

MAIN EVENT



OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht (right), met with President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov during his visit to Tashkent.

OSCE Chairman-in-Office visits Uzbekistan

On the final stop of his visit to Central Asia to strengthen its relations with the OSCE, the Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, met top officials and civil society representatives in Uzbekistan on 1 April 2006.

Minister De Gucht gave assurances during his meetings with President Islam Karimov and Foreign Minister Elyor Ganiev that the OSCE was ready to continue the dialogue with Uzbekistan in order to expand the scope for co-operation.

“The countries of Central Asia have an important role in the Organization and it stands ready to co-operate and discuss concrete projects in all three OSCE dimensions, such as combating terrorism, promoting regional economic co-operation and strengthening civil society,” he said.

The Chairman confirmed that the OSCE was continuing efforts to further balance its work among the three dimensions, enhancing the economic and environmental dimension while not diminishing the importance of the politico-military and human dimensions.

“The Belgian Chairmanship’s priorities to address transport, organized crime and energy security would strengthen the economic and environmental dimension and are highly relevant to Uzbekistan,” he pointed out.



The Chairman-in-Office said he hoped that the Government would consult with the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities to develop initiatives in this sphere.

Concluding his visit, De Gucht reiterated that the Chairmanship would continue to draw on the experience of all participating States during the reform process to further strengthen the Organization.

Belgian Chairmanship Priorities

We have ambitious plans, but we must be realistic at the same time. In an organization in which the decision-making process is based on consensus, the Chairmanship must first of all play the role of honest broker, aiming to serve the interests and meet the expectations of all its members.

Our first task, as in every changeover, is to ensure the smooth functioning and continuity of the Organization. And then of course there are our own priorities:

We have four major thrusts:

- Combating international crime and promoting the rule of law will pride of place in our Chairmanship. These are issues that every citizen is concerned about.
- Belgium will play an active role in the institutional reform of the OSCE.
- In the interest of ensuring a better balance between the Organization’s politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions, we will devote attention to strengthening economic activities and we will seek to introduce into the OSCE the co-operative mechanism of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, particularly in the transport sector.
- Finally, the Belgian Chairmanship will step up efforts to find solution to the “frozen” conflicts.

Karel De Gucht

OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister of Belgium

(Source: OSCE magazine, January 2006)

CENTRE IN TASHKENT ACTIVITIES



Participants were required to develop their own business ideas, which were reviewed by expert and trainers.

Entrepreneurial Training for Youth

Between February and April the Centre in Tashkent jointly with the Youth Social Movement “KAMOLOT” carried out a new series of trainings under the joint Project entitled “Entrepreneurial Training for Youth”. Approximately twenty-five young potential entrepreneurs in Karakalpakstan and Khorezm provinces as well as in Fergana and Andijan provinces had a chance to learn about current legislation regulating private business, business plan development, and financial management.

In accordance with project goal, one additional day in each province was devoted to the training and the selection of qualified candidates to establish and manage Youth Social Support Centres (YSSC) in the provinces. These centres are being established in order to create a supportive environment for youth to develop necessary skills.

Each participant was required to participate with their own business ideas, which were reviewed by expert and trainers.

Women and Business in Uzbekistan

As further support to the Women Committee of Uzbekistan (WCU), the OSCE Centre in Tashkent (CiT) will continue the joint CiT - WCU Project entitled “Women and Business in Uzbekistan” and has launched a new series of trainings.

These trainings aim to increase the economic and legal knowledge of specialists in charge of working with women in rural areas. During February, the CiT in cooperation with

WCU, held trainings in Tashkent and Namangan provinces.

The participants learned about the role of women in social and business matters, problems that lie ahead of WCU in developing women entrepreneurship in the provinces, the existing possibilities of attracting financing, such as credit.

In addition, a roundtable discussion was held with representatives from local authorities and respective agencies to discuss problems and perspectives of women entrepreneurship.



The specialists, who in charge of working with women in rural areas, increased their economic and legal knowledge during these trainings.

Development of Arbitration and Supporting Farmers

With the support of the OSCE Centre in Tashkent, the NGO “Legal Problems Research Centre” continued activities under the project entitled “Promoting Development of Arbitration and Supporting Farmers in Uzbekistan”.

As a result, during March three two-day trainings were carried out in Syrdarya, Jizzak and Samarkand provinces.

Approximately thirty participants took part in each of these trainings, which aimed at facilitating the development of arbitration in the provinces, and promoting legal protection of farmers in Uzbekistan through educating the local lawyers on how to settle disputes of farmers by arbitration.

Budget transparency training for community representatives

About fifty representatives of the self-governing communities (mahallas) from Uzbekistan attended three-day training on basics of budgeting, accounting and financial reporting

initiated by the National Mahalla Foundation, and supported by the OSCE Centre in Tashkent.

The objectives of the training were to provide the basic knowledge for the self-governing administration on financial and legal framework to manage the community efficiently in new and comprehensive economic transfer conditions, and raise awareness about their respective rights, opportunities and responsibilities in dealing with the micro-management in mahallas.

“We are glad to support this project initiated by the local partner – the National Mahalla Foundation. Indeed, it is practically important to promote efficient micro-management in self-governing communities in order to strengthen its capacity”, said Ambassador Miroslav Jenča, Head of the OSCE Centre in Tashkent.

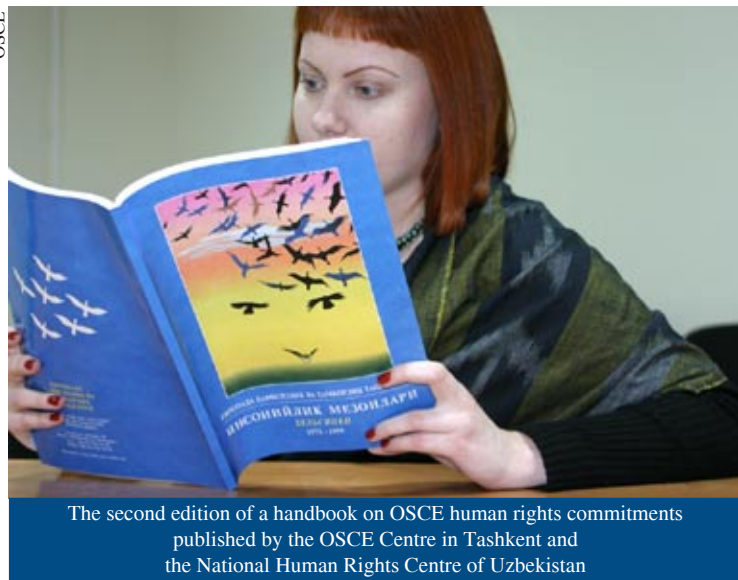
He also stressed the significance of establishing a consistent co-ordination of the financial and administrative activities of the self-governing bodies with the developing national legislation.

Nigmatulla Abdullaev, deputy chairman of the National Mahalla Foundation, added: “It is extremely important to provide mahalla leaders with accounting skills so that they can comply with national legislation and financial procedures.”

Uzbekistan’s mahallas (local self-governing community organizations) are traditional structures of Uzbek society, and intricately involved in the activities and needs of the community. Uzbekistan’s approximately 10,000 mahallas are in a good position to play a leading role in helping to resolve the communities’ social, economic and environmental problems. To do so, they need more knowledge and skills on

current legislation, transparent information on procedures, and increased contacts with appropriate Government agencies.

The training has been organized in three-day sessions in Tashkent province from 23 to 25 March. Trainers and moderators have been provided by the National Mahalla Foundation.



The second edition of a handbook on OSCE human rights commitments published by the OSCE Centre in Tashkent and the National Human Rights Centre of Uzbekistan

Handbook on human rights commitments

On 17 February, the OSCE Centre in Tashkent jointly with the National Human Rights Centre of Uzbekistan conducted the presentation of another handbook of the basic documents on the field of human dimension published in Uzbek language. The aim of the publication is the promotion of further distributing knowledge on international documents in the field of human rights among various layers of Uzbek society – students, law educators, legal practitioners, officials of state institutions and etc.

“The publication is a concrete example of co-operation of OSCE Centre in Tashkent with the national institutions of Uzbekistan in the area of increasing the knowledge of the wide range of population on human rights. We intended to further develop the joint activities in this area in the future”, - noted Head of the OSCE Centre in Tashkent, Ambassador Miroslav Jenča. He continued stating that one of the most important directions of the Centre’s activities is assistance to the Republic of Uzbekistan in implementing its commitments within the OSCE framework.

The OSCE Centre in Tashkent has successful experience of such publication carried out jointly with National Human



Leaders of mahallas, or self-governing communities, are offered training in financial and legal skills at courses supported by the OSCE Centre in Tashkent.

Rights Centre since the opening of the OSCE Central Asian Liaison Office in 1995. In 2002 the first publication of the basic human dimension documents covering the period of 1975 – 1995 in Uzbek language was performed. The handbook that is being presented today is the most updated and full version of the compilation of OSCE fundamental human dimension documents.

Workshop on practice of interactions between parliament committees and ombudsman

On 20 February, Representatives from the Senate and the Legislative Chamber of Parliament of Uzbekistan and



Participants shared with experience and opinions related to the cooperation between Parliament Committees and Ombudsman institution.

Ombudsman institutions as well as other governmental officials took part in workshop on practice of interaction between Parliament Committees and Ombudsman Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan, with the support of the OSCE Centre in Tashkent.

Participants shared with experience and opinions related to the cooperation between Parliament Committees and Ombudsman institution.

“Enhancing the capacity building of the Ombudsman and strengthening its co-operation with Parliamentary Committees will ensure the promotion of respect for Rule of law principles,” said Ambassador Miroslav Jenča, Head of the OSCE Centre in Tashkent. “Such events aim at supporting the development of the national human rights protection mechanisms in Uzbekistan”.

The OSCE Centre in Tashkent and Ombudsman Office plan to continue their close co-operation in the field of sustainable capacity building of regional representatives of Ombudsman and are developing a series of training courses for this purpose.

PUBLICATION

Booklet on environmental security in Central Asia

The latest issue of a Central Asian environmental bulletin was presented by the OSCE Centre in Tashkent in March.

The 7th issue of “Environmental Security and Civil Initiative” focuses on perspectives of re-usable energy, strategies of UNDP in the sphere of energy, ecotourism: its condition and perspectives, and also about legislation on ecological security.

Several articles were contributed by authors from Central Asia.

The quarterly issue in Russian, published since 2004, is a joint production with the Public Environmental Advocacy Centre ARMON, the State Committee for Nature Protection and the Institute for Strategic Research and Interregional Studies of Uzbekistan.

Four hundred copies will be distributed to libraries, environmental agencies, international organizations as well as NGOs and other interested parties.

Future issues of the bulletin will address topics such as alternative energy, conservation of natural territories, ecology and law, ecological emergency situations and international co-operation in the sphere of sustainable development.



For more information, please contact
OSCE Centre in Tashkent
Distributed free of charge

Afrosiyob 12B, Mirobod District, Tashkent 700015, Uzbekistan
Tel.: (998 71) 140 04 70 Fax: (998 71) 140 04 66/67
E-mail: OSCE-CiT@osce.org Web-site: www.osce.org/tashkent