

Annual Report 2022

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***** DISCLAIMER *****

The OSCE participating States could not reach consensus on a Unified Budget for the year 2022. The last Unified Budget of the OSCE was approved on 18 August 2021 by PC.DEC/1413, in which the OSCE participating States acknowledged that agreement could not yet be found on all programmatic activities and noted the need to continue some of these discussions.

*****END DISCLAIMER *****

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REFLECTIONS FROM THE 2022 CHAIRMANSHIP

The OSCE Chairmanship is selected by the OSCE Ministerial Council for a one-year term. The post of Chairman-in-Office is held by the foreign minister of the selected participating State.

“Standing firmly in defence of OSCE principles”

Chairman-in-Office: **Zbigniew Rau**

www.osce.org/chairmanship

CHAIRMANSHIP

Poland’s Chairmanship coincided with the gravest security crisis in Europe since the Second World War — Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. In 2022, there was no place for “business as usual” in the work of the Organization. Instead, the focus was on the ongoing war and its consequences. The Chairmanship defined its role as to defend OSCE principles and commitments and to put this task in the centre of the participating States’ and Secretariat’s activities throughout the year.

WAR IN EUROPE LEADS TO CRISIS FOR THE ORGANIZATION

Poland took over the OSCE Chairmanship, for the second time since 1998, with set priorities, eager to fully utilize the OSCE’s potential by working in a spirit of co-operation to implement shared commitments. At the inauguration of the Chairmanship, Minister Rau called attention to the need to respect international law as the way to safeguard co-existence free of violence and threats.

However, the Chairmanship soon had to face serious signs of an imminent large military conflict in Europe begun by the Russian Federation. To contribute to keeping the peace, Poland initiated the Renewed European Security Dialogue. This step was intended to defuse the tense security situation and work out ways to prevent similar ones in the future. Chairman-in-Office Rau proposed reflecting on the three fundamental principles underlying peace and security in Europe: comprehensive security, indivisible security and peaceful co-existence, and their mutual relations and links with other principles covered by the OSCE Decalogue. He also suggested that OSCE dialogue should address such themes as military confidence-building measures, conflict prevention and resolution, and non-military aspects of security. He suggested reflecting on how the participating States understand the principles and commitments adopted by the Organization and how these are being implemented. Unfortunately, this proposal, which received broad support from participating States, was not implemented due to Russia’s opposition.

On 24 February, Russia’s aggression unfolded into a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. Russia caused enormous suffering for the people of Ukraine; committed atrocities, mass violations of human rights and war crimes; and deliberately damaged civilian and critical infrastructure. The war posed serious challenges for the OSCE in every respect: from organizational issues to questioning its fundamental *raison d'être*. The hard-won gains of a multilateralist world were trampled underfoot by

unilateral choices and actions, undermining the multilateral framework the OSCE had designed and nurtured for decades. The observance of international law suffered a serious blow.

CHAIRING THE OSCE IN THE CONTEXT OF RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION

The Polish Chairmanship, guided by the spirit of the Helsinki Accords, in co-operation with the OSCE executive management, supported by the vast majority of participating States and in response to the challenge posed by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, stood up in defence of values, principles and the Organization itself.

The main considerations behind the Chairmanship's stance in the context of a war waged by one OSCE participating State against another were based on three foundations: (1) that the Chairmanship act as a broker, a role shaped in accordance with fundamental OSCE principles, and that the perpetrators of violence and their victims not be treated equally; (2) that the Organization reject the idea of refraining from using available OSCE tools because action might create a risk for the Chair or the Organization; and (3) that the OSCE adopt a "no business as usual" approach to ensure that the Organization focused on the most demanding security challenge in decades while preserving as many of its other activities as possible, for the benefit of the stakeholders and the Organization itself.

Based on these foundations, Poland emphasized the war against Ukraine and its consequences in all three dimensions of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security: the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions. Concurrently, the Chairmanship fulfilled its task to lead the Organization in accordance with its mandate.

RUNNING THE ORGANIZATION AT A DEFINING MOMENT

Despite the unprecedented circumstances, and keeping in mind the need for the Organization to make the war in Ukraine its primary focus for as long as the appalling tragedy continued, Poland organized key events in all three dimensions, focusing their agendas on the ongoing war in the spirit of "no business as usual". The Chairmanship stood up for the principles of the OSCE and maintained the core functions of the Organization, ensuring that its great legacy still applies and remains meaningful.

The Annual Security Review Conference took place against the backdrop of aggression and tragic reports of atrocities committed by Russian forces. The participating States identified the ongoing war as the most existential threat to security and the main source of instability in Europe since the creation of the OSCE. Russia's explicit involvement in instigating and fuelling conflicts in the OSCE area, including through threats and the use of force, were the main topics of the Conference.

OSCE's annual conference on cybersecurity, organized in Łódź, focused on increasing resilience to cyberattacks and threats by raising public awareness and enhancing the role of cyber education. The conference was an opportunity to address the issue of malicious cyber activities, which were an integral part of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. At the two-day conference, nearly 150 representatives of OSCE participating States and partners as well as experts from public administrations, the private sector, NGOs and academia discussed how to apply a multifaceted

approach to combat threats in cyberspace and how to make the best use of the OSCE's confidence-building measures. They also examined the growing role of the private sector in enhancing cybersecurity.

The three meetings of the 30th Economic and Environmental Forum, held in Vienna, Łódź and Prague, promoted how OSCE activities directly impact citizens' everyday lives. The timely topics of the meetings were the universal threat of climate change to both individuals and States, expanding the use of green technologies, reducing the reliance on fossil fuels, energy diversification and post-COVID-19 sustainable economic recovery across the OSCE region. In the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, participants were familiarized with the economic and environmental harms resulting from the war. The discussions also focused on possible paths to recovery from the atrocious damages caused by Russia, as well as on the destabilizing effect of the war throughout the global economy and the increased risk it posed to the environment. Looking to the future of the economic and environmental dimension, participants emphasized the need to prioritize core issues with security implications, such as climate change, environmental degradation and energy security.

The **Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting**, organized in November in Vienna, was the last key second dimension event under the Polish Chairmanship in 2022 and gathered around 150 participants in person and online, as well as several high-level speakers. The event focused on topics related to women's economic participation as well as their crucial leadership role in such fields as anti-corruption, climate change, energy sustainability and digitalization. It provided space for continued discussions on these issues while introducing a major focus on the current security situation in the OSCE area and the impacts on women caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Featuring broad geographical representation, experts' presentations led to a comprehensive exchange of opinions among all participating States on current and future OSCE initiatives concerning the meeting's overarching theme.

Organized in early February, the **conference on anti-Semitism across the OSCE region**, which took place at Warsaw's POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, gathered OSCE leaders and many online and in-person participants to discuss more effective ways of combating anti-Semitism, xenophobia and discrimination. Their main discussion topics were current risks of anti-Semitism in the OSCE area and challenges to combating it, addressing online anti-Semitism, fostering the revival of Jewish life and the role of local activists, and addressing anti-Semitism and anti-Roma discrimination in and through education. The conference concluded with practical recommendations on all these topics from, among others, representatives of the United Nations and the Council of Europe as well as the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office on Tolerance and Non-discrimination.

Since Russia blocked consensus on holding the 2022 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Poland decided to organize, with the support of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the **Warsaw Human Dimension Conference**. This much-needed event was an important step in co-operation between the OSCE, participating States and civil society. The 10-day conference brought together more than 1,000 attendees representing international organizations, governments and civil society from the entire OSCE area, including the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize winners — Russia's Memorial and Ukraine's Center for Civil Liberties, both human rights organizations — who came

together to analyse the implementation of the OSCE's human dimension commitments. Daily plenary sessions were devoted to democratic institutions, fundamental freedoms, tolerance and non-discrimination, rule of law, as well as humanitarian issues. In the context of Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, much attention was paid to human rights in conflict situations and the humanitarian consequences of war. On the margins of the conference, nearly 100 side events were held, devoted to such topics as the destructive impact of the war in Ukraine on the condition of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the ongoing refugee crisis and the increased risk of human trafficking.

Chairman-in-Office Rau, besides participating in OSCE events, visited every region where the OSCE is active to foster co-operation between the Organization and States and to exchange views on the consequences of Russia's aggression for the region and the future of the OSCE.

Throughout the year, the Polish Chairmanship faced not only the consequences of a war of aggression but also regular internal struggles for the Organization itself, such as questions related to the OSCE's budget and its field operations. Answers to these questions endeavours depend not only on the Chairmanship and the Organization's Secretariat but on all participating States and their shared sense of ownership of the OSCE. Regretfully, the OSCE was challenged by Russia's obstructionism in these spheres as well. The Russian Federation rejected the extension of the mandates of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) and of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Russia blocked the consensus on holding the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. Throughout 2022, Russia continuously blocked the adoption of the OSCE budget. Regardless of constant appeals for the release of SMM staff members, who continue to be unjustifiably held in Donetsk and Luhansk, Russia allowed this serious offence against the Organization and its staff to continue.

While the Russian Federation forced the closure of the OSCE's field operations in Ukraine, the Polish Chairmanship remained steadfast in safeguarding the Organization's commitment to Ukraine. To assure the OSCE's presence in Ukraine, Poland endorsed a new donor-funded **Support Programme for Ukraine** (SPU) backed by contributing OSCE participating States. The SPU addresses some of the immediate challenges to civilians posed by the war waged against Ukraine and supports the long-term democratic and social resilience of Ukrainian institutions and civil society organizations. The SPU is designed to build on the prior work undertaken with the OSCE's long-standing partners in the country, and to support humanitarian de-mining efforts, disaster risk reduction and the reform efforts of the Ukrainian Government, among other activities. Chairman-in-Office Rau appointed Ambassador Henrik Villadsen as Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office – Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Ambassador Villadsen became the Chair's focal point for the SPU and is leading the dialogue with relevant stakeholders in the country. The Polish Chairmanship continued to promote ongoing dialogue and joint activities with the Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-

"Faced with an unprecedented crisis, I and my Chairmanship team have shouldered the responsibility of defending the OSCE's principles and protecting its assets, namely its institutions, activities, projects and — not least — its achievements. I could not have chosen any other course. We were and are guided by the spirit of the Helsinki Accords."

operation, with support from the 2021 and 2023 Chairs, Sweden and North Macedonia. For more

“Our security and co-operation are based on principles that all of us have agreed upon. We, the OSCE community of States, are the guardians of those universal values, of commonly accepted rules of conduct and of the complete rejection of any idea that ‘might is right’.”

information on these activities, please see the chapter on Partnerships.

Zbigniew Rau
OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister of Poland

29TH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
1–2 DECEMBER 2022, ŁÓDŹ

Taking place against the backdrop of Russia’s war against Ukraine, the Ministerial Council brought together foreign ministers and senior officials from the 57 OSCE participating States, partner States and international organizations, as well as representatives of civil society organizations. The discussions focused on the ramifications and regional security challenges created by Russia’s aggression. Delegations also discussed the future of the Organization.

During the meeting, the foreign ministers of Sweden, Poland and North Macedonia, representing the previous, current and incoming Chairmanships of the Organization (also known as the “OSCE Troika”), issued a joint statement reflecting the state of affairs in the OSCE area, underlining the important role the Organization has to play in restoring trust and confidence in the region in the times ahead, and recognizing its important work in assisting participating States in continuing the implementation of the OSCE commitments.

Ahead of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the annual Parallel Civil Society Conference took place in Łódź, an opportunity for representatives of civil society from across the OSCE area to present their recommendations. At the event, participants discussed the need to stop Russia’s war in Ukraine, ensure accountability and bring the perpetrators of the war to justice.

The Ministerial Council in Łódź demonstrated overwhelming unity in the defence of the OSCE principles that Russia brutally disrespected by invading Ukraine.

CHAIR'S PERSONAL AND SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES

AMBASSADOR MIKKO KINNUNEN

Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group

Until the start of the war against Ukraine, the Trilateral Contact Group brought together representatives from Ukraine and Russia, as well as participants from certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions when agreed by the Group's members. Since its inception in 2014, the Trilateral Contact Group has been the only forum where the conflict sides, facilitated by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, have met on a regular basis to discuss the implementation of the Minsk agreements, as well as practical issues of critical importance for the civilian population affected by the conflict. Between 2014 and 2022, the Trilateral Contact Group, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (whose mandate ended on 31 March 2022) and the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk (discontinued in September 2021) were part of the OSCE's efforts to assist the sides in resolving the conflict related to eastern Ukraine.

In early 2022, the OSCE Special Representative, Ambassador Mikko Kinnunen, made several unsuccessful attempts to convene extraordinary meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group to address the rising tensions. The Group did not meet in 2022.

Throughout the reporting period, OSCE Special Representative Kinnunen provided continued support to the OSCE Chairmanship on developments in Ukraine and has also briefed the OSCE Permanent Council and other forums, such as the United Nations Security Council.

AMBASSADOR ANDRZEJ KASPRZYK

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference

Financial resources: **€1,179,700** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization)¹

Staff: **17**

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In fulfilment of his mandate, Personal Representative Kasprzyk and his team continued to explore opportunities for confidence-building measures between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. With the team's monitoring activities suspended since 2020, in January 2022 the Personal Representative hosted the Minsk Group Co-Chairs at a planning and co-ordination meeting in Kraków, Poland. In February, the Co-Chairs, together with the Personal Representative, had meetings with the Chairperson-in-Office, the Polish OSCE Task Force and other officials from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Personal Representative accompanied the Chairperson-in-Office to the region at the end of March/early April, and later, on subsequent visits to the region, followed up with the sides on a number of ideas brought up during the trip.

Supporting the Chairperson-in-Office, the Personal Representative provided regular reporting from the region to the Chairpersonship and the participating States, including detailed information on specific incidents and developments. Ambassador Kasprzyk consulted widely with the

¹ As the OSCE participating States did not agree on a Unified Budget for 2022, the OSCE continued operating on the basis of a Provisional Expenditure Authorization based on its 2021 Unified Budget in line with relevant Financial Regulations.

Chairpersonship, the OSCE Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Centre, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and in particular the parties themselves. Upon request, he provided briefings to and held consultations with a range of interlocutors in 2022, including the current and incoming Chairmanships, the Polish OSCE Task Force, and various UN and ICRC officials. Additionally, he consulted with high-level interlocutors at the US Department of State and National Security Council, the Foreign Ministry of Finland and various embassies and international organizations. Personal Representative Kasprzyk held a series of high-level meetings with the sides, including at the level of foreign ministers and once at the level of heads of State.

AMBASSADOR HENRIK VILLADSEN

Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office – Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

Following his appointment on 1 November, the Special Representative focused on working in close co-operation with the Support Programme for Ukraine, established on the same day. The Support Programme for Ukraine is a new extrabudgetary, wholly donor-funded initiative that aims to help Ukraine meet security challenges and address hazards of the war, and to support its democracy, rule of law, human rights and other institutions in accordance with OSCE commitments.

Ambassador Villadsen served as the focal point and fostered dialogue with relevant stakeholders in Ukraine related to OSCE project co-ordination. He travelled to Ukraine in December to meet OSCE partners in Zakarpattia and Lviv to discuss the situation and their current needs.

THE HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING GROUP

Colonel Goran Vasilevski

Head of the OSCE High-Level Planning Group

The mandate of the High-Level Planning Group (HLPG), which consists of military experts, is to make recommendations to the Chairmanship on developing a plan for the establishment, force structure requirements and operation of a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force in the area of conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference.

In 2022, the HLPG continued to work on enhancing its capabilities and gaining an understanding of current best international peacekeeping practices. As part of this, the Group focused on reviewing and updating one of the existing planning options it had developed in previous years.

The HLPG continued to engage with international and regional organizations, including relevant UN and EU institutions, to enhance its capabilities and gain an understanding of current best multinational peacekeeping practices. The Group also established contacts and held meetings with OSCE stakeholders relevant for the HLPG's activities.

SOUTH CAUCASUS

AMBASSADOR VIOREL MOŞANU

Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus

Fourteen years after the conclusion of the six-point ceasefire agreement of 2008, the Geneva International Discussions (GID) continued to contribute to the absence of military hostilities, pursuit of the non-use of force and international security arrangements, and a focus on improving the situation of conflict-affected populations and on the different ways conflict affects women and men, as well as on improving the situation of conflict-affected populations. The OSCE Special

Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Viorel Moșanu, and his fellow GID Co-Chairs from the United Nations and the European Union continued meetings in this vital dialogue format. In accordance with the Chair's priorities, Ambassador Moșanu emphasized inclusive approaches to mediation and engaged in frequent meetings with conflict-affected communities, vulnerable groups and civil society. Detentions and outstanding missing persons cases were also a major focus of Ambassador Moșanu's engagement.

Together with the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, Ambassador Moșanu also co-facilitated meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) in Ergneti, enabling six rounds of IPRM talks over the course of the year to address responses to the closures of crossing points and so-called "borderization" processes — or the erection of obstacles. The sharing of water for irrigation and related issues were also key topics.

TRANSNISTRIAN SETTLEMENT PROCESS

AMBASSADOR THOMAS MAYR-HARTING

Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transnistrian Settlement Process

In 2022, the Polish Chair continued to work closely with the OSCE Mission to Moldova to facilitate discussions within the framework of the Transnistrian Settlement Process, against the backdrop of the war against Ukraine and its possible implications for the overall security situation in the region. While a conference in the 5+2 format was not possible in 2022, dialogue and engagement between the Chief Negotiators from Chisinau and Tiraspol as well as 1+1 meetings on a technical level facilitated by the OSCE Mission to Moldova continued throughout the year. The Chairman-in-Office paid a visit to Moldova in March, as did the OSCE Secretary General, and Special Representative Mayr-Harting travelled to the country on five separate occasions, while also maintaining formal and informal contacts with the Sides, mediators and observers throughout the year. The Chairmanship placed a particular emphasis on the security situation, including energy security, freedom of movement between both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River, human rights and humanitarian issues, as well as on the repercussions of closed borders and the loss of established trade routes.

COMBATING CORRUPTION

PROFESSOR ANITA RAMASAstry

Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption

As participating States recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, Special Representative Ramasastry addressed the challenges posed by recovery efforts. She also underlined the security-related economic, social and environmental consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine and the direct negative impact it has had on Ukraine and its neighbours. At the same time, she continued to highlight the impact of corruption across the OSCE's politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions, examining how key OSCE commitments are needed across all three to prevent corruption and foster resilient economies.

In line with her mandate, Professor Ramasastry supported the Chairmanship in its activities, not least by participating in all major OSCE events, including those of the Economic and Environmental Forum cycle in Vienna (February), Łódź (May) and Prague (September). She also took part in the Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting in Vienna in November.

In May, the Special Representative spoke at an anti-corruption meeting hosted by the parliament of Cyprus and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Vice President, Irene Charalambides. In November,

Professor Ramasastry joined Ms. Charalambides, who is also the PA's Special Representative on Combating Corruption, on a joint visit to Moldova to support the government's ongoing anti-corruption reforms and to identify new areas where the OSCE could provide technical support. She also spoke at the OSCE Security Committee in October, emphasizing the importance of procurement reform, beneficial-ownership transparency and open data to address corruption and transnational organized crime.

The Special Representative attended several events organized by the Co-ordinator on Economic and Environment Activities (OCEEA), on such topics as the reuse of recovered assets for social purposes and how civil society can use open data to uncover corruption cases, and she advised on various projects related to these topics. She launched a research project to examine the limitations of existing jurisdictions in different OSCE participating States, giving them a tool for future legal reforms to better recover assets. In October, Professor Ramasastry gave a keynote address on green governance, transparency, public participation and access to information at the annual meeting of the Aarhus Centres.

In November, the Special Representative hosted three virtual events in co-operation with the Polish Chairmanship and the OCEEA to highlight the OSCE's innovative work in promoting resilient economic recovery through transparency, good governance and anti-corruption initiatives. These events focused on such key projects as the efforts of the Secretariat's Programme for Gender Issues to address gender-related aspects of corruption, asset recovery and social reuse.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

LILIANA PALIHOVICI

Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Gender

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

In 2022, the Special Representative continued to advocate for a greater understanding among OSCE participating States of the international security implications arising from gender inequalities and women's lack of participation in decision-making and peace processes.

In her March and July addresses to the Permanent Council, Ms. Palihovici called on the participating States to speed up the restoration of peace, to act decisively to combat all forms of violence and abuse against girls and women, including women refugees, and to prevent trafficking in human beings. She urged States to increase their efforts to diminish the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and of conflicts on women and girls and to continue to invest resources so that gender equality policies can be implemented.

The Special Representative repeated this appeal at other forums in 2022, including the conference on work-life balance as leverage for women's empowerment and promoting gender equality, organized by the Italian Government and the Council of Europe, and at a side event during the 66th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, where she highlighted the crucial contributions of women human rights defenders and activists in Eastern Europe.

At the High-Level Conference on Gender-Responsive and Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Policies and Management, organized by the OSCE Secretariat Gender Issues Programme in June, Ms. Palihovici advocated for all OSCE States to apply gender-responsive approaches to disaster risk

reduction, and advised them to implement the 2014 Basel Ministerial Council Decision on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction, taking into account the specific gender and disability aspects.

Ms. Palihovici contributed to two anti-trafficking events promoted by the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings: the 22nd Conference of the Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons in Vienna, and the Anti-Trafficking and Gender Technical Co-ordination Meeting in Moldova, both held in April. They emphasized the trafficking risks for women and men and outlined how gender-sensitive approaches can diminish them. She also partnered with ODIHR on several topics: protecting women human rights defenders, strengthening the participating States' response in preventing violence against women and supporting women's organizations and diverse women activists active in this area, and enhancing women's participation in political life and decision-making.

The Special Representative visited Austria, Hungary, Poland and Romania to monitor the situation of Ukrainian women refugees. She commended the countries' authorities and civil society for the complex humanitarian and human rights assistance offered to women refugees. She also discussed with governmental representatives the challenges in implementing gender commitments and stressed the importance of enhancing the meaningful participation of women in decision-making, as provided by UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

RABBI ANDREW BAKER

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism

AMBASSADOR MEHMET PAÇACI (until 19 July 2022)

AMBASSADOR İSMAIL HAKKI MUSA (from 20 July 2022)

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR REGINA POLAK

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions

The OSCE Personal Representativesspoke out repeatedly against the war. They condemned the 3 March missile attack on Babyn Yar on 3 March, the site of a Holocaust memorial near Kyiv. In April, they joined Daniel Höltgen, the Council of Europe's Special Representative on Antisemitic, Anti-Muslim and other forms of religious intolerance and hate crimes, in calling for a stop to destruction of religious sites and places of worship. A month later, they reacted to a statement made by the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov. Moreover, in August, on the occasion of

the International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, they issued a joint message².

In February, following a well-established OSCE tradition and shortly after International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the OSCE Chair convened a conference on combating anti-Semitism attended by the Personal Representatives. At the event, Rabbi Baker noted that the lessening of COVID-19 restrictions had been followed by a significant increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the OSCE region, and spoke of the need for more security assistance, the importance of participating States employing a clear and comprehensive definition of anti-Semitism, and the need to prevent Holocaust denial and distortion.

Professor Polak observed a similar trend throughout the year. She noted in meetings with Christian communities that there was a growing hostile atmosphere against Catholic or Orthodox Christians, not only against members of the majority churches but also against minority groups, which resulted in increased intolerance and discrimination against them. She also highlighted that racism, xenophobia and discrimination continued to be a challenge for ethnic, religious and other minorities, migrants and refugees, and vulnerable persons, such as women, children and other minority groups.

Ambassador Musa, who took over from Ambassador Paçaci as Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims on 20 July 2022, similarly noted a more antagonistic and outspoken attitude against Muslim communities and observed that anti-Muslim sentiment was “on a critical edge”.

Reflecting these observations, the Representatives issued a joint message on the occasion of the International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, in August, in which they mourned the loss of life and the suffering of people due to the innumerable acts of violence based on or justified by religion or belief. They singled out the growing phenomenon of online hate directed at Jews, Muslims and other communities of believers, especially vulnerable minorities, which also translate all too often into physical attacks.

In April, the Representatives travelled to Strasbourg, where they met representatives of the Council of Europe, the Commissioner for Human Rights, officials from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, and members of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. The goal of the meetings was to strengthen collaboration between European institutions on tolerance issues.

In September, the Representatives travelled to Georgia, where they discussed with government and civil society representatives such topics as combating religious discrimination and xenophobia against members of different religions. The Representatives emphasized the role of an active and engaged civil society network and passionate, courageous human rights activists in combating intolerance and discrimination.

² [Joint Message of OSCE CiO's Personal Representatives on International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief | OSCE](#)

On International Day for Tolerance, 16 November, the Representatives called upon all OSCE participating States to take note of their obligation to protect and respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals and take the necessary steps to safeguard them.

YOUTH AND SECURITY

Maria Raczyńska

Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Youth and Security

Throughout the year, the Special Representative advocated on behalf of youth in the OSCE area.

She actively raised the question of youth inclusion, bringing attention to its importance and to concrete measures to effectively engage youth in the political, public and peace discussion. To spread her message, Ms. Raczyńska attended several events, such as the 8th Istanbul Mediation Conference and the 5th Conference on National Dialogues and Non-formal Dialogue Processes in Helsinki.

The Representative travelled to the Polish-Ukrainian border where she visited humanitarian aid points and took part in several meetings with governmental and non-governmental organizations to see and hear first-hand about the refugees' situation. She pointed out that youth pay one of the highest price in the war, and that the duty of all was to do anything possible to support them and their families.

Ms. Raczyńska also supported actions aiming to help young people in the business environment, such as the OSCE YDEAS project (see also the chapter on Economic and Environmental Activities), and to equip them with tools needed in professional life, for example via the OSCE Academy in Bishkek or ODIHR's Young Policy Advisers Course for Mediterranean Partners.

CHILDREN AND SECURITY

AMBASSADOR RITA IZSÁK-NDIAYE

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Children and Security

The Personal Representative on Children and Security continued to raise general awareness of the importance of increasing attention and institutional capacity dedicated to children's rights issues within the OSCE. She focused on children in armed conflict and applicable international humanitarian and human rights norms.

The Personal Representative voiced her concerns about the millions of innocent children who are forced to bear the brunt of wars, and issued various social media and press statements on this issue. She participated in several online and in-person seminars and meetings, including at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting to discuss international co-operation to address violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and at the Forum for Security Co-operation Dialogue on children and armed conflict. In April, she made a statement at the OSCE Human Dimension Committee meeting on children and youth.

In October, the Personal Representative organized a side event at the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference on the issue of children and security in the OSCE and beyond, with speakers representing the Council of Europe, Save the Children Ukraine, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Addressing a

different side event at this Conference, she also spoke on how to improve access to inclusive education for Roma and Sinti children.

To foster interagency exchange and learning, she held a meeting in Strasbourg in May with the Council of Europe's Director of Anti-Discrimination, the Head of the Children's Rights Division and the Head of Anti-Discrimination to share good practices and lessons learned in the area of children's rights and anti-discrimination.

ASSISTANCE WITH BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

LIEUTENANT COLONEL (RET.) HELMUT NAPIONTEK

OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners

The Representative continued to assist with the implementation of the 1994 bilateral agreement between the governments of Latvia and the Russian Federation on social guarantees for military pensioners from the Russian Federation and their families residing in Latvia. The latest available overview covered 4,864 people falling under the special provisions of the agreement; this represents a decrease of about 600 people compared with 2021.

No individual complaints by military pensioners were brought to the attention of the Representative in 2022, continuing a stable trend since 2008.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

AMBASSADOR HELMUT TICHY

Chairperson of the Informal Working Group on Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE

Since its creation in 2009, the Informal Working Group has focused on finding a solution that would grant international legal personality and internationally recognized privileges and immunities to the OSCE in accordance with one of four options that have emerged during discussions in recent years. The absence of such international legal personality and of privileges and immunities based on international law continues to present operational challenges to the OSCE.

The Working Group did not meet in 2022, however, due to the crisis caused by Russia's war against Ukraine.

PERMANENT COUNCIL

The Permanent Council is the OSCE's principal body for regular political dialogue and decision-making among representatives of the Organization's participating States. It meets every week in Vienna.

Permanent Council

www.osce.org/permanent-council

The weekly meetings of the Permanent Council serve as the main platform for dialogue, debates, consultations, the exchange of ideas and decision-making not only on recurring issues on the OSCE agenda but also on matters related to the Chairmanship's priorities and to unpredicted developments in the OSCE area. Throughout the 2022 Polish Chairmanship, the meetings were chaired by Poland's Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Ambassador Adam Hałaciński. Under the Polish Chairmanship, the Permanent Council gathered for 54 sessions, including 14 special meetings (taking place outside of the regular schedule) and 3 reinforced meetings (on the level of foreign ministers).

Given the unprecedented crisis in the OSCE area since 24 February 2022, every meeting of the Permanent Council considered "The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine". Throughout the year, the Polish Chairmanship invited numerous special guests who addressed the Permanent Council to report on the situation resulting from Russia's war against Ukraine.

"The Russian aggression against Ukraine has seriously challenged the entire Organization in every aspect. The Polish Chairmanship took the responsibility of defending its principles, institutions, activities and projects. In our understanding, the Chairmanship's task is to take a firm stance in defence of the OSCE principles. And I believe we have done so."

Ambassador Adam Hałaciński, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Poland to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

CHAIRPERSONS OF THE THREE COMMITTEES APPOINTED BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

- Ambassador Jocelyn Kinnear, Canada: Chairperson of the Security Committee
- Ambassador Florian Raunig, Austria: Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee
- Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen, Norway: Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee

CHAIRPERSONS OF THE INFORMAL WORKING GROUPS APPOINTED BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Ambassador Siniša Bencun, Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Chair of the Informal Working Group on Civil Society Participation at OSCE meetings, with a focus on the implementation of Paragraph 16, Chapter IV of the 1992 Helsinki Document

Ambassador Károly Dán, Hungary:

Chair of the Informal Working Group established by PC Decision 1039

Ambassador Vesa Häkkinen, Finland:

Chair of the Informal Working Group on Structured Dialogue on the Current and Future Challenges and Risks to Security in the OSCE Area

Ambassador Helmut Tichy, Austria:

Chair of the Open-Ended Informal Working Group on Strenghtening the Legal Framework of the OSCE

High-level speakers at the Permanent Council in 2022

13 January:	Zbigniew Rau, 2022 OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland
27 January:	Kathrin Meyer, Secretary General of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance
3 February:	Benedetto Della Vedova, Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy
27 February:	Emine Dzhaparova, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
17 March:	Raouf Mazou, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Assistant High Commissioner for Operations
12 May:	Rosemary DiCarlo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
9 June:	Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
27 October:	Margareta Cederfelt, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
8 December:	Gabrielius Landsbergis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION

As the OSCE's key decision-making body on politico-military aspects of security, the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) meets weekly in Vienna to discuss issues in line with its mandate to consult on arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building, security co-operation and conflict prevention in the OSCE area. The Forum's Chairpersonship rotates among the OSCE participating States, with each State chairing it for four months. In 2022, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Belgium chaired the FSC.

Forum for Security Co-operation

www.osce.org/forum-for-security-cooperation

FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION

Responding to the unprecedented security crisis provoked by the war against Ukraine, the FSC, in close co-ordination with the Permanent Council Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat, conducted its work in 2022 in the mode of “no business as usual”. The FSC Chairpersonships continuously highlighted the importance of co-operation among participating States, fostering crisis prevention and management by utilizing all available tools and continuing dialogue.

Against this backdrop, and based on the decisions about the dates, agenda and modalities the participating States adopted in October and November 2021, the 32nd Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting was held in March, during Azerbaijan's FSC Chairpersonship. Led by Norway and Uzbekistan, this meeting provided an opportunity for participating States to discuss the present and future implementation of agreed confidence- and security-building measures in the light of shared fundamental principles and commitments.

In February, the risk reduction Mechanism for Consultation and Co-operation as Regards Unusual Military Activities (Vienna Document 2011) was invoked twice to discuss security concerns. Following consultations to discuss the matters giving rise to concern, two special joint meetings of the Permanent Council and the FSC were convened, during which the situation with regard to unusual military activities was assessed and recommendations proposed. The delegations who took the floor focused on providing recommendations to stabilize the situation and halt the activities giving rise to concern.

Despite the difficult climate among the OSCE participating States, the Forum's meetings and security dialogues conducted last year underscored the FSC's importance as a platform for dialogue and for addressing security issues of concern.

The FSC is an important platform that enables OSCE participating States to exchange information and views on politico-military aspects of security. In addition to exchanges on Russia's war against Ukraine agenda item, the following security dialogues took place:

- Compliance with International Humanitarian Law and Protection of Civilians;
- Mine Action with a Focus on UN Security Council Resolution 2365;
- Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition — OSCE Commitments and Lessons Learned;
- The European Security Architecture: The Role of Non-Aligned Countries;
- Countering Terrorism in All Its Forms and Manifestations;

- Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Peace-Building: Lessons Learned in the OSCE Region and the Way Ahead;
- Children and Armed Conflict;
- Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation of Women;
- Explosive Hazards in the OSCE Region;
- Armed Forces and the Environment; and
- The Code of Conduct Revisited.

In total, the FSC held 11 security dialogues in 2022. Furthermore, the Belgian FSC Chair and the Polish Chairmanship organized a Joint FSC–Permanent Council meeting focusing on international humanitarian law.

Due to the lack of consensus, neither the 11th Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security nor the OSCE Biennial Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the OSCE Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition took place.

The FSC contributed to the 2022 Annual Security Review Conference, which provided an opportunity for the participating States to exchange views on security issues related, among other issues, to arms control and confidence- and security-building measures in the OSCE area.

In the field of small arms and light weapons (SALW), the FSC updated its “Best Practice Guide on Ammunition Marking, Registration and Record-Keeping”, which is aimed at strengthening efforts to develop policy guidance, operational guidelines and procedures on these issues.

Work on the OSCE’s assistance projects on SALW and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) continued in 2022. Several projects were aimed at ensuring the secure and safe management of stockpiles of SALW and SCA through infrastructure, material and equipment upgrades at storage sites as well as chemical analysis laboratories for ammunition surveillance.

A significant part of these projects included providing support for efforts to combat illicit trafficking in SALW across the OSCE region. Extensive support was provided to Central Asia in developing technical assistance projects to counter the threat and risk of potential trafficking from Afghanistan, including combating trafficking in SALW. The SALW Portal, a new IT tool enabling a better overview and greater transparency of the portfolio of OSCE practical assistance projects on SALW and SCA, was established in 2022; the Portal also provides more details about how these projects are progressing.

The OSCE also supported the Comprehensive Review of the Status of Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 by providing a contribution to the Review, initially in writing in 2021 and subsequently by a statement made in June 2022 at UN headquarters in New York.

Throughout the year, all FSC Chairpersonships supported the 2022 OSCE–UN Office for Disarmament Affairs Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme, which is aimed at empowering young professionals, especially women, to engage meaningfully in policymaking, planning and implementation processes in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the OSCE area.

In 2022, military information exchange continued at a high rate. The FSC also adopted a decision on electronic military information exchange. The development of the OSCE Information Management

and Reporting System (iMARS) reached an important milestone when all participating States were given access to it at the end of the year.

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 323 parliamentarians from across the OSCE region, providing a platform to engage in dialogue, conduct diplomacy, observe elections and promote participating States' compliance with OSCE commitments.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Secretary General: Roberto Montella

Budget: **€4,094,279**

Staff: **35**

www.oscepa.org

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A YEAR OF ACTIVITIES ON UKRAINE

Throughout the year, the PA remained highly engaged on Ukraine, conducting field visits and holding regular meetings and webinars.

On 13 and 14 March, several PA leaders visited Polish reception centres for Ukrainian refugees near the Polish–Ukrainian border. On 27 June, a high-level OSCE PA delegation visited Irpyn and Bucha, and met parliamentary and governmental representatives in Kyiv. Ukraine was the primary topic of discussion at the OSCE PA's Annual Session in July and its Autumn Meeting in November, and the PA participated in the Parliamentary Summit of the Crimea Platform in October. The President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), appointed a Special Representative for Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine and a Special Rapporteur on War Crimes in Ukraine, with mandates to pursue both diplomacy to end the war and accountability for violations of international law.

A GREATER ROLE FOR YOUTH

Under the leadership of the OSCE PA Special Representative on Youth Engagement, Farah Karimi (the Netherlands), the PA focused heavily on promoting a greater role for young people by holding a series of meetings to advance the youth perspective in the PA and OSCE executive structures. Members of the informal network of young parliamentarians participated in the OSCE's Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, where they discussed the importance of integrating youth perspectives into decision-making processes, and Special Representative Karimi met UN officials in New York between 9 and 11 November to focus on ways to enhance the youth dimension and improve co-ordination of efforts in youth empowerment between international organizations.

DISCUSSING CLEAN ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On 4 February, the PA held a webinar to discuss the clean energy revolution and its implications for the OSCE region. More than 100 parliamentarians, experts and representatives of OSCE participating States took part in the event to assess current energy trends, the latest technological developments in energy production and possible geopolitical implications of the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. The Chair of the PA's economic and environmental committee, Pere Joan Pons (Spain), met in Athens in late May with representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme's Mediterranean Action Plan and with Hellenic authorities to discuss the PA's recent joining of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development.

In a meeting on 18 February, parliamentarians from all eight OSCE PA Arctic delegations discussed policy priorities in the High North region, with a focus on sustainable development and building resilience. Another event, a webinar held on 2 March, focused on implementing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, stressing the importance of promoting common solutions.

NEW INITIATIVES TO COUNTER TERRORISM AND PROMOTE SOUND MIGRATION POLICIES

Through the work of its two ad hoc committees, the OSCE PA continued to pursue a data-driven, co-operative and effective approach to challenges related to terrorism and migration. In co-ordination with other parliamentary assemblies, it helped launch a counter-terrorism parliamentary co-ordination mechanism to boost global parliamentary engagement on such issues as foreign terrorist fighters and the prevention of radicalization. The OSCE PA was elected as the first President of this new platform. The PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, meanwhile, focused primarily on the refugee crisis resulting from Russia's war against Ukraine, while also continuing to focus attention on other migration issues, including the situation in Afghanistan. In March, the migration committee organized a survey of OSCE PA delegations on special measures to welcome Ukrainian refugees, with the aim of obtaining an overview of and contributing to the sharing of good practices.

CONTRIBUTING POLITICAL EXPERIENCE TO OSCE ELECTION OBSERVATION

OSCE PA election observers contributed their political experience, judgement and visibility to this essential OSCE endeavour while working closely with ODIHR and other international partners. In 2022, some 370 OSCE PA observers deployed for elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Serbia and the United States.

MEETINGS

Winter Meeting: Vienna, 24-25 February

Annual Session: Birmingham, 2-6 July

Autumn Meeting: Warsaw, 24 – 26 November

“We, as Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, resolutely condemn the heinous war by the Russian Federation against Ukraine.”

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt

FIELD OPERATIONS

The OSCE is active in Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia through a network of field operations and local project activities. This presence gives the OSCE an edge when it comes to managing crises, helping host countries to achieve their reform goals and playing a critical post-conflict role. The field operations assist host countries in putting OSCE commitments into practice and help develop their local capacities. Activities vary depending on the context of the host country and are subject to the specific mandates of the field operations. The field operations contribute to early warning and conflict prevention, and monitor and report on developments on the ground.

Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (closed)

Chief Monitor: Ambassador Yaşar Halit Çevik

Budget: **€108.7 million** for the mandate period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 (**€91.3 million** from assessed contributions and **€17.4 million** from extra budgetary contributions). Total expenditure for mandate 2021/2022 as of 31 March 2022 was **€100.6 million**.

Staff: **809** international and **470** local fixed-term staff members, including **663** monitoring officers across **10** teams (as of 31 March 2022)

www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine-closed

The Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) was a civilian mission deployed in March 2014. Its mandate expired on 31 March 2022, as no consensus among OSCE participating States could be reached on its extension due to the position of the Russian Federation. The Mission's mandate was to monitor, establish facts, gather information and report on the security situation throughout Ukraine, with the aim of reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability and security. It also monitored and supported respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and facilitated dialogue on the ground.

The SMM was the first mission to be deployed to an active conflict zone and grew to be the OSCE's largest field operation. Due to the high level of international interest and the importance of access to independent and factual information on the conflict, the Mission monitored the security situation 24/7, reporting on a daily basis and making these reports publicly available. In addition to its ground patrols, the Mission employed some of the most sophisticated monitoring technology available, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), remote camera systems and sensors, as well as satellite imagery, to enhance its operational capabilities and improve its situational awareness. The Mission also supported the civilian population by contributing to the maintenance of critical civilian infrastructure along the contact line and providing mirror patrols on both sides to monitor ongoing repair works.

A wealth of valuable lessons from the SMM's rapid deployment and expansion in the wake of the Minsk agreements, as well as its use of sophisticated technological monitoring tools that can inform future peace operations, for both the OSCE and the international community at large, have been identified. (An assessment of the first five years of the OSCE SMM in Ukraine, including lessons learned and best practices, can be found here: www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/6/491220_0.pdf.)

On 14 February 2022, the OSCE Secretary General issued a formal early warning, only for the third time ever in OSCE history, encompassing the gravity of the situation. The Secretary General recalled the fundamental importance of respect for OSCE's principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, reminding the participating States to consider all available tools and procedures that can be effectively used to de-escalate this critical situation.

After the outbreak of the full scale war against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Mission's international staff were temporarily evacuated from the country and monitoring activities were suspended. The OSCE facilitated the relocation of 169 Special Monitoring Mission's (SMM) national mission members, including those who had been trapped in Mariupol, where relocation had to be paused for some days awaiting for a safe passage. The OSCE arranged several convoys to relocate upon request national mission members within Ukraine and to evacuate mission members outside Ukraine to Moldova and Romania as well as from non-government controlled areas to the Russian Federation and onwards. Many national mission members were relocated within Ukraine, with some being offered shelter in OSCE premises and the use of OSCE vehicles to move across the country as

well as psychosocial care and written letters co-signed by the Secretary General, SMM Chief Monitor and Head of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine aimed at protecting their privileges and immunities.

By 7 March, all international staff had been evacuated while most local mission members had been relocated to other areas in or outside Ukraine. The Mission ceased all operational activities after its mandate expired; administrative work related to its drawdown, however, continued until 31 October 2022, when the SMM was officially closed.

MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Against the backdrop of media reports of a large Russian military build-up along the border with Ukraine in late 2021, the Mission continued to observe a fragile security environment at the beginning of 2022. In the week before 24 February, the Mission observed a threefold increase in the number of heavy weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements deployed to the contact line and a considerable increase in their reported use in ceasefire violations.

Restrictions on freedom of movement increased significantly in 2021, hampering the Mission's operations in eastern Ukraine, and this trend continued in early 2022. Throughout January and February, the Mission's ground patrols faced a growing and acute number of restrictions on their freedom of movement, occurring mostly in non-government-controlled areas. Persistent restrictions on freedom of movement directly affected the Mission's ability to implement its mandate, especially when trying to cross the contact line for operational or logistical reasons. The SMM's unmanned aerial vehicles also continued to face regular jamming incidents in the first months of 2022, and seven mini and mid-range UAVs were lost due to jamming and shooting incidents.

Ceasefire violations continued to lead to civilian casualties and damage to civilian property and infrastructure, but many of those alleged in the weeks before 24 February could not be followed up on or corroborated by the Mission because of the deteriorating security situation and restrictions on freedom of movement.

In the first two months of the year, the Mission facilitated 13 "windows of silence" to enable the repair and maintenance of critical infrastructure facilities, such as water, gas and electricity networks, benefiting civilians on both sides of the contact line.

Until the outbreak of the war, the SMM continued to monitor the impact of crossing restrictions and the partial closure of the contact line to civilians, which severely curtailed their freedom of movement. The Mission also monitored respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the situation of internally displaced persons, and gathered information on respect for the rights of religious communities and national minorities, including language and education rights, and respective legislative and policy developments. In particular, the Mission followed up with persons belonging to different religious communities on their religious rights and freedoms, and with media representatives on the safety of journalists and freedom of the media.

Four facts about the SMM

- The Mission was established in March 2014, following a request by the Ukrainian Government to the OSCE, and a consensus decision by all 57 participating States.
- With 1,279 mission members (809 international and 470 local staff),¹ the SMM was the Organization’s largest field presence and one of two OSCE structures in Ukraine. It played a crucial role as the international community’s eyes and ears on the ground, by providing objective information on the security and humanitarian situation, and it worked to ease the effects of the conflict on the civilian population.
- During its deployment, the Mission issued more than 2,400 daily reports and more than 230 spot reports. In 2021 alone, the monitoring teams carried out nearly 18,000 patrols and facilitated close to 400 “windows of silence”, enabling the repair and maintenance of critical civilian infrastructure facilities such as water, gas and electricity networks, benefiting civilians on both sides of the contact line in eastern Ukraine.
- On 28 April 2022, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister of Poland Zbigniew Rau, and OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid announced that the OSCE would initiate activities for the closure of the SMM after the Russian Federation did not provide its consent to extend the SMM’s mandate.

Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (closed)

Project Co-ordinator: **Ambassador Henrik Villadsen**

Financial resources: **€3,618,500** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€5,029,630** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **5** international and **91** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 March 2022)

www.osce.org/project-co-ordinator-in-ukraine-closed

For more than two decades, the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine supported the country in meeting its OSCE commitments and obligations, and helped strengthen its democracy, uphold the rule of law and respond to security challenges. From its establishment in 1999, the Office implemented some 500 projects, working closely with the host government, parliament, judiciary, civil society, media outlets, academia, civilian population and other international organizations. These projects spanned all dimensions of the OSCE's work: from elections to media freedom and civil society dialogue; from justice reform to gender equality; and from combating cybercrime and human trafficking to taking humanitarian mine action and promoting environmental security. On 1 July 2022, the Co-ordinator's Office ceased operating, after the Russian Federation did not provide its consent to extension of the mandate.

ADAPTING ITS WORK

After the start of the full-scale war in February 2022, the Co-ordinator's Office maintained its presence in the country even though its international staff were temporarily evacuated. Part of the local staff also moved abroad or relocated to safer places. Despite these challenging circumstances, work did not stop, and as soon as security conditions made it possible, the Office readjusted its project priorities to meet the new and urgent needs of its partners. In early April, the Project Co-ordinator returned to the country and opened a temporary presence in the western region of Zakarpattia, providing a safe haven for staff, storage space for humanitarian assistance goods and a venue for in-person events. Kyiv continued to be the Co-ordinator's official head office.

PROVIDING PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO PARTNERS

Within two months, the Project Co-ordinator's team secured funding for humanitarian assistance to meet the critical needs of 46 Ukrainian partners — ministries, agencies, local authorities, universities and civil society. The team delivered IT equipment to enable partner institutions to work remotely so employees could be safe, furniture to universities in western Ukraine so they could host professors and students forced to move there from conflict-affected areas elsewhere, and minivans to enable civic activists to speed up delivery of humanitarian aid.

The Co-ordinator also delivered four vehicles equipped to support humanitarian demining and 10 inflatable motorboats for emergency personnel to help remove unexploded rockets, shells and mortars from rivers and lakes in war-ravaged areas across Ukraine.

RAISING AWARENESS OF WAR-RELATED RISKS AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM

Helping Ukrainians adapt to the new reality of war and mitigate the associated risks was another focus of the Co-ordinator's work. As millions of civilians were displaced or forced to leave the country or move to other regions, the Co-ordinator launched a campaign to warn them about the risks of becoming human trafficking victims. The Co-ordinator's team sent out safety advice and video announcements and shared other useful online resources, such as the chatbot Stay safe. They

also supported civil society activists who visited help centres for the displaced, where they provided in-person consultations to over 4,000 people and distributed 13,000 leaflets on safety measures to avoid trafficking risks. In western Ukraine, the Co-ordinator worked with partners to develop and distribute leaflets on how to prevent and manage conflicts between displaced persons and host communities.

The team used digital outreach tools, such as online webinars, to give journalists a platform to debate emerging media ethics issues and to learn how to inform people better about safety rules regarding threats from unexploded military ordnance or chemical accidents. Other webinars informed the general public about the legal implications of martial law and enabled lawyers to conduct professional discussions on the impact of war on constitutional justice.

The online map-based portal [Ecodozor](#), created by the Project Co-ordinator's office, gives access to data on 5,000 serious incidents of war-related environmental damage recorded before the end of May, which will be useful for emergency relief and rehabilitation planning efforts.

Three facts about the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

- The Project Co-ordinator was established in June 1999, following a request by the Ukrainian government to the OSCE and a consensus decision by all its participating States. It replaced the OSCE Mission to Ukraine, which functioned from 1994 to 1999.
- With 98 mission members (4 international and 94 local staff),¹ the Office was one of two OSCE structures in Ukraine. For more than 20 years, it played a crucial role in engaging governmental bodies and NGOs of Ukraine and supporting reform efforts by implementing a wide range of projects in the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions of security.
- On 30 June, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister of Poland Zbigniew Rau, and OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid announced that the OSCE would initiate activities to close the Office after the Russian Federation withheld its consent to extend its mandate.

Mission to Moldova

Head of Mission: **Dr. Claus Neukirch (Ambassador Kelly Keiderling, as of October 2022)**

Financial resources: **€2,302,700** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€365,908** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **13** international and **39** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/mission-to-moldova

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The war against neighbouring Ukraine had a considerable impact on Moldova in 2022. The Mission continued to help residents from both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River find practical solutions to everyday problems, resolve outstanding issues, outlined in the “Berlin-plus” package to improve the situation surrounding the Transnistria conflict and prevent setbacks to a lasting political settlement. This included holding meaningful interactions between the Sides, helping to build confidence and looking for ways to improve the everyday lives of people on both banks of the River.

UKRAINE WAR AFFECTS DIALOGUE IN TRANSDNIESTRIAN SETTLEMENT PROCESS

The war against Ukraine fundamentally changed the environment for the Mission’s activities. The “5+2” process, aimed at finding a solution to the Transnistria conflict, was put on hold, making regular, direct talks between the negotiators in Chisinau and Tiraspol even more important. Issues of energy flows, importation of medicines and fertilizer, and financial transfers became more complicated and diminished trust between the Sides. Nonetheless, the Mission facilitated nine “1+1” meetings between the Chisinau and Tiraspol Chief Negotiators, and mediated 17 meetings of expert working groups on health care, civil-status documentation, ecology, education and other topics.

FIRST RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR TRANSDNIESTRIAN HEALTHCARE STAFF AT MOLDOVAN UNIVERSITY IN 30 YEARS

Through advocacy work by the Mission, Transnistrian medical personnel were able to take Russian-language courses at a Moldovan university for the first time since 1992 and receive certificates with credits from the Moldovan Ministry of Health. The Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, in Chisinau, held 24 continuing-education courses in Russian for about 330 Transnistrian medical personnel in 2022. This initiative not only benefits residents of Transnistria but also builds the confidence of medical personnel from both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River so that together they gain the expertise needed to provide improved health care to their communities.

TEACHING ADVANCED SKILLS TO WOMEN NEGOTIATORS

Together with the OSCE Secretariat’s Conflict Prevention Centre, the Mission trained 16 women negotiators from the joint expert working groups of the Transnistrian Settlement Process on negotiation skills. Using role-playing techniques, the participants acquired gender-focused analytical skills and learned about integrative bargaining, interest-based negotiations and techniques for problem solving and conflict resolution. They practised working with difficult negotiation partners, formulating compromises and reaching mutually beneficial agreements. The women were also able to network at the training, building relationships and improving their understanding of each other’s working conditions. “For the first time, I see the person behind the opposing party. I am curious to

look out for more fields of co-operation,” said one of the participants about her impressions from the training.

ACCOMODATING REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE AND WELCOMING EVACUATED OSCE STAFF

As of February 2022, the rapid support provided to facilitate the arrival of evacuated OSCE staff in Moldova highlighted the country’s preparedness to accommodate Ukrainian refugees fleeing the country after the outbreak of the full-scale war and the need to support these efforts. In parallel, the Mission played a crucial role in supporting the evacuation of the SMM members. The OSCE Mission to Moldova, put to good use its long-term experience in building confidence between the sides, by providing support to the relocated OSCE staff.

YOUNG ARTISTS FROM BOTH BANKS OF THE DNIESTER/NISTRU RIVER REFLECT ON PEACE THROUGH ART

Since early childhood, painting has been Elena Reabciuc’s true passion. Luckily for her, both her parents and teachers encouraged her, sharing with her the age-old adage given to budding artists: “Follow your heart!” Elena did just this; she applied to an art college in Bender and was promptly accepted. In June, she joined 18 like-minded art lovers — all students — for an open-air event in Old Orhei that the Mission to Moldova organized to inspire the participants to express themselves on the topic of peace and freedom of movement. There, young artists from both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River found common ground to talk about the unifying power of art.

“Living in a state of peace, tranquility and harmony is natural for human beings. Art has a unifying and creative power because art is based on love for the world around,” Elena commented after the event. “Creative people speak the same language. And the communication and interaction among creative people from different countries, exchange of opinions and knowledge, and joint creative projects only contribute to strengthening the peace that is so needed these days in the modern world.”

The Mission’s initiative brought together not only the 19 art students but also two teachers, all from either the Alexandru Plamadale Republican College of Fine Arts, in Chisinau, or the Victor Postoikin Bender Higher Education Art College, which Elena attends. The work the artists produced over the four days was eventually displayed at an art exhibition in November at the Mission’s Tiraspol office.

When asked about the Old Orhei project, Elena found it difficult to rein in her enthusiasm, speaking about fascinating memories and vivid impressions, bridges built and wonderful friendships created. “I would love to participate in a similar project again,” she said. “I could never imagine that for a few days we could unite with people we had never met before and create such spiritual and creative bonds. These four days were some of the best and happiest in my life. We have all changed and become friends.”

Centre in Ashgabat

Head of Centre: **Ambassador John MacGregor**

Financial resources: **€1,661,200** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€344,853** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **5** international and **29** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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As Turkmenistan celebrated the 30th anniversary of its partnership with the OSCE, the Centre in Ashgabat continued its broad programme of co-operation. This included supporting confidence- and security-building measures, promoting cyber/ICT security, combating transnational threats and strengthening border management. The Centre intensified its support to improve systems aimed at combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism, facilitated the development of renewable and hydrogen energy solutions, and worked on sustainable environmental governance in the oil and gas sector. It also prioritized the promotion of human rights, gender equality and media freedom.

OSCE-TRAINED LOCAL EXPERTS SHARE KNOWLEDGE ON MODERN-DAY SECURITY THREATS

In recent years, one acronym concerning the OSCE's central activities in the security arena has become ubiquitous: VERLT, which stands for "violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism". In Turkmenistan, a group of local experts explained in a series of training courses the issues covered by the term, sharing their in-depth knowledge of modern-day security threats and showcasing their ability to explain complex concepts and innovative methodologies. All six of these experts had previously completed the OSCE Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism train-the-trainers programme and had helped develop training modules.

One of the newly-certified experts who participated in the training modules, Maya Meretkuliysheva, said: "Based upon what we've learned, we now aspire to promote a gender-responsive and whole-of-society approach to VERLT prevention adjusting sessions to audiences and highlighting the role of either youth, law enforcement or community leaders, including women and religious leaders".

The training courses were tailor-made for law enforcement officials, police cadets, and youth and community leaders. The trainers presented not only the current situation in Central Asia but also Turkmenistan's legislation, gender stereotypes, human vulnerabilities and media literacy. The courses, which ran from September to November, emphasized the importance of respecting human rights when responding to the challenges of VERLT.

PROMOTING HYDROGEN ENERGY TO MOVE TO A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY

Working with OSCE experts, energy officials from Turkmenistan developed the country's first roadmap on the development of green hydrogen energy in 2022. The document is result of the Centre in Ashgabat's intensified support for Turkmenistan's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote the transition to a more sustainable, low-carbon energy economy.

"The roadmap (...) forms the basis for the elaboration of the National Hydrogen Energy Development Strategy of Turkmenistan," said Aganiyaz Jumayev, Vice Rector of the Turkmen State Energy Institute, which participated in the initiative. "We are proud that the Centre of Energy Saving

Technologies, opened with the OSCE Centre's support in 2020 at our Institute, was instrumental in endorsing a dialogue on green hydrogen energy development," he added.

The Centre also facilitated expert discussions on the potential and risks of hydrogen energy, its development in various industries, its impact on the economy and the potential for exporting it.

A HELPING HAND FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Aydana is divorced; Madina, a widow; and Olga, single.³ The three women have different life stories but share one common problem; they all experienced some form of domestic violence and had to leave their homes with no means of support.

All three were also lucky to hear about Keik Okara, an NGO that has been assisting victims of domestic violence for almost 15 years. The NGO's staff gave the women shelter, helped them find jobs and provided psychological, financial and legal assistance. The NGO, which also runs a victim hotline, is supported by the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat.

"Stigma, guilt and fear usually prevent female victims of domestic violence from seeking aid," says Sabir Agabalayev, Deputy Chairperson of Keik Okara. "This is why we attach special attention to raising awareness of this criminal phenomenon." With help from the Centre, Keik Okara organized three information events in 2022, bringing together some 50 participants — not only potential victims but also community and youth leaders, as well as government officials.

³ The women's names have been changed to protect their identity.

Programme Office in Astana

Head of Office: **Dr. Volker Frobart**

Financial resources: **€2,232,700** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€101,121** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **4** international and **24** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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In 2022, the Programme Office continued to foster dialogue and co-operation between government, civil society, academia, the private sector and the international community. The Office, in partnership with the host country, also explored new opportunities to work with the country's authorities on cybercrime, disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, as well as countering transnational threats, while also supporting national human rights institutions and judicial reform.

EQUIPPING DIVERS TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE CASPIAN SEA

Kazakhstan has a shoreline on the Caspian Sea that runs for nearly 1,900 kilometres, which is regularly patrolled by Kazakhstan's Coast Guard. The Office has assisted the country for many years in strengthening its border management and security. As part of these efforts, the Office delivered to the Coast Guard in 2022 diving gear and safety and communications equipment for use by the diving teams of Kazakhstan's Committee for National Security. Complementing this, the Office organized multi-week training sessions in the coastal city of Aktau to train the teams on how to safely use and maintain the equipment.

In another activity, the Office familiarized divers from a new Coast Guard unit with the many rules, regulations, and international and national standards related to underwater activities, including in different aquatic environments, and personal safety features during diving operations at varying depths. This support package is part of the Office's efforts to assist Kazakhstan in addressing terrorism and transnational organized criminal activities, as well as to deal with the consequences of environment-related incidents in the Caspian Sea. Additionally, helping the authorities run inspections of trading vessels more effectively makes it easier to counter smuggling and environmental criminal activity.

REDUCING THE RISK OF FLOODS FROM HIGH-ALTITUDE LAKES IN THE ALMATY FOOTHILLS

In April, the Office signed an agreement with the Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction to monitor high-altitude moraine lakes in the foothills of Almaty, a city with close to two million inhabitants, and to assess the risk of outburst floods. The effects of climate change on moraine lakes in the mountain ranges near Almaty present — due to the possibility of sudden floods — a particular risk to lower-lying regions. The agreement stipulated that this regional centre, established jointly by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, would monitor moraine lakes in the Ulken Almaty river basin from April to November 2022.

The initiative also included the checking and updating of risk assessments so that state agencies can take pre-emptive measures and develop emergency responses. During a series of field studies, the

Centre's experts evaluated whether current approaches could be replaced by more cost-effective measures, such as the use of drones and more compatible IT solutions. They also developed interactive cartographic and visual materials that reflect the outcome of monitoring and disaster risk assessment activities. Based on this, possible emergency scenarios were updated, pointing to the implications for the population and social and other facilities in the region, particularly in the upper valley near Almaty.

SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING AND INSTITUTION-BUILDING

Under its mandate to promote institution-building, human rights and youth inclusion in peace and security, the Office continued to support the activities of the country's Human Rights Commissioner and Ombudsperson, Elvira Azimova, in 2022. At her request, these activities included a Human Rights Summer School, which the Centre organized in Almaty together with KIMEP University.

The summer school invited law students from all over Central Asia, who received training in international human rights standards during states of emergency. The classes also included a presentation before a mock jury of academics and the Ombudsperson. "Youth involvement is of great value. Many scenarios have been developed for government actions given collective interests, including human rights and freedoms", the Ombudsperson said, commenting on the initiative. "During such events, students learn critical thinking and show extraordinary opinions," she added.

The Office also consolidated report on National Preventive Mechanisms that focus on prisoners' rights during the COVID-19 pandemic in line with national law and international legal instrument.

Diving deep into Kazakhstan's border guard service

"Seventy-five per cent of the Earth is [covered with] water. Divers live on a much bigger planet," someone famously once said. They may as well have described the life of Lieutenant Colonel Nurlan Aulbekov, who spends much of his professional time in the blue element or, to be precise, below its surface. Aulbekov is a diver with Kazakhstan's Coast Guard, with the naval rank of Captain 2nd Rank of the Border Service Department for the country's Mangistau Region.

Training coast guard divers is part of the Programme Office's efforts to strengthen Kazakhstan's Border Service. For this, Coast Guard divers go through different practical exercises, in both pools and the open waters of the Caspian Sea. Lieutenant Colonel Aulbekov and his 27 co-trainees are in their element in submarine conditions, as can be witnessed in a video on YouTube.

"For our Department, which solves a wide range of practical problems in Kazakhstan's sector of the Caspian Sea, diving is a new and quite promising direction," Aulbekov says. "With the support of the OSCE Programme Office and the Department, a lot of work is being done to train diving specialists."

The training in 2022 was the second part of a multi-year programme. In 2021, the divers participated in a three-week course that taught them the general regulations and international and national diving standards, specifics of underwater activities in different water environments and personal safety during diving operations at different depths.

"The second training was held in three stages: theoretical training, practical diving in the pool and practical immersion in the sea," Lieutenant Colonel Aulbekov explains. "The practical part of the training played a big role in the programme," he adds. "Our trained military personnel received theoretical and practical knowledge that allows them to carry out diving operations at depths of up to 15 metres."

The training course concluded with an exam that all divers passed successfully. For Lieutenant Colonel Aulbekov, this also meant a step up in Kazakhstan's hierarchy of diving skills. "Based on the results of the training, I upgraded my qualification as a fourth category diver to a fifth category diver," he says. "As you know, one of the necessary conditions for the successful completion of the tasks is the availability of qualifications," he adds soberly.

Programme Office in Bishkek

Head of Office: Ambassador Alexey Rogov

Financial resources: **€6,928,600** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€941,996** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **11** international and **103** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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In 2022, the 30th anniversary of Kyrgyzstan joining the OSCE, the Programme Office continued to strengthen its co-ordination with the host country and implement its programmes in the politico-military, economic-environmental and human dimensions in line with its mandate. The Office also upheld its support for the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, which, in 2022, celebrated two decades since its establishment; the Office's support helped the Academy have an even more positive impact on peace and security in Central Asia and the OSCE region.

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL SECURITY CO-OPERATION AT CENTRAL ASIA'S BORDERS

Together with Kyrgyzstan's Border Service of the State Committee for National Security, the Programme Office organized a regional meeting of senior Border Service representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The event, which was held, with the support of the OSCE presences in the four countries, in Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul province in June, formed part of the Programme Office's efforts to support various dialogue platforms that touch on issues of common interest and strengthen co-operation and co-ordination among Central Asian stakeholders.

The meeting contributed to regional security by giving the participants an opportunity to exchange knowledge, strengthen relations and discuss how to effectively address common threats, such as international terrorism, violent extremism, and weapons and drug trafficking. The border officials determined key measures to counter transnational threats at their shared borders and clarified joint tasks for patrolling undefined border sections.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

A series of events held throughout the year promoted gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings. Women Initiative Groups, a grassroots network of respected women leaders supported by the Programme Office, conducted community-based meetings in 11 villages and cities on preventing and countering gender-based violence and promoting peace-building. Mobile Police Reception Units, also supported by the Programme Office, accompanied these events, which helped strengthen the community outreach of local law enforcement staff and their understanding of the different needs and perspectives of women and men. MPR Units consist of representatives from police, local authorities and civil society, and help enhance community security and maintain public order in different parts of Kyrgyzstan.

Another event focused on simulating possible responses to human trafficking, such as forced begging, forced labour and sexual exploitation, under the umbrella of the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking. This exercise was the second

such event, following the first National Anti-Trafficking Simulation Exercise held in Kyrgyzstan in 2021. The simulations gave the participants a practical understanding of how to identify and rescue trafficking victims, and how to provide medical, psychological, legal and social assistance to victims as fast and efficiently as possible.

CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES FOR KYRGYZSTAN AND THE OSCE ACADEMY IN BISHKEK

Kyrgyzstan marked a landmark anniversary in 2022: 30 years since joining the OSCE. The Office held a 10-day art and photo exhibition at the Kyrgyz National History Museum that was dedicated to the anniversary; the exhibition focused on the OSCE's activities in the field. To celebrate this important date, the Programme Office also commissioned the painting of a mural on a building in downtown Bishkek, prominently featuring both Kyrgyzstan's and the OSCE's flags.

Another memorable moment was the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. In 2022, the Academy reached a number of milestones, including the launch of its first bachelor's degree programme in economics, further development of its two long-standing master of arts programmes, the finalization of preparations for its third master's programme, on human rights and sustainability, together with the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice; and a noticeable increase in in-house research and publications.

During its fifth alumni reunion meeting, the OSCE Academy celebrated its anniversary together with more than 100 alumni of both master's programmes from the past 20 years. Also, current students, lecturers, staff and representatives of the OSCE and the Government of Kyrgyzstan attended the event, as did members of the diplomatic corps and the Programme Office's Bishkek-based partners.

A SUCCESS STORY IN KYRGYZSTAN: BUSINESSWOMAN SETS UP CENTRAL ASIA'S FIRST LAVENDER FARM

Aisuluu Duishebaeva has literally broken new ground. Instead of choosing the staple crops that can be found all over the country — potatoes, onions, wheat — the 38-year-old entrepreneur from Kyrgyzstan established Central Asia's first-ever lavender farm. Both her plants and the process to raise them are 100 per cent organic. Aisuluu plants the seeds by hand, weeds her land by hand and picks the bushes by hand. Neither fertilizers nor any other chemicals that could impair the quality of the lavender are used.

Aisuluu is the beneficiary of one of the Programme Office's projects to support women entrepreneurs. Since 2017, the Programme Office has been supporting the development of small- and medium-sized businesses across Kyrgyzstan. The women's entrepreneurship support project began in 2020 with projects in Batken and Issyk-Kul provinces, and won the 2021 OSCE Gender Champion Award in the Best Initiative category.

Before she began growing the fragrant plant, Aisuluu worked for several international organizations in the capital, Bishkek, mostly on agricultural development projects. Over the years, she became an

expert on organic agriculture and finally decided to set out on her own. Raising Kyrgyzstan's classic crops would have been the easy choice — but Aisuluu thought differently.

The road to economic independence can be rocky, however, and Aisuluu's path was no exception. "No one helped but my brother, and when I learned that I had won a business grant from the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek it took me some time to process and start believing it," she says. Her gamble finally paid off. Today, Aisuluu successfully exports pure lavender and Damask rose essential oils to a high-end perfume company in Japan that creates custom fragrances for each client.

For Aisuluu, focusing on improving the quality of her essential oils comes first — growing production only second. "My utmost goal is not to constantly increase production volumes but to add value, thereby adding value to the land I was born and live on, to my community and to new women-owned businesses across Kyrgyzstan," she says emphatically.

The lavender produced on Aisuluu's land is of exceptionally high quality. Her success speaks for itself, and she has already found new customers, this time further west: in Germany.

Programme Office in Dushanbe

Acting Head of Office: **Tea Jaliashvili** (since 8 July 2022)

Financial resources: **€7,311,600** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€3,533,302** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **21** international and **126** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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The Programme Office worked closely with Tajikistan’s government and civil society on activities in line with its mandate. The Office helped the country address the issue of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism, and promoted good governance, water and energy security, as well as gender equality, to improve the overall security of Tajikistan’s citizens. Many of its activities took place with and for youth.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 continued to be a challenge for its neighbours in 2022, including in the context of violent extremism and terrorism. The Office assisted Tajikistan in addressing these challenges, galvanized by the country’s adoption of its National Strategy and Action Plan on Countering Terrorism and Extremism for 2021–2025. The Office helped mobilize civil society to confront the root causes of the issue, and helped establish partnerships between civil society and the government by training 206 civil society representatives (93 of them women) on measures to prevent violent extremism and radicalization by upholding the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security and human rights.

PROMOTING AN ANTI-CORRUPTION CULTURE AMONG YOUTH

Together with the country’s Agency for State Financial Control and the Fight against Corruption as well as the Coalition of Civil Society Organizations on Transparency and Anti-corruption, the Office held a series of seminars at universities to address the risk of corruption and its effects on all levels. The Office focused particularly on regional activities: four of the events were organized in regional locations while four others took place in Dushanbe. The priority target audiences were women and young people. Up to 240 students from various disciplines — more than 1,300 in total — took part in each of the seminars. The Office also organized a Youth Forum at the Anti-corruption Agency, which attracted 50 participants.

CONNECTING RURAL COMMUNITIES TO ELECTRICITY

Tajikistan’s climate favours the use of solar energy, which can meet between 10 and 20 per cent of the country’s energy demands. Recognizing that connecting rural areas to the electricity grid can have many positive effects for communities, the Office helped run energy need surveys in remote, off-grid communities in the Danghara, Baljuvon, Rasht, Sangvor and Lakhsh regions in 2020 and 2021. Based on the survey results, some 20 smaller communities and social institutions, including schools and a medical centre, had solar energy solutions installed. In 2022, three more villages in the Sangvor region, home to 25 households and two schools, received access to electricity. The benefits from these measures go beyond mere convenience: less fossil fuels are used, and people have better access to education and employment opportunities.

INVOLVING YOUTH IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN RURAL AREAS

To tackle gender stereotypes in rural areas, the Office promoted the participation of youth in raising awareness of gender equality and women's political participation. A youth network of gender champions carried out a two-part peer-to-peer awareness-raising event, the second part of which took place in solidarity with the annual global campaign 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The gender champion network was created by the Office in 2017 and is comprised of 25 women and 10 men, the most experienced of whom empowered 30 young women leaders by teaching them new skills. Many of those young women went on to use those skills to bring about gender-related behaviour change in their own communities.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR THE BORDER MANAGEMENT STAFF COLLEGE

www.oscebmse.org

Established in 2009, the Border Management Staff College (BMSC) is a major regional OSCE training centre that offers advanced postgraduate courses on border security and management to mid- and senior level professionals. To date, the College has organized courses for 4,088 border officials, including 847 women, from 49 OSCE participating States, 11 Partners for Co-operation and eight non-OSCE countries.

In 2022, the BMSC conducted a month-long staff training course in Vienna. This was only the second time such an event had taken place away from the College's Dushanbe campus. At one of the BMSC's roundtable discussions in Vienna, Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid emphasized the disproportionate impact of crises on women and, at the same time, the value of female border security actors in tackling challenges related to border management.

Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

Project Co-ordinator: **Ambassador Pierre von Arx**

Financial resources: **€2,499,200** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€158,923** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **3** international and **35** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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The fight against transnational threats, corruption, money laundering and trafficking in human beings and drugs continued to be key activities undertaken by the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan in 2022. The Office of the Project Co-ordinator also promoted transparency in governance, organized training courses on cyber/ICT security and digital entrepreneurship, and supported lawyers and the independence of their institutions.

DEVELOPING SKILLS TO COUNTER CYBER/ICT SECURITY THREATS

Continuing its co-operation with the NGO Softline Education, the Project Co-ordinator conducted a series of training courses to improve the skills of specialists in the field of cyber/ICT security. The courses, which were aimed at expanding participants' knowledge of cyber/ICT security tools to help them identify and prevent attacks, also specifically targeted women working as executives, key employees or technical experts at governmental agencies.

In October, representatives from Uzbekistan's Foreign Ministry and the Cybersecurity Competence Centre took part in the OSCE-wide Łódź cybersecurity conference, organized by the Polish Chairmanship. The Project Co-ordinator supported the participation of Uzbek officials and, as part of this initiative, organized four training seminars on cybercrime for police officers and the Prosecutor General's Office. In the same month, the Prosecutor General's Office opened a Dark Web Lab, created with the support of the Project Co-ordinator. The Lab uses advanced computer and ICT network equipment to help police officers who search for and collect digital evidence on the so-called dark web build practical skills.

Working with the Uzbek authorities and the OSCE's Transnational Threats Department, the Co-ordinator's Office also organized a series of webinars on trends in contemporary policing, including on crypto currencies and dark web investigations, and facilitated an online meeting between Uzbek representatives and the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise to discuss the possibility of Uzbekistan joining the organization.

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL GENDER DIVIDE: ADVANCED ONLINE MARKETING SKILLS FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

A lack of essential digital skills among girls and women in Uzbekistan creates additional barriers preventing them from becoming independent and achieving their true potential. Continuing its initiative to promote the empowerment of women in Uzbekistan's socio-economic life, and thereby directly addressing gender equality and growing income inequalities affecting women as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Project Co-ordinator launched a capacity-building programme for women engaged in traditional handicraft businesses in the Bukhara province. The programme was split into two training courses, one on IT and computer literacy and the other on e-commerce and

digital marketing. Some 150 women entrepreneurs took part in the first course, which covered basic IT knowledge. In total, 90 participants successfully completed this segment and went on to learn more advanced IT skills and the use of digital technology in business. The training programme is aimed at bridging the digital gender divide by teaching women to access emerging markets with digital tools. An additional benefit for the women entrepreneurs is the network they are able to build, enabling them to showcase their products and services and to share their entrepreneurial journey with fellow women entrepreneurs.

STRENGTHENING DEFENCE LAWYERS AND THEIR INSTITUTIONS

Supporting the institutional independence of the country's Chamber of Advocates and improving defence lawyers' knowledge of international standards concerning human rights and freedoms has been an important part of the Project Co-ordinator's work since 2020. Having successfully completed a train-the-trainers course organized by the Project Co-ordinator's Office in late 2021, a group of 30 defence lawyers delivered training classes in five of Uzbekistan's provinces (Fergana, Khorezm, Bukhara, Qashqadaryo and Sirdaryo) in 2022. The classes focused on the application of certain provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Together with other international organizations and national partners, the Project Co-ordinator's Office also organized an international conference for defence lawyers, at which participants discussed, among other topics, how to strengthen the institutional and functional independence of the Bar Association and its role in protecting human rights.

Presence in Albania

Head of Presence: Ambassador Guido De Sanctis

Financial resources: **€2,981,200** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€1,389,449** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **15** international and **80** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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The Presence's work in 2022 reflected the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. Together with its Albanian partners, the Presence dealt with arms control, border management and the fight against trafficking, while strengthening the rule of law and anti-corruption activities. The Presence also helped consolidate democratic institutions by working with Albania's parliament, Central Election Commission and Constitutional Court. Environmental awareness, good governance, respect for human and minority rights, media freedom, and youth and women's empowerment also ranked high on the agenda.

TAKING ACTION TO EMPOWER YOUTH

Working with and for youth was at the centre of the Presence's activities in 2022. Tirana was Europe's Youth Capital for the year, which provided an additional impetus to engage over 1,200 young people in youth-related activities. The Youth Trail — a flagship annual activity bringing together youth from South-Eastern Europe to promote democratic values, co-operation, peace and security — was held four times in 2022. Discussions there mirrored central OSCE themes: safety and security, environmental governance, intergenerational dialogue and understanding, and media literacy.

The Presence used the October Cybersecurity Awareness Month as an opportunity to reach out to students, parents, teachers, psychologists and social workers in schools across the country, to talk about how to stay safe online at a time when cyber threats are becoming ever more frequent.

To build young people's democratic engagement, the Presence worked with youth groups to connect them with parliament and local governments, and promoted increased participation on the part of visually impaired young voters in elections. It also organized a Youth Talk session to raise awareness of persons who went missing during the Communist regime. Another activity focused on training law students on individual constitutional complaints. The Presence also continued supporting master's programmes in criminology and transitional justice that had been created on its initiative in 2021.

SUPPORTING ALBANIA'S FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Continuing its support for Albania's efforts to strengthen the prevention and enforcement of, as well as raising awareness and education about corruption, the Presence worked with both existing and newly established anti-corruption bodies. The new institutions, created as part of Albania's ongoing judicial reform process, include the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). To help consolidate and grow this law enforcement body, the Presence and its international partners run a training programme for newly hired NBI investigators. Since 2021, some 60 new NBI officials have been

trained on intelligence gathering, the efficient and legal use of special investigative techniques, data protection and regional experiences working with the offices of special prosecutors. The programme builds the NBI's capacity to conduct criminal investigations of high-level corruption and transnational organized crime groups. Support for the NBI, as well as other judicial bodies in Albania, is part of the Presence's sustained, cross-cutting efforts to assist the country in the fight against corruption by combining a security expertise with good governance and the rule of law.

BRINGING PARLIAMENT CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE

Under the umbrella of its work on transparency and accountability with the Assembly, Albania's parliament, the Presence organized a broad array of activities to help improve the Assembly's outreach capacities and increase public participation in decision-making. Many initiatives focused on outreach through parliamentary committees, media, and youth and civil society organizations. The Presence also organized field visits to help parliamentarians better understand the situation in Albanian towns and improve their planning of the state budget. The topics discussed at these events spanned from migration, border security and internal and inter-institutional co-operation, to women's representation within the local police, domestic violence and challenges in the health sector. Problems of pollution and environmental threats to the new Vjosa River National Park were also debated, as were questions of education and culture.

To improve the media's ability to report and interact with parliament, the Presence worked with the Assembly on a visiting programme for journalists from TV stations, newspapers and electronic media. They travelled to Austria, North Macedonia and Slovenia where they learned about best practices used by these countries' parliaments and media.

The Presence assisted the parliament with the drafting of its first-ever ICT strategy, paving the way for the introduction of an e-legislation system — an online platform to host the country's laws and digitized parliamentary documents. In another step to bring parliament closer to the people, the Presence produced three videos and a mini-documentary explaining how the Assembly works and the history of parliamentary committees in Albania. Over 105,000 people watched the videos on social media in 2022, while the public broadcaster aired the mini-documentary.

Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Head of Mission: **Ambassador Kathleen Kavalec (Ambassador Brian Aggeler since October 2022)**

Financial resources: **€11,682,000** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€1,774,964** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **29** international and **273** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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Head of Mission: [@Brian Aggeler | Twitter](https://twitter.com/Brian_Aggeler)

The Mission continued to work on a broad array of areas in 2022. This ranged from democratic governance to elections, human rights and education; from furthering the rule of law and gender equality to security governance and co-operation, arms control and anti-terrorism work; and from environmental and economic activities to trust-building and youth engagement. In pushing ahead on its mandate, the Mission strongly engaged with citizens and authorities at the municipal, cantonal, entity and State levels.

NEW COUNTRY STRATEGY STRENGTHENS COUNTER-TERRORISM, PROTECTS HUMAN RIGHTS

In November 2022, Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a new strategy for preventing and combating terrorism. This step was the long-awaited result of a sustained effort by the Mission to assist the country in establishing a modern counter-terrorism strategy that addresses the evolving threat of terrorism while preserving human rights and the rule of law.

The Mission helped the authorities to identify the previous strategy's key shortcomings, map gender aspects and define key strategic areas, such as foreign terrorist fighters, protection of critical infrastructure and cyber/ICT and border security. The new strategy covers all forms of potential terrorist ideology and does not focus on any specific religious or political group. By involving all relevant partners from the country's education, health, social protection and religious sectors, the Mission also helped Bosnia and Herzegovina move away from the overly security-oriented approach adopted in the earlier strategy.

This initiative forms part of the Mission's work to make Bosnia and Herzegovina more resistant to violent extremist ideologies and better able to cope with potential terrorist attacks. Crucially, the Mission's assistance gives room to respond to the perspectives of all relevant actors while ensuring that the fundamental rights of those involved are respected.

CREATING CITIZEN ACTION TO PROTECT THE DRINA RIVER

Thousands of cubic metres of rubbish regularly washes up at the Višegrad dam, threatening the functioning of an important hydroelectric power plant there. International media have warned of an impending "ecological catastrophe". To help protect the tributary, the Drina River, and the

surrounding ecosystem, the Mission embarked on a new project to raise awareness and encourage prompt action among citizens. The universities of Sarajevo and of East Sarajevo, which are implementing the project, brought together local communities, young people, citizens and officials for several water sampling events. The water samples and caught fish were analysed, and the findings will flow into a comprehensive report on the ecological state of the Drina. It is hoped that this will help drive future steps to protect the waterway. The first results from one of the riverine towns, Goražde, seemed to confirm a good ecological state, but further laboratory analysis is needed to learn more about lead concentrations in another stream nearby.

BRINGING 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION STANDARDS TO THE SARAJEVO AND ZENICA-DOBOJ CANTONS

The Mission's efforts to improve the quality and inclusiveness of education in the country through curriculum reform finally reached classrooms at the beginning of the new school year in September, when the Sarajevo and Zenica-Doboj cantons implemented new subject curricula in primary and secondary schools. This is a major step towards better-quality education, as it moves away from the traditional focus in the country's schools on rote learning and the regurgitation of facts.

The focus of the new curriculum is on developing critical thinking, the use of a variety of sources and problem-solving — all essential skills for success in the 21st century. For the first time, the draft curricula were also open to public discussion among the country's citizens, allowing all interested actors and the broader public to participate in the change process and have their opinions on curriculum reform heard. The Mission's support does not stop here: the reform process is already being expanded to the West Herzegovina and Una-Sana cantons, and is expected to begin in 2023 in the Herzegovina-Neretva canton.

Joining a dialogue for peace: Indira's story

When Indira Agić turned 16, a life-changing moment was waiting just around the corner for her. In 2017, the young woman from Zenica, a town of some 110,000 inhabitants in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, decided to actively engage in the inter-ethnic and interreligious dialogue in her city. She joined the Interreligious Chapter, an institution supported by the OSCE Mission that forms part of the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Now 21, Indira looks back happily at her early experiences. “Over the last five years, I have been blessed to meet many young — and not so young — people from whom I learned a lot. This was my first opportunity to meet and exchange experiences with people with whom I never thought I would be connected,” she says.

Indira, who is currently studying for a master’s degree in cultural studies, stands out for her dedication to fostering peace through interreligious activism. However, there are many others like her in Zenica and other parts of the country who want to promote tolerance and peace through dialogue between religions. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a religiously and ethnically diverse country, and supporting freedom of religion or belief — often constrained by legal, political and social hurdles — is essential for the security and stability of its citizens.

Kenan Hodžić, Secretary of the Inter-religious Chapter of Zenica, is conscious of the fact that there have always been, and always will be, people of different opinions and lifestyles, but he wanted the Zenica Chapter to serve as a model for tolerance. “Bosnia and Herzegovina is a land of sleeping beauty. Inter-religious dialogue is the awakening of what has been dormant. We had no desire to change others or change the state; all we wanted was to awake the beauty in the local community,” he says.

Looking back at her own experiences, Indira finds that she has learned a lot about people and herself. “I have learned that being a good person is way above any kind of ethnic difference. Our differences are exactly what connect us as humans,” she says. “Peace is the only option and in a melting pot of cultures, like in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there can be beautiful stories about those who know how to be openhearted.”

Mission in Kosovo‡

Head of Office: **Ambassador Michael Davenport**

Financial resources: **€17,495,300** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€299,431** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **87** international and **371** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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The Mission continued to engage with Kosovo's⁴ institutions to advance human and community rights, enhance transparency and inclusive decision-making, and strengthen the public safety sector. As the largest demographic group in Kosovo, young people are a special priority for the Mission as agents of change and progress. In 2022, this priority translated into dedicated youth activities that created and fostered more opportunities for communication, dialogue and networking across communities.

YOUNG WOMEN LEARN PEACE-BUILDING FIRST-HAND IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Recognizing how to nurture dialogue and peace-building cannot be learned from books, the Mission took 12 alumnae of the OSCE-supported Dialogue Academy for Young Women to Belfast for an intensive course on mediation, conflict resolution and peace-building. Such initiatives are important especially for younger generations who have not experienced conflict but are affected by its consequences.

During the study tour, the young women supplemented theory with practice and learned about conflict resolution through real-life examples. They also met prominent figures who were and still are directly involved in peace-building and fostering intercommunity relations in Northern Ireland. The group included two women from Belgrade and Prishtinë/Priština, who both described the study visit as an “eye-opening experience” during which they reflected on intercommunity relations, discussed dynamics and challenges of peace-building processes and met one of the rare women signatories of a peace agreement, the Northern Irish peace activist and human rights defender Monica McWilliams.

A FRESH VIEW ON PROTECTING CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS HERITAGE IN KOSOVO

In 2022, the Mission launched a landmark report, *Protection of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo*, which provides insight into the policy, legal and administrative frameworks of cultural heritage protection between 2014 and 2020.

One of the report's main findings is that effective protection of cultural heritage should not be limited to physical restoration. The report recommends a broader approach through inclusive

[‡]All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

management, imaginative spatial planning, awareness-raising and training for cultural heritage personnel.

“We have an extraordinary cultural wealth, which is a universal value and key to creating social interaction and overcoming differences between communities,” said Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports Hajrulla Çeku. “We are committed to placing culture and cultural heritage at the centre of the fundamental principles of co-existence, mutual respect and development of a democratic society.”

The report provides several recommendations for key institutions that should help enhance the protection and valorization of cultural heritage. They include introducing management plans for cultural heritage sites, conducting heritage impact assessments for planned interventions, adopting a more inclusive definition of cultural heritage and enhancing the resilience of cultural heritage sites.

TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT FOR POLICE FIGHTING DRUG TRAFFICKING

In 2022, the Kosovo Police faced an increase in the number of complex transnational criminal cases involving the production of illicit drugs, mainly cannabis. They also had to investigate cases involving hard drugs, especially concerning the control of delivery and transit to third countries. To strengthen their response to such challenges, the Mission organized specialized training for investigators assigned to combating organized drug trafficking groups.

The Mission trained over 80 per cent of police investigators from the Kosovo Police Department for the Investigation of Trafficking in Narcotics, improving their awareness of personal safety and security during the execution of operational duties in the field, particularly in searches of high-risk persons, vehicles and premises. To complement this operational assistance, the Mission also equipped the Department with high-tech equipment and narcotics field test kits.

“Our international partners have been generously providing the Department with strategic and capacity-building support through practical training and advice on best practices, as well as by equipping the Department with contemporary ICT equipment essential for combating complex organized crime,” said Major Reshat Murseli, Director of the Department. The Mission’s support helped improve the investigators’ skills, with the result that they dealt with 39 per cent more cases in the first six months of 2022 than in the same period of 2021.

REBUILDING THE LIVES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

Search for a dedicated human rights and community activist in Kosovo who actively helps victims of domestic violence, and the name Agmie Osmani will come up instantly. A psychologist and social worker by profession, Agmie volunteered for many years at a shelter for victims of domestic and gender-based violence, an experience that later pushed her to create the NGO Follow Up – Organizata per Integrim dhe Zhvillim Social (Organization for Social Integration and Development).

Agmie is one of the Mission in Kosovo's most enthusiastic partners. In 2017, she participated in the third edition of the Mission's Youth Academy, a platform for young people to discuss and learn about human rights and activism. A few months later, she joined the Mission's Pool of Trainers, a group of 21 young activists from different backgrounds who use their expertise in human rights education to design and implement activities proposed by the Mission and other institutional partners.

“My engagement in these youth mainstreaming activities served as a source of inspiration and practical knowledge to co-establish and run my own NGO,” Agmie says. Her engagement with the shelters opened her eyes to the lack of follow-up services for cases of domestic violence, whose victims very often have no option but to return to their previous violent situation. This experience pushed her to take on a more active role to help vulnerable communities.

As Executive Director of Follow Up, she advises and supports victims of domestic violence in rebuilding their lives after leaving abusive environments. One strand of her work is to create links between local businesses and domestic violence victims to empower the women to become independent and self-sustaining.

“Our aim as an organization is to offer reintegration services to marginalized communities, especially women and children coming out of violent situations. Seeing as they are often forced to go back to unhealthy, violent environments, we give them the option not to,” Agmie says. “We try to give them a chance to start over by providing employment or education opportunities, psychosocial support and other needed social services.”

Agmie’s enthusiasm knows no bounds. An alumna of the OSCE Dialogue Academy, she is now also the co-ordinator of the Mission’s Pool of Trainers and, speaking at the 2022 Youth Academy, inspired other young women and men to take action in their communities.

“Being a part of OSCE activities and programmes has really been rewarding for me both personally and professionally. They have set a new standard for me and given me a platform for development,” she says, and she pays the Organization a generous compliment: “A big contributor to my experience has been the opportunity to meet and work closely with OSCE staff. That is why I always say that the OSCE has a knack for hiring great people, especially amazing, capable and hard-working women.”

Mission to Montenegro

Head of Mission: **Ambassador Dominique Waag**

Financial resources: **€2,152,100** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€489,472** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **10** international and **26** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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By implementing an innovative, results-oriented programme, the Mission continued to support Montenegro in achieving its national policy objectives. It worked on addressing serious and organized crime, as well as other transnational threats; strengthening the professionalism of the police, democratic institutions, electoral processes and independence of the media; and bringing about judicial reform. The Mission also promoted gender equality and youth engagement, and strengthened the authorities' capacity to safely store ammunition and prevent the trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

MAKING ELECTIONS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

People with disabilities continue to face barriers in Montenegro when it comes to casting their vote, despite a 2020 Constitutional Court ruling on their legal right to vote independently and in secret. The Mission worked with a tireless human rights advocate, Marina Vujačić, from the Association of Youth with Disabilities, to organize a series of meetings with the State Election Commission and the Union of the Blind. As a result, the Commission, with the Mission's support, amended its secondary legislation to introduce the use of the Braille tactile writing system for voting devices, ballot papers, voter information material and accessibility instructions at polling stations.

Another step forward was a public information campaign prior to local elections in October that alerted people with disabilities of their right to vote. "There was a significant change in the number of people with disabilities who voted independently and in secret," Ms. Vujačić said. "However, a more consistent application of these rules is necessary, and so we will continue to work with electoral bodies in the country to ensure that all polling places are accessible and provide free legal aid to any voter that encounters discrimination."

PROMOTING ONLINE HEALTH AND SAFETY

A new publication put together by the Mission together with the Agency for Electronic Media is aimed at fostering a sense of critical thinking among primary school pupils when they are online. Titled Media and Digital Literacy, the book (developed as part of the 2022 Media Literacy Days) guides readers on using careful and critical observation when encountering information on the internet. Pupils from the Maksim Gorki school in Podgorica took on the challenge of discussing how to be critical and safe when online, and be mindful of the effects of social media on their mental health. Tigran Dobrašinović, director of the school, said: "This book will help us in building a proper foundation for students' critical thinking in today's media and digital environment". The plan is to distribute the book to schools throughout Montenegro.

“It seems that the online space can be damaging, but also very useful. Understanding the difference is what media literacy is all about.”

A seventh grader who participated in the Media Literacy Days initiative

FORENSIC CENTRE GOES REGIONAL

Since the Forensic Centre’s establishment in 2008, the Mission has provided it with technical assistance to strengthen its capacity to conduct forensic examinations, from crime scene investigations and fingerprint comparisons to DNA, drugs and explosives trace evidence analysis, ballistics examinations and digital forensics. The Mission also supported the Centre in becoming a member of the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI), which makes it possible for evidence examined by the Centre to be used in trials outside of Montenegro. The head of the Centre, Dr. Aleksandar Ivanović, praised the Mission for its support in making the Forensic Centre a regional body where forensic centres from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia can exchange operational forensic data and work jointly on cross-border crime investigations. At a conference held in Budva, Montenegro, in October, the participating centres agreed to use OSCE best practices aimed at improving regional co-operation and to meet international standards in the exchange of forensic data.

Through sports, a push for change in society

High-performing athletes are generally expected to have only sports on their mind but Marko and Vlado Terić, shot-putters from Montenegro's coastal city of Tivat, put this theory to the test. The 20-year-old twins, members of the country's Paralympic Committee, participated in an OSCE event that involved athletes in discussing youth engagement to combat violent extremism and radicalization.

The Terić brothers have always been active in sports. "We trained in basketball, table tennis. In our spare time, we swam and played football," says Marko, talking about his years before taking up shot put. "We first participated in shot-put competitions in Podgorica, then in Kruševac. Our best experience was this May at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Jesolo, Italy, where Vlado won a bronze metal, and I won the silver. These wins and the beautiful gatherings with friends and members of the Paralympic Committee inspired us to work hard."

The twins joined a group of 20 young Montenegrin athletes to discuss youth engagement in combating violent extremism and radicalization at an event organized by the Mission and the Ministry for Sports and Youth. The event recognized the important role that athletes play in social integration and how they can help strengthen intercultural dialogue.

Engaging young people is a core activity of the Mission, which works with state institutions and the Regional Youth Co-operation Office to encourage youth to become drivers of change in society. During the workshop, participants discussed basic concepts of violent extremism that may lead to terrorism and how to identify, react to and tackle this issue. They also learned what to do to foster peace and resolve conflict.

For the Terić brothers, the workshop was an eye-opener. Realizing the vital educational and socializing effect sports can have, they emphasized: "It is important to trust in yourself and have will. Not to have prejudices about physical defects or complexes, but to live your life to the fullest, rejoice, socialize and do everything with love. We all can be good examples for our friends and family, making them believe in themselves."

Marko and Vlado also have a message for young people: "We can do more without the internet — and avoid alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. Be tolerant and reasonable towards each other. Let's turn to sports, nature, travel, songs, games and everything that makes our lives better."

Mission to Serbia

Head of Mission: **Ambassador Jan Braathu**

Financial resources: **€6,258,600** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€1,139,471** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **17** international and **116** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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The Mission continued to work with Serbia on activities to implement and deepen reforms in the country. Its activities included promoting the rule of law and police reform; encouraging independent, professional and responsible media; strengthening anti-corruption policies; further consolidating human and minority rights, gender equality and youth participation; and strengthening a rules-based, democratic, transparent and inclusive system that is accountable to Serbia's citizens.

PROMOTING NATIONAL MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN CENSUS AND COUNCIL ELECTIONS

To promote the broadest participation of Serbia's citizens in the 2022 population census, the Mission worked with the country's Statistical Office to translate both the call for census enumerators (the people who conduct visits and survey residents for a census) and the call for preparing the census instructions in 13 national minority languages.

Following sustained advocacy by the Mission, all leaders of the country's ethnic Albanian community unanimously declared their support for the community's participation in the census. The Mission helped translate instructions for the organization and execution of the census, the methodological instruction and the guide for enumerators into Albanian. The ethnic Albanian community did not participate in the previous census, in 2011, which negatively affected the community in terms of budget and policy planning.

The Mission also supported the active participation of national minorities in the 2022 elections of 23 National Minority Councils, which offer national minorities an important voice on issues of culture, education, language and media. Jointly with the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and the civil society organization Centar za slobodne izbore i demokratiju (CeSID) – Centre for Free Elections and Democracy, the Mission helped raise awareness among national minorities, women and youth of the electoral procedures.

SUPPORTING A REGIONAL NETWORK OF WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS

After a hiatus caused by the pandemic, officers of the Serbian Women Police Officers' Network met again in person with international colleagues for a regional conference in Belgrade, where they talked about such issues as empowering female police officers, the role of women in the security sector and career advancement. The Mission supported the event as part of its work to promote diversity, non-discrimination and gender equality within the police force. During the COVID-19 pandemic, women police officers dealt with rapidly changing priorities and an increase in family violence cases. The European Network of Policewomen sent its President, Montserrat Pina Martínez, to participate in the event. "I was able to convey the message that there is a need to foster quality

through equality to some 80 women police officers, a valuable opportunity for our Network to share equality strategies with our colleagues,” Martínez said at the event.

CREATING A REGIONAL YOUTH DIALOGUE AND REFORMING SCHOOL CURRICULA

Working with youth and students continued to be a centrepiece of the Mission’s work. Together with the Presence in Albania the Mission organized a video feature presentation on cultural similarities between Albania and Serbia. The event was part of the Mission’s efforts to build bridges and foster positive narratives among youth from the region. It took place during the Media Development Forum, an event held in 2022 in Tirana to facilitate dialogue between media, state institutions and civil society. In a separate activity, the Mission involved youth council representatives from Albania and Serbia in a meeting where the participants developed action plans to further the implementation of the UN’s Youth, Peace and Security agenda in their countries. The event took place in Tirana in September.

In February, Serbia’s Education Ministry granted the status of “training of public importance” for the new sociology curriculum at secondary schools, developed with the Mission’s help. The Mission worked with the Institute for the Improvement of Education on the project and organized training courses for sociology teachers. The new training curriculum allows students to learn in a systematic way about fundamental rights, the rights of national minorities, respect for diversity, interculturalism, integration of diverse societies, the rule of law, democratic processes, gender equality, and youth and civic participation. Sociology is a mandatory subject in secondary schools throughout Serbia.

A LIFE DEDICATED TO PROTECTING JOURNALISTS

Having co-founded the internationally renowned radio station B92 in 1989, Veran Matić became a household name for independent and professional journalism. Since 2013, he has also been the Chair of the Commission for the Investigation of Murdered Journalists, a role for which he is much less well known outside of media circles. However, the fate of journalists who often have to work under precarious circumstances is close to his heart.

“The fight for media freedom is like a marathon that I have been running for 40 years, 25 of which together with the OSCE,” he says, and points to the success of the Chronicle of Threats campaign. This initiative, which won the Bronze Lion at the Cannes Lion International Festival of Creativity, was created by the Commission and the OSCE in 2013 to encourage public debate and determine methods to protect journalists more effectively. “All over the world, journalists are facing increasingly complex security challenges, which is why they need the support of all parties, especially of international organizations such as the OSCE,” he adds.

In 2017, after several attacks on journalists, Serbia’s Interior Ministry linked up with the Public Prosecutor’s Office and seven journalist and media associations to establish a new body, the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists. The Mission has been involved from the very beginning. As Matić explains, “Our primary and common goal in Serbia is to save the lives of journalists, to improve the environment for work of the media, to advance the efficiency of institutions and to decrease impunity for attacks on media workers.”

In 2022, Matić shifted his focus to the local level. “In local communities, journalists are facing specific challenges and are much more exposed to violence, threats and pressure, and for them justice is more difficult to achieve,” he says. One example is the case of OK Radio, a station in Vranje, southern Serbia. The station’s staff received threats from local criminals, as did Matić himself. But

the engagement of the Permanent Working Group paid off: “Only four months after the incident, the perpetrators were sentenced to prison in an action representing an example of excellent co-operation between state authorities and the media community.”

The Group’s sustained efforts are also showing results on the international level. In 2021, Serbia ranked 93rd on the Reporters Without Borders’ Press Freedom Index. A year later, it rose to 79th position.

Mission to Skopje

Head of Mission: **Ambassador Kilian Wahl**

Financial resources: **€6,506,100** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€853,234** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **34** international and **118** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

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In 2022, the Mission continued to support North Macedonia's efforts to improve its performance in furthering democratic policing and professionalizing the police forces; combating transnational threats; fostering the rule of law and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms; and strengthening democratic and environmental governance, social cohesion and gender equality.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION EFFORTS CROWNED WITH CRITICAL SUCCESS

A landmark legal decision in 2022 was an indication of the great success of the Mission's sustained fight against discrimination in the country. One of the Mission's implementing partners, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, had filed a strategic litigation case. The ruling court eventually found in favour of the Committee, which had argued that the government and the State Election Commission had discriminated against persons with disabilities by failing to ensure their participation in elections on an equal basis with other citizens. The court ordered the government to take steps to ensure equal access, including by providing physical access to voting facilities. Helsinki Committee Executive Director, Uranija Pirovska, welcomed the decision: "This verdict represents a great victory because people with disabilities face serious problems and systematic discrimination in our country."

The Mission also trained law students from the nation's top three law schools on anti-discrimination law, and supported efforts by the Commission for the Prevention of and Protection from Discrimination to inform the public of their right to bring complaints before the Commission. This innovative campaign included open meetings throughout the country and the distribution of posters and flyers with information in the local languages and Braille.

OSCE SUPPORT CUTS DOWN ON K9 RESPONSE TIME

While police dog training may not instantly be associated with the OSCE, the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) definitely is. For several years, the Mission has been supporting the country in this field, one of the priorities being the strengthening of the capacities of the police K9 Unit to better detect such weapons. This includes improving the internal organization, mobility and deployment of police dog handlers.

In 2022, the Mission supported the Ministry of Internal Affairs in developing a standard operating procedure and a training manual on police dog deployment and donated 14 specialized police dog vehicles and three specialized police dog trailers. These efforts resulted in a significant decrease in the Unit's response time to SALW-related incidents. Additionally, and for the first time, the K9 Unit

now has the capacity to respond simultaneously to multiple requests. The project has also improved the country's ability to co-operate with neighbouring states on cross-border threats of SALW proliferation.

TOGETHER WE MATTER!

In September 1992, the OSCE — then still named the CSCE (Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe) — began its work in Skopje with a fact-finding visit for the future CSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje. Thirty years later, the Mission celebrated its status as the oldest continuously operating OSCE field operation with an outreach campaign aimed at informing the public of its work and contributions to the country's development. Under the hashtag [#30YearsOMSK](#), online visitors were able to view video statements, a documentary and photos with quotes by OSCE officials and their local partners over the years. Working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mission organized campaign events to highlight the Mission's anniversary and also the importance of North Macedonia chairing the Organization in 2023.

STOKING YOUNG PEOPLE'S INTEREST IN JOURNALISM

Mihailo Donev, a 27-year-old journalist from Shtip, a town of some 40,000 people in the east of North Macedonia overlooked by a medieval fortress, had a good feeling when he joined the 2022 OSCE summer camp for young media professionals. "We talked a lot about media in the digital era and new communication tools," he said. "But we also socialized a lot with journalists and editors, which helped create networks that could benefit us in the future." He was right. In November, Donev, who works for the TV24 network in Skopje, was selected as one of eight journalists to serve alongside seven judges on the country's Judicial Media Council.

North Macedonia has made significant progress in recent years to improve the situation of journalists, especially when it comes to their safety. However, journalists still face many other problems, not the least of which are economic difficulties. Perhaps not surprisingly, a survey in 2020 revealed that fewer than 30 students were enrolling each year to study journalism at state universities.

A healthy media landscape is essential for a democratic society. To help stimulate rising young journalists to stay in the profession and to raise their professional standards, the Mission worked with the Association of Journalists to organize the summer camp. A total of 19 young journalists participated — nine women and 10 men — all from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Their interest in modern journalism techniques was stoked from day one when the nine media experts delved deep into narrative structure and in-depth reporting techniques. Complementing these theoretical sessions were hands-on classes on the use of cutting-edge digital multimedia tools.

The camp left a lasting impression on many of the trainees. Rita Behadini (25), a journalist from Tetovo working for the last three years for TV Alsat, was impressed by the breadth of topics they learned about. "What impressed me most was the use of modern digital tools in preparing a news story," she said. "But we also learned how investigative journalism is carried out in our country, especially using modern technology. And we were trained on the rights of journalists — which institution to contact in case our professional rights are violated."

While technical training and journalism theory were certainly at the centre of the summer camp, the idea of working together and getting to know each other was equally important. As Behadini points out: “Networking between young journalists is always necessary. The camp has helped us get familiar with each other. Such networks make our day-to-day work easier.”

INSTITUTIONS

The OSCE includes three institutions dedicated to specialized areas of work: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights promotes democracy and human rights; the High Commissioner on National Minorities uses quiet diplomacy and early action to seek resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace and security; and the Representative on Freedom of the Media monitors media developments and provides early warning on violations of freedom of expression and media freedom.

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Director: **Matteo Mecacci**

Financial resources: **€16,394,000** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€6,830,129** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)⁵

Staff: **91** international and **62** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/odihr

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[@osce_odihr | Twitter](https://twitter.com/osce_odihr)

[OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights \(ODIHR\): Overview | LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/osce-odihr/)

As the primary institution within the OSCE focusing on the human dimension of security, the Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) provides support, assistance and expertise to governments and civil society in OSCE participating States to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as well as to increase tolerance across the region and respect for the rights of Roma and Sinti.

“In these difficult times for human rights, ODIHR is continuing to support countries across the OSCE in strengthening their democratic institutions and to bring States and civil society together in open dialogue. Ensuring that all voices are heard is vital if we are to find solutions to the human rights challenges of our time.”

ODIHR Director Matteo Mecacci

The stories below present a snapshot of ODIHR’s activities in 2022, a year in which human rights defenders and organizations from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine — all valued ODIHR partners — won the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize, highlighting their activities and the dangers they face. The Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, organized by the 2022 Polish OSCE Chair, also gave ODIHR an opportunity to discuss a broad range of pressing human rights issues.

MONITORING REPORTED INTERNATIONAL LAW VIOLATIONS IN UKRAINE

Following Russia’s military attack against Ukraine, ODIHR responded rapidly by launching the Ukraine Monitoring Initiative. This project utilizes ODIHR’s monitoring and human rights expertise to document the most serious alleged violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, providing accurate and timely information and analysis.

Since 24 February 2022, ODIHR has systematically collected and analysed information through desk research and the deployment of monitors to Ukraine and neighbouring countries hosting refugees. The goal is to help ensure accountability for violations of humanitarian and human rights law that take place during the conflict. To date, 120 witnesses and survivors of reported violations have given first-hand interviews, describing attacks consistent with myriad violations of these laws. Key findings were published in reports in July and December.

⁵ As of 30 November 2022.

EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE PEACEFULLY DURING COVID-19

ODIHR closely monitored the impact of the pandemic on freedom of peaceful assembly in the OSCE region and published a report of findings and recommendations, including valuable analysis of and detail on state responses.

STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

At an event that gathered representatives of more than 60 national human rights institutions (NHRIs), ODIHR launched a [Guidance Tool](#) to help strengthen NHRIs against the growing threats they face. The Tool offers practical advice on 12 key resilience factors, crisis management tools and concrete ways to respond.

UNCOVERING HATE CRIMES TARGETING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Increased reporting not only improves policies to address hate crime but also helps to ensure access to justice and support for victims, including for those from indigenous groups. This was an important focus of ODIHR's tolerance and non-discrimination activities during the year, which built on the Office's first-ever conference on the topic in 2021.

Hate crime under-reporting is a persistent challenge among all targeted communities (see more at hatecrime.osce.org). However, it is particularly acute for those with limited access to state resources.

In August, ODIHR brought together representatives of indigenous groups and civil society from across the OSCE region to learn how their communities are affected by hate crime and to explore the connections between intolerance and marginalization as well as opportunities for reporting such crimes.

TRAINING TO MONITOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AT INTERNATIONAL BORDERS

ODIHR launched a new training course to help human rights defenders monitor and report on human rights abuses at international borders and to protect themselves from the increasing risk of attacks both online and offline. Political stability and security in the OSCE depend on finding solutions to migration and displacement. Human rights monitoring at international borders has a particularly important preventive function. Experience shows that where monitors have unrestricted access to both places and people, fewer human rights violations occur. Since 2015, criminalization of humanitarian assistance to migrants and refugees has become one of the key trends in migration management, restricting — and sometimes directly endangering — the lives of human rights defenders.

“The OSCE/ODIHR training on monitoring, safety and security for human rights defenders gave me the necessary skills to engage with human rights work in a more coherent, structured and strategic way,”

Isabella Ranieri, an independent activist based in Croatia who took part in one of ODIHR’s courses.

RENEWED INTEREST IN WORKING TOGETHER ON ELECTORAL REFORM

In 2022, ODIHR conducted 15 election observation activities in 13 OSCE States, deploying over 1,400 observers, and continued its work to improve democratic processes and protect the right of all citizens to participate. With 10 of the 15 observation activities taking place in EU Member States — two of which were large-scale election observation missions — ODIHR was able to look closely at the trends and challenges facing democracy in this region. (For more details on the formats of ODIHR election observation missions, see www.osce.org/odihr/elections.)

ODIHR published 48 election-related reports in 2022, providing thorough assessments of electoral processes in the OSCE area, including 19 final reports with recommendations on how to improve election processes. The Office continued to train election observers and to update its observation methodology with a revised edition of the handbook on observing women’s participation and development of a new handbook on observing the work of election management bodies.

As participating States emerged from the pandemic, there was renewed interest in electoral reform and follow-up to ODIHR’s electoral recommendations. ODIHR and the Venice Commission provided five legal opinions on electoral legislation in five countries and supported 13 countries in their efforts to implement ODIHR’s electoral recommendations.

2022 ELECTIONS WITH ODIHR OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Early Parliamentary Elections

30 January, Portugal, EET

Parliamentary Elections

26 March, Malta, EET

Presidential Election and Early Parliamentary Elections

3 April, Serbia, EOM

Parliamentary Elections

3 April, Hungary, EOM

Presidential Election

10 and 24 April, France, EAM

Parliamentary Elections

24 April, Slovenia, EAM

Parliamentary Elections

12 June, France, EAM

Referendum

5 June, Kazakhstan, RAM

Early Parliamentary Elections

25 September, Italy, EAM

Parliamentary Elections

1 October, Latvia, EAM

Early Parliamentary Elections

2 October, Bulgaria, EOM

General Election

2 October, Bosnia and Herzegovina, EOM

Early General Election

1 November, Denmark, EET

Mid-term Congressional Elections

8 November, United States of America, LEOM

Early Presidential Election

20 November, Kazakhstan, EOM

LEOM – limited election observation mission

EOM – election observation mission

EET – election expert team

EAM – election assessment mission

RAM – referendum assessment mission

ROMA REFUGEES FLEEING UKRAINE OR INTERNALLY DISPLACED

ODIHR closely monitored the growing intolerance faced by Roma refugees fleeing Ukraine, including the impact on their human rights. The Office worked hand in hand with national and international civil society organizations on how to document the situation.

In parallel, ODIHR carried out training to further empower Roma and Sinti women, human rights activists and civil society organizations. ODIHR organized self-advocacy training for Roma girls, women and activists in North Macedonia and Poland, strengthening their ability to voice their concerns and make their issues visible to policy- and decision makers. ODIHR co-organized a [Summer School on Roma rights](#) for young Roma to develop their human rights monitoring skills to help protect their rights and combat racism and discrimination.

Training for Roma and Sinti on ODIHR's short-term election monitoring methodology helped improve their election observation skills. The training covered electoral processes, the election observation context, international commitments and election standards.

High Commissioner on National Minorities

High Commissioner: **Ambassador Kairat Abdrykhanov**

Financial resources: **€3,504,000** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€581,844** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **18** international and **15** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/hcnm

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Amid the challenges of the changing European geopolitical landscape of the early 1990s, the position of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities was established 30 years ago with the mandate to provide early warning and take early action at the first sign of tensions involving national minorities in the OSCE region. In 2022, the High Commissioner continued to work with all 57 OSCE participating States to identify the causes of interethnic tensions and help build well-integrated, multi-ethnic societies that celebrate diversity.

DESIGNING INCLUSIVE POLICIES

High Commissioner Kairat Abdrykhanov continued to call for the social, economic and political inclusion of national minorities throughout the OSCE region and encouraged regular, constructive debates to be held between *all* stakeholders on this issue. In Georgia, for example, through the High Commissioner's work, a group of young people from national minority communities met with the parliamentary Committee on Human Rights Protection and Civil Integration and the Committee on Sports and Youth Affairs to discuss ways to create more opportunities to engage youth in decision-making. In this field, the High Commissioner also engaged in wider consultations with international experts who are helping to compile a new set of recommendations and guidelines on national minorities and socio-economic participation.

INTEGRATION WITH RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

Integration policies that respect diversity are vital to building cohesive and inclusive societies. Many institutions and government departments focus explicitly on national minority issues and inter-ethnic relations or on developing and implementing integration policies. In 2022, the High Commissioner convened a high-level interagency roundtable to help a group of institutions and government departments share their experiences and good practices in key policy areas such as language, education and participation in public life. Broader change in the security and geopolitical architecture in the OSCE region was also discussed. While the instrumentalization and securitization of minority issues, as well as disinformation and hate speech, remain key concerns, the High Commissioner's guidelines and recommendations helped policymakers counter such negative developments.

USING LANGUAGE TO UNITE COMMUNITIES

Language is a vital part of our identity. It stimulates our sense of belonging and builds bridges between communities. The High Commissioner continued to support and promote mother tongue-based multilingual education throughout the OSCE region. After the pandemic, the HCNM focused on re-engaging with a broad network of schools, education practitioners and policymakers. Among

other events, a roundtable was organized in Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan, for education practitioners working with minorities. Participants praised the multilingual education initiative in Kyrgyzstan for strengthening social integration by making it easier to acquire the state language while preserving minority mother tongues.

THE FRAZA PHRASEBOOK: A GROUNDBREAKING INITIATIVE

In June, the High Commissioner launched in Skopje an expanded version of FRAZA, the first-ever Macedonian–Albanian–Turkish–Serbian digitized phrasebook. Following the success of the initial [Macedonian–Albanian/Albanian–Macedonian phrasebook](#) in 2020, the High Commissioner and the Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje added two more languages: Turkish and Serbian. This initiative illustrated the High Commissioner’s ongoing commitment to multilingualism and policies aimed at building bridges by overcoming language barriers and providing individuals in diverse societies, such as the one in North Macedonia, with the necessary tools to communicate with each other.

The phrasebook is freely available [online](#), with [Android](#) and [iOS](#) applications, enriched with audio recordings of pronunciations. By the end of the year, *FRAZA* had been downloaded over 800 times and had 11,706 followers.

MILESTONES

In September, the High Commissioner organized a conference with Slovenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs to mark the tenth anniversary of the publication of The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies, published by the Office of the High Commissioner in 2012. Following an expert meeting and a high-level conference, High Commissioner Abdurakhmanov concluded, “The key takeaway from The Ljubljana Guidelines comes back to one single point: that society as a whole, not just one specific group, benefits from diversity and integration policies”.

On 24 November, the Social Justice Center, a Georgian organization, became the tenth organization to receive the Max van der Stoel Award. The award is given out biennially by the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the High Commissioner to an individual or organization in recognition of their outstanding achievements aimed at improving the position of national minorities in the OSCE region.

Representative on Freedom of the Media

Representative: **Teresa Ribeiro**

Financial resources: **€1,608,800** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€394,595** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **14** international and **5** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media

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[The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media | YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/c/OSCERepresentative)

[OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media | Telegram](https://t.me/oscerfom)

The year 2022 presented great challenges to freedom of expression and the safety of journalists in a region where the general media freedom situation had been steadily declining for many years already. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media continued her work to engage with participating States on these issues. Marking the 25th anniversary of her institution, the Representative used the opportunity to take stock and look ahead, publishing an in-depth report by nine experts on the future of media freedom in the OSCE region.

NEW REPORT STATES UNEQUIVOCALLY: “NO SECURITY WITHOUT MEDIA FREEDOM”

“Can there be security without media freedom?” The Advisory Group of Eminent Experts on Freedom of the Media convened by the Representative tried to answer this, and other, fundamental questions on the key role of media for security and democracy. The expert group’s answer, a resounding “no”, was reflected in a [report](#) that also tried to provide answers as to whether media freedom remains relevant for human security, what the current understanding of the “media” element of the “freedom of the media” concept is and how media freedom can be safeguarded by intergovernmental organizations, particularly the OSCE. The report, and the recommendations it contains, was produced as a guiding tool for the Representative’s future work.

The Representative continued to work with participating States on questions of media freedom, monitored the situation in the OSCE region and assisted the authorities with their commitments to uphold and further the functioning of free, independent and pluralistic media. Addressing challenges identified in her daily work, she intervened more than 400 times on cases of media freedom violations.

PROJECT LAUNCHED TO STRENGTHEN THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS

Journalists are at the forefront of conflict and often pay with their lives for their work. At the same time, crimes against journalists often go unpunished, which makes the safety of journalists an important part of the Representative’s work now more than ever. A new project launched in 2022 aims to better protect journalists by strengthening and improving the implementation of legal frameworks and national strategies. The project builds on the ground-breaking 2018 Ministerial Council Decision on Safety of Journalists, which commits all OSCE participating States to uphold the safety of journalists. In seven roundtable meetings, the project will discuss the following topics: the collection and use of data regarding attacks on and violence against journalists; the safeguarding of secure working conditions; the position of media working in conflict or in exile; the promotion of intersectional perspectives; the furthering of safety in the digital realm; the combating of legal harassment; the improvement of police handling of the media; and the fight against impunity for violence against journalists.

STRENGTHENING MEDIA LITERACY TO COUNTER MIS- AND DISINFORMATION

Another new project launched by the Representative's Office aims to support media literacy policy-making processes, cross-sectoral collaboration and public awareness in the participating States to counter mis- and disinformation and to uphold the quality of media content. The project combines the skills and knowledge necessary to protect and promote media freedom, understand the ethical and legal implications of the media in today's digital information ecosystem, and communicate effectively. As part of the project the Office investigated gendered and intersectional perspectives on the spread of disinformation and how online platforms potentially amplify it.

NEW MANUAL SPOTLIGHTS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Culminating two years of research and several expert workshops, the Office launched in January 2022 a new manual with human rights–centric recommendations on how to safeguard freedom of expression in the use of artificial intelligence in content moderation and curation. The Spotlight on Artificial Intelligence and Freedom of Expression policy manual is to be accompanied by a resource hub that brings together policy guidance, recommendations and additional project initiatives, outcomes and resources. The policy manual and resource hub toolkit is meant to give policymakers, participating States and other stakeholders guidance and access to a variety of related sources of information.

COUNTRY VISITS TO RAISE MEDIA FREEDOM ISSUES

The Representative visited participating States in the European Union, South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus to discuss a variety of media freedom issues. Among the most important topics discussed were increased violence against journalists, in particular against women; legal harassment; arbitrary detentions; the use of surveillance software; restrictions on the free flow of information; the independent role of public service media and media regulators; and the spread of disinformation. The Office of the Representative continued to provide assistance to and share good practices from across the OSCE region with the participating States.

SECRETARIAT

The Vienna-based Secretariat assists the OSCE Chairmanship and participating States, carries out programmatic work in support of OSCE commitments, supports OSCE field activities, maintains relations with international and non-governmental organizations, and provides conference, language, administrative, financial, personnel and information technology services.

Office of the Secretary General

Director: **Ambassador Luca Fratini**

Financial resources: **€11,446,200⁶** (based on Unified Budget adopted in 2021), **€586,400** (additional provisional expenditure authorization),⁷ **€397,657** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **58** international and **60** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/secretariat

The Office of the Secretary General provides central services for all OSCE executive structures. It manages programmes and has a policy advisory function for the OSCE Chair and the Secretary General. The Office supports co-ordination and collaboration across the Organization.

OSCE-WIDE SUPPORT FROM CENTRAL SERVICES

As in previous years, Conference and Language Services delivered meeting and language support to delegations, the Chair and executive structures. In total, it hosted over 2,000 meetings, distributed over 12,000 documents and provided for the safe and effective conduct of the day-to-day business of OSCE delegates. It continued to facilitate the holding of events in blended, in-person and fully virtual formats, often with interpretation into all six OSCE languages, including a significant number of Special and Reinforced Permanent Council meetings.

Extraordinary challenges were faced for the handling of OSCE staff security in 2022. Security Management responded to this challenge by providing robust support to the Crisis Management Team, the Special Monitoring Mission and the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine in the process of evacuating and relocating OSCE personnel in Ukraine. Security Management contributed to the work of the Joint Analysis and Operations Centre and facilitated multiple missions to Ukraine. It also continued to support all OSCE executive structures by reviewing and endorsing their mandatory security documents, to provide security advice and to carry out training.

The Office of Legal Affairs continued to deliver advice to the Chair and all executive structures on the full range of legal issues that concern the Organization, such as interpretation of the regulatory framework across all executive structures, analysing and advising on administrative appeals and complaints, advising on privileges and immunities questions, dealing with dispute settlements, providing advice on tenders and negotiations of complex contracts, as well as the development and substance review of administrative policies.

Preserving and sharing the OSCE's institutional memory remained the central task of the Documentation Centre in Prague, which is responsible for retaining knowledge and improving collaboration with better records management practices and tools. An important task in 2022 was the transfer of records from the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine after the closure of these field operations. The Centre also responded to a 28 per cent increase in requests for information and documents from OSCE staff, participating States, civil society organizations and other stakeholders, hosted nine researchers and delivered presentations on the history and role of the OSCE to trainees and students.

⁶ Includes financial resources of Gender Section

⁷ According to Permanent Council decision 1455

DELIVERING POLICY ADVICE AND PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT

The Executive Management team supported the OSCE Chair and the Secretary General with policy advice as well as the preparation of meetings, statements, speeches and official travel. Executive Management also ensured effective co-ordination with other Secretariat departments and executive structures, facilitating a whole-of-OSCE approach.

A continued focus of the OSCE is to engage young people in work on peace and security, including through targeted activities, such as the Perspectives 20-30 Online Academy. Through this initiative, young women and men from across the OSCE region worked together and shaped policy recommendations on a range of current security challenges. These recommendations were provided to the Secretary General and participating States. The academy also offered participants the opportunity to hone their professional skills and gain insight into the work of the OSCE. In the last two years, this initiative has been instrumental in strengthening the work of youth networks and promoting their role in their own communities.

One of the key roles of the Communications and Media Relations team is to improve the Organization's visibility. It made a concerted effort to do this by focusing specifically on the impact OSCE programmes and activities have on people living in the OSCE region. The gradual shift towards more engaging social media content in recent years has resulted in greater engagement on Instagram (58 per cent increase) and Twitter (74 per cent increase), as well as a 12 per cent increase in followers overall from 2021 to 2022. The team also continued its traditional task of providing strategic communications advice and support to the executive structures.

The External Co-operation Section supports the Office of the Secretary General in maintaining and enhancing relationships with international and regional organizations as well as partner countries. This is an important facet of the OSCE's work, given the unique strengths that different organizations can bring to bear and the value in shaping complementary approaches to complex challenges.

Conflict prevention

Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre: **Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä**

Financial resources: **€5,239,700** (based on Unified Budget adopted in 2021), **€586,400** (additional provisional expenditure authorization)⁸, **€3,971,093** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **44** international and **71** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/secretariat/conflict-prevention

The Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) is the main contact point on matters concerning OSCE field operations. It addresses all phases of the conflict cycle by providing policy and operational guidance and advice, including in the areas of early warning, crisis response and efforts to find lasting political settlements to existing conflicts. The CPC is at the core of the OSCE's politico-military activities and assists participating States with the implementation of Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs). It also provides Organization-wide support for project management.

RESPONDING TO THE WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

Until late February, the CPC continued to support the OSCE's response to the 'crisis in and around Ukraine', notably through the two field operations in the country – the Special Monitoring Mission and the Project Co-ordinator – as well as the work of the Trilateral Contact Group. With the onset of the full-scale war against Ukraine on 24 February, the CPC supported the evacuation and relocation of OSCE staff, including through an ad hoc Secretariat-based Operations Cell (see also sidebar). In March, a Joint Analysis and Operations Cell began delivering regular updates on developments on the ground to the Chairmanship, the Secretary General and senior management.

Since the mandates of both the Special Monitoring Mission and the Project Co-ordinator were not extended beyond 31 March and 30 June, respectively, the CPC co-ordinated activities to close these two missions, working with mission staff and Secretariat departments. To continue OSCE engagement in Ukraine, a new, fully extra-budgetary Support Programme for Ukraine (SPU) was established in November. SPU projects will address the immediate challenges to civilians due to the war and support the long-term democratic and social resilience of Ukrainian institutions and civil society. The Programme will deliver on a multi-dimensional portfolio ranging from humanitarian mine action to protecting media freedom and addressing environmental damage caused by the war.

EVACUATING AND RELOCATING MISSION STAFF

On 24 February, based on the joint instruction from the Chairmanship and the Secretary General, both OSCE missions in the country were instructed to evacuate all international staff and, where possible and on request, to relocate local staff to safer locations inside Ukraine. This instruction was carried out under exceptionally challenging circumstances, as Ukraine was facing wide-scale armed attacks on many areas of the country. International mission members – when possible accompanied by local staff – used different evacuation routes, leading to either Moldova, Romania, Türkiye or the Russian Federation. Personnel of other international organizations and citizens of participating States were also offered the possibility to join OSCE convoys whenever possible. The Organization worked closely with the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other organizations to bring people to safety. Thanks to support from Türkiye, those evacuated through the Russian Federation were then flown to Istanbul to facilitate their onward journeys. OSCE staff were afforded psychosocial care at reception centres in Moldova, Romania and Türkiye.

⁸ According to Permanent Council decision 1455

FROM CONFLICT RESOLUTION TO FIELD AND PROJECT SUPPORT

In other regions, the CPC continued its work to support the OSCE's field operations and to assist with conflict resolution activities. It also provided programming and project management support to the Secretariat and field operations and oversaw the OSCE's portfolio of 187 active extra-budgetary projects with a value of 276 million Euros (figure as per the end of October 2022).

In the South Caucasus, increased attention went into supporting the efforts of the Special Representative for the South Caucasus, the OSCE's involvement in the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in Ergneti, and the Geneva International Discussions (GID) dealing with the consequences of the 2008 war in Georgia. As in previous years, a CPC representative co-moderated the GID Working Group on humanitarian affairs.

The CPC also supported the OSCE Minsk Process, and backed conflict resolution efforts by the OSCE Mission to Moldova and the Special Representative for the Transdnisterian Settlement Process.

In Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, the annual regional meetings of heads of field operations once again proved an essential platform to discuss regional dynamics. The meeting in South-Eastern Europe highlighted cross-border activities, the OSCE's trust-building work and how to most effectively tackle violence against women and girls. In this region, a people-centred approach remained at the heart of the CPC's work, as exemplified by its support for the Regional Housing Programme. This Programme, extended until June 2023, has enabled the delivery of just over 10,000 housing units (with a final target of 11,400), aiding roughly 28,000 vulnerable people. The CPC also provided strategic guidance and hands-on co-ordination for the Regional Trial Monitoring Project in South-Eastern Europe, which monitored around 200 organized crime and corruption cases in its first full year of operation.

The annual meeting of heads of field operations in Central Asia put a spotlight on the implications of developments in Ukraine and Afghanistan for Central Asia. Two flagship projects in the region, the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe and the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, received dedicated support from the CPC for their efforts to offer opportunities for synergies and joint action, regionally and OSCE-wide. Responding to the situation in neighbouring Afghanistan, the CPC continued to co-ordinate the *Response to the Implications of Afghanistan for the OSCE Region' Framework* (RIAOR). Together with other OSCE offices, the CPC worked on a package of extra-budgetary projects focused on Central Asian participating States, aiming at reducing risks, addressing vulnerabilities and fostering opportunities for better regional connectivity and for energy security. Also in Central Asia, the CPC and UNHCR trained OSCE field staff on the joint OSCE-UNHCR Protection Checklist, to help identify the protection needs of displaced persons and to build more effective co-operation in addressing forced displacement.

IMPLEMENTING THE CONFLICT CYCLE MANDATE

As mandated by Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 on Elements of the Conflict Cycle, the CPC delivered regular and ad hoc early warning analysis to the Secretary General and the OSCE Chair. This assistance can be highlighted with the support given to the Secretary General when issuing the early warning to participating States in mid-February 2022 prior the full-scale war against Ukraine, leading to the anticipation of the evacuation of the SMM members.

Together with the Department of Management and Finance, the CPC oversaw the establishment of a Strategic Asset Reserve, which makes use of some assets formerly held by the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, such as vehicles, personal protective gear and communications equipment. These can be used for rapid crisis response in the OSCE region.

In October, the CPC organized the fifth OSCE Mediation Course, which addressed such topics as the mediation of water conflicts, psychological aspects of mediation and dealing with dilemmas in mediation settings. It also held its first mentoring programme on mediation and dialogue facilitation for staff of the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, who were trained on process design and networking.

ACROSS THE DNIESTR RIVER: NEGOTIATION SKILLS FOR WOMEN NEGOTIATORS

The CPC and the Mission to Moldova trained 16 women negotiators involved in the Transdnisterian settlement process on gender-sensitive conflict analysis and interest-based negotiation skills. Aside from building their capacities, participants had the chance to foster relationships and trust between women negotiators from both sides.

FURTHER PROGRESS ON POLITICO-MILITARY COMMITMENTS

The FSC Support and the Communications and Technology Units continued their work to support the participating States in implementing CSBMs. Those measures include the Vienna Document, addressing military force postures and activities; documents on small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA); the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security; and the principles of non-proliferation.

Via the OSCE Communications Network, the CPC facilitated the secure exchange of military and cyber-related information, and reported on the implementation of CSBMs, thereby supporting the analysis of military data exchanged by participating States. The CPC also continued developing its Information Management and Reporting System (iMARS), a tool to improve the capacity of participating States to access and analyse exchanged military information and notifications. A learning tool, the *FSC E-Learning Project*, has been made permanently available online, offering easy access to FSC decisions and related documents. All eight introductory modules are available in English and Russian.

As in previous years, the OSCE, together with other international organizations in Vienna, organized the [Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme](#) to teach participants about conflict prevention and resolution through arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the OSCE area. In 2022, 152 young, mostly female, professionals took part in the eight-week programme, representing 51 OSCE participating States and 10 Partners for Co-operation. The graduates testified to the quality of the programme, calling it “empowering and motivating” and “one of the most enriching experiences of my life”). A related, one-week course providing more in-depth training attracted 44 women participants to come to Vienna and be empowered to ‘*step up for peace and security*’.

“I see there is such an immense need for female engagement in approaching issues such as arms control and disarmament. This programme intensified my belief that there is space for women to be the agents of change.”

Roqia Noori, programme participant from Afghanistan

Another activity aimed at strengthening Ukraine’s safety and security with regard to biological weapons, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1540. Supported financially by the European Union, the OSCE developed legislative proposals, produced a training course for life scientists, equipped a multimedia facility and piloted an online training platform on this issue. After the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine was not extended, the CPC took the lead on these activities.

Across the OSCE region, 20 SALW- and SCA-related assistance projects were conducted with CPC assistance, at a total cost of over 40 million Euros. They addressed a wide range of security and safety risks stemming from conventional ammunition, explosive material and toxic rocket fuel components; degraded physical infrastructure and poor stockpile management; the presence of explosive remnants of war and landmines; and illicit trafficking in SALW.

Transnational threats

Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats: **Ambassador Alena Kupchyna**

Financial resources: **€2,769,600** (based on Unified Budget adopted in 2021), **€3,344,013** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **25** international and **13** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/secretariat/cyber-ict-security

www.osce.org/secretariat/terrorism

www.osce.org/secretariat/policing

www.osce.org/secretariat/borders

The Transnational Threats Department supports the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation in their efforts to address transnational threats, with a focus on combating terrorism, enhancing border security and management, building law enforcement capacity — including in addressing transnational organized crime — and strengthening cyber/ICT security. In 2022, the Department assisted the participating States in fulfilling their commitments by carrying out capacity-building projects, sharing information and good practices, and convening expert meetings.

JOINING EFFORTS TO PROTECT INFRASTRUCTURE FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS WHILE RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Working with the OSCE field operations in Central Asia, the United Nations and INTERPOL, the Department brought together experts from all participating States in this region, as well as Mongolia, for a workshop aimed at strengthening regional co-operation in protecting critical infrastructure and ‘soft’ targets from terrorist attacks. The timing of the event was fitting: in January, a power outage had swept across Central Asia, disrupting the lives of millions and highlighting the importance of resilient infrastructure and cross-border co-operation.

Human rights were at the centre of the event. “States are right to take action to protect vulnerable targets from terrorist attacks — indeed, their obligation to do so is grounded in international human rights law, including obligations with respect to the right to life,” said a representative of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism at the workshop. “Any such action — whether preventative or responsive — must itself be consistent with international human rights law and gender-sensitive,” she highlighted.

CLAMPING DOWN ON TRAFFICKING IN CULTURAL PROPERTY

With its close links to transnational organized crime and terrorist financing, international money laundering and corruption networks, the trafficking of cultural property is a serious international security threat. Expanding a programme it launched in 2021, the Department developed new training courses and led a task force of international partner organizations, border and law enforcement agencies, academia and museums to tackle this global security threat.

A particular hotspot was the destruction and looting of art, antiquities and cultural sites in Ukraine. The Department worked with partner organizations to help protect and preserve the country’s rich cultural heritage and delivered capacity-building workshops in Ukraine’s neighbouring states to strengthen co-operation in the region. Ongoing work also includes facilitating the movement of protective equipment for museums and heritage objects to Ukraine.

While terrorists and criminals view the content of archaeological sites and museums as readily accessible sources of funding, the Department continues to help participating States and Partners for Co-operation to prevent such groups from accessing and trafficking these priceless pieces, to stop the destruction of the shared heritage of humanity and to dismantle the related financial streams.

FIGHTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

At a time when countries in South-Eastern Europe are working on implementing the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, a new project called Enhancing Criminal Justice Capacities for Combating Gender-based Violence in South-Eastern Europe is playing a key role as a regional platform for exchanging good practices and lessons learned on gender-based violence. The Department developed the project together with the Gender Issues Programme, ODIHR and the field operations in South-Eastern Europe. It recognizes that both criminal justice practitioners and the public are central in raising awareness of gender stereotypes and prejudices and aims to create organizational and cultural changes ultimately benefiting the victims. A law enforcement officer who took part in some of the project activities highlighted the need to address all forms of gender-based violence, not only domestic violence, adding that psychological violence, cyber violence and sexual harassment/violence had become more and more common and were difficult to detect, record and prosecute.

INCREASING TRAINING ON CYBER/ICT SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

Nearly 1,000 trainees enrolled in an e-learning course on cyber/ICT security confidence-building measures (CBMs), one of many online and offline training courses offered by the Department — highlighting the emphasis placed on such capacity-building opportunities — to address the complex interdependencies in cyberspace that transcend national borders. The Department developed an e-learning course on [CBM 16 \(co-ordinated vulnerability disclosure\)](#), a process by which vulnerability finders work together and share information with vendors and ICT infrastructure owners.

The Department published a report on [cyber incident classification](#) and, with the threat of COVID-19 slowly receding, resumed in-person training events, including a subregional training course on cyber/ICT security, a course on international cyber diplomacy and a workshop on CBM 15 (critical infrastructure protection).

Economic and environmental activities

Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities: **Ambassador Igli Hasani**

Financial resources: **€2,235,700** (based on Unified Budget adopted in 2021), **€2,669,803** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **17** international and **6** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/oceea

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The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) works on a broad array of topics in these two activity areas, such as promoting good economic and environmental governance; preventing and combating corruption; fostering digitalization and trade and transport connectivity; tackling socio-economic disparities, including economic empowerment of women; and promoting transboundary water co-operation and water diplomacy, disaster risk reduction, hazardous waste management and energy security.

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CENTRAL ASIA IN THE RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR

The energy sector is one of the least gender diverse sectors of the global economy. The Central Asian region is no exception. To promote the participation of women professionals in the energy sector, the OCEEA launched in 2022 the very first mentoring programme targeting Central Asian women employed in this increasingly important sector for the economies of the region. Designed to provide women with the knowledge, skills and networks to become change agents in the energy transition, the programme aims to promote a more inclusive and sustainable energy future for Central Asia.

Following a competitive selection process, the 30 women selected engaged regularly with mentors from all over the world to discuss the challenges they face in the energy sector and identify the best ways to advance their careers. Thanks to the programme, the mentees visited Vienna to participate in energy-related events. This was a unique opportunity for them to share their stories and connect with representatives from international organizations and executives from leading energy companies.

“Gender equality in the energy sector is not only an issue of fairness or inclusion,” says Giulia Manconi, associate energy security officer at the OCEEA. “Empowering women in the energy sector can help fight energy poverty, foster energy sustainability and accelerate the ongoing green transition process. This is vital to meeting both climate change and energy goals in Central Asia.”

Maral Sagynalieva, from Kyrgyzstan, explains the essence of the programme: “More opportunities for women are being created in the renewables sector. However, there is still a need to fight gender stereotypes in the energy sector, and mentoring plays a key role. The programme is equipping me with the skills and tools to bring constructive solutions to generate equal socio-economic benefits among all social groups.”

The mentoring programme is implemented in partnership with the Global Women’s Network for the Energy Transition and is part of an OSCE extrabudgetary project on promoting women’s economic empowerment in the energy sector for energy security and sustainability in Central Asia.

MITIGATING THE RISKS OF THE LAUNDERING OF VIRTUAL ASSETS

Cryptocurrencies and virtual assets are becoming the tools of choice for criminals to launder their unlawful proceeds. Cryptocurrency-based crime hit new record levels in 2021, with illicit addresses receiving an estimated US\$14 billion.⁹

To help participating States find innovative policy solutions to mitigate security risks associated with the laundering of virtual assets, the OCEEA launched a new initiative targeting countries with steadily expanding virtual assets markets and the aggressively growing illegal cryptocurrencies mining sector.

As part of the project, representatives from law enforcement agencies in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine acquired the skills necessary to prevent and proactively investigate illegal activities that use virtual assets.

“The ability of national authorities to counter vulnerabilities of virtual assets for money laundering is crucial, especially in these turbulent times,” said Lorenzo Rilasciati, Senior Economic Officer at the OCEEA. “Thanks to this project, practitioners from the national law enforcement and financial supervision agencies of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine can access best practices and effective solutions already developed by other participating States in this field.”

Yulia Parkhomenko, Director of the Digital Economy Directorate of Ukraine’s Ministry of Digital Transformation, said: “For Ukraine, the initiative launched by OCEEA provides much-needed support to our national efforts in the fight against money laundering. Through capacity-building activities and technical expertise, our financial intelligence unit and financial sector supervisors can now be a step ahead of criminals who use the digital space for money laundering.”

Implemented jointly with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the project stands out as an example of the commitment of both organizations to continue supporting governments in preventing and addressing the security risks associated with the laundering of illicit proceeds by criminal networks.

SEIZING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF THE DIGITAL AND SOCIAL ECONOMY

Promoting a new generation of digital change-makers is necessary for a post-pandemic socio-economic recovery and the core objective of the YDEAS project, kickstarted in 2022. By providing opportunities for youth aged 18 to 25 to upskill, network, and participate in exchanges and mutual learning, the project intends to boost entrepreneurial opportunities for social innovation that have the potential to reduce inequalities in the Western Balkans. YDEAS kicked off in spring in Tirana, Albania, the 2022 European Youth Capital. Later in the year, in November, 80 young people met in Ohrid, North Macedonia, and enthusiastically embraced a social economy model that promises to be a critical catalyst for a much-needed reset in their communities.

In a region suffering from rapid population decline and youth emigration — especially on the part of educated young people — social entrepreneurship offers an answer to the lack of opportunities that is driving them to leave. Based on social and environmental objectives, participatory governance, solidarity and the reinvestment of most profits, the social economy business model demonstrates an

⁹ As stated in [Chainanalysis, “Crypto Crime Trends for 2022: Illicit Transaction Activity Reaches All-Time High in Value, All-Time Low in Share of All Cryptocurrency Activity”, 6 January 2022](#).

intense cultural shift that recognizes the importance of relations between societies across the world, and between humans and their ecosystems.

A tangible result of this change is the rapid spread of various forms of economics that are based on mutual relationships that give businesses a different purpose, one that benefits communities, institutions, the planet and individuals, while still being highly profitable. Such a social economy contributes about 7 per cent to the world's gross domestic product, according to a 2017 report by the United Nations Secretary General on co-operatives in social development.

Throughout Europe, the social economy is a major economic player, with 2.8 million businesses, ranging from small and medium-sized enterprises to large groups spanning across the European Union. YDEAS aims to continue investing in young people's capacities and skills, while engaging in a policy-relevant dialogue to build an enabling business climate for social enterprises, particularly at the regional and local levels.

A special way of looking at things

In his youth, Aleksandar Momiroski had a sudden realization. Always interested in being an entrepreneur, he discovered that he had a different approach to business, one that set him apart from some of his peers but also brought him closer to others. He was 20 years old at the time.

"I was selected for the scholarship at the European Innovation Academy [EIA] in Turin," he says. "We were the first ones ever from the Western Balkans region to participate in the EIA's acceleration programme. In this 'melting pot' I could feel strongly that we, the 'Balkaners', had somehow our own special way to look at things, not better, not worse, but special. And we all felt and grew together in this spirit of being one single community."

Today, Aleksandar is the CEO of Solar Data Collector, a start-up creating solutions for advanced forecasting, monitoring, optimizing and managing photovoltaic systems. His path was laid when he became one of 18 awardees of the OSCE Scholarship Programme, an initiative created by the YDEAS project in 2018. This Programme enables awardees from the Western Balkans to attend the EIA's Summer Acceleration Programme. The YDEAS project was extended in 2022 to give 30 young people the same chance.

Four years after his experience in Turin, Aleksandar looks back at how it shaped his career and personal growth. "In Italy, I learned a lot about how to run a start-up and how to choose the right strategies. But most of all, I met people from all over the world and could benefit from their different way of thinking and addressing challenges. I believe this was one of the most striking aspects of this whole experience," he says.

"In addition to learning technical skills, what I cherish most from this experience are two lessons: first, to not be afraid of failing. Mistakes are our best friends, as they allow us to learn and advance. The biggest risk is not taking any risk," Aleksandar reflects. "The second is a deep sense of gratitude and the urgency to give back. Whenever I have the opportunity to speak to young people about my start-up adventure, I try to motivate, support, encourage and reassure my younger peers."

And indeed, Aleksandar has moved up from participant to mentor of young people in the Ideathon, organized by the YDEAS project in Ohrid, North Macedonia, in November 2022. There, 80 youth explored how digitalization and the right mindset can bring about social change.

Combating trafficking in human beings

Special Representative and Co-ordinator: **Valiant Richey**

Financial resources: **€1,073,700** (based on Unified Budget adopted in 2021), **€72,100** (additional provisional expenditure authorization),¹⁰ **€555,058** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **14** international and **4** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/cthb

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The fight against human trafficking has been a central OSCE activity for many years. The Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings assists the Organization’s participating States in their efforts to prevent this crime, investigate and prosecute perpetrators and protect victims. The war against Ukraine dramatically increased the trafficking risk and consequently dominated the Office’s agenda in 2022.

FAST RESPONSE BY OSCE TO PREVENT TRAFFICKING OF UKRAINIANS

The war against Ukraine sparked the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II and created a prime opportunity for human traffickers. A key target for them was the more than 400,000 Ukrainians who crossed into neighbouring Moldova within a few weeks after the war broke out.

Desperation is exactly what traffickers leverage when they recruit new victims. With more than 400,000 Ukrainians crossing into Moldova following the start of the conflict, Moldova faced an unprecedented challenge. The arrival of so many people was the equivalent of a sudden population increase of nearly 15 per cent. More than 100,000 refugees have remained in Moldova in 2022, half of them children.

In this difficult situation, Moldova and Moldovans reacted with unwavering solidarity. The help offered by private citizens, who took in 90 per cent of the refugees, and the quick action of the authorities were the key elements of the country’s response. However, key challenges remained: for example, how to secure education and childcare for 50,000 newly arrived children. Without childcare, single mothers cannot easily find employment and, again, can fall prey to traffickers.

Responding rapidly to the trafficking risks, the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings met anti-trafficking stakeholders from government, international organizations and civil society at a co-ordination meeting organized by the Mission to Moldova. His Office also organized a workshop to help Moldova implement the OSCE’s anti-trafficking recommendations, and facilitated the first-ever parliamentary hearing to strengthen the country’s effectiveness in combating trafficking.

Together with the media corporation Thomson Reuters, the Office launched [Be Safe](#), an online public awareness campaign that offers Ukrainian refugees critical information on how to avoid becoming a victim of human trafficking. The Mission to Moldova helped spread information about the campaign online and printed posters that were distributed to government agencies and NGOs.

¹⁰ According to Permanent Council decision 1455

AFTER 20 YEARS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTION, OSCE-WIDE REPORT UNVEILS PROGRESS AND SHORTCOMINGS

A new report published by the Special Representative's Office in 2022 revealed how human trafficking has evolved since the adoption of the first internationally recognized definition of this crime 20 years earlier. The [OSCE's 2021 Survey Report](#) also detailed the progress participating States had made in combating human trafficking, and outlined additional actions that could make a better impact.

The OSCE's first anti-trafficking commitments, which also date back two decades, guided States' actions; these commitments have grown considerably over the years in scope and ambition. And so has the scale of this crime, whose profits in recent years have increased fivefold, reaching US\$150 billion annually according to the International Labour Organization.

One of the Report's key findings is that technology has become the single greatest facilitator of human trafficking, increasing its scale and altering forms of exploitation. However, only 23 countries in the OSCE region require online platforms to identify and remove content depicting child sexual abuse, and only seven reported having laws in place to hold technology companies accountable for knowingly facilitating trafficking. The Report concludes that much more action was needed to curb the misuse of technology.

The Survey Report also revealed that States were falling short of their commitments to combat child trafficking (almost no policy action taken in the last five years) and to discourage the demand fostering sexual exploitation (no criminal justice or prevention measures identified in 19 countries despite the fact that there is an international obligation to have such measures in place).

In some areas, though, States are making strong progress, according to the Report. For example, the number of countries leveraging their public procurement practices to prevent the purchase of goods and services extracted from trafficked labour has doubled since 2015.

Overall, the Report revealed that further success was limited by resource constraints, indicating a need for stronger political will to prioritize anti-trafficking work.

Gender equality

Senior Advisor on Gender Issues: **Lara Scarpitta**

Financial resources: **€437,100** (based on Unified Budget adopted in 2021), **€967,270** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **10** international and **3** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/secretariat/gender

The OSCE seeks to mainstream gender in all its programmes, projects and activities and to support participating States in key areas, such as implementing the women, peace and security agenda; combating violence against women and girls; and promoting women's economic empowerment.

NEW PILOT PROGRAMME LAUNCHED TO ENGAGE WOMEN IN PEACE PROCESSES

A new flagship initiative, the Women's Peace Leadership Programme, was kicked off in October, aimed at strengthening women's meaningful participation in peace-building, mediation and negotiation processes. Experienced women mediators and peace-builders worked with participants from all over the OSCE region and Afghanistan, a partner country, to help empower the next generation of women leaders to participate and lead peace processes. The programme aims to create an inclusive space for participants to engage in peer-to-peer exchanges based on tailor-made capacity-building and training activities.

"A leading role for women at the peacebuilding table is not a benefit, it is a necessity. No peace process can be successful without their active participation," OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid said at the launch of the initiative. "However, we are still far from that. Women peace-builders, mediators and even leaders are often largely isolated. Given that women make up half the population, bringing their experience and unique perspectives to the table is crucial for building sustainable peace. The OSCE Women's Peace Leadership Programme will support women's agency in peace processes at all levels. Their contributions need to be fully recognized".

The initiative is a key project of the OSCE Secretary General's Networking Platform for Women Leaders, launched in December 2021, and part of the multi-year project WIN — Women and Men Innovating and Networking for Gender Equality — which is aimed at strengthening comprehensive security through innovating and networking for gender equality.

"The reward of the Peace Leadership Programme is seeing that the issues we are working on are being resolved, that women who work on the grass-roots level at this very moment are heard and their experiences are accounted for. I am using my privilege of being part of this programme to make sure that the prominent role of women in Ukraine in response to the crisis is acknowledged and respected."

Hanna Manoilenko, from Ukraine, programme participant

TRAINING ALBANIA'S OFFICIALS ON GENDER–CORRUPTION LINK

Corruption is not gender-neutral and has pervasive and long-lasting effects on women, limiting their access to basic services and employment. It also increases their risk to being exposed to physical and psychological violence and abuse. A 2021 discussion paper by the Secretariat's Gender Issues Programme explored the links between gender inequalities and corruption. In 2022, this initiative was followed up by a training course in Albania held in co-operation with the OSCE Presence there.

Building on the paper's recommendations, the OSCE worked with anti-corruption focal points at Albania's Justice Ministry to help them better define gender-sensitive anti-corruption measures in their policies. The event dovetailed with ongoing efforts by the country's National Co-ordinator against Corruption to develop a 2023–2030 national anti-corruption strategy for Albania. The training course, also part of the above-mentioned WIN project, was attended by ministry officials, law enforcement agencies and other state institutions dealing with Albania's anti-corruption activities.

ENHANCING PROTECTION AND RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The OSCE is committed to fighting against all forms of violence against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence. Responding to a request from Ukrainian women who work in peace-building, in October, the Gender Issues Programme organized a meeting for 20 activists in Bosnia and Herzegovina who work with the OSCE Mission there. The activists from both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ukraine, shared their experiences and lessons learned, and discussed tools to effectively address gender-based violence in wartime. This was the first event as part of a Programme initiative to provide a platform where women human rights activists working on violence against women and girls can talk about how to respond to such violence in times of conflict. This activity is also part of the WIN project.

“The OSCE initiative provides a safe space where women human rights activists can exchange experiences, listen and support each other, form solidarity alliances and bring forth new strategies in combating gender-based violence.”

Gorana Mlinarevic, human rights defender from Bosnia and Herzegovina

Human resources

Director: **Paolo Bernasconi**

Financial resources: **€4,171,600** (based on Unified Budget adopted in 2021), **€15,160** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **15** international and **26** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

A capable, diverse and committed workforce is the backbone of the OSCE. The Department of Human Resources supports the Organization's executive structures in delivering their work by recruiting, managing, developing and retaining dedicated staff while applying a robust human resource regulatory framework.

In 2022, the Department continued to ensure cohesive and efficient people strategies across the OSCE, and to recruit and retain the best talent to deliver on its mandate.

The evacuation of staff from Ukraine and the closure of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Office of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine put considerable strain on the Department's staff. The Department worked in close co-operation with HR colleagues at these two field operations and provided psychological and medical support on-site at reception centres in Türkiye and Moldova.

With regard to the Department's ongoing work, special effort was made to shorten recruitment lead times, to increase geographic balance and the proportion of qualified female candidates, and to make the hiring process more effective overall. Based on international best practices, the Department updated its policies to promote a performance-based and values-driven organizational culture, and an inclusive workplace where staff feel free to speak up without fear of retaliation. Particular attention was paid to maintaining a respectful and professional work environment, and to ensuring a zero-tolerance policy on harassment and a victim-/survivor-centred approach.

The Department continued to focus on learning and development opportunities for staff members. Across the OSCE, it made efforts to further improve staff onboarding, enhance leadership development and foster an organizational culture of diversity and inclusion. Revised Staff Instructions enabled internal mobility by providing for a smoother temporary exchange of staff among executive structures and flexible working arrangements based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 period.

The Department established a dedicated human resource analytics function that strengthened evidence-based decision-making and policy refinements, and helped provide timely visibility to process bottlenecks. New systems were introduced to automate the onboarding of new staff and to track employee engagement throughout the employee life cycle.

Through its Occupational Safety and Health team, the Department continued to safeguard staff's physical and mental health, and successfully completed several COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. To boost workforce resilience in a post-COVID world, health and well-being interventions have become a core element of the department's HR strategy.

PROMOTING AN ETHICAL WORKPLACE CULTURE

The Secretariat's Ethics function continued to promote an ethical workplace culture in the OSCE. In 2022, this included 29 recommendations to the Secretary General on requests for activities needing authorization under the OSCE Code of Conduct. The Ethics Co-ordinator also provided confidential consultations and advisory services on over 50 occasions, supporting officials in navigating ethical dilemmas and workplace concerns.

Management and finance

Director: **Gelfiya Shchienko**

Financial resources: **€11,445,400** (Provisional Expenditure Authorization), **€39,921** (extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: **25** international and **66** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/secretariat

The Department of Management and Finance supports all OSCE executive structures in the delivery of their mandates, thereby contributing to security and co-operation in the Organization's region. Its work is based on operational excellence, a spirit of continuous improvement and innovation, and a relentless pursuit of efficiencies through the simplification and streamlining of operations, backed by strong internal control and risk management frameworks.

The Department has a three-pronged mandate: it provides administrative, procurement, logistics, facilities management, information technology and financial services; it develops and maintains the OSCE's Common Regulatory Management System; and it provides oversight in the form of a so-called 'second line of defence' — a dedicated risk management and compliance system. These roles are equally important in ensuring the efficient and effective delivery of the Organization's mandate.

Despite the challenges of an unapproved budget and rapidly rising inflation that marked 2022 — and while working under unprecedented financial constraints — the Department continued to provide uninterrupted service, support and advice to internal stakeholders and the participating States. Another challenge for the Department was the timely and orderly closure of two OSCE field operations in Ukraine, including the Organization's largest-ever mission. Reacting to changing workloads stemming from the mission closures, the Department reduced or reassigned staff and pursued emerging opportunities to restore and strengthen support for field operations impacted by previous budget restrictions.

In the budget and finance area, the Department worked closely with the executive structures on the preparation and timely delivery of all Unified Budget–cycle documents. The Department also fully supported the participating States in ensuring the use of funds in a manner that is compliant with the Common Regulatory Management System. It provided high-quality accounting, treasury and extrabudgetary contribution management services. The OSCE's 2021 financial statements, which were submitted on time, received an unqualified audit opinion from the external auditor.

The Department also helps the executive structures manage their material resources by providing client support on procurement, assets, logistics, travel and facilities management services and policy guidance. An end-to-end online travel solution was integrated into Oracle/IRMA, as was a self-booking-tool called Cytric, so that travellers and travel arrangers can create travel-related documents in a single system with no paper transaction.

To ensure that the Organization was able to deliver its mandate in an efficient and effective manner, the Department continued to deliver essential ICT services. In 2022, most executive structures migrated to a new secure Microsoft infrastructure computing environment, and the Department completed a major multi-year upgrade of the Organization's enterprise resource planning system.

The Department continued carrying out its activities as a second line of defence, as well as risk management and information security procedures, to promote the efficient and effective use of OSCE financial and material resources. It updated and revised the internal control walkthrough process guidelines, co-ordinated the review and update of administrative risks and controls, trained

programme managers at the Secretariat on risk management, and started a pilot project to embed risks and controls within the Unified Budget outcomes for the Secretariat.

Internal Oversight

Director: **Susanne Frueh**

Financial resources: **€1,828,900** (based on Unified Budget adopted in 2021), **€32,700** (additional provisional expenditure authorization)¹¹

Staff: **12** international and **3** local fixed-term staff members (as of 31 December 2022)

www.osce.org/oio/evaluation

The Office of Internal Oversight is an integral part of the OSCE's three-tier oversight system, also known as the “three lines of defence”. It plays a key role in promoting efficient and effective management practices within the Organization. An external, independent Audit Committee complements and oversees the Office's internal work, while external auditors make sure that the OSCE's annual financial statements are accurate.

IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND MANAGING RISKS

The Office continued to deliver three core services to the OSCE's executive structures and activities: internal audits; investigations; and independent evaluations of operations, activities, outputs and progress towards outcomes.

Its work provided assurance to the participating States of the adequacy of governance, risk management and internal control processes, and of the results achieved by the Organization in the delivery of its mandates. The Office also formulated a number of recommendations aimed at improving organizational performance, and monitored their implementation on a regular basis.

In addition to this, as in previous years, the Office helped to protect the Organization against fraud and corruption by ensuring that allegations of fraud or other misconduct were addressed in a timely manner through professional investigations.

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF EVALUATION AND LEARNING IN THE OSCE

Evaluations help the Organization to make informed, and hence better, decisions, to use limited resources strategically and to continuously learn about what works, what does not work and how to adapt to changing circumstances. In November 2022, the OSCE introduced a new evaluation policy that aligns the Organization with the norms and standards for evaluation used in the United Nations system. This was an important milestone in the OSCE's efforts to promote a strong culture of evaluation and learning across the Organization.

“A healthy culture of evaluation is crucial to ensuring that the Organization is effective and keeps on being relevant now and in the future.”

Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid

The Office continued to deliver capacity-building, backstopping and advisory services to the OSCE Evaluation Network, a vibrant community of practice established in 2013 that brings together 100 staff and mission members from all executive structures. The Evaluation Network gives participants

¹¹ According to Permanent Council decision 1455

an opportunity to reflect on achievements, promote peer-to-peer learning and plan how to further strengthen the Organization's decentralized evaluation function.

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT FUNCTION

The International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing of the Institute of Internal Auditors represent the key normative framework for the practice of internal auditing. These standards require an external assessment at least once every five years to confirm that the internal auditing function conforms with the Standards as well as with the Institute's Code of Ethics, which outlines the principles and expectations that should govern the behaviour of those conducting internal audits.

In line with this requirement, the OSCE Internal Audit function performed a self-assessment in 2022, which was independently reviewed and validated by a member office of the network of heads of internal audit in international organizations in Europe. The Office of Internal Oversight passed the review successfully.

PARTNERSHIPS

Security in the OSCE region is inseparably linked to that of neighbouring regions and can be strengthened through dialogue and the sharing of commitments, resources and expertise. The OSCE maintains privileged relations with 11 Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and continues to build on its extensive network of co-operative relationships with other international and regional organizations.

Asian Partners for Co-operation

Afghanistan, Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Thailand

Chair, OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group: Sweden

ASIAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION GROUP

The 2022 Chair of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation, Sweden, focused its programme on an enhanced and open dialogue and building stronger relationships based on the priorities for both the Swedish and Polish OSCE Chairpersonships. The Group held four meetings in Vienna in 2022, at which participating States and Asian Partners engaged in discussions on key security issues. They also convened one additional ad hoc meeting to discuss the situation in Afghanistan.

The priorities of the 2022 Chair mirrored the Asian Partners' common interests in achieving comprehensive security. In line with this, four thematic areas of special interest were singled out: climate and security; women, peace and security; countering transnational organized crime; and the role of civil society in strengthening co-operation between the OSCE and Asian Partners. As security critically deteriorated in the OSCE region throughout the year, Sweden adjusted its programme to prioritize the most pressing issues. As a result, the war against Ukraine was a central aspect of every meeting of the Co-operation Group. On 3 June, the Swedish Chair convened a special meeting of the Group following the Secretary General's report to the Permanent Council a day earlier on the response to the implications of Afghanistan for the OSCE region.

YOUNG DIPLOMATS FROM ASIAN AND MEDITERRANEAN PARTNER COUNTRIES GET IN-DEPTH LOOK AT OSCE

In September, five young diplomats from Australia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Thailand took part in a two-week study programme designed by the OSCE specifically for Partners for Co-operation countries, to give them a better understanding of and insight into the Organization's mandate and activities. The participants learned about the OSCE's values, principles, commitments and competencies and visited several of the Organization's institutions. Briefings by OSCE delegations and staff on the history and structure of the Organization were also on the programme, as were presentations on activities in the areas of gender equality, youth, economic and environmental issues, transnational threats and the fight against human trafficking. A highlight for the participants was the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, which enabled them to learn more about human rights and fundamental freedoms in the OSCE area.

A PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP: JAPAN CELEBRATES THREE DECADES AS AN ASIAN PARTNER

Japan was the first country to establish special relations with the then-Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), participating as a guest at the Helsinki Summit in July 1992. This makes it the longest-standing Asian Partner. Since 1992, the country has been invited to participate in the Senior Council, the Permanent Council, the Forum for Security Co-operation, Summit meetings, review and preparatory meetings, and OSCE Ministerial Councils. Sweden, the Co-operation Group Chair, celebrated Japan's privileged relationship at an anniversary event on 22 July 2022, highlighting key elements of co-operation between the OSCE and Japan that contributed to strengthening human security, confidence building and multilateralism in the OSCE region and beyond.

2022 OSCE ASIAN CONFERENCE

Strengthening security for all and by all and finding synergies and opportunities for co-operation between Europe and Asia was the topic of the 2022 OSCE Asian Conference, which took place on 15 June 2022, hosted by Sweden with support from the OSCE Secretariat. As in the previous year, the conference was held in a blended format (in Vienna and online). In her opening address, Ann Linde, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, reminded the 140 participants of her country's commitment to acting together with other countries to stop Russia's war against Ukraine. Key themes of the conference were the role of women in building confidence, peace and security; climate-related challenges to security; and the role of civil society in strengthening co-operation between the OSCE and its Asian Partners.

"What happens in the OSCE region affects the surrounding world, and vice versa. Over the past year we have seen clear examples of this. The ongoing unprovoked and unjustified Russian aggression against Ukraine not only causes immense human suffering and widespread destruction within Ukraine. It also entails a security crisis that has impacts on global security far beyond Ukraine's and the wider OSCE region's borders."

*Ann Linde, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden,
2022 OSCE Asian Conference*

Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia

Chair, OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group: **North Macedonia**

MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION GROUP

After the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years, North Macedonia, as the 2022 Chair of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group, set out to re-energize the dialogue with the OSCE Mediterranean Partners.

Key highlights included three meetings of the Group to promote dialogue on a range of crucial topics. These included the role of women and youth in fostering security, the OSCE's work in the field of cyber/ICT security, co-operation with the Partners and the challenges caused by climate change, a central topic of the 2021 OSCE Ministerial Council.

These meetings were followed or complemented by a number of practical activities, such as simulation-based interactive training for young diplomats from the Mediterranean Partner countries and the participating States. ODIHR and the Office of the OSCE Secretary General organized this training in Skopje from 13 to 16 September, with the active involvement and support of North Macedonia.

The Partnership Fund supported these and several other activities in 2022, as well as the participation of speakers from Partner countries in the meetings of the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group. The Fund also continued to support activities and projects in the field of youth engagement and women's empowerment, as well as in the broad area of transnational challenges and threats.

With the support of several participating States, including the Polish OSCE Chair, a new edition of the ODIHR-run Young Political Advisors Course for young professionals from the Mediterranean region took place in March 2022.

2022 OSCE MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE

On the initiative of the Group's Chair, North Macedonia, the Mediterranean Conference, held on 24 and 25 October, returned to a Partner for Co-operation, Jordan, for the first time since 2015. It provided a long-awaited opportunity to boost the visibility of the OSCE in the Middle East and North Africa region. More than 200 participants from over 40 countries registered for the event, which opened with a high-level political segment that addressed security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region, highlighting the role of youth. Topics discussed at the event included the impact of the war against Ukraine on European and Mediterranean security, the nexus between climate change and security, new approaches to combating human trafficking and women's empowerment as a security-enhancing strategy.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Jordan and of North Macedonia opened the conference, together with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, who chaired the Asian Partners Group in 2022; and the OSCE Secretary General. Several deputy ministers from the Partners for Co-operation and the participating States, as well as other political representatives, participated

in the event, confirming the relevance of the Mediterranean Conference as a ministerial-level forum for regional dialogue.

“This year’s Mediterranean Conference shall also be a turning point. While our efforts to stop the war against Ukraine fall short in the warring face of the Russian Federation, this is not the time for defeatism, but for active engagement. We should use this forum to reiterate the security interdependence between our neighbouring regions, tackling together — constructively and in a spirit of true partnership — priorities that touch the lives of all of our citizens.”

Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia

Co-operation with International and Regional Organizations

The OSCE co-operates with a large network of international and regional organizations and institutions, amplifying its efforts to strengthen stability and security across its region and beyond. This co-operation allows for political dialogue, information exchange and the sharing of good practices. Working on an operational level with other international and regional bodies also creates synergies, maximizing the OSCE's impact while avoiding duplication.

CO-OPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS IN FOCUS

After two years of reduced in-person contacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, regular political dialogue and working-level consultations intensified in 2022. At the same time, the implications of the war against Ukraine prompted increased interaction and bilateral meetings between the Secretary General and senior United Nations officials. When the war began in February, the OSCE and the UN, as well as other international organizations, worked together and exchanged information during the evacuation of international members of the two OSCE field operations in Ukraine.

The 77th session of the UN General Assembly provided an important opportunity for the Secretary General to meet senior officials from the UN, the OSCE participating States and other international organizations, and to strengthen co-operation and multilateral efforts in the face of security challenges across the OSCE region. Secretary General Schmid met UN Secretary-General António Guterres and reiterated the OSCE's commitment to strengthening the Organization's long-standing and fruitful co-operation with the UN to address complex regional and global security challenges.

While Russia's war against Ukraine topped the agenda of these meetings, the work of the OSCE and other issues were also discussed, including terrorism, climate change and environmental degradation, gender and human trafficking. The Secretary General attended both the high-level meeting and the general debate at the 77th UN General Assembly session. She also spoke at side events on sexual violence in conflict, avoiding humanitarian crises through mediation, and human trafficking and sexual exploitation in the context of the war against Ukraine.

Another highlight was the Secretary General's address at an open debate on the role of regional organizations in implementing the women, peace and security agenda in the face of political turmoil and seizures of power by force, which she attended (online) in June at the invitation of the then-Albanian Presidency of the UN Security Council. This intervention reinforced Secretary General Schmid's strong commitment to implementing the women, peace and security agenda.

On the working level, consultations between the UN and the OSCE continued throughout the year on conflict prevention and resolution, as well as operational matters of mutual interest aimed at exploring future synergies for co-operation and enhanced co-ordination. Partnership with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime intensified with the successful implementation of the biannual Joint Action Plan for 2020–2022, including several joint activities and programmes. In September, the Secretary General also signed a partnership agreement between the OSCE and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism to strengthen regional co-operation on the use of passenger data to prevent terrorist travel, and the signing of a Biennial Action Plan between the two organizations that joins their forces in preventing and countering terrorism.

STRENGTHENED CO-OPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

Following the successful OSCE–EU High-Level Meeting in October 2021, both organizations strengthened their efforts with the creation of a joint working group aimed at sharing information and exploring new avenues for co-operation in a more structured manner. The new working group, in tandem with ad hoc dedicated meetings, intensified the interaction with the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs and the Directorate-General for International Partnerships.

High-level exchanges took place throughout the year. In June and October, Secretary General Schmid travelled to Brussels to meet high-level representatives from the EEAS and the European Commission.

The EU continued to provide strong support to OSCE activities in the form of extrabudgetary contributions. One prominent example is the successful regional trial monitoring project on combating organized crime and corruption in the Western Balkans, which the DG NEAR continued to fund in 2022. Another is the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe’s project to stabilize Tajikistan’s southern border region with Afghanistan, the second phase of which the FPI agreed to support financially. The FPI also made a commitment to support mine action in the framework of the OSCE Support Programme for Ukraine.

REINFORCED RELATIONSHIP WITH ORGANIZATIONS EAST AND WEST OF VIENNA

In 2022, with NATO’s new Strategic Concept calling for co-operation and co-ordination with the OSCE, both organizations maintained a fluid exchange of views across a wide variety of portfolios. Secretary General Schmid met NATO’s Deputy Secretary General, Mircea Geoană, on several occasions and agreed to strengthen co-operation on key topics, such as countering trafficking in human beings and promoting gender equality.

The Secretary General continued to meet with representatives of several other international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and Interpol.

In June and December, Secretary General Schmid met Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in Vienna. She also spoke in December at the Council’s Committee of Ministers’ Deputies.

The Secretary General met her counterpart from the Organization of Turkic States, Baghdad Amreyev, as well as, in March and November, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, Secretary General of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). The latter meetings focused on the implications of developments in Afghanistan for regional security and sustainable connectivity between Europe and Asia. In October, a representative of the OSCE Programme Office in Astana attended as an observer the sixth CICA Summit. At the 2022 OSCE Asian Conference in Vienna, in June, an expert speaker from the CICA Secretariat gave a presentation on confidence-building measures in the environmental dimension.

ANNEXES

OSCE STAFF AT A GLANCE

2,269 STAFF MEMBERS FROM 48 COUNTRIES WORKING IN 19 LOCATIONS IN THE OSCE AREA

262 INTERNATIONAL CONTRACTED STAFF¹²

329 INTERNATIONAL SECONDED STAFF

1,678 LOCALLY RECRUITED STAFF

(all full-time staff, as of 31 December 2022)

PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER PARITY

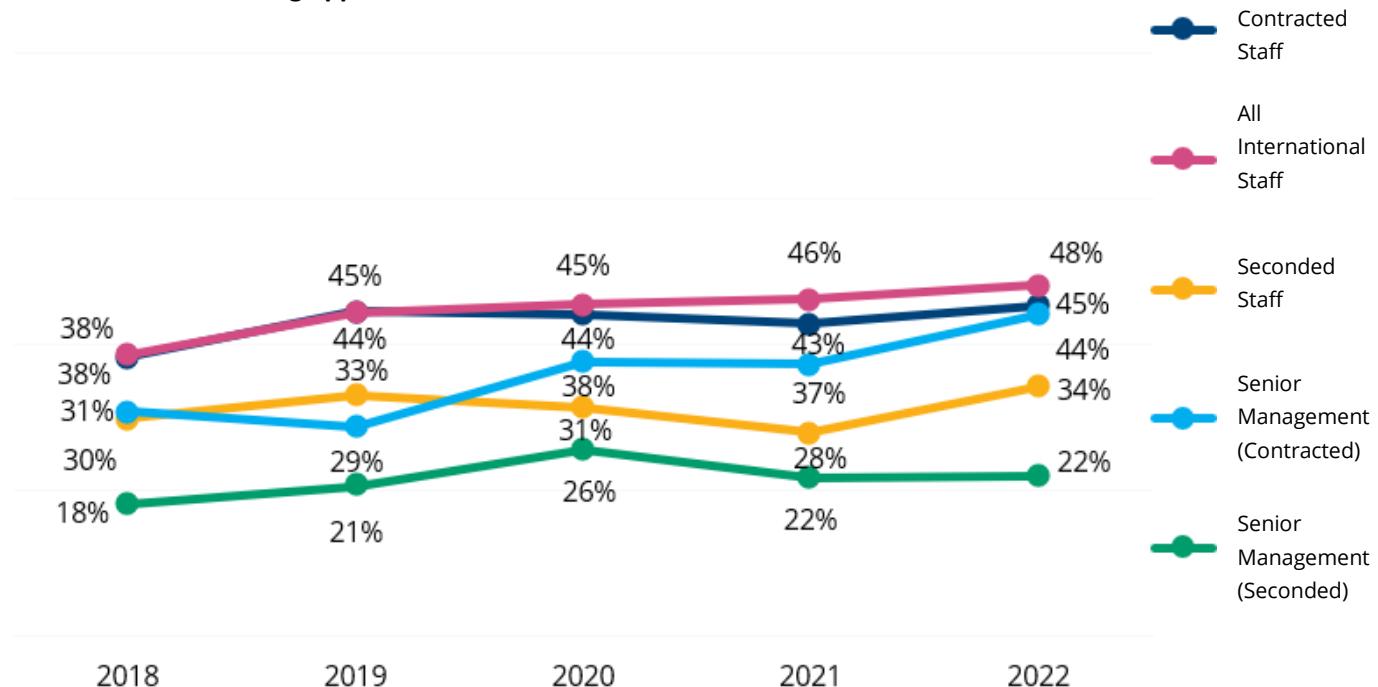
Attracting, hiring and retaining more women is a high priority for the OSCE..)

Share of women among active staff

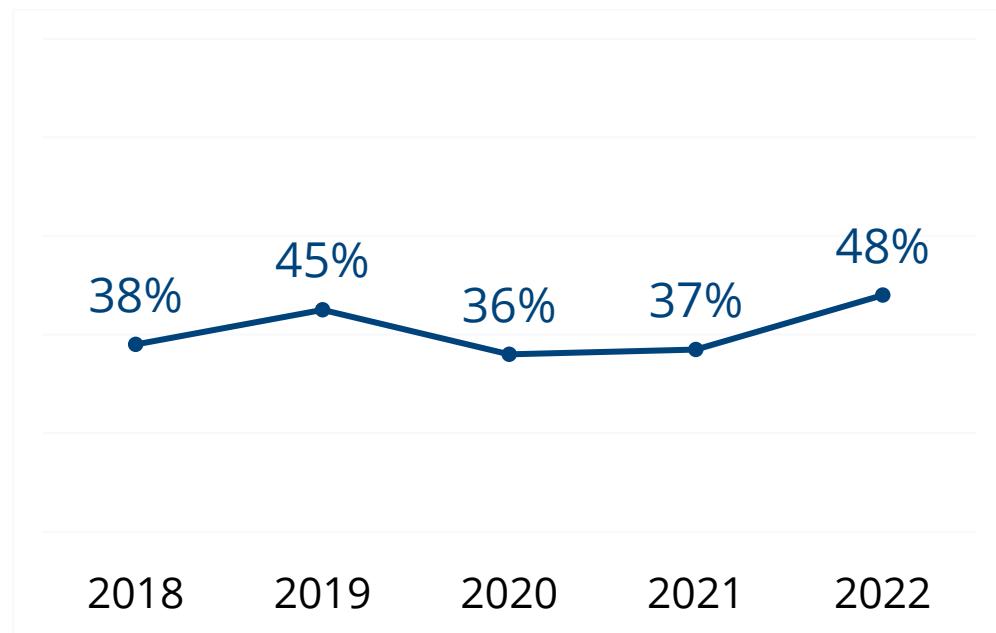


¹² The large big leap from 2021 to 2022 is due to the closure of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

Share of women among applicants



Share of women among new hires



International staff: staff holding a post in the professional and higher categories

Contracted staff: staff appointed on a direct contractual basis, grades P1 to P4

Seconded staff: staff members nominated for an assignment by or through an OSCE participating State, grades S to S3

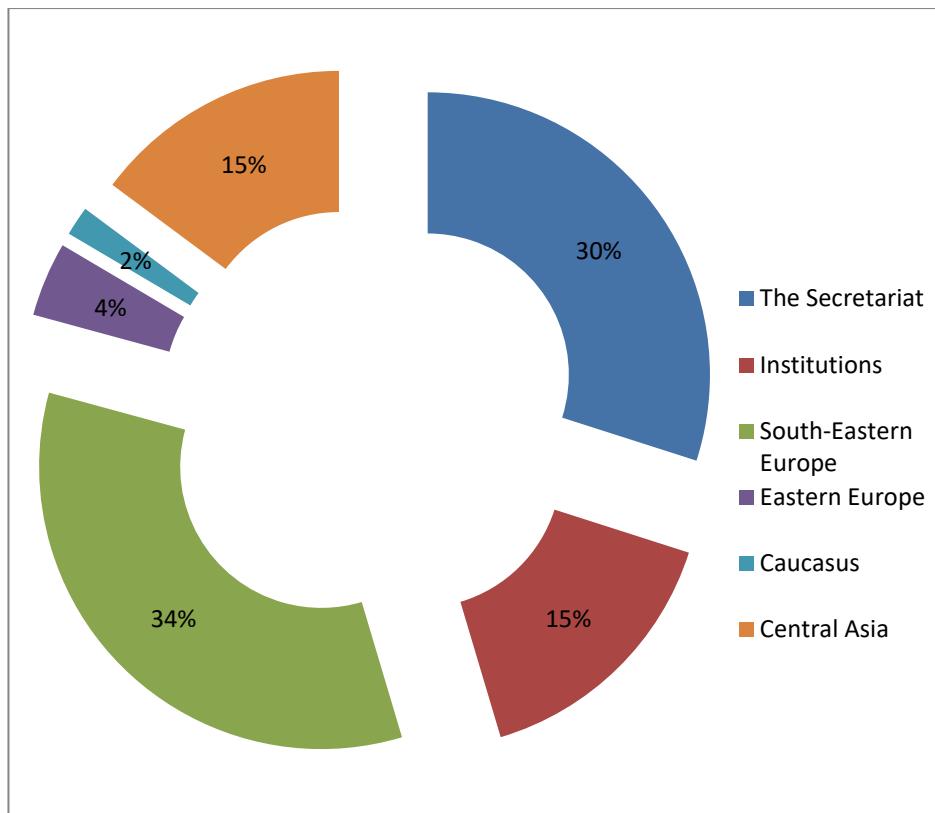
Senior Management: Grades S4, Deputy Head of Mission, Head of Mission, P5, Director, Head of Institution, Secretary General

More information on employment by the OSCE and staff categories is available at jobs.osce.org.

2022 OSCE Expenditure Report by Executive Structure*

	2022 Provisional Expenditure Authorization	2022 Expenditure	% of total
THE SECRETARIAT AND INSTITUTIONS			
The Secretariat	41,636,500	40,654,690	30%
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights	16,394,000	15,924,672	12%
High Commissioner on National Minorities	3,504,000	3,477,000	3%
Representative on Freedom of the Media	1,608,800	1,599,195	1%
TOTAL FOR THE SECRETARIAT AND INSTITUTIONS	63,143,300	61,655,557	45%
OSCE FIELD OPERATIONS			
South-Eastern Europe			
Mission in Kosovo	17,495,300	17,494,869	13%
Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	11,682,000	11,656,081	8%
Mission to Serbia	6,258,600	6,250,545	4%
Presence in Albania	2,981,200	2,967,755	2%
Mission to Skopje	6,506,100	6,473,009	5%
Mission to Montenegro	2,152,100	2,072,030	2%
Total for South-Eastern Europe	47,075,300	46,914,289	34%
Eastern Europe			
Mission to Moldova	2,302,700	2,284,524	2%
Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	3,618,500	2,441,310	3%
Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners	5,500	2,808	0.004%
Total for Eastern Europe	5,926,700	4,728,642	4%
Caucasus			
High-Level Planning Group	247,600	180,233	0.2%
The Minsk Process	911,200	111,946	1%
Personal Representative of the CiO on the Conflict Dealt with by the Minsk Conference	1,179,700	978,133	1%
Total for Caucasus	2,338,500	1,270,312	2%
Central Asia			
Programme Office in Astana	2,232,700	2,216,223	2%
Centre in Ashgabat	1,661,200	1,656,394	1%
Programme Office in Bishkek	6,928,600	6,919,190	5%
Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan	2,499,200	2,413,250	2%
Programme Office in Dushanbe	7,311,600	7,151,290	5%
Total for Central Asia	20,633,300	20,356,346	15%
TOTAL FOR OSCE FIELD OPERATIONS	75,973,800	73,269,589	55%
GRAND TOTAL	139,117,100	134,925,147	100%

*The table reflects utilization of resources against the 2022 total provisional expenditure authorization in line with Financial Regulation 3.04 and PC decision PC.DEC/1455.



The Secretariat	41,636,500	30%
Institutions	21,506,800	15%
South-Eastern Europe	47,075,300	34%
Eastern Europe	5,926,700	4%
Caucasus	2,338,500	2%
Central Asia	20,633,300	15%
	139,117,100	100%

Contributions by participating States

PARTICIPATING STATE	PROVISIONAL 2022 FINANCIAL RESOURCES (€)	% OF TOTAL
Albania	91,052.63	0.07
Andorra	91,052.63	0.07
Armenia	45,758.48	0.03
Austria	3,189,241.33	2.31
Azerbaijan	45,758.48	0.03
Belarus	200,222.92	0.14
Belgium	4,600,337.45	3.33
Bosnia and Herzegovina	91,052.63	0.07
Bulgaria	369,425.48	0.27
Canada	7,494,844.12	5.42
Croatia	200,338.27	0.14
Cyprus	199,734.35	0.14
Czech Republic	671,045.52	0.49
Denmark	2,855,087.91	2.07
Estonia	129,703.64	0.09
Finland	2,646,700.80	1.92
France	14,277,462.25	10.33
Georgia	45,758.48	0.03
Germany	15,030,785.84	10.88
Greece	1,158,662.59	0.84
Holy See	91,052.63	0.07
Hungary	656,830.58	0.48
Iceland	184,775.89	0.13
Ireland	1,067,655.51	0.77
Italy	14,241,703.37	10.30
Kazakhstan	264,099.06	0.19
Kyrgyzstan	45,758.48	0.03
Latvia	133,594.24	0.10
Liechtenstein	91,052.63	0.07
Lithuania	133,594.24	0.10
Luxembourg	478,373.09	0.35
Malta	94,943.23	0.07
Moldova	45,758.48	0.03
Monaco	91,052.63	0.07
Mongolia	45,758.48	0.03
Montenegro	45,758.48	0.03
Netherlands	5,403,215.09	3.91
North Macedonia	91,052.63	0.07
Norway	2,848,746.43	2.06
Poland	1,632,319.65	1.18
Portugal	1,027,590.20	0.74
Romania	455,727.48	0.33
Russian Federation	5,568,829.50	4.03
San Marino	91,052.63	0.07
Serbia	100,111.46	0.07
Slovak Republic	285,816.01	0.21
Slovenia	268,429.75	0.19

Spain	6,657,417.21	4.82
Sweden	4,596,098.46	3.33
Switzerland	3,813,504.50	2.76
Tajikistan	45,758.48	0.03
Türkiye	1,193,550.47	0.86
Turkmenistan	45,758.48	0.03
Ukraine	519,603.62	0.38
United Kingdom	14,276,010.41	10.33
United States of America	17,838,769.00	12.91
Uzbekistan	250,278.65	0.18
Gap in Scales	48,673.07	0.04
Total	138,204,100.00	100.00

Extrabudgetary pledges and voluntary contributions

Donor	Pledge amount (€)
Andorra	20,000
Austria	327,400
Azerbaijan	12,000
Belgium	1,100,000
Bulgaria	66,910
Croatia	10,000
Czech Republic	281,370
Estonia	45,000
European Union	5,700,000
Finland	1,252,574
France	1,870,000
Georgia	2,000
Germany	10,580,907
Greece	25,000
Hungary	142,000
Iceland	341,924
Ireland	354,157
Italy	724,752
Japan	645,849
Kazakhstan	10,000
Latvia	10,000
Liechtenstein	313,953
Lithuania	30,000
Luxembourg	95,000
Monaco	100,000
Montenegro	100,000
Netherlands	2,076,998
North Macedonia	220,000
Norway	4,339,738
Poland	4,816,888
Portugal	50,000
Romania	80,000
Serbia	2,000
Slovakia	106,000
Slovenia	7,000
South Korea	82,084
Spain	80,000
Sweden	1,087,418
Switzerland	1,614,813
The Coca Cola Foundation	140,700
Türkiye	27,398
United Kingdom	407,911
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	101,500
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)	381,245
United States	14,966,694
Grand Total*	54,749,184

*Voluntary contributions to the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine are included.

Executive Structure	Pledge amount (€)
Secretariat	27,445,408
Secretariat Unallocated Funds*	6,009,762
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights	4,413,663
High Commissioner on National Minorities	722,663
Representative on Freedom of the Media	169,261
Mission in Kosovo	190,627
Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,286,682
Mission to Serbia	682,080
Presence in Albania	1,240,127
Mission to Skopje	345,627
Mission to Montenegro	338,339
Mission to Moldova	282,892
Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	2,551,000
Programme Office in Astana	19,063
Centre in Ashgabat	619,834
Programme Office in Bishkek	1,305,563
Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan	159,763
Programme Office in Dushanbe	6,854,907
Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine	111,924
Grand Total	54,749,184

*Unallocated extrabudgetary contributions are funds provided by donors to the OSCE without allocating contributions to a specific extrabudgetary project at the time of acceptance.

Extrabudgetary expenditures*

Executive structure	Actual expenditures (€)
Secretariat	12,329,992
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights	6,830,129
High Commissioner on National Minorities	581,844
Representative on Freedom of the Media	394,595
Mission in Kosovo	299,431
Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,774,964
Mission to Serbia	1,139,471
Presence in Albania	1,389,449
Mission to Skopje	853,224
Mission to Montenegro	489,472
Mission to Moldova	365,908
Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	5,029,630
Programme Office in Astana	101,121
Centre in Ashgabat	344,853
Programme Office in Bishkek	941,996
Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan	158,923
Programme Office in Dushanbe	3,533,302
Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine	5,094,772
Total	41,653,086

* Actual expenditure figures do not include obligations. This applies to all actual expenditure figures throughout this document.