

Focus on **15** years

SEPTEMBER 2007



Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje



Dear Friends,

This issue of our magazine is a special publication dedicated to marking the 15 year anniversary of the establishment of the Mission.

Back in September 1992, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was the first international organization invited to this newly born State, which had peacefully declared independence only the year before, thus establishing the Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje.

During the 15 years of our presence, it is evident that our synergy with the country has been a success. Although security, democracy and human rights were and remain core priorities, as the situation changed our objectives have followed the needs of the country. Our work began with monitoring, early-warning preventive diplomacy and moved to crisis management, post-conflict rehabilitation, and rebuilding of inter-community relations, finally arriving at support for long-term reform processes and institution and capacity building.

In this publication you will find some anecdotes, personal memories of former Heads of the Mission and ordinary citizens, as well as illustrations, which feature the activities and achievements that have resulted from the hard work of the Mission and its partner institutions and organisations.

Two components of the OSCE Mission's "personality" have been crucial to its success: its committed and enthusiastic people as well as the close co-operation we have enjoyed with the country and its authorities.

We would like to congratulate our hosts and partners for all that they have achieved and to thank the participating States and our other donors who have generously supported our work.

Sincerely yours,

Ambassador Giorgio Radicati
Head of the OSCE Spillover
Monitor Mission to Skopje

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Cover Photo
OSCE
Graduation
ceremony at the
Police Academy

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Chief Editor: Maria Dotsenko

Editorial team: Maria Dotsenko and Sally Broughton

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For further information on the work of the Mission, please visit the OSCE website www.osce.org or contact the Mission Spokesperson, Sally Broughton: Tel. + 389 2 3234619 E-mail - sarah.broughton@osce.org



Branko Crvenkovski
President of the Republic

It is a special pleasure and honour to congratulate you on the 15th anniversary of the OSCE Mission to Skopje.

I would like to take this occasion to express once again our recognition and high appreciation of the OSCE's role in the development of the democratic processes in the Republic of Macedonia.

Since the acquisition of its independence, the Republic of Macedonia has walked the hard and challenging path of the transformation of its society, a path filled with problems and ordeals. Today, the Republic of Macedonia is a modern democratic country recognized as a successful example and model of interethnic cohabitation, tolerance and understanding, a state where the law rules, a state cherishing regional cooperation and close bilateral relations with all countries in the world, and one contributing to the overall stability and prosperity in the region. In a short period of time, the Republic of Macedonia has achieved significant overall progress and is firmly determined to share common generally accepted values.

Over the past fifteen years the OSCE Mission has not only been a witness of these processes and progress, as well as of the challenges encountered along the way, but also their active participant.

The support given to the Republic of Macedonia during the conflict of 2001 as well as in alleviating its consequences in the post-conflict period is invaluable.

No less vital is the importance of the contribution to the strengthening of the rule of law, confidence building, implementation of the decentralization process, and public administration fostering.

Considering the contribution made by the OSCE Mission to the new picture, new perception and image of the Republic of Macedonia, I sincerely thank you on my behalf, and above all on the behalf of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.



Marc Perrin de Brichambaut
OSCE Secretary General

Anniversaries are a moment for pride, of course. They are also moments for recollection and for looking towards the future. The OSCE has been a part of the history of this country for the last fifteen years, not least because of the presence of the Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, but also because the country itself grew from being an observer country to being a full and very active participating State.

The work of the OSCE Mission has changed significantly over the years — indeed, as the situation in the country has changed. It began with simple monitoring, moved into conflict resolution, and now is working on issues affecting long term stability and development in partnership with domestic institutions.

About one point, I can be certain. The successes that the OSCE has had over the years are essentially the successes of the host country, its society and its people. The achievements of the Mission are the achievements of the numerous and diverse local partners, including, not least, the Government.

Many examples from the work of the Mission in co-operation with its domestic partners are being used as models for other States and with other Missions. The examples of community policing and border police training stand out.

The OSCE Mission continues today working closely with domestic institutions on issues such as the rule of law, decentralization and police reform. Our movement away from concentrating on post-conflict security issues is only natural, reflecting the tremendous progress that this country has made and to which all political factors in the country have contributed.

The OSCE Mission has always been here at the request of the Government of the host country, with whom we look forward to continuing our strong and close collaboration for as long as it is requested.



Antonio Milososki
Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia appreciates the contribution of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to the advancement of the democratic processes in our country.

The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje was the first international organization to deploy its mission in Macedonia in 1992 during the turbulent times in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. At the time we were campaigning for our international recognition and membership in international organizations.

Our special gratitude to the OSCE in general and the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje in particular goes for the support in 2001.

Following the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje played an extremely important role, first in redeployment of the police, and then in the implementation of a number of tasks assigned to it under the Annex C of the OFA (confidence-building, reform of the police, media and rule of law).

We are proud that we have come to a stage in which Macedonia can offer a larger contribution to the OSCE activities in Vienna and in the field operations.

Our Ambassador to the OSCE, Zekolli, is chairing the Economic and Environmental Committee. Our experience and expertise in community policing is widely used in other missions. Macedonia is providing experienced and talented personnel as secondees in the OSCE field operations. Finally, I believe that our joint success is best reflected in the fact that the future will bring more Macedonia's contribution to the OSCE and less need for OSCE involvement in Macedonia.

FACTS AND FIGURES

1991, September 8

Proclamation of Independence. The Parliamentary Declaration of Sovereignty of 25 January, 1991 and the Referendum on a Sovereign State of September 8, 1991 established the country as an independent state.

1991, November 17

The Constitution was adopted, cementing the base for parliamentary democracy, the rule of law and a market economy.

1992, August 12

The Committee of Senior Officials of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) at its 15th Meeting agreed to establish a Monitoring Mission in Skopje under CSCE auspices in order to extend the efforts of the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) to neighbouring countries of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to help avoid the spread of tension to their territories.

1992, September 10 -14

The CSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje started its work with a CSCE fact-finding visit to Skopje.

1992, October

The Steering Group on the Yugoslav Crisis worked out the “Modalities and Financial Implication for the CSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje” which were adopted by the *ad hoc* Group (later approved by the 17th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials on November 6). The Mission was staffed with 8 international Mission members and 3 local.

1992, November 7

“Articles of Understanding Concerning CSCE Spillover Monitor Mission” were exchanged between Denko Maleski, Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Josef Moravcik, Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chairman-in-Office of the Council of Ministries of the CSCE.

1994, December

The CSCE officially became the OSCE and the Mission gains enhanced institutional support under the new arrangement.

1995, October 12

The country became the 53rd participating State of the Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe.

1998, March

The Permanent Council, in a special session on the situation in Kosovo, decided to temporarily enhance the monitoring capacities of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje in order to allow for “adequate observation of the borders with Kosovo, Yugoslavia and prevention of possible crisis spillover effects.”

2001, February

Armed groups of ethnic Albanians started violent actions initially along the northern border, and eventually also in the Tetovo and



General view of the OSCE Permanent Council meeting, at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna.
(OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev)

Kumanovo regions, posing a serious threat to the stability of the country. The Mission monitors the situation in close co-ordination with the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM), the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as members of diplomatic missions in Skopje.

2001, March

The Permanent Council, noting the reports of the Mission indicating an upsurge in violence by ethnic Albanian armed groups in the area of the northern border region, decided to increase the size of the Mission by adding eight international staff: *“The additional staff members will focus their work particularly in the border areas, with a view to strengthening the capacities of the Mission to monitor developments along the border and report, and perform other duties in accordance with the Mission’s mandate.”*



The OSCE Mission to Skopje in 1994 was headed by Ambassador Norman Anderson. (OSCE)

2001, March

In order to facilitate political dialogue, the Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana appointed a Personal Envoy, first, Ambassador Robert Frowick of the United States, then in July, Max van der Stoel of the Netherlands, the former High Commissioner on National Minorities.



The imperial Hofburg Palace in Vienna hosts the meetings of the 56-nation OSCE Permanent Council. (OSCE)

2001, April 9

A Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Members States, of the one part, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, of the other part was signed in Luxemburg. This was the first such agreement with any former Yugoslav republic, giving the country a clear European perspective.

2001, April

The Misison establishes field stations in Kumanovo and Tetovo to better monitor the spread of violent conflict, informing the Chairmanship and the Permanent Council on a daily basis.

2001, June

The Permanent Council decided to further increase the size of the Mission by ten international personnel (totalling 26).

2001, July

Talks on the peaceful settlement started with the help of international mediators. Among them were: the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Personal Envoy Max van der Stoel, EU



The OSCE Mission Members were monitoring not only the security situation, but also reporting on developments in the municipalities. Mission Members visit one of the schools in Cucer-Sandevo municipality together with the journalist. 1995. (OSCE)



Max van der Stoep, then the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities helped to facilitate the establishment of the South East European University in Tetovo. Now Max van der Stoep and other representatives of the international community are frequent guests of the University. (OSCE/Andy Burrige)

Special Envoy Francois Leotard, the Special Envoy of the United States, James Pardew.

2001, August 13

The country's political leaders signed the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) which ended the conflict, proposing a political solution achievable through ending all hostilities and disarmament of the National Liberation Army, constitutional and other legal changes, as well as strengthening the multiethnic character of the state through expanding the right of ethnic minorities and proclaiming its territorial integrity and unitary character. Within the document, the OSCE was called to assist with its implementation, especially in the areas of police, public administration and rule of law reforms, media development, inter-ethnic reconciliation and confidence building.

2001, September 28

The Permanent Council decided to further increase the size of the Mission on the basis of the existing mandate, by 72 international confidence-building monitors and 60 police advisers and 17 police trainers as well as 10 others to deal with administrative matters, totalling 210 internationals.

“The monitors will contribute to the maintenance of stability and security in the country and to the building of general confidence amongst the population. They will report regularly on the security situation, including: the situation in the northern border areas including illicit arms trafficking; the humanitarian situation; including the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and trafficking in human beings; the situation in sensitive areas; and on cases of incidents and recurrence of hostilities.”

Police advisers were deployed to sensitive areas, concurrently with the phased redeployment of the national police, so called *Matrix Plan* for redeployment of police forces to the former crisis areas. Although they had no executive authority, their role was to assist in ensuring a phased and coordinated redeployment by the national police.

2002

To implement tasks deriving from the Framework Agreement and the enhanced



The OSCE Mission co-operates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Svetlana Geleva, Head of the International Department of the MFA and Igor Dzundev, MFA's Permanent Representative in New York pose for the photographer with Ambassador Craig Jenness, then Head of the Mission. (OSCE)



Ilinka Mitreva, then the Minister of Foreign Affairs greets Dimitrij Rupel, then the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister during his visit to Skopje in 2005. (OSCE Mirvete Mustafa)

mandate, the Mission changed its administrative structure and consolidated its activities under five programmatic Units: Police Development, Rule of Law, Public Administration Reform (2004), Media Development and Confidence Building.

2004

The Mission shifted its focus from primarily pro-active monitoring of the security issues to the specific projects implementation, assisting the country's effort to reform, focusing in the area of strengthening the rule of law and decentralisation, while it continues supporting and co-operating with the local partners on police reform, media development, education, confidence building and inter-ethnic dialogue.

2005, December 17

The European Council granted the status of candidate country for European Union membership. The EU welcomed the significant progress made by the country towards meeting the political criteria set by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, and the Stabilisation and Association Process requirements established by the Council in 1997 (including its trade-related provisions).

Presenting the Opinion, Olli Rehn, Commissioner for Enlargement, said: "Only a few years after a major security crisis, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia today is a stable democracy and a functioning multi-ethnic state. This is a remarkable achievement. The country has also made important progress towards European integration. The Commission welcomes this progress and recommends that the Council should grant candidate status to the country."

2007, September

The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje is not only the oldest field operation of the OSCE, but is known as one of the most successful Missions, thanks to the support and co-operation of its local and international partners, as well as to the dedicated work of its Mission Members: local and international from almost all OSCE participating States.



Nikola Gruevski, the leader of VMRO/DPMNE discusses a point with the representatives of the international community. The OSCE-supported project "Polical dialogue". May 2006. (OSCE / Mirvete Mustafa)



Antonio Milososki, Minister of Foreign Affairs, greets Ambassador Giorgio Radicati, Head of the Mission. (OSCE/ Maria Dotsenko)



Mission management and long serving local Mission members smile on behalf of all 188 national and 68 international Mission Members. (OSCE / Mirvete Mustafa)



The OSCE Mission to Skopje assisted the country with crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. (OSCE)



The Mission assisted with the rebuilding of inter-community relations and promotion of stability and peace. (OSCE)



Within the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the OSCE was requested to assist with the training police cadets from ethnic minority communities. One thousand new police officers were trained and the camera captured their faces during the graduation ceremony at the Police Academy. (OSCE)



The country's political leaders signed the Ohrid Framework Agreement which ended the 2001 conflict, proposing a political solution achievable through constitutional and other legal changes. (Fakti newspaper)

OSCE monitors closely followed the security situation in areas affected by the conflict. (Zeitenspiegel / Uli Reinhardt)



The International Community was called upon by the country to assist with the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. (OSCE)





Ambassador Robert Frowick, USA

Head of Mission: September – December 1992

An experienced American diplomat, Robert Frowick, was appointed as the first Head of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) Mission to Skopje in September, 1992. The young Republic had invited the CSCE in to help to

maintain peace, stability and its territorial integrity. Also, the Mission was invited to assist to prevent a spillover of the war in Yugoslavia and to deal with an influx of 65,000 refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

His task was extremely challenging. Ambassador Frowick had to organize all of the Mission's activities from scratch. It was a difficult job, not only because of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and a generally tense situation in the former Yugoslavia, but also due to the fact that it was the first field operation of the CSCE and the first international Mission in the country: he was a pioneer

paving the way for future field operations. The Ambassador skillfully designed the Mission's strategy together with the Government and according to its mandate. He quickly learned the political situation and established trusting relations with all key political players and community leaders.

Ambassador Frowick continued his diplomatic career, serving in different positions, including OSCE institutions in other countries and its headquarters. In 1995, the Hungarian Chairman-in-Office appointed Ambassador Frowick as the first Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and once again he started a Mission from the ground up.

After he finished his assignment in Sarajevo, the Ambassador continued his career in diplomacy, working extensively in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

Even after he retired, Ambassador Frowick was called again to Skopje. In March 2001, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana appointed Ambassador Frowick as his Personal Representative for the situation in the Republic during the armed conflict. He participated in the peace negotiations, which led to the signature of the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

Ambassador Robert Frowick passed away on January 18, 2007 in the United States.



Ambassador Tore Bøgh, Norway

Head of Mission: November 1994 – June 1996

While serving as the Head of the Mission to Skopje my impression was that our constant consultation with the government, meetings with political parties and groups were useful and appreciated. As an international presence we did have the confidence and support of all communities, and I believe we had a

calming influence on inter-ethnic relations at a critical time. Perhaps one could also say that the Mission in those days played a part in defusing some ticklish problems in Skopje's relations with certain neighbouring capitals.

1995 was a particularly difficult year for the newly independent state. Horrible events took place in nearby Bosnia/Herzegovina, and in October an attempt was made to assassinate president Kiro Gligorov. I was frequently told by the political leaders that they considered the Mission's role a reassuring and stabilizing element in those unsettling circumstances.

I recall with special fondness the excellent personal relationship I had with the President Gligorov. He has been pivotal in making the country what it is today.

I also very much enjoyed the exhilarating beauty of its mountains and lakes. The distance between the centres of Skopje and Tetovo was exactly that of a marathon race. It gave me the idea that one could divide it into twenty lengths and have teams from the two cities, sports clubs, government, parliament and international organizations participating in a multi-ethnic competition. Later it was named the Blossom Run and became an annual traditional charity event.



Ambassador Christian Faber-Rod, Denmark

Head of Mission: June 1996 – June 1998

At the time of my take-over, the Mission was a well running structure. It possessed the necessary capacities within its competent staff for dealing with the main tasks such as monitoring the regional security situation, promoting socio-political and economic cooperation,

and facilitating the interethnic dialogue. The Mission played its natural role as co-ordinating focal point for the increasing number of international organisations that were present in the host country.

The fortnightly reporting of the Mission continued to be a very useful information tool for all member States and not least for those without their own national permanent presence in the country.

Very close and constructive contacts were kept with the Government and authorities for finding practical solutions to problems addressed to the Mission.

The two years I spent in Skopje gave me a lot of memories. Some can be relived again like the memories of a beautiful country with fresh green colours, lakes, streams, forest, good food and friendly people. Others were more "one-timers" linked to the specific period, like the problems in Gostivar ending with seven years in prison for the Mayor Rupi Osmani. The yearly Tetovo to Skopje run stays as a precious memory together with training in 4 wheel driving, map and compass reading.

But most clearly of all stands the memory of how a plastic garden armchair melted in the heat under me during a meeting on ending a hunger strike among the ethnic Turkish population in the mountains southeast of Debar (Kozadzik). The absolute seriousness of the demand for the teaching of the Turkish language in the local school was underlined by the already one week old hunger strike by a group of male parents. In the meeting room the grave faces and the enormous summer heat only got worse. To this day I feel certain that the very sensible compromise offered by the Minister for Education would not have been accepted had my presentation of it not been accompanied by the simultaneous gradual collapsing of my plastic chair, leaving me at the end sitting on the floor. The situation was so unexpected and funny - even to the grave audience - that they all burst into laughter. The deadlock was broken and an acceptable solution found.



Ambassador Faustino Troni, Italy

Head of Mission: June 1998 – June 1999

On the occasion of the marking of the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, I would like to congratulate the hard working people of this country and its government for the wide range of initiatives undertaken in safeguarding stability and

security.

During my mandate as HoM in the years 1998/1999, until the end of the Kosovo war, I considered the task I had been entrusted with as a real challenge in the light of the situation prevailing at

that time. My first steps focused on setting up a widespread network of contacts at all levels, which proved extremely useful later on.

In this respect, I can say that the main achievement of my short but intense mandate was the establishment of a mechanism of close consultation and co-operation with both the government and the different political forces. This was instrumental in allowing the Mission to appropriately intervene and mediate in some crucial situations.

As to my favorite memories, I still remember with satisfaction and pride the high prestige enjoyed by the Mission within the various segments of the local population.

The marking of the establishment of the Mission provides me with the opportunity to convey to such a marvelous people of an unforgettable country my warmest wishes of increasing prosperity in stability and peace.



Ambassador Carlo Ungaro, Italy

Head of Mission: June 1999 – September 2001

When I arrived in Skopje in the end of August 1999, the country was slowly recovering from the upheaval caused by the massive influx of refugees from Kosovo. In that period the political scene was directly destabilized by the war in Kosovo, and 1998 general elections had brought the first radical

changes of power in Skopje since the country's declaration of independence.

The country's leaders invested a lot of energy, financial and human resources, to overcome these challenges and to maintain peace and stability. The country's internal stability depended on a swift and effective resolution of the refugee problem. The international community was supportive in making this happen. The shock had been considerable, and the presidential elections of 1999 were held in an atmosphere of growing ethnic tensions.

The first major task entrusted to the OSCE Mission after my arrival was, therefore, to support the ODIHR Mission that was monitoring the 1999 presidential elections, and, at the same time, to attempt to defuse the strong tensions that had been caused, at least in part, by the events in Kosovo.

These tensions were not only "inter-ethnic", but also among political parties belonging to the same ethnic group, and this, it was feared, could have devastating destabilizing effects.

Reconciliation and confidence building efforts took up the

bulk of the Mission's energies. The Mission – in conjunction with other international organisations, assisted the Republic to develop a growing awareness of the problem of trafficking in human beings, and efficient measures were taken to assist victims. Strong and rewarding efforts were also made to bring about a greater inclusion of the ethnic Roma and other minority communities in the political and social mainstream of the country.

Despite all the efforts to maintain peace and stability, the seven-month armed conflict flared up in the northern-western regions between the Government forces and ethnic Albanian guerrilla groups who were demanding more rights.

International actors worked to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the crisis. To complement their efforts an attempt was made to find a "facilitator" from OSCE who could support the negotiations. The Chairman-in-Office invited Ambassador Robert Frowick and later Max van der Stoep to help mediate because of each of their earlier experience and connections in the country.

The "Framework Agreement", which ended the conflict and offered the road map of further reforms was signed in Ohrid in August 2001. It was foreseen in the Framework Agreement that the OSCE would assist the country with its implementation.

Personally, it is difficult to single out any "favourite memories" because, in spite of the crisis, tensions and difficulties, the quality of life in Skopje was excellent, and I have no unhappy souvenirs. I spent there two memorable years, met many interesting and talented people. I remember many quite warm summer evenings, which I have spent with my local friends in small cosy "kafanas" along the Vardar river, where owners were happy to serve us their best wine and to please us with the "best in town" turli-tava, the traditional Macedonian dish.





Ambassador Craig Jenness, Canada

Head of Mission: September 2001 – November 2003

I became Head of Mission just after the signing of the Ohrid Agreement in 2001. The Mission had a lot to do – helping stabilize the former crisis regions, training 1000 new police officers, and other tasks including supporting elections, rule of law, and the media. We grew from a small Mission of about 25 people to over 450 in a year.

When I arrived, the country was still on the brink of a civil war. When I left two-and-a-half years later, things were stable and it was hard not to be hopeful about the future. Of course, the OSCE Mission was not responsible for establishing peace, but I am sure peace would not have been possible without it. Most of us – especially the national staff – worked extremely hard; many people were very brave. I couldn't be more proud of the Mission and what it achieved.

Personally, my greatest triumph was in the summer of 2003, when I finally convinced my (now) wife Barbara to marry me. Perhaps our Sunday walks together on the paths up on the mountain Vodno somehow wore her down.

I left Skopje at the end of 2003. I was very sad to leave; but I had reached one of those moments in life when I knew that although it was easy to stay, it was better to go. I think what I missed most of all were the friends and colleagues; perhaps I had not realized how attached I had grown to so many of them.

In 2005, I worked for a few summer months in Kosovo. I used to drive to Skopje almost every Sunday. I would again (but more slowly) climb Vodno. I would tell myself that these trips were an escape from the pressures of Kosovo. But I think I really made them because I could sit for a while at the top of the mountain and look over the city, and get a small feeling again of how much Skopje and my friends there meant to me, and how proud I was to be part of that Mission.



Ambassador Carlos Pais, Portugal

Head of Mission: January 2003- November 2006

When I joined the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, at the end of 2003, the Ohrid Framework Agreement was barely two years old. But already Concordia, the European Union's first military operation under the European Security and Defence Policy, was closing down, the security situation no longer warranting an active military presence. The OSCE Mission had already switched from crisis management mode to one of post-conflict rehabilitation. The amazing progress that had taken place was first and foremost a credit to the people of the country, and to its rulers, too. But, their international friends had also played a truly magnificent role. The OSCE Mission stood tall among the most loyal and dedicated of those friends. It had played a pivotal role in building confidence and trust among the various strands that enrich the country's social fabric. It had trained a multi-ethnic police force endowed with policing methods tested in some of the world's most advanced democracies. It had started to help the young country strengthen its institutional capacity in the broad field of the rule-of-law: from improving its ability to conduct elections approaching European standards to preparing its legal practitioners to deal with the most sensitive kinds of cases; from encouraging multi-ethnic interaction as a factor for progress to inspiring political dialogue as the sole means of problem-solving.

In the three years that followed, those initial accomplishments broadened to encompass efforts in building-up an independent, professional media and in developing a decentralized administration, not along, but cutting through, ethnic divides.

My life in Skopje started with a tragedy: the untimely accidental death of President Boris Trajkovski. But, while mourning its irreplaceable loss, the country moved forward, attaining EU candidate status in a very short time. There, too, the OSCE, and its Mission to Skopje, played a crucial role. It identified EU membership as the best long term guarantor for the country's security and the region's stability. Therefore, in line with the EU requirements, rule-of-law became the focus of its streamlined activity, and it proceeded to work under that assumption. I do not regret the choice. The close partnership developed with my colleagues from the European Union, NATO and the United States – the main international actors involved, together with the OSCE, in facilitating the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement – proved that the choice was the right one. There were many successes, with only a few inevitable failures.

For me personally, working with a multi national staff – with colleagues coming from faraway cities such as Dallas or Moscow, and closer ones like Zagreb, Ankara, Geneva, Munich, Paris and London – was a truly inspiring experience. Seeing how fast our local staff members were able to catch up with the rest of us, often surpassing us, was equally rewarding. I left Skopje with the conviction that further progress would soon materialize.

Now, from Brussels, I continue to closely follow progress in Skopje. And I see no reason why, in the next few years, further steps could not be achieved in bringing to fruition the country's main foreign policy goals: its integration in the Euro-Atlantic structures.

DIplomacy IS ALSO AN ART

Ambassador Arsim Zekolli, talks with the Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski. (OSCE / Maria Dotsenko)

Ambassador Arsim Zekolli is one of the fifty six Ambassadors representing their countries in the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna. Arriving in 2006, he brought with him an in-depth knowledge of past and ongoing political and economic developments in one of the regions in which the OSCE is most active. Ambassador Zekolli started his career in 1990 as an editor of the first Albanian language political magazine "Dita", but was also directly involved in various humanitarian and social activities. He learned the art of diplomacy, working long hours beside top international diplomats, while serving in the Missions of international multilateral organisations.

What do you see as the main achievements of the OSCE Mission to Skopje?

For years, working in civil society organisations and later with international organisations, I was in close contact with the Mission to Skopje, either participating in or observing their activities. The Mission's achievements in the area of improving inter-ethnic relations, confidence building, security monitoring, administration, police and rule of law reforms are visible and complimented by its successes in developing media and civil society. However, I think that the main asset of the OSCE is amazingly dedicated and intelligent people, both local and international. I have many friends among them and stay in touch with some even though they have left our country.

Another impressive asset of the Mission is its open door policy and the trust which it gained from the authorities and population. The OSCE Mission is the organization that has constant and direct contact with all levels of authorities; Mission officials not only advise and consult us, but they also listen to our ideas and learn from us. This is an exceptional symbiosis which has made the OSCE Mission so successful in fulfilling its mandate.

How do you feel being first ethnic Albanian Ambassador to take this post at the OSCE HQ in Vienna?

It is a high honour, privilege and challenge as well as an exceptional responsibility to represent the interests of my country at the OSCE. And to answer your question, I must say that I am only one of several ethnic Albanian Ambassadors of Macedonia currently serving abroad and doing our utmost to represent our country to the best of our abilities. Besides, regardless of our ethnic



origin, as Ambassadors, we all share the same aspirations, same goals, same wishes and determination. As you know, the main focus of our foreign policy is to make our path to memberships in the EU and NATO smoother. This brings new momentum to our diplomacy, and I am very pleased to represent my country in this challenging and dynamic period of our history.

How does being an Ambassador to the OSCE Permanent Council fit into your personal goals?

I actually graduated with an Art History degree from Skopje University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, and have the heart of an artist and photographer. As an artist, I have always wanted to explore the world and learn about diverse cultures, because I believe that by learning about these kinds of differences, we learn about ourselves and come to know who we are. Working with my colleagues from the other 55 participating States and getting into the issues important in the regions in which the OSCE operates is definitely giving me the chance to fulfil this desire.



Ambassador Arsim Zekolli is not only experienced in the art of diplomacy, but also in the art of photography. Walking around Vienna he captures city life through the focus of his camera.



**Lence Markovska, 44 years old,
Lubodrag village, Kumanovo**

“Everybody knows that the OSCE Mission helped a lot of people in this former crisis area. But we have no need for OSCE help now as the crisis is over and the situation is normal and peaceful.”



**Redzep Ali
Cupi
25 years
old,
Gostivar**

I had a chance to be directly involved in one OSCE project on capacity building of Roma municipal counselors. This is, however, a very small thing the OSCE Mission was focusing on during the last 15 years among plenty of activities on democratization and monitoring of the political situation.



**Vera Hulrikova, 35 years,
Lubodrag village, Kumanovo**

“During the conflict we had some prejudices, but now we don’t think about the OSCE any more. During elections we see OSCE observers in our village. This helps us to know that our election process is improving.”



**Abedin Imeri, 50 years old, businessman,
Bogovinje village**

“I see the OSCE as an organization that mediates in solving inter-ethnic relations, conflicts through projects with local NGOs. I personally had good contacts with OSCE representative Aytekin Aktas. We cooperated on improving of inter-ethnic relations in the Tetovo area. After the conflict, the OSCE also helped with the police redeployment in our village. This was very positive, and the results are visible today.”



**Aneta Lozanoska, private consulting
company, Skopje**

“We are working for two years with the OSCE, conducting assessments on the progress of decentralization. OSCE experts understand the needs of the country and know what should be done. We together develop recommendations for the government on the progress of fiscal decentralization.”



**Arburim Arifi, 23 years old, auto-
mechanic, Lopate village, Kumanovo**

“My highest appreciation for the OSCE is shared by all residents here. It really helped people in different ways. Personally, the OSCE helped me to obtain my citizenship through the Ombudsman project. They took away all my documentation since I was in the NLA during the conflict. But today, thanks to the OSCE, I got my citizenship and all documents back.”



**Elizabeta
Nikolova,
lawyer,
Strumica**

“I learned more about how to exercise my right to free access to information, thanks to the handbooks, published by the OSCE.”



**Mile Ristovski, 19 years old, university
student, Sveti Nikole**

“I know that Macedonia is a member state of the OSCE. I know that the OSCE Mission does a lot of good things here. For example my friends from the non-governmental organization in Kumanovo received support from the OSCE to implement NGO projects, which help improve the inter-ethnic relations.”



**Sveto
Milosevik,
24 years old,
Demir Kapija**

I don’t know much what OSCE is doing. Luckily this magazine came in my hands not long ago, and I saw many interesting things about OSCE’s projects in Macedonia.



Besim Shabani, 25 years old, radio-journalist (Radio Jehona) Matejce village, Kumanovo

I know that the OSCE has some projects, which assist the MRT development. We would like to implement several community-related projects for our radio with the OSCE help.

Our Jehona radio has fruitful cooperation with a Macedonian language radio in Kumanovo and thus, we can do a joint project aiming to improve the interethnic relations.



Naxhije Berzati, 48 years old, housewife, Bogovinje village

“I have no words how to express my gratitude for the OSCE. Thanks to OSCE representative Krzysztof Tomkowsky, today we have a roof above our heads, as our house was burnt to the ground by unknown perpetrators after the armed conflict. We still don’t know the reason, but, we try to leave that behind. Kristoph helped a lot to find us sponsors to rebuild the house. We will never forget this. He became our family friend and he is always welcome in our house.



Zejdi Osmani, 62 years old, school secretary, Pirok village, Tetovo area

“My highest appreciation for the OSCE. This organization sponsored a project on forestry in Pirok, which was initiated by the municipality. Our students were engaged in planting the trees and we were also assisted by Forestry Association “Sharr” from Gostivar. The project also involved the local community members.



Nadir Isufi, 45 years old, municipal official, Matejce village, Kumanovo

I have a positive opinion. OSCE representatives used to come very often in the village after the conflict, but now, when the situation is normal, we rarely see them. There was a project on community policing, which changed a lot the image of police and our understanding of their work and brought the communities together.

PEOPLE SAY...



**Vlatko Stojanovski
34 years old,
Skopje**

During the 2006 elections I was an NGO monitor in one polling station. I saw OSCE representatives also monitoring the elections.



Sevim Jashari, 29 yrs old, unemployed, Matejce village, Kumanovo

I have good opinion for the OSCE Mission. Many families in our village received assistance after the conflict. OSCE advised us how to build confidence among different communities. They also helped us to trust the police. Police officers are visiting the local school and talking to children about police officers’ duties. We also hope that the OSCE will help us to re-construct the park in the center of the village, where children can play.



**Aleksandar Jovanov:
29 years old,
Negotino**

I have noticed that there is a ‘visual change’ of the Public Broadcaster MRT. I heard that OSCE did it.



Nada Minovska, 48 years old, cafeteria worker, Dolno Sonje village

“Of course, I know the OSCE. For example, two years ago, there was a project on planting trees, which turned out very successful. My children were involved in the “Road Safety for All” project, organized by the OSCE. They learned more about road safety.”

A PATRIARCH REMEMBERS

Kiro Gligorov President (January 27, 1991 - November 19, 1999)



“In 1992 it was crucial to express our position and to attract the international community’s attention to the challenges faced by our newly born state, utilizing the advantages of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is now known as the OSCE. It was important to use not only the open forum discussions in the headquarters in Vienna, but also to have the presence of international monitors in the country. That is how the CSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje began,” recalls President Kiro Gligorov.

When you read the biography of President Kiro Gligorov, it is difficult to believe that one person could have achieved so much in just one life time. Kiro Gligorov is the oldest ever president of a country, staying in power until he was 82 years old.

Kiro Gligorov held various high level decision making positions in Yugoslavia, including that of Secretary of State for Finance in the Federal Executive Council. He was a member of the Yugoslav Presidential Council as well as the Speaker of the Parliament of Yugoslavia. Kiro Gligorov was the first democratically elected President of the state (January 1991) after the collapse of Yugoslavia.

Under his leadership the country became the only Republic of the former Yugoslavia to attain independence peacefully and legitimately, through a referendum. The centuries old dream of this ancient nation was finally fulfilled. A new Constitution was adopted in 1991, which cemented a base for rule of law, parliamentary democracy and market economy, while respecting CSCE commitments and other international standards. The Yugoslav Army peacefully left the territory of the newly created Republic and the country joined the UN family in 1993.

“1992...war in Bosnia-Herzegovina... tense situation in other parts of the former Yugoslavia. Our internal situation was complicated as well: we were cut off from oil shipments from Greece, which could have led to a collapse of the economy. We had nearly 65,000 refugees from Bosnia and mounting domestic unrest stimulated by all these events. While seeking to meet the essential needs of our population and to maintain domestic stability, we also kept an uneasy eye on Kosovo, convinced that an outbreak of crisis there would quickly spillover into our Republic and lead inexorably to another Balkan war,” recalls Patriarch Gligorov.

“With these concerns uppermost on our agenda, the leaders of our country were eager to receive the CSCE Mission and co-

operated without hesitation in starting up the spillover monitoring operations as expeditiously as possible. We needed international help in order to observe the situation at the grass roots level, to prevent a spillover of the conflict, maintain peace and stability, and to safeguard the territorial integrity of the Republic,” said the President.

President Gligorov has warm memories about his cooperation with Ambassador Robert Frowick, the first Head of the Mission and his successors: Ambassadors Willam Wittman, Norman Anderson, Tore Bogh, Christian Faber-Rod and Faustino Troni. He can talk for hours describing different activities in which OSCE’s assistance made a difference.

President Gligorov emphasized that it was the OSCE Mission, which was the first to help not only with border monitoring and dealing with refugees, but also to assist the state to initiate many institutional reforms, which were so urgently needed by the young democracy. “The Mission’s experts were extremely helpful in assisting us to organize efficient police training and establish bases of the Ombudsman institution. In 2001, the Organization’s mandate was expanded and it was called to assist with the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which ended the 2001 conflict in the country. Since this time, the Mission remains one of the main supporters of the police and rule of law reforms.”

Many things have changed here during the last 15 years and President Gligorov has been and actor or a witness to them. Many OSCE projects have successfully contributed to the country’s efforts to build a multi-ethnic state based on rule of law principles, with democratic policing, and respect for human rights and freedom of expression.

Despite the fact that this year President Gligorov celebrated his 90 birthday, he has a very busy and active life. He keeps his finger on the pulse of political life, advising, analysing and commenting on the developments, as the President of the “Gligorov Foundation”, the President enjoys sharing his experience and memories with the young generation, gives interviews to media, and actively participates in different public events.

¹ The 2000 Guinness Book of World Records



First President Kiro Gligorov shares his experience with the next generation. (OSCE / Samir Ljuma)

The International Perspective:

Memories from some of the most long serving international Mission Members



“One specific gratifying moment for me came in August 2001 when I received a call from the community leader of the ethnic Macedonian village of Lesok, concerning the fact that they had no water for their fields or livestock. Upon investigation, I found that the villagers of the ethnic Albanian village of Slatino had dammed up the river above the village. I

proceeded to Slatino where the community leader accompanied me back to Lesok. I mediated a meeting between the two community leaders who then agreed to share the water. We went together to the site where the river had been blocked and the Slatino community leader agreed to get some of his men to open up the waterway. Not wanting to wait, I waded out into the middle of the stream and began tearing down the makeshift obstruction. I noticed the two community leaders (who had been friends prior to the conflict but had not spoken to each other since it started), standing on the bank of the stream embracing each other and pointing and laughing at me drenched from head to toe. We have all remained friends ever since.”

Carl Underwood, Confidence Building Monitor, USA, Serving since July 2001



“Back in 2001, we were operating out of a three-story house in Struga that served as the OSCE field office. It was surrounded by numerous check-points and was in an area with a progressively inflammatory security situation. Although we had very little in-house capacity to report on the alleged human rights violations in the region, I managed to document, with the support of my

team, almost a hundred individual complaints - interviewing alleged victims of trafficking, police abuse or discrimination.

From those times, I would underline the splendid team spirit, the intensity of daily life and the commitment of our staff. During my time in Struga and after in the Tetovo field station, I experienced some tense moments when monitoring court trials against some notorious criminals. Some times I felt discouraged observing investigations that were not being properly handled or cases not duly adjudicated. However, I recall with affection the justice officials who, despite the obstacles they faced, did their best to promote the rule of law in their areas of responsibility. It's certainly rewarding that, during these six years, the country enacted necessary legal changes and continues to build sustainable legal institutions and civil initiatives to protect citizen's rights and articulated mechanisms to identify and address any deficiencies in the criminal justice system.

Luis Carnasa Berga, Senior Rule of Law Officer/Legal Systems Monitoring Division, Spain, Serving since November 2001



“In the beginning of my tenure I was monitoring cases of alleged Human Rights violations in an extremely complex situation. But, one of the most rewarding memories is linked to the project, aimed at providing shelter to victims of traffick-

ing. The project implementation was long and strenuous and we had to deal with numerous issues, including the acceptance by the Ministry of Interior of the existence of this type of facility managed by civil society. However, I remember one day when we received a telephone call informing us that the police were transferring the first three victims to be sheltered. That day I had the sensation that we had done something extremely useful and touched with my hand the benefits of our activities. I am aware that there is still lots to be done, but looking behind makes me realise how much has been achieved and gives me a tremendous incentive to continue working for this organisation.”

Monica Portillo, Senior Rule of Law Officer - Anti-Trafficking Programme Director, Spain, Serving since September 2001



“In 2001 I came to the Mission to help with police training having previously served in various post-war Balkan countries. I knew what a critical role the police plays in healing post-conflict wounds and I understood what should be done.

Together with my local partners from the Ministry of Interior, some police instructors from the Police Academy and energetic colleagues from other OSCE participating States, I have been involved over the years in the training of more than 1000 new recruits and many serving police officers in ethics, communication and interviewing techniques, surveillance, dealing with victims of trafficking, behavior during elections, and much more. Now, when traveling around the country, visiting police stations I feel very rewarded often meeting my former “students”, some of whom over the past five years have been promoted to higher positions. Who knows, some of our former trainees may become chiefs of police stations, or heads of different departments in the traffic police, or in the border police or chair sections in the Ministry of Interior.”

Yurii Derevianchenko, Police Instructor, Ukraine, Serving since November 2001



(OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev)

BEAR'S "SECOND FAMILY"

Bear Graždani, National Political Officer, joined the OSCE Mission to Skopje in the beginning of October 1992, immediately after it was established. Bear was the Mission's first local employee and is still in the Mission despite having received numerous offers for other high level positions, including an offer of an Ambassadorial post.

Bear knows almost everybody within the country's political circles. He can pick up the phone and dial current and former governmental officials' directly.

The Mission in 1992 was small, with only eight international and three local Mission Members. Each of them was performing a broad range of duties, often working long hours and on weekends. Bear's main duties were to follow the political and security situation which represented (and still does) the core of the Mission's mandate.

Bear and his colleagues symbolically called the Mission their "second family". They often spent more time together at work than with their own families. Should Bear attempt to visit all of the friends he has made in each of the OSCE participating States, with whom he worked over the past 15 years, he and his family would spend the rest of the lives on the road.

Bear not only welcomed and bid farewell to nine Heads of the Mission and hundreds of international Mission Members, but he also introduced and guided them through the peculiarities of the local political environment. Today it is no different: Bear is a valuable source of information, not only for the OSCE Mission, but also for the rest of the international community, including the UN, Council of Europe, European Union and NATO.

According to Bear, during the events of 2001 each of these organizations benefited not only from their close ties with local leaders, but also from sharing networks and information. He adds however, "OSCE field monitors were often able to enter areas where others had difficulties. Using our contacts we managed to free a Macedonian soldier who was captured in the Lipkovo area in May 2001. Some diplomats asked if I would contact my sources and try to negotiate with the NLA. Of course, I did my best and thankfully it succeeded. It would not have been possible without the cease-fire was announced by the late President Boris Trajkovski. After the soldier was handed over to the OSCE, I immediately called the President so the soldier could speak to him

directly. I will never forget how excited and happy the soldier's face was while he was talking on the phone with the President."

After a couple of weeks, the grateful citizens of Pehcevo, the soldier's native town, granted Bear status of honorary citizen of Pehcevo.

Bear's calmness, wisdom and impartiality are the bases of his reputation and it is not a surprise that politicians from both governing and opposition circles, community and religious leaders and ordinary people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds respect and trust him.

Another example of when Bear's mediation skills were used in the service of the Mission can be found in the earlier years, when the Mission was monitoring the initiative by a group of ethnic Albanian intellectuals to create a University in Albanian language in Tetovo.

The first lectures at the then not-recognized Tetovo University were scheduled for February 17, 1995 in the village of Poroj and Mala Rechica near Tetovo. Special police forces were sent to stop the lectures, but thousands of villagers blocked the main street in Poroj ready to prevent police from entering the village. Bear was there with another Mission Member on one of their usual field monitoring trips.

Bear recalled: "The smell of violence was in the air. We did not have a lot of time to decide what to do, but since many people knew me, we addressed the crowd and asked them to take ten steps backwards. After tough negotiations they took our advice, but



The Mission is always open to media. Bear Graždani talks to journalists in the village of Poroj. February 17, 1995. (OSCE)

requested the police do the same. Luckily I knew the police commander and after a brief negotiation with him, this was done. We succeeded in creating a buffer zone dividing the confrontational sides. The lectures finished and the crowd dispersed peacefully".

"Bear's outstanding knowledge and insight into the political sphere, his extensive network and good relations with many of the key political figures make him an indispensable part of the Mission's work. His long-term experience enables him to develop and present a thorough and accurate analysis of complex political processes", commented Sebastian Dworack, Chief of Political Reporting Section within the OSCE Mission.

"Bear also enjoys respect among his colleagues of different ethnic, national and cultural backgrounds. He is a renowned mediator inside as well as outside the Mission and thus contributes to the work of the Mission."

Today, after working for fifteen years with the Mission and his active involvement in many political processes, Bear is gratified by what he considers to be the great achievements of his country: that, first, in the beginning of the nineties the young Republic virtuously avoided war and, then, successfully transitioned from the edge of civil war and succeeded in becoming the region's example for inter-ethnic harmony righteously expecting admission into NATO and EU.

The Mission's mediation efforts prevented possible violence. Village of Poroj, February 17, 1995. (OSCE)



FROM BEHIND THE SCENES

Interview with Bojan Eftimov



Bojan Eftimov has worked as a National Administrative Officer in the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje for more than 13 years. He is one of the people who work behind the scenes to make sure that the Mission is running smoothly and that the Mission members working on programme activities and monitoring are able to do their jobs.

How did you first hear about the Mission?

The OSCE Mission to Skopje' anniversary is an important event that takes me back to its beginnings and my first contacts with the organisation. I heard about the CSCE for the first time during its Belgrade Conference back in the 1980s, at that time I worked at the Civil Engineering Faculty. Of course, I did not have a clue at that time what is the CSCE.

I later learned about the CSCE Mission to Skopje and its mandate also from the media. I was motivated to learn more when I was invited to a job interview in the Mission back in April of 1994. The interview was carried out in the building of Nova Makedonija, which was the Mission's HQ at that time.

What are some of your most memorable moments from working at the Mission, both the challenges and the high points?

After all these years I have many memories from working at the OSCE Mission. For instance, I remember that back in 1999 I was tasked to create a new logo that would include the existing OSCE logo and in addition would symbolize the country that hosted the Mission. It was then when the present logo was chosen to represent the OSCE Mission to Skopje.



The Blossom Runs aimed to collect funds for charity, were initiated by Ambassador Tore Bogh, the Head of the Mission in 1994. (OSCE)

I remember the early local elections held only a couple of years after I started that ODIHR was not able to monitor. I was directly involved then in the Mission's effort to organizing the monitoring of those elections using volunteers from the diplomatic community in country.

For me as an administrative officer the Mission's enlargements in 1999 and 2001 and the opening of Mission's Field Stations at those times were also very challenging, but exciting times.

Some of my fondest memories come from the Blossom Marathon Event. The Blossom Run event used to take place every year in May. The relay marathon run of 42 kilometers from Tetovo to Skopje was initiated and co-organized by the OSCE Mission to Skopje. It brought together participants from the diplomatic community, governmental and non-governmental organizations, sport federations and schools, with strong national support from Ministries, the Red Cross and various sponsors, all together involving more than 600 people. It was a major event celebrating spring, sport and music. It demonstrated a will to work together. The event was held 7 times, the last one taking place in May 2003 under the auspices of President Trajkovski.

What does it mean to you as a citizen of this country to be working in the Mission?

It's an honor and opportunity to contribute as a Macedonian both to the OSCE princi-

pals in general but also to the purposes of providing substantial support to the development and prosperity of our own society. Moreover it's a privilege to be able to be part of the OSCE Mission.

What is it like working in an environment with people from so many different backgrounds?

Working with colleagues with such a variety of cultural, national and professional background represents an opportunity for enhancing personal knowledge and understanding. It's also a huge incentive to see that in such a complex environment the work you do is respected and appreciated.

How do you plan to use this experience in your life "outside" of the OSCE?

The high standards existing in the Mission, both in terms of the general working environment and the working relations and professionalism are an excellent basis for personal development and for raising my personal standards to a higher level. I believe that it is a benefit and an investment in all my future engagements.

The OSCE Mission assists with logistics to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights during its elections observation missions. (OSCE / Maria Dotsenko)



POLICE MATTERS

Philip Tolson, Head of the Police Development Unit, is usually in his office by 7:40. He likes his mornings: the office is empty and quiet and it is a perfect time to plan the day. A busy day is typical for Philip, who leads the largest unit in the Mission, a 46-person team of experienced locals and international officers from 12 countries.

This day begins unusually, with a visit to a steel mill. On the occasion of the International Small Arms Destruction Day (July 9) the Ministry of Interior (MoI) organized a PR event in which weapons confiscated from criminals were destroyed. Philip and other representatives of the international community were invited to observe. Philip and his colleagues watch as more than 600 rifles, pistols, guns are thrown into huge metallurgical furnaces at Skopje's steel mill "MakSteel". They use the occasion to quickly exchange information on the latest developments in the police and encourage their MOI counterparts to continue with collection of small arms.

The OSCE Mission has been one of the most active international organizations in working with police for many years. After successfully completing its initial task in assisting the MoI with the redeployment of police units to the former crisis areas, the Mission focused its efforts on training over 1000 new police officers of ethnic minorities to achieve more equitable representation in the police under the provisions of The Ohrid Framework Agreement. The focus changed

The MoI organized a PR event in which weapons, confiscated from criminals, were destroyed in the metallurgical furnaces at Skopje's steel mill "MakSteel". (MoI / Dragan Gajic)



Officials from the Ministry of Interior appreciate the OSCE's donation of IT equipment, which will improve their efficiency. (OSCE / Mirvete Mustafa)

to assisting the MoI in developing community policing and professional training. Training and other activities are now guided by the National Police Reform Strategy and the new Law on Police, both intended to bring policing closer to democratic standards.

Next, Philip attends an important meeting with the Directors of the Border Police and Customs Administration about ways to enhance co-operation between the two agencies and to develop joint training programs. Recognizing the importance of fostering inter-agency co-operation in order for the country to successfully implement its Integrated Border Management, both officials agreed to explore developing some initial joint training program on topics of common interest with support from the OSCE.

Many years have passed since 1993 when United Nations peacekeepers and European Union observers joined forces with the OSCE Mission in preventive monitoring of the border areas. Now the country is strengthening the capabilities of its border police thanks in part to the OSCE, which is assisting the authorities in improving border security. This assistance has increasingly focused on practical training and developing the MoI's internal training capacity.

"Training is, of course, important, but is more crucial to make the process self-sustainable. We are helping to improve the training base of the Border Police. Each of the country's four Regional Training Centres have been modernized and re-equipped with our help," shares Philip Tolson.

Driving to the Shuto Orizari municipality to a meeting with the ethnic Roma Mayor, Philip contrasts the plight of the ethnic Roma population with the many positive

changes in Skopje: many modern supermarkets full of goods; a young generation in new cars rushing to their offices, new residential buildings and a growing number of foreign banks and businesses.

The poorer parts of the Shuto Orizari are a reminder of the work that remains to be done. Philip reflects on how OSCE has supported the MoI in opening a new police office here and in organizing a Citizen's Advisory Group (CAGS) in this area as a way of creating community outreach from the police to the ethnic Roma population.

Philip talks with the mayor about issues that were raised by community members and police officers participating in the CAG such as poor traffic safety and need for more ethnic Roma police officers patrolling the area. The police representatives in the CAG also pointed to the recent change of street names as an element of confusion in citizen communication with police. They discuss possibilities for addressing these issues and also agree to involve more women in future activities.

"We are an important interface between the government and society. The more we sit down and talk to our community representatives and municipal officials, the less "work" we will have in the future. People know us; we know them and their problems can be solved together," said Ilco Gjorgjiev, a police officer from the police station which covers Shuto Orizari and active participant in CAG.

After the meeting Philip heads back to the office to discuss the ideas that came out of his very different activities. He checks in with his colleagues about how their days went to make sure there is nothing urgent to deal with before heading home.

The concept of community policing was first introduced in 2002. With the support of the OSCE, the MoI developed a plan to implement a new approach to policing that aims to create a co-operative partnership between police and citizens. Promoting community policing and increasing citizens' confidence in people in uniform is the goal of more than 130 Citizens' Advisory Groups set up by the MoI.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

As Bernard Segarra, Head of Confidence Building Unit, sits in his fourth floor office in Skopje and finishes an e-mail, his mobile phone begins to vibrate and then ring. He quickly answers the anticipated call, confirming that Christopher Gostlin, his Reporting and Analysis Officer, is waiting downstairs with a vehicle for their field visit. It is only 7:30 A.M., but the temperature outside is already hot and is expected to exceed 40 degrees Celsius by day's end. They begin their two hour trip.

The destination is the town of Bitola, a town located in the south/southwestern part of the country, only a few kilometers north of the border with Greece. This is the site where the two week International Summer University is being held and, on this particular day, observations will be made of one of the Mission and ODIHR's jointly sponsored courses titled "Gender, Ethnicity, and Democracy".

Although Bernard is required to spend much of his time in meetings back in Skopje, he recognizes the need to make periodic trips to see how projects are being implemented or find out from local counterparts what is happening on the ground. This comes from his previous field experience dating back to when he was seconded to the Mission by his home country France following the end of the 2001 conflict. Through that valuable experience obtained while working out of both the Kumanovo and Tetovo field stations, he saw the importance of communicating field activities to headquarters, something that he continues to do on a daily basis.

Throughout his journey south he reflects on some of the major changes the country has experienced over the past six years, many of which are directly linked to the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement signed in August 2001. Remarkable progress has been made that, ultimately, he hopes, will lead the country to NATO and European Union membership. He also reflects on some of the smaller changes the country has seen. He needs to look no further than outside of the car's window where he sees such an example. As the vehicle passes a toll booth, a number of farmers are selling freshly harvested watermelons at the same location where, not so many years ago, protests and roadblocks often occurred.

The most remarkable part of this day,



Bernard Segarra, then the Confidence Building Officer on one of his usual field monitoring trips. Leshok monastery. 2001. (OSCE)

however, comes when he arrives in Bitola and enters Bitola's Technical University, the site of the International Summer University. It is easy to see that the participants have come from all over southeastern Europe and the rest of the world. Despite the intense summer heat that would send most people to the beach, these young men and women of various ethnic and religious backgrounds have all come together in one location to share ideas and learn. Their enthusiasm and dedication to study in a multicultural, multi-ethnic, and mixed gender environment is a breath of fresh air on this hot summer day.



*Children of different ethnicities made many new friends at scouting camps, thanks to an OSCE-supported project. (OSCE / Graziella Pavone)
Villager greets the Confidence Building Officer. (OSCE)*





The Mission assisted the country's efforts aimed at the rebuilding of inter-community relations, promotion of stability as well as long-term reform processes. Dancing and working together helps young people from different ethnic communities to better know each other and to appreciate diversity. (OSCE)



The Mission continues to assist the Border Police to improve their professional skills and in-house training capacity, through different training sessions, from first-aid medical training to the identification of fake documents and much more. (OSCE / Maria Dotsenko, Mirvete Mustafa)



The OSCE-supported short documentaries about the every day work of police and public safety tips "Odblisku" (in English "Take a closer look"), which were broadcast on television stations across the country. (OSCE / Borce Manevski)



The Ministry of Interior with OSCE support introduced the concept of community policing, bringing police officers closer to communities, strengthening the confidence of citizens in people in uniform. Children enjoy learning more about day-to-day police work. (OSCE)



The Mission encourages private and public media to understand that the objective, neutral and professional media coverage of events is the standard for any democratic society. (OSCE / Maria Dotsenko)



Since 2002, the Mission supports the development of the multilingual Public Service Broadcaster, Macedonian Radio Television (MRT). (OSCE / Maria Dotsenko)

WHY MEDIA DEVELOPMENT?



The Mission together with other partners assisted with the professional training of young journalists, implemented by the local Macedonian Institute for Media. (OSCE)

The Media Development Unit of the OSCE Mission to Skopje was established as a result of the Ohrid Framework Agreement which calls on the OSCE to support the development of multilingual media and pluralism in the country's media landscape. Though the OSCE, maybe known more so as a security organization, the commitments made by the participating States related to freedom of the media serve as a framework for its involvement in this area, and the Mission was able to receive guidance in its media work from the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media in Vienna.

From the beginning the Media Development Programme supported the development of the Public Broadcaster,



The ability of journalists to freely execute their duties and professionally inform the public is one of the basic pillars of any democratic state. (OSCE / Samir Ljuma)

Macedonian Radio Television (MRT), as it was the only national multilingual media in the country. This support included training and other efforts aimed at increasing the quality of the programming in general and particularly in the languages of the country's non-majority ethnic groups. At the same time the Mission together with various local partners initiated a series of training and production projects aimed at increasing the capacity of the private media, and encouraging the production of content intended to improve inter-ethnic relations.

The media development projects also encouraged journalists from different ethnic backgrounds to work together and share information. One of the biggest projects was the "City Desk" in Tetovo, which brought journalist from different media together to produce daily balanced news in a time when it was difficult for media to equally access sources across ethnic divisions.

As the security situation quickly stabilized the OSCE Mission looked towards ways to support the long term development of media as a whole, engaging in activities aimed at improving the legal and regulatory environment. It monitored and supported the drafting of a new Broadcast Law, which was adopted by the Parliament at the end of 2005, and continues to monitor its implementation. It provides technical and expert

assistance to the country's independent regulatory authority, the Broadcast Council, especially in planning for digitalization of broadcasting and new media. These technological developments create a new challenge for the country's institutions both to preserve pluralism and increase the quality level of media content.

Using the principles and guidelines issued by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media as a basis, the Mission began in 2005 to work with local non-governmental organizations and state authorities to open up public discussion on various issues surrounding the development of an information society.

The country is now creating strategies, laws and other policy frameworks for dealing with issues from ensuring safe electronic transactions and fighting cyber-crime to Internet presentations that reflect the freedom of expression. The new media of the information society can provide opportunities for media freedom and access to information, making communication between the government and citizens easier and more transparent.

Free access to information is the cornerstone of the modern democracies and especially to free and independent reporting. The Mission along with local partners lobbied for the adoption of the Law on Free Access to Information and is still supporting the state institutions in its complex implementation.

The Media Development Unit is assisting the government in preparing a legal base for information society development in more areas. The top priorities are: professional journalism and at the same time preserving freedom of speech in the new media environment.

In line with the recommendations of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Mission supported an initiative of the government and freedom of media activists, which resulted in adoption of amendments to the Criminal Code, abolishing imprisonment as a punishment for defamation.

HELPING TO TACKLE THE CHALLENGES

Despite being the youngest unit of the OSCE Mission, established only in 2003, the Public Administration Reform Unit has already logged significant achievements in its support to the decentralization process, which are evident to citizens and municipalities.

“Back in the beginning it was important to make citizens and municipal officials aware of the changes that decentralization will bring, because an active citizenry that is involved in local decision-making can ensure that municipalities are transparent and accountable and actually help with the transition”, explained Alessandro Tedesco, Programme Officer within the Public Administration Reform Unit.

For a more than a year before the transfer of competencies to the municipalities, which happened on 1 July 2005, the Mission worked with the Ministry of Local Self-Government and other international partners on a country-wide information campaign, which included all mass media as well as almost twenty round table discussions around the country.

“With the general public mostly aware of what will happen, the other piece of the preparation for the July 2005 deadline was training for municipal officials in order to get them ready to take on their new responsibilities, and training in various technical areas continues even now during the imple-

mentation”, added Alessandro.

The Mission has focused on working directly with the municipalities in strengthening of the professional capacity of the elected municipal officials and the municipality employees who are dealing with all aspects of decentralization. Since 2004, training has covered the details of the related legislative changes, good governance methods, and gender equality as well as highly technical topics such as tax administration, budget planning, internal auditing, and fraud prevention methods.

“We benefited not only from the numerous training sessions on budgeting, treasury operations, administration of taxes and internal control, but also from networking and exchanging our experiences during these workshops,” said Dragica Todorovska, Head of Budget Department in the Skopje municipality of Gjorce Petrov.

More than a thousand elected officials and municipal employees have completed these various training programmes, many of which are followed up by individual consultations and “on the job” assistance from the experts in the OSCE Mission.

“When we look back at all of the capacity building work, the training programmes, the consultations and the publication of thirteen different manuals and reference books, we really have to acknowledge the significant efforts of our long term local partners. Our cooperation with the Association of Local Self Government Units, the Association of Financial Officers and, of course the Ministry itself has always been key to the success of our efforts” commented Alessandro.

One aspect specific to the functioning of local government in this country is the role that local level decision-making can play in maintaining good inter-ethnic relations and protecting the identity and rights of smaller communities.

The Law on Local Self-Government institutionalizes this by calling for the creation of Committees for Inter-Community Relations, which are mandatory for those municipalities in which more than twenty per cent of the population belongs to a com-



Fiscal decentralization is the cornerstone of successful decentralization. (OSCE / Maria Dotsenko)

munity other than the majority. The Mission has assisted twenty six municipalities to establish these committees and in order to enable sustainability of their work more than 100 members of these Committees were trained on the legal framework governing inter-ethnic relations, the organization of citizen forums and the role of the municipality in the facilitation of inter-ethnic dialogue.

The Mission is continually monitoring the decentralization process as a whole in order to assist the authorities in reviewing the achievements and challenges of the reform. It conducted its first survey on the implementation of the decentralization process in the middle of 2006. The picture painted by its results was largely positive, and the specific recommendations were made available to all stakeholders in the process. A second survey conducted in 2007 showed that progress remains consistent, but that more work is needed in some key areas.

The Minister of Local Self Government, Abdurahman Memeti stated: “Everyone knew that decentralization would be a complex process, but implementation is moving along better than expected. The support from OSCE has been very practical and concrete. We are hoping this will continue and be directed at the Ministry and the municipalities in the areas in which they need assistance in order to successfully fulfill their responsibilities”.



The Mission assists multi-ethnic municipalities not only with the capacity building training but also by donating translation equipment. (OSCE / Mark Naftalin)

RULE OF LAW PUZZLE

Increased transparency and efficiency of the judiciary

- publication of all annual court reports and public presentations of the reports by key court officials
- installation of an automated case distribution systems in all courts
- monitoring of selected criminal cases (police abuse, anti-trafficking, organized crime and high-profile) which provided feedback and recommendations to judicial officials

Increased efficiency in combating trafficking in human beings

- support the Government in its implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, and the OSCE Action Plan including the establishment of National Referral Mechanism Co-ordination Office, which helps to identify and assist trafficking victims
- technical expertise on anti-trafficking legislation including amendments to the Criminal Code and the ratification of the Palermo Convention and its Protocols
- support anti-trafficking initiatives: non-governmental shelter for victims of trafficking, a country-wide public awareness campaign and a 24 hour help hotline

Strengthened Human Rights Institutions

- Expansion of the Ombudsman institution to the regional level: six regional offices are equipped and staff capacity developed
- Establishment of a strong non-governmental network for monitoring the work of the judiciary and human rights abuse cases called Coalition "All for Fair Trials"

Understanding the details of the country's achievements in strengthening the Rule of Law and the implementation of judicial reform is not easy for the ordinary citizen as well as for legal experts. Hopefully this user-friendly puzzle will help with an understanding of, not only what the Rule of Law is, but also what the Mission's most notable accomplishments have been in assisting the country in this area.

Implementation of the National Judicial Reform Strategy

- comments provided on draft legislation, including law on the judiciary, criminal procedures, policing, religious affairs, elections and referenda.
- support the development of the new Academy for Training of Judges and Prosecutors
- *ad hoc* training for judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers on substantive law issues such as trafficking in human beings, international fair trial standards, filing cases with the European Court for Human Rights and juvenile justice and on practical advocacy skills

Increased equal gender representation

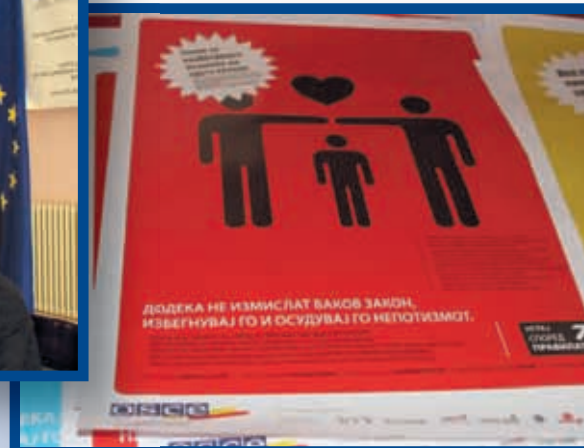
- support for local lobbying efforts by the Union of Women's Associations, which achieved a 30% quota in the Election Code and an increased number of women serving in the Parliament and municipal government
- training for political parties, and elected officials on effective lobbying on gender issues



The Mission continues to strengthen the professional development of court staff through a variety of training programmes, as well as to support efforts to fight trafficking in human beings and promote human rights. (OSCE / Mirvete Mustafa)



Nikola Gruevski, Prime Minister greets Ambassador Giorgio Radicati, Head of the Mission. (OSCE/Maria Dotsenko)



The Mission has supported the judicial reform from the very beginning: strengthening professional capacity of legal experts, developing Ombudsman institution and supporting public awareness campaigns. (OSCE / Mirvete Mustafa)



The Mission supported a country-wide public awareness campaign aimed at increasing road safety. The campaign was initiated by the Ministry of Interior. (OSCE / Maria Dotsenko, Mirvete Mustafa)



Girls and boys in Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish ethnic dress enjoy fiery traditional dances, as part of various projects. (OSCE)



The Mission's local partners, various civil society groups, public institutions, and other international organizations participate in 7 Blossom Runs over the years to collect money for charity. (OSCE)