



ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY  
AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

**ANNUAL REPORT 1998  
ON OSCE ACTIVITIES**

*(1 December 1997 - 30 November 1998)*

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SEC.DOC/2/98  
2 December 1998

Original: ENGLISH

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## I. Introduction

The Sixth Meeting of the Ministerial Council held on 18 and 19 December 1997 in Copenhagen took stock of the discussion on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the twenty first century. The participating States decided, among other things, on guidelines for an OSCE Document-Charter on European Security. The Ministerial Council emphasized in its decision that a politically binding Document-Charter should “take a further step with regard to standards and practices of OSCE participating States” and “serve the needs of our peoples in the new century by addressing risks and challenges to security, thus contributing to a common security space within the OSCE area”. One of the essential elements of the future Document-Charter will be a Platform for Co-operative Security. The Organization’s activities in 1998 were significantly influenced by the decision, pending the elaboration of a Platform for Co-operative Security as part of a Document-Charter, to task the Chairman-in-Office, in co-operation with the Secretary General, to work actively to increase the OSCE’s co-operation with other international institutions and organizations. The discussion on a Platform for Co-operative Security as a proposed element of the Document-Charter on European Security reflects the participating States’ goal of further strengthening the interlocking and mutually reinforcing nature of co-operation between international institutions and organizations concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security in Europe.

Under the Chairmanship of Polish Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek, the OSCE has evolved further as a “primary instrument for conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation”. During the reporting period (1 December 1997 to 30 November 1998) the international community was confronted with new challenges to European security and stability. In responding to these crises, the OSCE focused on the need to strengthen pragmatic co-operation among the various international organizations contributing to European security - not as a goal in itself, but rather as a means.

The Organization continued its involvement in Albania, where its Presence was given the role of providing a co-ordinating framework for international organizations present in the country. This role was enhanced in connection with the situation in the neighbouring Federal Republic of Yugoslavia province of Kosovo and the renewed unrest in Albania.

The OSCE has repeatedly condemned the excessive and indiscriminate use of force during police and military actions in Kosovo (FRY). The Organization has expressed deep concern about the continued flow of refugees driven by violence across the borders to neighbouring countries. It has also called on all concerned to oppose violence as a means of achieving political ends and called for unconditional and meaningful dialogue, based on full observance of OSCE principles and commitments. On 11 March, the Permanent Council called on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to accept without preconditions an immediate return of the OSCE missions of long duration to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina and allow the Chairman-in-Office’s Personal Representative for FRY, Mr. Filipe Gonzalez to carry out his mandate, i.e. to assist the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in promoting internal dialogue and democratic reforms as well as to pay special attention to the FRY’s adherence to the International Community’s demands regarding a solution of the problem in Kosovo.

In July, exploratory talks between the OSCE and the FRY were initiated on the basis of a joint statement by Presidents Yeltsin and Milosevic, issued on 16 June 1998. As a result of the first round, an OSCE Technical Assessment Mission was sent to the FRY, in mid-July. The

mission concluded that high-level international involvement in the negotiation process was essential given the total lack of trust between the two communities in Kosovo. It further expressed concern about the humanitarian situation.

Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1160, the Chairman-in-Office has reported regularly to the UN Secretary General on the situation in Kosovo and on measures taken by the OSCE in that respect.

Owing to the continuing deterioration of the situation in Kosovo (FRY), and pursuant to the resolution of the United Nations Security Council calling upon the OSCE to establish a Mission in Kosovo (FRY) to verify the FRY's implementation of Resolutions 1160 and 1199 of the UN Security Council, the Permanent Council decided on 25 October to establish the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) for one year, with the possibility of extensions. The KVM is expected to deploy its permanent presence, consisting of two thousand persons, at as many locations throughout Kosovo as it deems necessary to fulfil its responsibilities. The OSCE will establish co-operation with other organizations to allow the KVM to accomplish all its objectives most effectively. The KVM will, to the extent possible, assist UNHCR, ICRC and other international organizations in facilitating the return of displaced persons to their homes, and the provision of humanitarian assistance to them by the FRY, Serbian and Kosovo authorities as well as humanitarian organizations and NGO's.

The OSCE strengthened border monitoring in Albania and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by enhancing the capabilities of the OSCE Presence in Albania and the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission in Skopje in order to allow for adequate observation of the borders with the FRY and to prevent possible spillover effects. Working closely with monitors from the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM), the border monitoring operation in Albania also helps facilitate the work of UNHCR, the ICRC and other international and humanitarian organizations in the area.

Attempting to deal with the widespread violence and the breakdown of public order in Albania, European organizations spoke with one voice as the first step in concerted international efforts. A joint visit of the OSCE and the Council of Europe to Tirana was followed by a declaration issued by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the President of the European Union Council, the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and the Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council on 23 September 1998 which called upon the government and the opposition to show moderation.

In the past year, the OSCE was called upon by its participating States to apply a flexible range of tools in innovative ways. In Croatia, the OSCE took on the unprecedented task of deploying civilian police monitors in the Croatian Danube region following the expiration of the mandate of the United Nations Police Support Group (UNPSG). This task includes monitoring of the operational aspects of traditional police work, providing assistance and expertise to Croatian police and other law enforcement authorities in dealing with issues that include community-oriented policing and protection of human rights of displaced persons, refugees and persons belonging to national minorities.

Together with the Croatian government, the OSCE Mission is already playing an important role in reconciliation, the two-way return of refugees and the protection of human rights and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities - tasks it assumed following the



expiration of the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium on 15 January 1998.

The handover from the UN to the OSCE in both cases was seamless, and based on close co-operation. The Croatia example underscores the need for close co-operation among international organizations, and points to the OSCE's ability to respond to new challenges.

The OSCE has continued to play a leading role in the international community's civilian stabilization efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The past year saw the OSCE supervising elections to the National Assembly in Republika Srpska on 22 and 23 November 1997, Mr. Javier Ruperez of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly being appointed by the OSCE's Chairman-in-Office as his Special Representative for the assessment of those elections. While the election was well administered, it had been grafted onto a political environment which falls short of democratic standards. The OSCE also supervised the parliamentary and presidential elections, and the fourth OSCE-supervised elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which took place on 12 and 13 September 1998. During the weeks leading up to the elections, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina was engaged in activities designed to promote a fair and democratic election process. The election supervision role in Bosnia and Herzegovina is quite unprecedented, not only in terms of the range of responsibilities of the Organization, but also in its sheer scale.

The OSCE also played an important role in post-conflict military stabilization in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A vital component of its efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina was arms control undertaken under Article IV (the Agreement on Subregional Arms Control, aimed at the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska) of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Under the auspices of the OSCE, the limits established under the Agreement on Subregional Arms Control, which came into effect in late 1997, resulted in a significant reduction in the level of arms holdings, with some 6,600 armaments destroyed. An effective inspection regime, routine exchange of information on military forces, and a constructive working relationship with the Subregional Consultative Commission were established. The Article IV process, which is considered a success by the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, General Carlo Jean, and the Parties concerned, has been an important confidence-building measure and an essential part of the peace-building process in the region.

Successful implementation of Article IV has always been an implicit precondition for the negotiation of Article V of Annex 1-B, which aims at establishing "a regional balance in and around the former Yugoslavia." In the last few months, the OSCE has been holding consultations on a precise mandate for the negotiations on this Article.

The democracy-building and stabilizing role of the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina are a key element in the overall strategy of the international community, in which a number of international organizations and institutions play roles in keeping with their comparative advantages.

Turning to other regions, the OSCE's Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus began operating in early 1998, under the direction of Ambassador Hans-Georg Wieck, to "assist the Belarusian authorities in promoting democratic institutions and in complying with other OSCE commitments; and monitor and report on this process". The OSCE has confirmed in this way its

commitment to continued support in the transformation of the country into a fully developed democracy.

Reflecting the willingness of the Central Asian States to step up OSCE activities in their respective countries, the OSCE increased the international staff of its Liaison Office in Central Asia and decided to open up new centres in Ashgabad (Turkmenistan), Bishkek (Kyrgyz Republic), and Almaty (Kazakhstan). These decisions will allow the OSCE to enhance its role in the whole of Central Asia as well as the scope of its co-operation with those States.

But the past year also saw the fulfilment of one of the OSCE's mandates: in line with the "Agreement between the Republic of Latvia and the Russian Federation on the Legal Status of the Skrunda Radar Station during its Temporary Operation and Dismantling" of April 1994, which the OSCE has assisted in implementing, the Russian Federation on 31 August 1998 fulfilled its obligation to close down the station. The successful implementation of the agreement is an excellent example of how the OSCE can assist participating States in solving difficult bilateral issues.

In the OSCE's work with neighbouring regions, and in the light of the continued interest shown by the Mediterranean partners in becoming better acquainted with OSCE activities, the participating States, wishing to improve the quality of the Organization's interaction with the Mediterranean partners for co-operation, have decided that OSCE missions will, on a case-by-case basis, receive representatives of the partners for co-operation for short-term visits, and that the ODIHR will make arrangements for the inclusion of observers sent by them in election monitoring or supervision operations conducted by the OSCE. Jordan was welcomed as a Mediterranean partner for co-operation in May 1998.

There have also been numerous institutional changes in the OSCE, aimed at making the Organization more effective. In fulfilment of a decision taken at the Lisbon Summit Meeting in December 1996, a new institution was created in the OSCE, namely the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Under the guidance of the Representative, Mr. Freimut Duve, the Office has in the past year become a fully functioning institution and has highlighted the OSCE's continuing commitment to freedom of the media. Central to the functioning of this new Office has been the ability of the Representative and his staff to visit countries and assess, at first hand, their governments' commitment to freedom of the media. These visits have been designed to gain exposure to what this new Office has identified as its "Four Constituencies": Governments, Parliaments, non-governmental media organizations (NGOs), and the media practitioners themselves.

As called for by the Lisbon Summit Meeting in December 1996, a Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities was appointed to the Secretariat in early 1998. The Co-ordinator is charged with "strengthening the ability of the Permanent Council and the OSCE Institutions to address economic, social and environmental aspects of security." One of his major tasks during the reporting period was the preparation of the Sixth Economic Forum of the OSCE which took place in Prague from 1 to 5 June 1998, and dealt with two issues: the security aspects of energy development in the OSCE area and the economic dimension implementation review conference. The environmental problems that the Central Asian States face today were discussed at a Seminar on Regional Environmental Problems and Solutions in Tashkent, (22-24 September).

With reference to internal matters, the participating States adopted and put in place a new financing mechanism for larger OSCE missions and projects. Following a decision of the Copenhagen Ministerial Council, an open-ended group of experts working in close co-operation with the Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary General submitted to the Permanent Council a proposal on ways of enhancing the Secretariat's operational capabilities which was approved on 1 October 1998. As a result, the Secretary General reorganized the Secretariat on the basis of two main departments: The Conflict Prevention Centre and the Department for Administration and Operations. Work on a training strategy focusing on the field activities was started. An Information Systems Strategic Plan, a three-year strategic review that examines both critical information system needs and the opportunities provided by information systems technology to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the Organization, was presented. The critical information system needs were agreed upon by the participating States.

## **II. Activities of the OSCE**

### **1. Political Consultations and Negotiations**

The Permanent Council (PC), the main body for political consultations and decision-making of the OSCE, adopted 75 decisions during the reporting period. These decisions provided political guidance for OSCE activities.

Four reinforced PC meetings took place during the review period: on 27 March, 17 July, 23 October and 12 November. The participants reviewed the progress made in developing a Document-Charter on European Security and assessed the OSCE's 1998 activities. The October meeting, held with the participation of the Chairman-in-Office, Professor Geremek, focused on regional issues.

No Senior Council meetings took place in 1998.

The Security Model Committee continued to discuss the question of a Document-Charter on European Security, establishing two working groups (WGA and WGB) on specific subjects. A special informal meeting of the Security Model Committee with representatives of the Western European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Council of Europe took place on 3 July, and one with representatives of United Nations institutions took place on 29 October.

### **2. Early Warning, Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation**

Early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation remained the OSCE's primary tasks. Through its missions and its field activities, the OSCE continued to serve as an effective instrument at all conflict cycle phases. During the reporting period the OSCE's field presence was augmented considerably.

The most important development in 1998 was the decision to establish an OSCE Verification Mission in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; this field operation is the largest and most complicated ever undertaken by the OSCE. In 1998 the OSCE increased the international staff of its Liaison Office in Central Asia and decided to open centres in Ashgabad (Turkmenistan), Bishkek (Kyrgyz Republic) and Almaty (Kazakhstan). The OSCE's Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus began operating early in 1998. The OSCE strengthened its border monitoring in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by enhancing the capabilities of the OSCE Presence in Albania and of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission in Skopje in order to ensure adequate observation of the borders with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to prevent spillover effects from the crisis in Kosovo. The OSCE Mission in Croatia was increased, with the deployment of civilian police monitors in the Croatian Danube region. Further implementation of the arms control provisions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina led to considerable progress as regards post-conflict military stabilization in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In accordance with their mandates, elaborated by the participating States, the OSCE field missions carried out multifaceted activities, taking advantage of the range of tools available to

them. They monitored respect for human rights and assisted in the consolidation of democratic institutions. In addition, some missions carried out specific activities ranging from the integration of non-citizens to police monitoring and civilian stabilization efforts.

## **2.1 OSCE Missions**

### **2.1.1 Missions of Long Duration in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina**

During 1998, the missions continued to be unable to implement their mandate as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia continued to link their reactivation to the country's participation in the OSCE. Following the eruption of the Kosovo crisis in February 1998, the Permanent Council, in its Decision No. 218 of 11 March, called upon the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to accept the immediate return of the missions. The United Nations Security Council and the Contact Group reiterated that demand on several occasions, but no progress was made until the agreement of 13 October between President Milošević and United States Special Envoy Holbrooke regarding the establishment of an OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (for information about the Kosovo Verification Mission see chapter 2.2.4).

The ad hoc "watch group" continued to meet regularly, in Vienna, in order to assess analyses of the situation in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina provided by participating States, transmitting information to the Permanent Council on a weekly basis.

### **2.1.2 Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje**

The Mission has continued to implement its mandate, which remains unchanged. It began the year with an international staff of four, which was raised by June to eight persons with the addition of temporary border monitors in connection with the crisis emerging in Kosovo (FRY).

The additional focus on border monitoring and the increased risks of 'spillover' from Kosovo (FRY) have characterized the Mission's work. In addition, the Mission has maintained dialogue with the Government and with the minorities in seeking to defuse tensions. It has made particular efforts in the economic dimension - one of its members is focusing on this task - in an attempt to promote the economic growth which is crucial to general stability and security. The Mission has sought to bring business and investment opportunities to the attention of donors, to improve the range and quality of its economic reporting, and to work in tandem with aid and other international organizations and financial institutions to identify sectors for development - thus serving in a certain sense as a catalyst.

The Mission has co-operated closely with the UN, particularly in co-ordinating the efforts of other international and non-governmental organizations to assist the host State with the development of democratic institutions.

Working with the ODIHR and the Government, the Mission contributed to the creation of a new body of electoral law prior to the parliamentary elections in October 1998. The law in question achieved broad support among political parties. The Mission played a key role in support of the ODIHR by arranging for international observation of the elections, recruiting some 50 observers from the local international community and thus significantly reducing the cost of the operation and strengthening it with local expertise. Throughout the electoral period the Mission collaborated closely with the European Media Institute concerning media coverage and it provided the National Broadcasting Council with advisory support and information material. The

Mission, in co-operation with the ODIHR, was also active in monitoring the electoral campaigns and the voting in the rounds of elections.

The Mission has continued to support the work of the HCNM. In May 1998 it again organized a national marathon team relay linking the cities of Skopje and Tetovo, drawing teams from all parts of the community, with over 400 participants from all ethnic groups.

### **2.1.3 Mission to Georgia**

During the period under review the Mission has continued to work on all aspects of its mandate. Although progress has been slower than expected, the visit of the Chairman-in-Office has given fresh impetus to OSCE assistance in the regulation of the conflicts in the country.

As regards the settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, the security situation in the conflict zone has further improved and co-operation between the two sides in upholding law and order has become routine. Relations between the Mission and the Joint Peacekeeping Force have remained cordial. The efforts of the Mission to bring about more regular meetings between the leaders of the two sides have borne fruit. The meeting of President Shevardnadze with the South Ossetian leader Chibirov in Java in November 1997 was followed by another meeting in Borjomi on 20 June 1998, with the Head of Mission present and intervening in both meetings. These meetings laid the general groundwork for more specific efforts by the negotiators, efforts which, however, have not yet materialized. The Georgian side has shown some hesitation to engage the Ossetian side by putting on the table concrete proposals on how to move towards a political settlement. Russia, mainly as a consequence of the change of government, has allowed a lapse in the work of the Joint Control Commission, which last met in September 1997. For the same reasons, an earlier promise of a Russian-Georgian agreement on economic assistance to South Ossetia remains to be fulfilled. The Mission has constantly urged progress on these matters and will continue to do so.

While the spontaneous return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) has picked up speed, the process of organized return still leaves much to be desired. The Mission has regularly provided the political back-up needed for the relevant efforts of the UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council. Moreover, the Mission is co-ordinating international efforts to advise the Georgian authorities on how to solve the question of a return of lost property to refugees and IDPs, a matter of particular importance in the context of a return of Georgian citizens of Ossetian nationality to the interior parts of Georgia.

As a consequence of earlier efforts by the Mission, international economic and humanitarian assistance to South Ossetia - as approved by the Georgian authorities - is now well established. A certain number of organizations, including NGOs, have established their presence in Tskhinvali alongside the Mission, which provides political advice and assistance whenever called upon to do so.

The work of the Mission on the Abkhaz question has significantly increased owing to the reactivation of the leading role of the UN in the relevant negotiations (Geneva process). The Head of Mission, representing the CiO, fully participates in the three-layered mechanism created in November 1997 in Geneva and has confirmed the general commitment of the OSCE to assist in the human dimension of any agreement. However, no substantive progress on the traditional issues in this conflict (constitutional settlement, return of the refugees) has been made as yet. The flare-up of hostilities in the Gali district in May confirmed the Mission's views regarding the

urgent necessity of reaching at least a temporary agreement on how to preserve, preferably with international assistance, law and order in the Gali District (Georgian-inhabited, but partly controlled by the Abkhaz). The Head of Mission has consistently appealed to the parties to accept a compromise on the following lines: the creation of safe and stable conditions for a definitive return of the refugees to the Gali district, to be accompanied by credible Georgian guarantees to put an end to partisan activities and by the initiation of measures for the economic rehabilitation of Abkhazia.

In the field of human rights and democratization, the Mission has substantially increased its commitment in terms of manpower: both in Tbilisi and in Sukhumi there are now two Mission members working in the respective human rights offices. Co-ordination with the ODIHR and with other international organizations has been significantly improved, a development to which the visit of Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann as head of a strong multilateral delegation in March 1998 substantially contributed. The Mission was also involved in organizing two visits by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, one to Tbilisi and one to Sukhumi. The Mission has paid particular attention to trials with a political connotation, to the functioning of the new Office of the Public Defender (Ombudsman), to human rights education in schools and to the issue of the Meskhetians, deported in 1944. In Sukhumi the Mission has assured the continuing functioning of the Human Rights Office during more than four months of absence of a UN-appointed Head of Office.

#### **2.1.4 Mission to Estonia**

Throughout 1998, the Mission has continued to monitor government policy and legislation relevant to the promotion of dialogue and understanding between the communities in Estonia. An amendment to the citizenship law to enable children born in Estonia from stateless parents to acquire Estonian citizenship has been introduced by the Estonian Government and is expected to be adopted by the Parliament.

The Mission has continued to monitor the issuing of aliens' passports, noting that the number of residence permits issued has kept increasing and that a number of residents without documents have obtained either a foreign passport or an alien's passport.

The Mission has been following and supporting the Estonian Government Integration Strategy, under way since the autumn of 1997, which is aimed at establishing a future policy on aliens with the following goals: changing of attitudes related to non-Estonians; significant reduction of the number of persons with undetermined citizenship; development of the Estonian educational system as the central integration factor; improvement in the knowledge of the Estonian language among non-Estonians; adaptation of non-Estonians to the Estonian cultural sphere and their active participation in Estonian society; reduction of regional isolation of non-Estonians (especially in Ida-Virumaa); and political integration of Estonian citizens who are not ethnic Estonians. With a view to promoting wide acceptance of the Integration Strategy among the population as a necessary basis for legislative support, the Mission organized and hosted, in April 1998, a lecture/presentation by the Estonian Minister for Ethnic Affairs, an event which found a very positive echo among Estonian official representatives and the public at large.

The Mission participated in the planning of an international seminar on the issue of establishing an ombudsman institution in Estonia entitled "Ombudsman - Protector of Human Rights" held in Tallinn in September 1998.

The Mission has continued its efforts to contribute to the integration process in Estonia through practical influence, awareness programmes and a number of concrete projects, many of which have been supported by NGOs and national institutions (such as the Estonian Foundation for the Integration of Non-Estonians, established in March 1998) as well as by international organizations and foreign donors (language training programmes for adults; language training for nurses in Ida-Virumaa; language training for teachers in Narva; education of Russian-speaking students in public administration; joint computer and language training for residents of children's homes; youth NGO activities in Narva; the drug users' rehabilitation centre in Narva; and integration of widows and divorcees of ex-Soviet military officers into Estonian society).

The Mission has encouraged the creation of NGOs, supported their work and assisted them in obtaining and exchanging information with a view to creating awareness of the potential for NGOs in civic society.

### **2.1.5 Mission to Moldova**

The signing of the Moscow Memorandum "On the Bases for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Trans-Dniestria" in May 1997 gave rise to hopes that, in the months to follow, Chisinau and Tiraspol would find the necessary political will to agree on a special status for Trans-Dniestria and resolve the Trans-Dniestrian problem definitively. Although progress in dividing and delegating competences was made during the summer of 1997, and at a special negotiating session held near Moscow in October, no accord was reached. In November, the two sides committed themselves to establishing some twenty working groups in the social-economic sphere. Desultory expert talks continued into the winter, but early in February, after the tabling of a "Draft Declaration of Statehood of the 'Trans-Dniestrian Moldovan Republic'", they came to a halt. On the eve of 22 March 1998 parliamentary elections (which were monitored by the ODIHR, assisted by the Mission to Moldova), Presidents Kuchma and Lucinschi, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and Mr. Smirnov met in Odessa and signed a document spelling out ten confidence-building measures, including the opening of the Dubasari Bridge and the introduction of Ukrainian military monitors into the Security Zone. In addition, they signed a protocol calling for the resumption of talks on an overall political settlement.

In accordance with its mandate, the Mission to Moldova "assisted the parties" at all stages of their negotiations. The "political framework for dialogue and negotiations" called for in the mandate has long existed. The parties should now seek to arrive at an accord.

As regards the military situation in Moldova, the Russian operational group now consists of approximately 2,800 officers and men. Some engineering equipment has been withdrawn from Trans-Dniestria, but the withdrawal of the arms and ammunition stored there cannot be said to have begun in earnest. The Mission's mandate calls on it to "encourage the participating States concerned in pursuing negotiations on an agreement on the status and the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign troops." Such an agreement was concluded in October 1994, but it is not yet considered to be in force. Consequently, the instruction to the Mission from the December 1994 Budapest Review Conference to "follow closely" the implementation of the agreement cannot be complied with at present.

On the basis of principles of co-operation with the Joint Control Commission (JCC) agreed upon in 1996 and endorsed periodically since then, the Mission has attempted to facilitate the peace-keeping operations that the JCC supervises. The Mission's contributions have included behind-the-scenes mediation when the work of the JCC became deadlocked, the development of



new rules of procedure for JCC meetings, and consultations with the Joint Military Command and with peace-keeping units in the field.

The Mission has extended its mediatory services in areas of particular sensitivity to both sides, such as education and transport. The fact that a compromise was reached this year on the question of School No. 20 in Tiraspol is primarily to the credit of the officials involved, who showed pragmatism and flexibility, but was in part due to early and effective mediation by the Mission's Human Dimension Officer.

The Mission continued to contribute to post-conflict rehabilitation in Gagauzia, dealt with innumerable human rights complaints and provided assistance in improving prison conditions.

The Mission has increasingly sought to communicate directly with the public by seeking access to the media on both sides of the Dniestr River. A major OSCE contribution to public discussion of the Trans-Dniestrian problem was a Seminar on the Relationship between Central and Regional Governments (Chisinau, 1-2 July 1998) organized by the Department for General Affairs of the OSCE Secretariat with the support of the Mission. The Seminar, opened by President Lucinschi and Secretary General Aragona, was attended by experts from OSCE participating States and representatives of international institutions and organizations. Unfortunately, Trans-Dniestrian representatives did not attend the Seminar, which nevertheless received considerable press coverage.

The Mission has established contacts with all parties to the Trans-Dniestrian conflict, in particular by meeting with legislators and actively supporting the principle that parliamentarians should play a role in the definitive resolution of the Trans-Dniestrian problem.

#### **2.1.6 Mission to Latvia**

During 1998, the Mission's main focus continued to be on the process of integrating the substantial non-citizen population into the mainstream of Latvian society. This entailed strengthening co-operation with the relevant governmental and other institutions, including key ministries and parliamentary commissions, with governmental agencies like the Naturalization Board and the Department for Citizenship and Migration Affairs (DCMA), with various NGOs and with various international organizations. The Mission was actively involved in the preparation of a public opinion survey designed to make clearer the reasons for the low number of applications for naturalization and encourage initiatives to promote the integration process. It kept in close touch with the DCMA on matters relating to the issuing of non-citizen passports, a process which - it is hoped - will be completed in 1999.

In its first such initiative, the Mission, with financial support from the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, organized a seminar which took place in the port city of Liepaja in May 1998. The seminar brought together representatives of various local communities to discuss their interrelations and ways of improving mutual understanding. The Mission continued to monitor the conduct of naturalization tests and to discuss with the Naturalization Board ways of further simplifying the procedures involved.

The Mission intensified its contacts with the institutions concerned with legislation relating to language, employment and education, which have a direct bearing on the promotion of peaceful integration in Latvia. It welcomed the outcome of the 3 October referendum, which is in favour of implementation of the amendments to the Citizenship Law adopted by the Saeima on 22 June 1998. This outcome should contribute significantly to the progress of naturalization.

The Head of Mission in his capacity as OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners continued to work with the Latvian and Russian authorities in the joint commission which handles problems connected with the retired Russian military personnel who stayed on in Latvia after the bulk of Russian forces was withdrawn in 1994.

### **2.1.7 Mission to Tajikistan**

In its capacity as a guarantor of the Tajik Peace Agreement reached in June 1997, the Mission has during the past year concentrated on facilitating the implementation of the Agreement, and particularly of the protocols dealing with political issues, the return of refugees, and military issues. The Mission has been playing an active role in the weekly meetings of the Contact Group that monitors the implementation of the General Agreement. Supporting the Commission for National Reconciliation (CNR), the Mission is continuing to be involved in the issues of constitutional amendment, legislation on political parties, elections and mass media.

Together with the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), the Mission is the focal point for election questions on which the two Missions alternately host meetings attended by representatives of all the international organizations concerned with the issue of elections in Tajikistan.

Since February 1998, the Mission has been an adviser to the CNR on the Protocol of Military Issues and also a member of the Technical Support Group on the demobilization and reintegration of Opposition armed personnel and the reform of Tajik power structures.

In April 1998, after almost two years of planning, an OSCE presence was established in the Garm region. The fruitful work being done there had to be suspended when the security situation deteriorated following the murder of four UNMOT members on 20 July. As a result of that incident, the activities of the three field offices in the Khatlon region were suspended for some six weeks until the beginning of September.

The Mission has been authorized by the Permanent Council to open a field office in Leninabad province, in the north of Tajikistan, and is pursuing the matter with the Tajik authorities.

The Mission has stepped up its work on gender issues, with the establishment in the Khatlon region of a number of support groups to help women still suffering from civil war trauma and with the start of efforts to address the issue of the severe curtailing of women's rights in the Karategin valley area. There is now closer co-operation with the governmental "Women in Development" bureau in matters of policy and legislation relating to women, and support is being provided to local women's NGOs concerned with issues such as violence against women, women and elections, and women in politics and public life. The Mission funded a conference on "Women and Peace", and participated, together with a large Tajik delegation, in a regional OSCE conference on "Women in Public Life".

Pursuant to the Mission's strategy for democratization, the field offices are promoting, in the areas where they are located, the establishment of the rule of law and the building of confidence in the judiciary, law enforcement bodies and other local institutions. Within the framework of its media programme, the Mission supported the re-establishment of two local newspapers and is currently pressing for the establishment of a local radio station in south Tajikistan, its hope being that the successes achieved will be repeated in other parts of the

country. The Mission has been organizing lectures on human rights at Dushanbe University, human rights training for teachers and weekly meetings on human rights issues.

Interventions by the Mission have resulted in the release of illegally detained persons, and persistent reporting by the Mission on tensions between local authorities and military units in the Khatlon region has led to the taking of conflict prevention measures and to an improvement in relations there. After the last wave of refugees returned home, at the end of 1997, the Mission monitored their reintegration through its field offices, and it is continuing to provide legal assistance to the entire population.

To encourage the development of political processes, the Mission has during the past year organized and funded conferences and seminars on topics such as national unity. With an eye to the future parliamentary elections and in this context to local capacity-building, the Mission facilitated the sending of observers from Tajikistan to the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

### **2.1.8 Mission to Ukraine**

A general lowering of tensions has continued over the past year in Crimea, the Mission's main area of activity. This has allowed the Mission to concentrate its efforts on the still unresolved economic and social problems of Crimea. Much of the Mission's work relates to issues associated with Crimea's multiethnic population and with the return to Crimea of over 250,000 deported people and their descendants, the overwhelming majority of whom are Crimean Tatars. The Mission is working especially closely with the HCNM and several international organizations, in particular UNDP, the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Like other OSCE Missions, the Mission to Ukraine has a human dimension component in its mandate. This empowers the Mission to continue monitoring and reporting on the situation as regards human rights and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Crimea.

Ukraine has not been able to carry alone the burden of resettling the deported people and their descendants who have returned to Crimea. For that reason, the international community is offering co-ordinated assistance. A second international donor conference, chaired by HCNM Max van der Stoep and held in Kiev in June 1998 as part of a long-term assistance process, raised several million dollars for use in helping with the reintegration of former deportees.

Ukraine's citizenship regulations have been modified so as to facilitate the acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship by the approximately 95,000 Crimean Tatars now residing in Crimea who are either stateless or still citizens of other former Soviet republics, mainly Uzbekistan. The Governments of Ukraine and Uzbekistan concluded an agreement simplifying the procedures for the relinquishment by more than 65,000 Crimean Tatars of their Uzbek citizenship and abolishing the \$100 fee charged by Uzbekistan. The Mission and the UNHCR are seeking to publicize the modified citizenship regulations among the scattered deportee communities on the peninsula.

The legal framework for an Autonomous Republic of Crimea within the Ukrainian State is not yet complete: the new Constitution adopted by the Crimean Parliament on 21 October 1998 will have to be approved by the Ukrainian Parliament. The Mission, with expert advice from various OSCE sources, has made suggestions regarding this issue to the Ukrainian and Crimean authorities.

The Mission is co-operating with the ODIHR in several matters:

- a pilot project for reforming Ukraine's election complaints and appeals procedures and training judiciary and election officials to resolve election disputes in accordance with international standards. The first stage of this project has been successfully launched;
- the intensification of contacts with the recently established Office of the Ukrainian Ombudsman, the aim being to provide material support and promote information exchange. In order to assist the Ombudsman Office, the Mission arranged for a donors meeting on 29 September 1998 that raised USD 57.000;
- the promotion of further co-operation between the Ukrainian and Spanish Constitutional Courts, including exchanges of visits and information-sharing aimed at improving the management capabilities of the Ukrainian Constitutional Court.

In the economic and environmental fields, the Mission is organizing seminars, conferences and workshops and taking other initiatives as part of an effort to expand Ukraine's participation in OSCE-related activities.

The Mission also follows developments in the area of Freedom of the Media.

### **2.1.9 Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The OSCE's activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina from December 1997 to November 1998 consisted mainly in implementing the September 1997 municipal election results and conducting and supervising the country's second post-war general elections, held in September 1998. Concomitantly, the Mission focused on establishing a neutral and democratic political environment through the activities of its Human Rights, Democratization and Media Development Departments and on the further implementation of the arms control provisions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina through its Regional Stabilization Branch.

Elections After the successful conduct of municipal elections in 136 municipalities, the OSCE was given responsibility for ensuring the installation of effective municipal administrations. This represented a major challenge, as the Provisional Election Commission's rules required that some positions should be held by persons representing minorities and many eligible minority representatives had been displaced during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The exercise, which was co-ordinated by the OSCE-chaired National Election Results Implementation Council (NERIC) and supported by the Office of the High Representative (OHR), was successful: the political parties reached power-sharing agreements in 126 of the 136 municipalities (in the other ten municipalities, power-sharing arrangements were arrived at through OSCE/OHR arbitration). Arbitration awards were implemented in all but one municipality, Srebrenica, so that final certification was granted in 135 of the 136 municipalities. In Srebrenica, an Interim Executive Board under OSCE chairmanship was set up, but its functioning has been hampered by continued recalcitrance, particularly on the part of the Serbs. Even recently some other municipalities have had their final certification withdrawn as a result of non-compliance with the rules and regulations of the Provisional Election Commission. Efforts are under way, with OHR support, to resolve the outstanding issues.

In September 1998, the Mission faced the challenge of a third round of elections within 12 months – the second post-war presidential, parliamentary and cantonal elections (in addition,

elections were conducted in 11 new municipalities). The Mission, which was responsible for the partial registration of voters and for full supervision of the elections at 2,180 polling stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and at 137 in Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, introduced scannable ballot counting technology in order to accelerate the counting of approximately 2.4 million ballot papers. The Swiss Support Unit distributed about 2,500 tons of election material, including kits for the international supervisors and observers, and – with SFOR protection – collected ballot papers from polling stations throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite technical problems which delayed the opening of about 5 per cent of the polling stations, the elections passed off peacefully, with about 70 per cent overall turnout. The results saw Republika Srpska (RS) President Biljana Plavšić defeated by Radical Party candidate Nikola Poplašen in the RS presidency race. As in the 1997 RS National Assembly elections, the hard-line nationalist parties lost ground to more moderate forces.

The transfer of responsibilities and technical expertise from international to national election staff intensified in 1998, as evidenced by the appointment of local election officers to all OSCE field offices and of a Bosnian national as Head of Political Party Services. The process will continue in 1999, so as to ensure that a skilled national cadre is in place for future elections. In this connection, the Mission is continuing to work with the OHR and Bosnian experts on the drafting of a Permanent Elections Law.

Human Rights The Human Rights Department, reporting on a weekly basis, continued to monitor the human rights situation and to investigate and intervene in cases of human rights violations throughout the country. OSCE human rights reports were distributed by the OHR's Human Rights Co-ordination Centre, where they are used by the participating international organizations in formulating and implementing human rights policy. The focus continued to be mainly on property questions and the return of refugees and displaced persons. The Mission contributed greatly to the passage, in April 1998, of property legislation in the Federation which allows hundreds of thousands of persons to reclaim the apartments in which they were living before the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Monitoring of implementation of the legislation, however, has revealed significant obstruction by municipal authorities, requiring intervention by the human rights officers in the field. In September 1998, information supplied by OSCE human rights officers led the High Representative to grant a six-month extension of the deadline for filing claims. Ensuring implementation of the Federation property legislation, and of the property legislation expected to be enacted in the Republika Srpska, will be a priority task of the Mission throughout 1999.

The Human Rights Department continued to assign very high priority to strengthening the national human rights institutions: the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ombudsperson, the Human Rights Chamber and the Federation Ombudsmen. The OSCE assisted these institutions in their investigations, channelled cases to each of them, and ensured compliance with their provisional orders or recommendations. It worked with the OHR and the Venice Commission on a draft law to establish a multiethnic ombudsman institution in the Republika Srpska, a priority for 1999, and on draft legislation governing the already established Federation Ombudsmen.

The Department contributed to judicial reform in 1998. The monitoring of trials continued, and there were further interventions to ensure compliance with the "Rules of the Road". In addition, the Department worked on inter-entity judicial co-operation, on reforming the judicial appointment process and on strengthening the role of the Federation Prosecutor and police through legislative and structural reforms.

The introduction of common license plates resulted in a dramatic increase in the freedom of movement across the inter-entity boundary line, but violence in locations where refugees and displaced persons are attempting to return increased - a challenge for the Human Rights Department in 1999. In addition, discrimination in employment and education and obstacles hampering access to documentation, social benefits and utility services are problems that the Human Rights Department will need to deal with in 1999.

Democratization Confidence-building activities included roundtables of Bosnian intellectuals on wide-ranging themes such as “Democratic Development and the Dayton Peace Agreement and Political Pluralism”, as well as meetings of key religious leaders. At the community level, a number of Democracy Centres and Reading Rooms were opened across the country to provide information on democracy and human rights in some of the most closed communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Democratization Department also organized large numbers of community meetings between potential returnees and officials from their home municipalities.

Through its Civil Society Development Programme, the Democratization Department intensified the development of non-governmental organizations in neglected areas such as the eastern part of Republika Srpska. It co-ordinated the training of 3,000 domestic election observers from 159 local NGOs, a tenfold increase over the number available at the time of the 1997 municipal elections. Political party development was a central focus of the OSCE’s efforts in the run-up to the September 1998 elections. The OSCE provided additional assistance in the form of campaign-related publicity materials to 20 parties. Political Party Service Centres throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina provided all political parties free access to office equipment, meeting space and information. These Centres hosted almost 300 press conferences and meetings during the campaign. The “Women in Politics” Programme organized two Bosnia and Herzegovina-wide conferences promoting women politicians and issued publications designed to highlight gender issues during the campaign.

Governance Programmes included training on democratic local governance for new councillors in 107 municipalities, thereby bringing many councillors together for the first time since the war. The Municipal Leadership Programme trained 56 Mayors and Senior Municipal Administrators in the principles and functioning of good governance through seminars and visits with counterparts in Germany and Spain. The Department also carried out a Municipal Management and Return project to assist 35 municipal officials and local leaders in coping with their obligations relating to the return of refugees and displaced persons.

The Department’s Rule of Law Programmes included the creation of and support for what is to be a self-sustaining Legal Aid Network, which has already received over 2,750 cases since its launching in December 1997. The Department organized 24 training sessions for legal professionals on the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Its Youth and Education Programme arranged several seminars aimed at improving democratic structures in schools and liberalizing the school curricula. The Department also initiated a two-year Democratic School Management Programme for school directors from 30 municipalities.

Media Development As part of the OSCE Mission’s role of supervising elections and strengthening democratic structures in Bosnian society, the Media Development Department closely monitored the media in the run-up to the September 1998 general elections. Through the OSCE-related Media Experts Commission (MEC), attempts were made to ensure fair reporting

and free and equitable access to the media for all parties that participated in the elections. Daily close monitoring of the media during the political campaigns proved to be a genuine deterrent to the kind of inflammatory language used in the past by media associated with extreme nationalist parties. The monitoring also allowed the MEC to verify compliance with the Provisional Election Commission Rules and Regulations. MEC interventions, which were aimed at guaranteeing even-handed broadcasting in the run-up to the elections, contributed significantly to the most neutral pre-election media environment yet seen in post war Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Media Development Department also organized presidential debates that took place on the eve of the September 1998 elections. The debates were broadcast live by the national radio and television networks, through a first-time link-up between stations covering all of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Media Development Department also initiated various projects to foster independent media throughout the country. A cross-entity project distributed newspapers and magazines throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, inter-entity journalists' conferences provided training in journalistic standards and encouraged inter-ethnic contacts, and independent media were given small grants to help develop their capacities.

Regional Stabilization Considerable progress has been made in 1998 in implementing the confidence-building measures and arms control agreements negotiated in accordance with Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Articles II and IV).

In February, the Parties to the "Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina" met in Vienna for the First Conference to Review the Implementation of the Agreement, during which several important decisions were adopted. For example, the Parties agreed on an updated version of the Protocol on Existing Types of Conventional Armaments and Equipment. They also agreed to overcome the difficulties hampering the deployment of Military Liaison Missions (MLM) between the Chiefs of the Armed Forces. This resolution resulted in a permanent exchange of Military Liaison Missions in June.

In 1998, the Parties achieved a breakthrough regarding the subject of Weapons Manufacturing Facilities, by agreeing on a number of visits to such facilities to be conducted during the remainder of 1998 and throughout 1999, and by adopting a Protocol defining the rules and regulations applicable to such visits. In September, the Parties carried out "specified area inspections" in accordance with Section 8 of Article II. These were the first such inspections to be conducted under the Agreement. Finally, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office continued to act as Chairman of the Joint Consultative Commission throughout 1998, and meetings were held every second month. The Personal Representative also continued to nominate international inspectors to participate in each inspection carried out by the Parties under the terms of the Agreement.

Increased transparency and co-operation between all five Parties to the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control has been noted throughout 1998. In June, the Parties met in Vienna for the First Conference to Review the Implementation of the Agreement. The Parties to the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control are to meet for a Second Review Conference in June 2000.

After being appointed by the Copenhagen Ministerial Council Meeting as Special Representative of the Chairman in Office to conduct the negotiations on regional stabilization in

South Eastern Europe under Article V of the Dayton/Paris agreement, Ambassador Henry Jacolin began his work in February 1998; his team was complete by May.

Consultations were held in the capitals of most of the States involved in this process in April and May. A draft mandate for the Article V negotiations was prepared, circulated and discussed with the 20 States taking part: Albania, Germany, the United States of America, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Netherlands, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Turkey, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There is clear consensus on the idea that all States will participate on an equal footing, around the same table, in these negotiations.

The participating States are near consensus on a draft mandate for the negotiations, which could start in early 1999, provided the draft mandate is finally approved before the end of 1998.

#### **2.1.10 Mission to Croatia**

The Mission to Croatia, established in April 1996 with 14 international staff members, has become – with the expiration of the UNTAES mandate on 15 January 1998 – the main international presence in the country, with 280 international staff members at the Mission's headquarters (in Zagreb), at three co-ordination centres (in Vukovar, Sisak and Knin) and at 16 field offices and seven field sub-offices. The enhanced Mission's mandate is to assist with and monitor the Croatian Government's implementation of domestic legislation, the fulfilment of international commitments pertaining to the rule of law and human rights, the protection of national minorities, and the return of refugees and displaced persons. The Mission's political aim is to consolidate internal peace, assist with political normalization and promote democratization.

The transition from United Nations to OSCE police monitoring in the Danube region – that is, the former UNTAES area in eastern Croatia – took place on 15 and 16 October 1998. In anticipation of an orderly phased hand-over, the deployment of 120 police monitors commenced in late September.

During the past year, the Mission has concentrated on closely monitoring the situation throughout Croatia and on advising and assisting the Croatian Government in matters concerning the return of refugees and displaced persons, the development of democratic institutions, the rule of law, the establishment of trust between nationalities, and compliance with the highest international standards on human rights.

In order to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons, the Mission has encouraged the Croatian Government to establish fair and transparent return procedures, both for refugees living abroad, especially in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for displaced persons in Croatia. The process established in April 1997 for the organized return of people to and from the Danube region has functioned poorly, owing to refugee occupancy of housing, war damage, insecurity, bureaucratic obstruction and administrative delays; cross-border returns have been minimal.

There were no clear provisions for expeditious property repossession, but in June 1998 the Croatian Government, after consulting with representatives of the Mission and other international bodies, promulgated a comprehensive Return Programme that includes such provisions. The Mission has, together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the



European Community Monitoring Mission, established Return Facilitation Groups for the co-ordination of international monitoring of and support for the Return Programme.

Following its 1996 and 1997 recommendations concerning electoral legislation, the Mission, together with the Council of Europe and the ODIHR, drew up an internationally supported position paper outlining recommendations for making necessary changes in Croatia's electoral legislation in order to enable future elections in Croatia to be both free and fair. The recommendations cover seven areas: representational rights of Croats living abroad; disenfranchisement of individuals with the right to Croatian citizenship; role of the media in the context of elections; minority representation; election commissions; domestic non-partisan election observers; and campaign resources and financing. The paper was presented to the Croatian Government on 14 August 1998.

The Mission, which has sought to foster freedom of the media, supports the transformation of the State radio-television network into a public service broadcaster. To this end, the Mission organized a visit in March 1998 by a delegation of experts from the Council of Europe. Government officials subsequently stated that the experts' recommendations were drawn upon in the preparation of a bill to amend the present law on broadcasting. If enacted in its present form, however, this bill will not remove concerns about the political domination of broadcasting in Croatia by the governing party. Accordingly, early in October the Mission organized a second visit by Council of Europe experts to discuss the bill with members of the Croatian parliament.

The Mission has been co-ordinating the response of the international representatives in Croatia to the Government's efforts to organize a Conference on Reconstruction and Development. The international representatives have made their support for such a conference dependent upon the Government's promulgating a comprehensive and non-discriminatory reconstruction programme and facilitating the swift implementation of the Return Programme.

On 29 January 1998, the Mission submitted to the Government of Croatia a non-paper outlining 27 points on which the Mission would be focusing its attention; the 27 points relate to the return process, property restitution and compensation, freedom of the media, electoral reform, amnesty, administration of justice, minority rights, de-mining and reconciliation. Subsequently, the Mission prepared a comprehensive assessment of the progress made by the Government. In the assessment report, which was presented to the Government and made available to OSCE delegations on 20 May 1998, the Mission concluded that since the end of the UNTAES mandate the Government's performance in a number of areas had not met expectations. In a second assessment report, issued on 8 September 1998, the Mission welcomed the momentum created by the adoption of the Return Programme, but pointed to a lack of progress in many key areas, including freedom of the media and electoral reform.

The Mission will continue to issue periodic reports on the Government's progress in meeting international commitments. A third assessment report is to be issued in January 1999.

## **2.2 Other OSCE Field Activities**

### **2.2.1 Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference**

Implementation of the mandate of the Personal Representative depends to a great extent on progress in the negotiations relating to that conflict. In 1998 there has been no significant progress in those negotiations; the plan for ending the conflict presented to the parties by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group was rejected by the Nagorno-Karabakh leaders and, after the Armenian presidential elections of March 1998, also by Armenia (before those elections, the Armenian authorities had accepted it as a basis for further negotiations). The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was foremost on the agenda during the CiO visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan in November: all parties involved in the conflict agreed that the Minsk process is the suitable framework for the continuation of the peace process. The Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as the leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh expressed their firm commitments to support efforts to achieve a resumption of peace negotiations. Upon the suggestion of the Chairman-in-Office, all parties involved agreed to an exchange of prisoners of war. The Personal Representative has thus concentrated on:

High-level contacts The Personal Representative maintained such contacts throughout 1998, an important aspect being assistance with confidence-building measures between the parties to the conflict.

Monitoring Monitoring has been taking place since May 1998 without incident, contributing to stability along the line of contact (LOC). It provides the Office of the Personal Representative, the CiO and the Minsk Group members with valuable information about the situation on the ground and permits direct contact at the local-commander level through the use of OSCE radio equipment. The High-Level Planning Group has been assisting with monitoring activities to assess the situation on the LOC for its own purposes.

Humanitarian issues Owing to incursions along the LOC and the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and to various other incidents, a number of people have been taken prisoner of war (POW) and there is a growing need for a POW exchange. According to the information received by the Personal Representative and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), several people are being held by each party to the conflict. The Office of the Personal Representative, in close co-operation with the ICRC, will pursue this important humanitarian aspect of the conflict.

### **2.2.2 OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya (Russian Federation)**

The Assistance Group (AG) maintains permanent contacts with the most influential individuals, groups and structures representing Chechnya's political, religious and cultural life. It monitors the political and economic situation, collects and analyses information, and assesses developments both in Chechnya and in the rest of the North Caucasus region – for which purpose it maintains regular contacts with the leadership of the neighbouring republics.

The AG has during the past year focused mainly on the following points in its mandate: human rights, national minorities, and the facilitation of humanitarian assistance rendered by NGOs operating outside Chechnya and by OSCE participating States.

As the only international body operating in Chechnya, the AG is essential for informing the international community about the humanitarian situation there and about local needs.

Governments and international organizations are using the AG as a means of channelling money earmarked for humanitarian purposes to various Chechen NGOs and other structures, assigning to the AG responsibility for the financial control and monitoring of programmes and for reporting on them. Through the AG, support is being provided for, *inter alia*, the Grozny Forensic Laboratory, an orphanage with 54 children and a number of local NGOs.

The AG is closely monitoring the situation regarding crime, especially kidnapping. Several citizens of OSCE participating States have been kidnapped in Chechnya and the neighbouring republics (the Russian President's representative in Chechnya, Mr. Vlasov, was kidnapped in May and released in November), and many of them are still in captivity. Chechen law enforcement bodies are making some effort to combat crime, but because of insufficient technical equipment and the non-payment of police officials' salaries, their effectiveness is very low. One of the main reasons for the increase in crime is the large number of unemployed people with weapons. In the rare cases where local law enforcement bodies are able to free hostages, the AG helps the freed persons to leave Chechnya.

The Chechen authorities declared a one-month emergency and curfew in their fight against crime, but to little effect. The hostage situation is still alarming and the security situation volatile.

### **2.2.3 OSCE Presence in Albania**

Since its establishment in March 1997, the OSCE Presence in Albania has moved on from intensive election-related work to longer-term activities aimed at consolidating democracy and the rule of law. The difficult political climate and the highly polarized relations between the Government coalition parties on the one hand and the Opposition on the other have led to constant demands for the Presence's services in helping to reduce tension and maintain at least minimum conditions for dialogue and compromise. As a result, the OSCE's profile in Albania has remained very high, with recognition from all sides for the Presence's proactive, positive stance.

Besides political brokerage, the operations of the Presence include assistance with and the monitoring of elections, assistance in the Constitution drafting process, assistance with the creation of a civil registry, donor co-ordination, NGO development, parliamentary observation, and (through its Legal Counsellor's Office) advancement of the rule of law and respect for human rights. A recent initiative was the formation of a "Friends of Albania" group comprising 23 countries and eight international organizations, co-chaired by OSCE and EU. At the local level the Chairmanship is ensured by the Head of Presence. It is hoped that through its collective efforts the group will act as a stimulus and lend direction and focus to ideas and projects.

On 30 October an International Conference on Albania was held in Tirana in a concerted effort of co-operation among various countries and international bodies to assist Albania and to support policies and concrete measures that promote stability and social and economic progress. The conference which had a major impact on both political parties and the public at large, was addressed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Professor Bronisław Geremek, also in his capacity as Co-Chairman of the "Friends of Albania" Group.

A core team of international staff is located at the headquarters office, in Tirana, and at the three field offices in Shkodra, Gjirokastra and Vlora. These four offices have established close contacts with political forces, facilitating dialogue, mediating and assisting with

confidence-building at the national and the local level. Eight temporary border field offices have been opened pursuant to a Permanent Council decision of 11 March 1998 and are playing a major role in the monitoring of, *inter alia*, the fighting in parts of Kosovo adjacent to the Albanian border and refugee flows and weapons trafficking in connection with the Kosovo crisis.

The Presence is mandated to provide advice and assistance, particularly in relation to democratization, the rule of law, freedom of the media, human rights and the basic elements of civil society. Furthermore, the Permanent Council decided the Presence should, together with the Albanian Government, provide a flexible co-ordinating framework within which other international organizations can play a part in their respective areas of competence.

Consolidation of democracy The Presence, with assistance from its Legal Counsellor's Office, has played a significant role in conflict prevention during the reporting period. Early in 1998 it mediated the resolution of a series of hunger strikes by judges and former political prisoners. Also, the Presence engaged in mediation efforts connected with a new Law on the Organization of Justice, claims brought by creditors of one of Albania's failed pyramid schemes and amendments to Albania's "lustration" laws (laws prohibiting the assumption of public office by individuals who held certain positions under the communist regime).

The political conflicts in which the Presence has mediated have included one that threatened the June 1998 partial local elections and one that arose out of the replacement of opposition party chairpersons on local district councils.

In January and June 1998, the Presence planned and co-ordinated an unprecedented European parliamentary mission following requests for assistance from the co-chairpersons of the Albanian parliamentary commission responsible for drafting a new Constitution. Senior members of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe and of the European Parliament (the Tri-Parliamentary Mission) explored ways of overcoming the impasse in the Constitution drafting process and made declarations that have in many respects shaped Albania's political agenda. The first visit, which was welcomed both by the ruling coalition and by the opposition, induced the latter to end its boycott of Albania's Parliament (but not of the Constitution drafting process) on 12 March 1998, so ending a six-month absence.

Unfortunately, the Democratic Party began a second – indefinite – boycott of Parliament in July. Polarization of the political climate has intensified, resulting in a period of serious turmoil in mid-September after the murder of a prominent Democratic Party functionary. During a serious armed confrontation on 14 September, the Presence's mediation skills were tested to the full in negotiations between the Government and Opposition parties, with activists who had taken over the State television station and with activists who had commandeered two tanks.

In monitoring democratic governance in Albania, the Presence has drawn attention to the discrepancy between policies and implementation, and in particular to the discord in relations between the centre and local authorities due largely to the failure of the Government to put into practice its declared intention to promote local self-government. In addition, the Presence has been monitoring, *inter alia*, developments connected with the land claims of former property owners, the drafting of secured lending laws, and the legal reform efforts of the University of Tirana's Law Faculty.

Following a call by the Tri-Parliamentary Mission for proper parliamentary procedures, including respect for the rights of the Opposition, the Presence has, in close co-operation with the

Council of Europe and the embassies of Germany, Austria and the United States of America, been officially observing the procedures in Albania's Parliament.

To date the Presence has issued 13 parliamentary observation reports, containing recommendations the implementation of which has contributed to a marked improvement in parliamentary practices. Several OSCE participating States have provided assistance in response to the Presence's observations concerning technical and organizational shortcomings.

In the wake of the 1997 elections, which brought a Socialist-led coalition to power, the ODIHR, in consultation with the Albanian Government, identified the need for an accurate and verifiable register of voters. The main purpose of the ensuing Voter Registration Project was to establish a computerized database that would generate sound voter lists for elections and referenda. Five pilot municipalities were chosen for the Project, a final report on which was presented to the Albanian Deputy Prime Minister in September. It is hoped that the Government will use the same approach in a nation-wide effort in the future.

Municipal by-elections were held on 21 June 1998 in seven municipalities and nine communes. They were the first elections since the 1997 parliamentary elections. In order that they might take place, it was necessary for the Presence to become involved in lengthy mediation relating to the composition of the Central Electoral Commission and, at the eleventh hour, to the question of the use of electronic media by the ruling Socialist-led coalition – a question over which the Union for Democracy threatened to boycott the elections. In order to ensure that the by-elections went smoothly and that it would be in a position to respond to claims of irregularities, the Government requested that the by-elections be observed. Accordingly, the process was monitored by 23 international teams, comprising OSCE teams (which included representatives of various embassies and international organizations) and teams from the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. The by-elections were considered to represent a major improvement over the 1997 parliamentary elections and a significant step towards democracy in Albania. A joint statement by the OSCE and the Council of Europe providing confirmation to that effect was widely acclaimed and undisputed.

Co-ordination The Presence plays a co-ordinating role. It has been trying to strengthen the Albanian Government's capacity to assume an ever-increasing role in the co-ordination of international assistance efforts. In areas where there is no obvious lead agency (e.g. judicial and electoral reform and Constitution drafting), the Presence is itself providing a focal point.

The Presence has helped to design a database that gives an overview of all potential and ongoing assistance efforts. Together with the Ministry of Economic Co-operation and several other ministries, it has organized and hosted co-ordination meetings on police, military, judicial, agricultural and other matters. Also, it has organized meetings between heads of diplomatic missions on one hand and the Ministry of Economic Co-operation on the other so that the latter might present its view of the current state of affairs as regards Albania's development.

Rule of law In May 1998, the Presence established a Legal Counsellor's Office (LCO), which – now staffed by one international attorney, two Albanian attorneys and an administrative assistant – provides rapid analyses of legal conflicts as they arise, co-ordinates assistance efforts in the area of legal development, directs the Presence's Human Rights Alert Programme and provides direct legal assistance in various areas.

During the reporting period, the LCO analysed issues relating to, *inter alia*, the Constitutional Court, district councils, and the local and parliamentary election laws. It played a central role in co-ordinating the efforts of the ODIHR, other international bodies, the Albanian Government and various NGOs in the development of an ombudsman institution for Albania and facilitated ODIHR assistance for Albania in the area of legal education. It established separate groups for the co-ordination of assistance relating to criminal justice reform, the ombudsman institution, legal/social aid clinics, human rights NGOs, commercial law reform and local government. Lastly it provided direct assistance in the area of minority rights and analysed the drafts of various laws, including the Law on the State Information Service, the Law on State Secrets and the Law on the Verification of Figures.

The Presence and the LCO hope that the Human Rights Alert Programme, under which the Presence and domestic NGOs will work together in investigating and reporting on alleged human rights abuses, will be fully operational by the end of the year.

The Presence is host to the Administrative Centre for the Co-ordination of Assistance and Public Participation (ACCAPP), which supports nearly all aspects of the Constitution drafting process – an endeavour that has been a focal point of legal and political discussion. To assist in this process, ACCAPP organized a programme of public participation unprecedented in Albania, involving a wide variety of public fora where constitutional issues were discussed and public input gathered. The public input was presented to the Constitutional Commission of the Albanian Parliament for consideration during the drafting process.

The OSCE Presence in Albania furthermore assisted in the preparations of the referendum on the Constitution held on 22 November 1998. The Democratic Party asked its followers not to participate in the vote.

The Presence also co-ordinated the OSCE monitoring of the preparations and voting of the referendum with the ODIHR Observation Mission, the Ministry of Local Government, the Central Election Commission and local non-governmental organizations.

ACCAPP has contributed to educational television programmes and produced a range of educational material which has been distributed to over 100,000 citizens. Also, it has served as an information clearing-house, providing the Constitutional Commission with technical legal material and co-ordinating the assistance offered by distinguished bodies such as the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, the American Bar Association (through its Central and Eastern European Law Initiative) and Germany's Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Society for Technical Co-operation).

Human rights and civil society To the extent allowed by its human resources, the Presence has, through its field offices, investigated – on an ad hoc basis – cases of human rights violations, notably complaints of discriminatory treatment, arbitrary arrest, police brutality and other abuses. It is expected that, under the Human Rights Alert Programme, the Presence will become more systematically active in investigating such complaints throughout Albania. Also, the Presence intends to step up the training of Albanian NGOs in the investigation of complaints.

The Presence has, in endeavouring to strengthen civil society in Albania, organized various activities for and with Albanian NGOs. In March 1998, it organized a meeting in Tirana for the purpose of bringing Albanian NGOs together with international NGOs and donors. In addition, using funds provided by the German Government and in co-operation with the

Foundation for Civil Society in Tirana, the OSCE has organized three training seminars for NGOs at field offices in Albania, and, with Norwegian funds, has held a regional conference on minority issues in Permet, southern Albania.

The Presence, which has been monitoring and actively participating in the development of Albanian media, has sponsored several seminars and other meetings on legislative matters such as the draft Law on Electronic Media. Also, it has had discussions with the parties opposed to this law in an effort to find the best way of ensuring that public television is editorially independent of the Government. In addition, it has been co-operating closely with international and Albanian organizations (for example, the Council of Europe and the Albanian Media Institute) in supporting the development of a democratic media environment in Albania, the focus being on human rights and the professional performance of journalists.

The Presence is helping the Albanian Government to formulate a strategy for recovery of the approximately 700,000 small arms looted from military depots during the early 1997 unrest, and it has taken steps to mobilize NGOs in this connection. In September it provided support for a United Nations mission concerned with the illegal ownership of weapons, and it will support a related pilot project that is to be launched in the Gramsh district. It intends to organize a conference for the purpose of reviewing the illegal weapons ownership situation in Albania.

Border monitoring In March 1998, the Permanent Council widened the mandate of the Presence to include the monitoring of the Albanian border with Kosovo (FRY). As a consequence, eight temporary field offices have been set up in north-west Albania. At present, 26 observers from 15 OSCE participating States are involved in the border monitoring effort, which is proving to be of great value, the observers being very much the eyes and ears of the world during the current Kosovo crisis. Working often under difficult and sometimes under dangerous conditions, the field offices have many times been called upon to provide much needed assistance to international teams and organizations, including NGOs.

In view of the difficult refugee situation, working relations with the UNHCR and the local authorities have been particularly close.

#### **2.2.4 OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) (FRY)**

On 15 October 1998, in Decision No. 259, the Permanent Council declared “the preparedness of the OSCE to embark upon verification activities related to compliance of all parties in Kosovo with the requirements set forth by the international community with regard to the solution of the crisis in Kosovo” and expressed support for the Chairman-in-Office’s efforts “to arrange with the FRY authorities for the OSCE to make such contribution” to the peaceful solution of that crisis. On 16 October, Chairman-in-Office Bronisław Geremek and Yugoslav Foreign Minister Živadin Jovanović signed, in Belgrade, an agreement between the OSCE and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the creation of an OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM).

On 24 October, in resolution 1203, the United Nations Security Council, endorsing the creation of the KVM, demanded that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia abide by its agreements and commitments concerning the KVM and reminded it of its “primary responsibility for the safety and security of all diplomatic personnel accredited to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia”. It said that all parties should comply “fully and swiftly” with Security Council resolutions 1160 and 1199 and “co-operate fully” with the KVM. Also, it insisted that the Kosovo Albanian

leadership “condemn all terrorist actions”, demanded that such actions cease immediately and emphasized that “all elements in the Kosovo Albanian community should pursue their goals by peaceful means only”.

On 25 October, the Permanent Council formally established the KVM for one year, with possible extensions. Ambassador William G. Walker of the United States was appointed Head of the KVM by the Chairman-in-Office on 17 October.

The aforementioned agreement between the OSCE and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia provides for 2,000 unarmed verifiers from OSCE participating States “to verify compliance by all parties in Kosovo with UN Security Council Resolution 1199, and report instances of progress and/or non-compliance to the OSCE Permanent Council, the United Nations Security Council and other organizations”. To this end, the KVM is to establish a permanent presence throughout Kosovo.

In addition, the OSCE is responsible under that agreement for supervising elections in Kosovo, so as “to ensure their openness and fairness in accordance with regulations and procedures to be agreed”, and for assisting in the establishment of democratic institutions and the development of a Kosovo police force. Appropriate augmentation of KVM personnel has been foreseen.

The KVM’s headquarters have been established in Priština, and there is a liaison office in Belgrade. Five regional centres are to be established – in Peć, Prizren, Kosovska Mitrovica, Priština and Gnjilane. A co-ordination centre will be established in the principal town of each “*opština*” (administrative district), and “sub-stations” will be established where operationally required – particularly during the election phase.

The KVM will co-ordinate its activities closely with the activities of other international organizations and assist other organizations in carrying out their functions – for instance, in the humanitarian field. Of particular importance will be relations with NATO, which has agreed with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to carry out an air surveillance mission. NATO has also drawn up plans for supporting the KVM if the urgent extraction of verifiers should become necessary.

Deployment of the verifiers, who have been seconded by the OSCE participating States, will take place in phases, with operational duties preceded by three days of training in Kosovo. The Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Missions already in Kosovo will provide information and assistance to the KVM, and will ultimately be absorbed by the Mission.

Under the agreement between the OSCE and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the role of the verifiers will be as follows:

1. To travel throughout Kosovo to verify the maintenance of the cease-fire by all elements and to investigate reports of cease-fire violations.
2. To receive weekly information from relevant FRY/Serbian military/police headquarters in Kosovo regarding movements of forces during the preceding week into, out of or within Kosovo. Upon request of the Verification Mission Director, Mission personnel may be invited to accompany police within Kosovo.



3. To look for and report on roadblocks and other emplacements which influence lines of communication erected for purposes other than traffic or crime control. The Mission Director may request the removal of any roadblocks.
4. To maintain liaison with FRY authorities about border control activities and movements by units with border control responsibilities through areas of Kosovo away from the border. KVM will visit border control units and accompany them as they perform their normal border control roles.
5. To accompany police units in Kosovo as they perform their normal policing roles.
6. To assist to the extent possible UNHCR, ICRC and other international organizations in: facilitating the return of displaced persons to their homes; and the provision of facilitative and humanitarian assistance to them by FRY, Serbian and Kosovo authorities and humanitarian organizations and NGOs. The KVM will verify the level of co-operation and support provided by the FRY and its entities to the humanitarian organizations and accredited NGOs. The Mission will make such representations as it deems necessary to resolve problems it observes.
7. As the political settlement defining Kosovo's self-government is achieved and implementation begins, the Mission Director will assist, both with his own resources and with augmented OSCE implementation support, in areas such as election supervision, assistance in the establishment of Kosovo institutions and police force development in Kosovo.
8. To receive periodic updates from the relevant authorities concerning eventual allegations of abusive action by military or police personnel and the status of disciplinary or legal actions against individuals implicated in such abuses.
9. The Verification Mission will maintain liaison with FRY, Serbian and, where appropriate, Kosovo authorities, and with ICRC regarding ICRC access to detained persons.
10. The Mission Director will, as required, convene representatives of national communities and authorities to exchange information and provide guidance on implementation of the agreement establishing the Verification Mission.
11. The Mission Director will report instances of progress and/or non-compliance or lack of full co-operation from any side to the OSCE and other organizations.

### **2.2.5 OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus**

The Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus (AMG), which was established by the Permanent Council in September 1997, could not take up its activities until early 1998, after the conclusion of an agreement with the Government of Belarus on the practical modalities for its work. Ambassador Hans-Georg Wieck was appointed Head of the AMG, whose task is to "assist the Belarusian authorities in promoting democratic institutions and in complying with other OSCE commitments; and monitor and report on this process".

The Chairman-in-Office, Professor Bronisław Geremek, visiting the AMG on 27 February 1998, described Belarus as "an integral part of democratic Europe" and committed the OSCE to continuing support for the transformation of the country into a fully developed democracy.

During 1998, the AMG worked to make Belarus institutions more aware of the fundamentals of democratically organized State structures, with particular reference to the rule of law, the separation of powers (especially the independence of the judiciary) and respect for human rights. The Presidential Office, various governmental departments, Belarus' legislative bodies and several State committees were involved in the AMG's activities, which also drew in experts from many OSCE participating States, among them the Russian Federation, the United States of America and European institutions.

The AMG created occasions for open dialogue in the context of seminars and conferences on issues important for the development of democracy and the rule of law in Belarus; for example, it initiated conferences on "Structures of Pluralistic Democracies" and "Free and Fair Elections" (held in April 1998) and one on "Democracy, Social Security and Market Economy" (held in September 1998).

The Government has established five high-level consultative groups on: legislation; the implementation of laws; democratization; human rights education; and political questions. The AMG has been assisting the Presidential Office with the preparation of a new electoral law and Parliament with the preparation of new legislation relating to the penal code and to penal procedures.

The AMG has advised on possible alternatives to the State- and Government-controlled television and radio monopoly, GOSTELRADIO - in this connection it has received, incidentally, a visit from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Freimut Duve - and on the draft of a law that would establish an ombudsman institution in Belarus (in the latter connection, it arranged for ombudsmen from other countries - including Bosnia and Herzegovina - to visit Belarus and share their experience).

Another focus of the AMG's activities has been the provision of advice to the Government and the Opposition in the light of the risks associated with Belarus's present economic, financial and monetary policies and the suggestion of alternatives to the policy of granting highly subsidized credits to industry and setting production targets irrespective of market conditions.

The AMG intends to maintain close contacts with civil society representatives and to engage NGO representatives, members of the last democratically elected Supreme Soviet and political party representatives in parallel consultative processes focusing on democratization and on the role of opposition politicians, of citizens at large and of NGOs in ensuring the rule of law and respect for human rights. It also intends to involve research, educational and other academic institutions in this process and to encourage the full participation of citizens in decision-making at the local level.

With the assistance of other OSCE institutions (especially the ODIHR) and of various other international organizations, the AMG is devising programmes for the training of election monitoring instructors.

In the light of recurring complaints about administrative harassment and human rights violations in Belarus, the AMG recently proposed the establishment of a tripartite working group - composed of governmental representatives, representatives of NGOs and representatives of the AMG - to consider individual complaints. The Belarus Government seems to like the

proposal, which represents a new approach in the AMG's endeavours to assist in the field of human rights.

Although there have been no spectacular achievements so far, the AMG has established itself as a nationally and internationally recognized institution. It has offered advice to the two sides in the constitutional and political conflict and to all other entities that have expressed an interest in the process of democratization in Belarus.

#### **2.2.6 OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia, OSCE Centres in Almaty, Ashgabad and Bishkek**

During the reporting period the Permanent Council decided to open the OSCE Centres in Almaty, Ashgabad and Bishkek. According to their mandate, the Centres will promote the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments; facilitate contacts between the Chairman-in-Office, other OSCE institutions and OSCE participating States in Central Asia as well as co-operation with international organizations and institutions; establish and maintain contacts with local authorities, research institutions and NGOs; and assist in arranging OSCE regional events. To this effect the Centres will liaise and co-operate closely with the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia (CALO) in order to maintain the coherence of the regional approach of the OSCE.

The CALO assisted in the organization of a number of high-level visits to the region, including the April 1998 visit of Chairman-in-Office Professor Bronisław Geremek to all five of the Central Asian OSCE participating States, the September 1998 visit of Secretary General Aragona to Uzbekistan and the July 1998 visit of High Commissioner on National Minorities van der Stoel to Uzbekistan.

The CALO assisted the Department for General Affairs of the OSCE Secretariat with the preparations for a regional seminar on "The Role of Stable and Transparent Economic Legislation for Economic and Social Transition" held in Almaty in October 1997, a seminar considered to have made a useful contribution - especially in the field of economic legislation - to the process of economic reform in Kazakhstan. Also, the CALO provided organizational and administrative support for a regional seminar on "Regional Security, Stability and Co-operation in Central Asia" held in Ashgabad in February 1998 as part of the Conflict Prevention Centre's programme; this seminar was notable for the active participation of the Central Asian delegations in the discussions, a very positive contrast to previous events of this type.

The CALO made most of the organizational and administrative preparations for a regional seminar on "Regional Environmental Problems and Co-operative Approaches to Solving Them" held in Tashkent in September 1998, a seminar attended by many experts from Central Asian and other OSCE participating States and from a number of international institutions.

During 1998, the CALO devoted considerable effort to the implementation of ODIHR projects in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, organizing Civil Society Project meetings involving representatives of local NGO and governmental representatives.

In March, the CALO organized a meeting to which all international organizations active in the field of election assistance in Uzbekistan were invited, the objective being to create a co-ordination framework that will prevent duplication of effort and increase the effectiveness of international election assistance.

In May, the CALO provided organizational and administrative support for an ODIHR training course on OSCE commitments in the field of migration and human contacts for Uzbek border and customs officials and organized the second stage of an ODIHR training course in human rights law for legal specialists and representatives of human rights NGOs from all five Central Asian Participating States.

The most ambitious and demanding event organized by the CALO for the ODIHR has been a three-day regional consultation on “Women in Public Life” held in Tashkent in June with support from the Government of Uzbekistan. The CALO’s partner in organizing this event was the Regional Project in Support of Gender in Development of UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (UNDP/RBEC). The regional consultation brought together ten participants from each of the five Central Asian participating States (governmental, parliamentary, NGO and other representatives) Other participating States and the UNDP/RBEC provided experts. The participants discussed the practical implementation of international and national commitments with regard to women’s rights and the challenges to gender equality in Central Asia.

In March, members of the CALO’s international staff attended meetings of the ODIHR Special Representative with governmental officials in Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, which the Special Representative was visiting in order to discuss the possible conclusion of Memoranda of Understanding between the ODIHR and the Governments of those two countries.

In June, CALO staff members were involved in exploratory discussions between representatives of the ODIHR and various governmental agencies in Almaty and Astana regarding a package of ODIHR projects and the possible conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between the ODIHR and the Government of Kazakhstan. In July, a CALO staff member accompanied an ODIHR expert on a needs-assessment visit to law enforcement agencies in Tashkent.

The CALO has initiated regular fortnightly meetings where representatives of interested OSCE participating State embassies and international organizations in Tashkent discuss and share information on various human rights issues relevant to Uzbekistan.

The CALO maintains very close contacts with international organizations active in Uzbekistan and has established good relations with international organizations operating in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, the objective being to avoid duplication of effort and to explore possibilities for joint activities like the aforementioned regional consultation on “Women in Public Life” and human rights training for border and customs officials in May.

Thanks to an increase in its international staff, the CALO was able in 1998 to monitor developments in the region more closely and visit many more areas remote from the capitals of the Central Asian participating States.

CALO staff met regularly with representatives of Central Asian NGOs, in particular those dealing with human rights, thereby obtaining valuable information about, and insights into, the implementation of OSCE commitments by the Central Asian participating States.

## **2.3 OSCE Assistance in the Implementation of Bilateral Agreements**

### **2.3.1 The OSCE Representative to the Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners**

The Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners has continued reviewing applications for residence permits submitted by Russians who formerly belonged to the Soviet armed forces. Some 19,000 applications have been reviewed, and about 1,000 remain to be reviewed before the end of 1998. All residence permits issued to the applicants in question are temporary (for 1-5 years), but they can be extended. The consideration of extension applications is due to start in 1999.

This year there were problems associated with numbers of the applications reviewed:

- many of the applications in question had been submitted after the submission deadline, but the Commission decided to review them nevertheless to prevent them from becoming illegal and to avoid additional attendant problems;
- many files of former KGB officers turned out to be incomplete and had to be returned to the applicants (together with a notice about the possibility of reapplying);
- some 400 applications had been submitted by persons who were also holders of US vouchers entitling them to housing in the Russian Federation. At the same time, however, these persons had received or applied for residence permits when in fact they were supposed to leave Estonia and occupy their new homes in the Russian Federation.

Very few out of those have been turned down but most got only short-term residence permits (1-3 years). The results of a Government appeal to illegal aliens to register have so far not been very encouraging. The OSCE Representative has been promoting an approach whereby illegal aliens (including former military personnel) would receive assurances of non-prosecution if they registered.

### **2.3.2 The OSCE Representative to the Joint Committee on the Skrunda Radar Station**

The "Agreement between the Republic of Latvia and the Russian Federation on the Legal Status of the Skrunda Radar Station during its Temporary Operation and Dismantling" continued to be implemented without any major problems in 1998. As agreed, the period of temporary operation ended on 31 August 1998. Eight inspections have been carried out by teams from 11 OSCE participating States, the last on 3 September 1998; the inspectors confirmed that the Skrunda Radar Station has been switched off.

Dismantling started on 1 September 1998, and there will be four more inspections during the dismantling period, which is due to end with the expiry of the Agreement on 29 February 2000.

The Joint Committee will continue to meet on a monthly basis. On 31 July 1998, Mr. Joergen V. Andersen from Denmark resigned as OSCE Representative to the Joint Committee. He has been replaced by the former Alternate OSCE Representative, Colonel Jürgen Hübschen from Germany.

### **3. Report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

During the reporting period, the activities of the High Commissioner on National Minorities increased both in scope and in intensity.

The reporting period culminated in the organization, together with the ODIHR, of an international conference on "Governance and Participation: Integrating Diversity" held in Locarno from 18 to 20 October 1998. The aim of the conference was to focus attention on the objective of good governance through the effective participation of minorities in public decision-making processes.

The following gives an overview of the main activities of the HCNM during the reporting period.

#### **3.2 Croatia**

In close co-operation with the OSCE Mission in Croatia, the HCNM continued to be involved in a wide range of issues relating to the Serbian minority. Also, the HCNM followed issues relating to the other minority groups in Croatia.

Together with the OSCE Mission, the ODIHR and the Council of Europe, the HCNM is analysing Croatia's electoral law, especially the provisions regarding the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in elections.

The HCNM paid special attention to the situation in the Pridunavlje area (the former UN Sector East) and to the Joint Council of Municipalities (JCM), created on the basis of the Erdut Agreement. At the end of 1997, the HCNM recommended that a special capacity-building project be initiated in order to assist the JCM in performing its functions and interacting with the central and local authorities. Such a project was initiated, and it is being implemented by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations.

The HCNM is closely following the implementation of the Knin Legal Clinic Project, initiated early in 1997 by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations at the recommendation of the HCNM for the purpose of providing legal aid to the returnees in the former UN Sectors South and North.

#### **3.3 Estonia**

During the period from late 1997 to late 1998, the HCNM paid three visits to Tallinn. During these visits, his discussions continued to focus on the naturalization question. He inquired, in particular, about what was being done in parliament as regards the proposed changes in the citizenship law which relate to the conferral of citizenship on stateless children born in Estonia since the country regained independence.

The HCNM noted that in 1998 progress in connection with the naturalization question had continued to be rather slow; some 13-14% of the population is still without citizenship. The purpose of the HCNM's earlier recommendation that citizenship be conferred on children born in

Estonia of stateless parents was to help reduce the number of stateless persons in the country and to promote the process of integration. The proposed changes in the citizenship law are (at the time of writing) still only at the second-reading stage, which is due to be resumed later in the autumn.

Other matters to which the HCNM has paid close attention include proposals to create an ombudsman-type institution and plans to improve the teaching of Estonian in the country's minority-language schools.

Encouraging developments in Estonia during 1998 were the adoption of an Integration Strategy by the Government in March (and its endorsement by parliament in June), the approval of a National Language Strategy document in April and the introduction of a National Language Teacher Programme (providing for a further 50 Estonian language teachers as of September 1998).

The HCNM has highlighted the positive aspects of the Integration Strategy. For example, it refers to the importance of Estonians and non-Estonians working together in the consolidation of the country's society; it points out that integration is a two-way process, with responsibilities on both sides; it explicitly rules out assimilation as a goal; and it places emphasis on youth. The HCNM agrees with those observers who consider the main task ahead for Estonia to be that of ensuring that the ideas underlying the Integration Strategy are translated into reality. Practical implementation issues should now be given priority.

### **3.4 Georgia**

The HCNM paid two visits to Georgia in 1998, in June and August. The main topic of his discussions during both visits was the situation in Abkhazia. The HCNM's interlocutors gave their assessments regarding, in particular, prospects for achieving a settlement of the Abkhaz question. The HCNM was told about the present status of the bilateral negotiations taking place in Moscow. During his August visit the HCNM also travelled to Sukhumi, in order to meet representatives of the Abkhaz leadership and explain the OSCE's views regarding the Abkhaz question.

Another topic of the HCNM's discussions, especially during his June visit, was the problems of the Meskhetians (Meskhetian Turks), a people deported from Georgia by Stalin in 1944.

### **3.5 Consultations on the Meskhetian Issue**

The HCNM initiated and hosted a consultation meeting on the Meskhetian issue which was organized in co-operation with the UNHCR and the Forced Migrations Project of the Open Society Institute. The meeting, held in The Hague on 8 and 9 September, was the first of its kind devoted to the problems of the Meskhetian Turks. The participants included representatives of the Governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation and representatives of the Meskhetian Turks living in those countries, including representatives of the Meskhetian organization "Vatan".

The main purposes of the meeting were: to exchange first-hand information on the situation of the Meskhetian Turks; to promote dialogue and understanding among the parties involved in the Meskhetian issue; to discuss the problems currently facing the Meskhetian Turks

and the relevant authorities, with a view to identifying ways of overcoming them; to draw the attention of the international community to the Meskhetian issue and to explore possibilities for developing a joint and comprehensive approach to it; and to establish a framework for follow-up activities.

The meeting concluded with an agreed joint statement highlighting the need for an international, co-ordinated effort to ensure humane management of the Meskhetian issue. The participants welcomed what had already been done to develop the necessary legal framework in concerned countries, including Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

### **3.6 Kazakhstan**

The main focus of the work of the HCNM in Kazakhstan during 1998 has been on the further development and strengthening of mechanisms for dialogue and interaction between the majority and minority ethnic groups on one hand and between the different minority groups on the other.

The HCNM has continued to assist the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan in developing tools for early warning and the prevention of potential conflicts. In that context, the HCNM is helping the Assembly to establish a Research and Analysis Centre with a monitoring network based on subregional structures and local correspondents.

On 4-5 December 1997 the HCNM, assisted by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations and the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, organized a Seminar on the Administration of Inter-Ethnic Relations in Local and Regional Governments. The Deputy Governors of all regions of Kazakhstan attended the Seminar.

### **3.7 Kosovo**

In his special capacity as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Kosovo, the HCNM prepared in October 1997 a confidential report to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office containing an analysis of the situation in and around Kosovo and conclusions about possible steps to be taken by the international community in order to prevent an escalation of tension. The report was the result of consultations held in October 1997 at Dürnstein, Austria, with several political experts from Albania and Priština.

In January 1998, the HCNM prepared another confidential report for the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on developments in Kosovo and their possible impact on stability in the region, including the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania.

On 17-20 February, the HCNM visited Belgrade and Priština as a 'private person'. In Belgrade he had talks with senior representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with representatives of Serbian political parties and with Serbian experts; in Priština he had talks with leading Kosovo Albanian politicians and with political representatives of the Kosovo Serbs. The reports to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and to the OSCE participating States on his visits emphasized the risk of a likely further escalation of the Kosovo conflict.

The HCNM continued his activities relating to the Kosovo issue until March 1998.



### **3.8 Kyrgyzstan**

As in Kazakhstan, strengthening of the capacity of national and local structures to deal with inter-ethnic relations and the further development of mechanisms for early warning and early prevention were the main areas of activity of the HCNM.

The HCNM continued supporting the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan and its structures, in particular the Information and Research Centre, which organizes seminars and publishes bulletins on issues relating to inter-ethnic relations and harmony.

In the summer of 1998, the HCNM chaired a seminar on the management of inter-ethnic relations at the local level. The seminar was opened by President Akaev of Kyrgyzstan and attended by the Governors of all of Kyrgyzstan's regions.

The HCNM continued to support the Special Monitoring Network, which provides the Kyrgyz Government with regular detailed information and analyses on inter-ethnic relations in the different regions of Kyrgyzstan (the Network was established in 1996 at the initiative of and with direct support from the HCNM).

The HCNM, together with the responsible governmental structures, continued to pay close attention to further strengthening inter-ethnic understanding in the south of the Kyrgyzstan.

### **3.9 Latvia**

The HCNM continued during 1998 to pay close attention to the situation in Latvia in the light of his recommendations that steps be taken: (i) to abolish the "windows" system of naturalization; (ii) to confer citizenship on children born stateless in Latvia since 1991; (iii) to further ease the requirements of the history/constitution tests forming part of the naturalization procedures; and (iv) to ensure that the new language law - when adopted - is in conformity with international norms.

At the time of writing, the HCNM had paid three visits to Riga in 1998. As regards the citizenship issue, the main purpose of the visits was to explore ways in which the naturalization procedures could be simplified and to encourage more people to apply for Latvian citizenship, in the interests of promoting integration in Latvia.

In the HCNM's view (a view shared by many observers in and outside Latvia), there is clear evidence that the "windows" system is impeding the naturalization process, which has shown hardly any signs of advancing in recent years. Late in 1998, the proportion of non-citizens in the population of Latvia is still roughly 28%.

The HCNM's continued efforts to encourage Latvia to amend its citizenship law, in particular with regard to stateless children, were guided by the wish to help reduce the still sizeable number of stateless persons residing in Latvia and to promote the process of integration.

In a welcome development, the Latvian Parliament voted in June 1998 to adopt the Government-proposed amendments abolishing the "windows" system and conferring citizenship on children born stateless in Latvia since 1991. The vote was confirmed in a referendum conducted on 3 October, a result warmly greeted by the HCNM. The swift and effective implementation of the amendments to the citizenship law would be an important step in promoting the integration process.

On the issue of the history/constitution tests, the HCNM has continued to call for a further easing of requirements in his discussions with Latvian officials.

The new draft of the language law has been a particular focus of the HCNM's attention in 1998. The HCNM had several detailed discussions with the chairman of the Saeima committee responsible for drafting the new law, who asked him to comment on the draft text. On 17 April, the Government of Latvia issued a statement supporting the HCNM's earlier recommendation that the language law be in accordance with international norms. At the invitation of the Saeima committee chairman, the HCNM organized a team of experts (including an expert from the Council of Europe) which held consultations with the committee in Riga with a view to ensuring that the law does comply with international norms. The consultations, held in August, narrowed down the differences, but at the time of writing some points had still to be resolved, particularly points regarding the use of the State language in the private sector.

The HCNM has taken the opportunity, on his various visits to Riga and at meetings with Latvian officials, to express support for the progress so far achieved under the auspices of the National Language Training Programme as an instrument for promoting Latvian language learning and the broader integration process. He has also expressed the hope that this programme can be built upon and expanded in future, perhaps with further outside assistance, to improve knowledge of Latvian among the Russophone part of the population.

### **3.10 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

The HCNM continued his activities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, focusing on the improvement of inter-ethnic relations in the country, with special emphasis on the position of ethnic Albanians. In view of the conflict in Kosovo (FRY) and of the fragile political situation in Albania, inter-ethnic relations in FYROM assume, in HCNM's opinion, an even greater significance for overall regional stability.

The HCNM carried out his activities in the country through quiet and confidential mediation efforts, and numerous contacts and talks with the country's highest officials, political representatives of the Albanian minority and leaders of different political parties. In November 1997, he held consultations in The Hague with leaders of the Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity.

In the view of the HCNM, one of the critical aspects of the position of Albanians in the country is Albanian language education, especially higher education. At the time when this report was being drafted, more specific recommendations on this question were being prepared. The HCNM is also interested in the Government's efforts to increase the number of Albanians studying at Macedonian universities. To this end he supported a project carried out by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations to provide educational support to Albanian students preparing for the entrance examinations for the university of Skopje. Better educational possibilities will also improve Albanians' chances of entering the public service, both at national and local levels. During his meetings with the country's officials and with the Albanian minority's representatives, the HCNM took an interest in the developments that had followed the 1997 Gostivar events, particularly the results of the work of the special parliamentary commission investigating the issue and its conclusions and suggestions.

The HCNM also focused on issues related to various forms of dialogue between the authorities and representatives of minorities, particularly of the Albanian minority.

### **3.11 Romania**

In Romania, the HCNM continued his work on improving inter-ethnic relations, in particular as they affect the Hungarian minority. In this respect he focused primarily on the Education Law and the development of multi-cultural educational institutions.

The HCNM visited Romania twice in 1998. The first visit took place on the occasion of a Round-Table on Minorities and Tertiary Education organized by the office of the HCNM in co-operation with the Romanian Government in February 1998. The second visit came at the end of August and the beginning of September 1998 and followed up on issues discussed at the Round-Table.

Through his visits and the Round-Table, the HCNM promoted dialogue on possibilities for changes in the Education Law which would permit improvements in the tertiary education available for the Hungarian minority in their mother tongue. Since this topic proved to be a controversial one, consultations in Romania aimed at finding a compromise solution which would be both sustainable and acceptable to the Romanian Government and the minorities.

During the autumn of 1998, however, tensions arose between the Hungarian-Romanian UDMR party and the other governmental coalition parties. This came as a result of a decision of the Parliamentary Committee on Education to impose new restrictions on the previously proposed amendment of Article 123 of the Education Law, concerning the establishment of multi-cultural educational institutions. This development, which ran contrary to an agreement reached by the coalition, led to a threat on the part of UDMR to leave the coalition. At the time when this report was being drafted, a new compromise formula was being developed by the government.

### **3.12 Slovak Republic**

The activities of the HCNM at the end of 1997 and during 1998 have focused mainly on problems related to the use of minority languages, educational issues and issues connected with the reform of legislation on local elections.

At the invitation of the Slovak Government, the HCNM visited the Slovak Republic on 9 and 10 April 1998, along with delegations from the Council of Europe and the European Commission, in order to discuss the issue of minority language rights in the light of the Slovak Republic's international commitments. The objective of the meeting was to come to an understanding with the Slovak Government on questions regarding the use of minority languages in a situation where immediate steps need to be taken in order to maintain stable inter-ethnic relations and sustain such relations in the future. In the view of the HCNM, although the Slovak Constitution provides for protection for minorities, a situation of legal uncertainty exists regarding the use of minority languages. This uncertainty was created by the adoption of the Law on the State Language, which establishes the precedence of the Slovak language in a variety of settings without at the same time clearly taking into account the right of persons belonging to national minorities to use their own language. The HCNM urged the Slovak Government to endeavour to find immediate solutions, in particular with regard to the use of minority languages in official communications with administrative authorities and the availability of school certificates in minority languages, as well as in Slovak.

During the follow-up consultations at expert level on 18 and 19 May 1998, some elements of a working draft general law governing the use of minority languages were submitted to the

representatives of the HCNM's office, the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Despite some progress, various concerns remained. It was thus agreed that discussions on the draft law governing the use of minority languages and on the concerns expressed by the High Commissioner and other international institutions would continue in the autumn.

Other developments to which the HCNM has paid close attention in the Slovak Republic include the new legislation on local elections. The HCNM expressed serious concern about the main thrust and effect of the Law on Local Elections which had been adopted by the Slovak Parliament. The main aim of the Law is to fix electoral representation along ethnic lines, an idea that runs contrary to international principles and specific standards concerning free elections.

On educational issues, a bill submitted to Parliament by members of the Slovak National Party, which aimed at modifications regarding the language of instruction in minority language schools, was a particular focus of the HCNM's attention. The HCNM was pleased to note that the Parliament of the Slovak Republic rejected this proposal and decided in favour of the freedom of parents to choose the school system they prefer; this decision follows the Government's policy statement of April 1994 undertaking to respect the right of parents of children belonging to national minorities to choose the language of instruction.

### **3.13 Ukraine**

The HCNM's attention was concentrated mainly on issues relating to the reintegration of the formerly deported peoples of Crimea, and primarily the Crimean Tatars.

By the end of 1997 a special pilot project on possibilities of creating multi-cultural home schools in areas with undeveloped infrastructure (mainly Tatar settlements) was finalized and two schools were opened. The project was developed by the HCNM and implemented by UNDP and the Government of Ukraine.

The HCNM, in close co-operation with UNHCR, UNDP, IOM and the OSCE Mission in Ukraine, organized a Donors' Conference in June 1998 in Kiev to raise funds that could be used to meet the humanitarian needs of the formerly deported peoples of Crimea. Several million US dollars were pledged by more than 15 OSCE States at the Conference.

The HCNM has been working actively to persuade all the parties involved to simplify the procedure for obtaining Ukrainian citizenship for the formerly deported peoples of Crimea. In this context the HCNM and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees also interceded with the Government of Uzbekistan, from where the majority of the formerly deported peoples had returned. Recently, the Presidents of Ukraine and Uzbekistan reached a special agreement allowing an automatic change of citizenship for persons in this special category, upon individual request.

### **3.14 Uzbekistan**

On 1 and 2 June 1998 the HCNM paid an orientation visit to Uzbekistan as part of his trip to Central Asia. He had meetings with the Speaker of the Parliament, senior Ministers and leading scientists, but also met leaders of a number of national groups and representatives of several NGOs.

The HCNM noted the concern of most of his interlocutors aroused by the problems of Islamic fundamentalism and its effect on inter-ethnic relations in the country. The HCNM also

used the opportunity afforded by these meetings to emphasize the primary importance for States of adhering to generally recognized international standards in human rights.

### **3.15 Legal Questions**

It will be apparent from what has been said above that the HCNM has given his attention to several matters of law in the course of his conflict prevention activities. In keeping with his general approach, which is aimed at arresting tensions at source, the HCNM has relied upon international standards in an effort to promote practical solutions to disputes involving law and policy in various States. He has done this in a co-operative fashion, working with Governments and responsible parliamentary bodies involved in processes of law reform. A range of subjects, including especially legislation on citizenship, education and the use of language, has been covered in this way. In certain cases, the HCNM has sent expert missions, sometimes in co-operation with other competent international organizations, to provide advice on specific aspects of law reform. In addition, the HCNM has contributed his views on the overall compatibility with international standards of various laws relating to minorities, including some laws of constitutional rank which accord minority rights. The office of the HCNM has also increasingly responded to requests from other OSCE institutions and international organizations for analyses and views regarding relevant international law and practice. To this end, the office of the HCNM has continued to compile its own specialized data-banks and reference materials, and to develop further its own expertise.

With a view to clarifying the content of relevant international standards and providing useful guidance for States in the development of policies and laws consistent with their international obligations and commitments, the HCNM has in the past year promoted the Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities. The HCNM hopes that these Recommendations, compiled by eleven internationally recognized independent experts, may prove to be a useful tool for coping with States' problems in devising appropriate policy and legislation in this field, for these tend to be recurrent problems. The Oslo Recommendations complement The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities, which the HCNM initiated in the previous year.

With regard to State practice, the HCNM is in the process of completing a compilation and analysis of responses from OSCE participating States to his questionnaire regarding the use of minority languages. This compilation and analysis, which includes responses from virtually all participating States, should constitute a useful comparative reference base that States can draw on in the future. The HCNM intends to complete his analysis and to report to participating States at the beginning of 1999.

## **4. The Human Dimension: Report of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)**

### **4.1 Introduction**

1998 was an important year of development for the ODIHR. In accordance with the concept endorsed by the Permanent Council in June 1997, priority was given to the observation and promotion of elections in line with OSCE commitments, practical involvement in the promotion of human rights and democratic institutions, and monitoring the implementation of the OSCE's human dimension commitments.

The ODIHR has continued to adapt during the year and to respond to increasing requests for election and democratization projects and assistance in the OSCE region. At the same time, it has worked to reform the process for reviewing the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments by participating States, and has provided the necessary groundwork for further Memoranda of Understanding between the ODIHR and several participating States in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The Office moved in June to large, airy premises placed at its disposal by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs which provide adequate accommodation for the growing ODIHR staff. From 30 staff members in 1997, the ODIHR has expanded to over 40 employees during 1998, largely thanks to secondments by participating States.

## **4.2 Co-operation**

Co-operation between the ODIHR and other international organizations and institutions was a priority for 1998 and the Office is now working successfully together with the Council of Europe, UNHCR, UNDP and the EU Commission among others, in a number of different fields. For instance, Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Ambassador Stoudmann, ODIHR Director, signed an agreement on co-operation between the UNHCHR and the ODIHR on 19 June 1998. An exchange of letters on co-operation also took place between the ODIHR and Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees. In March 1998, the ODIHR's Director conducted a needs assessment mission to Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia together with representatives of the Council of Europe, the EU Commission, the UNHCR, the Soros Foundations and the Danish Refugee Council. The purpose of this joint effort was to identify the nature and scope of technical assistance to these countries, and simultaneously to divide tasks among the different international institutions in order to avoid any overlap in providing assistance to democracy building and to ensure a common approach to the different challenges. Those institutions are also consulted in the development of new projects. This has set a precedent for subsequent activities.

## **4.3 Elections**

A number of important elections were held in the OSCE region during 1998 and the ODIHR was on hand to provide technical assistance, legal advice and long and short-term observation missions.

**Observation:** In accordance with the procedures outlined in the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Handbook, and following the practice established in recent years, the ODIHR provided both long-term and short-term observers to ensure that the entire election process was properly carried out. Such missions were deployed in Armenia (16, 30 March), Moldova (22 March), Ukraine (29 March), Hungary (10, 24 May), Montenegro/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (31 May), the Czech Republic (19, 20 June), Bosnia and Herzegovina (12-13 September), the Slovak Republic (25-26 September), Latvia (3 October), Azerbaijan (11 October), and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (18 October). Following each observation, a final report was produced, outlining the degree to which the election process had met OSCE standards and detailing any concerns that remained. The reports also offered recommendations to improve the process for future elections.

**Technical Assistance:** The ODIHR responded to requests from the authorities in Montenegro/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Armenia, Albania and Azerbaijan for technical

assistance in preparing elections. In Montenegro the technical assistance team supplied by the ODIHR provided expert advice on election systems, media regulations and voter registration which led to revised election legislation being adopted in February 1998. In Albania the ODIHR was engaged in designing a methodology for civic/voter registration, through a number of pilot projects. A consolidated report will be produced with recommendations for a nation-wide registration exercise.

Following a needs assessment mission to Azerbaijan, the ODIHR assisted the authorities of that country in reviewing draft election legislation in preparation for the elections in October.

In February the ODIHR held an Election Assistance Strategy Meeting in Warsaw to share information between organizations involved in offering election assistance to countries in Central Asia. A large number of interested organizations and OSCE bodies attended, all of which stressed the need for increased co-operation and co-ordination of technical assistance among international donors and organizations in the region. It was proposed that the ODIHR serve as a regional focal point for centralizing and circulating information concerning the various election assistance programmes in Central Asia.

The ODIHR also organized an Electoral Process Workshop in March for 16 top-level election administrators from Central Asian countries. The three day workshop in Stockholm, entitled "Key Aspects of the Electoral Process", enabled officials to discuss common approaches to election issues.

The ODIHR is also organizing a joint regional conference with the UN and various international organizations and NGOs. The conference is to review standards for election administration and relevant election-related issues for the five Central Asian States, prior to the elections scheduled in the region for 1999.

#### **4.4 Democratization**

Work in the Democratization Section of the ODIHR has focused on the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus during 1998. Following the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Uzbekistan, signed in October 1997, several technical assistance projects have been implemented in that country. Preparations have also been made for the signing of similar MOUs with Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in the autumn of 1998. As part of the follow-up to the needs assessment mission to the Caucasus in March 1998, Memoranda of Understanding with Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia will define the nature of technical assistance to be offered to those countries in the course of 1999.

**Rule of Law:** Technical assistance projects have been carried out in Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Russia, Croatia, Albania, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The latter countries have all been involved in assistance with prison reform, a subject discussed separately below. Projects in Uzbekistan are aimed at promoting democracy and strengthening civil society, and are part of the follow-up to a Memorandum of Understanding entered into with the government of that country. One phase of one of these projects has concentrated on enhancing co-operation between the Constitutional Court, the other branches of the judiciary and the government and has had the benefit of assistance offered by judicial experts from France. Assistance provided to Ukraine's Constitutional Court has included a review of the day-to day functions and needs of the Court. This review will assist the Court in assigning appropriate priorities to its needs and its reform agenda for the next year. Another very similar assistance project carried out on behalf of

Ukraine's Constitutional Court involved co-operation with the Constitutional Court of Spain. In Ukraine emphasis has been placed on the identification of administrative and management reforms.

In March, a workshop on techniques to combat organized crime was held in Azerbaijan. The workshop was attended by more than 70 government representatives from national institutions in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. At the end of September the third phase of a judicial training project was implemented in Moscow, Russia, in co-operation with the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, the Russian Legal Academy, the Council of Europe and the Canadian International Development Agency. The substance of the training included economic, social and cultural rights and Articles 5, 6 and 13 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. More than 70 judges from the Moscow region participated.

In co-operation with the ODIHR Election Section, efforts are underway to assist Ukraine in reforming its election complaints and appeals procedures. As was apparent after the March Parliamentary elections, there exists some confusion regarding the jurisdiction and the respective roles of the judiciary and the election commission in resolving election disputes. This project will be further developed next year in other participating States.

**Ombudsman:** In Georgia, technical assistance was provided to the Office of the Public Defender (Ombudsman) following the relevant assessment mission; this took the form of day-to-day assistance from an international consultant in the management of that Office. In Albania the ODIHR provided an international expert to advise and assist the authorities in evaluating and discussing possibilities and mechanisms for the establishment of a genuinely independent national Human Rights/Ombudsman institution. The ODIHR also arranged for an ombudsman expert mission to visit Turkey in February for two round-table discussions with high-level representatives of the government with a view to supporting moves towards the establishment of a genuinely independent ombudsman institution.

The ODIHR also played host to the 1998 Human Dimension Seminar on Ombudsman and National Human Rights Protection Institutions in May. This meeting, organized in close co-operation with UNDP, the Polish Ombudsman's office and the Council of Europe, brought together over 300 experts and practitioners to develop improved operations and more effective institutions. The recommendations emerging from this Seminar included a number of ideas, among them the creation of a regional homepage to provide news and information about and for ombudsmen and human rights institutions, the establishment of a co-ordinated working group to identify the scope of training opportunities at present available and determine whether new programmes are needed, and improvements in exchange mechanisms with the media and NGOs.

**Migration:** In May 1998 an ODIHR delegation of experts ran a training programme in Uzbekistan, as part of the MOU, for border guards and customs officials. The programme focused on the specific needs and capacities of the country in relation to the establishment of effective border controls. It was conducted by trainers from Poland, whose main purpose was to convey the primacy of human rights and the vital importance of acting within the parameters set by law during all border operations. Interest in a follow-up to this course was very high, and apprenticeship of Uzbek border guards in Poland has been proposed.

In September a Round Table on Housing and Property Rights of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) took place on the premises of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. It was



organized by OSCE/ODIHR, UNHCR, the Council of Europe and the OSCE Mission to Georgia, and participants included representatives of the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of the government. The participants discussed expert recommendations related to housing and property restitution issues in the context of a return of persons displaced as a result of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict. It was agreed to form a working group that would be assigned the task of drafting relevant legislation, comprising experts from the UNHCR office in Tbilisi, the OSCE Mission to Georgia and experts nominated by UNHCR or the OSCE. The group is to start work at the beginning of October.

**Prison Service Training:** In Albania an assistance project was carried out with the aim of training correctional officers in international penal standards and ways to strengthen and reform the prison administration. An expert visited Albania once a month to design and implement local training exercises, apprenticeships abroad, development of training materials and follow-up courses for correctional officers. In Moldova a multi-phased correctional officer training initiative was undertaken to assist the Moldovan Ministry of Justice in reforming its prison system and improving the training of prison personnel. The ODIHR also dispatched a technical assessment and consultation mission to Croatia to follow up the similar training programme that took place in 1997.

**Human rights education:** Following the first human rights education course held in Uzbekistan in 1997, the ODIHR extended its reach to the other four States of Central Asia. In May 1998 a second human rights education course was held in Uzbekistan pursuant to the MOU. A follow-up advanced course was also organized for November, with careful selection of participants from all five States.

**Civil society assistance:** Projects were carried out in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Uzbekistan. The civil society assistance programme, launched in 1997, continued in Uzbekistan. In Kyrgyzstan, as in Uzbekistan, the ODIHR has been keen to help establish mechanisms for improved communication between the Government structures and representatives of civil society in order to allow the NGO community a more immediate voice in the local political process. The civil society assistance programme in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan consists of informal one-day consultations where participants discuss specific issues of concern in relation to the national human rights situation. The first consultation in Kyrgyzstan was held in February 1998 and resulted in the drafting of a set of recommendations to establish principles for co-operation between government institutions and NGOs. A second meeting in May sought to identify the problems of journalism in the country and discussed ways to improve ethical standards. In Georgia a civic diplomacy project was designed to enhance contacts and foster dialogue between civic groups from across conflict lines.

**Gender Equality:** The ODIHR organized a regional consultation on the theme "Women in Public Life" for over 50 high-level participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan from 16 to 18 June. The consultation focused on the legal framework and practical implementation of legislation, on challenges to gender equality in Central Asia, on lobbying and monitoring to enhance the status of women and on networking and sharing experience. The ODIHR was also able, thanks to the generosity of the United Kingdom, to appoint a new Adviser on Gender Mainstreaming and the Human Rights of Women who is responsible for developing a consistent approach to gender equality and for integrating gender issues into the various activities of the ODIHR.

Combating torture: Following the recommendations that emerged from the 1997 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the ODIHR established an Expert Panel for the Prevention of Torture, which met for the first time in Warsaw on 11 and 12 June 1998. The Panel's task is to provide advice on how the ODIHR can best develop programmes and activities to combat torture in OSCE participating States. In the first meeting the Panel provided the ODIHR with guidance on developing new projects involving legislative reform, training, and strengthening the work on NGOs. It also provided advice on ways to integrate torture prevention into existing projects.

#### **4.5 Monitoring the Implementation of OSCE Commitments**

The ODIHR continued to collect and disseminate facts, figures and analyses about the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments in the OSCE area. Some information was disseminated in the form of thematic background reports for the OSCE's human dimension implementation meetings.

Following the adoption of new modalities, the ODIHR hosted a human dimension implementation meeting in October/November 1998. In contrast to previous meetings, the 1998 meeting was characterized by substantial NGO participation and the integration of NGOs into the speakers list and by high-level representation of participating States at the closing plenary. The ODIHR also arranged side meetings on freedom of the media, religious freedom, gender issues, combating torture, and national policies regarding Roma and Sinti.

#### **4.6 Budget**

The large expansion of ODIHR activities required a substantial increase in resources. The ODIHR was able to expand its activities thanks to voluntary contributions – in particular contributions totalling more than USD 2 million from the Governments of Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States of America – and to staff secondments from Switzerland and other States. If the demand for ODIHR activities continues to increase, the ODIHR will need even greater support from participating States in 1999.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

In 1998 the ODIHR has proved itself to be a flexible, well integrated and fully operational instrument of the OSCE. Its rapid response capabilities and adaptability mean that it can provide practical assistance to still fragile emerging democracies throughout the OSCE area in their efforts to build sustainable democratic systems. The challenges remain enormous, however, and the risks to the stability of the countries in question are very real. The ODIHR, supported by the OSCE's participating States and other OSCE institutions, intends to further pursue activities designed to enhance the stability of the countries in transition, thereby – it hopes – contributing to conflict prevention, stability and security throughout the OSCE area.

### **5. Report of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**

In December 1997, at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Copenhagen, the participating States, acting in accordance with the Budapest and Helsinki Documents, endorsed the nomination of Freimut Duve as the first OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

In its first full year of operation, the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has become a fully functioning institution of the OSCE and has highlighted the OSCE's continuing commitment to freedom of the media. Participating States are aware of this new, forward-looking institution and some have raised their level of communication on media issues to new heights as a result of this office.

The Representative on Freedom of the Media has communicated in writing with numerous Foreign Ministers and has initiated correspondence with many countries on media issues of concern.

Central to the functioning of this new office has been the ability of the Representative and his staff to visit countries and assess, first hand, a government's commitments to freedom of the media. These visits have been focused on what this new office has identified as its "Four Constituencies:" Governments, Parliaments, non-governmental media organizations (NGOs), and the media practitioners themselves. Every visit has contained carefully programmed exposure to these "four constituencies."

## **5.1 Country Visits**

### **5.1.1 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

The Representative visited Skopje from 14 to 17 April 1998. The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje had arranged a productive programme which included meetings with the Prime Minister and members of the Government and extensive discussions with journalists, university professors, students and NGOs.

The main concern of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, relating directly to his "early warning" function, is the ongoing issue of how media in the region could, in the worst of all possible situations, be used to launch media campaigns against other groups. The Representative noted an encouraging sense on the part of many journalists, editors, broadcasters and politicians with whom he met, that they are all aware of the possibility of the media being used to create ethnic tension. This possibility of the media being used to pit group against group in this politically tense area, is a factor which will bear careful watching by all concerned.

### **5.1.2 Belarus**

The Representative, following an invitation of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group, participated in a Seminar entitled "Structures of Pluralistic Democracies" which took place in Minsk on 29 and 30 April, 1998.

He urged that journalistic professionalism be enhanced as a regular media policy in modern pluralistic societies and that steps should be taken to ensure broader representation of the public in the governing bodies of public electronic media.

### **5.1.3 The Slovak Republic**

The Representative paid a first short visit to Bratislava on 20 May. He raised a number of issues related to the then ongoing revision of the electoral law and to current working conditions for journalists.

After discussions in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, he gave a public lecture on “Democracy and free media” within the framework of the series of conferences on “Modern Foreign Policy” organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Slovak Foreign Policy Association in Bratislava. The Representative’s lecture referred, *inter alia*, to the historic achievements of the CSCE/OSCE, to the corrective function of free journalism and free media in a modern democratic society and to the professional responsibility of journalists, something they had to define themselves. The debate following the lecture focused on current issues in the Slovak Republic. The Representative gave several interviews while in Bratislava for this lecture.

#### **5.1.4 Croatia**

The Representative was a featured participant at a two-day seminar on the media organized jointly with the OSCE Mission in Croatia. He delivered introductory remarks describing the new OSCE office. The seminar sessions featured discussions on the print and electronic media, and on the role of the media in establishing trust and reconciliation.

The Representative continues to co-ordinate his efforts to supplement those of the Mission in Croatia in the media field with a view to engaging the Government of Croatia in a serious dialogue resulting in the Government’s meeting its commitments to a free and independent media landscape. One major issue for both the Mission and the Representative will be the debate on changes to the law on broadcasting to confirm that the privatization provisions are non-discriminatory.

#### **5.1.5 Turkey**

At the invitation of the Government of Turkey, the Representative visited Ankara and Istanbul for discussions with government officials, members of Parliament, journalists and NGOs.

He encouraged an “open and public debate” on the major issues confronting Turkish society, arguing that restricting public debate on controversial issues by penal and other legal codes could possibly have the unintended consequence of imbuing an issue with more importance than it might have merited, if free discussion had taken place. Turkish Government representatives noted that it was the intention of their Government to “broaden” the existing freedom of expression by a draft bill currently under consideration in Parliament which narrows the definitions of what is prohibited under the penal code and the anti-terror law. Prison sentences would also be shortened. If the draft bill should pass, several prisoners including some journalists, might be released.

#### **5.1.6 The Russian Federation**

The Representative paid an initial visit to Russia where he held talks with officials of the Foreign Ministry and representatives of the Duma. He also visited Russian media and discussed issues of concern relating to the ongoing development of free and independent media in Russia.

He met groups of journalists and editors, and representatives of NGOs, including the Glasnost Foundation. He also delivered a lecture at a Moscow university on his new office and on journalistic freedom and responsibility.

### **5.1.7 Albania**

The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media continues to be involved in the development of free media in Albania and is closely following the work being done on the drafting of a new public television law. An Advisor made an assessment mission earlier in the year and attended a Council of Europe-sponsored targeted conference on assistance to Albania. The office has recommended measures to reduce the economic disincentives militating against the development of free media, such as high VAT levels and high capitalization requirements for independent television stations.

### **5.1.8 The United States**

The Representative visited Washington, D.C. soon after taking up his duties and met with officials at the Department of State concerned with OSCE and media issues. He also met the "Helsinki Commission" staff of the U.S. Congress, and officials of the United States Information Agency to discuss ongoing co-operation on media issues. He spoke at a press club breakfast and met representatives of several Washington-based NGOs.

### **5.1.9 The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

In a special intervention to the Permanent Council on 27 August, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, consistent with his early warning function, delivered a statement concerning restrictions on journalists operating from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He noted that the ongoing conflict in Kosovo was not only an internal affair of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but rather that international media covering the conflict are an essential source of information.

The Representative noted that he had written letters to the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia urging the Belgrade authorities to allow unimpeded access to the media to cover the events in the country, especially in Kosovo. He offered, as well, to come to Belgrade to discuss this and other media-related issues with Belgrade authorities.

On 4 September, the Representative was informed by the Belgrade Government that he would not be issued a visa to visit the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to discuss these issues.

Throughout October and November the Government of FRY continued to inflict more and more restrictions on free and independent media in the country as a result of the escalation of the conflict in Kosovo. The Representative therefore issued a number of statements in October concerning the banning of independent radio stations and newspapers and of the re-broadcasting of foreign radio programmes.

The Representative has also criticised the adoption by the Serbian Parliament of the Law on Public Information on 20 October, four days after the signing of the Agreement on the establishment of the Kosovo Verification Mission by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Minister Geremek, and Yugoslav Foreign Minister Jovanovic. This Law institutionalized the banning of foreign programmes, levies exuberant fees on offending media with a 24-hour deadline in which to pay and gave the authorities numerous powers to curtail free media.

In November the Representative prepared a report on the current situation of the media in FRY.

### **5.1.10 Ukraine**

A number of critical references on the media situation in Ukraine mentioned in the ODIHR report on Parliamentary Elections in March 1998 and highlighted in international media reports as well as the Representative's letters to the Ukrainian Government have led the Office to undertake an assessment in Kiev. Talks there were held with government officials, newspapers and television editors of different political affiliations. This visit has confirmed the existence of widespread complaints about the relevant legal framework and about the implementation of laws considered to be arbitrary.

The Representative had raised these and other concerns in a meeting with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Tarasyuk on 16 October. Minister Tarasyuk expressed his readiness to co-operate with the Representative on media-related issues, especially before the Presidential Elections scheduled for October 1999. The Representative intends to visit Ukraine early next year.

### **5.1.11 Bulgaria**

An Adviser from the Representative's office visited Bulgaria in September to participate in a seminar on government-media relations sponsored by the Vienna-based NGO International Press Institute and the Bulgarian Government Information Office. From meetings with journalists, he gained the impression that the media environment is generally positive, but he was made aware of concerns about a new Radio and Television Law which could endanger the independence of the media. Noting that some statutes in Bulgaria's criminal code provide for the imprisonment of journalists convicted of libel or personal defamation, he expressed the hope that these provisions - although rarely applied - would be repealed by the Parliament.

### **5.1.12 Azerbaijan**

An Adviser from the office spoke at a Council of Europe seminar in Baku. In follow-up sessions with journalists and government officials, he identified the lack of independent television stations as an issue that needs attention. He noted several positive recent steps - abolition of censorship and repeal of the Value Added Tax for print media - and hopes to work with the Government of Azerbaijan to enable more independent television stations to obtain licenses to broadcast.

### **5.1.13 Kyrgyzstan**

An Advisor visited Bishek and concluded that the concept of freedom of the media is honoured in Kyrgyzstan. Legal safeguards that assure a free and independent media exist. The President has used his authority to create an environment where a pluralistic media can function freely. He has also expressed his gratitude to the media for assisting him in fighting corruption. The Representative has often referred to the "corrective function" of the media; this is a perfect example.

## **5.2 Relations with other institutions**

Central to the functioning of the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media have been its relations with other institutions, both within and outside the OSCE. The Office has concluded an agreement with the ODIHR confirming the current media monitoring arrangements and the ODIHR's primary responsibility for monitoring media during election campaigns, and

that the new Office will deal with structural issues. The Office has developed a productive working relationship with the Council of Europe which relies heavily on the expertise of the Council's media specialists.

The NGO media community has been particularly useful in providing the Office with information about what is happening in particular countries. Recognizing the value of this unique resource, representatives of the Office have met over a dozen representatives of such NGOs, and the Office communicates almost daily via e-mail and the Internet with NGOs around the world.

### **5.3 Structural issues restricting media freedom**

On several occasions, the Representative has expressed his concern about what he has called "censorship by killing," taking the life of a person because of what he or she has written or was about to publish. He continues to appeal to Governments to do their utmost to ensure legal prosecution. He will continue to seek ways of addressing this serious issue.

The Representative remains concerned about the restriction of media freedom through what he calls "indirect structural repression" against freedom of the media. He has referred on several occasions to the efforts of some governments to hinder the growth of independent and free media through political use of frequency allocation, for example, or excessive fees for licenses. It includes more subtle forms of leverage such as the ongoing government control of the distribution system, or the control of newsprint. It includes other disincentives, economic or otherwise, that make the development of independent and free media more difficult.

Criminal libel and defamation statutes in a number of OSCE countries have also drawn the focus of the Representative. The core belief is that no person should be imprisoned for what he writes and that there should be civil legislation which covers libel and defamation. The Representative has urged governments to move in the direction of de-criminalizing libel and defamation. This issue - with its serious implications for the freedom of expression - will need the Representative's attention in the coming year.

## **6. Security Co-operation**

### **6.1 The Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting**

The 8th Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting 1998 (AIAM) of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) took place in Vienna from 2 to 4 March 1998. The central role of this meeting in assessing the implementation of Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) was made evident by the participation of numerous experts from capitals. The meeting was marked by the submission of a large number of important proposals, tabled with a view to ongoing revision of the Vienna Document 1994.

### **6.2 Vienna Document 1994**

On 4 February 1998 the FSC decided to establish an ad hoc Working Group for the revision of the Vienna Document 1994, the aim being to complete the review during 1998. The Group started work in February, and the first phase of negotiations came to an end with the co-ordinator's presentation of a "rolling text" of the new document at the 21st meeting on 16 September 1998.

### **6.3 The Code of Conduct**

As a result of the Follow-up Conference on the Code of Conduct in September 1997, the FSC decided to institute a regular information exchange on the implementation of the Code of Conduct. Consequently, participating States will provide each other and the Conflict Prevention Centre, on an annual basis and not later than 15 April, with relevant information on the Code, including steps taken for its implementation.

### **6.4 Seminar on Defence Policies and Military Doctrines**

Under the auspices of the FSC, a high-level Seminar on Defence Policies and Military Doctrines was convened in Vienna from 26 to 28 January 1998. Numerous chiefs of general staff of participating States' armed forces had a fruitful exchange of opinion on force structures, national defence policies and military doctrines of the future. Among the main issues considered during the seminar were challenges posed by peacekeeping operations and the military's response thereto.

### **6.5 Global Exchange of Military Information**

A workshop on automated data exchange, attended by a larger number of participants than on previous occasions, preceded the Global Exchange of Military Information which was successfully carried out on 30 April 1998.

### **6.6 Other activities**

Since June 1998, participating States have been concentrating, at plenary meetings of the FSC, on discussion of the regional dimension of security and on regional measures in general.

The FSC decided to upgrade the OSCE Communications Network connecting capitals to make it "year-2000 compliant".

A special meeting of Working Group A was held on 18 September 1998 to review the implementation of the information exchange on conventional arms transfers by participating States.

During the reporting period participating States implemented the following confidence- and security-building measures:

- 7 airbase visits;
- 71 evaluation visits;
- 47 inspections;
- 8 demonstrations of new types of major weapon and equipment systems; and
- 13 visits to military facilities, military formations, and observations of certain military activities.



## **7. Economic and Environmental Activities**

In January 1998, following a proposal by the Secretary General, the Chairman-in-Office appointed Mr. Thomas Price as Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (CEEA).

The Co-ordinator's mandate has five main focal points:

1. enhancing the OSCE's interaction with relevant international organizations;
2. strengthening the economic, environmental, and social components of the work done by OSCE missions and field offices;
3. deepening interaction with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly;
4. broadening OSCE contacts with NGOs and the private sector; and
5. developing a work programme for appropriate additional activities in, and related to, the OSCE's economic dimension.

During the past year, and particularly since the arrival of the Co-ordinator himself, his newly founded office – below called the OCEEA – has concentrated its work in these five areas. On the first point of the mandate, several rounds of formal and informal consultations have been held with the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the European Commission, the European Bank Reconstruction and Development, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Energy Agency, the Council of Europe, the World Bank, and other key partners both here in Vienna and in the field.

In late August, responding to an invitation from UN Office in Vienna Director General Arlacchi, the Co-ordinator represented the OSCE at a UN meeting on the elaboration of an international convention against transnational crime. In September, the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia, the CEEA and a number of international organizations active in Central Asia organized a seminar in Tashkent on regional environmental issues. And in early November, an important conference on subregional environmental problems in the Black Sea area was co-hosted in Istanbul by the OSCE, the Black Sea Economic Co-operation and the Turkish Government.

On the second point, much work remains to be done. However, the CEEA took some useful first steps by meeting formally with all OSCE Heads of Mission when they gathered in Vienna in June, and by meeting many of them throughout the year as they passed through Vienna or when members of the OCEEA visited their Missions. The New Mission Members' Training Seminars also provide an invaluable opportunity for CEEA to interact directly with the people who are to carry out economic/environmental work in the field. As the OSCE prepares to open new centres in Central Asia, it has become increasingly conscious of the importance of having qualified personnel assigned to these offices who grasp the importance that governments and NGO's in the region attach to economic and environmental issues, and the selection process has been modified accordingly.

The third point, improving relations with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, has been a continuing priority. In March, the Co-ordinator held a meeting with the Parliamentary Assembly's standing committee when it visited Vienna. In July, he attended the annual meeting

of the Assembly and contributed actively to the deliberations of the second (economic dimension) committee. The CEEA was able to ensure some cross-fertilization between and among its key partners by inviting Tana de Zulueta, an Italian Senator who had been rapporteur of the Assembly's second committee and then became Vice President of the Assembly, to chair the closing session of the joint OSCE/OECD conference in Paris. Partly because of her work on the bicameral anti-Mafia committee in Italy, and partly thanks to her long familiarity with the OSCE and its work, she was able to make a most useful and highly appreciated contribution to the Paris conference.

The fourth priority identified in the mandate for the CEEA is to increase contacts with NGOs and the private sector. To this end, the Co-ordinator travelled to the Aarhus Ministerial on the environment in late June - a meeting which was attended by, and in large measure planned and conducted by, a wide range of NGOs from many OSCE participating States. Also in June, the Co-ordinator addressed the first annual meeting of the European Business Congress, one of a number of organizations and associations of private sector entities with which the OCEEA maintains regular contacts. Seeking to intensify contacts with NGOs, the Office has compiled an e-mail address list of several hundred organizations in OSCE countries which are active in the environmental field, and now corresponds with them on a regular basis.

The fifth and final point in the mandate, developing a work programme for activities in the economic dimension, continues to absorb a great deal of energy. In this context, the Office worked closely with the Chair to prepare for the Sixth Economic Forum, which took place this year from 1 to 5 June in Prague. The theme was 'Security Aspects of Energy Developments in the OSCE Area'. The Forum was attended by, in addition to representatives of participating States, representatives of the partners for co-operation, the Mediterranean partners for co-operation, NGOs, a number of international organizations as well as business and the academic community. It also included a review of the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic dimension as set out in the Bonn Document of 1990 and other OSCE documents.

Following the Forum, the OCEEA's main focus in this area has been the preparation and hosting, jointly with the OECD, in Paris on 15 and 16 July, of a major international conference on "National and International Approaches to Improving Integrity and Transparency in Government", which examined ways of improving governance and fighting corruption. The meeting was attended by a wide range of participating States and by representatives of NGOs, business and trade unions.

The Office has also organized a number of other seminars, principally a series of subregional seminars designed to lead up to the Seventh Economic Forum, and, along with the incoming Norwegian Chair, a follow-up seminar to the Sixth Economic Forum, now scheduled for January 1999 in Oslo.

From 22 to 24 September, the CEEA organized, through the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia and with the co-operation of the Government of Uzbekistan, a seminar on "Regional Environmental Problems and Co-operative Approaches to Solving Them", which examined ways of confronting the many environmental problems in Central Asia, including water and energy management, the Aral Sea disaster, and the threat of transboundary nuclear pollution due to unsafe nuclear power stations or tailings dumps. The Seminar was opened on behalf of the OSCE by the Secretary General.

On 5 and 6 November in Istanbul, the OSCE organized, in co-operation with the Government of Turkey and the Black Sea Economic Co-operation, a seminar in the same series entitled "Regional Environmental Problems and Co-operative Approaches to Solving Them", but focusing this time on the Black Sea. Issues dealt with at the Seminar included pollution of the Black Sea and its tributaries, energy matters, the problems of nuclear safety and waste disposal, the use of waterways in the region, and public participation in environmental decision-making.

Other parts of the work programme include special one-time activities (such as the workshop held on 15 September on the Euro, conducted by a visiting expert from the European Commission) and the designing of an economic database in the Secretariat for the use of participating States. Finally, devising strategies for increased activity in the economic dimension by OSCE offices in the field forms an important part of this growing work programme.

## **8. Relations with International Organizations and Institutions**

On the basis of a decision taken at the Copenhagen Ministerial Council, which, *inter alia*, tasked the Chairman-in-Office, in co-operation with the Secretary General, to work actively to increase the OSCE's co-operation with other international institutions and organizations, the OSCE considerably increased interaction with its international partners. The aim was to make maximum use of, and expand as appropriate, consultation mechanisms, at headquarters level in order to achieve concrete results in the field.

In the past year the OSCE's relations with other international organizations were re-evaluated in a number of contexts. Regular consultation mechanisms involving the principal partners of the OSCE (Tripartite High Level meetings of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the UN; '2+2' meetings of the OSCE and the Council of Europe; Target Oriented Meetings on specific crisis areas, involving all concerned international organizations; and finally bilateral meetings and cross-representation), were used to assess the state of relations, and particularly co-operation in the field. In 1998, an additional '2+2' meeting was held at the level of senior officials. Furthermore, visits by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to OSCE PC meetings in Vienna, and by the OSCE's Secretary General to meetings of the CoE Committee of Ministers at Deputies level in Strasbourg, offered an opportunity to assess possibilities for pragmatic co-operation and became a regular feature of the period on which we are reporting. For the first time, the UN Under-Secretary-General, and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council in November 1998.

An important event in this context was a meeting with international organizations held during the annual meeting of Heads of Missions and the Secretariat. International organizations and institutions were also drawn into the work undertaken in the context of the Security Model. At a special informal meeting of the OSCE Security Model Committee in July, representatives of the WEU, NATO, the CIS and the CoE participated actively, presenting their views on the Platform for Co-operative Security. A similar special informal meeting of the OSCE Security Model Committee with UN agencies took place in October.

The year 1998 saw both a deepening and a widening of OSCE's relations with other international organizations. An important development which reflected the deepening of relations during 1998 was the conclusion of Memoranda of Understanding with other international organizations aimed at bringing about closer co-operation in the field. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the ODIHR signed an agreement on co-operation on 19 June. An exchange of letters on co-operation also took place between the ODIHR and the UN

High Commissioner for Refugees as well as between the HCNM and the UNHCR. A Memorandum of Understanding on the Enhancement of Co-operation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the OSCE Secretariat was concluded on 15 October. This pragmatic agreement was inspired by the excellent interaction in the field between the two organizations and aims at improving concrete mechanisms already in use (improved exchange of information, designation of liaison officers, cross representation at relevant meetings, joint assessment of situations of common concern, coherence of approach in the field, and the possibility of holding target oriented meetings). The increasingly close co-operation between the UNHCR and the OSCE demonstrates recognition of the critical linkage between migration, displacement and security issues.

The reporting period also saw an in-depth discussion of the Organization's links with the Council of Europe at a Seminar on an Alliance for Human Rights and Democracy, held in The Hague on 5 June at the initiative of the Dutch government. While it was emphasized that the two organizations are different in many respects, it was also recognized that they share the objective of promoting human rights and democracy in Europe. Overlap was not considered a serious problem, as organizations can reinforce each other efficiently by co-ordinating their actions. Structural innovations which could lead to the creation of new bureaucracies should not be pursued. Rather, the organizations should build upon what they have achieved so far in a pragmatic manner, not through a strict division of labour but by ensuring practical complementarity.

Improvement of the relations between the two organizations was also the subject of a September Recommendation of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (1381/1998) on "General Policy: Council of Europe and OSCE". This document noted also that the two organizations share principles and objectives but have different responsibilities, structures, working tools and methods. It calls for a clearer division of tasks to avoid duplication, and supports the proposals on future relations put forward at the seminar in The Hague. The Final Report to the CoE Committee of Ministers by the Committee of Wise Persons submitted in November 1998, called for pooling of relevant information, consultation in times of crisis and a role for each other's chairpersons at ministerial meetings.

Co-operation with other international organizations is most important in connection with OSCE work undertaken in the field. In 1998 the OSCE Mission to Croatia took over important tasks from the UN following expiry of the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium on 15 January. The OSCE also took on the unprecedented role of deploying civilian police monitors in the Croatian Danube region following expiry of the mandate of the United Nations Police Support Group (UNPSG). The handover from the UN was marked by close co-operation.

The OSCE and UNHCR missions to Croatia co-operate closely on the two-way return of refugees and displaced persons. In an effort to further strengthen co-operation, the UNHCR and OSCE missions, together with the European Commission Monitoring Mission (ECMM), are developing a Co-ordination Centre for collation and analysis of the results of joint monitoring activities and improved co-ordination of joint action. The Mission to Croatia has established common structures, called Return Facilitation Groups, with UNHCR and ECMM (including a secretariat) to co-ordinate international monitoring of and support for the Return Programme.

Co-operation between the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) and humanitarian and other international organizations is a key ingredient of the Mission's concept of operations.

The first aim is to work closely together to achieve the purposes of the KVM itself, and the second is to collaborate in resolving the humanitarian difficulties facing the population of Kosovo. The agreement between the OSCE and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of 16 October 1998 states that the "OSCE will establish co-ordination with other organizations ... to allow the Verification Mission ...to accomplish all its objectives" and that "the Verification Mission will ... assist UNHCR, ICRC and other international organizations in facilitating the return of displaced people to their homes, the provision of facilitative and humanitarian assistance to them by the FRY, Serbian and Kosovo authorities as well as the humanitarian organizations and NGOs". Both categories of co-operation were subjects of discussion at a target-oriented meeting held in Warsaw on 5 November 1998 attended by representatives of humanitarian and other international organizations, of NGOs and of OSCE institutions. This meeting also focused on the work of the KVM in the field of human rights and elections.

The OSCE Presence in Albania continues to be an excellent example of the OSCE's ability to co-operate with international organizations. In Albania, the OSCE serves for the second year now as a flexible framework for co-ordination.

With the European Union the OSCE went a step further by initiating (and co-chairing) the *Friends of Albania* group, which held its inaugural meeting in Brussels on 30 September 1998. The OSCE in Tirana will provide the overall framework for the Group. The Group is open to countries and international institutions which wish to give Albania active support in its development efforts. The Group should, *inter alia*, provide a forum for mutual information, consultation, and co-ordination on political, financial, economic and security-related matters concerning Albania.

Another example of co-ordinated action is to be seen in the joint statements on the situation in Albania issued by the OSCE with other international organizations.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE and the CoE worked closely together in an International Election Observation Mission enlisting the joint efforts of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The elections held in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 12 and 13 September were assessed in collaboration with the Mission.

The close co-operation between the OSCE and the UN in the field was highlighted at a meeting of regional organizations in New York in July. The Secretary General of the OSCE submitted concrete proposals on enhancing co-operation between the two organizations. A follow-up meeting to be held in December will concentrate on practical modalities for co-operation in relation to early warning and conflict prevention.

## **9. Relations with partners for co-operation**

The OSCE continued to work with its partners for co-operation; Japan and Korea, and the Mediterranean partners for co-operation, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. This year Jordan was welcomed as a Mediterranean partner for co-operation.

The dialogue between the OSCE participating States and the Mediterranean partners continued mainly through the Contact Group meetings. A number of high-level OSCE officials gave briefings on the OSCE's various areas of endeavour, notably the elaboration of a Document-Charter on European Security and present mission activities, and also on OSCE

experience gained with regard to arms control and confidence and security building measures. In addition, briefings were presented by both the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Co-ordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

In their contributions to the Contact Group, the Mediterranean partners presented a number of ideas and proposals, in particular on co-operation in relation to cultural confidence-building measures and peaceful settlement of conflicts, as well as suggestions for seminars. The proposals are under consideration by the participating States.

In the light of the continued interest shown by the Mediterranean partners for co-operation in becoming acquainted with OSCE activities, and the desire of participating States to improve the quality of interaction with them in the day-to-day work the Permanent Council adopted a decision opening new opportunities for co-operation. As a result, representatives of the Mediterranean partners can make short-term visits to OSCE missions and participate in OSCE/ODIHR election monitoring or supervision operations. Detailed modalities for such participation have been prepared by the Secretariat and by ODIHR.

On 19 and 20 October 1998, the annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminar took place in Malta. The topic was "The Human Dimension of Security, Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law". In addition to representatives from twenty-eight OSCE participating States, the seminar was attended by representatives from Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Tunisia. Korea was also represented. Representatives of five international organizations, namely the Council of Europe, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, NATO, WEU and the Mediterranean Forum, also attended the event.

The partners for co-operation were invited to a number of OSCE activities, including the Follow-up Conference on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, the Seminar on Defence Policies and Military Doctrines, and the opening and closing sessions of the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting.

The appointment of an Adviser in the Department for General Affairs tasked to serve as contact person with the partners for co-operation helped to increase contacts and the flow of information between the Secretariat and the partners for co-operation.

Japan continued to attend the weekly plenary sessions of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council. At the Permanent Council meetings this year, Japan provided information on some key elements of Japanese policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, and announced a significant financial contribution for the elections organized by the OSCE in September 1998. Japan also seconded short-term observers to the elections held in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, Japan made a voluntary contribution to support the work of the Organization.

## **10. Contacts with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

The focal point of OSCE contacts with Non-Governmental Organizations is the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights with its NGO Unit. During 1998 the activities included special civil society assistance programmes in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan which were carried out in co-operation with local and international NGOs. Furthermore, the ODIHR organized a Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in late October and early November 1998 which benefited from more intensive and incisive involvement of NGOs; instead

of being confined to addressing the meeting only after all attending participating States and international organizations had done so, they were allowed to address the meeting on an equal footing with the other participants at any time.

Apart from the ODIHR, new institutions were established during 1998 which have close relationships with the NGO community. The Representative on Freedom of the Media, who took up his duties in 1998, identified NGOs as one of his "Four Constituencies" (the others being Governments, Parliaments, and the media practitioners themselves). Contacts with NGOs have thus become part of the programme of the visits of the Representative and his staff to OSCE countries during which the commitment of governments to freedom of the media was assessed.

The mandate of the newly appointed Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities also includes contacts with NGOs and the private sector. The Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities has widened the scope of his co-operation with NGOs to include those that work in the areas of economics and the environment as well. Close links to a number of them have been established during the past year. NGOs participated in the Economic Forum and other OSCE meetings focusing on economics and the environment. The Co-ordinator travelled to Denmark for the Aarhus Ministerial on the environment, which was attended - and, in part, conducted and planned - by a large number of NGOs from many OSCE countries. Seeking to broaden interaction with NGOs, his Office has compiled an e-mail list/address list of more than 200 organizations active in the environmental field and corresponds with them on a regular basis. This interaction has already proven to be mutually educational; it has certainly helped to raise the OSCE's profile in this area and to promote a greater awareness of its comprehensive concept of security.

Gender issues are another new field of co-operation between the OSCE and NGOs. The appointment of the focal point on gender issues in mid-May 1998 was followed by a meeting of the Secretariat with OSCE Heads of Mission and a number of invited NGOs in June, which focused on opportunities for co-operation between NGOs and the OSCE in gender mainstreaming efforts. The focal point has established links with international gender-related NGOs in order to take advantage of their expertise.

The Department for General Affairs continued to maintain regular contacts with NGOs active in the field of research on security issues. The DGA kept them informed about OSCE activities, attended and contributed to seminars and conferences organized by them, and also pursued the practice of inviting the NGOs to the OSCE seminars.

Finally the "Researcher in Residence" Programme is another new area of co-operation with Non-Governmental Organizations, i.e. academic institutions. It has been designed to give researchers working on OSCE or OSCE-related topics the opportunity to carry out research in the OSCE archives in Prague and thereby to promote knowledge of the Organization.

Apart from these innovations, the OSCE missions have continued to maintain close contacts and co-operation with NGOs in areas relevant to their mandate. Human rights and minority issues, the strengthening of civil society, gender issues, election observation and humanitarian assistance are all areas of endeavour that have benefited from such collaboration.

NGOs also continue to function as an important source of information for the High Commissioner on National Minorities. Contacts with NGOs have accordingly been on the agenda for his visits to OSCE participating States.

During 1998 NGOs participated actively in a number of OSCE Seminars.

## **11. Other Activities**

### **11.1 Integration of recently admitted participating States**

OSCE activities to facilitate the integration of recently admitted participating States (RAPS) began five years ago, and by now the RAPS are well on their way to becoming fully integrated into the OSCE family. This year, efforts to assist these States were conducted in three ways: through seminars and meetings organized in the States, an internship programme at the OSCE Secretariat, and financial support provided from the Voluntary Fund for Fostering the Integration of Recently Admitted Participating States.

In 1998 resources from the Voluntary Fund for Fostering the Integration of Recently Admitted Participating States were used to provide financial support for delegates from the RAPS to OSCE seminars, conferences and meetings. The Fund covered part of the travel and accommodation expenses of RAPS nationals for the following OSCE events:

- (i) Joint OSCE/OECD Conference on “National and International Approaches to Improving Integrity and Transparency in Government”, Paris, 15 and 16 July 1998,
- (ii) OSCE Seminar on ‘Regional Environmental Problems and Co-operative Approaches to Solving Them’, Tashkent, 22-24 September 1998,
- (iii) Seminar on subregional co-operation held on 13 and 14 October 1998 in Stockholm under the auspices of the CiO and hosted by the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs with support from the Institute for East West Studies,
- (iv) Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues, Warsaw, 26 October to 6 November 1998,
- (v) OSCE Seminar on ‘Regional Environmental Problems and Co-operative Approaches to Solving Them - The Case of the Black Sea’, Istanbul, 5 and 6 November 1998.

In addition to the activities of the Fund, the Department for General Affairs, the Conflict Prevention Centre and ODIHR organized seminars and meetings on issues of relevance to the recently admitted participating States:

- (i) “Regional Security, Stability and Co-operation in Central Asia”, held in February in Ashgabad, as part of the CPC programme,
- (ii) ODIHR’s Civil Society Project meetings and “Women in Public Life” Regional Consultation (refer to sections on ODIHR and the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia),
- (iii) OSCE Seminar on “Interrelationship between Central and Regional Governments”, Chisinau, Moldova, 1 and 2 July 1998, organized by the Department for General Affairs jointly with the OSCE Mission to Moldova.



Finally, the OSCE set up an internship programme for nationals of the Central Asian States. Thanks to voluntary contributions from a number of OSCE participating States, the Secretariat was able to offer each of the five participating States from Central Asia the possibility of selecting and sending an intern to the OSCE Secretariat for a term of approximately two months.

## **11.2 Press and Public Information**

### **11.2.1 Press**

Press interest in the OSCE rose in 1998. High-profile events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Croatia and Kosovo (FRY) kept the OSCE in the news. On the whole, the portrayal of the OSCE in the press was both positive and informed. There seems to be a growing awareness of the Organization, reflected in the quantity and quality of coverage. This is evident in the rising number of articles compiled by the press office in the daily press clippings.

In order to cope with the increased demand on the Spokesperson, a Press Officer was hired.

The Spokesperson and Press Officer worked closely with the Polish Chairmanship in helping to keep the press and general public aware of the Organization's activities. This work included a steady stream of press releases, frequent press briefings and press conferences, background briefings for selected journalists and organized trips for media representatives interested in travelling with the Chairman-in-Office and other high-level OSCE officials (e.g. to Central Asia and the Caucasus).

Distribution of press releases was speeded up by using the Internet.

Increased efforts were made to co-ordinate press work with OSCE field activities and Institutions.

### **11.2.2 Public Information**

The heightened profile of the OSCE in the press was complemented by an increased effort to spread the Organization's message through public information. From the beginning of the calendar year, the OSCE Newsletter introduced a new format and is now available in all six official OSCE languages. In order to increase efficiency and cut down on postage costs, the Newsletter is also distributed via e-mail. The Prague Office has improved its distribution of the Newsletter and remains, in this as in a number of other public information activities, an important asset for the Secretariat

The third edition of the OSCE Handbook was completed and will be released at the beginning of 1999. It is a completely revised and updated version of the 1996 edition and will be available in all six official languages of the OSCE. A new-style Factsheet was also issued.

A CD-ROM was issued containing all major conference documents from 1973 to 1997. The information is in all six official OSCE languages. The process of creating the disc consolidated the digital archives in Prague and provides the basis for improvements in access to information in digital form, particularly the documentation section of the OSCE website. The creation of the disc was a joint effort between the Department for General Affairs, the Prague Office and the Department for Conference Services.

The OSCE website continues to add new features. A significant overhaul was launched in October 1998, two years after its introduction into the public domain. The goal is to improve the content (particularly in languages other than English) and the graphic elements to provide an even higher quality and quantity of information to the more than 40,000 users (3.5 million hits) who access the site every year.

The heightened level of interest in the OSCE can be noted in a marked increase in public information inquiries to the Secretariat and Prague Office, the number of visiting groups to OSCE institutions and the number of researchers asking for access to the Secretariat library and Prague archives.

Efforts were made to generate even wider interest in the OSCE by implementing a targeting project that sent public information about the Organization to research institutes, universities, schools, international organizations and NGOs that are not already on the OSCE mailing list/data base but which carry out projects in OSCE-related subjects.

A "Researcher in Residence" Programme was created to give researchers working on OSCE and OSCE-related topics the opportunity to carry out research in the OSCE archives in Prague. Proposals were introduced for improving the Secretariat library in Vienna.

The depository library project has been implemented in 53 libraries in 37 OSCE participating States (as well as Japan and Tunisia). The goal is to have at least one OSCE depository library in every participating State by the end of 1999.

The Briefing Paper series was continued with new material on OSCE missions and field activities.

### **11.2.3 OSCE On-Line**

The OSCE On-Line project moved closer to implementation with the decision to establish a part-time post of OSCE On-Line Manager and the launching of the Information Systems Strategic Plan.

Pending a decision by the participating States to provide additional resources, the Secretariat carried out an assessment of the technical capabilities of the prospective major users, the participating States. The results showed no incompatibilities between needs and requirements.

The Department for General Affairs continued to explore ways of improving information exchange in digital form with international organizations.

## **11.3 Focal Point for Gender Issues**

In 1998 gender issues began to figure prominently on the agenda of the OSCE. The need for efforts to incorporate gender issues and concerns in all OSCE activities was recognized at the informal ad hoc Permanent Council meeting on follow-up to the Human Dimension Seminar on the Promotion of Women's Participation in Society, which took place in Vienna at the initiative of the Chairman-in-Office on 29 April 1998. The meeting included representatives from a number of international organizations and NGOs. The participants concluded that the time was ripe for concrete action to promote the OSCE's goals relating to women's participation in society.

The consequent appointment of the Senior Diplomatic Adviser as a focal point for gender issues in the OSCE Secretariat (May 1998), and the appointment, thanks to the generosity of the United Kingdom, of a new Adviser on Gender Mainstreaming and the Human Rights of Women at ODIHR in Warsaw (August 1998) have resulted in 1998 in a number of practical steps towards integrating gender issues in the work of the Organization.

The activities of the focal point on gender issues are intended to ensure that the meaning and purpose of gender mainstreaming are understood by OSCE personnel. A further task of the focal point is to monitor the opportunities of and for women in the OSCE institutions and Missions.

The Adviser on Gender Mainstreaming and the Human Rights of Women is responsible for developing a consistent approach to gender equality and for integrating gender issues into the various activities of the ODIHR. ODIHR is the primary OSCE institution working on projects related to gender issues.

Gender issues have been addressed in a variety of formats:

- A meeting of the Secretariat with OSCE Heads of Mission and a number of invited NGOs which the focal point addressed, and which focused on opportunities for co-operation between NGOs and the OSCE in gender mainstreaming efforts, took place in Vienna from 22 to 24 June 1998.
- ODIHR organized, in co-operation with the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia, a regional consultation on 'Women in Public Life' for over 50 high-level participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan between 16 and 18 June. The consultation focused on the legal framework and practical implementation of legislation, on challenges to gender equality in Central Asia, on lobbying and monitoring to enhance the status of women and on networking and sharing experience.
- For the human dimension implementation review meeting which took place from 26 October to 6 November 1998 in Warsaw, ODIHR prepared a thematic report on women's human rights which concentrated on Women in the Democratization Process/Women in Politics. Gender issues were addressed during a special roundtable on women and also in plenary debate.
- Gender issues have also been addressed in the framework of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. At the annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Copenhagen on 7 July 1998, a meeting of women parliamentarians on "The Role of Women in Connection with the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Activities" adopted a declaration on gender mainstreaming.
- OSCE missions have also contributed considerably to gender mainstreaming efforts. The Women in Politics Program of the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina organized two Bosnia and Herzegovina-wide conferences promoting women politicians, and contributed, with NGO partners, to the promotion of gender issues in campaigning. It has also published a statistical study on Women's Representation in Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina and printed a handbook for women in politics. The OSCE Mission to Tajikistan stepped up its activities regarding gender issues in 1998 with the establishment of a number of women support groups throughout the Khatlon region and has initiated work on women's rights in the Karategin valley.

### **III. Report of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, created as part of the “institutionalization” of the CSCE at the 1990 Paris Summit, occupies a unique place in the structure of the OSCE. The Assembly’s primary task is to support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in the OSCE’s participating States, to develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and to contribute to the development of the institutional structures of the OSCE and of relations and co-operation between the existing OSCE institutions. A dialogue aimed at further strengthening ties and co-operation between the governmental and parliamentary OSCE branches has been very positive and productive. The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has participated regularly in the Troika meetings and has addressed the OSCE Summits and Ministerial meetings. The International Secretariat of the OSCE PA, located in Copenhagen, has been working closely with the OSCE Secretariat and other OSCE institutions.

#### **1. Annual Session**

At its Annual Session in Copenhagen last July the Assembly considered “Development of the Structures, Institutions and Perspectives of the OSCE” as its contribution to the further strengthening of this important European and Trans-Atlantic Institution. Over three hundred parliamentarians met together to discuss this subject and to adopt a Declaration reflecting their assessment of developments relating to security and co-operation in Europe. They reiterated earlier recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly that the OSCE should adopt an “approximate consensus” rule enabling it to act if participating States are in agreement to the extent of 90 percent of both membership and financial contributions. A Resolution on Kosovo and a Resolution on an Economic Charter for the OSCE were also included in the Final Declaration. Following an established tradition, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, along with the OSCE Secretary General and the leaders of various OSCE Institutions, addressed the Annual Session in Copenhagen and answered questions from the floor.

A Declaration of the meeting of women parliamentarians was also adopted during the Annual session.

The Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Danish Folketing (Parliament), Ms. Helle Degn, was elected as new President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

#### **2. Annual Briefing in Vienna**

It has become a good tradition that the Standing Committee, which comprises the heads of the delegations to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, meets at the beginning of every year in Vienna at OSCE Headquarters in the Hofburg Congress Centre.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the OSCE Secretary General and heads of other OSCE Institutions met with members of the Standing Committee of the OSCE PA last February during their meeting in Vienna and briefed them on the latest developments in the Organization’s work. This briefing provides parliamentarians with the latest information about OSCE activities, while answers to questions from the floor ensure a vital direct link between Members of Parliament and the OSCE leadership. This unique dialogue has become increasingly popular with the leadership of the Parliamentary Assembly.

### **3. Election Observation**

As before, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has continued to make an important contribution to OSCE election observation efforts. A co-operation agreement between the Assembly and the ODIHR, signed in Copenhagen in September 1997 by the Chairman-in-Office and the President of the Assembly, was aimed at further increasing co-operation and enhancing the working relationship between these two important OSCE Institutions. In accordance with this agreement, the Chairman-in-Office has regularly appointed the President of the OSCE PA or a senior Member of Parliament as his Special Representative to lead each election monitoring operation and to present the conclusions of the observer teams. During the past eighteen months the Assembly sent delegations of parliamentarians to monitor elections in Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, Hungary, Montenegro, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Slovak Republic and Macedonia. The OSCE Secretary General and the Secretary General of the OSCE PA met in Copenhagen in August in order to consider the best possible ways of further improving co-operation in election monitoring.

### **4. Presidential Visits and Missions**

The President and other senior representatives of the Assembly have undertaken a number of official visits and missions during the past year in order to promote OSCE principles, to establish closer ties with Assembly members and to contribute to the development of democratic institutions in the OSCE area. One of the most important developments was the establishment of a Tri-Parliamentary Delegation to Albania - organized at the request of the OSCE Presence in Albania - to assist with the drafting of the new constitution and the development of democratic practices in the new Albanian Parliament. A Delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, headed by the OSCE PA's President Emeritus, carried out this mission and agreed to implement the programme in a continuous manner. The Assembly's President visited Pristina, Belgrade and Skopje to discuss the dangerous situation in the area and possible ways of resolving it, and he also made official visits to Bulgaria, the Slovak Republic and Italy, while the newly elected President paid a visit to the Chairman-in-Office in Warsaw and used this occasion to visit the ODIHR Headquarters and to acquaint herself with its work. She also led the OSCE PA Delegation to the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) Conference in Moscow and met with the Speakers of the State Duma (Lower House) and the Council of Federation (Upper House), the Foreign Minister and other high parliamentary and governmental officials of the Russian Federation.

### **5. Seminars, Conferences and Meetings**

Representatives of the Assembly participated in meetings organized by other OSCE Institutions. A highly representative delegation led by the Chairman of The Assembly's Economic Committee took part in the Economic Forum in Prague. Senior OSCE PA officials also participated in a seminar on OSCE and Council of Europe Relations in the Netherlands and in a meeting of Heads of OSCE Missions in Vienna. An Assembly delegation visited Belarus under the auspices of the OSCE Mission in Minsk and discussed the situation with representatives of the present administration and the opposition. In addition, the Assembly organized a Parliamentary Seminar on Conflict Resolution and Democratic Development in the Caucasus which was held in October in Tbilisi and was attended by senior OSCE Officials.

## **6. Other Activities**

The Bureau of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States Interparliamentary Assembly held a joint meeting in St. Petersburg in June 1998 at which they considered further steps towards the development of democratic institutions in the countries of the former Soviet Union and upgrading the OSCE work in the area.

The Parliamentary Assembly awarded its Third Annual Prize for Journalism and Democracy to Mr. Timothy Garton Ash, a British journalist who has made a considerable contribution to developing democracies, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe.

The Assembly also continued to expand its international intern programme on the premises of the International Secretariat in Copenhagen. The internships last six months and may be extended for up to one year. Over 50 interns from 18 OSCE countries have already benefited from this programme.

## **IV. Resources Management**

Following Decision No. 3 (MC(6).DEC/3) of the Ministerial Council Meeting in Copenhagen concerning the enhancement of the operational capacities of the Secretariat, the Permanent Council adopted Decision No. 257 (PC.DEC/257) in response to the report of the Chairman of the Group of Experts that had been established for the purpose of making relevant proposals. As a result the Secretary General reorganized the Secretariat on the basis of two main departments: the Conflict Prevention Centre and the Department for Administration and Operations. The former focuses on the support of the Chairman-in-Office in the implementation of OSCE policies, in particular the monitoring of the OSCE field activities and co-operation with other international organizations and institutions. The latter is responsible for technical, administrative and operations support functions, thus combining the functions of the present departments for Conference Services and for Administration and Budget, as well as most of the functions of the former Mission Support Section.

### **1. Conference Services**

#### **1.1 Meetings Services**

The Department for Conference Services (DCS) handled some 1,570 meetings during the reporting period from 1 December 1997 to 30 November 1998 in Vienna - a large number reflecting the continuous growth of OSCE activities on a broad range of different subject matters deriving from the OSCE's increased involvement in various geographical areas. Prominent is the need for informal consultations, and hence a substantial increase in the number of informal meetings, each with its own documentation requirements.

- The total number of Permanent Council meetings and related "PC" consultations was 370.
- The total number of Forum for Security Co-operation meetings and related "FSC" meetings was 220.

The DCS serviced over 135 meetings of the Joint Consultative Group and the Open Skies Consultative Commission.

310 informal meetings of regional groups or groups of OSCE participating States with an interest in specific topics also took place during this period. Meetings related to the work of the European Union took place on approximately 300 occasions.

The number of briefings for student groups, academics, research institutions and other organizations is increasing; 95 briefings had been held during the reporting period, as compared to 67 during 1997.

#### **1.2 Documents Distribution**

The tasks include registration, reproduction, distribution and archiving of documents, co-ordination of meeting room bookings, servicing accreditation and cultural co-ordination. The Documents Distribution Unit receives about 90 requests per day. During the reporting period, approximately 3,500 documents were distributed to OSCE delegations and the Secretariat, containing information relevant to the Permanent Council, the Forum for Security Co-operation,

the Joint Consultative Group and the Open Skies Consultative Commission, information bearing on budgetary and financial questions as well as more general information.

The workload of the Documents Distribution Section is steadily increasing from year to year. If we compare the number of documents distributed in 1994, namely 3,856, with the number distributed in 1997, 6,016, we see that there has been a 56% increase over three years.

Owing to the rapid growth in the number of meetings held and documents distributed, it was decided, in August this year, to undertake a revision of the existing system with the aim of facilitating the eventual switch-over to a digital archive system in the OSCE. This should make it possible to cope more effectively with the requirements of delegations, institutions and the Secretariat in a manner consistent with the demand for greater transparency, openness and flexibility in the operation of the OSCE.

### **1.3 Interpretation**

Interpretation was provided as usual for the bodies involved in implementing the regular OSCE programme (e.g. the Permanent Council, the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Security Model Committee) and also for the Joint Consultative Group and the Open Skies Consultative Commission meetings. Interpretation was also provided for the following meetings away from Vienna:

- Ministerial Council Meeting, Copenhagen, 19 and 20 December 1997
- Human Dimension Seminar on Ombudsman and National Human Rights Protection Institutions, Warsaw, 25 - 28 May 1998
- Economic Forum, Prague, 1 - 5 June 1998
- "Governance and Participation: Integrating Diversity", a meeting held under the auspices of the HCNM and the ODIHR, Locarno, 18 - 20 October 1998
- OSCE Mediterranean Seminar, Valetta, Malta, 19 and 20 October 1998
- Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues, Warsaw, 26 October to 6 November 1998

Additional recruitment of interpreters and translators was required for other "special meetings" held in Vienna, such as those of the Sub-Regional Consultative Commission, Article II/Article IV consultations, the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly, the HCNM Seminar on the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting and the Seminar on Defence Policies and Military Doctrines.

### **1.4 Translation, Documents Control and Editing**

During the reporting period the Translation unit of Language Services translated and edited over 8,000 standard pages and word processed over 16,500 standard pages of OSCE texts and documents in one or more of the six official OSCE languages. Using translation staff based in Vienna, Language Services provided translation and editing support for several major OSCE meetings and conferences (including the Ministerial Council in Copenhagen, the Economic Forum meeting in Prague and the ODIHR Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues



in Warsaw), texts being received from and returned to the meeting electronically in some cases. Starting with the February 1998 issue, Language Services has translated the monthly OSCE Newsletter into all OSCE languages. It also compiled *OSCE Decisions 1997* during the period under review. In collaboration with staff from the Department for General Affairs and the Prague Office, computer files of CSCE and OSCE documents were prepared for inclusion in the OSCE CD-ROM. In addition, Language Services staff edited and translated the supporting texts for the CD-ROM and helped test the beta versions of the product.

## **2. Finance**

### **2.1 Budgeting**

The Budget for 1998, initially established at the level of ATS 616.4 million, was approved by the Permanent Council on 16 December 1997 (PC.DEC/207). On 29 January 1998 the Permanent Council also approved a budget for OSCE tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the level of ATS 322.8 million. An additional budget to cover the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, amounting to ATS 489 million, was approved on 7 April 1998.

The 1998 Budget was further increased through separate decisions of the Permanent Council to include budgets for the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus, for the enhancement of the OSCE Presence in Albania and the OSCE Spillover Monitoring Mission to Skopje, and for the OSCE Centres in Bishkek, Ashgabad and Almaty, as well as additional budgets for the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, for ODIHR, for the 1998 Human Dimension Implementation meeting, and for the 1998 Ministerial Council Meeting in Oslo.

On 11 November 1998, the Permanent Council approved the 1998 Budget for the Kosovo Verification Mission in an amount of ATS 756.5 million. Thus the total budget for 1998 was established at the level of ATS 2,251.1 million.

The Secretary General submitted his budget proposals for 1999 on 1 October. With this submission an effort was made to present a document of a new type, in accordance with the principles of Programme Budgeting. The new budget proposals are based on two earlier documents issued in 1998, a background paper on the OSCE and Programme Budgeting (PC.IFC/21/98) and a Budget Outline (PC.IFC/25/98), the latter being an innovation.

### **2.2 Accounting**

The report of the External Auditors included an unqualified audit opinion certifying that

- the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the OSCE as at 31 December 1997, and the results of the operations then ended;
- they were prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles;
- transactions were in accordance with the approved financial procedures and legislative authority.

The audited financial statements for 1997 were submitted to the Delegations of participating States on 27 May 1998, and were accepted by the Permanent Council on 23 July 1998 (PC DEC/249).

A training seminar for local finance and administration staff members at the OSCE missions and institutions was held during the period from 15 to 19 June 1998.

## **2.3 Cash Management**

A new second scale of assessment for the large OSCE missions and projects was adopted on 19 December 1997 (MC(6).DEC/8) along with a system of voluntary funding in order to accept financial contributions for such larger missions and projects. Pledges have been received in respect of this voluntary fund amounting to ATS 72 million. The residual balance was billed in the Fourth Bill dated 29 July.

Arrears procedures in accordance with the Financial Regulations were implemented in order to reduce the outstanding contributions. In order to monitor the impact of the outstanding balances on the operational capability of the OSCE, a regular cash flow report was introduced.

On-line Electronic banking was fully installed in accordance with the recommendations of the External Auditors.

During the deployment of over 2,500 Polling supervisors for the Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, subsistence allowance cash payments were made over three days amounting to DEM 4.5 million. Such projects highlight the OSCE's ability to respond effectively and efficiently to such challenges.

New bank accounts were established in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Sarajevo for the Benefits Commission and in Brcko for the Regional Centre.

## **3. Personnel**

### **3.1 Policies and Procedures**

By Decision No. 257 (see above) the Permanent Council amended Regulation 4.07 of the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules for Fixed-Term Staff. This amendment sets the maximum period of service for appointments of staff members holding posts in the professional category, when factors related to institutional memory and continuity are of central importance, at seven years.

Pending the design of an integrated human resources management system in the OSCE's Information System Strategy Plan, initial efforts have been undertaken to improve the links between personnel and finance with regard to information exchange on various personnel actions.

### **3.2 Social Security**

Improved health coverage for fixed term staff in Institutions were negotiated with the Insurer and are expected to take effect in 1999. Health coverage for local staff in the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina was also negotiated with the Insurer and came into effect on 1 April 1998.

### **3.3 Recruitment**

At the request of the participating States, a report on the implementation of the recruitment policy was submitted to the Permanent Council in March. The report pointed out the root causes of problems affecting recruitment.

Recruitment activity in 1998 continued at the same pace as in 1997. During the reporting period, 46 vacancy notices had been issued for fixed term posts. Recruitment of short-term staff to meet short-term needs continued throughout the year.

A special section in the OSCE website has been designated for job openings. Information on vacancies in Institutions can be accessed in the web pages. (<http://www.osce.org>)

### **3.4 Internship Programme**

The OSCE accepted offers of service from nine interns in 1998 under the normal internship programme. These interns have assisted the Conflict Prevention Centre, the Department for General Affairs, and the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities. In addition, a special internship programme funded through voluntary contributions was implemented specifically for the benefit of Central Asian States. In this special programme five interns assisted the Conflict Prevention Centre at various times during the year.

### **3.5 Post Classification**

Following the submission of two reports on this subject to the Permanent Council, a Job Classifier will be conducting a global review of post classification in the OSCE using the ICSC job classification standards in the context of OSCE specificities. The review is to be carried out in two stages. The initial stage, covering posts in Institutions that need to be dealt with fairly urgently, has commenced in November 1998.

## **4. Information Technology**

### **4.1 The Secretariat**

In addition to support for all software and computer equipment (about 500 major items), procurement of such items and assistance with evaluations and trials of new technologies, critical upgrades were made to the information-systems infrastructure within the Secretariat in 1998.

The upgrading included:

- Expansion of the network cabling at Kärntnerring to include a significant portion of the 5th floor (Finance and Personnel) and the 9th floor (Freedom of the Media). A LAN was installed for Article V;
- Upgrading of the computer network at the Hofburg offices to a structured system, improvement of the connectivity to the Kärntnerring;
- Installation of a computer working area for delegates at the Department for Conference Services;
- Development and implementation of applications to support:

- the 1999 budget preparation process;
- human resources management and payroll for the Secretariat (November 98);
- human resources management of seconded staff for the Mission Staffing Section;
- the Archive of the Secretariat and HCNM;
- the processing of job applications for the Secretariat;
- Organization of data entry for different database applications (addresses, inventory checks, e-mail users, etc.);
- Consolidation of the Kärntnerring ITS offices into a new single location on the 4th floor;
- Provision of on-site technical support for the 1997 Ministerial Council meeting in Copenhagen;
- Co-ordination of installations and training for new/replacement staff at the Secretariat;
- Issue of the first set of Administrative Instructions related to IT (3/1998);
- Assistance to CSBM in the selection and evaluation of the upgraded network;
- Ongoing improvements to the technical IT infrastructure of the Secretariat (e.g. NT rollout, Internet upgrades, software installations, LAN management tools);
- Improvement of Help Desk services at all sites in the Secretariat.

## **4.2 The Missions**

In 1998 the IT Section continued to provide basic general support and assistance for a number of specific projects. This included:

- Assistance to the Mission Support Section (MSS) with the completion of their BPR (Business Process Re-engineering) project;
- General computer advice and assistance as requested (e.g. approaches to control of computer viruses, reference material), including help with the procurement process for computer-related services, equipment and software, and IT reviews as part of the 1999 budget submission for the missions;
- Assistance with/advice about support relating to all major computer components and associated services;
- Specific and general IT training for mission staff (as part of the Secretariat's new mission member training programme);
- On-site consulting support for the Mission to Croatia with regard to developing an IT infrastructure and implementing a network;

- Support for MSS and the International Organization for Migration in the procurement of additional equipment required for the 1998 Bosnia and Herzegovina elections, reconditioning and upgrading of "Out of Country Voting" computers for redeployment;
- Software enhancement and on-site support for the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in connection with the Election Supervisors registration process.

Starting mid-October the Secretariat's IT Section made significant contributions to assist in the start-up of the Kosovo Verification Mission;

- Assisted the KVM Support Unit in planning, budgeting and in the initial implementation of all IT related services for the mission. This was accomplished by the full-time reassignment of one of the IT Officers to the Support Unit for the duration of the mission.
- Provided initial assistance in gathering IT related logistical information and IT Support in Kosovo by the temporary assignment of the IT Help Desk staff member.
- Redesigned critical components of the Secretariat's IT infrastructure and service mechanisms in order to accommodate the very significant increases in staff and volumes of activities resulting from the KVM.

### **4.3 Information Systems Strategic Plan**

The OSCE-wide Information Systems Strategic Plan (ISSP) has been developed and widely circulated in the OSCE. The critical components of the plan (financial management system, material management system and enhancement of the IT Section) were approved by the Permanent Council.

A consultant has been engaged to develop the functional requirements and issue the tender document. The recruitment process for the staff identified in the ISSP is underway.

An Invitation to Tender has been formulated and issued for the Financial Management and Material Management Systems (November 1998).

## **5. Legal Matters**

Legal assistance was provided to the Secretariat, other OSCE Institutions and Missions, as well as to delegations. The main areas of interest were privileges and immunities; drafting of and advice on international legal instruments, such as Memoranda of Understanding governing the activities of missions and other operations; contracting, claims and insurance matters; taxation, social security, personnel questions; and drafting and interpretation of documents, such as the Financial Regulations and the Staff Regulations and Rules.

## **6. Training**

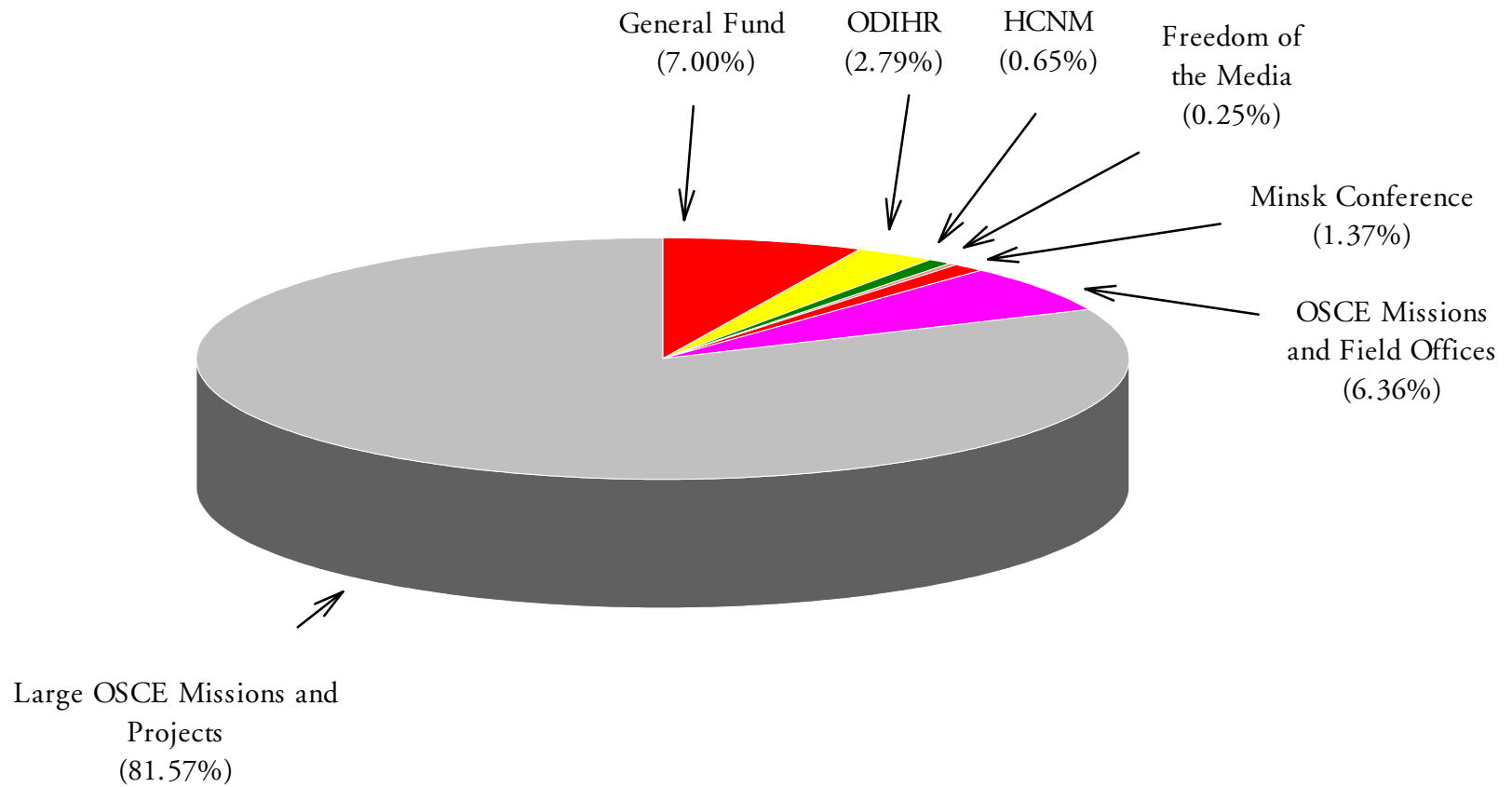
In 1998 the Secretariat launched an OSCE Training Strategy. It concentrates on the training needed for field missions. The implementation of this strategy has been entrusted to a Co-ordinator, Ambassador Sune Danielsson, seconded to the Secretariat by the Government of Sweden. The implementation of the strategy would constitute a considerable step forward in the use of human resources available to the OSCE, in particular its field missions, and result in a more cost-effective management approach.

## **7. Other Administrative Tasks**

The General Services Unit continued to provide services to the OSCE Secretariat and the Missions, including a travel office (flight planning and booking, hotel accommodation), liaison with the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding registration of staff with the Austrian authorities and tax exemption privileges. It also continued to service the OSCE missions and institutions by pouch. The archive and registry unit is endeavouring to cope with ever growing amounts of communication traffic (for example, the Mission Report processing workload increased by 40% over 1997). Owing to the constantly increasing number of missions and other field activities, over 20,000 original documents were registered and processed for internal and/or external distribution during the reporting period.

The efforts of the General Services Unit were vital in the planning, design and procurement activities required for the establishment of the seat of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Article V Negotiations, and the expansion of the Secretariat premises to the fifth floor of the Kärntnerringhof where the Accounts, Budget, Personnel and Treasury offices are accommodated.

The OSCE Unified 1998 Budget  
as per 21 November 1998  
ATS 2,251,153,937

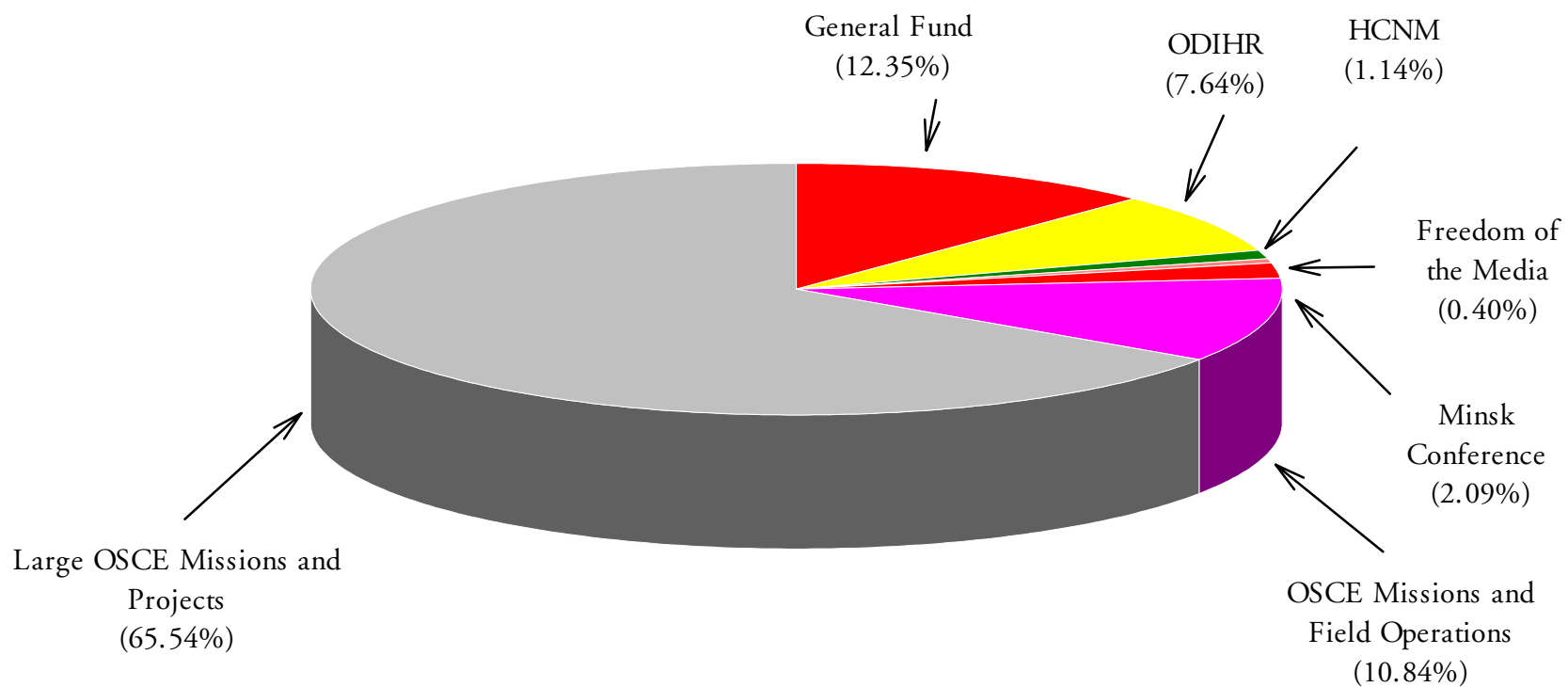


**OSCE UNIFIED BUDGET 1998  
AS PER 21 NOVEMBER 1998**

<u>Fund</u>	ATS	Per Cent
Main Programme		
<b><u>The General Fund</u></b>	<b>157,681,524</b>	<b>7.00</b>
Secretary General and Central Services	14,488,858	0.64
Activities Relating to the Economic and Environmental Aspects of Security	7,941,215	0.35
Conflict Prevention Activities	19,248,737	0.86
Activities Relating to Military Aspects of Security	7,032,250	0.31
Management of Resources	1,936,667	0.09
Conference Services in Vienna	49,572,619	2.20
Conference Services in Prague	3,890,078	0.17
Common Services in Vienna	49,527,101	2.20
Common Services in Prague	4,044,000	0.18
 <b><u>Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)</u></b>	 <b>62,917,852</b>	 <b>2.79</b>
 <b><u>High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)</u></b>	 <b>14,660,407</b>	 <b>0.65</b>
 <b><u>Representative on Freedom of the Media</u></b>	 <b>5,570,471</b>	 <b>0.25</b>
 <b><u>Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference</u></b>	 <b>30,950,172</b>	 <b>1.37</b>
High Level Planning Group	2,680,421	0.12
The Minsk Process	19,005,340	0.84
Personal Representative of the CiO	9,264,411	0.41
 <b><u>Other OSCE Missions and Field Operations</u></b>	 <b>143,097,761</b>	 <b>6.36</b>
 <b><u>OSCE Missions and Field Operations</u></b>	 <b>1,836,275,750</b>	 <b>81.57</b>
Mission to Croatia	268,013,227	11.91
Tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina	811,732,259	36.06
Kosovo Verification Mission	756,530,264	33.61
 <b>TOTAL</b>	 <b>2,251,153,937</b>	 <b>100.00</b>



The OSCE Unified Budget Proposal 1999 by Funds  
excluding the Kosovo Verification Mission  
as per 21 November 1998  
(not yet approved)  
ATS 1,503,801,568



**THE OSCE UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSALS 1999  
AS PER 21 NOVEMBER 1998  
(not yet approved)**

<u>Fund</u>	ATS	Per Cent
Main Programme		
<b><u>The General Fund</u></b>	<b>185,767,062</b>	<b>12.35</b>
Secretary General and Central Services	16,558,866	1.10
Activities Relating to the Economic and Environmental Aspects of Security	7,978,000	0.53
Conflict Prevention Activities	24,017,908	1.60
Activities Relating to Military Aspects of Security	7,945,525	0.53
Conference Services in Vienna	49,834,901	3.31
Conference Services in Prague	1,111,000	0.07
Common Services in Vienna	73,848,618	4.91
Common Services in Prague	4,472,244	0.30
 <b><u>Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)</u></b>	 <b>114,883,363</b>	 <b>7.64</b>
 <b><u>High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)</u></b>	 <b>17,156,927</b>	 <b>1.14</b>
 <b><u>Representative on Freedom of the Media</u></b>	 <b>5,996,901</b>	 <b>0.40</b>
 <b><u>Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference</u></b>	 <b>31,423,530</b>	 <b>2.09</b>
High Level Planning Group	2,717,156	0.18
The Minsk Process	19,005,340	1.26
Personal Representative of the CiO	9,701,034	0.65
 <b><u>OSCE Missions and Field Operations</u></b>	 <b>162,945,783</b>	 <b>10.84</b>
 <b><u>Large OSCE Missions and Projects</u></b>	 <b>985,628,002</b>	 <b>65.54</b>
Mission to Croatia	307,064,850	20.42
Tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina	678,563,152	45.12
 <b>TOTAL</b>	 <b>1,503,801,568</b>	 <b>100.00</b>