by the OSCE

in both countries. This role would now be reflected through the work of the OSCE's specialized Institutions, including the High Commissioner on National Minorities,

with which Estonia and Latvia have offered to continue co-operation.

Although the Missions are officially closed, the winding down procedure will

continue into 2002 over a period of several months. In the case of Latvia, it will also involve the completion or transfer of a number of ongoing projects.

“The Chairmanship of the OSCE is a very special responsibility”

Ambassador Liviu Bota of Romania looks back with satisfaction over the past year

As Romania prepared to pass on the mantle of the Chairmanship to Portugal at the beginning of January, Ambassador Bota of Romania shared his thoughts and reflections with the OSCE Newsletter on what it meant for his country to have executive responsibility for the OSCE for one year.

OSCE/Michael Orljaniuk



Liviu Bota, 2001 Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council: listening to all voices

How would you like the Romanian Chairmanship to be remembered?

Rather than repeat what the Foreign Minister of Romania, Mircea Geoana, reported in December to the Ministerial Council in Bucharest, I would like instead to share with you some personal impressions. Of course, the events of 11 September in the United States have changed the world to a large extent and the prompt reaction of the OSCE under our Chairmanship will be remembered.

When we took over the assignment in 2001, the Organization was at a crossroads. The Ministerial Council in Vienna in 2000 could not adopt any important decisions. It was clear that a stage in the post-Cold War period was over. It was obvious that lessons had to be learned and we did that.

We initiated a 'revisit' of the whole Organization and its methods of work. We thought that instead of beating around the bush, we had better face the criticisms of the Organization. This is why we included an item on the agenda of the Permanent Council called 'Strengthening the role of the Organization and making it more relevant to the participating States'. The Romanian Chairmanship will be remembered for initiating this process, which will con-

tinue under a working group on the reform of the OSCE.

We looked at the three dimensions of our work – the human dimension, the political-military aspect, and economic and environmental matters. The human dimension is one of the traditional activities of the OSCE. As for the military aspect, sometimes it's more prominent, sometimes less.

But the economic dimension has always been under-estimated and our Chairmanship pointed to its importance. Eventually, we managed to establish a sub-committee of the Permanent Council on the economic and environmental dimensions. We intend to continue to follow this area with interest.

We have enlarged the political dialogue and consultations and made them more active. For us, all voices were important and we made a major effort – and to a large degree we have succeeded in involving more actively all countries in political consultations.

I would stress that we have introduced new themes for reflection. Among them, let me point to the informal meeting of the Permanent Council with the participation of a number of eminent personalities on ethical and spiritual values as factors of peace and stability. The aim was to identify a role for the OSCE.

My own Chairmanship of the Permanent Council will probably be remembered by the change in agenda and methods of work, as well as the increased discipline. The Council now focuses on current issues as the first item on the agenda.

The statements are short and to the point. The meetings start at the announced hour and the atmosphere in this august body is dignified.

We initiated the adoption by consensus of political statements on current issues, which have been made public. The first such statement was on developments in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Another welcome innovation was to conclude the discussions on reports of Heads of Mission and Institution with a statement by the Chair, synthesizing the general direction of the debate and giving further orientation.

But perhaps the most important feature of the Romanian Chairmanship was

our providing leadership. We were not merely following or reacting to developments. We maintained the strategy and course of action we had set out to do from the very beginning. From that point of view, we were both consistent and persistent.

What do you think the one-year Chairmanship of the OSCE meant to Romania?

We proved our ability to manage the problems faced by the Euro-Atlantic area on behalf of the participating States. By serving the Organization the way we did, we served the loftiest interests of our own country. The Chairmanship is entrusted to the country as a whole, not just to an individual or two – and so the whole country’s ability to run the Organization and to manage the problems in the OSCE area is put to a test. I believe that our performance in the Chair will have a role to play in the consideration of Romania’s candidacy to NATO and the European Union.

I believe that our Chairmanship was in keeping with the Romanian tradition of distinguished service to international organizations. Before the Second World War, Nicolae Titulescu, a prominent Romanian diplomat, was elected twice as President of the League of Nations Assembly. The first East European ever to be elected President of the United Nations General Assembly, in 1967, was Romanian – Corneliu Manescu. Roma-

nia’s contributions to the work of the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe [the predecessor of the OSCE] were remarkable. I would like to think that at the OSCE, we have continued these traditions.

Would you have any advice to the next Chair of the Permanent Council?

To take the Chairmanship seriously. When you take over the Chair, you should know almost every problem facing the OSCE very thoroughly, including the concerns of all the participating States, because you don’t have time to learn once you are in the post. The Chairmanship should be strong and reject attempts to undermine its authority.

Any personal thoughts at the end of Romania’s Chairmanship?

My records show that I presided over 60 meetings of the Permanent Council and 150 informal meetings. I enjoyed working with all my colleagues and am indebted to all of them for their support. So many things happened during the course of the year, it is difficult to identify the most momentous events.

We had a good, very close working relationship with the Secretariat. Together, we managed the activities of the OSCE efficiently including opening the Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, re-opening the OSCE office in Chechnya, enlarging the Spillover

Monitor Mission to Skopje in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and organizing the successful election in Kosovo. The Institutions and the entire Secretariat staff provided us with valuable support and were a source of advice and ideas. We appreciated their professionalism and their readiness to assist.

Of course it was a lot of hard work. Throughout the year, we started our working day at 8 a.m. and finished long after 8 p.m. I have been blessed with a great team here in Vienna which included Ambassador Traian Chebeleu, who is also bilateral Ambassador of Romania to Austria, and a small team of competent, enthusiastic and energetic young people.

More importantly, I had the full confidence of the highest authorities in Romania. As you know we had as Chairman-in-Office, the Foreign Minister Mircea Dan Geoana, a young, dynamic and brilliant public servant who spent a lot of time on behalf of the OSCE in various regions and in areas of conflict in co-ordination with other organizations. He is widely admired.

In the history of diplomacy of any country, I believe the Chairmanship of the OSCE is a very special one in terms of complexity of tasks entrusted to any one country. That is why when you finish it successfully, there’s a feeling of pride and satisfaction. This is my feeling, one which is shared by the entire team of the Romanian Chair in Vienna.

Liviu Bota: distinguished service

In 1999, Liviu Aurelian Bota was in his 27th year of serving with the United Nations when he was requested by the Government of Romania to head the Chairmanship team in Austria. The country had been chosen at the Istanbul Summit in November that year to hold the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office position in 2001. By 2000, work on OSCE issues was well under way for Ambassador Bota and his staff, since Romania already formed part of the OSCE Troika with Norway, under Austrian Chairmanship.

As the representative in Vienna of the Romanian Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Bota assumed the Chairmanship of the Permanent Council, the regular body of the OSCE for political consultation and decision-making.

He came to the post uniquely prepared to take up its demands and complexities. His three-decade career spans the full spectrum of global political affairs, not only as a member of his country’s diplomatic corps but also in multi-lateral bodies. He has held the positions

of Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva and Director and Senior Adviser under the Secretary General for Human Rights. He was also Head of the United Nations missions and Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Tajikistan and Georgia, where he dealt with the conflict in Abkhazia.

As Head of Delegation, Mr. Bota will remain in the new Troika (Romania, Portugal and the Netherlands) at the OSCE headquarters in Vienna.

“Pollution demands a solution”

Simple messages, serious issues

By Stella Ronner

A media campaign in Serbia sponsored by the OSCE aims to raise public awareness of key environmental problems and ways of solving them. The ultimate goal is to introduce a nationwide environmental law and an environment ministry.

“What air are we breathing?” asks a colour advertisement showing a child suffering from asthma. A postcard of a garbage dump on the streets of Belgrade carries a biting “Greetings from Serbia”.

These are just some of the elements of a media campaign launched by the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in December to make the public aware of the need to address environmental problems. Under the slogan “Pollution demands a solution”, the campaign calls attention to the various ways pollution can manifest itself and how it affects our day-to-day lives.

The messages are direct and simple. “What are we drinking?” and “What are we eating?” are the questions people have started to see in newspapers throughout Serbia. The campaign also

uses billboards, television spots, radio jingles and postcards to reach the widest possible audience.

The campaign employs humour and irony to get its messages across. The postcard of a garbage dump reads: “A monument to an unknown hero”. Advertisements are another vehicle used to inform the public about how the introduction of new technologies, legislation and control standards can contribute to reducing pollution. Individual citizens are reminded that they can each contribute to a better environment – by using water rationally, for example, or by not dumping rubbish and toxic waste into rivers.

The campaign is the first step in an effort to spark a public debate on a proposed environmental law, which was drafted by the Serbian Directorate for



“What kind of water are we drinking?” asks a billboard in Serbia to remind citizens to take care of their environment

Environmental Protection with the support of the OSCE and other international bodies.

The ultimate goal of the OSCE project is the adoption of the environmental law and the establishment of an environment ministry. Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Norway have contributed to the financing of the media campaign.

Stella Ronner is the Spokesperson for the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

How the Kosovo Assembly election was brought to voters with special needs

High participation rates are essential in a healthy democracy. By 17 November, the day of the assembly election, the OSCE had helped more than 10,000 Kosovo voters who were unable to get to a polling station by bringing the election to their doorstep

After the two four-wheel drive vehicles had travelled over rugged, mountainous dirt roads for nearly an hour, the six-member OSCE Special Needs Voting Team and police escort reached the end of the road. With the help of a detailed map and the guidance of a woman from the area, the

team began trudging up the mountain towards four houses located hundreds of metres above them.

They were going to visit a house-bound voter in the mountains north of Leposavic. As the team approached the village, the OSCE international supervisor stopped for a minute to catch his

breath and wipe the mud off his shoes. “After all this, I sure hope the woman is at home”, he said.

When the team arrived at the village, they were greeted by an elderly woman with thick glasses and a wide smile. “Would you like to vote in the Assembly elections?” the supervisor asked. The

team's interpreter translated the question, and without any hesitation, the woman responded with a hearty "yes".

The Team then checked her identity, registered her, and explained the ballot to her. Because she could not read or write, her son helped her. She made her choice and inserted her ballot into the ballot box with an even wider smile. The team and its police escort then carried the ballot box, laptop computer, voters' list and other polling materials back down the mountain.

Special measures for exceptional needs

In communities across Kosovo, the OSCE has made similar strenuous efforts to reach voters who were unable to go to the polls on election day. In any election, there are voters who would be disenfranchised unless special measures were taken to accommodate their exceptional needs. In Kosovo, special needs voting was carried out under one of the most progressive electoral programmes in the post-conflict and developing world.

Starting on 31 October, mobile teams throughout Kosovo began visiting individuals who were housebound due to disability and those whose duties would prevent them from voting on election day, such as OSCE staff and Kosovo Police Service officers. By 16 November, 31 mobile teams had visited individuals who were fearful about venturing out to vote, those in prisons and hospitals, and those in remote communities. The programme served more than 10,000 voters.

Disabled voters were identified either by Handikos, a Kosovo non-governmental organization, or by registration staff who had found out about special cases

from family members and neighbours. Besides offering the opportunity to vote, the programme also facilitated civil registration. When a team visited someone who was housebound because of fear, a human rights officer familiar with the family was also present.

Preventing fraud

To prevent fraud, those who voted under the Special Needs Voting Programme were removed from the voters'

Materials used in the Special Needs Voting – ballots, voters' lists, the ballot stamp, electoral ink, laptops and CD-ROMs – remained under international supervision at all times. These were picked up every morning by the international supervisor from the local base of the KFOR (Kosovo Force), escorted by police of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. At the end of the day, the supervisor returned the materials to the KFOR base.



OSCE/Lubomir Korek

At the 2001 Kosovo Assembly Election, individuals with special needs were able to cast their votes two weeks ahead of the rest of the population

list used on election day. In addition, the same ink used in polling stations – detectable only under ultraviolet light – was sprayed onto the right index finger. This ink remained on the skin for some time, and when people went to vote, their fingers were checked.

For a democracy to develop, the widest possible participation of citizens is crucial. At the 2001 Kosovo Assembly Election, the Special Needs Voting Programme of the OSCE played a vital role in ensuring a broad and representative ballot.

Quiet Diplomacy in Action

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Ed: Walter Kemp ■ Foreword by Michael Ignatieff

This comprehensive account of the work of the first OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoel, has been written by his Senior Adviser. It takes the reader behind the scenes to explain how the "silent diplomat" fulfilled his conflict prevention mandate for over eight years in more than 15 countries. Major documents are annexed.

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NEWSLETTER

Stopping the spread of small arms and light weapons in Central Asia given new urgency

Five states welcome OSCE workshops aimed at combating trafficking in arms

By Kate Joseph

Weapons-smuggling has become a significant problem for many Central Asian states – fuelling crime, exacerbating conflicts and facilitating terrorism within and outside the OSCE area. The first national training workshops have been held to address this spreading contagion.

Two teams of experts from the OSCE travelled to Central Asia in November and December with a sole purpose: to conduct a series of pioneering workshops aimed at combating trafficking in arms.

The training workshops were among the practical initiatives stemming from the Tashkent Conference on Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism held in October 2000. The workshops have assumed greater urgency in the light of the renewed determination of the OSCE to counter international terrorism.

Small arms and light weapons are often used in assaults, assassinations and other terrorist and criminal activities. Many terrorist organizations are also heavily involved in arms smuggling to raise revenue and maintain their operations.

Guided by the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the workshops covered four main issues: control over manufacture and transfer of weapons, stockpile management and security, marking and tracing, and weapons collection and destruction. The Document, adopted by participating States in November 2000, outlines measures to prevent weapons from being diverted from legal trading to the black market.

A lively debate ensued on measures to stop cross-border traffic, reduce the possession of illegal weapons among the civilian population, and secure and guard state arsenals. Participants also identified a number of concerns stemming from the instability in the region, specifically in neighbouring Afghanistan, and asked for more assistance and training to deal with them.

The workshops initiative was boosted in December by the International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia, at which Central Asian states vowed to “prevent the destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread and illicit traf-

ficking of small arms and light weapons.” Ministers encouraged the states to take part in a follow-up meeting on small arms in Almaty, Kazakhstan, to be held in spring 2002. They also urged the OSCE to continue developing activities to implement its Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The national workshops represent the initial phase of a project conceived by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna. Sponsored by the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands and Switzerland, they were held in each of the Central Asian states: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. In every country, participation spanned the full spectrum of government ministries and agencies involved in small arms control: ministries of foreign affairs, defence, interior and economy, customs and border guard services, and national security committees.

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Journal of Conflict, Security and Development

This regular publication examines the relationship between security policy and development and is dedicated to bridging related disciplines, offering a forum for the cross-fertilization of ideas and perspectives.

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Central Asian journalists voice concern over freedom to report objectively amid anti-terrorist tensions

The impact of the global anti-terrorism campaign after the 11 September events in the United States and the danger that national security could be used as a pretext for limiting freedom of the expression of the media were two key concerns shared by participants at an OSCE-organized conference in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 10 and 11 December

Addressing more than 80 participants from the region, Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, said: “We are meeting at a time when several governments have stressed the priority of national security matters over human rights, an argument that is not only legitimately used at a time of war but also misused to stifle dissent and public debate.”

“You have a tough time ahead. But remember: without free journalists, there can be no true democracy.”

The conference adopted an eight-point declaration calling on the governments in the international anti-terror alliance not to use national security arguments to limit human rights. They also appealed to the governments of the Central Asian states not to take advantage of the new conflict situation to justify repression against the opposition media.

“The media should be free to exercise their corrective function towards economic, ecological and military decisions in their countries, especially in times of conflict. The free public debate is imperative”, participants stated. “Especially after 11 September, the media should not be prevented [from] informing the public about existing financial links between terrorist group activities and corruption.”

“Many Central Asian media representatives confirm that their working conditions have been deteriorating”, said Heinrich Haupt, the Head of the OSCE Centre in Almaty. Key problems include the concentration and monopolization of the media and efforts to silence journalists – through legal and illegal means – who are critical of the government.

“The struggle for freedom and democracy in Central Asia is still going on. Many of you sitting here are part of it. You have a tough time ahead. But remember: without free journalists there can be no true democracy”, said Mr. Duve.

“The struggle for freedom and democracy in Central Asia is still going on. Many of you are part of it.”

At the same time, the Almaty Declaration stated that journalists must make further efforts to report objectively and edit their coverage of the conflict carefully: “The journalistic ethic is needed more than ever in times of conflict and the journalists have to be aware of their increased responsibility.”

The conference was the third in a continuing series organized in Central Asia by the office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. The first conference was in Bishkek in 1999 and the second in Dushanbe in 2000.

The Almaty gathering was jointly organized by the OSCE Centre in Almaty in co-operation with the International Foundation for Protection of Freedom of Expression (*Adil Soz*) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.



Participants looking through publications on media freedom at the conference for Central Asian journalists



News from the field

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

OSCE expands monitoring operation along Georgia's borders

The OSCE has established a presence along the border between Georgia and the Ingush Republic of the Russian Federation to monitor and report on movement across the border. A team of five international border monitors started their work in the new year in the village of Sno, where a new OSCE border monitoring base has been established. The monitoring activities of the Ingush portion of the border will be conducted both from Sno and from the Shatili base created almost two years ago. The deployment follows a decision on 13 December by the OSCE Permanent Council to expand the two-year-old monitoring operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, begun in December 1999. "The expansion of the OSCE border monitoring operation is a significant contribution to stability in this volatile region", said Jean-Michel Lacombe, Head of the Mission. The monitors are unarmed and have no enforcement responsibilities. They act with full respect for the sovereignty of the Georgian authorities over their own borders.

International conference urges abolition of death penalty in Tajikistan

An OSCE conference to examine the death penalty in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) took place in Dushanbe on 20 and 21 December. Focusing on Central Asia, some 80 participants studied the experience of countries such as Turkmenistan and Ukraine, which have abolished this form of punishment. An appeal was made to Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov to review Tajikistan's legislation on the death penalty and to introduce a moratorium on executions. The Tajik participants agreed that the country's death penalty should be abolished but felt that



OSCE/Lubomir Konek

The OSCE has expanded its operations, begun in December 1999, to monitor and report on movement along Georgia's borders

it was not yet the right time. The conference was organized by the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan with the Tajik branch of the Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation and the local League of Women Lawyers. It was preceded by two round tables held in Dushanbe and Khujand in August and September 2001.

OSCE Mission to Georgia signs assistance agreement with European Commission

The OSCE Mission to Georgia and the European Commission (EC) signed a grant agreement of 210,000 euros on 20 December in Brussels. The grant from the European Union (EU) is aimed at strengthening the mechanisms for settling the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict. The contribution responds to an official request for assistance directed to the OSCE from the parties in the con-

flict. Jean-Michel Lacombe, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, said: "This is an important step forward in the peace process, which reflects the EU's willingness to play a more active political role in the southern Caucasus, and to support efforts to resolve conflicts in the region. It also reflects a wish to strengthen co-operation between the OSCE and the EU." At the initiative of the Mission, the European Union – both the Presidency and the Commission – has been included in an observer capacity for almost a year in the Georgian-South Ossetian negotiation framework. The rehabilitation programmes funded by the European Commission in the conflict zone, first established in 1998, are being implemented under the auspices of the OSCE Mission to Georgia in close co-operation with the delegation of the EC to Georgia.

Multi-ethnic police teams redeploy to more areas in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Multi-ethnic police forces were redeployed on 19 December to another five villages surrounding the town of Tetovo, site of earlier conflicts along the northern border of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. They were accompanied by monitors of the OSCE and the European Union and representatives of the NATO Task Force Amber Fox. The police redeployment has been generating a sense of safety and security in the 15 villages covered by the initial phase of the internationally-supported re-entry plan, envisaged by the Macedonian Government as crucial to the Ohrid Agreement of 13 August 2001. The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje is supporting the stabilization process through 107 confidence-building monitors and 60 police advisers. Consultations are under way on the next stage of redeployment, covering another 10 to 15 villages. The return of police forces to the former conflict area was facilitated by an intensive information campaign.

Modernization of Albanian parliament is goal of Dutch-supported OSCE project

The OSCE Presence in Albania signed an agreement with the Government of the Netherlands in mid-December on a project to improve the capacity of the Assembly of the Republic of Albania to monitor and oversee the Government. Costing 786,629 euros, the project will be implemented over three years in co-ordination with the World Bank. It will focus on three areas: a long-term training programme for members of parliament (MPs) and their staff, including the establishment of a permanent training capacity in the parliament; a new research and advisory unit to support the work of MPs and parliamentary commissions; and outreach activities to make the public aware of the role of parliament and to foster a greater sense of responsibility among parliamentarians towards the electorate. The agreement was signed by Dutch Ambassador Johan Blankenberg and Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, Head of

the Presence in Albania, at the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Tirana.

Dynamic NGO community in Kosovo urged to develop common identity

The second forum of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kosovo, held in Pristina on 14 and 15 December, examined the influential role of citizens in building a democratic and pluralistic Kosovo. The aim is to harness the talents and energy of the diverse and dynamic community of some 120 NGOs in Kosovo. The OSCE has been encouraging the NGOs to develop a common identity through the establishment of a network aimed at promoting accountability in self-government. The inter-ethnic gathering, which included representatives of political parties, also stressed the role of civil society as a critical and supportive partner of the recently elected Kosovo Assembly, and institutions such as municipal and civil administrations. The forum was sponsored by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation.

Training seminar for young journalists held in Azerbaijan

A seminar on the theme of 'developing freedom and responsibility' was held on 14 and 15 December for young Azerbaijani journalists in NGOs and the Government. More than 30 representatives from the mainstream media, universities and embassies participated in the sessions. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media, who co-operated on the seminar with the OSCE Office in Baku, sponsored the participation of two international experts. Speakers stressed the importance of a free media in a democratic society, a sense of responsibility and professionalism in the Azeri press, radio and television, and differentiating fact from opinion in reporting.

OSCE Mission in Kosovo hosts conference on protection of journalists

The journalist community in Kosovo discussed its experiences in pursuing and investigating stories at a conference organized on 15 December by the Temporary Media Commissioner and the

OSCE Mission in Kosovo. To prepare for the conference, the OSCE surveyed local journalists to assess the level of threats, interference and intimidation faced by the media. The survey results and the journalists' concerns raised at the conference will form the basis for special training courses, such as techniques of investigative journalism. International journalists described the process of nurturing the tradition of journalism in their countries. Participants also held a dialogue with political representatives and police officials examining how authorities interact with journalists, how the media hold public figures accountable in the performance of their duties, and how pressure from public authorities interferes with the work of the media.

Police and NGOs in Azerbaijan join forces for a week of training seminars

A series of training seminars for police officers and civil society representatives has been launched successfully in a joint endeavour by the OSCE Office in Baku, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and IPD, a well-known local human rights NGO. Some 120 policemen from different districts in Baku and NGO representatives participated in four two-day seminars between 9 to 16 December. The trainers were from the OSCE-run Kosovo Police Service School. The seminars examined situations encountered by police during mass disturbances, arrests and detentions, and other emergencies. It was the first time the police teamed up with an NGO on an activity. The German Embassy provided financial support.

More municipalities to benefit from OSCE technical assistance in BiH

Twelve municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) were selected in December to be part of the Municipal Infrastructure Finance and Implementation (MIFI) Project of the OSCE in 2002. Capljina, Foca/Srbinje, Foca Ustikolina, Kotor Varos, Livno, Lopare, Prijedor, Prnjavor, Tomislavgrad, Trebinje, Vlasenica and Vogosca join a select group of 34 municipalities that have already benefited from comprehen-

sive technical assistance under the project. The OSCE provides the municipalities with intensive training and on-site advice in budget design and financial management. By upgrading their practices, municipalities are in a better position to improve the lives of their citizens.

OSCE and ODCCP respond to drug problem among Turkmen youth

Concerned about the growing drug culture among young people in Turkmenistan, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabad and the local office of the United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) pooled resources to draw the public's attention to the problem through a seminar on 30 November and 1 December. An initiative of the OSCE Centre, the project is a follow-up to the Tashkent Conference in October 2000 and is believed to be the first of its kind in the region that combines the efforts of both organizations.

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of OSCE funded the participation of a specialist in prevention of drug addiction and rehabilitation of addicts, who works with the well-known Polish NGO, *Monar*. Presentations were made by an expert from an Ashgabad NGO and a resource person from the local office of UNICEF. Due to the encouraging response from law enforcement officials, NGO representatives and teachers, another seminar is planned for 2002.

Round table identifies components of anti-corruption strategy for former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

A round table to determine the key components of a national anti-corruption strategy for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was held in Skopje on 22 November. Supported by the Office of the Co-ordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities of

the OSCE, it was organized by the Forum – Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation (CSR/D), a local NGO. Some 40 participants identified effective anti-corruption measures and drew up an anti-corruption programme and strategy. Discussions highlighted several priorities: to update the draft anti-corruption law to meet the latest international standards; to enhance legal and institutional capabilities in the fight against corruption; and to carry out reforms in local criminal procedures, in public administration, and in the public procurement law, as well as in the judiciary and educational systems. National and governmental institutions represented at the round table included the judiciary and the General Prosecutor's Office, the diplomatic and academic communities, the media and NGOs. A brochure has been published and distributed and a follow-up event is planned.



The OSCE Chairman-in-Office during 2001, **Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana**, welcomed in late December the decision

taken by the President of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov, to abolish the country's exit visa requirement. The decree, expected to enter into force on 1 January, was a direct outcome of a meeting of the two officials in Ashgabad on 8 June 2001. "When other States are adopting measures aimed at reinforcing their national security, sometimes at the price of restricting basic freedoms and liberties of their citizens, Turkmenistan chose to abolish a non-democratic procedure. I believe the authorities will make sure that all Turkmen people will benefit from it", Mr. Geoana said.

On the occasion of United Nations Human Rights Day on 10 December, outgoing **Chairman-in-Office Mircea Geoana** called on all OSCE participating States to firmly uphold their international human rights commitments while

fighting terrorism. "Protecting human rights means defying terrorism. Strictly adhering to our human rights commitments makes us immune to the terrorists' objective of eroding our common values and destabilizing our societies."

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he stressed, remained the common standard of achievement in recognizing the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all peoples in all nations.



Fruitful meeting in Ashgabad, June 2001: President Saparmurat Niyazov of Turkmenistan (left) and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2001, Mircea Geoana

The **Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee of the Permanent Council**, established by the Ministerial Council in Bucharest, convened its first meeting on 19 December in Vienna. Daniel Daianu, National Co-ordinator of the Economic and Environmental Activities in the OSCE, representing the Romanian Chairmanship, and Acting Co-ordinator Marc Baltes underlined the important role of the Sub-Committee in strengthening the Organization's economic and environmental dimension. Participants welcomed the Sub-Committee's launching and the opportunity it offered for a regular exchange of views. The group will work on the preparation and follow-up of meetings of the Economic Forum of the OSCE. A consensus emerged on the need to consider practical mechanisms to ensure the implementation of OSCE decisions and principles, including those referring to the fight against terrorism. The Sub-Committee plans to invite a broad range of partners for a discussion on joint initiatives: international finance institutions, non-governmental organizations, the business community, academics, the media, and economic and environmental officers in the OSCE field offices.

Ambassador Bernard Poncet left Croatia in mid-December after two and a half years as head of the OSCE Mission to return to the French Foreign Ministry. During his tenure, he saw the growth of an open and pluralistic atmosphere in Croatia as well as the development of a multi-party democracy. Ambassador Poncet focused a great deal of energy on the return of the displaced population of Croatia. "I believe some progress was achieved in respect to the situation of Croatian Serb refugees and Bosnian Croat settlers", he said. After putting in place an effective multi-ethnic police force as part of a successful two-year operation, the Mission's police monitoring group completed its tasks in the Danube region in October 2000. Mr. Poncet strongly recommended that special attention be given to Croatia's judicial reform and the practical implementation of the rule of law. He praised the Croat-

ian media for their maturity as an important voice in the public debate. Despite occasional frustrations along the way, the OSCE Mission, he felt, had been making its best effort to assist Croatia in moving closer to European norms.

Ambassador Hans-Georg Wieck completed his assignment on 31 December as Head of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus (AMG) since its inception in December 1997. He said that the Group would continue to carry out its mandate to contribute to the development of Belarus' democratic institutions and to monitor the country's compliance with its OSCE commitments. "Civil society within Belarus has developed during the past four years with regard to its democratic commitment and orientation", Ambassador Wieck said. "However, the processes of democratic transformation within the state structures have not yet made enough progress, in regard to the country's OSCE commitments."

Ambassador Daan Everts has ended his assignment in Kosovo after being Head of the OSCE Mission from June 1999 to December 2001. He is returning to the Dutch foreign ministry, where he will be part of the OSCE Chairmanship team. (The Netherlands will assume the Chair in 2003 and will therefore be part of this year's OSCE Troika of previous, present and future Chairs-in-Office.) Describing his Kosovo experience as "very special", he said he had always encouraged Mission members to show respect for Kosovo's traditions, culture and capacities. He spoke of his firm belief in the importance of handing over the responsibilities of governance to the people of Kosovo. He pointed to the continuing need to strengthen the police, the civil service, the media and other institutions that serve the public. The OSCE Mission, he felt, had worked efficiently and effectively in its efforts to contribute to the return of normalcy in Kosovo. But, he added, there had been frustrations, anxieties and difficulties along the way. Too many people still did not enjoy full rights and freedoms, which he found "unacceptable".

Succeeding Daan Everts as Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo is **Ambassador Pascal Fieschi from France**. From 1997 until his new appointment in January, Mr. Fieschi served as France's Ambassador to Ukraine. Earlier, he held posts in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also serving in the General Secretariat for National Defence. A member of the French diplomatic corps since 1969, his career includes postings in the French embassies in Athens, Prague, St. Petersburg, Canberra and Moscow. He took part in the negotiations on the Helsinki Final Act, the founding document of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which was transformed into the OSCE in 1994.

Ambassador Stephan Michael Minikes took up his duties as Permanent Representative of the United States on 4 December, succeeding David T. Johnson. A graduate of Cornell University and Yale Law School, Mr. Minikes is a well-known member of the Washington, D.C., legal community. Previous to his appointment, he was a partner in the law firm Thelen Reid & Priest LLP in Washington, D.C. From 1974 to 1977, he was senior vice-president and a member of the management committee of the Export-Import Bank. He served in the Pentagon as legal counsel to the Chief of Naval Operations from 1972 to 1974. Born in Berlin in 1938, Ambassador Minikes has lived in the United States since 1949.

Ambassador Justus Jonathan de Visser assumed his post as Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OSCE on 19 December, succeeding Ambassador Johannes C. Landman. Before coming to Vienna, he was his country's Ambassador to Poland and Belarus. From 1994 to 1998, he was Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO and from 1990 to 1994, he was Director of the European Integration Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the Hague. Other postings have included Moscow and Paris. Born in 1944, Mr. de Visser is a law graduate of the University of Utrecht.

PRESS PROFILE



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

PORTUGUESE CHAIRMANSHIP

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 28 December

‘Portugal takes over the OSCE Chairmanship with a government, which is, after the resignation of Prime Minister [António] Guterres, only in office to continue current business. Early national assembly elections are expected. [Foreign Minister Jaime] Gama gave assurances, however, that consultations are planned between the government and all parties on the coming year, with Portugal heading the OSCE. He categorically excluded that the insecurity of internal politics will influence the Organization’s Chairmanship in any way.’

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

BBC, 3 December

‘The OSCE’s contribution will be partly symbolic, offering a forum for the member nations to show solidarity with the United States in the wake of the 11 September attacks. But the OSCE is also involved in training police forces in emerging democracies such as Kosovo. Such expertise could be brought to bear in the Caucasus and Central Asia, identified by the summit host, Romania, as in the front line of the struggle against Islamic extremist groups.’

CNN, 3 December

‘Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said the new anti-terrorist partnership between Moscow and Washington had strengthened the OSCE. Last year, disputes over references to Russia’s war in Chechnya derailed the OSCE Summit.’

Il Tiempo, 4 December

‘Delegates to the Ninth Ministerial

Council of the OSCE are optimistic and believe that the failure of the 2000 Ministerial Council – when participating States were not able to approve a final document because of the Russian veto – will not be repeated. This year the situation is radically different, because Russian President Vladimir Putin, after the terrorist attacks against the United States, stands clearly close to the American President, George W. Bush, in the fight against terror...’

BISHKEK INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Agence France Presse, 14 December

‘In the fight against international terrorism, Russia comes out primarily for the liquidation of all the sources for financing it, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Safonov told a press conference [in Bishkek] on Friday... According to Safonov, OSCE representatives at the Bishkek conference are evincing much interest “in the recently set up CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre”.’

ESTONIA AND LATVIA

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 12 December

‘While Estonia and Latvia are internationally recognized to have made remarkable advances in dealing with their large Russian minorities, the tunes from Moscow are still different. At the last OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Bucharest, Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov published an appeal to the OSCE States, stating that the observation missions in Riga and Tallinn were far from fulfilling their mandates.’

Interfax, 16 December

‘Russia’s Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Alexander Alekseyev, has sharply criticized the decision to close down the OSCE Mission in Estonia. In a statement made at a meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, circulated by the Russian Foreign Ministry on Saturday, he described this decision as “extremely politically motivated and absolutely unjustified... The mission’s mandate has been terminated only on the basis of a report saying that the OSCE representa-

tives in Estonia have fulfilled the instructions of the Austrian Chairmanship [in 2000], which had never been discussed or adopted by the Permanent Council as a consensus document”.’

CHECHNYA

Le Monde, 25 December

‘Russia has succeeded in getting the OSCE to accept a calendar for its mandate in Chechnya, with a view to the withdrawal of the pan-European organization’s mission at the end of next year. Moscow succeeded in limiting the OSCE mandate in Chechnya to December 31, 2002, whereas this mandate had been for an indeterminate period since 1995. Last month, “diplomatic sources in Moscow”, cited by the Ria Novosti agency, had accused the OSCE in Chechnya of “raising temperatures... instead of working on useful humanitarian projects”.’

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Reuters, 13 December

‘No serious problems were reported as police reappeared in some of the first 15 of 101 villages to be “reintegrated” in the north and northwest of Macedonia over the next two months. In Ljuboten, a hill village 15 km northeast of Skopje, residents turned out in frigid, snowy weather to greet four police, including two ethnic Albanians, who arrived with NATO and OSCE monitors... NATO and OSCE liaison experts had sounded out local sentiment weeks before the police return.’

TRANSNISTRIAN REGION

Interfax, 19 November

‘Russian President Vladimir Putin believes that in order to solve the Transnistrian issue, it is necessary to first of all continue negotiations in the current five-sided format (Russia, Ukraine, the OSCE, Chisinau, and Tiraspol). Putin said on Monday after the signing of the Russian-Moldovan treaty on friendship and co-operation that “...It is necessary to fully use the already existing and

tested mechanisms and communication channels for establishing a constructive political dialogue between Chisinau and Tiraspol”.

Agence France Presse, 10 December

‘The separatist leader Igor Smirnov easily won a third term as president of the self-proclaimed republic of Transnistria in eastern Moldova, preliminary election results showed on Monday... The voting was not monitored by

the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe or other mainstream observers because no state officially recognizes Transnistria.’

FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

Die Presse, 24 December

‘It seems to be a Sisyphean task, but the contributors to the project mobile.culture.container have taken on the challenge: their goal is to combat

hatred and prejudice in the Balkans and to build friendships across ethnic borderlines. For this goal, they toured in five and a half months four cities in the former Yugoslavia: from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia, to Serbia and back again to Bosnia. Following their slogan, “Defence of our Future”, they spoke with the youth in this region about their wishes, worries and fears, and discussed with them media freedom and the European Union.’

UPDATE

from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

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

ODIHR closes office in Montenegro

The ODIHR officially closed its office in Podgorica in Montenegro, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, on 31 December. It will be replaced by a new branch office of the OSCE Mission to the FRY.

The Podgorica office was established at the request of the Parliament of Montenegro, following OSCE observation missions for the presidential elections in October 1997 and for the parliamentary elections in May 1998. It was closed during the Kosovo conflict, reopening with its tasks expanded at the end of the conflict, again at the request of the Montenegrin authorities.

Its main tasks have been political monitoring and reporting, including election observation, and project work to support democratic reform. Projects have addressed legislative reform, civil society, gender equality, trafficking, institution-building, the media and the Roma community. The generous financial and human resources support of many participating States – among them Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States – has enabled the office to maintain a professionally well-qualified international and local staff.

The ODIHR will remain active in Montenegro/Federal Republic of Yugo-

slavia in 2002 in all its areas of specialization.

Human rights is focus of ODIHR visit to Azerbaijan

On 28 and 29 November, an ODIHR delegation led by Director Gerard Stoudmann visited Azerbaijan for discussions with the authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the human rights situation in the country and future ODIHR assistance. The group also took part in an anti-torture seminar and visited prisons.

The delegates were taken to three penitentiary facilities that were operating under markedly improved conditions after their transfer from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Justice. They had an opportunity to speak with prisoners, including with three individuals who had been identified by the Council of Europe as political prisoners.

The findings of the visit were discussed at a meeting with the President of Azerbaijan. Issues of common concern and prospects for future co-operation were also reviewed, including a future project to organize a regional seminar on religious tolerance and dialogue in 2002. The delegation also discussed human rights issues with the Presidential Administration, the Ministers of the Interior and of Justice, and representatives of

local non-governmental organizations.

The visitors took part in a seminar, ‘For a Society without Torture’, organized jointly by the ODIHR, the Institute of Human Rights and the Ministry of Justice. Held in a prison, it was attended by prison administrators, prisoners, the prosecutor’s office, judges, journalists, NGOs and senior representatives of the Ministry of Justice and the presidential administration. Two similar seminars will be held next year, one in a women’s prison and the other in a prison for juveniles.

ELECTIONS



Local elections in Kyrgyzstan assessed

Two members of the ODIHR’s Election Section were deployed to Kyrgyzstan for two weeks to assist the OSCE Centre in Bishkek to carry out a political assessment of the local elections, held on 16 December.

ODIHR reviews election law of former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The ODIHR has issued comments on the draft Parliamentary Election Law of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The review is available on the ODIHR website at:

www.osce.org/odihhr/documents/reports/election_reports



Support continues for prison reform in Kyrgyzstan

The ODIHR continued its support for the reform of the penitentiary system in Kyrgyzstan, the first country in Central Asia to commit itself to the transfer of all penitentiary facilities, including pre-trial institutions, from the authority of the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice. The reform is expected to lead to substantial changes in the criminal justice system and to a demilitarized penitentiary service.

The ODIHR sponsored the visit of Latvia's General Prison Director to Kyrgyzstan in early December. Accompanied by the ODIHR Rule of Law Officer, he assessed the latest developments in the country's penitentiary system, sharing the experience of Latvia which transferred its system in 1999. Senior prison administrators gave the visitors a briefing on the concept behind the reform and practical matters involved in the transfer process. The ODIHR expert met with the working group under the Ministry of Justice to discuss legal requirements for the transfer and participated in a round-table discussion on the process.

ODIHR conducts workshop on domestic violence in Azerbaijan

On 13 and 15 November, the ODIHR organized the first workshop for police officers in Azerbaijan on combating domestic violence. Participants were made aware that domestic violence was not a private matter and should be treated as a punishable crime. The sessions were a follow-up to the conference, 'Say no to violence', held in May 2000.

The heads of the 28 police departments in Baku exchanged experiences with experts from the Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Police Force of Austria, who gave briefings on international standards and commitments on combating domestic violence. The Ministries of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Justice as well as the police academy and other authorities showed great interest in working in this area with the

ODIHR, which proved crucial to the project's success.

The Azerbaijan Gender Association (*Symmetria*), the NGO dedicated to preventing domestic violence, participated actively and facilitated the first-ever contacts and co-operation between civil society and the police force on this problem. The ODIHR plans to conduct follow-up workshops for law enforcement agencies in Azerbaijan in spring 2002.

Coalition of women's NGOs in Georgia records successful first year

The coalition of women's NGOs in Georgia, established in October 2000 under an ODIHR project, marked its first year of existence with a list of achievements. It has succeeded in developing a common strategy on a number of fronts: addressing women's rights and promoting gender equality, lobbying for equal opportunities, creating joint mechanisms for advocacy work and capacity-

building, and introducing a methodology for co-operation and working procedures in the coalition.

Georgia and Azerbaijan improve training skills in promoting women's rights

Under its 2001 programme in Georgia and Azerbaijan to raise awareness of women's rights, the ODIHR has succeeded in building local capacity in training by creating pools of skilled trainers in 11 regions. Follow-up workshops all over Azerbaijan and Georgia covered remote areas, training more than 3,000 women on women's rights and encouraging them to participate actively in civil society and become more involved in decision-making.

Throughout its implementation, the project attracted wide coverage in the media. It was one of the few international initiatives that reached out beyond



OSCE

These Georgian women are now qualified to train others in promoting women's rights, after completing an ODIHR workshop

building, and introducing a methodology for co-operation and working procedures in the coalition.

Uniting 35 women-led NGOs, the coalition seeks to develop into a body that will serve civil society by lobbying for gender-equality issues, enhancing women's leadership capabilities and increasing women's participation in decision-making. The coalition will expand

the main capitals. The project served as a catalyst for the women's movement in the regions of Azerbaijan and Georgia, using local capacity to develop new organizational structures. It has led to the creation of new women's initiatives and brought about co-operation and networking among different leaders and communities on women's rights and gender equality.

Strategic planning workshop on women in politics in Kazakhstan

Following up on its project to raise awareness of women's rights in Kazakhstan, the ODIHR, in co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Almaty, organized a strategic planning workshop on women in politics from 4 to 6 December in Almaty. Participants who had benefited from earlier training had identified the need to promote women in politics as the most crucial issue facing the women's movement in Kazakhstan and had requested the ODIHR to facilitate a planning process.

Representatives of NGOs and local and central government from several cities and rural areas defined four strategic areas for long-term action: improving election mechanisms, training women candidates, awareness-raising among the electorate, and working with the media. Action networks were assigned and activities for possible ODIHR assistance were proposed.

The results of the workshop will be consolidated into a concrete action plan with implementation mechanisms and budgets. A follow-up meeting is being organized in January 2002.

Prison management in Kazakhstan is focus of ODIHR training

Three ODIHR experts conducted training on teaching methodology and

prison management for the staff of the Pavlodar Prison College from 2 to 5 November. The workshop's goal was to help the college to draw up a mission statement, design the syllabus for a human rights course to be taught at the College, and further develop the curriculum. The participants included the college director and deputy director, teachers and students, and the Director of the Kazakh Prison Administration.

The same ODIHR experts conducted the first in a series of seminars for the staff of SIZOs – pre-trial detention centres – and other detention centres in Kazakhstan on 6 and 7 November. Participants were introduced to the international standards used in the treatment of pre-trial detainees. The OSCE Centre in Almaty and the ODIHR will continue the seminars in 2002, in co-operation with the Ministry of Interior and the director of the pre-trial detention facilities.

Bulgaria shares experience in training for the judiciary with Kazakhstan

To facilitate the establishment of a training centre for the judiciary in Kazakhstan, the ODIHR organized a training programme from 16 to 23 November for a delegation from the Kazakhstani Supreme Court at the Magistrate Training Centre (MTC) of Bulgaria. The

director of the future Kazakh Training Centre, the chairman of the Committee on Judicial Administration and two justices of the Supreme Court took part in the programme.

This was the first time the Bulgarians hosted an activity of this kind. Briefings focused on the principles of professional education for the judiciary, international practices in judicial training and a description of MTC operations. The MTC director offered future assistance to the Kazakh Training Centre.

Representatives of Uzbek Ombudsman learn from Poland's rule-of-law reforms

The Deputy Ombudsman of Uzbekistan and the Head of the Secretariat, Ombudsman's Office, were in Poland from 18 to 25 November on a training visit. They met with the Polish Ombudsman Office, focusing on the methodology for complaint investigation and on issues dealing with criminal justice.

The visitors were given the opportunity to participate in a regular inspection of a penitentiary facility by the Polish Ombudsman office and to observe a murder trial in a Warsaw court. They also met with the ODIHR Director and had discussions with the ODIHR staff on reforms in the rule of law in the OSCE area.

NEWS

from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

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High Commissioner holds 'status law' discussions with Hungary

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, devoted November and December to playing an active role in efforts to prevent the implementation of the Act on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries from damaging relations between Hungary and its neighbours, especially Romania and Slovakia.

Designed to give benefits to ethnic

Hungarians in Hungary's neighbouring countries (excluding Austria), the Act has been criticized by the international community and some of Hungary's neighbours for provisions that are interpreted as extra-territorial and discriminatory. In a continuous dialogue with the concerned governments, the High Commissioner has sought to ensure that the law is in keeping with international standards. He has also encouraged all parties to carry out discreet and constructive

consultations to clarify misunderstandings and resolve outstanding points of disagreement.

Adhering to the principles in his statement of 26 October on "Sovereignty, Responsibility, and National Minorities", Mr. Ekeus sought to diffuse tensions that might arise from the implementation of the law, proposed to start on 1 January 2002. At the Ministerial Meeting of the OSCE in Bucharest in December, he met separately on the issue with



Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase and Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi. He presented a number of recommendations to the Hungarian Government and met with members of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and Romania. The High Commissioner is visiting Slovakian authorities in January to discuss the government's reservations about the law's implementation.

Balkan issues are focus of HCNM visits

The High Commissioner visited Skopje, Podgorica, Novi Sad and Belgrade from 19 to 23 November. In Skopje, on 20 November, he spoke at the opening of the South East European University in Tetovo (see *OSCE Newsletter*, November/December 2001, Vol. VIII, No. 10). He also met with members of smaller minorities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, focusing on the Vlachs.

In Podgorica, Mr. Ekeus met with government and minority representatives including Yugoslav President Milo Djukanovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs Branko Lukovac, Minister for National Groups Rights Protection Gezim Hajdinaga, and representatives of the Bosniac (Muslim) and Albanian minorities. Among the issues discussed were the future status of Montenegro and the rights and participation of minorities.

In Vojvodina, the High Commissioner discussed the future status of the region and inter-ethnic issues with Nenad Canak, Speaker of the Parliament, representatives of the Hungarian minority and other leaders.

In Belgrade, the High Commissioner was informed about the latest developments on the draft Law on the Rights of



The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, meets the press at the Bishkek International Conference

National Minorities. Rasim Ljajic, Minister of National and Ethnic Communities, expressed appreciation for projects supported by the High Commissioner's office. Other issues discussed in Belgrade included the situation in the Preshevo Valley and the Act on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries.

Ekeus welcomes abolition of language requirement in Estonia

In a statement issued on 22 November, the High Commissioner welcomed the Estonian Parliament's adoption of a bill (880 SE I) abolishing the required Estonian language proficiency for individuals running for local and national office. He hailed it as "an important decision", adding: "The amendment to the Election Laws brings Estonian legislation into conformity with Estonia's international obligations. More generally, Estonian law now ensures the basic democratic principle that, through their freely chosen representatives, the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government." This principle has long

been promoted by the High Commissioner in both Estonia and Latvia.

Combating terrorism and minority issues are major themes at Bishkek events

On his visit to the Kyrgyz Republic from 11 to 14 December, the High Commissioner was received by President Askar Akaev and met with Foreign Minister Muratbek Imanaliev, parliamentarians, and other senior officials. He also held a meeting with representatives from the network that monitors ethnic conflicts in southern Kyrgyzstan, an initiative supported by the High Commissioner's office to detect early indicators of inter-ethnic tension.

Among the topics they discussed were the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan, the use of minority languages, particularly Russian as an official language, minority education, the forthcoming draft law on minorities, the current state of inter-ethnic relations in the country, and the impact of religious extremism and regional security on Kyrgyzstan's domestic security.

On 13 December, Mr. Ekeus delivered a keynote speech at the Bishkek International Conference on security and stability in Central Asia. He noted: "Freedom, democracy, respect for the dignity and worth of the human being are under attack. ... these are values that we must continue to defend and promote." He stated that it was crucial to strengthen existing approaches and activities within the OSCE that were directed towards the sources of conflict and political extremism, "which inspires or is invoked to justify terrorism".

For the full text of the speech, please see: www.osce.org/hcnm

Visit the OSCE website: www.osce.org

REPORT from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

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Severin underlines role of PA in winning public support for OSCE

In his address to the Ninth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Bucharest on 3 December, Adrian Severin, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), strongly emphasized the importance of a more formal and prominent role for the Assembly in the work of the OSCE.

public opinion in each of our countries, and mobilize political, legislative, human, financial and budgetary resources to support our entire Organization.”

Mr. Severin also addressed the need to develop relations further with the Mediterranean and Asian partners for co-operation. He proposed that the People’s Republic of China be invited by the OSCE to become a partner. “We cannot ignore the

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, chaired by President Severin, took place on 2 December. The Speaker of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies, Valer Dorneanu, addressed the meeting. The Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana, noted that the relationship with the PA was improving gradually and expressed his support for the Assembly’s proposal for a ‘group of wise men’, senior parliamentarians and government officials who would produce a joint policy paper.

Committee on transparency and accountability discusses agenda

Also on 2 December in Bucharest, members of the *ad hoc* committee on transparency and accountability discussed their future work. Steny Hoyer (United States), committee chair, stressed the need to enhance the level of implementation of the Parliamentary Assembly’s declarations and recommendations. Members also discussed the level of transparency in the OSCE as well as PA recommendations that had been implemented.

PA visits Latvia and Estonia

From 6 to 8 December, nine members of the OSCE PA familiarized themselves with the work of the OSCE Missions to Latvia and Estonia. Headed by Andrew MacKinlay (United Kingdom), the visit was part of a new initiative to gain a better understanding of the OSCE’s work in the field, enabling the PA to identify ways of co-operating on field activities. The choice of the two missions was made on the basis of their serving as a precedent and example for the closure of OSCE field offices once their mandates had been successfully fulfilled.

In Latvia, delegates were briefed by the Head of Mission, Peter Semneby, and had meetings with the Deputy Speaker



OSCE PA President, Adrian Severin (second from left), during talks with the Speaker of the Macedonian parliament, Stojan Andov (opposite), and other officials

He said: “The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly claims the right to be consulted, the right to encourage and the right to warn. This implies the right to free and regular access to all events, meetings, debates and information.” National parliaments, he pointed out, “provide not only political support, but also political legitimacy for the decisions of OSCE executives... Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly continue to play an important role in bringing public support to the OSCE as well as acting as a link between the Organization and national parliaments and governments. Members of parliament shape

importance for security and co-operation of the world’s most populous country with a common border with the OSCE”, he said. “China’s recent membership in the World Trade Organization adds an important new element to its complex integration into the new global community. It is ever clearer that future patterns of world co-operative security will depend on the quality and nature of the relations between China and the OSCE States.”

PA Bureau holds meeting in Bucharest

In conjunction with the Ministerial Council, a meeting of the Bureau of the

of Parliament, and members of the Latvian delegation to the PA, as well as representatives of ministries and civil society who had been working closely with the Mission.

The programme in Estonia included a briefing by the Mission's staff and its head, Doris Hertrampf. The delegation also met members of the Estonian delegation to the PA, the Minister of Population Affairs and Ethnic Issues, Foreign Ministry officials, and representatives of the Russian-speaking and other minorities.

Vice-President Tan represents PA at Bishkek Conference

On 13 and 14 December, Vice-President Ahmet Tan, MP (Turkey), took part in the 'International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism'. His address focused on the role of parliaments in preventing and combating terrorism. Noting that "it is by strengthening legislation that parliaments can have the most direct impact", he described efforts being undertaken in the United States Congress, the Russian Duma, the German Bundestag and the Turkish Grand National Assembly. He highlighted the important role of the OSCE PA, which adopted, in October 2001, the Sintra Declaration of the OSCE PA Standing Committee, a document that mapped out guidelines in the global campaign against terrorism. He also informed the participants that the PA's annual session in 2002, in Berlin, would focus on international terrorism.

President Severin continues PA efforts in South-East Europe

During a visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 27 and 29 November, Mr. Severin met with Stojan Andov, Speaker of the Macedonian parliament, Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski, Radomir Karangeleski, the head of the Macedonian delegation to the PA, and Jordan Boskov, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the parliament. He also met with several parliamentarians and leaders of major political parties, representing a cross-section of the Macedonian population.

Prior to his meetings, President Severin visited the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and held discussions with Head of Mission Craig Jenness. He also visited the Mission's Field Station in Kumanovo, accompanied by Pentti Vaananen, Deputy Secretary General in the International Secretariat of the PA. Mr. Severin held a dialogue with local authorities and citizens on the work of the OSCE and its relevance to their daily concerns. He stressed the need to strengthen the Organization's role in the country, as part of its mandate to support internal dialogue and confidence-building.

President Severin holds talks in Bulgaria

On 5 December, Adrian Severin addressed the General Assembly of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC). He reiterated the need for increased co-operation between the two parliamentary organizations, especially in the field of economic development. He also met with the members of the Bulgarian delegation to the OSCE PA and its head, Tosho Peikov.

In meetings with Ghiorgi Parvanov, Bulgaria's President-Elect, and Ognian Gerdjikov, Speaker of the Bulgarian National Assembly, Mr. Severin described the efforts of the PA to enhance the parliamentary aspect of the Organization, calling for Bulgarian support.

Ad hoc working group on Belarus visits Minsk

Uta Zapf, MP (Germany), newly appointed chair of the PA's *ad hoc* working group on Belarus, and Urban Ahlin, MP (Sweden), visited Minsk from 25 to 27 November. The first PA visit after the presidential election, it was aimed at assessing the situation in Belarus and exploring ways for the working group to promote democratization. The MPs met with the Chairmen of the Council of the Republic and the House of Representatives, and parliamentarians in the two chambers of the National Assembly. They also met with several key government officials and political parties, research institutes, and the Belarussian Association of Journalists, as well as with OSCE

ambassadors. The working group's priorities in Belarus were discussed, including the powers of parliament, the situation of the media and the electoral framework.

Severin visits Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Russia

From 19 to 21 November, President Severin travelled to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan where he met with the Foreign Ministers and the Speakers of parliament, as well as with representatives of international organizations, local media, and non-governmental organizations. The security situation in the region and global efforts in countering terrorism dominated the discussions.

On 21 November, he went to Khujand, Tajikistan's second largest city, where he met with local parliamentarians and the deputy head of local government.

Proceeding to the Russian Federation on 23 and 24 November, he met in Moscow with Deputy Foreign Minister Yevgeny Gusev and with Deputy Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov. He also participated in a conference on Transdniestria.

In St. Petersburg, the President took part in the 18th plenary session of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States. He met the Speaker of the Federation Council, Igor Stroyev, and the Speaker of the Russian State Duma and Vice President of the OSCE PA, Gennady Seleznev.

Parliamentarians monitor Assembly Election in Kosovo

Bruce George led the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation to Kosovo on the occasion of the Assembly Election on 17 November. The election observation mission was composed of more than 50 parliamentarians from the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and from the European Parliament.

"Democracy based on the integration of all ethnic communities is the key to stability and economic improvement in South-East Europe", said Mr. George. "The test of this election will be the functioning of the new Kosovo Assembly." The mission concluded that in the after-

math of the 1999 conflict, the Assembly Election was a significant step towards constructing a democratic society in Kosovo based on human rights and the rule of law.

PA participates in OSCE Mediterranean seminar

Zdravko Tomac, head of the Croatian delegation to the PA and deputy speaker

of the Croatian parliament, represented the Assembly in an OSCE seminar in Dubrovnik on 'The implementation of OSCE economic and environmental dimension commitments: the OSCE experience and its relevance for the Mediterranean region'. In his keynote statement on 31 October, Mr. Tomac outlined the importance that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has attached to

Mediterranean issues, calling on several occasions for further co-operation among Mediterranean countries, whether or not they were OSCE partners. He remarked: "Parliamentarians can, more easily than governments, establish dialogues and other forms of co-operation, which can help solve numerous political, economic and other problems in the region."

NEWS from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

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Independent newspaper in Belarus ordered to close

Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, wrote to Foreign Minister Mikhail Khvastov of Belarus on 6 December about the closure of the independent newspaper *Pahonya* by the country's Supreme Economic Court. He stressed that the court decision was interpreted by many as another case of harassment of a non-governmental media outlet. The OSCE Representative called on Belarus to adhere to OSCE documents dealing with the freedom of expression that had been signed by the Government.

RFOM holds third conference for Central Asian media

The Third Central Asian Media Conference was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 10 and 11 December. (see article on page 11) The Conference was organized by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE Centre in Almaty in co-operation with the International Foundation for Protection of Freedom of Expression (*Adil Soz*) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. More than 80 journalists from all the Central Asian countries, government officials, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) took part.

The first conference was in Bishkek in 1999 and the second in Dushanbe in 2000. The gathering in Almaty focused

on four major issues: the state of freedom of the media in Central Asia, the new climate in which the media is operating after the tragic events of 11 September in the United States, the protection of journalists in conflict zones, and the next generation of journalists.

human rights at home and reduce their support elsewhere.

■ In particular, the governments of the Central Asian states should not take the new conflict situation as a justification for repressive steps against opposition media. On the contrary, they should use



The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve (right), conferring with the new Chairman-in-Office, Portuguese Foreign Minister Jaime Gama

Participants adopted the following Almaty Declaration on Freedom of the Media in Times of Anti-Terrorist Conflict:

■ The governments of the Anti-Terror Alliance should not, in times of conflict, use national security arguments to limit

it as a catalyst for further steps towards creating a free media landscape in their societies.

■ The media should be free to exercise their corrective function towards economic, ecological and military decisions

in their countries especially in times of conflict. Free public debate is imperative.

■ The media should be free to play its fundamental role as society's watchdog against corruption, which is a serious obstacle for all countries on their way to democracy. Especially after 11 September, the media should not be prevented from informing the public about existing financial links between terrorist group activities and corruption.

■ Leading international media must remain more actively engaged in the region, both as an important source of information and as an example of professional journalism. Under conditions of increased international tension and continued contradictions in Central Asia, journalists should manifest more solidarity and support for each other.

■ Journalists must undertake further efforts to report objectively and edit carefully their coverage of the conflict. Journalistic ethic is needed more than ever in times of conflict and the journalists have to be aware of their increased responsibility.

■ The international community, governmental and non-governmental organizations must do more to safeguard journalists working in conflict zones. The leading media outlets could provide the needed training and insurance and can establish so-called security pools. Media foundations can be approached to financially support these pools. The creation of more efficient identification documents for professional journalists working in conflict zones should be promoted.

Two journalists sentenced to prison terms in Russia

Two journalists in Russia who were sentenced to prison in December plan to appeal. Military journalist Grigory Pasko was convicted of treason by a military court in Vladivostok and sentenced to four years in prison for providing a Japanese television company with footage of the Russian navy dumping nuclear waste into the Pacific Ocean. In Belgorod, a local court sentenced Olga Kitova, a reporter for *Belgorodskaya Pravda*, to a suspended sentence of two and a half years for libel and for using force against government representatives. Kitova was actively investigating corruption in her region. The OSCE representative on Freedom of the Media will continue monitoring their cases closely.

REPORT

from the OSCE Secretary General and the Secretariat

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Director of CIS Anti-Terrorist Centre meets with SG

Before the preparatory meeting of 5 November on the Bishkek International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia, the Secretary General met with the Director of the Anti-Terrorist Centre of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Boris Mylnikov. OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis informed him about discussions in the OSCE on its potential role in countering terrorism, including the establishment of a Working Group on Terrorism.

Secretary General takes part in Council of Europe session

The Secretary General participated in the 109th session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 8 November. He took part

in an informal meeting with Secretary-General Lord Robertson of NATO, hosted by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Walter Schwimmer.



Jan Kubis (right) meets the new Head of the Delegation of the United States, Ambassador Stephan Minikes

OSCE

The Committee adopted a communiqué on international action against terrorism.

Central and Eastern European leaders confer on combating terrorism

The Secretary General attended a conference in Warsaw on 6 November that brought together Heads of State from Central and Eastern Europe to discuss combating terrorism. He delivered a statement on behalf of the Chairman-in-Office.

OSCE and UNHCHR to improve co-ordination

The Secretary General met on 9 November with Ambassador Thomas Hammarberg of Sweden, Regional Adviser for Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. They discussed potential areas for

improved co-ordination between the two organizations including the establishment of mechanisms on a variety of issues that would involve OSCE institutions and missions. Ambassador Hammarberg referred to the conclusions of the Conference on Human Rights and Democratization in Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, held in Dubrovnik, which also called for enhanced co-operation between organizations.

OSCE-UNHCR discuss activities in south-eastern Europe

On 19 November, the Secretary General met with Werner Blatter, Regional Co-ordinator for South East Europe, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The main topic of discussion was regional co-operation between the two organizations.

Secretary General meets with foreign ministers in Bucharest

The Secretary General presented his report to the Ninth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, held in Bucharest on 3 and 4 December. He held bilateral meetings with the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, Jozias van Aartsen (representing the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2003) and with the Foreign Ministers of four Central Asian states: Erlan Idrisov of Kazakhstan, Muratbek Imanaliev of Kyrgyzstan, Talbak Nazarov of Tajikistan and Rashid Meredov of Turkmenistan. He also met with Foreign Ministers Mikhail Khvostov of Belarus, Vilayat Guliyev of Azerbaijan, Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz of Poland, as well as with the Executive Secretary of the CIS Executive Committee, Yuri Yarov.

The Secretary General met with Christopher Patten, Commissioner of the European Union for External Relations, and Secretary General Schwimmer of the Council of Europe. They explored the idea of intensifying their co-operation on an inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, among other matters. Mr. Kubis also took part in the working

dinner with Mediterranean and Asian partners for co-operation during the OSCE-Council of Europe meeting of high-level officials.

The Secretary General was received by the President Ion Iliescu of Romania.

Secretary General holds talks with UN officials

The Secretary General delivered a statement at the United Nations General Assembly on 6 December, complementing an earlier statement of the Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana. During his two-day visit to the UN Headquarters in New York, he met with a number of high-level officials. Discussions with Sir Kieran Prendergast, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, focused on current developments in Afghanistan and their impact on Central Asia. Sir Kieran reviewed the results of the recent UN-sponsored conference on Afghanistan in Bonn. The important role of the OSCE in



Ambassador Justus Jonathan de Visser, Head of the Delegation of the Netherlands, calls on the Secretary General

its area of responsibility, especially in Central Asia, was highlighted.

The Secretary General and Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, discussed the implementation of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and explored possibilities of OSCE-UN co-operation.

Discussions with Hedi Annabi, Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, included the future of the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Kosovo elections, the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and recent developments in Georgia.

In their discussions, the Secretary General and Kalman Mizsei, Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), assessed the positive developments in the Balkans while underlining the tremendous challenges still facing the Caucasus and Central Asia. The UNDP would forward to the OSCE the draft of its document on a regional co-operation framework dealing with the western Balkan region.

The Secretary General was accompanied on his visit by the OSCE's Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, the Head of the External Co-operation Section and the Acting Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities. At the UN Secretariat, the OSCE delegation had high-level staff meetings with the Departments for Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations, as well as the Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict. At the UNDP, they met with representatives from the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the Global Environment Facility and the Office of Human Resources.

Secretary General opens security conference in Bishkek

On 13 December, the Secretary General opened the 'International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism'. (see article on page 3) It was organized in co-operation with Kyrgyzstan whose assistance contributed to the success of the conference. The wide range of participants enabled a consolidation of efforts by the global community, especially in Central Asia.

Two important documents – a Declaration and a Programme of Action – were discussed and endorsed. In their statements, many participants cited the conference as having strengthened the international campaign against terrorism.

The Secretary General was received by President Askar Akaev of Kyrgyzstan.

He also met with Foreign Minister Muratbek Imanaliev and with representatives of civil society.

IOM reaffirms co-operation on 2002 Kosovo elections

The Secretary General met with Director General Brunson McKinley of

the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on 18 December. The municipal elections in Kosovo in 2002 figured prominently in their discussions, with Mr. McKinley expressing his organization's interest in working with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, as in the two previous elections.

Visit the website of the 2002 Portuguese Chairmanship at www.osce.org/cio



PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS

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

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

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

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



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