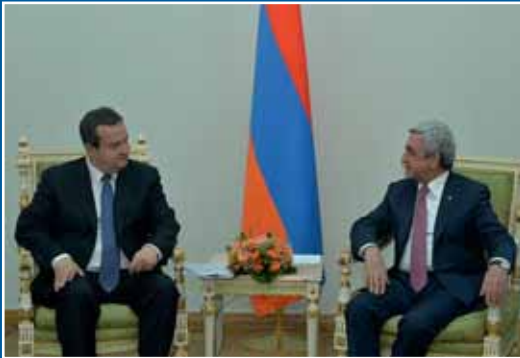


NEWS LETTER

OSCE Office in Yerevan



OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE VISITS ARMENIA

On 3 June, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (CIO), Serbia's Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, visited Armenia. In Yerevan, he met with President Serzh Sargsyan, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, Speaker of the National Assembly Galust Sahakyan and representatives of political parties.

During his meetings, the CIO emphasized the importance of regional dialogue and spoke about co-operation between the OSCE and Armenia. Dačić underlined his concern about the recent increase in reported violations of ceasefire agreement and reiterated his full support for the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs concerning the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The CIO also visited the premises of the OSCE Office in Yerevan and met with the staff.



ENVIRONMENTAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE CENTRE FOR RESPONSIBLE MINING

On 21 May the Office donated mobile pollution testing equipment to the American University of Armenia (AUA) Centre for Responsible Mining. The equipment will allow the Centre to conduct independent research and analysis of samples for heavy-metal pollution resulting from mining and mineral processing in Armenia. The equipment will also be introduced to students who can use it for their research.

COMMUNITY POLICING WEEK

The Office organized a series of activities in the first week of June aimed to foster police-public relationship and community policing model in Armenia.

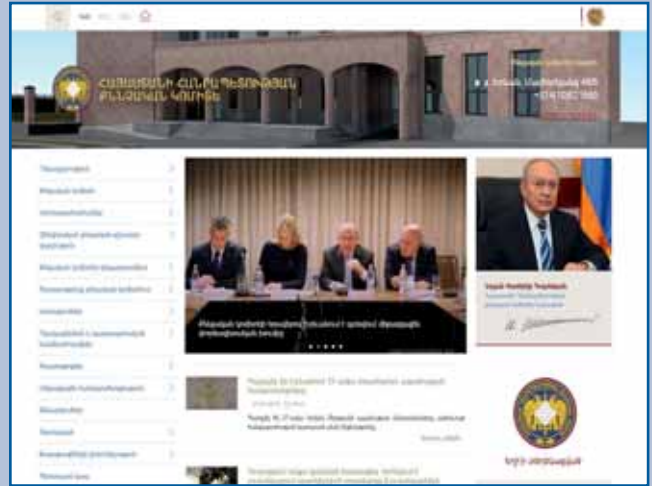
The 1st of June event was held in Artashat on the occasion of the International Children's Day bringing together the local police and children from a hostel located in one of the most run-down communities. The National Centre for Legal Researches NGO with OSCE support organized games, sports competitions and a variety of other activities, engaging both children and police officers.



Another event, an International Conference on Police-Public Relations, was arranged on June 4 by the Office, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Armenian Police. About 60 participants from the Police, National Assembly, Ombudsman's Office and civil society discussed international and local approaches to strengthening police-public partnership and police co-operation with other stakeholders as effective tools for building public trust.

The week concluded with the Workshop on Police and Public Relations held on June 5 for middle-rank police commanders and staff of the Police Educational Complex. As a follow-up to the Conference, it covered more hands-on issues pertinent to practitioners and trainers.

CO-OPERATION WITH THE INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE



On 15 April the Office donated 15 computers and three printer-scanner machines to the newly-established State Investigative Committee with the aim of enhancing the capacities and efficiency of the institution and its investigators. This initiative resulted in a pilot programme to implement the digitalization of materials in two investigative departments of Yerevan, considering further digitalization in the regions. The Office has also provided technical equipment to a Training Centre established within the Committee to foster the professional skills of investigators.

The OSCE also supported the development of the official web-site of the Committee www.investigative.am to increase its transparency and enhance public access to its activities. As well, workshops were organized with participation of journalists, civil society, advocates and the representatives of the Committee to discuss sensitive issues related to reporting on the cases under investigation, communication between investigators and journalists, as well as issues related to the right to liberty and security of person in the light of the importance of the public interests. The Office also supported a publication on the interrelationship of the parties in criminal proceedings prepared by the Committee as a useful guide for investigators.

WORK WITH REGIONS



Model OSCE Conference in Gyumri

A Model OSCE conference, a simulation of the OSCE core decision-making body (Permanent Council), was organized on 1-2 May where approximately 60 young people from the Shirak Region of Armenia participated. In advance of the conference, participants were trained on international relations, diplomacy and negotiations skills and received relevant materials on the OSCE and its dimensions. The purpose of the conference was to educate youth on the OSCE, as well as to increase participation opportunities for young people from regions.

Expanding Women's Resource Centres Network



As Women's Resource Centers in Goris, Kapan, and Meghri formed the Armenian Women's Resource Centers' (WRC) Network, becoming a member of European Association of Women Resource Centres (WINNET), the Office hosted a delegation from WINNET Europe on 4-7 May. Along with presenting their activities to donor organizations and Gender Theme Group members, the delegates travelled to Syunik region in order to get acquainted with the details of WINNET Armenia activities.

Earthquake Resilience City Scenarios for Stepanavan

The OSCE supported the development of two earthquake resilience scenarios for Stepanavan, within the Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE) Small Grants Programme that is a part of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative. The scenarios are already provided to the municipality for further utilization within urban planning activities as well as proper annual budgeting and advocacy purposes. In addition, in-depth seismic safety assessment for the town's 5 schools and 3 preschools are prepared and also provided to the local municipality. Disaster Rapid Response (DRR) teams are established in the mentioned educational institutions.

Arsenic Burial Site in Alaverdy

Following the request from the Governor of Lori province the OSCE commissioned a comprehensive study on Alaverdy arsenic graveyard, for which two international experts in waste management were engaged by the Office. The study includes the identification of options for remedial action and a justification for recommendation. As well, it specifies major steps that need to be taken to successfully implement the remedial actions and provides a cost estimate. In January the study was submitted to the Ministry of Nature Protection and the Alaverdy Municipality adjusted its 2015 Action Plan and the budget towards the solution.

EVENTS/PUBLICATIONS

Guide on Social Services to Children



The Office in co-operation with the Children's Support Center Foundation commissioned the development of the guide on organizations which provide social services to children and their families in all regions of the country. It was presented on 14 May during roundtable discussion, where the issue of better co-ordination and closer co-operation of all child protection and welfare specialists, state and no-state agencies was highlighted for the protection of the rights and best interests of a child.

Study on Probation Service

The study on perspectives of penitentiary reforms and introduction of a probation service in Armenia was prepared by "Protection of Rights without Borders" NGO with OSCE support and aims to analyze current challenges in the legislation in the light of international human rights standards and good practices. It also offered recommendations for the proper establishment of probation service.

Research on Council of Justice

The research prepared by the House for Rights and Democracy NGO with OSCE support reflects on the main issues related to the status of the Council of Justice, its formation and activities, from the point of view of the ongoing constitutional reform. It also provides information on the international practice.

Universal Rights Award

The OSCE, US Embassy, EU Delegation, British Embassy, Council of Europe and UN honoured individuals working to promote various aspects of human rights in Armenia at the Universal Rights Awards Ceremony on 4 June in Yerevan. Ambassador Andrey Sorokin, Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, presented "Freedom Defender" Award to Shushan Doydoyan, President of the Freedom of Information Centre in recognition of her efforts to promote open, transparent and accountable governance. Other awardees included the Coalition to Stop Violence against Women (Woman of Courage), Zaruhi Mejlumyan, a journalist and President of Armenian Innocence Project NGO (Media Excellence), Inter-Agency Anti-Trafficking Working Group (Government Reformer), Artsruni Igityan, Mayor of Akhuryan community (Local Government Reformer) and Armen Alaverdyan, Executive Director of Unison NGO (Promoting Inclusion).



About the OSCE

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) works for stability, prosperity and democracy in its 57 participating states through political dialogue on shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

The OSCE Office in Yerevan was established in 2000 to assist Armenia in the implementation of its OSCE commitments in all three aspects of security: politico-military, economic and environmental, and the human dimension.

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