



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

S O F I A

2004

Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council

6 and 7 December 2004

**Sofia Ministerial Statement
on Preventing and Combating Terrorism**

**Ministerial Declaration
on the Sixtieth Anniversary of the End of World War II**

**Statement of the Ministerial Council
on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict**

Decisions of the Ministerial Council

Chairperson's Statement

Reports to the Sofia Ministerial Council Meeting

**Memorandum of Understanding between
the Secretariat of the OSCE and the Secretariat of the UNECE**

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**I. SOFIA MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING TERRORISM**

SOFIA MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING TERRORISM

1. We, the members of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE, having met together in Sofia, declare our resolute and unconditional condemnation of terrorist acts, in particular those committed in 2004 in Spain, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Russia, where in the city of Beslan terrorists brutally and callously killed innocent and defenceless children. We grieve the loss of hundreds of human lives and express our profound solidarity with victims of acts of terrorism and their families. These acts have vividly exposed terrorism's inhuman nature. We express our solidarity with the States not participating in our Organization which were also attacked by terrorists.

Reiterating that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to peace and security and considering that acts of terrorism seriously impair the enjoyment of human rights, we reaffirm our commitment to protect the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially the right to life, of everyone within our jurisdiction against terrorist acts. We re-emphasize our determination to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as a crime that has no justification, whatever its motivation or origin, and to conduct this fight with respect for the rule of law and in accordance with our obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

2. We underscore the leading role of the United Nations in the comprehensive fight against terrorism.

We reaffirm obligations and commitments adopted by our States in the field of combating terrorism within the United Nations, including resolutions 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001), 1456 (2003), 1535 (2004), 1540 (2004) and 1566 (2004) of the United Nations Security Council, as well as resolution 58/187 of the United Nations General Assembly, and we support the resolution 2004/87 of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. We also reaffirm obligations and commitments adopted within other international organizations of which we are members.

We welcome the importance attributed by UN Security Council resolution 1566 (2004) to the role of relevant international, regional and subregional organizations in strengthening international co-operation in the fight against terrorism and the call for intensified interaction with the United Nations.

We underline our determination to support the important efforts of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and of its Executive Directorate. We commit to hold ourselves to the highest possible standards of implementation of the 12 United Nations conventions and protocols related to terrorism. We also renew our call for co-operation on an expedited basis in resolving all outstanding issues with a view to adopting by consensus the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism and the draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

We remain committed to the anti-terrorism OSCE decisions, in particular the commitments contained in the Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism, the OSCE

Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism and the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century.

Our countries reaffirm their commitment to swift and full implementation of these decisions and arrangements throughout the OSCE area.

3. We welcome the OSCE's efforts in the field of combating terrorism, including the decisions adopted in 2004, and support the work of the Action against Terrorism Unit of the OSCE Secretariat.

We are convinced that the package of practical decisions that we adopt and welcome today¹, and their further implementation will increase the level of security and stability in the OSCE area. These decisions will help ensure implementation of our obligations under international law to prevent and combat terrorism.

4. We intend to step up OSCE activities and measures to prevent and combat terrorism and to address all the factors which engender conditions in which terrorist organizations are able to recruit and win support.

We reaffirm that the OSCE efforts to counter terrorist threats should be taken in all OSCE dimensions, the security dimension, including the politico-military area, the economic and environmental dimension, and the human dimension. Based on the common, comprehensive and indivisible approach to security, our Organization could make further substantial contributions to global anti-terrorist efforts.

We are convinced that respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms is an important element of ensuring peace and stability and prevention of terrorism. We acknowledge that effective prevention of and fight against terrorism require the involvement of civil society in our countries.

We are determined to further strengthen our interaction at both bilateral and multilateral levels in various formats in order to forestall the threat of terrorism in the OSCE area and in the world. We will actively co-operate to find and bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers, supporters and sponsors of terrorist acts.

We also will continue to develop interaction and dialogue on the issues of preventing and combating terrorism with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation.

1 Permanent Council Decision No. 617 on Further Measures to Suppress Terrorist Financing (1 July 2004)
Permanent Council Decision No. 618 on Solidarity with Victims of Terrorism (1 July 2004)
Ministerial Decision on Combating the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes
Ministerial Decision on Enhancing Container Security
Ministerial Decision on Reporting Lost/Stolen Passports to Interpol's ASF-STD

**II. MINISTERIAL DECLARATION
ON THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
END OF WORLD WAR II**

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II

The year 2005 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the battles of World War II. We mourn the tens of millions of people who lost their lives, as victims of the war, the Holocaust, occupations and acts of repression. We honour all those who fought for the victory of humanity against dictatorship, oppression and aggression. Time will not diminish the meaning of their sacrifice. We welcome the UN General Assembly resolution on the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II.

Reflecting on our desire to prevent the recurrence of such a European and international catastrophe, we hail the progress that has been made in the past sixty years in overcoming the tragic legacy of World War II, towards achieving global peace and security, reconciliation, international and regional co-operation and the promotion of democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular through the United Nations and the establishment of regional organizations. We stress the important role that the CSCE and OSCE have played in this regard in the past three decades.

Recalling the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the Charter for European Security, and other agreed OSCE documents we shall spare no effort to avoid the emergence of new dividing lines in the OSCE area, and to eliminate sources of hostility, tensions and confrontation. We are determined to continue our collective efforts with a view of creating a common and indivisible space of security in the OSCE area, based on democracy, the rule of law, economic prosperity, social justice, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

We have learned from history the danger of intolerance, discrimination, extremism and hatred on ethnic, racial and religious grounds. We are committed to combat these threats, including through the OSCE, and we reject any attempts to justify them.

We strongly condemn any denial of the Holocaust. We condemn all forms of ethnic cleansing. We confirm our adherence to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted on 9 December 1948. We call on the participating States to take every possible action to ensure that attempts to commit genocide are prevented today and in the future. The perpetrators of such crimes should be brought to justice.

New times have brought new threats and challenges, one of the most dangerous of which is terrorism. We will fight this threat together, by uniting our efforts and resources, and defending common principles. We will work, *inter alia*, through the OSCE, to combat terrorism and other threats and challenges to security.

We are convinced that the peaceful resolution of all existing conflicts, the observance of the norms of international law, the aims and principles of the UN Charter, the fulfilment of commitments contained in the Helsinki Final Act and other agreed OSCE documents are the best way to pay tribute to those who struggled for peace, freedom, democracy and human dignity, to commemorate all victims of World War II, to overcome the past, and to save present and future generations from the scourge of war and violence.

**III. STATEMENT OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
ON THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT**

**STATEMENT OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
ON THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT**

We commend the progress achieved in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2004, in particular, the three meetings of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan under the auspices of the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group. We also welcome the creation of the so-called “Prague Process”, through which four meetings between the Foreign Ministers of both countries allowed the methodical re-examination of all the parameters of a future settlement. We note that, building on the results of the “Prague Process”, the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group presented to both Presidents in September in Astana a framework that could serve as a basis for a settlement. We invite the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to take that framework into account and to go forward based on it. We strongly urge the parties to redouble their efforts toward the rapid settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group.

IV. DECISIONS OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

DECISION No. 1/04
EXTENSION OF THE MANDATE OF THE
OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES
(MC.DEC/1/04 of 25 June 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the decision of the CSCE Helsinki Summit 1992 to establish a High Commissioner on National Minorities,

Considering that, according to Decision No. 2 of the Eighth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the mandate of Mr. Rolf Ekéus as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities expires on 30 June 2004,

Taking into account the recommendation of the Permanent Council,

Decides to extend the mandate of Mr. Rolf Ekéus as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities for a period of three years with effect from 1 July 2004.

DECISION No. 2/04
ELABORATION OF AN OSCE BORDER
SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT CONCEPT
(MC.DEC/2/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Guided by the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century and, in particular, its paragraph 35,

Committed to promoting open and secure borders in a free, democratic and more integrated OSCE area without dividing lines,

Recalling the principles and commitments of the Helsinki Final Act, all of which apply equally and unreservedly, each of them being interpreted taking into account the others,

Recalling the principles and commitments contained in the Helsinki Document 1992 and in the Charter for European Security 1999,

Recalling the action plans, decisions and other relevant agreed OSCE documents, including documents in the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions addressing, among others, border issues,

Reaffirming that border security and management is a matter of national sovereignty and should be in accordance with international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law, and relevant OSCE commitments, as a prerequisite for good-neighbourly relations,

Welcoming the work carried out in 2004 by the Permanent Council informal Working Group on Borders,

Decides as follows:

- That the Permanent Council will continue its work on the elaboration of an OSCE Border Security and Management Concept with the firm intention to complete it by the Ministerial Council in 2005;
- That, in developing the Concept, the OSCE participating States will be guided, *inter alia*, by the following objectives:
 - To promote the free and secure movement of persons, goods, services and investments across borders in conformity with relevant legal frameworks, international law and OSCE commitments;
 - To reduce the threat of terrorism, including by preventing cross-border movement of persons, weapons and funds connected with terrorist and other criminal activities;
 - To prevent and repress organized crime, illegal migration, corruption, smuggling, and trafficking of weapons, drugs and human beings;

- To promote co-operation between border services, and between specialized national authorities and agencies of participating States;
- To encourage high standards of their border services and specialized national authority and agency structures;
- To ensure a dignified treatment of all individuals wanting to cross borders, in conformity with relevant national legal frameworks, international law, in particular human rights, refugee, and humanitarian law, and relevant OSCE commitments;
- That the work on the Concept will be carried out in a special working group of the Permanent Council. The Forum for Security Co-operation will make its own contribution to this work within its competencies and mandate, and in accordance with Bucharest Ministerial Council Decision No. 3 on Fostering the Role of the OSCE as a Forum for Political Dialogue. Progress on the work will be reviewed, as required, at joint meetings of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation;
- That the work on developing the Concept to be carried out by the special working group will be guided by the common considerations contained in annex to this Decision.

Annex to Decision No. 2/04

COMMON CONSIDERATIONS OF THE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON BORDERS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN OSCE BORDER SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT CONCEPT

The participating States agree on the common objectives of promoting freedom of movement of people, goods, services and investments, and to jointly address the problems related to these movements.

The border services of participating States, acting in conjunction with their respective specialized national authorities and agencies, will co-operate towards this objective.

Issues of a regulatory nature raised by cross-border movements can be addressed through direct co-operation between the specialized national authorities and agencies of the participating States, based on bilateral agreements. In particular, circumstances that would allow liberalization of visa regimes deserve to be encouraged.

Direct contacts between border services and between specialized authorities and agencies of participating States may take place bilaterally or multilaterally, including on a regional basis, depending on specific border-related issues.

Pursued along these lines, border management can improve the prospects for joint economic development. It would also help establish common spaces of freedom, security and

justice in which participating States can share the benefits of integration processes in the OSCE area.

Sovereign national authorities and in particular the border services responsible on each side of the border have the best knowledge of the issues at hand. Cross-border dialogue, transparency and confidence building constitute the first step required to generate solutions with added value for the benefit of all.

Borders in the OSCE are not uniform. Every border has a particular character and may require specific policy choices. Each participating State has the sovereign right to choose how to secure and manage its borders, taking into account relevant political, military, economic and social considerations.

In keeping with its concept of common, comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security, the OSCE constitutes an appropriate political framework and offers the services of its structures and institutions for contributions if participating States so request.

International assistance and co-operation could benefit from a more target-oriented and co-ordinated approach. The OSCE should therefore contribute to political and operational co-ordination with other international organizations and institutions promoting open and secure borders.

As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is also a forum for co-operation with other regional organizations in its area. Increased co-ordination between States on border security and management at a regional level may constitute a stepping stone towards the OSCE-wide establishment of open and secure borders.

Commitments of the OSCE participating States related to border security and management may also be shared by the Partners for Co-operation, on a voluntary basis.

DECISION No. 3/04
COMBATING THE USE OF THE INTERNET FOR
TERRORIST PURPOSES
(MC.DEC/3/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Recognizing United Nations Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1566 (2004) as milestones of the international legal framework for the fight against terrorism,

Determined to further intensify efforts in the implementation of existing OSCE commitments on combating terrorism, as reflected in the OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism, Porto Ministerial Council Decision No. 1 on implementing the OSCE commitments and activities on combating terrorism, the Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism and the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century,

Recalling the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (November 2001), and other relevant works developed in this forum, as well as the results of the Council of Europe Conference on the Challenge of Cybercrime,

Recalling the OSCE Meeting on the Relationship Between Racist, Xenophobic and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes (Paris, 15 and 16 June 2004),

Concerned by the extent of use of the Internet by terrorist organizations:

- To identify and to recruit potential members,
- To collect and transfer funds,
- To organize terrorist acts,
- To incite terrorist acts in particular through the use of propaganda,

Decides that participating States will exchange information on the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes and identify possible strategies to combat this threat, while ensuring respect for international human rights obligations and standards, including those concerning the rights to privacy and freedom of opinion and expression;

Tasks the Secretary General to organize in 2005, in co-operation with Interpol and other interested international organizations, an expert workshop to exchange information on the extent of this threat, as well as on the existing legal framework and institutional tools, and to consider concrete measures to enhance international co-operation on this issue.

DECISION No. 4/04
REPORTING LOST/STOLEN PASSPORTS TO INTERPOL'S
AUTOMATED SEARCH FACILITY/STOLEN TRAVEL DOCUMENT
DATABASE (ASF-STD)
(MC.DEC/4/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling that the OSCE participating States have committed to prevent and combat terrorism, and in particular to enhance travel document security, through the Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism and the Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision on Travel Document Security (MC.DEC/7/03),

Acknowledging the importance of cross-border communication and co-operation in combating global organized crime and terrorism,

Reaffirming its commitment to implement effective and resolute measures against terrorism and to prevent the movement of terrorist individuals or groups through effective border controls and controls relating to the issuance of identity papers and travel documents,

Decides that the OSCE participating States should rapidly report all instances of lost and stolen international travel documents*, either individually personalized or blank (unassigned), to Interpol's Automated Search Facility/Stolen Travel Document Database (ASF-STD), in accordance with Interpol's data protection guidelines and agreements between Interpol and the participating States concerned.

* Except for internal passports of Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation.

DECISION No. 5/04
FURTHER IMPLEMENTING THE OSCE DOCUMENT ON
STOCKPILES OF CONVENTIONAL AMMUNITION

(MC.DEC/5/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

- Acknowledging the need to raise awareness throughout the OSCE area of the problems related to the management, security and disposal of stockpiles of conventional ammunition, explosive material, and detonating devices in surplus and/or awaiting destruction,
- Reaffirming the principles and procedures agreed to by the OSCE participating States in the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (FSC.DOC/1/03, 19 November 2003),
- Recognizing the risk of diversion and the risks and challenges to human security and the environment caused by the presence in the OSCE area of these stockpiles,
- Noting with interest the decision taken by the First Committee of the fifty-ninth United Nations General Assembly to include the problems resulting from surplus stockpiles of conventional ammunition in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session,
- Welcoming the concrete steps undertaken so far in the framework of the OSCE to implement the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition,
- Encouraging participating States to continue in their efforts to address this issue, *inter alia*, by working in co-operation with other international fora,

Decides:

- To task the FSC to submit, through the FSC Chair, a progress report on the further implementation of the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition to the Thirteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council in 2005.

DECISION No. 6/04
OSCE STANDARD ELEMENTS OF END-USER CERTIFICATES AND
VERIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR SALW EXPORTS

(MC.DEC/6/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Willing to complement and reinforce the implementation of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), in particular with regard to export documentation,

Determined to contribute to reducing the risk of diversion of SALW into the illicit market,

Recognizing the need of strict export controls to prevent the destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of SALW, and the usefulness of developing standard elements among the participating States for application to end-user certificates which could be useful to other United Nations Member States,

Endorses and underlines the importance of FSC Decision No. 5/04 of 17 November 2004 on Standard Elements of End-User Certificates and Verification Procedures for SALW Exports.

DECISION No. 7/04
OSCE PRINCIPLES ON THE CONTROL OF BROKERING IN
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

(MC.DEC/7/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Willing to build upon the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), in particular with regard to control over arms-brokering, and to reinforce its implementation,

Determined to improve the control of arms-brokering in order to avoid circumvention of sanctions adopted by the Security Council of the United Nations, decisions taken by the OSCE, other agreements on small arms and light weapons, or other arms-control and disarmament agreements, to minimize the risk of diversion of SALW into illegal markets, *inter alia*, into the hands of terrorists and other criminal groups, and to reinforce the export control of SALW,

Endorses and underlines the importance of FSC Decision No. 8/04 of 24 November 2004 on OSCE Principles on the Control of Brokering in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

DECISION No. 8/04
OSCE PRINCIPLES FOR EXPORT CONTROLS OF
MAN-PORTABLE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS

(MC.DEC/8/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Recognizing the threats posed by unauthorized proliferation and use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), especially to civilian aviation, peacekeeping, crisis management and anti-terrorist operations,

Willing to complement and thereby reinforce the implementation of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in order to enhance effective export control of SALW in the OSCE area,

Bearing in mind that the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century adopted at Maastricht in December 2003 notes that the OSCE is using all the tools at its disposal to address proliferation of MANPADS,

Determined to contribute to reducing the risk of diversion of MANPADS into the illicit market by implementing strict export controls,

Endorses and underlines the importance of FSC Decision No. 3/04 of 26 May 2004 on OSCE Principles for Export Controls of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS).

DECISION No. 9/04
ENHANCING CONTAINER SECURITY
(MC.DEC/9/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Reaffirming the OSCE participating States' commitment to prevent and combat terrorism,

Recalling the participating States' obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1566 (2004), as well as the commitments in the Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism and the OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism,

Recognizing the vulnerability of transport networks, the important role container shipping plays in the global economy, the OSCE's ability to work effectively with governments, representatives of business and civil society, and the importance of enhancing container security,

Recognizing the need to minimize any adverse effects on the free flow of commerce of enhanced container security, and that enhanced container security will promote international trade and economic co-operation,

Decides that OSCE participating States will act without delay in accordance with their domestic legislation, and necessary resources available, to enhance container security, based on best practices and on norms and standards to be agreed internationally;

Tasks the Secretary General to organize an experts' workshop in early 2005 to discuss container security developments, raise awareness, exchange information on best practices and explore possibilities for the OSCE participating States to promote and enhance container security, in co-operation with other relevant international organizations;

Tasks the Permanent Council to follow up on the results of the experts' workshop with a view to recommend further action, if appropriate, in co-ordination with the International Maritime Organization, the World Customs Organization, the International Air Transport Association and the International Civil Aviation Organization and other relevant international organizations, and to report to the 2005 Ministerial Council.

DECISION No. 10/04
IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE ECONOMIC FORUM
(MC.DEC/10/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Reaffirming its commitment to strengthening the OSCE economic and environmental dimension (EED),

Recalling the relevant provisions of the Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension (Strategy Document),

Welcomes the progress achieved in the ongoing process of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Economic Forum, as outlined in the Annex.

Tasks the Permanent Council, through its Economic and Environmental Subcommittee and with the support of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), to continue its work on enhancement of the OSCE economic and environmental dimension and to periodically review the progress achieved. In particular, a report of the Economic and Environmental Subcommittee focusing on issues of further improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Economic Forum should be submitted to the Permanent Council preferably not later than by 15 June 2005.

Annex to Decision No. 10/04

The Economic Forum should become a more effective tool for promoting the implementation of the Strategy Document and other EED documents. The structure, format and content of the Economic Forum should reflect the provisions of the Strategy Document and other EED documents.

The theme(s) of each meeting of the Economic Forum should focus on issues where the OSCE can provide added value and should be selected among the priority areas defined by the Strategy Document, allowing thus for better and more comprehensive, thorough, streamlined and result oriented discussions. The Economic Forum will endeavour to treat economic and environmental subjects in a balanced manner.

The Economic Forum should strengthen its role in providing a framework for political dialogue among the participating States on key issues regarding the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE and should become more policy oriented and focus on practical proposals, building upon the work done during the preparatory process.

The Economic Forum should provide a framework for a more effective participation of officials and experts from the participating States, relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, financial institutions, representatives of academic and business circles, as well as NGOs.

The relationship between the Forum and the preparatory seminars has to be improved, with due attention to the number of seminars, their location and format. Special attention should be given to translating ideas and proposals voiced at the Forum into reality.

The Economic and Environmental Subcommittee, under the guidance of the Permanent Council, has a leading role in providing guidance for the substantive preparation of the Forum as well as for the follow-up activities.

The review of the implementation of the OSCE commitments should be substantially updated and improved. Relevant provisions of the Strategy Document and other EED documents should be applied. The review of commitments should be done in co-operation with other international organizations, as appropriate, and in particular with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, in accordance with the OSCE/UNECE Memorandum of Understanding. A more comprehensive and forward looking report should be prepared and distributed well in advance of the Forum. It should address the status of implementation of a specific cluster of commitments, obstacles encountered, best practices identified, follow-up action needed and possible OSCE assistance to participating States. Given the importance of this session, the time allocated to the review part of the Forum should be increased up to two working days.

In planning and conducting the meetings of the Economic Forums as well as of the preparatory seminars, the Chairmanship and the OCEEA, following the guidance of the Economic and Environmental Subcommittee, will pay due attention to further improving the quality of deliberations.

DECISION No. 11/04
COMBATING CORRUPTION

(MC.DEC/11/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Reiterating that corruption represents one of the major impediments to the prosperity and sustainable development of the participating States, that undermines their stability and security and threatens the OSCE's shared values,

Determined to further intensify efforts in the implementation of existing OSCE commitments on combating corruption, as reflected in the Charter for European Security adopted at the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit and the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted in Maastricht in 2003,

Reaffirming its commitment to make the elimination of all forms of corruption a priority and to implement effective and resolute measures against corruption, including through the implementation of relevant national legislation and programmes,

Recalling that the fight against corruption requires the adoption by the participating States of a comprehensive and long-term anti-corruption strategy,

Acknowledging the important work on this issue done by other international organizations, in particular by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),

Recognizing that the United Nations Convention against Corruption, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 31 October 2003 in New York, marks a major step forward in international co-operation against corruption and provides the opportunity for a global response to the problem,

Encourages the OSCE participating States, which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption as soon as possible, in order to ensure its rapid entry into force, and implement it fully.

Tasks the OSCE Secretariat, in particular the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), upon the request of the OSCE participating States, to provide support in mobilizing technical assistance, including necessary expertise and resources, from relevant competent international organizations, with due regard to their respective mandates, in the ratification or/and the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

DECISION No. 12/04
TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION
(MC.DEC/12/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Recognizing that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are at the core of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security,

Recalling its commitments in the field of the human dimension, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the Charter for European Security (Istanbul Summit, 1999) and all other relevant OSCE documents and decisions,

Recalling Decision No. 4/03 on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, adopted at the Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council in Maastricht on 2 December 2003,

Welcoming the work done by the OSCE during 2004 in promoting tolerance and non-discrimination,

1. Appreciates the Declaration made by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office at the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism held in Berlin on 28 and 29 April 2004 — “Berlin Declaration” and the Declaration made by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office at the OSCE Conference on Tolerance and the Fight Against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination held in Brussels on 13 and 14 September 2004 — “Brussels Declaration”;
2. Endorses the Permanent Council Decisions on Combating Anti-Semitism (PC.DEC/607) and on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination (PC.DEC/621) and the Permanent Council Decision on Promoting Tolerance and Media Freedom on the Internet (PC.DEC/633), annexed to this decision;
3. Further decides to intensify efforts for the implementation of these three decisions, which include commitments in the fields of, *inter alia*, education, media, legislation, law enforcement, migration and religious freedom;
4. Decides to follow up the work started in 2003 and continued with the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism, (Berlin on 28 and 29 April 2004), the OSCE Meeting on the Relationship Between Racist, Xenophobic and anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes, held in Paris on 16 and 17 June 2004, and the OSCE Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, (Brussels on 13 and 14 September 2004). Also welcomes the offer by Spain to host in Cordoba in June 2005 the OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance;
5. Welcomes the intention of the Chairman-in-Office to appoint, in accordance with Porto Ministerial Council Decision No. 8, three personal representatives as part of the overall fight of the OSCE in combating discrimination and promoting tolerance. The personal representatives will have their costs covered by extra-budgetary contributions.

PERMANENT COUNCIL DECISION No. 607
COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM
(PC.DEC/607 of 22 April 2004)

The Permanent Council,

Taking into account the forthcoming OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism in Berlin on 28 and 29 April 2004,

Reaffirming the participating States' existing commitments related to combating anti-Semitism, and

In order to reinforce our common efforts to combat anti-Semitism across the OSCE region,

Decides,

1. The participating States commit to:
 - Strive to ensure that their legal systems foster a safe environment free from anti-Semitic harassment, violence or discrimination in all fields of life;
 - Promote, as appropriate, educational programmes for combating anti-Semitism;
 - Promote remembrance of and, as appropriate, education about the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the importance of respect for all ethnic and religious groups;
 - Combat hate crimes, which can be fuelled by racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda in the media and on the Internet;
 - Encourage and support international organization and NGO efforts in these areas;
 - Collect and maintain reliable information and statistics about anti-Semitic crimes, and other hate crimes, committed within their territory, report such information periodically to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and make this information available to the public;
 - Endeavour to provide the ODIHR with the appropriate resources to accomplish the tasks agreed upon in the Maastricht Ministerial Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination;
 - Work with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to determine appropriate ways to review periodically the problem of anti-Semitism;
 - Encourage development of informal exchanges among experts in appropriate fora on best practices and experiences in law enforcement and education;

2. To task the ODIHR to:
 - Follow closely, in full co-operation with other OSCE institutions as well as the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and other relevant international institutions and NGOs, anti-Semitic incidents in the OSCE area making use of all reliable information available;
 - Report its findings to the Permanent Council and to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and make these findings public. These reports should also be taken into account in deciding on priorities for the work of the OSCE in the area of intolerance;
 - Systematically collect and disseminate information throughout the OSCE area on best practices for preventing and responding to anti-Semitism and, if requested, offer advice to participating States in their efforts to fight anti-Semitism;
3. To ask the Chairman-in-Office to bring this decision to the attention of the participants of the upcoming Conference in Berlin and to incorporate it into his declaration concluding the Conference;
4. To forward this decision to the Ministerial Council for endorsement at its Twelfth Meeting.

Annex to Decision No. 12/04

PERMANENT COUNCIL DECISION No. 621
TOLERANCE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM,
XENOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION
(PC.DEC/621 of 29 July 2004)

The Permanent Council,

Taking into account the forthcoming OSCE Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination in Brussels on 13 and 14 September 2004,

Recalling the Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (MC.DEC/4/03), the OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism in Berlin on 28 and 29 April 2004 as well as the OSCE Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes in Paris on 16 and 17 June 2004 and their results,

Reaffirming the participating States' existing commitments related to the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, and

In order to reinforce our common efforts to fight manifestations of intolerance across the OSCE region,

Decides,

1. The participating States commit to:

- Consider enacting or strengthening, where appropriate, legislation that prohibits discrimination based on, or incitement to hate crimes motivated by, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status;
- Promote and enhance, as appropriate, educational programmes for fostering tolerance and combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination;
- Promote and facilitate open and transparent interfaith and intercultural dialogue and partnerships towards tolerance, respect and mutual understanding and ensure and facilitate the freedom of the individual to profess and practice a religion or belief, alone or in community with others, including through transparent and non-discriminatory laws, regulations, practices and policies;
- Take steps to combat acts of discrimination and violence against Muslims in the OSCE area;
- Take steps, in conformity with their domestic law and international obligations, against discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia against migrants and migrant workers;
- Consider undertaking activities to raise public awareness of the enriching contribution of migrants and migrant workers to society;
- Combat hate crimes, which can be fuelled by racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda in the media and on the Internet, and appropriately denounce such crimes publicly when they occur;
- Consider establishing training programmes for law enforcement and judicial officials on legislation and enforcement of legislation relating to hate crimes;
- Encourage the promotion of tolerance, dialogue, respect and mutual understanding through the Media, including the Internet;
- Encourage and support international organization and NGO efforts in these areas;
- Collect and maintain reliable information and statistics about hate crimes motivated by racism, xenophobia and related discrimination and intolerance, committed within their territory, report such information periodically to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and make this information available to the public;

- Examine the possibility of establishing within countries appropriate bodies to promote tolerance and to combat racism, xenophobia, discrimination or related intolerance, including against Muslims, and anti-Semitism;
 - Endeavour to provide the ODIHR with the appropriate resources to accomplish the tasks agreed upon in the Maastricht Ministerial Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination;
 - Work with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to determine appropriate ways to review periodically the problems of racism, xenophobia and discrimination;
 - Encourage development of informal exchanges among experts in appropriate fora on best practices and experiences in law enforcement and education;
2. To task the ODIHR to:
- Follow closely, in full co-operation with other OSCE institutions as well as the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and other relevant international institutions and NGOs, incidents motivated by racism, xenophobia, or related intolerance, including against Muslims, and anti-Semitism in the OSCE area making use of all reliable information available;
 - Report its findings to the Permanent Council and to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and make these findings public. These reports should also be taken into account in deciding on priorities for the work of the OSCE in the area of intolerance;
 - Systematically collect and disseminate information throughout the OSCE area on best practices for preventing and responding to racism, xenophobia and discrimination and, if requested, offer advice to participating States in their efforts to fight racism, xenophobia and discrimination;
 - Support the ability of civil society and the development of partnerships to address racism, xenophobia, discrimination or related intolerance, including against Muslims, and anti-Semitism;
3. To ask the Chairman-in-Office to bring this decision to the attention of the participants of the upcoming Conference in Brussels and to incorporate it into his declaration concluding the Conference;
4. To forward this decision to the Ministerial Council for endorsement at its Twelfth Meeting.

PERMANENT COUNCIL DECISION No. 633
PROMOTING TOLERANCE AND MEDIA FREEDOM
ON THE INTERNET

(PC.DEC/633 of 11 November 2004)

The Permanent Council,

Reaffirming the commitments made at the Ministerial Council Meeting in Maastricht to combat hate crimes, which can be fuelled by racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet,

Reaffirming the importance of fully respecting the right to the freedoms of opinion and expression, which include the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, which are vital to democracy and in fact are strengthened by the Internet,

Recalling the commitments to collect and maintain reliable information and statistics about hate crimes motivated by racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related discrimination and intolerance, to report such information periodically to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and to make this information available to the public, as contained in the Permanent Council Decisions on Combating Anti-Semitism (PC.DEC/607) and on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination (PC.DEC/621),

Stressing the importance of promoting tolerance, mutual respect, dialogue and understanding, including through the Media and the Internet within strategies based on a variety of measures,

Decides that:

1. Participating States should take action to ensure that the Internet remains an open and public forum for freedom of opinion and expression, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to foster access to the Internet both in homes and in schools;
2. Participating States should investigate and, where applicable, fully prosecute violence and criminal threats of violence, motivated by racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic or other related bias on the Internet;
3. Participating States should train law enforcement agents and prosecutors on how to address crimes motivated by racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic or other related bias on the Internet and should share information on successful training programmes as part of the exchange of best practices;
4. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media will continue an active role in promoting both freedom of expression and access to the Internet and will continue to observe relevant developments in all the participating States. The Representative will advocate and promote OSCE principles and commitments. This will include early warning when laws or other

measures prohibiting speech motivated by racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic or other related bias are enforced in a discriminatory or selective manner for political purposes which can lead to impeding the expression of alternative opinions and views;

5. Participating States should study the effectiveness of laws and other measures regulating Internet content, specifically with regard to their effect on the rate of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic crimes;
6. Participating States should encourage and support analytically rigorous studies on the possible relationship between racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic speech on the Internet and the commission of crimes motivated by racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic or other related bias;
7. The OSCE will foster exchanges directed toward identifying effective approaches for addressing the issue of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet that do not endanger the freedom of information and expression. The OSCE will create opportunities, including during the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, to promote sharing of best practices;
8. Participating States should encourage the establishment of programmes to educate children and youth about expression motivated by racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic or other related bias they may encounter on the Internet. Also, as appropriate, participating States and Internet service providers should take steps to increase parental awareness of widely available filtering software that enables parents to exercise greater supervision and control over their children's use of the Internet. Materials on successful educational programmes and filtering software should be widely disseminated as part of the exchange of best practices;
9. Participating States should welcome continued and increased efforts by NGOs to monitor the Internet for racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic content, as well as NGOs' efforts to share and publicize their findings.

DECISION No. 13/04
THE SPECIAL NEEDS FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF
TRAFFICKING FOR PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

(MC.DEC/13/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Reaffirming the strong commitments of participating States in the field of combating trafficking in human beings, in particular the 2000 Vienna Ministerial Council Decision No. 1, the 2002 Porto Ministerial Declaration on Trafficking in Human Beings and the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Decision No. 2/03 which endorses the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, and establishes, under the aegis of the Permanent Council, an OSCE mechanism to provide assistance to participating States to combat trafficking in human beings, consisting of a Special Representative appointed by the Chairman-in Office, and a special unit in the Secretariat,

Recalling the 1990 Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE in Copenhagen, which *inter alia* declared that: “The participating States decide to accord particular attention to the recognition of the rights of the child, his civil rights and his individual freedoms, his economic, social and cultural rights, and his right to special protection against all forms of violence and exploitation”,

Recalling the principles of protection and respect for human rights as reflected in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and its related 2000 Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the 2000 United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption,

Mindful of the primary responsibility of participating States in combating trafficking based on an integrated and co-ordinated approach which includes prevention of trafficking, protection of victims and prosecution of traffickers and their accomplices,

Reaffirming that the general principles of, *inter alia*, the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation and survival and development provide the framework for all actions concerning children,

Dedicated to further strengthening the efforts by the OSCE to combat trafficking in human beings, and to continue an active implementation of the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, as well as to continue the Organization’s support to the participating States, on their request, in carrying out their respective national activities in this field,

Taking into account in particular the recommendations in the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings that the OSCE shall give special attention to the issue of trafficking in children, and also recognizing the vulnerability of unaccompanied and separated children,

Mindful that participating States are committed to protect children from all forms of violence, including sexual exploitation of children, and stressing the importance of respecting their special needs for protection and assistance, and the opportunity for the child to be heard,

Stressing that measures to combat trafficking in children should have a gender perspective and be non-discriminatory,

Underlining that the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration in decisions taken with regard to trafficked children, including through ensuring representation, as appropriate, for child victims,

Aware of the need for an effective child assistance and protection framework as well as awareness-raising to counter the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, and which makes children more vulnerable to being trafficked,

1. Decides to enhance OSCE efforts aimed at preventing children from being trafficked, protecting and assisting child victims of trafficking, and prosecuting those who traffic in children, taking into account the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings;
2. Encourages participating States to strengthen relevant governmental structures for children. Also encourages participating States to intensify actions, as appropriate, in line with the relevant recommendations for participating States in the OSCE Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings to counter factors which contribute to making children particularly vulnerable to trafficking in human beings including: discrimination, based, *inter alia*, on race, sex, religion or belief, national or social origin, birth or other status; exploitation, as defined in the OSCE Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings; poverty; lack of education and displacement;
3. Agrees to strengthen countering demand, including combating child sex tourism. In this context, also invites the participating States to consider, *inter alia*, elaboration of legal measures aimed at prosecution of their citizens for the sexual exploitation of children, including if such exploitation has taken place in another country;
4. Task the Permanent Council through the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and anti-Trafficking, with support provided, *inter alia*, by the Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and other relevant OSCE structures to elaborate an addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, contributing to its implementation, on addressing the special needs of child victims of trafficking for protection and assistance, including a summary of best practices, by 31 July for further appropriate action;
5. Invites the Informal Working Group to start this work based on commitments made by participating States under existing international conventions to which they are Parties, in order to address appropriately the need to provide special protection measures for children, taking into account the best interests and welfare of the child.

DECISION No. 14/04
2004 OSCE ACTION PLAN FOR THE
PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY
(MC.DEC/14/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling that at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, the Heads of State or Government declared that “The full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area. We are committed to making equality between men and women an integral part of our policies, both at the level of our States and within the Organization,”¹

Recalling the 2000 Action Plan for Gender Issues² which was established “in order to ensure that the OSCE commitments concerning equality in rights and equality of opportunity for women and men are taken into account by participating States and in the practical work of OSCE institutions and field mission,”

Recognizing that equal rights of women and men and the protection of their human rights are essential to peace, sustainable democracy, economic development and therefore to security and stability in the OSCE region,

Recalling the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in 2000, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”,

Recalling UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)³, which calls for full and equal participation of women in decision making with regard to conflict prevention as well as in post-conflict reconstruction, and stressing the importance of their full and equal participation and involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security,

Mindful of the need to appropriately reflect a gender perspective in the activities conducted under the auspices of the OSCE, and for participating States to take all necessary measures to encourage gender awareness raising and to promote equality in rights and full and equal participation of women and men in society, the aim being to promote the practice of gender equality and gender-mainstreaming⁴ in the OSCE area, which is essential to comprehensive security,

1 Charter for European Security, paragraph 23.

2 PC.DEC/353 of 1 June 2000.

3 Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000.

4 “Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not

Stressing the need for the OSCE to develop further and strengthen a continuous and sustainable gender-mainstreaming process, to promote a gender-sensitive and professional working environment and management culture, and efforts towards gender balance in staffing in particular on a professional level, in accordance with the OSCE Staff Regulations,

Decides to endorse the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality adopted by the Permanent Council in its Decision No. 638 on 2 December 2004, and annexed to this Decision.

Annex to Decision No. 14/04

2004 OSCE ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY

“The peace and welfare of the world require maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields.¹”

1. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law is at the core of the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security. The Charter for European Security adopted at the OSCE Istanbul Summit declares that: “The full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area. We are committed to making equality between men and women an integral part of our policies, both at the level of our States and within the Organization.”

2. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the OSCE is a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its region. In the OSCE area, it has become increasingly evident that security, democracy, and prosperity are closely linked. Economic liberty, social justice, and environmental responsibility are indispensable for prosperity. For the Organization to carry out its tasks and achieve its goals it is crucial that, in co-operation with participating States, it invests in its human capital.

perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-Second Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/52/3/Rev.1), chapter IV, paragraph 4.

1 United Nations General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 (CEDAW).

3. Effective gender-mainstreaming¹ with the goal of achieving gender equality, is important if full use is to be made of the human capital in the OSCE area. Gender equality contributes to comprehensive security, which is a goal of OSCE activities in all three dimensions. Gender-mainstreaming is a way of contributing to attaining this goal. The gender perspective should therefore be taken into account in the Organization's activities, projects and programmes, in order for the Organization to achieve gender equality within its own operations as well as in the participating States. It is the joint responsibility of the participating States, the Chairman-in-Office, the Secretary General, and the Heads of institutions and missions to promote equality between women and men as an integral element of policies and practices of the OSCE. In this effort it shall be borne in mind that if gender equality is to become a reality in any area and at any level of society, both men and women will benefit from such a change.

I. GENERAL CONTEXT

Status of implementation of the 2000 Action Plan

4. The 2000 OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues³ called for increased efforts to achieve equal treatment of women and men within the Organization in all areas, including personnel recruitment, and the inclusion of a gender perspective in the activities of the Organization. It succeeded in raising awareness of the need to promote gender equality within the OSCE through the activities by the Secretariat, institutions and field operations, and by participating States.

There are nevertheless shortcomings in the implementation of the 2000 Action Plan, especially in the fields of training, management, and recruitment, and in the overall practice of gender-mainstreaming throughout the OSCE as well as within participating States.

5. The 2000 Gender Action Plan stipulated that opportunities for women in the OSCE should be enhanced and a professional working environment should be promoted. The Chairman-in-Office, participating States and the Secretariat were asked to take positive action to promote and appoint women candidates in the OSCE's institutions and also in the field activities, and all participating States were called upon to make substantial efforts to nominate women, particularly at management level.

Representation of women in the OSCE continues, however, to be low, in particular at senior and policy-making levels, and has in fact decreased in recent years. There is a continuing lack of representation or under-representation of women from certain countries, in particular from participating States with economies in transition. Statistics indicate that

1 "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality." See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-Second Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/52/3/Rev.1), chapter IV, paragraph 4.

3 Decision No. 353 by the Permanent Council on 1 June 2000 (PC.DEC/353).

women candidates may have less chance of being employed by the Organization than men⁴. The biannual statistics and annual reports issued by the Secretary General on the implementation of the 2000 Action Plan for Gender Issues have not been addressed by the Permanent Council, and the implementation of the 2000 Action Plan has not been adequately monitored.

6. Another priority set in the 2000 Gender Action Plan was that all new mission staff should receive training on gender issues, and that OSCE institutions were to incorporate a gender perspective in their staff training. General training on gender awareness has been implemented and efforts have been made to provide for a professional working environment. Since 2000, every mission has nominated a mediator and annual training has been organized for these persons by the Secretariat. Nevertheless, training and sensitization of managers on gender issues, and on the responsibilities of all staff within their tasks and subject areas in this regard, has not produced the expected results, nor has the goal of a professional environment yet been attained.

7. The 2000 Gender Action Plan furthermore stipulated that a comprehensive framework would be established for gender-mainstreaming projects, and that data and research materials on gender issues would be analysed and used in the design of new programmes.

This process has not been developed with due continuity. Moreover, gender advisers and focal points have not been sufficiently involved in the development of new policies and programmes.

8. Gender-mainstreaming requires consistent, systematic, attention to gender perspectives in the activities of the Organization based on a cross-dimensional approach, and also adequate monitoring and review mechanisms. A new and strengthened Action Plan is called for, setting out goals and clearly assigned accountabilities, in order to reinforce the dedicated efforts of participating States to implement their commitments.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

9. The 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality aims to set out the priorities of the OSCE in promoting gender equality, in the Organization and in all participating States, and to ensure the monitoring of its implementation.

In order to achieve these goals, the plan will address the activities, policies, projects and programmes of the Organization concerning gender-mainstreaming, as well as assistance

4 Gender-Disaggregated Statistics of the OSCE Secretariat, institutions and missions, SEC.GAL/208/03, 21 November 2003. Concerning post-table posts, women make up 44 per cent of the general service level staff, on the professional level the overall representation is 25 per cent and has in fact decreased over the last years. Of all the candidates who applied for fixed-term posts in the period of January 2003 to September 2003 (9,566) 69 per cent were men and 31 per cent women; in the same period, however, of all selected candidates (50) 72 per cent were men and only 28 per cent were women. For the 34 vacancies issued for P-posts, women constituted 33 per cent of applicants, 23 per cent of interviewed candidates and 12 per cent of selected candidates. Of all nominated candidates for secondment in the first six months of 2003 (2,135), 30 per cent (641) were women and 70 per cent (1,494) were men. However, only 10 per cent (62) of these women were deployed to Missions, while 18 per cent (272) of the nominated men were accepted and deployed.

by the OSCE to participating States in promoting gender equality. Such assistance could be directed at the implementation of international commitments in the gender area, as well as the development of national programmes and policies.

10. The following objectives will be given priority:

(a) Within the OSCE:

- Providing specific training programmes for OSCE staff on gender awareness and sensitization to gender equality in their daily work, and programmes to strengthen efforts to ensure consistent gender-mainstreaming in policies and programmes, as well as review and assessment mechanisms;
- Promoting a professional and gender-sensitive management culture and working environment;
- Applying strengthened and innovative recruitment strategies in the OSCE to promote equal opportunities for all, and to ensure that well-qualified women are identified and attracted, in conformity with the Staff Regulations, reference PC.DEC/550/Corr.1 of 27 June 2003, the aim being to increase the number of women working in the OSCE at senior levels;
- Encouraging participating States to submit more female candidates for positions in the OSCE, in particular at senior and policy-making levels⁵, the aim being to achieve a continuous improvement in the ratio between men and women at all levels;
- Achieving the effective gender-mainstreaming of OSCE activities and policies, as well as of the activities and policies of participating States.

(b) To assist the participating States in:

- Defining priority areas for OSCE structures to assist OSCE States in implementing their respective commitments;
- Outlining some best practices for the promotion of the equality of women and men in participating States;
- Highlighting and promoting the role of women in conflict prevention and peace reconstruction processes;
- Providing a framework structure to ensure that gender issues, including the implementation of this Action Plan, are regularly discussed and reviewed.

5 P-5 and above.

III. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE OSCE

(A) Gender-mainstreaming the structures and working environment, and gender-mainstreaming in recruitment

Training

11. In order to achieve the objectives outlined in this Action Plan, the OSCE shall expand existing training opportunities and institute new training programmes in accordance with the OSCE training strategy for 2005–2007⁶ and the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings⁷. In this context, the General Orientation Programme at the Secretariat, the Human Dimension Induction Course at the ODIHR and additional induction courses or workshops in the field shall contain two specifically tailored modules, as appropriate:

- The first module shall deal with the training of all OSCE officials in gender awareness and mainstreaming a gender perspective in their everyday work. This module, appropriately tailored to each staff category in order to meet their specific needs, shall explain the principle of gender equality, the tools that exist to achieve this goal, and the reasons why it is important for the Organization to mainstream a gender perspective in its activities. The module shall be action-oriented and interactive and include information regarding tasks and responsibilities described in this Action Plan as well as in relevant provisions, in particular those regarding accountability of all staff. All categories of staff shall be included in such training. Training can also be provided in the field if necessary, to ensure that locally-hired staff are able to attend.
 - (a) Specific modules on combating domestic violence and trafficking in human beings will be included in training programmes, in particular those designed for police and border monitors.
 - (b) Heads of institutions and missions and Directors, shall exercise leadership in facilitating staff training, to ensure equal opportunities for both women and men to participate. They will also receive information on OSCE policies concerning gender issues, in particular complaint procedures.
- The second module shall address the gender-mainstreaming of OSCE programmes, projects, and technical co-operation activities in order to ensure consistent integration of a gender equality perspective. This means reviewing and enacting policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively taking gender perspectives into account at the planning, reporting, implementation and evaluation stages.

6 SEC.GAL/118/04/Rev.5, 27 July 2004.

7 MC.DEC/2/03 Annex, p.12, Awareness-raising. 8.4.: “The OSCE Training Co-ordinator, the Senior Adviser on Gender Issues and the Senior Security Co-ordinator will continue to use the induction course to develop and implement staff training on gender issues, trafficking in human beings and on relevant regulations and guidelines, in co-operation with the ODIHR, and to organize special workshops in the field. Heads of field operations will ensure that attendance at such training courses will be compulsory for all staff.”

12. Review and assessment provisions shall be included in all training programmes in order to measure their effectiveness at regular intervals.

13. The OSCE Training Co-ordinator is tasked to design and implement the staff training dimension of this action plan in close co-operation with gender units and gender focal points in the Organization and supported by the network of focal points responsible for training.

Management

14. The Secretary General, and Heads of institutions and missions shall exercise strong and active leadership in building sustainable gender awareness in the Organization and shall intensify their efforts towards achieving a gender-sensitive and professional working environment and management culture. Such a working environment shall also be promoted by all OSCE officials, in particular by staff in a supervisory role. When management positions are being filled, importance should be attached to finding people who demonstrate gender-sensitive attitudes and understanding of the importance of an inclusive corporate culture. The Director for the Department of Human Resources shall be responsible for reviewing and if necessary strengthening the policy of the OSCE against harassment, including sexual harassment. He/she will disseminate information and raise staff awareness of the problem of harassment in working life and of the measures available to combat and prevent it, and will encourage victims to come forward with their complaints.

15. Performance appraisals of managers will include an evaluation of their sensitivity to gender equality. For this purpose a gender-equality scoreboard, containing details of measures that can be compared across all services, shall be developed by the Department of Human Resources.

16. The OSCE's organizational regulations, rules, directives, and instructions shall be reviewed by participating States and/or the Secretariat, to incorporate gender-mainstreaming aspects, when called for.

17. Heads of institutions, heads of missions and directors in the Secretariat will chair regular meetings with staff to review the integration of and consideration to be paid to gender aspects in the work of their respective structure and to encourage all staff to gender-mainstream their work.

18. The Secretariat and ODIHR will continue to engage in the active exchange of information on gender-sensitive management policies with relevant international, intergovernmental and regional organizations. In particular the Secretariat will intensify interaction with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on gender equality. The Secretariat, institutions and missions will make this Action Plan visible.

Recruitment

19. Recruitment in the OSCE shall be based on a transparent process, subject to open competition among nationals of participating States, thereby securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

20. On recruitment, Regulation 3.01 of the OSCE Staff Regulations shall be fully implemented, including the principle of recruiting staff from all OSCE Participating States on a fair basis.

21. Participating States are encouraged to submit more women candidates for positions in the OSCE, in particular in higher-level positions where women are underrepresented; measures to this end shall include the identification of additional national recruitment sources, and the establishment of networks with professional organizations that will assist in seeking suitable candidates. More nationals of participating States, notably women from participating States with economies in transition, should be made aware of the OSCE vacancies and encouraged to make applications.

22. Participating States are to be encouraged to develop rosters of potential women candidates with a special emphasis on fields of expertise in which women are underrepresented.

23. The Chairman-in-Office and the Secretariat will be proactive in promoting the nomination of women candidates, in particular in higher-level positions, taking into account the OSCE Staff Regulations.

24. The Secretariat shall strengthen the wording of the statement in its vacancy notices encouraging women to apply.

25. The Secretariat will furthermore enhance its human resource planning in order to inform participating States as early as possible of upcoming vacancies, in order for them to be given sufficient time to search for and present qualified female candidates.

26. The Chairman-in-Office, the Secretary General, heads of institutions, and heads of missions shall seek to improve the ratio of men and women at all levels on a continuous basis. This, including the statistics on women candidates selected, will be reviewed in the annual evaluation report on gender issues in the OSCE to be presented by the Secretary General in accordance with paragraph 47 below.

27. The Department of Human Resources shall conduct regular gender-mainstreamed reviews of recruitment procedures and job specifications, in order to identify possible prejudices and obstacles against female applicants, and if necessary revise the procedures as appropriate.

28. The Department of Human Resources will seek to ensure that in recruitment for management posts, applicants of both sexes are invited for interview where possible, and that a gender-balanced shortlist is drawn up as appropriate. The shortlist of candidates invited for interview should contain information about the number of men and women who actually applied for the job.

29. Interview panels should, where possible, be gender-balanced.

30. The Department of Human Resources in the Secretariat will convene an annual co-ordination meeting with delegations and training/recruitment experts from capitals, to share information on profiles and skills in demand, and best practice on pre-mission training. These meetings will also discuss efforts to achieve gender balance in recruitment.

31. The Secretariat shall continue to prepare annual statistics showing the current distribution of women and men by category of posts at each level. These statistics will include institutions and missions as well as each Department and Unit in the Secretariat, and will be annexed to the Secretary General's annual evaluation report on gender issues referred to in paragraph 47 below.

(B) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into OSCE activities, policies, programmes and projects.

32. Participating States, the Secretariat, institutions and missions shall ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into OSCE activities, programmes and projects. The aim shall be to promote the practice of gender equality in the OSCE area, which is essential to comprehensive security; they shall focus in particular on women's empowerment and the participation of women as well as men in public, political and economic life in the context of democratic and economic processes in participating States. The gender-mainstreaming process shall also aim at overcoming negative stereotypes and at changing perceptions, as well as developing attitudes conducive to bringing about equality between women and men in all participating States.

33. Gender advisers in the Secretariat, institutions, and field operations shall be involved at an early stage when new directives, rules and regulations are being developed. In their regular reports to the Permanent Council, missions and institutions shall inform the Council on progress in their gender-mainstreaming efforts where appropriate, and also on problems, when they arise.

34. The Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), and in particular the Project Co-ordinating Cell (PCC) will assist in ensuring that gender-equity analyses are made of new projects being developed by missions, institutions, and units in the Secretariat, and of existing projects when they are being evaluated.

35. The Secretariat and the institutions, when developing projects and programmes for participating States which are not hosting OSCE missions, shall take a gender perspective into account.

36. Gender-mainstreaming of OSCE activities, policies, projects and programmes in the politico-military dimension shall also take into account obligations embodied in Security Council resolution 1325 calling for increased participation of women in, *inter alia*, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes.

37. The participating States, assisted by the Chairmanship, the Secretary General and heads of institutions, shall ensure that the planning of OSCE conferences and seminars across all three dimensions will take the gender aspect into account and, as appropriate, include related topics.

38. Institutions and missions working on gender issues should, in order to make tangible progress on gender-mainstreaming in OSCE activities, projects and programmes, develop concrete follow-up mechanisms in co-operation with participating States.

39. Missions will, where appropriate, establish internal gender working groups led by the gender focal point to design gender-mainstreaming strategies, monitor their implementation and enhance the visibility of their gender-related activities. It is the responsibility of the heads of mission to position gender focal points on a sufficiently high level and to make sure that they enjoy full access to senior management.

40. The Press and Public Information Section of the Secretariat, institutions and missions will encourage gender-balanced reporting, and highlight, as appropriate, meetings, seminars, special events, reports, case stories and developments related to the implementation of OSCE commitments on gender equality.

IV. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN PARTICIPATING STATES

41. Participating States, individually and collectively, bear the primary responsibility and are accountable to their citizens for the implementation of their commitments on equality of rights and equal opportunities for women and men. They have committed themselves to making equality between women and men an integral part of policies both at State level and within the Organization. They will ensure the full use of the appropriate OSCE fora for reviewing the implementation of OSCE commitments on equality between women and men.

42. Participating States are therefore recommended to:

- Ensure that the Organization develops policies which effectively promote gender equality and that new proposals and initiatives take a gender perspective into account;
- Establish or strengthen existing mechanisms for ensuring gender equality, *inter alia* by making available the services of an impartial and independent person or body, such as an Ombudsman/Human Rights Commissioner, to address gender related discrimination against individual citizens;
- Adhere to and fully implement the international standards and commitments they have undertaken concerning equality, non-discrimination and women's and girls' rights;
- Comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), if they are parties, or, if they have not already done so, consider ratifying or acceding to this Convention. States that have ratified or acceded to this Convention with reservations will consider withdrawing them. States parties to the CEDAW are also called upon to consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- If they are parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and/or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), report regularly and on time to the respective bodies, and include women's organizations in the preparation of their reports;

- Take further action where necessary in order to ensure a safe environment for their citizens and the right to equal protection under the law, notably by increasing activities aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women, including trafficking in human beings⁸, and encourage those who have not already done so to ratify and implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children;
- Support national and international efforts to bring to justice those who have perpetrated crimes against women which under applicable rules of international law are recognized as war crimes or crimes against humanity, and ensure that existing national legislation on violence against women is enforced, and that new legislation is drafted where necessary;
- As recommended in the Guidelines on International Protection on Gender-Related Persecution within the context of Article 1A (2) of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, introduce procedural practices, if States have not already done so, that ensure that proper consideration is given to women claimants in refugee status determination procedures and that the range of claims of gender-related persecution are accorded due recognition;
- Draw on the experience of the OSCE to develop cross-dimensional gender equality policies and strategies, and include in the follow-up to such policies, *inter alia*, the utilization of gender analysis and monitoring mechanisms to assess the impact of gender policies and strategies, so that constraints on their full implementation may be identified and addressed.

V. SUPPORTING OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES IN IMPLEMENTING RELEVANT COMMITMENTS TO PROMOTING EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

Areas of special interest to all OSCE participating States

43. The following priority areas are laid down as a basis for the OSCE Secretariat, institutions and missions to use when developing plans and programmes to assist participating States, upon their request, in implementing relevant commitments. All OSCE structures should endeavour to respect these priorities, as appropriate within their mandates. Countries not hosting missions are also urged to make full use of the expertise of the OSCE structures to assist them in promoting gender equality, as there is no country where full equality has been reached.

8 Reference is made to the Permanent Council Decision No. 557 of 24 July 2003 on the adoption of the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.

44. Priorities

(a) Developing projects in OSCE States not hosting missions

- In countries without missions, the ODIHR will identify projects to support measures in the areas of prevention of violence against women, promotion of women in the public, political, and economic spheres, and support for national gender-mainstreaming.

(b) Ensuring non-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks

- The ODIHR, in co-operation with other international organizations and relevant national bodies and institutions, will assist OSCE participating States in complying with international instruments for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights, and in reviewing legislation to ensure appropriate legal guarantees for the promotion of gender equality in accordance with OSCE and other commitments;
- The ODIHR will assist in the development and implementation of specific programmes and activities to promote women's rights, to increase the role of women at all levels of decision-making, and to promote equality between women and men throughout the OSCE area, particularly through education in gender awareness;
- The ODIHR will assist in the implementation and assessment of national strategies and action plans on measures to promote gender equality and gender-mainstreaming;
- The OSCE Secretariat, institutions and field operations will also assist the participating States in implementing the relevant provisions and recommendations contained in the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, and the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area.

(c) Preventing violence against women⁹

- OSCE structures will continue to assist participating States in developing programmes and activities aimed at the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence¹⁰;

9 Article 2(b) of the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women states: "Violence against women shall be understood to encompass but not be limited to, the following: [...] physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution."

10 The United Nations resolution on "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" (A/RES/S-23/3) of 16 November 2000, states (paragraph 59): "Gender-based violence, such as battering and other domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual slavery and exploitation, international trafficking in women and children, forced prostitution and sexual harassment... are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person..."

- OSCE structures will assist participating States with legislative initiatives to prevent violence against women, and will foster institution-building, strengthen co-ordination between government institutions and civil society, and raise awareness of the problem in general;
 - OSCE structures will, in co-operation with participating States, address the gender dimension of proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). SALW proliferation exacerbates violence against women, and a gender perspective should thus be taken into account in related endeavours;
 - The Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU) will enhance its project development to assist participating States in reacting to sexual violence offences and in including such elements as special investigation techniques, and interview skills designated for use with victims of sexual assault including children, and information on referral mechanisms for victim assistance, in the police training curriculum;
 - The Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), and the Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit (ATAU), while addressing underlying causes of trafficking in human beings, shall in co-ordination with relevant OSCE institutions and structures, assist participating States in tackling the lack of opportunities for women, female unemployment, and other gender aspects of trafficking, including the demand side of sexual and other forms of exploitation;
 - The Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) will upon request take action on the issue of the exploitation of women by terrorists to serve their own ends and propagate extremist ideologies;
 - As negative gender stereotypes contribute to the persistence of violence against women, OSCE programmes, projects, and activities should aim at women's empowerment.
- (d) Ensuring equal opportunity for participation of women in political and public life
- The ODIHR will assist participating States in developing effective measures to bring about the equal participation of women in democratic processes and will assist in developing best practices for their implementation;
 - The ODIHR and the OSCE field operations will assist, as appropriate, in building up local capacities and expertise on gender issues as well as networks linking community leaders and politicians;
 - The ODIHR will continue to assist participating States in promoting women's political participation. It will continue, as a part of its Election Observation Mission, to monitor and report on women's participation in electoral processes. When possible, additionally, the ODIHR will commission and publish reports specifically analysing the situation of women in electoral processes;

- The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) will address specific issues relating to the participation in public and private life of women belonging to national minorities and, in policies and projects developed by his/her office, take steps necessary to counter the double discrimination suffered by these women, as appropriate within the context of his/her conflict prevention mandate;
 - The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) will be alert to allegations of serious intolerance towards women and incitement to gender discrimination in or by the media in participating States in accordance with Chapter 6 of the mandate of the RFOM. The Representative will inform the participating States of such cases in his/her regular reports.
- (e) Encouraging women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction
- OSCE structures will, as appropriate within their mandate, promote the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on the role of women in, *inter alia*, the prevention of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction;
 - OSCE structures will, as appropriate, assist participating States in developing programmes and projects aimed at bringing about equal opportunities for women to participate in efforts for the promotion of peace and security, including those conducted at grass-roots and regional levels. The empowerment of women in the political-military dimension is also essential to comprehensive security.
- (f) Promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere
- The OCEEA will take initiatives to increase awareness of women's rights in the economic sphere as described in paragraph 40.6 of the Moscow Document and, as appropriate, develop projects to implement the same;
 - The OCEEA should take a gender perspective into account when implementing its tasks as outlined in the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, adopted by the Ministerial Council in Maastricht in 2003, and the Document of the Bonn Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe;
 - The OCEEA will upon request assist participating States in formulating their economic policies on the basis of the principles set forth in the Bonn Document and the OSCE Strategy for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. In this respect the OSCE should continue and strengthen its co-operation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and other organizations;
 - The OCEEA will, together with participating States and missions, analyse obstacles preventing women from fulfilling their potential in the economic

sphere, and develop projects that will enhance the role of women in economic activities and ensure that they are not discriminated against in this field, notably regarding access to and control over such economic and financial resources as loans, property and inheritance rights;

- The OCEEA and, as appropriate, missions should promote the development of women's entrepreneurial and other work-related skills by supporting training, retraining and special education facilities, and promoting the education and training of women and men in non-traditional subjects and jobs;
- The OCEEA will encourage international donor organizations and lending institutions to support projects designed to enhance the role of women in economic activities or to ensure equality in employment. Projects on employment issues should highlight the principle that maternity and paternity arrangements are a key element in promoting equal opportunities and responsibility-sharing between women and men;
- OSCE structures will assist participating States in ensuring that girls and boys, as well as women and men, have equal opportunities to receive education and training.

(g) Building national mechanisms for the advancement of women

- The ODIHR will continue to provide know-how and support for the building-up of democratic institutions for advancing gender equality, such as Ombudsman's offices at local and national levels, as appropriate;
- The ODIHR will facilitate dialogue and co-operation between civil society, media and government in promoting gender-mainstreaming.

(h) The Parliamentary Assembly is encouraged to:

- Continue to have on its agenda the issue of equal opportunities for men and women in national parliaments as well as within the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, having mainstreamed the discussion of gender equality in the agenda of the Assembly's Plenary Meetings;
- Further develop the current network of women parliamentarians through the work of the OSCE PA Special Representative on the Gender Issue, in order to promote the participation of women in political and public life at both the national and international levels;
- Ensure, with the assistance of the Special Representative, that it continues to put forward recommendations with regard to gender equality in its annual Declarations;
- Continue to produce, through the Gender Unit at the OSCE PA Secretariat, reports on the status of women in the OSCE area and seek to raise awareness by making such material available to all participating parliaments.

VI. GENERAL FOLLOW-UP

45. The Secretary General, heads of missions and heads of institutions, shall be accountable to the Permanent Council for the implementation of the relevant parts of this Action Plan, in accordance with their respective responsibilities.
46. The Secretary General shall before 1 October 2005, develop a plan for the implementation of measures for achieving the overall aims of this Action Plan. Heads of institutions shall also develop their own separate implementation plans by that date. These plans shall include concrete measures for implementing the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, measures concerning training programmes on gender-mainstreaming of the work of OSCE officials, measures for cross-dimensional gender-mainstreaming in OSCE policies, projects and programmes, and finally management and recruitment strategies, aimed at achieving gender balance at all levels.
47. The Secretary General shall report on progress in work on gender issues in the Annual Report for 2004. The Secretary General shall thereafter present an annual evaluation report on gender issues in the OSCE. This report will be presented to the Permanent Council in June each year starting in 2006. These evaluation reports will contain contributions from Departments, and from institutions and missions, on developments related to gender equality and gender-mainstreaming in the OSCE structures, including information on the plans dealt with in paragraph 46 above. They will include analysis of achievements in light of the requirements of this Action Plan.
48. Starting in June 2006, the Permanent Council will, on the basis of the Secretary General's annual evaluation report on gender issues, hold an annual discussion especially devoted to gender issues, covering the review and if necessary the updating of policies and strategies on gender-mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality. This discussion should also monitor implementation of this Action Plan.
49. The need to include in co-operation with host countries a gender perspective in the mandate of the respective missions may be considered as and when appropriate.
50. The next revision of the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality will take place when the Permanent Council so decides.
51. The implementation of this Action Plan requires provision of adequate resources.

DECISION No. 15/04
ROLE OF THE OSCE SECRETARY GENERAL
(MC.DEC/15/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Confirming the mandate of the Secretary General as decided at the Ministerial Council Meeting in Stockholm in 1992,

Wishing to improve the effectiveness of the OSCE and, to that end, wishing to clarify and strengthen the role and responsibilities of the OSCE Secretary General,

Recalling that the Secretary General derives his/her authority from the collective decisions of the participating States and acts under the guidance of the Chairman-in-Office,

Taking into account subsequent decisions of the meetings of Heads of State or Government, the Ministerial Council and the Permanent Council, *inter alia*, MC(10).DEC/8, MC.DEC/1/03, Permanent Council Decisions Nos. 485, 486, 550/Corr.1, 552 and 553,

Reaffirms that, among other tasks, the Secretary General:

1. Ensures implementation of the decisions of the OSCE;
2. Acts as the representative of the Chairman-in-Office and supports him/her in all activities aimed at fulfilling the goals of the OSCE by, *inter alia*:
 - Providing expert, advisory, material, technical and other support which may include background information, analysis, advice, draft decisions, draft statements, summary records and archival support;
 - Having the responsibility to publicize OSCE policy and practices and being entitled to make public statements on behalf of the Organization as a whole;
 - Ensuring the effective and continuous working contacts with other international organizations and institutions;
3. As Chief Administrative Officer of the OSCE:
 - Assists the Permanent Council and is responsible to it for the efficient use of the Organization's resources;
 - Is responsible for proper implementation of the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules which govern the budgetary and financial administration of the OSCE. On administrative matters and for the efficient use of resources, Fund managers are accountable to the Permanent Council through the Secretary General;
 - Is responsible and accountable to the Permanent Council for the proper application of the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. In this regard, Heads of institution and heads of

mission shall exercise their responsibility to the Permanent Council in respect of their institutions/missions, through the Secretary General;

Further decides that the Secretary General:

4. Supports the process of political dialogue and negotiations among participating States, in particular through the preparation and implementation of decisions and through assisting the Chairmanship in the preparation and conduct of meetings;
5. May bring to the attention of the decision-making bodies, in consultation with the Chairmanship, any matter relevant to his/her mandate;
6. Contributes to the preparation of and participates in the meetings of the OSCE and FSC Troikas;
7. Oversees the management of OSCE field operations and co-ordinates their operational work;
8. Countersigns letters of appointment for heads of mission as Chief Administrative Officer of the OSCE and informs the appointed head of mission of the applicable rules and regulations. The appointment of heads of mission is the responsibility of the Chairmanship;
9. As head of the OSCE Secretariat, is responsible for its effective and efficient management;
10. Appoints directors in the Secretariat with the consent of the Chairmanship. All Secretariat staff are accountable to the Secretary General, and he/she will answer for their performance;
11. Through the unified budget process, supports all Fund managers in implementing the mandates and policy guidance from the participating States. In this regard, he/she supports the co-ordinated planning, implementation and evaluation of the OSCE programmatic activities by facilitating co-operation among all OSCE Funds;
12. Is the focal point for co-ordination and consultations among OSCE institutions, while respecting their mandates. Heads of institutions are fully responsible and accountable to the Permanent Council;

Further requests the Permanent Council to align Staff Regulations 1.05, 3.04(a) and 3.07 with clauses 3 (c), 8 and 10 of this Ministerial Decision, not later than 1 March 2005.

DECISION No. 16/04
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PANEL OF EMINENT PERSONS ON
STRENGTHENING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OSCE
(MC.DEC/16/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Determined to enhance the OSCE's capacity to address the challenges of the twenty-first century as one of the pillars of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture,

Recognizing that the thirtieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the fifteenth anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the tenth anniversary of the OSCE provide with a unique opportunity to reflect on the role of the Organization in a transforming Europe,

Realizing that there is a need to improve the Organization's functioning as well as its capabilities for collective action, without diminishing its strengths and flexibility,

Mindful of the need to proceed further with this work in 2005 by taking broad and forward-looking approach to strengthening the overall capacity of the OSCE:

I.

1. Decides to establish a Panel of Eminent Persons on Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE, in order to give new impetus to political dialogue and provide strategic vision for the Organization in the twenty-first century;
2. Further decides that the Panel will review the effectiveness of the Organization, its bodies and structures and provide an assessment in view of the challenges ahead. The Panel will make recommendations on measures in order to meet these challenges effectively;
3. Tasks the Chairman-in-Office to appoint the members of the Panel after consultations with all participating States. The composition of the Panel, which shall have up to seven eminent persons with knowledge of the OSCE, will take into account the diversity of the OSCE community, including from participating States hosting field presences. Members of the Panel will have their costs covered by extrabudgetary contributions. Secretariat support shall be provided by the OSCE Secretariat through existing resources. The Chairman-in-Office shall act as Focal Point for the Panel during its work. The Panel shall present its report with recommendations no later than the end of June 2005 to the participating States through the Chairman-in-Office. Specially convened High Level OSCE Consultations will be held as a follow-up. The Permanent Council shall take a decision on the organizational modalities and the timetable of such a specially convened High Level OSCE Consultation by the end of July 2005;
4. The Consultations will examine the report of the Panel as well as other possible contributions, and will forward their conclusions and recommendations through the Permanent Council to the Ministerial Council meeting in 2005 for appropriate action.

II.

The Ministerial Council further tasks the Permanent Council, through the Working Group on Reform and the Informal Group of Friends of the Chair on Improving the Functioning and Effectiveness of OSCE Field Operations, to continue consideration of issues pertaining to improving the functioning of the Organization. The Chairpersons of the Groups will be available for consultations with the Panel of Eminent Persons when necessary.

DECISION No. 17/04
OSCE AND ITS PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION
(MC.DEC/17/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Recognizing the increasing importance of the well-established co-operation between the OSCE and its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation,

Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 571/Corr.1, by which the Permanent Council decided to submit a report to the Ministerial Council meeting in 2004 on further dialogue and co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation and exploring the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with others, and which requested the Forum for Security Co-operation to make its own contribution to this work,

Underlines the importance of the report PC.DEL/366/04/Rev. 4, which is based on an exchange of various views, including with the OSCE Partners for Co-operation;

Tasks the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation to remain seized of the matter.

DECISION No. 18/04
OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP IN THE YEAR 2007
(MC.DEC/18/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Ministerial Council,

Decides that Spain will exercise the function of the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2007.

DECISION No. 19/04
TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

(MC.DEC/19/04 of 7 December 2004)

The Thirteenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council will be convened in Slovenia on 5 and 6 December 2005.

**V. CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT
AND STATEMENTS BY DELEGATIONS**

**STATEMENT BY DR. SOLOMON PASSY,
CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE, AT THE THIRD PLENARY
SESSION OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

1. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the OSCE participating States, met in Sofia at a time of momentous change in Europe. This change has created new opportunities and challenges. At the same time they stressed that participating States face common threats to their security. The Ministers expressed their resolve to remain united and promote security for States and individuals through co-operation. This unity would give the strength to meet the challenges identified in the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, to adopt collective responses and innovative approaches, and to improve the ability of participating States to uphold common principles.
2. Recalling that the CSCE was created to overcome deep divisions in Europe, and that the Helsinki process contributed significantly to promoting security and co-operation from Vancouver to Vladivostok, the Ministers remain committed to creating a common and indivisible OSCE area free of dividing lines and zones with different levels of security.
3. The Ministers recognized the need to build on common ground in order to provide a strategic orientation for the OSCE area in the years to come. They confirmed that they will spare no effort to ensure that the OSCE and its operational instruments remain relevant to the needs and interests of all participating States taking note of the different views on the means and ways to accomplish this task.
4. 2005 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the fifteenth anniversary of the Charter of Paris. This will provide a useful opportunity to recall the important role of the CSCE/OSCE for promoting dialogue and confidence-building, democracy, rule of law and market economy. The Ministers stated that this would give a chance to reinforce the common commitment made in Paris in 1990 to create a Europe whole and free.
5. The Ministers adopted a Ministerial Declaration on the Sixtieth Anniversary of the End of World War II in order to solemnly mark this event in 2005. This will be a time to recall the horrors of war, the dangers of extremism and all forms of intolerance, and the need to constantly work for peace and security in order not to repeat the suffering and destruction of the past. The conviction was expressed that the observance of the norms of international law, the aims and principles of the United Nations Charter as well as the principles to which participating States have all subscribed within the OSCE are the best way to save the present and future generations from the scourge of war and violence.
6. A strong bond that unites the OSCE participating States is consensus on common goals, principles and commitments. These are the foundation of relations between participating States, between people and their governments, as well as between the organizations of which participating States are members. The Ministers stated that they remain committed to their equal and unbiased application across the entire OSCE area and that they value the OSCE assistance in their implementation, including through the important contribution of its institutions and field activities.

7. The Ministers underlined their commitment to the protection of human rights. All participating States will intensify efforts to strengthen pluralist democracy, civil society and the rule of law, and ensure full respect and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Ministers underlined the importance of free and fair elections. They reaffirmed the commitment to free and independent media. They call upon the participating States to undertake further steps to effectively protect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in accordance with international commitments and obligations in order to sustain efforts at ensuring equal opportunities for persons belonging to national minorities.

8. Most Ministers welcomed the will of the Ukrainian people to live in free, open and democratic society. Developments in Ukraine highlight its role in building a secure and stable Europe, based upon democratic values. Most Ministers appealed to all parties and institutions in Ukraine to co-operate fully in the implementation of the 3 December 2004 decision of the Supreme Court and to ensure that the rerunning of the second round of the presidential elections reflects the will of the Ukrainian people. They praised the commitment of all sides to avoid violence. They noted the valuable assistance provided by the international facilitators and called upon all parties of the Round Table to fully implement agreements reached with their participation. They encouraged the participating States to provide OSCE/ODIHR with all necessary resources for the forthcoming voting in the presidential elections. They noted with appreciation the continuous close co-operation between the Government of Ukraine and the OSCE Election Observation Mission. They reiterated their support of the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers of Ukraine and objected any attempts to interfere into its internal affairs.

9. The Ministers stated they value the OSCE's increasing expertise and operational capacity in addressing new threats and challenges to security, *inter alia*, in counter-terrorism, policing, anti-trafficking, border management and security as well as the increased attention being paid to the politico-military and economic and environmental dimensions. They underlined the importance of a cross-dimensional approach to the OSCE's work in these fields.

10. The Ministers pledged to further enhance OSCE counter-terrorism efforts. Terrorist attacks in the OSCE area grimly confirm that terrorism remains a real and immediate threat to all participating States. Ministers were committed to intensify practical and effective action, including in the framework of the Action against Terrorism Unit. The Ministers have adopted the Sofia Ministerial Statement on Preventing and Combating Terrorism and an extensive package of practical decisions that not only deepen counter-terrorism efforts, but strengthen collaboration with other international, regional and subregional organizations in the process. They pledged that efforts to fight terrorism will be in accordance with obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

11. The Ministers recognized that combating intolerance and discrimination in the whole OSCE area was an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and was vital for integrating diversity. They were therefore resolved to promote inter-cultural, inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue, respect and mutual understanding, and to combat hate crimes, including manifestations of aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia, discrimination, anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and members of other faiths, as well as other forms of intolerance. They were resolved to build on the successful outcome of the OSCE events in Berlin, Paris and Brussels

held in 2004. They welcomed the intention of the Chairman-in-Office to appoint three personal representatives as part of the overall fight of the OSCE in combating discrimination and promoting tolerance and also welcome ODIHR's increased activities in implementing its new tasks in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination, and look forward to the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance in Cordoba, Spain, in June 2005.

12. The Ministers reaffirmed their strong commitment to preventing and combating trafficking in human beings. Trafficking is a heinous crime. The Ministers pledged to do their utmost to actively implement the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings based on co-ordination and co-operation between countries of origin, transit and destination working together with the Special Representative in an alliance against trafficking. They recognized the special needs for protection and assistance of child victims of trafficking, and had decided to task the Permanent Council to elaborate an addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, contributing to its implementation.

13. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to promote open and secure borders, *inter alia*, through the elaboration of an OSCE Border Security and Management Concept, recognizing the need to address, among others, the threats stemming from cross-border movements related to terrorist and other criminal activities. They therefore welcomed the work carried out by the informal Working Group of the Permanent Council on Borders in 2004 and the Decision on the Elaboration of an OSCE Border Security and Management Concept.

14. Policing provides a key link between security and human rights. The Ministers encouraged the further development of OSCE police-related activities for the purpose of capacity- and institution-building to help participating States, upon their request, to strengthen the rule of law.

15. The Ministers regard migration as related to the core OSCE work in human rights, freedom of movement, borders, integration and economic dimension. They declared their intention to further develop activities in this field, including combating the smuggling of migrants.

16. The Ministers reconfirmed their commitments in the field of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures, as reflected in the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, adopted in December 2003 and other agreed OSCE documents. They welcomed the decisions of the Forum for Security Co-operation on small arms and light weapons, establishing principles for controlling brokering, improving export controls of MANPADS and setting standard elements for end-user certificates. These are a valuable contribution to preventing terrorism. They also welcomed the Forum's decisions to improve information exchange on anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war. They stated that requests from participating States under the OSCE Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition for assistance in carrying out their responsibilities in these areas will continue to be addressed.

17. The Ministers welcomed the continued successful implementation of the Treaty on Open Skies and recognized its contribution to promoting openness, transparency and stability in the OSCE area. They also welcomed the accession to the Treaty of a number of OSCE

participating States, and took note that the applications of others have already been approved, or were on the agenda of the Open Skies Consultative Commission. They look forward to the forthcoming First Review Conference of the Treaty on Open Skies from 14 to 16 February 2005.

18. Arms control and confidence- and security-building measures remain indispensable for a comprehensive approach to security. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) continues to make a significant contribution to security and stability and remains a cornerstone of European security. Most Ministers recalled that some of the commitments made at the 1999 Istanbul Summit on Georgia and Moldova have not yet been fulfilled. Their fulfillment without further delay, would, in their view, create the conditions for States Parties to move forward on ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty.

19. The Ministers welcomed the increased activities in the economic and environmental dimension. These activities should aim at the full implementation of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension in order to enhance co-operation, good governance, sustainable development and protection of the environment. They expressed their commitment to further improve the effectiveness of the Economic Forum.

20. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE is a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its region. Ministers remain concerned over the persistence of conflicts in various regions in the OSCE area that threaten the observance of the OSCE principles and have an impact on peace and stability. Ministers expressed resolve to redouble efforts to promote negotiated solutions to these conflicts based on norms and principles of international law particularly those enshrined in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act as well as other OSCE documents.

21. Most Ministers stand ready to give a fresh impulse towards a political settlement of the Transdnestrian problem in the Republic of Moldova. They condemned Transdnestrian actions on freedom of movement, on the Moldovan railways and against the Moldovan schools teaching in the Latin script, and commended the efforts by the OSCE Mission to resolve these issues. Above all, they called upon the two sides, with the increased support of the international community, to undertake additional efforts to resume a working dialogue in all available negotiation frameworks. The Ministers urged further steps under the auspices of the OSCE towards stability, security and a lasting political settlement fully respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova while providing a special status for Transdnestria. Most Ministers supported the further development of the OSCE initiative on Border and Customs Monitoring at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border.

22. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. Most Ministers highly appreciated recent OSCE efforts to defuse tensions in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and welcomed the recent meeting of the parties' high-level representatives in Sochi. The agreement on a phased demilitarization of the region, to be carried under the active monitoring by the Joint Peacekeeping Force and the OSCE Mission in Georgia, should be conducive to re-establishing confidence. Most Ministers encouraged reinforcement of the OSCE team of observers in this context. They expressed hope that the agreement of the Joint Control Commission to conduct a high-level meeting, with the assistance of the international community, will give a new impetus to a lasting peaceful resolution of this conflict in Georgia. Most Ministers acknowledged the very significant

contribution to stability and confidence in the region made by the Border Monitoring Operation and urged extension of its mandate. Further co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations on the UN-led conflict settlement process on Abkhazia (Georgia) was strongly recommended.

23. The Ministers commended the OSCE's significant and long-standing engagement in Kosovo/Serbia and Montenegro and underlined the importance of the OSCE's role as an integral part of the UN-led effort to create a democratic multi-ethnic society in Kosovo/Serbia and Montenegro in accordance with UNSCR 1244, particularly through capacity-building. The principles of democratic and multi-ethnic life embodied in the "Standards for Kosovo" have and will continue to guide the OSCE work as an important pillar of UNMIK.

24. The Ministers expressed their awareness of the necessity of a broad and thorough debate on strengthening the role of the OSCE. They expressed their belief that the OSCE could be more effective. They have decided to establish a Panel of Eminent Persons on Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE to be followed by specially convened High Level OSCE Consultations in 2005 in order to provide strategic vision for the Organization in the twenty-first century.

25. The Ministers welcomed the discussion on reforming the OSCE and tasked the Permanent Council to continue the process of reform by reviewing and improving the functioning of the Organization, the effectiveness of field missions, and inter-institutional co-operation. They took a decision on the role of the Secretary General. In order to diversify venues for OSCE meetings across the OSCE area, participating States will hold one of the human dimension meetings in 2005 in Georgia, responding to the invitation of the Government of Georgia to hold the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Tbilisi. Ministers also look forward to hold in the future the OSCE Economic Forum in sites other than Prague, and welcome to this end the invitations extended by Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

26. The Ministers commended the increasingly important role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which also enhances the visibility of our Organization. They welcomed the close interaction with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly that has developed in recent years.

27. The Ministers endorsed the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. They recognized that achieving gender equality through gender-mainstreaming was of crucial importance in order to make full use of the human capital in the OSCE area. A gender perspective should be taken into account in the OSCE activities in order to achieve gender equality for the Organization.

28. The Ministers reaffirmed that OSCE's interaction with other international organizations and institutions is based on the Platform for Co-operative Security and the Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century. They encouraged a broadening of contacts and a further dialogue between the OSCE and international, regional and subregional organizations in order to share information, exchange ideas, and benefit from each other's experience and capabilities.

29. The Ministers acknowledged the importance of the multifaceted co-operation with the Council of Europe and endorsed the decision to enhance this co-operation in order for our

two organizations to complement and reinforce each other in pursuing the strategic objective of building a continent without dividing lines.

30. The Ministers welcomed the valuable contribution that non-governmental organizations were making to the work of the OSCE's three dimensions.

31. The Ministers valued relations with the Partners for Co-operation and expressed appreciation for the report on "The OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation" concerning the implementation of Permanent Council Decision No. 571. Participating States will continue to promote closer dialogue and co-operation with Partners for Co-operation in the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions of the OSCE. The support the OSCE provided to the presidential election in Afghanistan was welcomed as contributing to this country's stability. Ministers are looking forward to further co-operation with this partner in building democratic Afghanistan. The Ministers welcomed Mongolia as a new Partner for Co-operation.

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

Despite lengthy negotiations and determined efforts, it was — yet again — not possible to reach agreement on some key issues facing the Organization. The EU regrets that we find ourselves in this situation and that no reference to regional issues concerning Moldova and Georgia could be agreed upon. While regrettable, by itself this is a true reflection of the lack of progress made this year in the search for solutions with regard to both regional conflicts.

On the other hand, we should recognize that all the Ministers did agree on a number of important issues. The European Union fully supports the statement just made by the Chairman-in-Office, both where he refers to issues of agreement and where he refers to those on which agreement was not possible. Throughout the consultation process, the EU has made the maximum effort to help reach consensus.

The EU remains committed to the OSCE and has prepared an assessment report on the EU's role vis-à-vis the OSCE to be endorsed by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 13 December. The EU continues to be prepared to invest in the Organization.

On the few outstanding issues, the EU's position are as follows:

On Moldova, we confirm our support for the role of the OSCE and other mediators in the resolution of this conflict, in full respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. The EU remains ready to engage in discussions with all parties concerned on a declaration of principles concerning the stability and security of Moldova. Regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops and equipment, we exhort the Russian Federation to honour without delay the commitments made in Istanbul in 1999.

As regards Georgia, we hope that resumption of the dialogue on the conflict with regard to South Ossetia will gain further momentum through a high-level meeting of the Joint Control Commission with the support of the international community, to be convened soon. We expect an early deployment of additional OSCE monitors, as agreed in principle. We attach great importance to a continued, albeit reduced, Border Monitoring Operation. On Abkhazia, we remain convinced that a peaceful solution through the UN-led process should be pursued on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. In accordance with the 1999 Istanbul commitments, we reaffirm the need to reach an early agreement between the parties on the duration and modalities of the functioning of the Russian military bases.

The European Union congratulates all parties concerned in Ukraine on working their way out of a complicated and politically tense situation in a peaceful and constructive atmosphere. The rerun of the second round of Presidential elections is planned for 26 December. It continues to be of the utmost importance to ensure the integrity of the election process. The EU urges all OSCE participating States to heed the call of the ODIHR to send election observers and to make available the necessary resources. The EU stands ready to contribute its share. The events since 21 November have, for the EU, underlined the relevance of the Helsinki principles and the OSCE *acquis*, to which we are all committed. The EU deplores very much that it has not been possible to adopt a joint declaration at this

Ministerial Council on the situation in Ukraine. This is even more deplorable given the fact that the text of such a declaration was supported by the Government of Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman, the efforts of the EU continue to be directed at helping to find a way out of this crisis in a non-violent manner, while ensuring that democratic principles prevail, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine are preserved and the will of the Ukrainian people is reflected.

Free and fair elections in which the electorate has confidence are vital to the development and consolidation of democracy in every country in the OSCE region. In this respect, the EU expresses its strong support for the election-related activities of the OSCE/ODIHR, as conducted in accordance with the provisions of the 1990 Copenhagen Document.

Looking to the future, the EU is interested in early establishment of a Panel of Eminent Persons, which is to address the need for strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization. We look forward to a creative and constructive discussion on its recommendations by the middle of next year.

The EU urges all participating States to do their utmost to come to a resolution of the scales issue before the end of the year.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that this statement be attached to the Journal of the Day.

The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia¹ align themselves with this statement.

1 Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilization and Association Process.

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GREECE

With reference to the Chairman's statement on the question of the 1999 Istanbul commitments, I would like to make a statement on behalf of the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The text of the statement reads as follows:

“We remain committed to the CFE Treaty as a cornerstone of European security, and reaffirm our attachment to the early entry into force of the Adapted Treaty. It is essential for the Russian Federation to complete withdrawal of its military forces from the Republic of Moldova as soon as possible. We also urge a swift resolution of the outstanding issues between Georgia and Russia as set out in their Istanbul Joint Statement of 17 November 1999, and to this end, call upon the parties to resume negotiations. Fulfilment of these remaining Istanbul commitments, undertaken in 1999, on the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova will create the conditions for NATO Allies and other States Parties to move forward on ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty. We will continue to assist in this process.”

The countries subscribing to this statement request for its inclusion to the official documents of this Ministerial Meeting.

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF MOLDOVA

The Delegation of the Republic of Moldova regrets that the Twelfth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council failed to adopt a set of important documents, including the draft Ministerial declaration. Notwithstanding the relevance of all the other documents, this Delegation considers that the adoption of a Ministerial declaration would have been instrumental in objectively reflecting the activities of the OSCE throughout the year and in streamlining our work in 2005. The Republic of Moldova has been constructively engaged in the negotiations process and making its contribution towards finding consensus solutions to all controversial problems. We would like to thank all the delegations that joined our efforts in this regard. However, it is unfortunate that the lack of due political will prevailed over the overwhelming drive to reach an agreed text.

The Delegation of the Republic of Moldova considers it necessary to reiterate a number of provisions that we consider it would have been pertinent to reflect in the Ministerial declaration.

There never was a freely expressed consent of the Moldovan constitutional authorities to the presence of Russian troops on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. We are concerned about the lack of progress in the withdrawal process during the past year, and call upon the Russian Federation to show firm political will to complete the withdrawal in the earliest possible timeframe. The complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Russian troops from the Republic of Moldova in conformity with the Istanbul commitments is a prerequisite for moving forward with the ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty.

We consider it important that an international assessment should be made of the stocks of armaments of the Russian Federation and of those belonging to the illegal military units from the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova.

We reiterate the importance of finding a political solution to the conflict, defining the status of the eastern regions as an integral part of the sovereign and territorially integral State — the Republic of Moldova. We appeal for the increased involvement of the international community, in particular the EU and the USA, in the conflict settlement process.

The Republic of Moldova regrets that it was not possible to endorse the Declaration on the Stability and Security of the Republic of Moldova on the margins of the Sofia Ministerial Meeting. The President of the Republic of Moldova has launched this initiative in an effort to enhance stability in this region of Europe. The Declaration was meant to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova as well as the inviolability of its borders and internationally recognized control over them. It also called for the respect of the principles of democracy, the rule of law and the market economy throughout the territory of the Republic of Moldova. At the same time, the signing of the Declaration could have significantly facilitated the process of the settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict, mobilizing the efforts of all partners involved within a broader framework. We call on all potential signatories to continue the consultations with a view to signing the Declaration as soon as possible.

The fundamental principles enshrined in the Declaration will help to further the policy of European integration of the Republic of Moldova.

Ensuring the proper control and safety of the border between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine would represent an important step towards settlement of the conflict. We appreciate the OSCE's initiative on the Border and Customs Monitoring Operation along the Moldovan-Ukrainian border and welcome further EU involvement in providing assistance to both countries on border issues. We expect constructive co-operation from the Ukrainian authorities in order to resolve all outstanding border problems.

The Republic of Moldova expresses its commitment to co-operate with all the OSCE participating States in reforming the Organization with a view to enhancing its ability to implement our common decisions. We consider that the credibility and authority of the OSCE is dependent on the political will of all the participating States to constructively engage in this process.

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF NORWAY

Mr. Chairman,

In accepting the many important documents that we have just agreed on, Norway would like to align itself with the statement just made by the EU. We deeply regret that, again this year, we did not manage to reach agreement on references to regional issues facing this Organization, and that we did not reach consensus on a ministerial declaration.

Mr. Chairman,

As we speak, we are witnessing important developments taking place in Ukraine, developments which highlight that country's role in building a secure and stable Europe based on democratic values.

A great number of delegations, including the Ukrainian delegation itself, would have welcomed a declaration on Ukraine. We deplore that this was not possible.

I ask that this statement be annexed to the Journal of the Day.

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

In connection with the statement made by the Chairman-in-Office, the delegation of the Russian Federation would like to make the following statement.

1. The Russian Federation agrees with many of the positions reflected in that statement, including those concerning a number of documents adopted today by the ministers on the work of the OSCE in all three dimensions. First and foremost, this concerns the efforts to counter and combat terrorism, politico-military aspects of security, practical aspects of the reform of the OSCE and several questions regarding the economic and human dimensions. These decisions are designed to reflect the political priorities of the Organization in specific practical undertakings.

2. However, some of the chairmanship's assessments do not reflect the consensus-based point of view. The Russian Federation does not feel bound by those conclusions and recommendations and does not find it possible for them to be taken into account in the work of the OSCE and its structures.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach a consensus on such a pressing matter as the improvement of election practices. Nevertheless, Russia does not consider this matter closed and hopes that next year the OSCE will be able to conduct a comprehensive analysis of election laws in the participating States and to draw up unified standards, common criteria and a methodology for objective election monitoring and unbiased evaluations of election results. It is on the basis of that work that we shall judge the effectiveness of the activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE as a whole.

Owing to the position taken by certain countries, it was not possible to reach agreement on a number of regional issues, something that cannot but cause regret.

3. The Russian Federation is disappointed that the artificial linkages and misguided political bargaining employed by a number of delegations thwarted approval by the Ministerial Council of such objectively timely initiatives as the holding of a seminar on military doctrines and a conference on energy issues. This can only worsen the imbalance between the three dimensions of the OSCE.

4. We regret that the initiatives proposed by the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States for improving the state of affairs within the Organization, as set out in the Moscow Declaration of 3 July 2004 and the Appeal to the OSCE Partners adopted in Astana on 15 September 2004, did not receive appropriate attention during the Sofia Ministerial Council Meeting. The Russian Federation emphasizes that, in the light of the thematic and geographical distortions persisting in the work of the Organization and the widespread application of "double standards", the usefulness of the OSCE and its ability to respond appropriately to modern-day challenges and to meet the real interests and needs of the participating States are yet more seriously called into question.

5. This being the case, the Russian Federation believes that the priority area of work for the OSCE in 2005 must be a comprehensive reform of its structures, specialized institutions, field activities and system of financing.

6. In connection with the position taken by some States regarding a supposed linkage between the so-called Istanbul commitments and ratification of the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Russian Federation does not consider this linkage to be legitimate. The Russian-Georgian and Russian-Moldovan agreements reached in November 1999 are of a bilateral nature and do not imply any obligations for Russia with regard to third countries. The Russian Federation has fulfilled all the provisions relative to the CFE Treaty and intends, provided necessary conditions are in place, to continue its implementation of these agreements subject to Georgia's and Moldova's compliance with the commitments they made when concluding the agreements.

States delaying ratification of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty on groundless pretexts are failing to comply with the commitment undertaken by them in Istanbul "to move forward expeditiously to facilitate completion of national ratification procedures so that the Agreement on Adaptation can enter into force as soon as possible" and bear full responsibility for the fate of the Treaty — the cornerstone of European security.

We request that this statement be attached to the Journal of the day.

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CANADA

Mr. Chairman,

Canada thanks the Chair, Foreign Minister Passy, for all his efforts.

We welcome the decisions just adopted, which represent important steps forward in a number of areas and chart a course for the next year.

We express our great regret at the participating States' inability, once again, to find a common ground on the joint political declaration.

At a time when this group of nations should be building bridges to address common challenges, some seem more focused on finding divides.

What most of us see as the strength and backbone of this Organization, namely, election monitoring, governance, rule of law and human rights, others see as a problem.

Our frozen regional conflicts remain frozen. We call again on Russia to fulfil its Istanbul commitments.

We deeply regret that it was not possible to agree on a separate Sofia ministerial statement on Ukraine.

This is a serious missed opportunity, especially given that this initiative came from Ukraine.

This outcome diminishes our collective resolve to engage in an area of core activity for the OSCE.

Canada will assist the ODIHR with observing the election in Ukraine on 26 December to help ensure that the will of the Ukrainian people is respected.

Mr. Chairman,

Canada asks that this statement be added to the official documents for this OSCE conference.

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GEORGIA

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express our profound disappointment at the failure of the OSCE community to find a common ground on the political declaration of the Organization, which would have been the pivotal document of the Ministerial Council.

The absence of consensus for the second year in a row on the document, which purports to reflect the very essence of the OSCE, undoubtedly undermines our Organization's credibility and raises serious concern over its future.

My delegation did its best to facilitate the adoption of the political declaration, having no idea that its fate had been predetermined from the very beginning.

Mr. Chairman,

Having no common blueprint for action, my Delegation would like once again to reiterate its main points of concern:

We strongly believe that the OSCE border monitoring operation (BMO) in Georgia is one of our Organization's most successful missions, simultaneously making a tremendous contribution to Georgia's border security along the most volatile and controversial segments of the Georgian-Russian border. Therefore, we strongly support the BMO's extension for the sake of peace and stability in the region.

We extend our gratitude to the Chairman-in-Office for his initiative to relocate some of the activities of the OSCE to different subregions of the OSCE area. In particular, we welcome the proposal to hold the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting — the largest OSCE human dimension forum — in 2005 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The Government of Georgia is committed to undertaking all necessary steps to make this event a major success.

There is no doubt that the cornerstone of our common security is the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). The timely ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty and its entry into force will be a major achievement in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. We have more than once reiterated that the main obstacle to the ratification process is the overdue international commitment of the Russian Federation, particularly the withdrawal of its military forces from Georgia and Moldova. We wish to express once again our strong confidence that, through meaningful negotiations and for the sake of our mutual security, the Russian Federation will carry out its international obligations and thereby foster a lasting peace on the European continent.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite this setback, we hope that the OSCE participating States will seriously reflect on the causes that disrupt a common understanding of the major issues of our Organization.

Georgia views the OSCE as the sentinel of democracy and security on the European continent and stands ready to contribute, wherever it can, to the Organization's effective functioning.

In closing, let me once again thank the organizers of the Twelfth Ministerial Council and express the hope for our Organization's every success in its responsible work.

Thank you.

**VI. REPORTS TO THE
SOFIA MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE FOR 2004

1. Introduction

The agenda for the OSCE in 2004 was largely set by the decisions taken at the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting at Maastricht in December 2003, particularly the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century and the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. The Bulgarian Chairmanship therefore decided that implementation should be the main theme for the year.

The outcome of the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting demonstrated the need for strengthening the sense of common purpose in the Organization. The Chairmanship stated that it would aim at a more comprehensive understanding of the broad spectrum of opinions when articulating OSCE policies and taking specific decisions.

Reform of the OSCE became a major theme in 2004, focusing, *inter alia*, on the relevance of the OSCE and possible ways of transforming it.

Work to intensify the co-operation between the OSCE and other international organizations engaged in maintaining security and stability in the OSCE area featured prominently among the activities of the Bulgarian Chairmanship.

Tolerance and non-discrimination were the topics of three high-profile meetings in 2004. The participating States took important decisions on combating anti-Semitism, as well as tolerance and the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination, and promoting tolerance and promoting freedom of the media on the Internet. Measures were agreed on to ensure effective follow-up.

Another major theme was outreach. The OSCE launched its first out-of-area operation by sending an Election Support Team to Afghanistan before the presidential elections of 9 October. Relations with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation were intensified, and Mongolia was welcomed as the newest Partner. In the last days of the Bulgarian Chairmanship, a training needs assessment visit by a group of experts from the OSCE Secretariat and the ODIHR was organized to the Palestinian Territories, at the time of the presidential elections on 9 January.

2. Reforming the OSCE

Reform has been on the OSCE's agenda for some time, but in 2004 the debate gathered considerable momentum and acquired a certain prominence in the OSCE agenda. The enlargement of the EU and NATO has redrawn the political map of Europe, with implications for other organizations such as the OSCE. New threats and challenges to security have changed strategic priorities. It was suggested that ten years on from the transformation of the CSCE into the OSCE, the Organization should be reassessed, adapted and strengthened. Some participating States were particularly outspoken about the need for transforming the OSCE. On 3 July 2004, the presidents of nine CIS states issued a statement on the need to reform the OSCE, which was followed on 15 September by an appeal by eight CIS foreign ministers meeting in Astana.

The Chairman-in-Office (C-i-O) was personally involved in the reform debate, particularly as manifested in his address to the Thirteenth Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Edinburgh on 5 July 2004. There, and on subsequent occasions, he emphasized the need to make the OSCE less bureaucratic, better match resources with priorities, shift resources from South-Eastern Europe to the Caucasus and Central Asia, change the location of human dimension and Economic Forum meetings to better reflect the geographic diversity of the OSCE area, update the rules of procedure, improve the effectiveness of field activities and strengthen the role of the Secretary General. These and other ideas were discussed in the Working Groups on Reform and on Improving the Functioning and Effectiveness of the OSCE Field Operations.

For the first time since 1973, work was done on updating the rules of procedure, and significant progress was made in that direction. At the Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, in Sofia, a decision was taken that clarifies the role of the Secretary General.

In line with the prevailing view that the OSCE could be more effective, the Ministers decided at Sofia to establish a Panel of Eminent Persons on Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE, to be followed by specially convened high-level OSCE consultations in 2005 in order to provide a strategic vision for the OSCE in the twenty-first century.

The process is a continuous one and will certainly be a topic for debate in 2005, when the OSCE celebrates a number of anniversaries and looks ahead to the future.

3. The Fight Against Terrorism

Terrorism remains one of the gravest threats to the individual and common security of the OSCE participating States. The horrendous attacks in Beslan and Madrid in 2004 further demonstrated how terrorism is a clear and present danger in the OSCE area. Reinforcing the Organization's role in combating terrorism therefore remained a high priority of the Bulgarian Chairmanship.

The Chairmanship broadened the mandate of the Informal Group of Friends on Combating Terrorism, established in 2003. This allowed the Group, chaired by the Ambassador of Sweden, not only to review the implementation of previous commitments, but also to turn its attention towards responding to other current and emerging terrorist threats.

The high degree of attention paid to terrorism by the participating States was also demonstrated at the second Annual Security Review Conference.

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) — in the framework of its specific mandate — made a significant contribution towards enhancing the OSCE's role in curbing the terrorist threat.

The success of the work of the Informal Group of Friends and the FSC was evident in the number and range of decisions on combating terrorism that were taken at the Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, namely, on: combating the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes; enhancing container security; reporting lost/stolen passports to Interpol's database; establishing principles for export controls of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), principles on the control of brokering in small arms and light weapons, (OSCE) standard elements of end-user certificates and verification procedures for SALW exports; further

implementing the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition; and endorsing PC decisions on further measures to suppress terrorist financing, and on solidarity with victims of terrorism. The Sofia Ministerial Statement on Preventing and Combating Terrorism reaffirmed the resolve of the participating States to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Also contributing to the global effort against terrorism were a number of practical OSCE conferences and workshops that served to exchange among relevant practitioners from the OSCE participating States information, experiences and best practices in countering urgent terrorist threats such as the MANPADS threat to civil aviation at airports.

In its efforts to guide OSCE's counter-terrorism work, the Chairmanship clearly focused its attention on the fundamental principle that the fight against terrorism cannot be used to restrict human rights and civil liberties in any way.

In clear recognition of OSCE's growing role in the area of counter-terrorism and of its successful interaction with other organizations, the OSCE hosted, in co-operation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the third Special Meeting of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNCTC) with International, Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations in March 2004.

4. Border Security and Management

With the adoption of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century at the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting, in Maastricht, the participating States agreed on developing an **OSCE Border Security and Management Concept**. An informal working group of friends on borders was set up in January 2004 under the chairmanship of the Ambassador of Belgium. The informal working group started its work, on the one hand, by exchanging information and experiences on what had been done so far in the field of border-related issues, both inside and outside the OSCE, and, on the other hand, by promoting a focused discussion among the participating States, in order to derive a clear understanding of what should be the aim and the scope of such a concept. Between June and October 2004, extensive work was done on drafting the concept. In view of the complexity of the issue, some participating States considered that the time was not yet ripe to agree on such a concept on borders in the OSCE. At the twelfth Ministerial Council meeting, in Sofia, the Ministers decided upon political goals, principles and considerations to be taken into account when completing the work of preparing the concept in 2005.

The OSCE's **South-Eastern Europe Cross-border Co-operation Programme** (OSCCP) was implemented as a response to the OSCE's commitment to the Ohrid process in terms of civilian aspects of training and advice to border police, assistance to and facilitation of institution building and promotion of regional co-operation. The first phase of this Programme consisted of six seminars, all based on the results of a needs assessment mission that took place in the autumn of 2003. The Programme responded to the most urgent needs and demands in this field and addresses senior and middle management at the regional and subregional levels. It aimed at accelerating the process of regional cross-border co-operation among the respective border police forces, as well as setting the scene for more specific topics to be followed up during the second phase of the Programme in 2005. All the seminars were well attended by participants from the countries concerned and their neighbouring States. The participants were unanimous in agreeing that the aims had been successfully met

throughout, and in particular through the “quick impact” solutions to problems that the Programme had set out to achieve.

On 7 and 8 September 2004, the Bulgarian Chairmanship organized a **Joint OSCE/UNODC Technical Experts Conference on Border Management and Security**. The aim of the Conference was to share international organizations’ experience in promoting more effective border management and security, and to develop a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to delivering international assistance. Almost 200 participants from all 55 participating States, Partners for Co-operation and international organizations such as NATO, the European Commission (EC), CIS, Europol, Interpol, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe attended the Conference, which set the scene for ensuring, *inter alia*, better and closer co-operation between those international organizations with border management and security-related mandates.

Also on the subject of borders, in 2004, the Chairmanship, the Secretariat and the OSCE Mission to Moldova developed contingency plans for an OSCE Border and Customs Monitoring Operation (BCMO) at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. As at the end of 2004, implementation of the BCMO had not yet been possible.

5. Education

At the outset of its tenure, the Bulgarian Chairmanship included education, in the widest sense of the word, among its priorities. Taking into account the global interest in security in the Central Asian region, one of the main focuses of the Bulgarian Chairmanship was to draw the attention of the participating States, as well as that of other international organizations, to the topic of education in Central Asia. This was deemed important, as high educational standards in this region can help to foster stability and security in the area and can give further impetus to the reform process in general.

In light of the above, a one-day **Ministerial Conference on Education as an Investment in the Future** was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 5 April 2004. The Conference was organized by the Bulgarian Chairmanship and hosted by the Uzbek Government. It brought together Ministers of Education of Central Asian States and Afghanistan and institutions and international organizations active in the region, including international financial institutions and development agencies, as well as research institutes from within and outside the region. The Chairman-in-Office (C-i-O), Bulgarian Foreign Minister Passy, addressed the Conference.

The main objectives of the Conference were to offer a platform to the States of the region to illustrate their achievements, to foster increased co-operation and synergies with all actors, and to take stock of ongoing supporting activities by international organizations. The Conference issued a number of recommendations, including the following: (i) the internationalizing of education systems; (ii) achieving quality education for all; (iii) providing higher salaries to teachers; (iv) strengthening of vocational training; (v) training of staff at the ministries of education; (vi) developing an education financing framework, based on medium-term targets and on associated costs of inputs; (vii) and developing ideas for regional co-operation, following the example of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship further encouraged synergies with other education-related work of the OSCE, given that the topic cuts across dimensions, and facilitated education-related activities in the framework of:

- Field operations, in particular the curriculum development in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Latin script schools in Moldova, and the youth and education programme of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK);
- The OSCE conferences on anti-Semitism in Berlin (28–29 April), and on tolerance and the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination in Brussels (13–14 September);
- The ODIHR’s Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Human Rights Education and Training held on 25 and 26 March;
- The Twelfth Economic Forum, which developed recommendations for education, capacity-building and training programmes;
- The High Commissioner on National Minorities; and
- The Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Furthermore, the Chairmanship tasked the Secretariat’s Conflict Prevention Centre with preparing an **OSCE-wide survey** of all past, present and future OSCE education-related activities. The survey highlighted the fact that the scope of the OSCE’s involvement in education covered activities from capacity-building of educational institutions to vocational training, as well as awareness-raising activities and advocacy for OSCE values and commitments. The findings reconfirmed a considerable role and investment on the part of the OSCE in education as it relates to conflict prevention.

6. Politico-Military Dimension

Forum for Security Co-operation

The Bulgarian Chairmanship welcomes the efforts of the OSCE in promoting the fight against illicit trafficking of **small arms and light weapons (SALW)**. The implementation of the Document on SALW adopted in 2000 was high on the FSC’s agenda in 2004. The FSC’s determination to reduce the risk of diversion of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) into illicit markets led to the adoption of a decision on OSCE principles for export controls of MANPADS in May 2004. Furthermore, a decision on OSCE principles on the control of brokering in SALW was adopted just before the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia. This decision aims at improving the control of arms-brokering, thus minimizing the risk of diversion of SALW into illegal markets and, *inter alia*, into the hands of terrorists and other criminal groups. Finally, the FSC recognized the need for stricter export controls in order to prevent the destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of SALW. This resulted in the adoption of two decisions on verification procedures for SALW exports and standard elements of end-user certificates. The Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia endorsed all these decisions.

The Chairmanship also notes the risks and challenges to human security and to the environment caused by the presence of **stockpiles of conventional ammunition**. The Chairmanship welcomes the principles and procedures agreed to by participating States and the steps already taken to implement the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. The Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia therefore tasked the FSC with submitting a progress report on the implementation of the Stockpiles Document to the thirteenth Ministerial Council meeting, in 2005.

The Chairmanship strongly believes that the implementation of the documents on SALW and on stockpiles of conventional ammunition will **enhance security in the OSCE area**. The OSCE has already received several requests for assistance from participating States. Two States indicated their willingness to receive operational assistance for the destruction of SALW and four States requested assistance for the destruction of surplus ammunition. Considerable financial means will be required for these operations. The Chairmanship encourages participating States to continue to address this issue in the future.

Annual Security Review Conference

The Chairmanship welcomes the results of the second **Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC)**. The 2004 ASRC was convened by the Chairmanship on 23 and 24 June 2004, drawing on support by the Secretariat for its preparation and follow-up. The aim of the event was to review activities undertaken in the previous year in the field of security, to enhance exchange of information on major security issues, as well as to fix strategies and define priorities for the coming year. The Conference consisted of four sessions, each of which was opened by two keynote speeches. Participants from all the 55 participating States, with reinforcement from capitals, took part in the discussions, together with all ten OSCE Partners for Co-operation and a number of key international partners of the OSCE. A particular focus was placed on terrorism-related activities, border-related activities, traditional politico-military activities and the way forward, touching specifically on the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century and the need to make it operational. The discussions were fruitful, with over a hundred new proposals and suggestions emerging from them.

7. Economic and Environmental Dimension

The agenda in the economic and environmental dimension for 2004 was largely set by the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. The Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), with guidance from the Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee, was brought into a number of activities with a view to implementing the Document in the areas of economic co-operation, good governance, SME development, anti-trafficking, human capacity-building and sustainable development.

Special emphasis was placed this year on improving the OSCE's performance in the areas of early warning and implementation of existing commitments. To that end, a memorandum of understanding on co-operation was signed at the Sofia Ministerial Council meeting between the OSCE and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

The theme of this year's Economic Forum was "New Challenges for Building up Institutional and Human Capacity for Economic Development and Co-operation". The C-i-O

suggested that, in the future, Economic Forum meetings should be organized in a different way and held in other parts of the OSCE area. At the Sofia Ministerial Council meeting, a decision was taken on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Economic Forum, and offers have been received from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to host meetings of the Economic Forum in the future.

The OCEEA assessed the recommendations made at the Twelfth OSCE Economic Forum and suggested concrete follow-up in the fields of SME development, investment, building of human capacity, economic integration and the fight against corruption. In Sofia, the Ministerial Council adopted a decision on combating corruption.

8. Human Dimension

The Chairmanship's activities in the human dimension followed several tracks. A number of them were channelled through the regular OSCE human dimension meetings: the **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), the Human Dimension Seminar and the three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings (SHDM)**. Other activities resulted from decisions taken at the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht, such as the **OSCE Conferences on Anti-Semitism and on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, the OSCE Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes**, as well as the work on the **2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality**.

The three SHDMs organized in co-operation with the ODIHR were devoted respectively to human rights education and training, electoral standards and commitments and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The first of these meetings was organized in Vienna on 25 and 26 March. The theme **"Human Rights Education and Training"** was chosen to give the opportunity to all interested parties, including international organizations and NGOs, to consolidate ongoing efforts to promote human-rights education and training in the OSCE region. Participants shared best practices, discussed such topics as formal human-rights education, human-rights education in school curricula, human-rights education and training of public officials, and informal human-rights education. Useful recommendations on ways of improving the quality of human-rights education and training were elaborated.

The second SHDM took place in Vienna on 15 and 16 July and focused on the topic **"Electoral Standards and Commitments"**. It provided a forum for discussions on the implementation of existing OSCE commitments for democratic elections and follow-up to ODIHR recommendations. It was recognized by several delegations that the participating States should consider the possibility of supplementary commitments, in addition to the existing ones. The SHDM underlined the need to address emerging challenges, such as electronic voting, trends towards low turnouts, recall elections and referenda.

The third SHDM was devoted to the theme **"Internally Displaced Persons"** (IDPs) and took place in Vienna on 4 and 5 November. The main objective was to discuss practical approaches that OSCE institutions and participating States can adopt to alleviate the plight of IDPs in the OSCE area. The meeting featured general discussions on States' responsibility towards IDPs and fundamental rights and freedoms of IDPs, as well as more focused debates

on durable solutions, including return and resettlement, reintegration and property restitution. The participants called on participating States to develop detailed laws and policies to protect IDPs.

As called for by Permanent Council Decision No. 353 of 1 June 2000 on the OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues, the OSCE participating States developed an **OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality**, which aims to set out the priorities of the OSCE in promoting gender equality, both in the Organization and in all the participating States, and to ensure the monitoring of its implementation. The Action Plan was endorsed by the Sofia Ministerial Council meeting.

The annual Human Dimension Seminar in 2004 was devoted to the topic **“Democratic Institutions and Democratic Governance”** and took place in Warsaw from 12 to 14 May. The meeting provided a forum for renewing the debate on the current state and future of democratic institutions and democratic governance. Among its key recommendations, the meeting underscored the urgency of fostering a more developed understanding of the workings of the democratic process. Moreover, the need to develop a culture of respect and to take an active part in developing effective and inclusive mechanisms of interaction between the citizenry and government authorities was stressed.

As tasked by Decision No. 4/03 of the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting, on tolerance and non-discrimination, the Chairmanship followed up the work started in 2003 and in co-operation with host countries organized two OSCE conferences on issues addressed in the Decision. A **Conference on Anti-Semitism** took place on 28 and 29 April in Berlin, and a **Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination** took place on 13 and 14 September in Brussels. The two conferences confirmed the determination of the participating States to work together in combating racism, xenophobia, discrimination and anti-Semitism. Two decisions by the Permanent Council assigned further tasks to the ODIHR in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination. The conferences highlighted the key role of the ODIHR in serving, *inter alia*, as a data collection point and urged all the participating States, NGOs and others to work in partnership with the ODIHR. At the end, the C-i-O summed up the proceedings of the conferences in what he called the “Berlin Declaration” (see Annex 1) and the “Brussels Declaration” (see Annex 2).

As urged by the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht, the Chairmanship, in co-operation with France, organized a special **Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes** on 16 and 17 June in Paris. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of fully respecting the rights to freedom of information and expression, reiterated the commitment to combat hate crimes and stressed the importance of promoting tolerance, mutual respect, dialogue and understanding, including through the media and the Internet. At the end of the Meeting, the Chairmanship issued its conclusions.

The **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM)** took place from 4 to 15 October in Warsaw. During the first week, a comprehensive review of all the OSCE commitments in the Human Dimension took place, while the second week was devoted to three specifically selected topics: promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination; freedom of assembly and association; and complementarity and co-operation between international organizations in promoting human rights. During the special day devoted to freedom of assembly and association, the participants highlighted a need for continued OSCE attention to

the protection of defenders of human rights. Other recommendations included continued political dialogue with the participating States, training of government officials, introduction of changes in administrative practices and intensification of the co-operation between international organizations in promoting human rights.

On 10 March 2004, following a silence procedure on the appointment by the Ministerial Council, the C-i-O appointed Mr. Miklos Haraszti to the position of OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

In line with Decision No. 2/03 of the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting, on combating trafficking in human beings, the C-i-O appointed Mrs. Helga Konrad as a Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for a two-year period beginning on 10 May 2004.

As part of the overall fight of the OSCE in combating discrimination and promoting tolerance, on 22 December 2004, the C-i-O appointed three personal representatives: Mrs. Anastasia Crickley as Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions, Mr. Gert Weisskirchen as Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism and Ambassador Ömur Orhun as Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

9. Operational capacity of the OSCE

OSCE Troika

The OSCE Troika continued to function as an important tool for co-ordinated action and mid-term planning. In 2004, the **OSCE Troika** met twice at the level of foreign ministers (in January and in July) involving also the Secretary General, the heads of institutions and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE

The Chairmanship continued its close co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly (PA) of the OSCE, including through the PA's special representative in Vienna.

The C-i-O addressed the Winter Session of the OSCE PA, held on 19 February 2004 in Vienna, stressing the need for enhancing the co-operation between the PA and the other OSCE institutions and bodies.

The C-i-O also addressed the Thirteenth Annual Session of the OSCE PA, which took place on 5 July 2004 in Edinburgh and focused on the theme "Co-operation and Partnership: Coping with New Security Threats". He commended the choice of such a timely topic and underlined the role of the PA as an important institution promoting the OSCE's values. In his address, the C-i-O presented a number of ideas for transformation of the OSCE in order to further improve the Organization's efficiency and keep it fit to deal with its contemporary security priorities. Those recommendations and ideas found support among the parliamentarians and were included in a resolution of the PA.

10. Financial issues

Following the activities in 2003 of the working group of the informal Financial Committee on scales of contribution, and guided by the two relevant Permanent Council decisions on matters relating to scales adopted in 2001 (No. 408) and in 2002 (No. 468), the Bulgarian Chairmanship undertook steps aimed at reaching a timely agreement on the matter. In the process of negotiations, systematic efforts were made, through consultations in different formats, to overcome the diverging views, reach an acceptable compromise and move further towards “capacity to pay” levels. From the outset, it was openly stated that reaching consensus on the scales of contribution would only be possible if all the participating States applied creativity, realism and a clear political will in the endeavour to reach such a consensus.

In December, after several “Chair’s Guesses”, the Chairmanship introduced a final proposal for the two scales which followed the basic criteria of Permanent Council Decisions Nos. 408 and 468, as well as the methodology developed by the working group in 2003. The Chairperson’s proposal avoided both large increases and decreases in the contributions, achieved through limitations in the fluctuation. Ultimately, only one participating State remained outside the consensus on this proposal.

11. Regional issues

In 2004, a priority for Bulgaria’s Chairmanship of the OSCE was to support the process of democratization in Georgia, to reinvigorate the process of dialogue in Moldova and to maintain effective co-operation with all the States in which the OSCE had field activities. During the course of the year, the Chairmanship had to respond quickly to developments in Ajara and South Ossetia in Georgia, a flare-up of violence in Kosovo/ Serbia and Montenegro, and mass protests in Ukraine after the presidential elections.

South Caucasus

One of the Chairmanship’s main priorities in the Southern Caucasus was to promote the peaceful settlement of the existing conflicts and to prevent occurrence of new conflicts in the region.

In 2004, **Georgia** underwent significant political changes, making OSCE activities in the country particularly challenging and also demanding increased attention from the OSCE Chairmanship.

Following the pledges of support by participating States at the eleventh OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht in December 2003, the Georgia Election Assistance Programme (GEAP) was set up by the Mission to Georgia to assist the country in the conduct of extraordinary presidential and parliamentary elections on 4 January and 28 March 2004.

The Chairmanship took an active stand in response to the crisis around Ajara. In particular, during the peak of the crisis in mid-March, the C-i-O flew to Poti to promote a peaceful settlement. He met with Georgian President Saakashvili and Prime Minister Zhvania, and had a telephone conference with the then-Head of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, Mr. Abashidze. The Chairmanship also supported the increased activities of the OSCE

Mission to Georgia in Ajara, particularly in relation to the development of local free media and human rights protection organizations.

In the summer of 2004, violence erupted in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. The OSCE appealed repeatedly to Tbilisi and Tskhinvali to cease hostile actions and to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. The C-i-O discussed the situation with President Saakashvili, Prime Minister Zhvania, and South Ossetian leader Kokoity. He also discussed issues related to the settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and US Secretary of State Powell. In support of the existing OSCE efforts to reduce tensions, the Special Envoy of the C-i-O, former President of Bulgaria Zhelyu Zhelev, visited Georgia from 25 to 28 July. He held talks with representatives of both sides, urging them to exercise maximum restraint and implement commitments entered within the framework of the settlement process.

Throughout the crisis, the OSCE actively monitored developments on the ground, and sought to reduce tensions. On 6 August, the Permanent Council decided to enhance the staff of the Mission by adding two monitoring officers. After a cease-fire agreement had been reached on 13 August, a group of 20 heads and members of OSCE delegations, accompanied by a representative of the C-i-O, visited Georgia from 5 to 9 September to get first-hand information on the situation in the country, in particular on developments related to the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

The OSCE actively sought and welcomed the resumption of the high-level dialogue between the Georgian and South Ossetian leaderships. On 5 November, Prime Minister Zhvania and the South Ossetian leader Mr. Kokoity met and agreed on a number of issues, including the phased demilitarization of the zone of conflict and the need to support economic development and to ensure freedom of movement of people and goods in the area. Building on these developments, the Chairmanship offered to host a high-level meeting in Sofia devoted to identifying possibilities for resolving the conflict. The Chairmanship also welcomed the acknowledgement by the parties of the positive role of the OSCE in the settlement process, including its financing of the demolition of military fortifications, its support for the setting up of a Secretariat of the Joint Peacekeeping Force and its active role in the implementation of confidence-building projects, as well as the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure in the zone of conflict.

Regarding the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, the OSCE has continued to support the United Nations's efforts to bring about a comprehensive settlement and is closely following developments in the region. The Chairmanship hopes that negotiations will be resumed as soon as possible, once a decision on the future political leadership of Abkhazia is reached. The Chairmanship supports the OSCE's work with the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) with a view to opening a Gali branch of the UN Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia (HROAG).

The OSCE Border Monitoring Operation (BMO) in Georgia played an important confidence-building role, thus contributing to the promotion of security along the Ingush, Chechen and Dagestan segments of the border between Georgia and the Russian Federation. However, at the end of 2004, the mandate of the BMO was not extended due to lack of consensus.

The OSCE continued to support **Armenia** in the process of electoral and constitutional reforms, with a special focus on reform of the Electoral Code and constitutional amendments. In addition, the OSCE continued to promote the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments in all three dimensions, including through special attention to the fight against corruption, freedom of the media, action to combat trafficking, prevention and combating of terrorism, penitentiary reform, police assistance and economic and environmental activities in the country. The preparation for implementation of the Police Assistance Programme and the Project on Elimination of Rocket Fuel Component (Melange) as a typical OSCE cross-dimensional activity were in the focus of the OSCE activities as well.

The Chairmanship closely followed developments in relation to opposition rallies held in April of 2004 in Yerevan. The attacks against opposition supporters as well as journalists that took place during these rallies were strongly criticized by the OSCE. The OSCE continued to emphasize the importance of dialogue between the authorities and the opposition and the participation of all factions in the parliament's law-making activities.

In **Azerbaijan**, the OSCE continued to promote the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments in all the OSCE dimensions, with a special focus on the rule of law, good governance and freedom of the media, including through the carrying out of projects in the areas of assistance to the police and economic and environmental development.

During his visit to Azerbaijan on 16 March, the C-i-O raised the question of democratization and respect for human rights in the country and also voiced concern over the fate of those detained and awaiting trial after the October disturbances. The C-i-O welcomed the decision of President Ilham Aliyev of 17 March to pardon 129 people and release them from prison. The OSCE expressed its concern over the conduct of the trials, including the decision taken by the Court of Appeals on 19 November 2004 to uphold the prison sentences of seven senior opposition members. In the framework of the ODIHR Trial Monitoring Programme, the Office in Baku together with local lawyers monitored the trials and prepared a report to be discussed with the Government.

The Chairmanship was actively involved in the promotion of a political settlement of the **Nagorno-Karabakh** conflict. Close co-operation involving the Chairmanship, the Personal Representative of the C-i-O on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, and the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group was further pursued under the Bulgarian Chairmanship. In his contacts with the parties, the C-i-O assured them of his and the OSCE's commitment to finding a solution to the conflict and of his support for the positive momentum gained during the year in the course of the meetings of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan under the auspices of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group, and in the framework of the so-called "Prague Process", through which the Foreign Ministers of both countries methodically explored all the parameters for a future settlement. It was encouraging to have an agreed statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict at the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia.

In addition, the C-i-O asked the former Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Mr. Philip Dimitrov, to visit Armenia and Azerbaijan from 20 to 24 September as his Special Envoy for the conflict, with the task of giving impetus to the peace process. In Baku and Yerevan, Mr. Dimitrov reaffirmed the support of the C-i-O for the efforts of the Co-Chairs of

the OSCE Minsk Group and his Personal Representative. He also called on the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to take into account the framework presented to them by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group in mid-September in Astana that could serve as a basis for a settlement. Mr. Dimitrov was reassured in Baku and Yerevan that the sides were committed to reaching a peaceful solution to the conflict.

The activities of the Personal Representative of the C-i-O on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference were instrumental in reducing tensions along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and the line of contact, particularly during the summer, when a number of violations of the cease-fire agreement took place.

Northern Caucasus

With regard to the situation in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation, the Chairmanship continued the dialogue initiated by the Netherlands Chairmanship with the Russian Federation aimed at agreement on a long-term OSCE programme of technical co-operation in Chechnya.

South-Eastern Europe

In 2004, the OSCE made clear its commitment to continue to foster peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe through enhanced regional co-operation, the promotion of and support for legislative reform, respect for human and minority rights, and institution- and capacity-building. It made further concrete efforts, in co-operation with its partner organizations, to facilitate the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons, to assist in enhancing the capacity of the domestic judiciaries and to monitor domestic war-crimes trials.

The C-i-O visited **Kosovo/Serbia and Montenegro**, together with the NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, to assess the situation following the violence in March. In Pristina on 23 March, he called the violence “unacceptable” and said that “it is not welcome on the path to Europe”. The C-i-O conveyed the message that the OSCE, working with its international partners in Kosovo, was prepared to continue to work to secure peace and stability. He also pledged the OSCE’s assistance for free and democratic elections in October 2004. Thereafter, the C-i-O visited Belgrade to discuss the situation in Kosovo with the Serb leaders. At the invitation of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the C-i-O and the OSCE Secretary General attended meetings in September at UN Headquarters in New York, which focused on the way forward in Kosovo, including the international community’s tasks and responsibilities in the foreseeable future.

On 29 March 2004, the C-i-O visited **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. During the visit, he reiterated the OSCE’s continued interest in and support for the political stabilization and the ongoing process of reforms in the country, in particular with regard to defence and education.

On 10 and 11 May 2004, the C-i-O visited **Croatia**. His visit focused on return of refugees, property restitution, occupancy tenancy rights, and co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The C-i-O and Croatia’s Prime Minister Ivo Sanader made field trips to Zadar and other communities to observe at first hand the situation of refugees and returnee families and to assess the efforts of the Croatian Government to facilitate the return and reintegration of refugees, including the

reconstruction of destroyed properties, repossession of occupied properties, and the provision of alternative accommodation to Bosnian Croat settlers.

The Special Co-ordinator of the **Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe**, Dr. Erhard Busek, was invited by the Chairperson to address the Permanent Council on 20 May 2004. There was a common understanding that priority should be assigned to the repatriation of refugees and IDPs, as that could pose an obstacle to long-term stability in the region. The continued co-operation between the OSCE and the Stability Pact in matters such as stabilization of population movements, combating of organized crime, trafficking in human beings, and border management was noted with appreciation, as was the OSCE's contribution to the follow-up to the Ohrid Conference.

Between 18 and 21 October, the C-i-O toured South-Eastern Europe, visiting **Skopje, Pristina, Belgrade, Podgorica and Tirana**. In Kosovo, the main purpose of his visit was to become better acquainted with the situation on the ground and the activities of the OSCE on the eve of the elections to the Kosovo Assembly on 23 October. While in Pristina, he urged politicians from all sides to reach out to the electorate, inviting them to participate in the elections. He strongly encouraged the Kosovo Serbs to take part. In Skopje, he discussed the implications of the referendum on 7 November concerning decentralization. In Belgrade and Podgorica he urged Serbia and Montenegro to speed up reforms related to their OSCE commitments to achieve their objective of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The C-i-O also discussed concrete forms of co-operation between the OSCE and the various countries, taking into account their foreign policy objectives.

The C-i-O strongly supported an initiative co-ordinated by the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) designed to enhance **inter-State co-operation in war crimes proceedings**. The CPC, together with three OSCE Missions in South-Eastern Europe and the ODIHR, have considered ways in which the OSCE could facilitate a direct, concrete dialogue among practitioners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro for the purpose of enhancing inter-State co-operation in dealing with war crimes proceedings (investigations, prosecutions, and trials). "Witness issues" was the topic of a first expert-level meeting by the OSCE facilitated that took place in Palic, Republic of Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro), on 29 and 30 November 2004. The meeting in Palic, conducted in a spirit of regional ownership, was appreciated as an excellent starting point in the broader, more technical process that the OSCE has launched in this important field.

Central Asia

The Bulgarian Chairmanship drew increased attention to the Central Asian region and offered assistance to the five participating States of Central Asia in pursuing their path of political, social and economic reform. The Chairmanship aimed at enhancing the awareness of the Central Asian participating States as to what the OSCE could offer them and how a balanced approach to the three OSCE dimensions could help to further the reform process.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship sought to enhance the relationship between the OSCE and Central Asian countries by maintaining an open and regular dialogue. In this context, the C-i-O visited all five Central Asian States as well as Afghanistan in April 2004. He was received by the five Heads of State and met with the respective Foreign Ministers and with representatives from civil society.

During the C-i-O's visit to **Uzbekistan**, education, the fight against terrorism in the light of the bombings in Tashkent in April and election preparation were among the key topics discussed. The C-i-O opened the Ministerial Conference on Education as an Investment into the Future, held in Tashkent on 5 April, and underlined in his statement the key role of education in building security, ensuring political stability and reducing poverty.

In **Kazakhstan**, the discussions revolved around Kazakhstan's bid for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2009, water resource management, anti-trafficking activities and elections. In **Kyrgyzstan**, the C-i-O stressed the importance of regional initiatives such as the OSCE Academy, elections, action to combat terrorism, prison reform and border issues. In **Tajikistan**, the talks focused on issues pertaining to de-mining, tax reform, labour migration, the media and elections. During the C-i-O's visit to **Turkmenistan**, enhanced co-operation between the OSCE and Turkmenistan, media issues and the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking were discussed. In addition to the visit of the C-i-O to Central Asia in April 2004, Mr. Younal Lutfi, Vice-Chairman of the Bulgarian National Assembly, visited Turkmenistan at the beginning of December 2004 at the request of the C-i-O. Issues relating to the upcoming elections, action to combat terrorism, education, national minorities and access to prisons for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were reviewed.

The reappointment of President Martti Ahtisaari, the former President of Finland, as **Personal Envoy for Central Asia** further demonstrated the importance the Bulgarian Chairmanship attached to continuity and engagement with the five Central Asian participating States. President Ahtisaari maintained contacts at the highest political level in all five States and followed up on issues that had been discussed during the C-i-O's visit in April. Mr. Ahtisaari visited Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan twice in 2004 and Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan once each. In his discussions, President Ahtisaari focused especially on elections, freedom of the media and other issues related to political, economic and environmental developments in the individual countries.

Moldova

The Bulgarian Chairmanship was actively involved in seeking solutions to the Transdniestrian conflict. The Chairmanship's efforts began with consultations between the mediators convened in Sofia during the month of January, resulting in promising reactions from both the Moldovan and the Transdniestrian parties to the proposals tabled. As a result, subsequent consultations between the mediators were held in February in Belgrade, culminating in the first round in negotiations in the five-sided format in Tiraspol and Chisinau in April. These were the first such talks in six months. A follow-up meeting was held in May.

The C-i-O visited Moldova in June, meeting all the parties and voicing support for the documents proposed by the mediators as a basis for a political settlement, as well as expressing concern over the lack of progress in the implementation of the OSCE Istanbul Summit commitments concerning the Russian military forces.

The Chairmanship also closely followed the developments linked to the crisis involving the Moldovan schools teaching in the Latin script in Transnistria. Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister Petko Draganov visited Moldova in July to assist in the efforts of the OSCE Mission in Moldova to find solutions to the rising tensions between the two parties over this issue.

As the crisis deepened, the C-i-O appointed former Bulgarian President Petar Stoyanov as his **Personal Envoy for Moldova**. President Stoyanov's visit to Chisinau and Tiraspol in September demonstrated the Chairmanship's commitment to seek an overall settlement of the dispute. However, despite the continuing work of the mediators and some positive developments, during the first half of the year, there was a lack of progress towards a comprehensive political settlement.

The Chairmanship tried to break the deadlock in the negotiation process by convening a meeting of the mediators in Sofia on 11 and 12 October. This was followed by a meeting in Varna, Bulgaria, on 8 and 9 November, with the participation of the mediators and representatives of the Republic of Moldova and of Transdniestria. Work on confidence- and security-building measures were carried out up to the end of the year.

In all contacts, the Chairmanship called upon the parties to the conflict to establish and to strengthen a working dialogue which could lead to a more effective and lasting solution. Additional efforts are still needed to find a formula for a comprehensive settlement on the basis of a strengthening of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova while ensuring a special status for Transdniestria.

Belarus

A representative of the Chairmanship paid a visit to Minsk in March for consultations on relations between the OSCE and Belarus, during which preparations for the visit of the C-i-O were also discussed. The C-i-O visited Minsk in June in order to discuss ways of enhancing co-operation between the OSCE and the host country, in the light of OSCE commitments and to collect first-hand information on the situation in Belarus. The C-i-O also took the occasion to convey the OSCE's message in relation to some issues of concern, such as the trend towards the deterioration of the situation with civil society, NGOs, the mass media and political parties. In anticipation of the parliamentary elections of 17 October, the C-i-O stressed the need to conduct a free and fair poll. The Chairmanship supported the OSCE Office in Minsk in pursuing the activities set out in its mandate, in co-operation with the Belarusian authorities and civil society, in order to promote the country's performance vis-à-vis the Organization's principles and standards.

Ukraine

From the time of his meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Gryshchenko on 14 April 2004, the C-i-O was forthright in outlining the assistance that the OSCE could provide to the electoral process in Ukraine, beginning with the first round of the process on 31 October 2004. Similarly, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine was involved in the run-up to the elections through implementation of the project, "Assistance in further improvement of the election process in Ukraine".

The Presidential elections in Ukraine put that country and the OSCE in the spotlight. The OSCE/ODIHR were outspoken in their criticism of some aspects of the election process. Following the second round of voting on 21 November, and the subsequent electoral crisis, the C-i-O, in a statement issued on 24 November, urged the Ukrainian authorities "to investigate, in a proactive and timely manner, the irregularities which were identified". He

also designated OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubiš as his envoy to join other international mediators in the round table discussions mandated to facilitate an end to the crisis.

On 4 December, the C-i-O issued a statement welcoming the decision of the Supreme Court of Ukraine to declare the second round of the presidential elections invalid and pledged full support of the OSCE in the re-run of the vote. He noted that the Supreme Court decision echoed the findings of international observers including the OSCE/ODIHR and said that “the decision will make it possible to find a peaceful outcome to the present political crisis”. He called on the Ukrainian authorities to ensure a fair campaign and underlined, in particular, the need for unbiased reporting by State-controlled media.

Ukraine was also on the agenda of the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia. In his opening remarks, the C-i-O said that the winners in the process were democracy and the rule of law, and emphasized the OSCE’s key role in election monitoring and as facilitator. He called on participating States to support the international monitoring effort for the re-run of the second round.

The OSCE was able to launch a significant monitoring effort, with over a thousand monitors in Ukraine for the re-run on 26 December.

12. Co-operation with other international organizations

Further development of relations between the OSCE and partner organizations and institutions was one of the priorities of the Bulgarian Chairmanship in 2004.

The establishment of closer working relations with the United Nations was supported throughout the year by the Chairmanship. In July 2004, the C-i-O took an active part in the United Nations Security Council meeting with regional organizations on co-operation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes. The C-i-O, together with the Secretary General, participated at the invitation of the United Nations, together with high-level representatives of the European Union and NATO, in a meeting which provided for an exchange of views on the way forward in Kosovo. In October, the Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister addressed the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on co-operation between the UN and the OSCE.

Efforts were made throughout the year to further develop relations between the OSCE and the European Union. Meetings between the OSCE and the EU Ministerial Troikas were held during the Irish and the Dutch Presidencies, on the margins of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in January and July 2004. Further meetings of the OSCE and the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) troikas were hosted in Vienna in February and October 2004. The fact that the Netherlands held the EU Presidency and was part of the OSCE Troika at the same time made matters easier. Close ties were also maintained by the Bulgarian Chairmanship with the EU Presidency, the Council Secretariat and the European Commission at the policy level. One major concern for the Bulgarian Chairmanship was also to maintain a dialogue with EU member States on relevant developments within the OSCE and to promote the formulation of EU positions supportive of the OSCE’s policy. In order to promote a flow of information and co-ordination, several representatives of the EU were invited to address the Permanent Council, including the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Ireland and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as well as the EU Commissioner for External Relations.

Relations with the Council of Europe featured especially prominently on the OSCE agenda this year. The C-i-O of the OSCE responded positively to the initiative of the Norwegian Chairmanship of the CoE Committee of Ministers to strengthen synergy and launch closer co-operation between the two organizations. This was one of the main items on the agenda of the meeting between Foreign Ministers Passy of Bulgaria and Petersen of Norway, which took place in Sofia on 13 October. The Ministers agreed that there was scope for enhanced interaction to ensure that the OSCE and the CoE avoided unnecessary duplication and fully met the expectations of participating and member States. On 2 December, the OSCE Permanent Council adopted a decision on enhanced co-operation between the OSCE and the CoE which will, *inter alia*, lead to the establishment of an OSCE/CoE co-ordination group.

The Chairmanship made a systematic effort to have a regular dialogue with NATO. In the course of the year, the C-i-O addressed the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in January and November respectively, bringing issues related to OSCE-NATO co-operation to the attention of the member and partner States. In January, on the occasion of his address to the NAC, the C-i-O met with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer to discuss further enhancement of OSCE-NATO co-operation at all levels. Members of the OSCE Troika were also involved in working-level consultations between the OSCE Secretariat and representatives of the NATO International Staff.

The Chairmanship also participated in the regular Tripartite Meeting between the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN, as well as the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the ICRC, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the target-oriented meeting at expert level in an expanded tripartite format, hosted by the OSCE, in Vienna. The Tripartite Meeting was devoted to addressing threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century and co-operation in the field, while the target-oriented meeting considered activities of, and co-operation between, partner international organizations in the Southern Caucasus.

The Chairmanship conducted a series of consultations with partner organizations on the ad hoc consultative mechanism. This mechanism, proposed in the Maastricht Strategy, is a tool offered by the OSCE as a flexible framework for consultation through the initiation of contacts with relevant organizations and institutions whenever a specific threat arises or is intensified.

A strengthening of co-operation with other regional and subregional organizations was also promoted by the Chairmanship. In May 2004, the C-i-O participated in the Arab Summit held in Tunisia.

13. Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

In 2004, further to the decisions adopted at the Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht, there was a marked increase in contacts at various levels between the OSCE and its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation. Based on the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, the participating States adopted Permanent Council Decision No. 571, in which they decided, *inter alia*, to identify additional fields of co-operation and interaction with the Partners for Co-operation for the

purpose of enhancing mutual security and to encourage them to voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles and commitments as a means to further interaction with the OSCE. A comprehensive report was developed by the Informal Group of Friends, chaired by the Ambassador of Finland, taking into account all three OSCE dimensions. As a result, the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia adopted a decision (MC.DEC/17/04) on the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation, emphasizing the importance of the report (PC.DEL/366/04/Rev. 4), which is based on an exchange of various views, including with the OSCE Partners for Co-operation. The decision tasks the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation to remain seized of the matter.

The Partner States were also **invited more frequently** as observers to Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation meetings. They participated in more regular meetings of the Mediterranean and Asian Contact Groups, which bring together the OSCE participating and Partner States.

Representatives of the Partners for Co-operation took part in the OSCE events to promote awareness regarding tolerance and non-discrimination, the Annual Security Review Conference and a Technical Experts Conference on Border Management and Security organized by the OSCE and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The OSCE-Japan Conference, co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the OSCE, on the topic: “The Search for Effective Conflict Prevention in the New Security Circumstances: European Security Mechanisms and Security in Asia”, took place on 15 and 16 March, in Tokyo. The Chairmanship was represented by the Bulgarian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, who emphasized that the Conference afforded an excellent opportunity to share experiences on conducting crisis prevention activities and to discuss ways of further promoting dialogue between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation on security matters. The participants called attention to the fact that both regions faced similar challenges and had a common interest in finding appropriate responses to them in the new security environment. A number of proposals for follow-up were made, and were discussed during the meetings of the Asian Contact Group. Following the OSCE-Japan Conference, an informal meeting of its participants with participants in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) workshop on preventive diplomacy, co-chaired by Japan and Thailand, took place on 16 and 17 March in Tokyo with the objective of sharing among ARF members the conclusions of the OSCE-Japan Conference and the experience of the OSCE in preventive diplomacy.

The annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminar, jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and the OSCE, on the topic: “Addressing Threats to Security in the Twenty-First Century: Interaction between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation”, was convened in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 18 and 19 November 2004. At the meeting, the C-i-O said that the OSCE was happy to share its considerable experience in confidence-building and in fostering tolerance and non-discrimination with the Mediterranean countries as a contribution to building a just and lasting peace in the region. A number of concrete suggestions were made, e.g. on further joint work on issues of tolerance and respect, and on the question of the integration of migrants, including their rights and obligations, and those of the hosting countries. Several participants proposed that the OSCE play a role in the Palestinian elections scheduled for 9 January 2005.

A highlight of 2004 was the OSCE's engagement in Afghanistan. In response to an invitation from the Government of Afghanistan, the OSCE deployed an **OSCE Election Support Team** to Afghanistan. This was the first time the OSCE has deployed an operation outside its region.

Closer and deeper interaction between the OSCE and Partner States was highlighted during the two **Ministerial Troika meetings** with the counterparts from the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation that were chaired by Foreign Minister Passy on 5 December on the eve of the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia. The participants felt that, in 2004, significant steps had been taken on joint work and activities, and that the outcome provided a solid basis for further work next year.

In his remarks to the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia on 6 December, the C-i-O called on his colleagues to go even further in reaching out, since the OSCE had a lot to offer.

Annex 1 to the Activity Report

**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE
concluding the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism held in Berlin**

Distinguished delegates,

Let me sum up the proceedings of this Conference in what I would like to call “Berlin Declaration”. Based on consultations I conclude that OSCE participating States,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which proclaims that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, religion or other status,

Recalling that Article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights state that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling also the decisions of the OSCE Ministerial Councils at Porto and Maastricht, as well as previous decisions and documents, and committing ourselves to intensify efforts to combat anti-Semitism in all its manifestations and to promote and strengthen tolerance and non-discrimination,

Recognizing that anti-Semitism, following its most devastating manifestation during the Holocaust, has assumed new forms and expressions, which, along with other forms of intolerance, pose a threat to democracy, the values of civilization and, therefore, to overall security in the OSCE region and beyond,

Concerned in particular that this hostility toward Jews — as individuals or collectively — on racial, social, and/or religious grounds, has manifested itself in verbal and physical attacks and in the desecration of synagogues and cemeteries,

1. Condemn without reserve all manifestations of anti-Semitism, and all other acts of intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, wherever they occur;
2. Also condemn all attacks motivated by anti-Semitism or by any other forms of religious or racial hatred or intolerance, including attacks against synagogues and other religious places, sites and shrines;
3. Declare unambiguously that international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism.

Annex 2 to the Activity Report

**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE
concluding the OSCE Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against
Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination held in Brussels**

Distinguished delegates,

Let me sum up the proceedings of this Conference in what I would like to call "Brussels Declaration". Based on consultations I conclude that OSCE participating States,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Recalling in particular that Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights state that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

Recalling the Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (MC.DEC/4/03) as well as previous decisions and documents, and committing ourselves to intensify efforts to combat racism, xenophobia, discrimination and anti-Semitism and to promote and strengthen tolerance and non-discrimination,

Recalling also the OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism in Berlin on 28 and 29 April 2004 as well as the OSCE Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes in Paris on 16 and 17 June 2004 and their results; and that the Conference in Berlin expressed concern and condemned anti-Semitism as a distinct and specific form of intolerance and developed operational recommendations for combating anti-Semitism,

Recognizing that acts of intolerance pose a threat to democracy, the values of civilization and, therefore, to overall security in the OSCE region and beyond,

1. Condemn without reserve all forms of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism and other acts of intolerance and discrimination, including against Muslims, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, wherever they occur;
2. Condemn organizations and individuals promoting hatred or acts of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, or related intolerance, including against Muslims, and anti-Semitism;

3. Urge participating States to adopt effective measures to combat acts motivated by intolerance and to speak out publicly against such acts;
4. Examine the need for a structural follow up within the OSCE to ensure implementation of the commitments on tolerance and non-discrimination;
5. Reject firmly the identification of terrorism and extremism with any religion, culture, ethnic group, nationality or race;
6. Declare unambiguously that international developments or political issues never justify racism, xenophobia or discrimination.

**REPORT OF THE
CHAIRPERSON OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF FRIENDS ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF PERMANENT COUNCIL
DECISION No. 571**

The OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation

1. Introduction

Relations with the OSCE's Partners for Co-operation evolved throughout the entire CSCE process, and later on, when the CSCE became the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Relevant CSCE/OSCE decisions, notably at the Summit and Ministerial Council levels, were essential in increasing the ongoing dialogue and joint activities. As a result, over the years, a framework of co-operation and additional tools for interaction has been developed with a view to enhancing relations between the OSCE and the Partner States.

The long-standing relationship between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation — Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia — goes back to the beginning of the Helsinki process, and is based on the conviction that “security in Europe is to be considered in the broader context of world security and is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean area as a whole, and that accordingly the process of improving security should not be confined to Europe but should extend to other parts of the world, and in particular to the Mediterranean area” (Helsinki Final Act, 1975).

The Partners for Co-operation in Asia started to foster a flexible dialogue with the CSCE/OSCE in the early 1990s, when the Organization had assumed a more formal structure. This was also a time when the OSCE area was increasingly involved in dealing with new security risks that emerged after the end of the Cold War. Japan's partnership started in 1992, the Republic of Korea's in 1994 and Thailand's in 2000. More recently, in 2003, Afghanistan was welcomed as a Partner State.

The OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, adopted by the Eleventh Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht in 2003, provides the OSCE and Partner States with an opportunity to explore new avenues of co-operation and interaction for the purpose of enhancing mutual security.

— More specifically, the OSCE Strategy, in paragraph 23, states “As threats originating or evolving in adjacent regions are of increasing importance, the OSCE will intensify its co-operation with its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, by early identification of areas of common interest and concern and possibilities for further co-ordinated action. We will encourage them to voluntarily implement the principles and commitments of the OSCE and will co-operate with them in this as appropriate. As a first step towards increased dialogue, we will invite all our Partners for Co-operation to participate on a more frequent basis as observers in Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation meetings. The OSCE will also consider ways in which OSCE norms, principles, commitments and values could be shared

with other regions, in particular neighbouring areas. Contacts with organizations in those areas will be further developed”.

- Paragraph 51 of the Strategy states: “One way of dealing with threats from outside the OSCE region is to seek possibilities for expanding the relevant principles, norms and measures contained in a number of OSCE politico-military documents to adjacent regions. The OSCE is particularly interested in encouraging its Partners for Co-operation and its Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to take part in a number of existing information exchanges and other endeavours in the framework of the OSCE confidence- and security-building measures. Mutual early warning exchanges will be encouraged”.
- Based on the Strategy, the participating States adopted PC.DEC/571/Corr.1, in which they decided:
 - (a) To identify additional fields of co-operation and interaction with the OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation for the purpose of enhancing mutual security;
 - (b) To encourage Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles and commitments, including as a means to further interaction with the OSCE;
 - (c) To explore the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with adjacent areas;
 - (d) To pursue its work on procedures for future applications for partnership;
 - (e) To prepare a report on the outcome of this work to be submitted to the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in 2004.

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) was requested to provide its contribution in accordance with PC.DEC/571/Corr.1 “within its competencies and mandate and in accordance with Decision No. 3 of the Ninth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council (Bucharest, 2001) on fostering the role of the OSCE as a forum for political dialogue”. In this context, the FSC contribution was sent by the Chairperson of the FSC (Austria) and is contained in parts 3 and 4 of this report.

2. Present situation

In the context of the ongoing dialogue and joint activities with the Partners for Co-operation, the OSCE shares its expertise and provides insight into current developments and is open to reciprocal enrichment provided by its Partner States. Interaction with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation takes place at numerous OSCE forums, and covers different areas, including security issues. Partner States are regularly invited to various activities, from Summits and Ministerial Council meetings to Review Conferences and Implementation Meetings, as well as other conferences, seminars and workshops. Partner States meet at a high level with the OSCE Ministerial Troika and the Secretary General, usually on the eve of the annual Ministerial Council meeting. The Partner States are also invited to the Economic Forum and to the Annual Security Review Conference. In the past

two years, with a view to closer interaction, Partner States have been more frequently invited to attend Permanent Council meetings as observers. In 2004, the Bulgarian Chairmanship has invited Partner States to most Permanent Council meetings. They have also been invited to some Forum for Security Co-operation meetings.

The Contact Group meetings with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation serve to strengthen the ongoing dialogue and co-operation between participating States and the Partners for Co-operation, as well as among the Partners themselves. An exchange of information and views on subjects of mutual interest related to the OSCE's *acquis* and activities, including with the Partner States, plays a prominent part in these meetings.

- The Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation was established in 1995, pursuant to the 1994 Budapest Summit decision, which states: “An informal, open-ended contact group, at the level of experts, will be established within the framework of the Permanent Council in Vienna. This group will meet periodically to conduct a dialogue with these non-participating Mediterranean States in order to facilitate the interchange of information of mutual interest and the generation of ideas”.
- The Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation was set up in 2003 pursuant to the Permanent Council Decision No. 430, taking note of and welcoming the report contained in PC.DEL/344/01/Rev.3, which refers to the setting up of “an informal contact group with the Asian partners which will enable the Asian partners to keep abreast of events and activities taking place in the OSCE area and the participating States to find out about the main issues concerning their region”.

Joint conferences, seminars and workshops are organized with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners. These include, for example, the annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminars and the Conferences with the Asian Partners. In 2003, a Mediterranean Seminar on the Comprehensive Approach to Security: the OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region, took place in Aqaba, Jordan, and a Workshop on the Applicability of OSCE CSBMs in Northeast Asia Revisited, was held in Seoul. In March 2004, an OSCE-Japan Conference on The Search for Effective Conflict Prevention in the New Security Circumstances — European Security Mechanisms and Security in Asia, took place in Tokyo. The 2004 Mediterranean Seminar on Addressing Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century: Interaction between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, was held on 18 and 19 November 2004 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

Both Contact Group meetings and the Mediterranean Seminars and Asian Partner Conferences have been characterized by increasing interaction and dialogue. There has also been increasing interaction between the two Contact Groups. Preparations for Contact Group meetings held at the level of Contact Points from both participating and Partner States have proved useful.

On an operational level, Partner States are invited to send observers to electoral missions of the ODIHR and to second, on a voluntary basis, mission members to OSCE field missions.

The Parliamentary Dimension

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly holds an annual Mediterranean Conference with delegations from the parliaments of the Partners for Co-operation. In addition, seminars on topics that are of interest to the Partners as well as to participating States are organized in conjunction with this Conference. Parliamentarians from the Partner States are invited to major Parliamentary Assembly Conferences; during the Winter and Annual Sessions, a side-event is devoted to co-operation. Parliamentarians from the Partner States also participate in election observation missions of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Parliamentary Assembly also sent an observation mission to the presidential election in Algeria in 2004.

In addition, recently, parliamentary delegations from the Partner States were invited to the Conference on Parliamentary Oversight of the Armed Forces, Police and Security Forces in the OSCE Area, which took place in May 2004 in Vienna.

3. Identifying additional fields of co-operation and interaction with the OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation for the purpose of enhancing mutual security

Co-operation and interaction with Partner States should remain voluntary and be driven by demand. Co-operation and interaction could be pursued in the form of dialogue, activities, and where appropriate, concrete projects. Additional co-operation and interaction could be identified in fields, such as:

Anti-terrorism activities

One of the main focuses of the OSCE's counter-terrorism efforts is the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), including the ratification and implementation of the 12 universal anti-terrorism conventions and protocols. The OSCE Action Against Terrorism Unit (ATU) and the ODIHR Co-ordinator on Anti-Terrorism Issues together assess the current status of ratification and implementation of these instruments, and in co-operation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), provide technical assistance to participating States, upon their request, in order to enhance their capabilities for reviewing existing legislation or drafting new legislation necessary to ratify and implement it.

It might be worth considering ways to exchange with the Partner States the experience of the OSCE and Partners in this area, should there be an interest on their part. This might prove useful in their national efforts to ratify and implement the 12 anti-terrorism instruments.

In addition, the ATU is organizing technical workshops to raise awareness and share experience on current and emerging terrorist threats (see also the reference to national workshops on combating money laundering and financing of terrorism, in the Section on economic and environmental activities).

Considering the importance of preventing acts of terrorism and of solidarity with the victims of terrorism, Partner States could be encouraged to explore the possibility of implementing steps included in recent OSCE decisions such as Permanent Council Decisions

No. 617 on further measures to suppress terrorist financing and No. 618 on solidarity with victims of terrorism.

Borders

Illegal cross-border activities pose a threat to security inside and outside the OSCE area. In response, the OSCE is developing a Border Security and Management Concept, and is further focusing on related issues by implementing several projects and specific programmes. Commitments of the OSCE participating States, relating to border security and management may also be shared by the Partners for Co-operation on a voluntary basis.

Economic and environmental activities

The annual Economic Forum is the most important event in the Economic and Environmental Dimension. Therefore, fostering enhanced interest and participation by Partners in the Forum itself, as well as in the preparatory meetings, is important. In 2005, the Thirteenth Meeting of the Economic Forum will take place in Prague from 23 to 27 May. The theme of the Forum will be "Demographic Trends, Migration and Integrating Persons belonging to National Minorities: Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development in the OSCE Area".

For the first time in 2004, with a view to helping to broaden co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners in the economic and environmental dimension, a side event on human resource development was held on the margins of the Twelfth Economic Forum. A similar side event with the Asian Partners for Co-operation has been proposed for the Forum in 2005.

The active participation of the Partner States in the OSCE Economic Forum and the preparatory meetings is welcome. Their participation provides an opportunity to exchange lessons learned and, thus, also to help identify potential co-operative activities in the future.

The Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) has organized national workshops, bringing together international consultants with national experts to discuss the development and/or strengthening of relevant legislative and administrative tools. In some of the countries, follow-up round tables have been organized and draft legislation to combat money laundering is currently being channelled to the various parliaments.

Consideration could also be given to national workshops on combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism, the concept of which the OSCE developed jointly with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Through the workshops, the OCEEA would provide expert legal assistance in facilitating the implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. This assistance is co-ordinated with the UNODC's Global Programme against Money Laundering, and the assistance conforms to the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, and the UN model law on money laundering.

Trafficking in all its forms

Subjects related to trafficking in all its forms have been discussed among participating and Partner States at relevant OSCE meetings, including at the Contact Groups and other

events with Partner States. For example, the co-chairpersons' summary of the OSCE-Japan Conference (March 2004, Tokyo), states that there are many OSCE activities that could serve as useful examples for Asia, as countries in the region consider steps to enhance preventive diplomacy. There may be scope for collaboration on the efforts undertaken by the OSCE and the ASEAN Regional Forum in tackling transnational and non-traditional security challenges. Such a common focus could provide an excellent basis for exchanges and cross-learning between the two organizations.

One of the proposals in particular makes reference to considering, with regard to the issue of SALW and trafficking in human beings, the arrangement of joint events with interested partners in Asia and the OSCE, taking into account that the two regions could benefit greatly by jointly addressing and combating such transboundary and transregional problems. Such events could be organized within the framework of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation in Vienna, with the participation of OSCE Partner States and member States of regional organizations outside the OSCE region. Partners have expressed particular interest in exploring these areas.

Human dimension meetings

All the human dimension meetings are fully open to the Partner States (both government representatives and civil society/NGO representatives, as is the case for the participating States).

The meetings that the ODIHR organizes each year in the human dimension sphere (the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw, and the Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings in Vienna) are open to the OSCE Partner States.

The involvement of representatives of civil society from Partner States in meetings related to the human dimension would be beneficial and conducive to sharing information and building on partnerships. Activities involving the ODIHR, such as workshops with Partner States, could be foreseen to exchange views on the holding and organization of elections, which, *inter alia*, could be attended by experts or national electoral commissioners.

Election observation

The Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation are invited to provide short-term observers (STOs) to ODIHR's election observation missions (EOMs).

For the first time, in response to an invitation of the Algerian Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdelaziz Belkadem, a special delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly observed the presidential elections held in Algeria in April 2004.

At the request of Afghanistan and in agreement with the United Nations, the expertise of the OSCE/ODIHR was successfully utilized in assisting in the election process in that country through the dispatch of an election support team in October 2004. The OSCE could consider the possibility of a similar role in other Partner States if requested.

Tolerance

In the relations of the OSCE and the Partner States, promoting tolerance is of particular significance. The Partner States made an important contribution to the three events in 2004 on anti-Semitism (Berlin, April); racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet and hate crimes (Paris, June); and tolerance and the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination (Brussels, September). They should also be involved in the preparations for further activities addressing problems of intolerance.

Freedom of the media

The meetings and conferences organized by the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media are open to the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation.

For example, the annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminar in 2002 (Rhodes, Greece) focused on the media and new technologies: implications for governments, international organizations and civil society. The Seminar was preceded by a Workshop on Freedom of Expression and New Technologies in Vienna.

Further, Partner States were invited to the Conference on Guaranteeing Freedom of the Media on the Internet, held in June 2004 in Vienna.

Education and training

Ensuring equal access to education, and the promotion of tolerance and democratic values are part of the OSCE values and commitments and have been seen as a long-term goal of the Organization. Sharing information on these commitments with the Partners for Co-operation could be beneficial for enhancing relations. Ways to further explore this issue might include:

- Staff members of the ministries of foreign affairs and of the delegations of Partner States dealing with OSCE matters could be invited to participate, on an individual basis, in the OSCE General Orientation Programme, provided that their participation was co-ordinated with the Training Section and that the relevant costs were covered by the Partner State concerned or by a sponsoring participating State.
- Students and young professionals from Partner States (such as Afghanistan) could be given an opportunity to take part in the Master's Programme of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. As alternatives to full attendance of the programme, part-time attendance as researchers or short-term visits/exchanges might be considered.
- Participation by Partners in future OSCE events (seminars, workshops, and conferences) on education, the promotion of tolerance and democratic values could be encouraged, and participating States could be urged to facilitate the participation of Partner States in OSCE and OSCE-related activities.

Side events at OSCE meetings

To promote co-operation with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners, side events could be organized to specifically address subjects of common concern, in parallel with some

of the main OSCE meetings. In June 2004, for the first time, a side event with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation took place on the margins of the Twelfth Economic Forum in Prague. The aim of the meeting was to promote co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners, given the interest they had expressed in the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension. A side event on election observation was organized for the Partners, also for the first time, during the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in 2004.

Side events could also be arranged on the margins of other major OSCE forums, such as the Annual Security Review Conference.

Partnership activities in Partner States and in participating States

Partnership activities may be organized in participating States or Partner States. Participating States are further encouraged to host partnership activities.

In response to an invitation by Partner States, visits, briefings and workshops could be organized in the Partner States on subjects to be mutually identified by the participating and Partner States, regarding which the OSCE or the organizing State has gained extensive experience. In the host State, such activities might involve not only OSCE experts, but also local officials, experts, parliamentarians, the media, academic institutions, civil society, NGOs and so on, for the purpose of transmitting to a wider audience the OSCE experience on specific subjects. Such activities would complement, *inter alia*, the annual Mediterranean Seminars and OSCE Conferences with the Asian Partners. They could be jointly funded through contributions by the Partner States, as has been the case when events were co-organized, i.e., the annual Mediterranean Seminar and the OSCE-Asian Partner Conferences.

Activities in Partner States could include organizing presentations by OSCE staff and representatives of the OSCE institutions on the main activities of the Organization. The participation of Partners could be facilitated by participating States that wish to defray the relevant costs.

Partner States have availed themselves of the opportunity to send their Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high-level officials to address OSCE meetings. Consideration could also be given to visits by the OSCE Chairmanship and staff to the Partner States and to relevant regional organizations. An exchange of views on such visits in general, including themes and substance to be discussed, could take place in the Permanent Council with the participation of the Partner States. Preparations for such visits and related activities could take place in the Contact Group meetings.

Voluntary contributions by participating and Partner States for joint projects

With a view to further developing joint projects such as the strengthening of border management, consideration could be given to co-operation based on contributions from participating and Partner States. Japan has set an example of the active role that a Partner State can play in contributing to various OSCE projects and activities.

Secondments/internships

Secondments/internships represent a relevant means for enhancing co-operation with our Partners in accordance with established practice. So far, two Partner States have seconded mission members. Interns from three Partner States have been liaised with the External Co-operation Section.

Young diplomats or graduate students from the Partner States could be further encouraged to apply for internships in the Secretariat, other OSCE institutions and field operations. With a view to gaining insight into the OSCE experience, secondments/internships by the Partner States to the OSCE Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Centre (in particular, the FSC Support Unit and the Operations Planning Unit, including in the analysis and research field) could be suggested.

Short-term visits to missions (PC.DEC/233)

Partner States should be further encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunity to send their representatives on short-term visits to OSCE missions.

Preparations at ambassadorial level for high-level meetings of the OSCE Ministerial Troika with the Foreign Ministers of the Partner States

Prior to the high-level OSCE Ministerial Troika meetings with the representatives from Partner States that usually take place on the eve of Ministerial Council or Summit meetings, preparatory meetings could take place in Vienna at the level of ambassadors (OSCE Troika, Secretariat and Partner States) to better plan and prepare for the outcome of such meetings. In addition, briefings could be organized in preparation for Ministerial Council Meetings.

Briefings for representatives of Partner States at the OSCE Secretariat

The External Co-operation Section, in co-operation, *inter alia*, with the Press and Public Information Section, has organized workshops and briefings for representatives of Partner States on goals, activities and structures of the OSCE. Briefings could also take place in co-operation with participating States. For example, in 2003, Germany sponsored two visits of officials from Afghanistan to take part in briefings at the OSCE Secretariat.

Occasional joint meetings of the Mediterranean and Asian Contact Groups

Based on the interest expressed by Partner States in cross-cutting themes, such as trafficking, gender issues, anti-terrorism and borders, consideration could be given to organizing joint meetings of the Mediterranean and Asian Contact Groups with the participation of experts who could give briefings on relevant subjects.

Confidence-building in the Mediterranean region

The Charter for European Security adopted at the Istanbul Summit in 1999 declared that, "We will encourage the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to draw on our expertise in setting up structures and mechanisms in the Mediterranean for early warning, preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention".

A recent example of furthering confidence-building is the informal working visit by OSCE Mediterranean Partners that took place in May 2004, at the invitation of Slovenia, for the purpose of theoretical and practical presentations of selected OSCE CSBMs. The event also included a simulation of an evaluation visit modelled on the 1999 Vienna Document.

A proposal for a possible conflict prevention centre for the Mediterranean region was recalled at the Mediterranean Seminar on Confidence-Building Measures and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures: the OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region, which took place in Portorož, in October 2000. The proposal was brought up again at the Permanent Council in March 2003 by the Foreign Minister of Tunisia, as well as by a number of participants in the Mediterranean Seminars held in Aqaba, Jordan, in October 2003 and Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2004.

Possible ways to promote dialogue and co-operation in the politico-military dimension

The following additional fields of co-operation and interaction for the purpose of enhancing mutual security have been identified with the OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation:

- Participation in FSC meetings on a more regular basis. As a first step towards increased dialogue, Partners will be invited to participate at the initiative of the Chairperson, where the agenda includes issues that could be of particular interest to them, thus rendering politico-military activities, including decision-making mechanisms, more transparent;
- Provision of a platform for Partners' inputs through the Security Dialogue in the FSC (i.e., invitations to defence ministers or senior representatives of organizations, presentations on defence planning by the Partners);
- Participation in FSC-related conferences, for example follow-up conferences on such matters as the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security;
- Organization of side events with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation during major meetings and conferences to which they are invited, in order to promote co-operation and to enable the Partners to become better acquainted with the OSCE and more specifically with the FSC *acquis*;
- Voluntary extension of invitations by participating States to Partners, as has already occurred in some cases, to visits, demonstrations, seminars and "open-house" events with prepared agendas regarding the implementation of CSBMs;
- Voluntary extension of invitations to Partners for Co-operation to participate in events organized under Chapter IV of the Vienna Document (airbase visits, visits to military facilities, demonstrations of new types of major weapons and equipment systems, observation visits);
- Based on the experience gained by the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the Implementation of Articles II and IV of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well

as the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, consideration of the possibility of exchanging views on how CMEP (civil-military emergency preparedness) activities could serve as a confidence- security-building measure;

- Organization of an informal seminar on SALW, in line with the second meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)/Inter-Sessional Group on CSBMs in 2005. ARF members could be invited to participate, providing an opportunity to follow up the discussions at the 2004 Japan-OSCE Conference in Tokyo. Partners for Co-operation could be invited to this event;
- Development of channels of communication, especially between the military establishments and reciprocal visits of military representatives;
- Regular contacts and possible joint activities of the OSCE/FSC with other regional organizations (League of Arab States, ASEAN/ARF, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, African Union), including mutual participation in formal events (e.g., Annual Security Review Conference, Annual Implementation Assessment Meetings, ASEAN Regional Forum/Inter-Sessional Group) and joint technical workshops;
- Exploration of the possibility of creating a special home page for Partners in order to share information through the Internet;
- Dissemination of information on FSC-related issues and activities that are of interest to Partner States and vice versa;
- Consideration, if requested, of the possibility of translating the SALW document as well as the Best Practice Guides into the languages of Partner countries.

Researcher-in-Residence Programme

Candidates from the Mediterranean and Asian Partner States are welcome to apply for participation in the Researcher-in-Residence Programme, which is designed to give researchers working on OSCE or OSCE-related topics the opportunity to carry out research in the OSCE archives in Prague.

Research Institute Network

Consideration could be given to establishing a research network, including research institutes and strategic centres in the Partner States. The Asia academic network, as proposed in 2003, could serve as a channel for an exchange of forward-looking views between Asia and Europe. In the Mediterranean region, contact could be made with existing networks, such as EuroMeSCo¹, and other institutes and centres in the Mediterranean States.

1 Since its creation in 1996, EuroMeSCo has been adopted by the Barcelona Process as an official confidence-building measure. Currently, EuroMeSCo comprises 39 institutes from all over Europe and the countries of the Mediterranean region.

4. Encouraging Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles and commitments, including as a means to further interaction with the OSCE

With the aim of further developing the concept of OSCE partnership, the participating States have decided to encourage Partners to voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles and commitments. At the same time, they recognize that the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation are members of the United Nations, and therefore they are already bound by international norms and principles shared also by the participating States. Partner States are encouraged, however, to consider benefiting from the OSCE's experience, accumulated over three decades, of applying the concept of comprehensive security in practice, and using it as a source of inspiration.

Partner States and participating States should co-operate in identifying those areas of the OSCE *acquis* where Partner States could initially concentrate, bearing in mind the added value for the Partner States of implementing OSCE norms, principles and commitments.

The OSCE and the participating States could assist them in their efforts.

The OSCE could consider ways of conveying to interested Partner States, other interested States, international organizations and others the essence as well the details of its norms, principles and commitments. A project is underway to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the CSCE in 2005 by publishing a booklet on the OSCE *acquis* and its development, for the benefit of the participating States and Partner States and others alike.

In the politico-military field, the Partner States have already been invited to some military contacts and visits (e.g., FSC.AIAM/36/04).

Additional fields of co-operation in the politico-military dimension could include the following:

- The CPC could provide expertise for a trial exchange of information on plans for the deployment of major weapons and equipment systems, among Mediterranean and Asian Partners, should they express interest (VD 99, Chapter I, paragraphs 13 and 14);
- Upon request of either Partners or participating States, inclusion of Partners' defence planning presentations in the FSC could be considered (VD 99, Chapter II, paragraph 15);
- Dialogue could take place at Partners' initiative, on early warning and crisis management issues (VD 99, Chapter III, paragraphs 16 to 18);
- At the initiative of either Partners or participating States, the CPC could provide expertise for arrangement of a demonstration of new types of major weapons and equipment systems (VD 99, Chapter IV, paragraphs 31 to 35);
- Both participating States and Partners for Co-operation are encouraged to take advantage of measures provided for in the Vienna Document, in a regional context (VD 99, Chapter X);

- Partners for Co-operation and participating States might undertake, on the basis of separate agreements or in the form of regional CSBMs, measures to increase transparency and confidence at the regional level (as listed in VD 99, Chapter X, paragraph 144);
- At the initiative of either Partners for Co-operation or participating States, the CPC could provide expertise on the principles of transparency, restraint in the transfer of conventional weapons and related technology through information exchange (Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers);
- The possibility of assisting with institutional development support by acquainting the Partners with Decision V of the Helsinki'92 Document, outlining a comprehensive agenda, could be considered (“implementing and building on the Helsinki Document 1992” was included in the conclusions of the Istanbul Summit 1999). To this effect, support could be bilateral (FSC Chairperson-Partner) or multilateral (through Contact Group and/or joint PC-FSC-PfC meeting and/or security dialogue);
- Consideration could be given to providing expertise should the Partners wish to set up a regional CPC, if they deem it necessary.

5. Exploring the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with adjacent areas

The OSCE experience of comprehensive security provides a wealth of ideas for addressing issues in the three traditional dimensions of the OSCE, as well as cross-dimensional issues. Therefore, OSCE norms, principles and commitments can also be applied outside the OSCE area and by others than the OSCE Partners for Co-operation. Many of the OSCE norms, principles and commitments are already shared by others, as they are the same as or similar to those contained in conventions and documents agreed on by other international organizations, whether legally or politically binding.

Still, much of the OSCE *acquis* is unique and its usefulness has been proven in practice in the OSCE area.

The wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments by others is facilitated if the norms, principles and commitments can be conveyed in such a form and with such clarity that their usefulness to others can be better assessed.

For example, the OSCE should pay particular attention to keeping its Handbook updated and to making it widely available also in adjacent regions. OSCE commitments in specific areas such as the human dimension and the politico-military dimension could also be made available and explained.

A booklet on the OSCE *acquis* and its development, such as the one being prepared for 2005, should be made widely available.

Translation of OSCE publications into languages widely used in Partner countries and adjacent regions, financed through voluntary contributions, could be considered.

The scope of the wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments depends on the efforts of the OSCE and its participating States, but also on the needs of others and their interest in using them as a source of inspiration when looking for solutions to various issues of comprehensive security.

The OSCE and the participating States should more frequently grasp the opportunity to present relevant norms, principles and commitments for others to consider when tackling issues of comprehensive security.

Other regional organizations provide a major channel enabling the OSCE to reach out to adjacent areas, although they should not be regarded as an alternative to relations with Partner States. Such organizations include the African Union, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN/ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the League of Arab States (LAS), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO).

Representatives of other regional organizations have visited the OSCE and attended its events. Reciprocally, representatives of the OSCE have been invited to their meetings.

Joint activities between the OSCE and regional organizations beyond the OSCE area could be organized within the existing funding possibilities. They might include:

- Joint activities such as technical workshops that could be organized between the OSCE and regional organizations beyond the OSCE region (such as the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the African Union, and ASEAN/ARF), with the involvement of experts from the OSCE participating States and member countries of the regional organizations;
- Possible joint events based on discussions between the OSCE and regional organizations, within the framework of the Permanent Council or the Forum for Security Co-operation, in Vienna or in countries hosting the regional organizations;
- Promotion of participation in the:
 - (a) Annual Security Review Conferences;
 - (b) Annual Implementation Assessment Meetings;
 - (c) Economic Forum Meetings; and
 - (d) Human Dimension Implementation Meetings and Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings.

6. Procedures for future applications for partnership

The issue of applications was last discussed in 2001, when the Permanent Council took note of and welcomed a report on recommendations concerning future applications for partnership, the so-called Ladsous report (PC.DEC/430).

The recommendations and observations contained in the report have been largely taken into account and implemented. In particular:

- The Contact Group with the Asian Partners was established in 2003;
- The Partner States have been increasingly involved in OSCE activities; and
- Relations with other regional organizations have been further developed, but they are not seen as an alternative to relations with Partner States.

The report mentions the following factors in connection with the possible admission of new Partners:

- Existing close relations;
- Sharing by the applicant country of the OSCE's principles, values and objectives;
- The security interests it has in common with the OSCE;
- The value of its partnership to the OSCE and its intention to participate actively in the Organization's work.

The report points out that those factors are neither exclusive nor cumulative; they highlight the idea of "affinity" that should govern any decision on the subject.

When Afghanistan was welcomed as a Partner for Co-operation in 2003, the above report was recalled in the decision (PC.DEC/537).

In discussing procedures, guidelines or criteria for possible new partnership applications, the majority of the delegations of the participating States underscored the importance of continuing to maintain an open and flexible approach. Possible new applications should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and the Ladsous report provides sufficient guidance for discussions.

Two delegations expressed interest in developing more formal criteria or guidelines to allow the participating States to be in a better position to deal with possible applications. The criteria or guidelines could be along the lines of those contained in the Ladsous report. One delegation stressed that the usefulness of geographic contiguity, in particular, should be taken into account.

**CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CO-OPERATION WITH
THE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION AND
ASIAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION,
BASED ON ADOPTED DOCUMENTS**

Helsinki Final Act (1975)

Questions relating to security and co-operation in the Mediterranean

The participating States,

Conscious of the geographical, historical, cultural, economic and political aspects of their relationship with the non-participating Mediterranean States,

Convinced that security in Europe is to be considered in the broader context of world security and is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean area as a whole, and that accordingly the process of improving security should not be confined to Europe but should extend to other parts of the world, and in particular to the Mediterranean area,

Believing that the strengthening of security and the intensification of co-operation in Europe would stimulate positive processes in the Mediterranean region, and expressing their intention to contribute towards peace, security and justice in the region, in which ends the participating States and the non-participating Mediterranean States have a common interest,

Recognizing the importance of their mutual economic relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States, and conscious of their common interest in the further development of co-operation,

Noting with appreciation the interest expressed by the non-participating Mediterranean States in the Conference since its inception, and having duly taken their contributions into account,

Declare their intention:

- To promote the development of good-neighbourly relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, on which their relations are based, and with the United Nations Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States and accordingly, in this context, to conduct their relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States in the spirit of the principles set forth in the Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between participating States;
- To seek, by further improving their relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States, to increase mutual confidence, so as to promote security and stability in the Mediterranean area as a whole;

- To encourage with the non-participating Mediterranean States the development of mutually beneficial co-operation in the various fields of economic activity, especially by expanding commercial exchanges, on the basis of a common awareness of the necessity for stability and progress in trade relations, of their mutual economic interests, and of differences in the levels of economic development, thereby promoting their economic advancement and well-being;
- To contribute to a diversified development of the economies of the non-participating Mediterranean countries, whilst taking due account of their national development objectives, and to co-operate with them, especially in the sectors of industry, science and technology, in their efforts to achieve a better utilization of their resources, thus promoting a more harmonious development of economic relations;
- To intensify their efforts and their co-operation on a bilateral and multilateral basis with the non-participating Mediterranean States directed towards the improvement of the environment of the Mediterranean, especially the safeguarding of the biological resources and ecological balance of the sea, by appropriate measures including the prevention and control of pollution; to this end, and in view of the present situation, to co-operate through competent international organizations and in particular within the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
- To promote further contacts and co-operation with the non-participating Mediterranean States in other relevant fields.

In order to advance the objectives set forth above, the participating States also declare their intention of maintaining and amplifying the contacts and dialogue as initiated by the CSCE with the non-participating Mediterranean States to include all the States of the Mediterranean, with the purpose of contributing to peace, reducing armed forces in the region, strengthening security, lessening tensions in the region, and widening the scope of co-operation, ends in which all share a common interest, as well as with the purpose of defining further common objectives.

The participating States would seek, in the framework of their multilateral efforts, to encourage progress and appropriate initiatives and to proceed to an exchange of views on the attainment of the above purposes.

Follow-up Meetings

In the follow-up meetings of the CSCE after Helsinki, the Mediterranean States were invited to make spoken and written contributions. Further, a number of specific meetings were held on Mediterranean issues mostly relating to the economic, social, environmental, scientific, and cultural fields, to which the Mediterranean States were invited to participate (Valletta, 1979; Venice 1984; Palma de Mallorca, 1990; and Valletta, 1993).

Paris Summit 1990

Guidelines for the future

(...)

Mediterranean

We consider that the fundamental political changes that have occurred in Europe have a positive relevance to the Mediterranean region. Thus, we will continue efforts to strengthen security and co-operation in the Mediterranean as an important factor for stability in Europe. We welcome the Report of the Palma de Mallorca Meeting on the Mediterranean, the results of which we all support.

We are concerned with the continuing tensions in the region, and renew our determination to intensify efforts towards finding just, viable and lasting solutions, through peaceful means, to outstanding crucial problems, based on respect for the principles of the Final Act.

We wish to promote favourable conditions for a harmonious development and diversification of relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States. Enhanced co-operation with these States will be pursued with the aim of promoting economic and social development and thereby enhancing stability in the region. To this end, we will strive together with these countries towards a substantial narrowing of the prosperity gap between Europe and its Mediterranean neighbours.

Prague Ministerial Council Meeting 1992

Chapter X: Relations with non-participating States

45. The Council requests the Helsinki Follow-up Meeting to recommend practical ways to establish a flexible dialogue between the CSCE and interested non-participating States or groups of States, for example through contacts between the said States and the Chairman-in-Office of the Council or of the Committee of Senior Officials.

Helsinki Summit Document (1992)

Chapter IV: Relations (...) with non-participating States (...)

(1) The new tasks before the CSCE require clearer relations and closer contacts with international organizations, in particular with the United Nations, and non-participating States.

(...)

(9) In accordance with paragraph 45 of the Prague Document, the participating States intend to deepen their co-operation and develop a substantial relationship with non-participating States, such as Japan, which display an interest in the CSCE, share its principles and objectives, and are actively engaged in European co-operation through relevant organizations.

(10) To this end, Japan will be invited to attend CSCE meetings, including those of Heads of State and Government, the CSCE Council, the Committee of Senior Officials and other appropriate CSCE bodies which consider specific topics of expanded consultation and co-operation.

(11) Representatives of Japan may contribute to such meetings, without participating in the preparation and adoption of decisions, on subjects in which Japan has a direct interest and/or wishes to co-operate actively with the CSCE.

(...)

(7) Recalling the provisions of the Final Act and other CSCE relevant documents and consistent with established practice, the non-participating Mediterranean States will continue to be invited to contribute to CSCE activities.

(8) Measures to widen the scope of co-operation with non-participating Mediterranean States are set forth in Chapter X:

Chapter X: Mediterranean

(1) The participating States recognize that the changes which have taken place in Europe are relevant to the Mediterranean region and that, conversely, economic, social, political and security developments in that region can have a bearing on Europe. In this context, the CSO will seek to relate issues regarding co-operation in the Mediterranean to the goals of the CSCE process and will examine, as appropriate, practical modalities for possible contributions to the CSCE by non-participating Mediterranean States.

(2) The Chairman-in-Office of the CSO is encouraged to foster contacts with non-participating Mediterranean States in order to establish an effective information exchange.

(3) Non-participating Mediterranean States will be invited to future review conferences to make contributions concerning security and co-operation in the Mediterranean.

(4) A CSCE Mediterranean Seminar will be convened under the auspices of the CSO in the course of the year following this Follow-up Meeting. It will meet for a duration of no more than five working days. The date, location and agenda will be decided upon by the CSO.

(5) The Seminar can be attended by non-participating Mediterranean States, to which invitations will be extended.

(6) The agenda of the Seminar may comprise topics such as the environment, demographic trends or economic development and other areas of bilateral and multilateral co-operation between CSCE participating States and non-participating Mediterranean States reflecting the general framework of principles of co-operation in the Mediterranean region as provided for in the Final Act and other CSCE documents. The Seminar will not produce a document with commitments binding on CSCE participating States.

3rd Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Committee (1993)

In December 1993 in Vienna, following a request from Japan, the participating States decided to invite Japan to attend its plenary meetings and to make contributions.

25th Committee of Senior Officials (1994)

The Committee of Senior Officials,

- Having examined the requests of five non-participating Mediterranean States (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia), which share CSCE principles and objectives, for a closer and more structured association with the activities of the CSCE,
- Bearing in mind the relevant provisions of the Helsinki Document (Chapters IV, 7-8 and X, 1-6), the decision of the 23rd Meeting of the CSO (23-CSO/Journal No. 3, Annex 4) and Chapter IX of the Decisions of the Rome Council Meeting on this subject,
- Committed to the further development of relations between the CSCE and the above-mentioned non-participating Mediterranean States,

Took the following decision:

1. Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia will be regularly invited to meetings of the CSCE Council of Ministers, as well as to Review Conferences. They will not take part in the preparation or adoption of decisions, but will be allowed to make contributions on matters pertaining to security and co-operation in the Mediterranean,
2. They will be invited to regular meetings with the CSCE Troika both to facilitate a more structured dialogue on developments within the CSCE and to clarify issues of common interest which may be developed further. In this context the Troika may make proposals with respect to invitations on a case-by-case basis to the above States to meetings of the CSCE bodies and the organization of ad hoc seminars in order to discuss Mediterranean issues,
3. They may also be invited on a case-by-case basis to seminars and other ad hoc meetings on subjects in which they have a special interest,
4. They will have access to all CSCE official documents, under the responsibility of the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE assisted by the Secretary General of the CSCE,
5. They will have the right to submit their views, on issues of mutual interest, to the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE, who will circulate them to all participating States.

The CSO will review the above decision on a regular basis in the light of experience, bearing in mind the extent to which the States concerned continue to share CSCE principles and objectives.

[Jordan became a Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation in May 1998 — see below].

27th Committee of Senior Officials (1994)

The Committee of Senior Officials,

Noting with appreciation the letter of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea to the Chairman-in-Office expressing the interest of the Republic of Korea in the work and experience of the CSCE and its desire to contribute to the cause of the CSCE,

Took the following decision:

1. The Republic of Korea will be invited to the Budapest Review Conference to observe proceedings in the Plenary, as well as in those working groups where it has a special interest;
2. The Republic of Korea will be invited to attend, and make contributions to, the forthcoming CSCE Summit;
3. The Republic of Korea may be invited on a case-by-case basis to CSCE seminars and other ad hoc meetings on subjects in which it has a special interest;
4. The Secretary General of the CSCE is requested to make arrangements for a more regular exchange of information (including access to official CSCE documents) between the CSCE and the Republic of Korea.

The Committee of Senior Officials will review the above decision in the light of experience, on the basis of the relevant provisions (Chapter IV, paragraphs 9-11) of the Helsinki Document 1992 as well as other criteria that may be developed by the forthcoming CSCE Summit concerning relations with non-participating States.

28th Meeting of the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials (1994)

During this meeting organizational modalities for the Budapest Summit 1994 were adopted, deciding to invite the non-participating Mediterranean States, Japan and Korea.

Budapest Summit (1994)

Chapter X: Mediterranean

1. The non-participating Mediterranean States have had a long-standing relationship with, and have shown keen interest in the work of, the CSCE since its beginning. Reaffirming their conviction that strengthening security and co-operation in the Mediterranean is important for stability in the CSCE region, the participating States welcome the agreements recently concluded in the Middle East peace process. Recalling the Helsinki Document 1992 and confirming subsequent relevant decisions, the participating States decide to intensify the

dialogue with the five the non-participating Mediterranean States referred to in the decision taken by the 25th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials.

2. To this end, and responding to the interest shown by these non-participating Mediterranean States, they take the following decisions:

- (a) An informal, open-ended contact group, at the level of experts, will be established within the framework of the Permanent Council in Vienna. This group will meet periodically to conduct a dialogue with these non-participating Mediterranean States in order to facilitate the interchange of information of mutual interest and the generation of ideas.
- (b) Building on the tradition of Mediterranean seminars already in existence within the CSCE, the participating States decide to hold a seminar in 1995 on the topic of the CSCE's experience in the field of confidence-building measures. The participating States also envisage holding future seminars on topics of mutual interest. They welcome the offer made by the Arab Republic of Egypt to host the above seminar, and encourage the other four non-participating Mediterranean States to make similar offers.
- (c) The Chairman-in-Office will conduct during his/her term in office high-level consultations between the CSCE, represented by the Troika and the Secretary General, and the non-participating Mediterranean States.
- (d) In order to consider the proposals that originate in the contact group, seminars and high-level consultations, the Chairman-in-Office will invite during the course of the year representatives of these non-participating Mediterranean States, as appropriate, to any meetings of the Permanent Council solely devoted to "Mediterranean Issues", or to the Senior Council when "Mediterranean Issues" are placed on the agenda. The Chairman of the Forum for Security Co-operation, with the consensus of the participating States, may also invite representatives of these non-participating Mediterranean States to meetings devoted to "Mediterranean Issues".

49th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council (1995)

PC.DEC/94, adopted on 5 December 1995, decided that the term "partners for co-operation" will be used to refer to Japan and the Republic of Korea, and the term "Mediterranean partners for co-operation" to Algeria, Egypt, Israel, [Jordan], Morocco and Tunisia.

Lisbon Summit 1996

Under the decision on the Development of the Agenda of the Forum for Security Co-operation it is stated that the:

"The participating States will consider extending, upon request and within existing resources, the FSC's experience to Partner States in the adjacent Mediterranean area."

Ministerial Council meetings in Copenhagen 1997 and Oslo 1998

During both meetings the importance of relations with Partner States was emphasised.

169th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council (1998)

Jordan was welcomed as a Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation by the adoption of PC.DEC/227 of 22 May 1998.

Istanbul Summit 1999

The Charter for European Security was adopted at the Istanbul Summit on 19 November 1999. During this meeting, under Chapter V. "Our Partners for Co-operation", Heads of State or Government declared:

48. We recognize the interdependence between the security of the OSCE area and that of Partners for Co-operation, as well as our commitment to the relationship and the dialogue with them. We emphasize in particular the long-standing relations with our Mediterranean partners, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. We recognize the increased involvement in and support for the work of the OSCE by our Partners for Co-operation. Building on this interdependence, we are ready to develop this process further. Implementing and building on the Helsinki Document 1992 and the Budapest Document 1994, we will work more closely with the Partners for Co-operation to promote OSCE norms and principles. We welcome their wish to promote the realization of the Organization's norms and principles, including the fundamental principle of resolving conflicts through peaceful means. To this end, we will invite the Partners for Co-operation on a more regular basis to increased participation in the work of the OSCE as the dialogue develops.

49. The potential of the Contact Group and the Mediterranean seminars must be fully explored and exploited. Drawing on the Budapest mandate, the Permanent Council will examine the recommendations emerging from the Contact Group and the Mediterranean seminars. We will encourage the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to draw on our expertise in setting up structures and mechanisms in the Mediterranean for early warning, preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention.

50. We welcome the increased participation in our work by Japan and the Republic of Korea. We welcome the contribution by Japan to OSCE field activities. We will seek to strengthen further our co-operation with our Asian partners in meeting challenges of common interest.

307th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council (2000)

During this meeting of 9 November 2000, two decisions pertaining to Partner States were adopted:

PC.DEC/378 granted the status of Partner for Co-operation to Thailand.

PC.DEC/379 tasked “an informal open-ended working group with developing recommendations by June of next year on the basis for considering future applications for partnership”.

348th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council (2001)

PC.DEC/430 took note of and welcomed the report on recommendations concerning future applications for partnership (PC.DEL/344/01/Rev.4).

Bucharest Ministerial Council 2001

During this meeting, *inter alia*, a decision was adopted (MC(9).DEC/1), which contains “The Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism”.

28. Participating States/Secretariat: Will strengthen co-operation and information exchanges, both formally and informally, with other relevant groups, organizations, and institutions involved in combating terrorism. Will strengthen co-operation with the European Union on analysis and early warning and reinforce synergy with the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and the Central European Initiative in areas relevant to combating terrorism. Will promote dialogue within the OSCE area on issues relating to new threats and challenges. Will broaden dialogue with partners outside the OSCE area, such as the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and Partners for Co-operation in Asia, the Shanghai Co-operation Organization, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Arab League, the African Union, and those States bordering on the OSCE area to exchange best practices and lessons learned in counter-terrorism efforts for application within the OSCE area.

During the same Ministerial Council, Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee of the Permanent Council was established MC(9).DEC/3, 4 December 2001, and called, where appropriate, to invite, *inter alia*, Partners for Co-operation, to participate in its meetings.

445th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council (2003)

PC.DEC/537 of 3 April 2003, granted the status of Partner for Co-operation to Afghanistan.

2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council

(MC.DOC/1/03):

(...)

23. As threats originating or evolving in adjacent regions are of increasing importance, the OSCE will intensify its co-operation with its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, by early identification of areas of common interest and concern and possibilities for further co-ordinated action. We will encourage them to voluntarily implement the principles and commitments of the OSCE and will co-operate with them in this as appropriate. As a first step towards increased dialogue, we will invite all our Partners

for Co-operation to participate on a more frequent basis as observers in Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation meetings. The OSCE will also consider ways in which OSCE norms, principles, commitments and values could be shared with other regions, in particular neighbouring areas. Contacts with organizations in those areas will be further developed.

(...)

51. One way of dealing with threats from outside the OSCE region is to seek possibilities for expanding the relevant principles, norms and measures contained in a number of OSCE politico-military documents to adjacent regions. The OSCE is particularly interested in encouraging its Partners for Co-operation and its Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to take part in a number of existing information exchanges and other endeavours in the framework of the OSCE confidence- and security-building measures. Mutual early warning exchanges will be encouraged.

484th Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council

PC.DEC/571/Corr.1 of 2 December 2003 decided on the following:

(...)

- To identify additional fields of co-operation and interaction with the OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation for the purpose of enhancing mutual security;
- To encourage Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles and commitments, including as a means to further interaction with the OSCE;
- To explore the scope for wider sharing of OSCE norms, principles and commitments with adjacent areas;
- To pursue its work on procedures for future applications for partnership;
- To prepare a report on the outcome of this work to be submitted to the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in 2004.

The Permanent Council also requests the Forum for Security Co-operation to make its own contribution to this work, within its competencies and mandate and in accordance with Decision No. 3 of the Ninth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council (Bucharest, 2001) on fostering the role of the OSCE as a forum for political dialogue.

Annex 2 to the Report

**PARTICIPATION OF MEDITERRANEAN AND ASIAN PARTNERS
FOR CO-OPERATION IN OSCE ACTIVITIES**

Partners for Co-operation are invited to:

- Summits;
- Ministerial Council meetings;
- Review conferences;
- High-level consultations between the OSCE Troika, the Secretary General and the Mediterranean and Asian Partners;
- Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation meetings, to which Partners for Co-operation are invited to participate on a more frequent basis as observers (as set forth in paragraph 23 of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, adopted in 2003);
- Meetings of the respective Contact Groups with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, chaired respectively by the incoming and outgoing OSCE Troika ambassadors;
- OSCE Mediterranean Seminars and OSCE Conferences with Asian Partners;
- Other relevant conferences, seminars and workshops.

They are also invited to the meetings related to implementation of the three dimensions (indicative list below):

Politico-military dimension:

- The Annual Implementation Meeting;
- Follow-up Conference on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security;
- Other events organized by the Forum for Security Co-operation such as the FSC-Workshop on the Security Risks Arising from Stockpiles of Ammunition and Explosives for Use in Conventional Armaments in Surplus or Awaiting Destruction in the OSCE Area (27 and 28 May 2003, Vienna), Workshop on the Implementation of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (February 2002); and the Expert Meeting on Combating Terrorism within the Politico-Military Dimension of the OSCE (May 2002) and the Seminar on Defence Policies and Military Doctrines (1998).

Economic and environmental dimension:

- The Annual Economic Forum;
- Preparatory Seminars for the Economic Forum.

Human dimension:

- Human Dimension Implementation Meetings;
- Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings;
- Human Dimension Seminars;
- (Partner States are invited to provide election monitors to ODIHR election observation missions).

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly events

Parliamentarians from the Partner States are invited to the Winter and Annual Sessions. Parliamentarians from the Mediterranean Partners are, *inter alia*, invited to the annual Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean.

Other conferences:

In 2003, the Partner States were also invited to the:

- Annual Security Review Conference (Vienna, 25 and 26 June 2003);
 - Conference on Anti-Semitism (Vienna, 19 and 20 June 2003);
 - OSCE Conference on Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination (Vienna, 4 and 5 September 2003);
 - OSCE Conference on Globalization (Vienna, 3 and 4 July 2003).
- In 2004, the Partner States were invited to the:
- Conference on Anti-Semitism (Berlin, 28 and 29 April 2004);
 - Special Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes (Paris, 6 to 17 June 2004);
 - Annual Security Review Conference (Vienna, 23 and 24 June 2004);
 - Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination (Brussels, 13 and 14 September 2004);
 - Conference on Human Rights and Trafficking in Human Beings — Protection of Victims in Countries of Destination (Helsinki, 23 and 24 September 2004).

OSCE-Partner State activities:

The annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminars focus on issues of mutual interest to the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners:

- The OSCE Experience in the Field of Confidence-Building (Cairo, Egypt, 26 to 28 September 1995);
- The OSCE as a Platform for Dialogue and the Fostering of Norms of Behaviour (Tel Aviv, Israel, 2 to 4 June 1996);
- The Security Model for the Twenty-First Century: Implications for the Mediterranean Basin (Cairo, Egypt, 3 to 5 September 1997);
- The Human Dimension of Security, Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law (Valetta, Malta, 19 and 20 October 1998);
- The Implementation of the Human Dimension Commitments (Amman, Jordan, 6 and 7 December 1999);
- Confidence-Building Measures and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures: The OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region (Portorož, Slovenia, 30 and 31 October 2000);
- Implementation of OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension Commitments: The OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region (Dubrovnik, Croatia, 30 and 31 October 2001);
- The Media and New Technologies: Implications for Governments, International Organisations and Civil Society (Rhodes, Greece, 4 and 5 November 2002);
- The Comprehensive Approach to Security: The OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region (Aqaba, Jordan, 20 and 21 October 2003).
- Addressing Threats to Security in the Twenty-first Century: Interaction between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 18 and 19 November 2004).

The OSCE Conferences with Asian Partners focus on issues of mutual interest in relations between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation:

- OSCE–Japan Conference on Comprehensive Security in Central Asia — Sharing OSCE and Asian Experiences (Tokyo, Japan, 11 and 12 December 2000);
- OSCE–Korea Conference on Applicability of OSCE CSBMs in North-East Asia (Seoul, Republic of Korea, 19 to 21 March 2001);
- OSCE–Thailand Conference on the Human Dimension of Security (Bangkok, Thailand, 20 and 21 June 2002);

- OSCE–Japan Conference on the Search for Conflict Prevention in the New Security Circumstances — European Security Mechanisms and Security in Asia (15 and 16 March 2004, Tokyo, Japan).

Workshops:

- Workshop for Experts from the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation (Vienna, 17 to 19 July 2000);
- Workshop for Experts from the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation on Challenges and Opportunities in Economic Development (Vienna, 25 and 26 June 2001);
- Workshop on Freedom of Expression and New Technologies (Vienna, 7 October 2002);
- OSCE-IFANS/MOFAT Workshop on Applicability of OSCE CSBMs in Northeast Asia Revisited (Seoul, Korea, 22 and 23 September 2003).

REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE REFORM OF THE OSCE TO THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairperson,

In my capacity as Chairperson of the Working Group on the Reform of the OSCE, I have the honour to report to you on its activities in 2004.

The Working Group on the Reform of the OSCE met for the first time on 28 May 2004. As a first step, I initiated a general debate on the reform of the Organization and invited the participating States and the OSCE institutions to put forward considerations and make concrete proposals. As a result, a number of contributions were received both in writing and orally.

Following discussions on these initial contributions, I identified two subjects on which I felt a consensus could be achieved: the role of the OSCE Secretary General and the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE.

A draft decision on clarifying and strengthening the role of the Secretary General was prepared and was agreed in general terms by the participants in the discussions in the Working Group. I therefore proposed its adoption by the Ministerial Council, and am gratified that it was adopted at the Sofia meeting of the Ministerial Council.

Our objective regarding the Rules of Procedure was to reflect in a consolidated document the current practice of the Organization. The document submitted for examination in the Preparatory Committee (MC.DD/18/04 of 26 November 2004) represented a clear reflection of the current practice and was intended as a document of reference for all delegations. The adoption of the Rules of Procedure would require a decision on the Senior Council and a draft decision in this respect was circulated, but was not adopted (MC.DD/22/04 of 30 November 2004).

I wish to express my appreciation for the valuable assistance that I received from the Secretariat and the Secretary General in the work of the Working Group.

The considerations and proposals put forward during the sessions of the Working Group on the Reform of the OSCE deserve further consideration. I therefore propose that the Working Group on the Reform of the OSCE should continue its activities, focusing on strengthening the role of the OSCE and improving its functions in order to make it more efficient and relevant to the participating States.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for the confidence you placed in me by inviting me to chair the Working Group.

Yours sincerely,

Liviu Bota
Ambassador
Chairperson of the Working Group on the Reform of the OSCE

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE INFORMAL OPEN-ENDED GROUP OF FRIENDS OF THE CHAIR ON IMPROVING THE FUNCTIONING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF OSCE FIELD OPERATIONS

The OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, adopted by the Eleventh Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Maastricht, noted that, “*Recognizing the significant contributions of the institutions and field operations in putting into practice the goals and principles of the Organization, the OSCE is considering ways of further improving the functioning and effectiveness of field operations and developing new tools if necessary.*”

Moreover, the Chairman-in-Office’s Perception Statement presented to the Ministerial Council in Maastricht welcomed the start of the discussions in 2003 on ways to further improve the functioning and effectiveness of OSCE field operations and pointed to the conclusion that this discussion could be continued in 2004.

Against this background, the open-ended, informal Group of Friends of the Chair on Improving the Functioning and Effectiveness of OSCE Field Operations established under the 2003 Netherlands Chairmanship continued its work during 2004.

Ambassador Evelyn Puxley, Head of the Canadian Delegation, chaired three plenary meetings of the Group during the first half of 2004. She was assisted by two Co-Chairs: Ambassador Erkin Kasimov, Head of the Delegation of Tajikistan, and Ambassador Zef Mazi, Head of the Albanian Delegation. The meetings took as their basis the Chair’s discussion paper, which summarized the views expressed in the meetings held in 2003 and proposals for the way forward (PC.DEL/1419/03).

In the first half of the year, the main aim of the Group was to identify practical and pragmatic steps to improve the functioning and effectiveness of field operations. The Group therefore focused on the mandates of field operations, called for rebalancing of OSCE’s field activities in the three dimensions of the Organization, mission staffing, suggestions for the establishment of “roving missions” and reporting practices.

Concerning mandate-related issues, the prevailing view was that, given the disparate situations in the areas where field operations were established, standardization of mandates would not be a reasonable prospect. Various participating States pointed out that the views of the host State should be taken into account when drafting the mandates of field operations, as this would have a lasting impact on each host government’s attitude towards the OSCE activities on its territory. The idea of regular reviews of mandates received the support of some participating States, but there was no agreement on the format for such discussions. While some participating States were in favour of creating a new framework for this purpose, others preferred existing formats, more particularly the annual Preparatory Committee’s discussions on the Programme Outline. Some participating States called for an elaboration of a clear exit strategy for field operations. In this context, it was observed that field operations established pursuant to conflict and/or political crisis were more likely to having an exit strategy, with benchmarks focused on substantial achievements, rather than on time lines.

Divergent opinions were expressed on the issue of ways to rebalance field operations activities in the three dimensions of the OSCE. Some participating States proposed striking a

proper balance by reformulating the mandates of field operations. Others believed that the specificity and focus of mandates and activities should be preserved against, as was stated, artificial efforts to rebalance the three dimensions.

Discussions on mission staffing issues focused mainly on an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the secondment system. Various participating States expressed their reluctance to authorize far-reaching changes to the present system. Some host State representatives raised the issue of increasing the number of responsibilities of national professional officers. The issue of appointments of heads of field operations was also discussed. The prevailing view was that the present system would benefit from adjustments. It was suggested that heads of field operations should be subjected to a procedure similar to that for heads of institutions. Some participating States were, however, of the opinion that this procedure might be too cumbersome to implement.

There was no agreement on the need to establish “roving missions”. A number of participating States stressed that, in view of the existence of various other tools, such as field operations, the Secretariat and Personal Representatives, there was no need to create “roving missions”. Other delegations were in favour of doing so because they were of the opinion that such a new tool would bring added value to the OSCE’s activities in response to new developments. Finally, some participating States associated “roving missions” with the activities of the representatives of the OSCE institutions sent with a specific mandate to the field.

No significant progress was achieved in the first half of 2004 on the issue of reporting by field operations. Participating States expressed divergent views on the content of reports, the frequency of reporting and the character of guidance from Vienna on reporting practices for the heads of field operations.

At the end of her tenure as the Chair of the Group, Ambassador Puxley prepared a summary of recommendations (PC.DEL/985/04) on the main issues discussed in the first half of the year.

Ambassador Margit Waestfelt, Head of the Austrian Delegation, took over the chairmanship of the Group in October 2004. She was assisted by two Co-Chairs, Ambassador Bisera Turkovic, Head of the Delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ambassador Rakhat Aliyev, Head of the Delegation of Kazakhstan. Under the new chairmanship, the Group held five plenary meetings and two drafting sessions.

Since October 2004, the Group has reviewed the important work carried out under the previous chairmanship. It was noted that the reports produced by Ambassador Puxley pointed to a common understanding that field operations were important assets of the OSCE and useful to their host States, but that certain aspects of the work of field operations could be reformed. In particular, the need to find the right balance between respecting the sovereignty of host States and fulfilling the mandates of field operations was one of the major questions identified in this respect. Some participating States were of the opinion that the main function of field operations was to provide assistance to their respective host States.

The Group returned to the question of a possible reform of the system of appointment of heads of field operations. Some delegations noted that, in order to be effective, heads of field operations needed the trust of both the Chairmanship and the host State in question. It was further suggested that the procedure for selecting heads of field operations should be

more thorough, following the example of appointments of directors in the Secretariat. The importance of heads of field operations and their deputies possessing managerial skills was also stressed, especially in light of the responsibilities of fund managers under IRMA. It was observed that the managerial skills of candidates should be assessed by the Secretariat, and if necessary, the Secretariat should provide management training to heads of field operations.

Regarding the proposals put forward in Ambassador Puxley's summary of recommendations, in particular the suggestion that a list of three to five candidates should be prepared, it was noted that there were rarely that many candidates for a given post and that the establishment of a "search committee" might paralyse the selection procedure. Calling attention to the fact that the process of appointment of heads of field operations was at the core of the disagreements, one participating State stressed that the main problem was that candidates were chosen on the basis of their nationality, not on that of their qualifications.

The Group also focused on the question of ways to improve guidance for field operations. Ambassador Puxley's recommendation that consultative groups should be established was referred to in this context. Some participating States were of the opinion that this was an interesting idea which deserved further attention. Others questioned the added value of such groups, in view of the guidance provided to field operations by the Secretary General and the Chairmanship-in-Office through the Conflict Prevention Centre. The idea of a limited composition of consultative groups was also questioned.

In view of the upcoming Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia, the Group decided to limit the scope of its work to those issues identified as problematic, rather than trying to reform the entire system of OSCE field operations. A general understanding was achieved that a "step-by-step approach" should be adopted by the Group, focusing on practical issues on which the participating States could come to agreement before the Ministerial Council. In this context, it was mentioned that these initial agreements might then lay a solid foundation before tackling more difficult issues in the future.

Against this background, the Group decided to concentrate on issues related to reporting by field operations. A common understanding was that, as a first concrete step towards improving the functioning and effectiveness of field operations, the Group could make practical recommendations to the Conflict Prevention Centre for updating the existing Reporting Guidelines for OSCE field operations. It was also agreed that the Group should prepare a draft Permanent Council decision on reporting, which could be complemented by a general statement at the Ministerial Council in Sofia on the work accomplished by the Group in 2004.

The Reporting Guidelines of 6 June 2002 (SEC.GAL/95/02) were recirculated for comments. Four problematic areas for further discussions were identified by the Group. These were: release of reports; the system of confidential reports; the frequency of reporting; and the issue of distribution of reports to partner organizations. As a result of two drafting sessions devoted to these subjects, the Group reached the following understandings:

Release of reports

Heads of field operations are ultimately responsible for the consistency, quality, accuracy, objectivity, classification and timeliness of reporting. Heads of field operations will make themselves available for regular consultations with the authorities of their respective host State on issues that will be reflected in the activity reports of their field operation. Views

of the host State should be taken into account by the head of field operation in the reporting process. Opinions of other actors, such as international organizations, NGOs and other representatives of civil society, should also be taken into consideration.

Reports can only be released for transmission to Vienna after clearance by the head of field operation or a designated representative acting as officer-in-charge. Faxed reports should include a cover sheet signed by the head of field operation or the officer-in-charge to indicate that release has been authorized.

Frequency of activity reports

As a rule, activity reports are sent at regular fortnightly or monthly intervals. The frequency of these reports will be established and reviewed, as appropriate, by the Mission Programme Section in the Conflict Prevention Centre under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship and the Secretary General.

OSCE-confidential reports

The classification of a document or report as “confidential” significantly limits its distribution. Unless it is specifically indicated that a confidential report should only reach the Chairmanship with a copy to the Secretary General, a confidential report is distributed to the Chairmanship, the Secretary General and the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre. A confidential document is distributed to other addressees only if specifically addressed by the sender or decided upon by the Chairmanship in consultation with the head of the relevant field operation or a designated representative acting as officer-in-charge.

Reports should not be over-classified — this will often limit their utility. The classification of a report as confidential shall remain rarely used and limited to specific cases where confidentiality is really needed, including cases of a disciplinary nature.

Distribution of reports to international organizations

With a view to promoting co-operation and co-ordination with international organizations and taking into account the need for reciprocity, the OSCE applies a practice of informal distribution of individual OSCE-restricted reports to selected international organizations (key OSCE partners in the field) for their internal information only. The list of addressees will be periodically reviewed by the participating States and may be amended by the Mission Programme Section in the Conflict Prevention Centre under the guidance of the OSCE Chairmanship and the Secretary General.

The Chair of the Group prepared a report to the Chairman-in-Office on its activities in 2004 and at the same time engaged in drafting a Permanent Council decision on reporting from OSCE field operations, to be adopted at a later stage.

The Chair of the Group would like to thank the participating States for their active participation in the work of the Group, the Co-Chairs of the Group for their assistance and the Conflict Prevention Centre for the excellent support provided throughout the process of discussions and drafting of relevant documents.

**LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION TO THE MINISTER FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE**

Your Excellency,

As Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation, it is my pleasure to inform you about the Forum's activities since the Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council.

The work of the Forum in 2004 under the successive Chairmanships of Andorra, Armenia and Austria was based on the commitment to improve security, stability and transparency in the area of the OSCE through full and comprehensive implementation, timely adaptation and further development of the work of the FSC on arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building measures.

The implementation of the substantial number of documents adopted by the FSC gained additional focus through the tasks given to the FSC by recent decisions of the Ministerial Council. Implementing the OSCE Documents on Stockpiles of Ammunition and on Small Arms and Light Weapons appears to be a new challenge as measures have to be considered to support ongoing efforts of participating States in addressing the threat of dangerous surplus stockpiles of ammunition.

The assessment of the implementation of the security work undertaken by the OSCE and of the agreed commitments by participating States is a regular task of the FSC and an essential confidence-building measure in itself. It has, however, also proved to be an opportunity to develop proposals for adapting existing instruments and mechanisms to evolving requirements.

The further development of the work of the FSC was assured by adopting new decisions and by addressing the changing security environment and its consequences in the Security Dialogue. The most important decisions create new politically binding OSCE principles and standards aimed at impeding the diversion of SALW to terrorists and to the illegal market (and concern the holding of a seminar on military doctrine next year).

Efforts were also made to further improve the co-operation with other bodies and institutions of the OSCE in order to address cross-dimensional aspects of the tasks of the FSC and to promote the use of the FSC *acquis* by Partners for Co-operation and in areas adjacent to the OSCE.

The task of implementing decisions and commitments was given a new focus in 2004 through decisions of the Maastricht Ministerial Council which had a direct bearing on the work of the FSC.

The OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century is an important guideline for the work of the FSC. It deals with many aspects of a politico-military nature, and confirms in its paragraph 19 that the FSC, together with the Permanent Council, has a central role in the OSCE as a forum for political and security

dialogue, for setting consensus-based, politically binding norms and principles and for promoting their implementation. It also tasks the FSC with contributing to the implementation of and follow-up to the OSCE Strategy, and this therefore permeated the work of the FSC in many aspects.

One example is afforded by paragraph 51 of the Strategy, on the expansion of OSCE principles, norms and measures contained in politico-military documents to adjacent regions and the involvement of the Partners for Co-operation in the framework of the CSBMs of the OSCE, which was elaborated on in PC Decision No. 571. As the FSC was directly concerned, all the Partners for Co-operation were invited for a special Security Dialogue in the FSC to evaluate areas of specific interest on their side for co-operation or for voluntary implementation of politico-military decisions or commitments. The FSC developed a comprehensive paper, containing a great variety of options for possible forms of politico-military co-operation and for voluntary implementation of FSC instruments and commitments. This paper was forwarded to the chairperson of the informal group on implementing PC Decision No. 571, with a view to its integration into the relevant ministerial decision as a specific contribution of the FSC.

The OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition endorsed by the Eleventh Ministerial Council in Maastricht contains the option that participating States may present requests through the OSCE for assistance in securing or eliminating such stockpiles. Since the 2003 Ministerial Council Ukraine, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan have presented such requests.

This opened up a new phase in the work of the FSC, and of the OSCE, namely, the question of support for participating States willing to provide assistance in implementing huge projects in the field of securing or destroying such stockpiles.

The requests and a one-day special FSC meeting on 29 September 2004 devoted to this question gave participating States an idea of the urgency and the magnitude of the problem and of its potential to threaten people, the infrastructure and the environment. The requests so far submitted also indicate that — considerable — financial means are required to solve the problem.

Initial efforts to address it are encouraging, but it appears that substantive progress would require strong support by all the interested participating States for strengthening public awareness, gaining experience with handling such projects and to use lessons learned in this field by other international bodies (UN, NATO/PfP, EU) and creating synergies by co-operating in the framework of the OSCE. This could be achieved, by pooling expertise and technology or by developing best practice guides and consideration of common advisory structures for planning, administering or financing projects.

The OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), endorsed by the Ministerial Council in 2000, has since remained the essential tool for preventing illicit trafficking of SALW and has become a permanent focus for the FSC. In 2004, however, implementation of the SALW document entered a new phase, when the first steps were undertaken by the participating States to address the requests made by Belarus and Tajikistan for assistance with the control or the elimination of surplus SALW, in accordance with Section V of the SALW document.

Progress was achieved in addressing both requests.

The work of the FSC on assessing implementation was focused on two events: the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) and the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM), as well as on the regular exchange of information on a variety of data concerning confidence- and security-building measures and relevant military data.

The Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC), established in 2003 by the Porto Ministerial Council to provide a framework for enhancing security dialogue and for reviewing security work undertaken by the OSCE and participating States, is of specific importance for the FSC, since it is the instrument for reviewing the work of the first dimension of the OSCE, namely security. The FSC has an important role to play in the Conference: It should be involved in the chairmanship, in making recommendations on the date, the agenda and the modalities for the Conference, in making its contribution to the Conference and — together with the PC — in addressing its recommendations.

The 2004 ASRC (23/24 June) was focused on preventing and combating terrorism, border security and management and on comprehensive security. It not only provided an opportunity to look back and review the ongoing security work, but also to look at the way forward, since more than 30 proposals of substance were made which fall into the direct competence of the FSC. A number of them, substantiated by food-for-thought papers, have already been integrated into the work programme of the FSC.

The 14th Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM) took place on 9 and 10 March 2004 in the presence of high-ranking officials and experts from capitals, and proved to be the most effective tool to assure transparency by debating all aspects of the implementation of agreed CSBMs, as well as of defence policies, military structures, armaments, deployments and other military activities of participating States, and to assess the implementation of those commitments.

It is noteworthy that positive trends have continued since the last AIAM not only in the area of inspections and evaluation visits. A situation where all the OSCE participating States provide the full information required by the Vienna Document 1999 has, however, not yet been reached. In this regard, the use of the Reminding Mechanism and the conduct of several seminars and training projects achieved positive results.

At the Meeting, no less than 48 proposals were made for further improving the implementation of OSCE commitments, including some which suggested a review of the structure of exchange and of the evaluation of the information exchanged.

The forward-looking approach of the FSC became manifest through the elaboration of several new documents and decisions of importance.

As SALW and terrorism are among the major concerns of the OSCE, it is no surprise that the FSC placed special emphasis on closing important loopholes allowing terrorists and international crime to acquire SALW, and in particular of MANPADS.

Three major documents: The OSCE Principles for Export Controls of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS), The OSCE Principles on the Control of Brokering in SALW, and The Standard Elements of End-User Certificates and Verification Procedures for SALW Exports were negotiated and adopted by the FSC. All of them concern SALW and all of them have a positive contribution to make in preventing and combating terrorism by

hindering transfers to illegitimate destinations. It is a remarkable achievement that all participating States were able to accept those high standards.

Recognizing the need for simplification of the 1997 questionnaire on anti-personnel mines, the FSC adopted an updated questionnaire which streamlines questions and minimizes duplication with international conventions relating to anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war.

A decision on upgrading the OSCE Communications Network architecture was adopted. Implementation of Vienna Document 1999, was improved by two useful supplements to this document which were introduced in the form of statements by the FSC Chairperson:

- On interpreters as auxiliary personnel during verification activities; and
- On the reassignment of former army helicopter units to the air forces.

(The possibility that the OSCE might hold a high-level military doctrines seminar has been raised on a number of occasions over the last year, most notably at the AIAM and the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC). Such seminars are encouraged in paragraph 15.7 of the Vienna Document 1999.

The FSC therefore decided to hold such a seminar in May 2005 in Vienna.)

The further development of the work of the FSC was also one of the main concerns of the regular Security Dialogue in the FSC.

This Dialogue allows the FSC to address security-related issues of a more general nature and to present not only new developments in defence policy and military doctrine, but also cross-dimensional aspects or new proposals for initiatives or documents to be developed. A broad range of items was addressed in 2004.

Presentations by participating States concerned among other questions, defence planning (France, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation), reform of armed forces (Germany, Austria), international missions (Austria) non-proliferation (United States of America), stockpiles of ammunition (Ukraine, Belarus, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Albania), bilateral CSBMs (Belarus/Poland) and trafficking in human beings and armed forces (United States of America).

A considerable number of experts from other international bodies were invited to address specific questions of interest, ranging from terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), brokering in SALW and the European security and defence policy to links between terrorism, WMD and military doctrine, armed forces and human rights, cross-dimensional aspects of security, trafficking in human beings and armed forces and links between arms imports and sustainable development.

But there are also other important aspects of the work of the FSC worth mentioning.

Special focus was given by the FSC on further intensifying the close co-operation not only with the Conflict Prevention Centre, its permanent essential partner, but also with other

bodies and institutions of the OSCE with a view to addressing cross-dimensional aspects of its task.

Co-operation with the Permanent Council is essential, since many issues are of a cross-dimensional nature or require common action, such as implementation of the Stockpiles and the SALW documents. Excellent relations were assured by three meetings of the Joint Troikas of the FSC and the PC as well as by a joint plenary meeting of both bodies on 10 November, devoted to preparing for the Sofia Ministerial Council and to addressing common interests in implementing the Stockpiles and SALW documents.

Cross-dimensional aspects of security were addressed in the FSC by the Director of the ODIHR and by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

As several field missions are involved in politico-military projects, the heads of missions from Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Armenia, as well as experts from the missions in Georgia and Moldova, were invited to the FSC to provide information about their activities and to use the lessons learned to improve the implementation of politico-military projects in the future.

Contacts with other international bodies concerning the implementation of projects relating to responding to requests for assistance made with regard to the OSCE documents on Stockpiles and on SALW have indicated potential areas of co-operation which should be further pursued.

The FSC's broad range of tasks in the politico-military dimension and the progress achieved in the framework of its mandate reaffirm its important role and demonstrate the significant contribution it has made and will continue to make to enhancing security across the OSCE region and to contributing thereby to the comprehensive task of the OSCE.

Your Excellency, you might deem it useful to reflect these developments in the appropriate documents of the Ministerial Council.

**LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE OPEN SKIES
CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION TO THE MINISTER FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE**

Your Excellency,

In my capacity as Chairperson of the Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC), I have the honour to inform you of the activities of the OSCC in 2004.

During the reported period, since the Ministerial Council Meeting in Maastricht the work of the OSCC concentrated on the one hand on regular issues essential for the effective implementation of the Treaty, and on the other on the preparation for the first Review Conference.

The Review Conference is to be held from 14 to 16 February 2005, and will be the first opportunity to comprehensively assess the initial three years of implementation of the Treaty provisions, after its entry into force on 1 January 2002. To date the OSCC has agreed on the rules and procedures and provisional agenda of the Conference.

As far as routine work of the OSCC and its informal working groups is concerned, the OSCC has adopted decision on changes to OS airfields and associated maximum flight distances and on the certification of new C-130 aircraft models. In the Informal Working Group on Rules and Procedures several other issues concerning the implementation of the Treaty are currently under consideration.

In order to improve the distribution process of active quotas for observation flights the OSCC adopted the revised version of the previous year's decision in this regard. The active quota distribution for the year 2005 has been conducted. Unlike the previous year's distribution process, consensus with respect to one country's passive quota was not achieved.

Since the last reported period, States Parties have conducted a significant number of observation flights whose vast majority has, admittedly, been carried out to the complete satisfaction of observers and observed. States Parties have also continued to carry out training observation flights on a bilateral basis. During the joint certification event Russia, Sweden and Turkey successfully certified their observation aircraft along with sensor configurations and performance in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty and related documents.

The importance and relevance of the Treaty was further recognized by accession of two OSCE participating State: the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia (the latter to take effect on 1 January 2005), thus bringing the number of total members to 32 from the initial 24. The OSCC took necessary steps to ensure that all technical arrangements with respect to the accession of these States were in place. The application of Cyprus remains on the agenda of the OSCC.

The successful implementation of the Treaty has encouraged members to consider the entire scope of its application, in accordance with the Preamble of the Treaty. The OSCC organized a seminar devoted to the possible use of the Open Skies regime for environmental

and ecological purposes. It turned out to be a useful opportunity to present views, ideas and experiences from international and national perspectives. The seminar provided the OS community with good background to examine further these issues during regular OSCC work and the upcoming Review Conference.

The Treaty on Open Skies remains a crucial instrument of confidence- and security-building in the OSCE area, proving to be effective in enhancing stability and promoting further transparency and openness among States Parties. In light of prospects for further enlargement of the area of application of the Treaty and strengthening its implementation, those States which are able and ready to fulfil the Treaty's goals are encouraged to consider the possibility of contributing to the Open Skies objectives.

Your Excellency, you might deem it useful to reflect these developments in the appropriate documents of the Ministerial Council Meeting.

REPORT OF THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE OSCE MINSK GROUP TO THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

After the completion of the election cycles in Armenia and Azerbaijan last year, the negotiation process started to move. The two Presidents accepted to meet for the first time in Geneva last December. Their second meeting took place in Warsaw in April.

The two Presidents accepted the Co-Chairs' proposal to set up a second level of dialogue. The objective of this second level was not to engage immediately in a new round of negotiations, but to fill the gap between the meetings of the two Presidents and to maintain the momentum of the process. The Presidents designated their Foreign Ministers as their personal representatives to this second level, and gave their consent for two meetings of the Ministers.

In the end, four meetings took place in the framework of what is called the "Prague process". A new method was agreed on: no agenda, no commitment, no negotiation, but a free discussion, on any issue proposed by Armenia, by Azerbaijan, or by the Co-Chairs. Thanks to the quality and the professionalism of the two Ministers, the discussions took place in a good atmosphere, and were constructive. They have achieved two main results:

- All the parameters of a future settlement have been explored methodically so that we have a clear idea of each party's positions;
- The core of the problem has been gradually identified, i.e., the basis on which real negotiations could start, necessarily involving compromises by each side, has been defined.

During their visit in the region in July, the Co-Chairs presented a set of possible scenarios to both Presidents:

- No agreement possible, which means maintaining the current fragile *status quo*;
- Agreement of the two parties to formally freeze *de facto* the current situation, which means postponing the definitive solution of the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, while normalizing relations between the parties;
- Agreement on how the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh will be determined, with a progressive implementation of the provisions of such an agreement, including other elements of the settlement.

The Co-Chairs were not expecting an immediate answer from the Presidents on these scenarios. They were encouraged by the willingness of the Presidents to continue with the Prague process.

After the fourth Prague meeting, the Co-chairs' assessment, shared by the Ministers, was the following: the Prague process has fully lived up their common expectations, and, at the same time, fulfilled its objectives. However, it is not possible to move forward further without clear guidance from the Presidents.

This is the message that the Co-Chairs passed to the Presidents when they met them in Astana in mid-September. They explained that they were ready to submit to their Ministers at a next Prague meeting a framework as the basis for a future negotiation. After a few hours of discussions between themselves and then with President Putin, the Presidents requested a “time for reflection” and committed themselves to make their answer known soon.

In the meantime, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office has sent his Special Envoy, former Bulgarian Prime-Minister Philip Dimitrov, to Baku and Yerevan to urge the Presidents to move forward and to remind them of the concern and the expectations of the OSCE.

The Co-Chairs have reminded the two Presidents, by a letter sent in late October, of their commitment to give their response to the Co-Chairs’ proposal for starting substantive negotiations on the basis developed through the Prague meetings.

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON CONFIDENCE- AND SECURITY-BUILDING MEASURES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (ARTICLE II, ANNEX 1-B, DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS) AND THE AGREEMENT ON SUB-REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL (ARTICLE IV, ANNEX 1-B, DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS)

1 January to 30 November 2004

Introductory remarks

This year has seen substantive and very positive changes in South Eastern Europe.

First, the on-going new defence reforms initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina are steadily easing the country toward European integration and the Partnership for Peace Programme.

Secondly, the Parties to Article II of Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Accords on 28 September decided to terminate the Agreement.

Thirdly, the Parties to the Article IV Agreement continued implementing the arms control process in the subregion and eased the two inspections organized and conducted by the State-level verification centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

All the aforementioned processes were achieved in a general environment of trust, openness and transparency.

Section I: Implementation

Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Article II of Annex 1-B, Dayton Peace Accords)

The most important event that occurred during this period was the decision taken in Sarajevo on 28 September 2004 by the Parties, at the 44th meeting of the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC), to terminate the Article II Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On that occasion, the Parties, taking into account the implementation of the Defence Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina that has brought about a single defence establishment and the formal decisions taken by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as those taken by the government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the government of Republika Srpska, agreed on the termination of the Agreement on the grounds that they considered its provisions to have been fully implemented.

The results achieved before the termination of the Agreement will be highlighted in the following paragraphs.

1. Meetings. The Parties met three times this year and, on 14-16 June, held the fifth conference to review the implementation of the Agreement, in Vienna. On this occasion, the Parties, after noting the exceptional progress made in the implementation of the confidence- and security-building measures, and in consideration of the results achieved, decided to voluntarily cease the implementation of many measures and annexes of Article II. They finally agreed to suspend its provisions permanently after the JCC meeting scheduled for 28 September 2004 in Sarajevo.
2. Inspections/visits to weapons manufacturing facilities. Four inspections were conducted during the first half of the year, of which two were led by the OSCE. Six OSCE countries contributed by either leading inspection teams or providing experts. Two visits took place to weapons manufacturing facilities. On the whole, the inspection regime was implemented regularly and professionally.
3. Annual exchange of information. Remarkable improvements were made in the annual information exchanges documents.
4. Voluntary measures. The Parties were actively engaged in voluntary programmes. Listed below are some of the more important activities that took place in the past year:
 - A. Code of Conduct. Germany provided experts who conducted two Code of Conduct seminars for junior and mid-level officers from the two entities. A substantial increase was noted in the active participation of the attendees and the level of interest they demonstrated.
 - B. Joint field training exercise. A successful joint field training exercise was conducted in the northern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina along the inter-entity boundary line (IEBL). The goal of this exercise was to test the ability of the armed forces to provide military assistance and equipment to civil protection authorities and organizations in order to manage a crisis situation.

Joint fire-fighting events, demining operations, search and rescue flights, and aerial observation flights were performed as part of the exercise scenario prepared by a special working group including local and OSCE experts.

The exercise terminated with a joint event featuring the armed forces building a ferry over the Bosna River in order to evacuate endangered civilian populations.

This exercise was the first opportunity for the newly appointed Bosnia and Herzegovina Minister of Defence, Mr. Radovanovic, to demonstrate the progress that has been achieved in CSBMs.
 - C. Seminar on international law. This seminar was held in Munich, Germany, and was well attended by a number of battalion commanders, medium-rank officers and key individuals of the military general staffs of both entities. The Deputy Consul of Croatia in Munich, General Radovanovic, on behalf of the Delegation of Republic of the Serbia and Montenegro, and the Military Adviser to the Delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina enhanced the importance of the seminar through their attendance.
5. Summary. Implementation of the Protocol on Verification and the Exchange of Information and Notifications continued flawlessly until the termination of the Agreement.

The results achieved really justify this outstanding process. Nevertheless, the termination of the Agreement will not preclude any of the Parties from agreeing to the voluntary continuation of any measure previously included in or associated with the Agreement.

Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control (Article IV of Annex 1-B, Dayton Peace Accords)

1. Meetings. The Parties met on three occasions this year and held the fourth Review Conference provided for in the Agreement. During this Conference, key decisions were taken that finally resolved a number of issues concerning exempted equipment. The Parties should be congratulated on taking these important decisions and closing the “loopholes” that allowed them to have, in effect, large numbers of items of equipment above the ceilings. The members of the Sub-Regional Consultative Commission (SRCC) have been able to resolve issues within the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control that remain unresolved in a similar conventional arms control regime.

In accordance with SRCC decision 1/26, a special agreement was reached on the reduction of armaments exempted for research and development to a maximum of 5% of each category limited by Article IV by the end of 2004. Progress has been made on armaments held in the internal security forces.

2. Inspections. All inspections have been conducted as scheduled. A total 13 inspections were conducted by the Parties. Twenty-eight OSCE countries contributed by providing experts either for the inspections or for the escort teams. I personally took part in the two inspections conducted by a Bosnia and Herzegovina team in Croatia (in July) and Serbia and Montenegro (in September). On those occasions I had the opportunity to verify “on the spot” the feelings which animate the representatives of the Parties’ verification centres. I have been very satisfied with the results achieved and I therefore warmly encourage the Parties to continue in this direction next year, conducting inspections in the same spirit of co-operation and transparency.

3. Annual exchange of information. The quality of the annual information exchanges has reached a high standard, and mid-year updates were provided by the Parties due to the continuous process of restructuring the armed forces.

4. Reduction of weapons. Republika Srpska, as a follow-on of the decisions taken during the previous SRCC meetings, complied with the reduction by severing certain armaments limited by the Agreement declared as decommissioned exemptions and other armaments declared under research and development. In addition, some armoured combat vehicles belonging to internal security forces were also reduced.

5. Summary. On the whole, the Article IV Agreement has been fully implemented, also including the inspections conducted by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Section II: Future activities

Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control

On 1 January 1999, the Parties assumed chairmanship of the Commission, the body with oversight responsibility for the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control. At that point, the OSCE, through the Personal Representative, took on a more advisory role, to include “secretariat” responsibilities. Subsequently, at the 21st meeting of the Commission, the Parties decided to hold meetings on their respective territories, thus ending the long-standing tradition of holding meetings in Vienna.

Since then, the Parties have shown steady improvement with regard to implementation of the Agreement. Each year, the information exchanges have improved with respect to presentation and content. This is indeed a remarkable achievement, considering the aggressive restructuring of the armed forces that has been taking place, the number of military installations that have subsequently been closed and the large number of military personnel who have been retired or demobilized.

With all this in mind, I am consulting with a number of OSCE delegations to develop a long-term strategy consistent with the overall strategy within the region, namely, giving the Parties ownership of this process and “streamlining” the role, presence and responsibility of the international community. Ownership, within the confines of the Article IV Agreement, has been achieved. The role of the OSCE within this regime is fundamental for the development of the entire process and as Personal Representative I retain responsibility for the implementation and training policy, for co-ordination of the inspections and for the participation of OSCE assistants in the inspection activities.

Section III: Conclusions

The Parties to the Agreement on CSBM in Bosnia and Herzegovina achieved a monumental success in terminating the provisions of Article II of Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Accords. This result represents a huge stride towards completion of the normalization process in the subregion.

On the other hand, the continuous and successful implementation of the Article IV provisions will greatly contribute to the stabilization and normalization process in the subregion, realizing, *inter alia*, the prerequisites for the full and complete participation of the countries in the international community.

This process will certainly be eased by the international community itself and/or through the provision by the OSCE of continuous expertise and support to the Parties.

In this regard and in accordance with the role of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Article IV, my office will continue to provide the Parties with guidance and technical support for implementing the inspection regime and analysis and expertise for managing the annual information exchanges.

ANNUAL REPORT 2004 BY THE SPECIAL CO-ORDINATOR OF THE STABILITY PACT FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

Introduction

The Stability Pact continued to serve as a mechanism of political co-ordination, its work being guided by the founding documents adopted in Cologne and Sarajevo in 1999. In addition, its activities were shaped by the Thessaloniki Agenda, in which the EU-Western Balkans Summit of 2003 called on the Stability Pact to facilitate the regional co-operation element of the European Union's Stabilisation and Association Process in a complementary manner. During 2004, the Office of the Special Co-ordinator (hereinafter referred to as the Stability Pact Secretariat) thus continued to encourage regional co-operation, and to co-ordinate international and local efforts to advance the political and economic development of South Eastern Europe. It focused its activities on further stabilizing and democratizing the region, and supporting the respective countries' Euro-Atlantic aspirations, wherever possible.

The violence which erupted in Kosovo in March represented a significant setback for the whole region, but South Eastern Europe (SEE) as a whole took several steps forward by taking ownership of a number of processes that were launched within the framework of the Stability Pact. Several political developments strengthened the region's ties with the European Union (EU), among them the EU's acceptance of Croatia as a candidate country, and the official application for EU membership by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Stability Pact Secretariat continued to work on activities within all three of its Working Tables, focusing on democratization and human rights, economic reconstruction, development and co-operation, and security matters, with the ultimate aim of preparing the region to eventually take full responsibility for existing initiatives. Under the leadership of Special Co-ordinator Erhard Busek (hereinafter referred to as SC Busek), the Stability Pact Secretariat shifted the emphasis from encouraging the region to issue declarations and adopt legislation, to promoting the implementation of earlier commitments.

Overview of activities

The Stability Pact marked its fifth anniversary during the Portoroz Regional Table in June 2004 by confirming the effectiveness of the regional approach to addressing problems of stabilization and democratization in the South Eastern European region. In Portoroz, the International Organization for Migration joined the Stability Pact as a participating organization, and the Pact was widened to include Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta. The Table commended the initiative to engage the ten new EU member States in transferring knowledge and know-how on experience in transformation processes to the South Eastern European region.

The Portoroz Regional Table was also the first to provide an active venue for a cross-table discussion, with input from all the Working Tables. Participants welcomed the initiative, noting that such a thematic approach (this time on migration) could deepen the dialogue and the co-operation between the various Working Tables. The Portoroz Regional Table reaffirmed the Stability Pact's commitment to fostering the integration of Kosovo into regional activities through enhanced cross border/boundary co-operation, in compliance with

UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The Table also requested the Stability Pact Secretariat to consider ways in which the Stability Pact could support UNMIK in advancing the Standards Implementation Plan.

Throughout the year, the Stability Pact Secretariat closely co-ordinated its activities with European Union institutions and member States. The Secretariat continued to meet the European Commission and the European Presidency at regular Informal Consultative Committee meetings, also attended by representatives of the Chairmanship of the South East European Co-operation Process (SEECP). On several occasions, the European Council's Working Group on the Western Balkans (COWEB) invited experts from the Stability Pact Secretariat to inform EU member States about various activities and regional developments. SC Busek also addressed the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee in October.

The Stability Pact Secretariat continued to maintain close co-operation with the SEECP, and in particular with the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania, both of which chaired the process, in the first and second halves of the year, respectively. The Stability Pact Secretariat also continued its fruitful collaboration with key Stability Pact partners, among them the OSCE, NATO, the Council of Europe, the OECD, the UN and its various specialized offices, the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the member States of the EU, as well as the national Governments of Japan, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America. Furthermore, SC Busek travelled to the United States twice for consultations regarding US involvement in South Eastern Europe, and received full support for the activities of the Stability Pact.

Jointly with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Moldovan Foreign Ministry, the Stability Pact Secretariat organized a major international conference, entitled Republic of Moldova in the Stability Pact – Achievements and Perspectives, in March 2004 to assess the first three years of Moldova's participation in Stability Pact activities. Throughout the year, SC Busek also continued a dialogue with the international community's highest representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

In an effort to further co-ordinate policy and to strengthen political support, SC Busek met with high-ranking officials in most European capitals, including in Vienna, Berlin, Bern, and Athens. During the year, he also met with EU High Representative Javier Solana, and EU Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten. During the month of October, he met with several commissioner-designates, including Olli Rehn, the future Commissioner for Enlargement. He also addressed the OSCE Permanent Council in May, and participated in the OSCE Parliamentary Conference in Sofia in November.

Throughout the year, SC Busek's key message was that South Eastern Europe's governments needed to follow up their commitments with rigorous implementation. The Special Co-ordinator also highlighted that a better investment climate, as well as the creation of a common energy and a liberalized trade market would encourage much needed flows of foreign investment into the region. Beyond promoting the above priorities, SC Busek and his Office also emphasized the importance of social cohesion during the complex and difficult transformation of the region's economies, industries and welfare systems.

SC Busek continued to maintain high-level political contacts in the region, and urged various governments to resolve existing deadlocks in key policy areas. He addressed the annual South Eastern European Prime Ministers' Meeting in Salzburg, and attended several ministerial meetings hosted by the SEECP, among them the Summit of Heads of

Governments. He also conducted high-level consultations with the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro. Beyond political negotiations, SC Busek also appeared at numerous high-level political round tables and conferences, and spoke at various universities, including the London School of Economics, the University of Sarajevo and Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

The Stability Pact Secretariat continued to support the efforts of the SEECP, and in particular the joint campaign to fight corruption and organized crime, which was launched by the Romanian Government in May. In addition, close co-operation was maintained with other regional initiatives to avoid duplication of activities. In its efforts to further integrate Kosovo into the regional processes, the Stability Pact Secretariat also worked closely with UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo. The Stability Pact Secretariat welcomed the appointment as Kosovo's fifth Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General of Soren Jessen-Petersen, who, prior to his appointment, had served as the Chair of the Stability Pact's Migration, Asylum and Refugee Regional Initiative (MARRI).

The engagement of both the European Union, and non-EU governments continued to be substantial. The biggest bilateral non-EU donor partners of the Stability Pact Secretariat were the governments of Canada, Japan, Norway, Switzerland and the United States. The US engagement was reaffirmed by the secondment of another senior US diplomat to the position of the Deputy Special Co-ordinator. Michael C. Mozur began his tenure in August, replacing John Riddle, who returned to Washington, DC, and now directs the Office of Performance Planning at the US State Department.

Working Table on Democratization and Human Rights

Working Table I continued to focus on the two core objectives, namely, media development, and local democracy/cross-border co-operation. Further activities concerned such issues as parliamentary co-operation, gender, and education. The Chair of Working Table I, Elisabeth Rehn, resigned from her post in June, but agreed to stay on to perform essential functions until her position was filled. In November, Goran Svilanovic, former Foreign Minister of Serbia and Montenegro, was nominated by SC Busek as the new Chair.

Media development (core objective)

The Media Task Force (MTF) brings together all the key organizations and NGOs active in the democratization of South Eastern Europe's media systems. The executive secretary and a network of nine national working groups determine priorities and co-ordinate action with the European Commission, the Council of Europe, various donor governments, and the main international NGOs working in media development. The task force also co-ordinates action with the South Eastern European Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Throughout the year, the nine national Media Working Groups issued statements and provided reports on developments in the media. The Working Groups' reports were distributed to a network of professionals working on media development in South Eastern Europe, within international organizations, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and member organizations of the Stability Pact. In co-operation with the Working Groups, the executive secretary discussed the need for media reform, particularly legislation and regulation, with the local authorities and international organizations involved. During the Special

Co-ordinator's visits to the region, he raised various issues of concern with the Governments of Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia.

The Media Task Force continued to endorse project proposals which enhance regional co-operation between media outlets, improve media legislation, and/or promote quality productions of television programmes. During 2004, 15 projects were funded by international donors within the Stability Pact framework. These include the production of television programming and documentaries addressing corruption, reconciliation, youth culture, social issues and the post-war separation of communities. In addition, the MTF supported the cross-border exchange of television programmes to enhance information-sharing, and closely co-operated with the European Commission on the development of support to television production under the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) regional programme.

During 2004, the Media Task Force prepared, together with the working groups and relevant organizations, an Overview of Media Support to South Eastern Europe, as well as country-by-country reports on support to the media. The executive secretary continued to update the monthly Media Legislation Matrix. In addition, the MTF helped to co-ordinate, support and advise donors on their media assistance. In particular, the executive secretary discussed future strategies for media support with several development agencies and Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The MTF also continued to co-operate with the European Commission's External Relations Directorate-General and EuropeAid on media assistance under the CARDS programme.

Extensive discussions were held at both the MTF meeting in May and the Portoroz Working Table meeting in June about the media's role in fuelling the violence in March in Kosovo. The Stability Pact Secretariat called upon donors to make a particular effort to establish quality control mechanisms with regard to the various projects and media outlets they are funding. The task force agreed to invite Kosovar journalists to engage more widely in an exchange amongst professional peers and to study more closely the mechanisms and instruments of self-regulation applied elsewhere in South Eastern Europe. During the year, the executive secretary and the Stability Pact Secretariat explored the possibility of establishing a Working Group within Kosovo as well. This approach, unlike other existing or planned efforts in Kosovo, would convene both international and local media experts around the same table.

During the MTF meeting in May, the participating organizations also discussed the position of public broadcasters, the reform of libel legislation, and strategies regarding the channelling of media assistance funds to the media in South Eastern Europe. In November, the MTF discussed the European Commission's (EC) future media policy towards South Eastern Europe.

Despite the overall international effort, the region's media landscape continues to be problematic, and bringing the standards of media legislation up to the level of Western European principles remains a difficult task. Controversy persists over the public service broadcasters in Bulgaria, Moldova and Serbia, and some basic legislative reforms are outstanding in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Passage of the Macedonian broadcast legislation has still not taken place, despite the efforts made to provide expertise and despite the high-level joint inquiries sent by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the SC of the Stability Pact, and the Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje.

Given that international donor funds are declining, or are being replaced by loans, it is increasingly crucial that the current efforts should be co-ordinated. Following a request by donors, the Executive Secretary distributed a strategy paper entitled “Support to Media in SEE, Strategy 2005–2007” in October, discussing both an overall strategy and country-specific recommendations. The efforts under the MTF will continue with dynamism, despite the fact that parliamentary co-operation will replace media development as one of the six Stability Pact core objectives from 2005 onward.

Local democracy and cross-border co-operation (core objective)

The Local Democracy and Cross-border Co-operation Task Force (LODE/CBC) continued to co-ordinate the work of both international and local actors to underpin regional co-operation in South Eastern Europe, with a view to strengthening local democracy through reform of local governance. Together with its key partners, the Council of Europe, the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South Eastern Europe (NALAS), the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA), and international NGOs, such as the EastWest Institute (www.iewws.org) and the Open Society Institute, the Task Force also sought to enhance cross-border co-operation, economic convergence, capacity-building, and social cohesion and citizens’ participation.

The Task Force provided political support for the development and implementation of concrete local and regional cross-border activities relating to trade, economic development and educational, cultural and social programmes, and for addressing key political obstacles to cross-border co-operation. In addition, the Task Force promoted capacity-building projects in the framework of NALAS through education and training programmes, partnerships, and the transfer of “transformation experience” from the new Central European EU member States, at both the local and the national levels of government.

Throughout the year, the LODE/CBC Task Force closely co-ordinated the activities of the various international organizations, national development agencies, international NGOs and regional partners. One main outcome of the co-ordination effort was the approval of the NALAS Action Plan for 2004–2007 in March, and the transformation of NALAS from a network into an official association during the 11th Plenary Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in May. The NALAS Secretariat, the activities of which have been handled on a rotational basis by countries of the region since May, began to prepare for a transfer of its activities from Strasbourg to South Eastern Europe.

During the year, the Stability Pact Secretariat assisted the Council of Europe in preparing a comprehensive concept paper for a regional ministerial conference on local and regional democracy, which was held in Zagreb in October. Organized by the Council of Europe, the Stability Pact and the Government of Croatia, the conference achieved the first joint political agreement by ministers of the region to improve governance at the local level.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the region’s governments adopted a clear commitment to reform of public administration procedures and to the eventual transfer of more competencies to regional and local levels. They pledged to implement comprehensive domestic work programmes the so-called “Work Programmes for Better Local Government”, which will extend to capacity-building, fiscal decentralization, local economic development and social cohesion. The conference also provided an opportunity to conduct a dialogue

between central governments and representatives of the national associations of local authorities, as well as civil society and NGO representatives.

In a joint effort with international and local partners, and in particular with the EastWest Institute, the Stability Pact Secretariat carried on with activities regarding various existing Euro-Regions, such as the South Adriatic, Sava-Drina-Majeвица and the Preševo-Kumanovo-Gjilane/Gjilan micro-regions. It also worked on preparing the establishment of the Ohrid-Prespa micro-region, which will be officially inaugurated in December 2004. Furthermore, the pilot programme for mapping donors' contributions on local government issues, prepared by the Stability Pact Secretariat, OSI/LGI and OECD, has proved successful and further implementation of the project is currently underway.

Additional areas of activity

In an attempt to focus more international and regional attention on the role of parliaments, a senior adviser was commissioned by the Stability Pact Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive strategy for increased Stability Pact involvement in the area of South Eastern European Parliamentary Co-operation. The German Government supported the information gathering process relating to the needs of various parliaments in the region, and prepared a long-term strategy on how parliamentary co-operation could be promoted and supported by the Stability Pact.

The senior consultant and the Stability Pact Secretariat held discussions with partners, both within and outside the region, and the plans were presented at several high-level conferences, including the Conference of the Presidents of Parliaments of the South Eastern European Co-operation Process (SEECP) Participating Countries in March, the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the SEECP in April, and a conference of the Parliamentary Troika (European Parliament, OSCE, Council of Europe) in November.

The initial findings were presented during the Portoroz Working Table meeting, and a complete report was delivered to the Working Table meeting in Skopje in November. According to the report, there remains a great need to increase efficiency in parliamentary offices, and a strengthening of the regional dimension could bring about tangible changes. Therefore, the activities of various international organizations, governments and NGOs, such as the EastWest Parliamentary Practice Project (www.ewppp.org) and the EastWest Institute, should be co-ordinated, and the emphasis should be placed on activities of a regional nature, the report concludes.

From these findings, the Stability Pact Secretariat envisions focusing the Stability Pact's attention on:

- Promoting the harmonization of legislation with EU standards;
- Enhancing the exchange of information on Parliamentary Co-operation activities;
- Developing links between committees of different parliaments dealing with similar issues;
- Institutionalizing training programmes for newly elected MPs and parliamentary staff;

- Promoting twinning between parliaments (within the region and between South Eastern European and EU parliaments, especially those of new EU member States);
- Supporting networks of women and young parliamentarians.

Furthermore, it is also envisaged that a website portal will be created to serve as a central platform for information-sharing between parliaments and the partners involved in parliamentary projects. The parliamentary co-operation initiative will endeavour to bring a parliamentary dimension to the work of all the existing Stability Pact task forces.

The Stability Pact Secretariat also continued to co-ordinate the activities of the region's governments with regard to the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE), established in the framework of the Task Force on Education and Youth. Throughout the year, the Task Force focused on establishing a secretariat which would work on regional capacity-building in the field of education and training, and would assist South Eastern European education ministries in the implementation of European Union standards. The Croatian Government successfully applied to host the secretariat, and the office was opened in Zagreb in November.¹

The work of the Task Force continued to be guided by the Joint Action Plan of May 2003, in which ministries from the region identified nine priority areas for the development and reform of education. These include the harmonization of relevant legislation and curricula with EU standards, the decentralization of the management and administration of education, the development of life-long learning strategies, as well as the widening of access to quality education. The Task Force also organized several capacity-building activities, including a regional expert seminar in the field of life-long learning strategies, and one in the field of human rights education. The OECD-led project entitled "Education Development for Disabled and At-Risk Students" was also successfully continued and entered into its second phase of implementation.

The Stability Pact Secretariat also continued to support the Gender Task force (GTF), which sought to advance gender equality throughout South Eastern Europe. In the framework of the Stability Pact and the SEECP, the Assembly of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the GTF and the International Institute for Democracy organized the Third Conference of Women Parliamentarians of South Eastern Europe in June. Through the co-operation of the GTF with the Norwegian People's Aid and the OSCE Missions in Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, training activities continued to focus on capacity-building for women in political parties, and in local decision-making positions. Several national advocacy campaigns were conducted and hundreds of women were trained.

The "SEE Women's Parliamentary Caucus" project, which connected women MPs in Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, was successfully concluded in May 2004. Meanwhile, the "Social Dialogue Empowerment of Women in Trade Unions" project, which holds field seminars, began in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro) in January, and

1 The Secretariat consists of a Governing Board of South Eastern European ministry representatives and a Consultative Body that comprises representatives of the Council of Europe, OECD, European University Association (EUA), European Training Foundation, European Commission, donor countries and institutions contributing to the ERI SEE, as well as additional education experts.

held “national strategic sessions” in June. The Task Force also sought to initiate social dialogue on gender issues, and in June, it secured funding to hold a regional consultative meeting to redefine the regional gender equality strategy. In September, preparations were started for a new regional project for Roma women. In addition, the GTF continued its co-operation with its institutional partners, and jointly organized a number of major conferences and seminars throughout the year.

Regarding the Ombudsman Initiative, a Regional Conference of the Ombudsman Institutions in South Eastern Europe was held in Belgrade in September. The meeting was organized by the Stability Pact Secretariat, the Eunomia Project of the Greek Ombudsman, the OSCE Mission in Serbia and Montenegro, and the Ministry of Local Self Government of the Republic of Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro), and discussed the responsibilities and challenges facing the ombudsman institutions in the South Eastern European region, as well as prospects for future regional co-operation.

Working Table on Economic Reconstruction, Development and Co-operation

The key goal of Working Table II is to facilitate sustainable economic development through modernization of infrastructure, particularly in energy and transport, as well as through trade liberalization, and investment promotion. A particular aim is to ensure that both the countries of South Eastern Europe and the international community take a regional strategic approach to economic development in order to make full and effective use of the available public- and private-sector financial resources. The Working Table also seeks to ensure that the importance of social cohesion is addressed by all.

Energy and other regional infrastructure (core objective)

In the field of energy, the Stability Pact is fully involved in the development of a regional energy market, under the initiative known as the Energy Community of South Eastern Europe (ECSEE). The European Commission leads this process and the Stability Pact Secretariat’s role is a complementary one that seeks to ensure regional political support and ownership, to promote a common strategy among the donors and to encourage private sector involvement in order to foster restructuring and investment in this sector.

Throughout 2004, the Stability Pact Secretariat promoted the implementation of two Athens Memoranda of Understanding signed earlier by South Eastern European governments, and it actively supported the decision of the European Council in June to grant a mandate to the European Commission to negotiate a legally binding agreement with the participating South Eastern European countries.

Formal negotiations on the treaty were launched in July and the Commission and the participating governments hope to reach agreement on the key provisions of the text by the end of 2004, and to progressively open electricity and gas markets in the coming years. In the course of the process, South Eastern European governments will adopt all relevant EU directives on energy and environment, and hope to undertake comprehensive modernization projects with the help of international financial institutions (IFIs) and foreign investors. Once EU standards have been implemented, the South Eastern European countries will also gain access to the EU’s internal energy market, irrespective of the status of their membership negotiations.

In July, prior to the official launch of the negotiation process, the Stability Pact Secretariat organized a meeting of senior advisers to South Eastern European prime ministers to highlight the key political issues that would emerge during the negotiations. At the request of the European Commission, the Stability Pact Secretariat also organized, in conjunction with the Romanian Chairmanship of the SEECP, a conference for the region's parliamentarians and social partners to inform them about the ECSEE process.

Held in Bucharest in October, the conference discussed the challenges facing the restructuring of the energy sector, including the costs and benefits of creating a regional energy market in line with the EU's single market and its implications for tariffs and employment. Delegates also examined the technical modernization needed to ensure the security of energy supply in the region, as well as the reforms necessary to harmonize legislation with the EU's *acquis communautaire*. Over a hundred participants attended the event from the region, together with representatives of IFIs and of ECSEE observer governments.

The Stability Pact Secretariat continued to provide input regarding the draft text of the ECSEE treaty, and participated in numerous high-level working meetings and political events discussing the plans. Furthermore, it supported the two South Eastern European "Energy Weeks" organized by the European Commission. Hosted by the Greek Government in Athens, the events served as forums for a series of meetings by different governing and co-ordination bodies established under the Athens Memoranda of Understanding.

While the main focus is on the ECSEE process, the Stability Pact Secretariat also undertook activities in support of regional energy issues, such as a seminar on the particular needs of the energy sector in Pristina, Kosovo, in May.

The Infrastructure Steering Group (ISG), created under the auspices of the Stability Pact and chaired by the European Commission, continued to be the main co-ordinating body for activities of the IFIs in support of regional infrastructure. A high-level meeting of the ISG in February reaffirmed the support of all the members for the Group and expanded its mandate to cover environmental infrastructure, particularly in the field of water management. The Group also decided to seek new ways to improve the implementation of infrastructure projects in the region, such as the proposed co-ordinated approach for transport projects in Albania.

In May, several projects were removed from the list of regional infrastructure projects following their completion, while five new projects were added. The number of current projects totalled 51 at the end of 2004, at a total cost of €4.1 billion, of which 39, valued at €3.45 billion, are under construction. In October, the European Commission appointed Michel Peretti as the new Chair of the ISG.

Regarding transport infrastructure, 2004 witnessed the signing in June of a Memorandum of Understanding on the Core Transport Network by the five Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) countries and UNMIK/Kosovo. This Memorandum of Understanding summarizes an agreed regional strategy for this key infrastructural sector that has been developed by the ISG and the South Eastern European countries over the past two years, based on the EC-funded study on regional transport infrastructure in the Western Balkans.

In July, the Stability Pact Secretariat brought together partners to work in an informal task force on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), in order to gain a better understanding of the potential PPP environment and to expedite the use of PPPs in the region. The task force will seek to promote the implementation of pilot projects in different infrastructural sectors and in different South Eastern European countries. Task force members were drawn from IFIs and the business community and work is underway to develop a shortlist of potential projects. As part of the Stability Pact's mandate to facilitate resolution of project implementation issues, the Stability Pact Secretariat also participated in joint field missions with the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the most recent being to Bosnia and Herzegovina in July, in order to study the problems in the implementation of specific infrastructure projects.

Trade and investment (core objective)

In the field of trade, the Trade Working Group (TWG) continued to be the key forum to implement the regional strategy for trade liberalization, as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding on Trade of June 2001. The TWG provides a forum for co-ordination among senior trade policy officials from the South Eastern European countries, the European Commission, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and several bilateral donors. During 2004, the TWG held three meetings — in Budapest (March), Brussels (July) and Belgrade (October) — and reviewed progress on the ratification and implementation of the 28 free trade agreements.

The year also saw considerable progress on the EC-funded project to assist South Eastern European countries to identify and eliminate non-tariff barriers that was launched at the request of the TWG. The joint OECD-Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (www.sida.se) project to promote and liberalize trade in services was completed in June and follow-up to this important project will now be undertaken through another EC/CARDS project. Throughout the year, a range of workshops and seminars were held under Stability Pact auspices to promote the free trade agreement (FTA) process.

In the autumn, the Stability Pact Secretariat led the preparation of the TWG's Strategy and Action Plan for 2005, and the first draft was discussed at the Belgrade meeting. The Plan focuses on full implementation of the FTAs, eliminating selected non-tariff barriers, promoting trade in services and further harmonization of the FTAs. In addition, the TWG will also prepare options for future direction and management of the trade liberalization process in the region for review and agreement at a ministerial meeting in 2005. One of the options under active consideration is to move to a single, multilateral free trade agreement as a way of fully exploiting the opportunities afforded by the regional trade liberalization process. Throughout the year, SC Busek raised the issues of delays in ratification and implementation with several South Eastern European governments, and continued to promote the benefits of the FTA process to the domestic and international business community.

In the field of investment facilitation, under the leadership of the OECD, the Investment Compact (IC) continued to undertake a range of activities including technical assistance, promotional events and the development of institutional structures. A key concern of the IC was to ensure that the countries implemented the agreed reforms designed to improve the investment climate. An independent evaluation of the Investment Compact (www.investmentcompact.org) was carried out and the final report, published in July, highlighted the positive impact of the initiative on the investment climate in the region, including the investment flows and the employment-generation impact.

The key political event under this initiative was the ministerial conference in Vienna in July, during which South Eastern European governments endorsed a political declaration to improve the investment climate. Among others, the region's governments promised to reduce administrative burdens for company registration and licensing, and undertook to facilitate appeals procedures and information exchange, as well as to strengthen institutional capacity at the central and local government levels. The Vienna conference also featured a business forum, and a ceremony to present the awards for International Investors of the Year 2004 in South East Europe. In addition, the IC's regional chairmanship was handed over from Romania to Bulgaria.

Private sector involvement in the IC has been strengthened through the activities of the Foreign Investors' Councils that have been established, or are in the process of being established, in each of the countries. Several of these councils have produced "White Books" on the investment climate in their respective countries and have presented these to governments as their input into policy development. Together with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Investment Compact also organized, in September, a conference to highlight the role of parliamentarians in implementing economic reforms. The need to ensure that MPs and local government representatives are better informed regarding economic development issues is emerging as an important topic across several Stability Pact initiatives and will be followed up.

In addition, the Trade Working Group and the Investment Compact, the Stability Pact Secretariat also worked closely with the Business Advisory Council (BAC). The BAC held four meetings in 2004, in Sofia (Bulgaria), Bled (Slovenia), Istanbul (Turkey) and Zagreb (Croatia). It also organized business missions to Chisinau (Moldova) (21 and 22 October) and Tirana (Albania) (14 and 15 November) to enhance a direct exchange of views between the public and private sector on the investment climate in individual countries. In 2004, the BAC institutionalized its partnership with the network of Foreign Investors' Councils, as well as SECIPRO committees (trade and transport facilitation bodies) in the region.

Additional areas of activity

The Stability Pact's strategy and approach for its Initiative for Social Cohesion (ISC) were revised substantially during 2004. The Initiative sharpened its focus and redefined its overall mission statement, establishing concrete objectives for its five areas of activity — employment, social dialogue, social protection, housing and health. A newly created Advisory Group consisting of the Co-Chairs, representatives of the leaders of each sector and the Stability Pact Secretariat now guides the overall strategy and approach for the Initiative.

The ISC has made progress in each of the sectors under its responsibility. Work in reviewing national employment policies as agreed during the South Eastern Europe Ministerial Conference on Employment in Bucharest in 2003 continues under the leadership of the Council of Europe and the International Labour Organization. Several countries have submitted reports, and Albania and Croatia are being subjected to an in-depth peer review. In the health sector, national plans for food quality and safety have been agreed on, and in many cases endorsed, while new projects in areas such as blood safety have secured funding. The Health Network has commenced detailed preparatory work for the ministerial meeting on health planned for 2005.

While social dialogue is still weak in South Eastern Europe, the ISC's activities in this area are achieving results, as evidenced by the outcome of the third joint meeting of the European Trade Union Confederation Balkan Forum (www.etuc.org) and the South East European Employers' Forum that took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, in October. A series of consultative meetings culminating in a joint forum brought together unions and employers to discuss how to further strengthen social dialogue in the region, and in particular how to settle labour disputes. In the field of social protection, the Stability Pact Secretariat supported the establishment of the EC-funded regional co-ordination centre for social policy issues in Skopje.

The progress made under the Housing and Urban Management umbrella (inherited from Working Table III's MARRI initiative) was highlighted at a high-level conference on informal settlements in South Eastern Europe in Vienna in late September. Ministry representatives from Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro signed a declaration, reaffirming their commitment to formalizing existing informal settlements and to facilitating access to education, health care and infrastructure services.

In addition to the ministerial meeting, the conference also included workshops and seminars involving governments, NGOs, practitioners, and academics, where wide-ranging discussions allowed participants to share best practices on issues affecting housing in the region and to agree on a number of common activities.

In line with the conclusions of the plenary meeting of Working Table II in Tirana in December 2003, the Stability Pact Secretariat worked to stimulate co-operation and synergies among its "classic" economic development activities and its social cohesion activities. Jointly with the OECD, the Irish EU Presidency and the Romanian SEECF Chairmanship, the Stability Pact Secretariat organized an international conference on enterprise development and employment generation in Bucharest in May. The conference discussed the social consequences of market restructuring, as well as the steps required to improve the business climate. It emphasized the need to bring about a palpable change in South Eastern Europe, establishing a culture of entrepreneurship and development of small and medium-sized enterprises, combined with improved employment, education and training policies.

One of the key conclusions of the conference was that a more comprehensive, horizontal approach was needed to stimulate entrepreneurship and to attract investment to individual regions throughout South Eastern Europe, as well as to address the problems created in the region by substantial industrial restructuring. The conference agreed that the development of a template of practical implementation measures on regional development strategies, including strategies to deal with industrial restructuring, would be constructive and useful.

As part of the process of implementing this recommendation, the Stability Pact Secretariat, in co-operation with the Investment Compact, the OECD and the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, held a one-day seminar in early November on local aspects of enterprise development and employment generation. This seminar emphasized the importance and value of community-based approaches to this issue, particularly when a region is affected by industrial restructuring. A series of practical measures to facilitate the implementation of such an approach were discussed and the organizers will now seek to incorporate these into a template of best-practice activities that can be used by all stakeholders.

During 2004, the Regional Environmental Reconstruction programme continued the process of developing and implementing environment-related legislation and practices in South Eastern Europe, in line with EU directives and standards. The Secretariat of the Regional Environmental Center (REC) in Hungary provides on-going technical support to the various countries, and in particular has developed an initial overview of some of the investment requirements in the environmental sector in South Eastern Europe.

After the completion of the parliamentary ratification process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovenia, the Stability Pact Secretariat participated in a ceremony establishing the Sava River Commission in Belgrade in June. The multilateral treaty establishing the Commission, the seat of which is in Zagreb (Croatia), was signed in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, in December 2002. It introduces a comprehensive river basin management concept addressing the needs of navigation, sustainable water management, hydro-electricity and environmental protection. The Sava countries signed legal documents, which state that the Republic of Slovenia will serve as depositary for the Sava Commission's legal instruments.

Working Table on Security Issues

In 2004, Working Table III continued to work on its core objectives, namely the fight against organized crime and management of population movements. It also pursued its efforts in security- and defence-related issues (core areas of activity) including defence conversion and weapons control, as well as border management and disaster preparedness. The Working Table meeting in Portoroz, Slovenia, in June focused on fighting organized crime and corruption as well as military conversion, while a separate cross-table discussion was held on issues of migration.

Fighting organized crime (core objective)

In this area, the Stability Pact Secretariat continued to focus on capacity-building, awareness-raising and legislative reforms in the framework of the Stability Pact Initiative against Organized Crime (SPOC). Together with the Police Forum, SPOC continued to facilitate results-oriented dialogue between local, regional and international agencies. In an attempt to promote the implementation of the 2002 London Statement on Defeating Organized Crime in South Eastern Europe, adopted in 2002, and the related conclusions of the EU-Western Balkans Summit (Thessaloniki, Greece, 2003), SPOC engaged in political advocacy to help South Eastern European governments formulate relevant strategies, and to improve regional co-operation on criminal matters.

Following the Ministerial Conference of Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs of SEECP participating States in Bucharest in May, which agreed to the Romanian Chairmanship's proposal to launch a joint campaign to fight organized crime and corruption, the Stability Pact Secretariat provided assistance to this campaign through intensified co-operation among its network of legal, law enforcement and judicial experts and practitioners. Among others, it worked on facilitating a closer co-operation with Europol and Eurojust. Meanwhile, the Stability Pact's related initiatives assisted in the design of a database and assessment methodology for the SEECP campaign.

SC Busek urged governments to implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and to design adequate mechanisms in this area. The Stability Pact Secretariat continued to closely monitor developments regarding the implementation process and raised awareness regarding the status of implementation at various ministerial and working-level meetings, both within and outside the region.

During the year, the Police Forum continued to work on specialized projects, among others, a series of training events for senior police officers, the Stolen Vehicle Project, the anti-drug networking project, the border checkpoints project, as well as the so-called Organized Crime Training Network (OCTN). OCTN aims at training middle-ranking officers of specialized organized crime units in South Eastern Europe, focusing on capacity-building and network creation. Meetings were held in Vienna (June), Brussels (July) and Zagreb (September) to prepare for the launch of the initial phase of the OCTN project. Close co-ordination and co-operation were ensured with the Association of European Police Colleges (AEPC), a partner in this endeavour, and the Association of South Eastern European Police Chiefs (SEPCA).

The Stability Pact Secretariat also continued to facilitate dialogue between the Bucharest-based Regional Centre for Combating Trans-border Crime and other law enforcement agencies, particularly Europol, with the aim of increasing formal operational exchanges on investigations regarding organized crime. In September, SC Busek welcomed the EU's expert-level assessment, which aimed at evaluating the Centre's contribution to fighting organized crime in the region, as well as its compatibility with similar efforts by existing European Union mechanisms.

The report concluded that the Centre, which supports joint transborder crime-fighting efforts through liaison officers, had played a major role in developing law-enforcement co-operation, and had contributed to the stabilization of the region's security situation. The independent evaluation also said that the Centre has the potential to become a regional office for Europol. In order to achieve that, the participating States should make more systematic use of the Centre as an instrument for regional law enforcement operations.

In the first half of the year, the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings worked on promoting the implementation of the statements on commitments signed by South Eastern European ministers in Palermo (2000), Zagreb (2001) and Tirana (2002). Following the appointment of Helga Konrad, Chair of the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings, as OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the Stability Pact Task Force was gradually disbanded. The Stability Pact Secretariat welcomed the appointment, and began co-operating with the new structure, while at the same time, undertaking a refocusing of its activities towards law-enforcement aspects.

In 2004, the Stability Pact Secretariat assisted the establishment in March of the Sarajevo-based secretariat for the Stability Pact Anti-Corruption Initiative (SPAI), which was created to provide expertise for the design and implementation of national anti-corruption strategies.

Managing and stabilizing population movements (core objective)

In 2004, the Stability Pact's Migration, Asylum and Refugee Regional Initiative (MARRI) was gradually moved under the auspices of the SEECP. The overall goal of the initiative has been to achieve a common framework for comprehensive and streamlined

regional action by participating government and civil society actors, as well as international organizations. By establishing the MARRI Regional Forum in April and signing a Memorandum of Understanding in July, the Governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro took full responsibility for implementing MARRI's objectives jointly.

The Stability Pact Secretariat provided assistance through fund-raising and policy guidance in the establishment of the Regional Secretariat in Skopje. The secretariat was opened on 18 November, one day prior to the Skopje Regional Table meeting. Discussions between SC Busek and the Albanian Government, representing the Presidency of the MARRI Regional Forum, subsequently concluded that the Stability Pact Secretariat would continue to provide political support for the issues of concern to the Regional Forum. It was also decided that the Stability Pact Secretariat would actively participate in the meetings of the "Friends of the Regional Forum", which had been created to provide recommendations regarding the Forum's activities.

The Stability Pact Secretariat provided guidance throughout the year to participating governments on pressing issues pertaining to remaining refugees and internally displaced persons, promoting a gradual move toward a broader approach of non-discriminatory access to rights and citizenship. The so-called "Access to Rights" initiative identifies weaknesses and gaps in the national legal frameworks, and seeks to establish consultation mechanisms between State and non-State actors. It advocates that governments should accord "unimpeded and non-discriminatory access" for all refugees and displaced citizens to their property rights and social rights as well as health, education, employment and citizenship rights. The Office also worked on encouraging the creation of sustainable national and regional mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on relevant progress.

The Stability Pact Secretariat also worked on establishing a related Regional Information Exchange (RIE) programme, which aims to fill gaps in information management and cross-border information exchange, as well as data protection. In addition, SC Busek welcomed the initiative of OSCE, UNHCR and EU offices in the region to jointly assist Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro in finding solutions to remaining refugee issues, and pledged to support their work in the future.

Additional areas of activity

In 2004, the Stability Pact Secretariat increased its activities in the area of security sector reform, and particularly defence conversion. The Stability Pact Secretariat participated in a conference of South Eastern European ministers of defence in April in Sarajevo, and in co-operation with NATO, it worked on facilitating programmes to assist in the conversion of military bases to civilian uses, and to support the transition to civilian life of discharged military personnel. The Stability Pact Secretariat closely co-operated with all international partners in this area, including UNDP, OSCE, the International Organization for Migration, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (www.dcaf.ch), and the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (www.bicc.de). It also initiated a dialogue with international financial institutions on future project financing. SC Busek also discussed the issue of defence conversion and the Ohrid Border Process with the NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in September.

During the year, the Ohrid process for border management and security entered the implementation phase, and the participating governments prepared national reports on the

harmonization of border management practices with EU standards. The second review meeting on progress in the development of an integrated border management system was held in Tirana in October, attended by all the participating governments as well as the Stability Pact Secretariat, the European Commission, the OSCE and NATO. Developments during the year confirmed that all the participating countries made significant progress on the path designated by the Ohrid "Way Forward Document" in 2003. All the countries started to bring their national legislations into line with the commitments entered into at Ohrid, in particular regarding legislation on civilian border authorities and related laws on foreigners and asylum.

The collection of small arms and light weapons (SALW) also remained a fixture on the agenda. Supported by the European Commission, the South Eastern Europe Clearing House for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) (www.seesac.org) continued to play a central role in the Stability Pact's work on SALW issues. According to a joint Stability Pact/UNDP and donor assessment, SEESAC remained the leading actor combating the threat of uncontrolled and excess SALW in the region. Meanwhile, the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC) concentrated its activities on providing a regional forum for more comprehensive political-military issues, and the retraining of discharged military personnel.

The Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Initiative (DPPI) continued to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination between regional governments and participating organizations such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (www.ifrc.org), the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (<http://ochaonline.un.org>), the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNDP, NATO, OSCE, the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre and the EastWest Institute. A number of training events on core DPPI issues were held, and a joint fire-fighting exercise was organized between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro in May. DPPI also continued to support the countries in establishing a legal framework for border crossings to ensure rapid disaster or humanitarian assistance.

**VII. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE SECRETARIAT OF THE OSCE AND
THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNECE**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR
SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE AND THE
SECRETARIAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

The Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE),

Noting common areas of interest and recalling past successful co-operation, including in the review of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension of security and in the framework of the Tripartite and Target Oriented meetings of the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe,

Recalling the provisions of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted at the 11th OSCE Ministerial Council in Maastricht in December 2003, which *inter alia* requested the Secretary General of the OSCE to conclude an arrangement with the UNECE to provide a basis for future monitoring and review of the economic and environmental situation in the OSCE area, as well as the relevant decisions of the 2004 Annual Session of the UNECE,

Recognizing the role of the OSCE as a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter and the substantial role of OSCE's economic and environmental dimension in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation,

Recognizing the leading role of the UN Regional Commissions within the United Nations, in their areas of competence, in interactions with regional organizations,

Mindful of the particularities of their respective mandates,

Wishing to achieve maximum synergy and complementarity in the pursuit of their objectives,

Desirous to promote a spirit of practical, pragmatic and result-oriented close co-operation,

Have reached understanding on the following:

1. Hold periodic meetings between the Secretary General of OSCE and the Executive Secretary of UNECE.
2. Hold other consultations on matters of common interest as appropriate.
3. Establish a joint working group on mutual co-operation and to designate focal points for maintaining regular contacts as appropriate.

4. Seek to ensure reciprocal participation in meetings and conferences on subjects of mutual relevance, in accordance with their respective rules, in particular, including the provision of speakers, moderators and experts.
5. Continue to provide mutual access to documents, statistical data and reports relevant for their co-operation and the activities of the other party.
6. Regularly inform the OSCE participating States and the UNECE member States about the ongoing co-operation through their plenary sessions and other fora.
7. Concerning the review of OSCE commitments: the UNECE will continue to play a supportive role in the review of implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension.
8. The commitments will be reviewed at the annual OSCE Economic Forum in accordance with the following clusters:
 - Environment, energy, sustainable development,
 - Integration, trade and transport,
 - Investment climate,
 - Poverty, social exclusion and education,
 - Public and corporate governance.
9. The UNECE will take the lead in preparing the review of the cluster on “Environment, energy, sustainable development”, “Integration, trade and transport” and the cluster on “Investment climate”. The UNECE will contribute to the review of the clusters on “Poverty, social exclusion and education” and “Public and corporate governance” as well as to the comprehensive review commensurate to its expertise and resource availability.
10. The review session should focus yearly on one or two specific clusters or should entail a comprehensive review of all clusters. The OSCE and UNECE intend to work together to improve the review sessions and their follow-up.
11. The OSCE and UNECE should accomplish the work on the review on the basis of their respective existing resources.
12. The OSCE will notify the UNECE of its decision on the subject of the forthcoming review session with maximal possible notice in order to provide the UNECE with sufficient time to ensure the satisfactory preparation of its contribution.
13. As foreseen by the Strategy Document (paragraph 3.2.4), the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities intends to continue the co-operation with the UNECE and other partner organizations on developing early-warning mechanisms and indicators for the assessment of the implementation of commitments subject to further decisions of the OSCE Permanent Council.

14. The UNECE is expected to be invited to the Economic and Environmental Subcommittee, which plans to follow up the review of implementation of commitments at the Economic Forum as well as to the discussions of other topics relevant for OSCE — UNECE co-operation. UNECE may also take the initiative to propose to deliver other reports for consideration to the Economic and Environmental Subcommittee.

15. Both Secretariats intend to further strengthen their co-ordination and co-operation in undertaking joint projects in member States including joint fund-raising for projects they plan to implement together.

16. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) takes effect upon its signature by both Parties. The present MoU does not entail any financial commitments for either Party. It may be modified by mutual agreement expressed in writing. Either Party may terminate this MoU at any time by giving a two-month written notice to the other Party.



Ján Kubiš
Secretary General
Organization for Security and Co-operation in
Europe



Brigita Schmögnerová
Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Sofia, 6 December 2004