

OSCE

NEWSLETTER

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Central Asia at centre stage: The challenges of co-operation

"The process of moving from highly centralized, totalitarian rule to democracy and the rule of law has only just begun in Central Asia," the OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO), Netherlands Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, told the 'Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Freedom and Human Rights in Central Asia'. The event, held in Washington, D.C., on 1 May, was chaired by Senator John McCain of Arizona. The CiO presented other arguments for the OSCE's more active role in the region: the threat of violent extremism and instability which stemmed from internal and external factors, human rights and trafficking

issues, and the minimal presence of international actors on the scene.

Central Asia was also the subject of the CiO's recent interview with IRIN News, the online United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks. The Dutch Foreign Minister talked extensively about stepped-up activities to translate the Chairmanship's priority focus on the region into action, including the appointment of former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari as his Personal Envoy to Central Asia. Excerpts from the interview follow.

IRIN News: What kind of role do you see for the OSCE in Central Asia?

Chairman-in-Office Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: The OSCE is the only European security structure in which the five Central Asian states are participants. We serve as a forum that keeps the dialogue with them going, especially because we encompass three essential aspects of security: the politico-military, the economic-environmental and the human dimensions.

I make it clear in all the discussions I have with the leadership of these coun-

Annual Report profiles 2002 activities: "Unrivalled presence on the ground"

"I hope this publication will succeed in giving you a better insight into the immensely varied activities of this unique and fascinating Organization," writes Secretary General Jan Kubis in his message introducing the *Annual Report on OSCE Activities 2002*.

Released in April,

the *Annual Report* appears in a new, reader-friendly format and, in addition to the print copy, is also easily browsed on the OSCE's website. Full-colour pictures and maps invite the reader to follow the OSCE story; its broad geographical reach and extensive field presence, its comprehensive and co-operative approach to security and its recognized role in confronting challenges to security.

"The year can justifiably be regarded as a successful one for the

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tries that I attach great value to maintaining a balance between the three facets. *Human security*, our Chairmanship's chosen centrepiece, is a combination of *peace and the rule of law*, which I believe gives us an excellent starting point for active engagement in the Central Asian region.

Human rights continues to be a dominant issue in all five former Soviet republics. How involved is the OSCE in this area?

The OSCE's presence in the field is one of its comparative advantages. The OSCE has Centres in Almaty, Kazakhstan; Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Dushanbe, Tajikistan; Ashgabad, Turkmenistan; and Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Our people are right there "on the ground" to assist the countries to forge ahead. The Centres' mandates are tailor-made for each country, but all share the same OSCE umbrella of values and principles.

For my part, as the Organization's Chairman-in-Office, I can say that I do not shy away from reminding the States that as participants in the OSCE, they have committed themselves to these international standards and norms, including those upholding human rights. Indeed, I consider the latter as one of the most important tasks of the OSCE in its promotion of comprehensive security, and I have the impression that this is also highly appreciated by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil

society representatives in these countries.

The OSCE has been quite vocal about the erosion of press freedom in countries such as Kazakhstan. What more can possibly be done to improve the situation?

Clearly, a free press and the development of professional and objective journalism are issues of deep concern to the OSCE – and not only in Kazakhstan, by the way. The OSCE has the means of assisting State authorities to improve the working conditions of their print media and broadcasting outlets. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE Centre in Almaty are ready with on-site expert advice, and in fact have already been actively providing assistance.

I am gratified that we have managed, in the case of the dissident journalist, Sergei Duvanov, to convince the Kazakh authorities to allow an independent expert mission to look into the facts. This is the reason why I keep emphasizing the value of an open-ended dialogue: we simply have to work together to improve the state of affairs – sometimes slowly, but always surely.

How successful has the OSCE been in bringing about positive change in Central Asia?

Let's not forget that these countries are still undergoing transition problems. Since 1999, the OSCE has been physi-

cally present in all five States. The fact that some areas are slow to change should not discourage us. Instead, we should be willing to explore other options that enable us to continue our co-operation. We work with both governments and civil society in these five countries, which

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OSCE," writes Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Martins da Cruz, Chairman-in-Office in 2002. "From the outset, the Portuguese Chairmanship identified the adaptation of the OSCE to the evolving security environment as the driving force of its work programme."

The *Annual Report* profiles the Organization's work as a vital forum for dialogue, consultations and negotiations on security matters, while remaining highly focused on field activities in south-eastern and eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

In his message, the Secretary-General also pays tribute to the OSCE's nearly 4,000 international and local staff working in 19 missions, offices and centres co-operating with their host countries – an "unrivalled presence on the ground".

The Annual Report can be accessed on www.osce.org. To order a print copy, please contact info@osce.org. The Report will also be available in French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish (publication dates to be announced).



makes our contribution especially unique and valuable.

Which countries have made the most progress in democratic reform?

I don't think it is useful to rate countries or to draw comparisons. The important thing to keep in mind – and this is precisely what our Centres are working towards – is that ultimately, the countries all find themselves on the path of democracy and economic and political reform. Just by way of example, in Tajikistan, some progress was made last year when exit visas were abolished and independent radio stations were allocated frequencies for the first time.

In which areas do you see scope for more improvements?

I don't think I would be divulging any secrets if I told you that the process of democratization and reform is a long one. We have seen this in other parts of the OSCE area as well. Countries have to deal with difficult political and historical legacies, and as I said, although we do want to move developments more quickly, we are all aware that we cannot change things overnight.

A discussion is currently going on within the OSCE about the role and the structure of the Organization's field operations. As you know, some countries consider an OSCE presence as a stain on their record and try to get rid of the mission as soon as possible. I find this regrettable.

I would very much like to see a change in this perception and strengthen the concept of "new generation" missions, in which there is broad agreement between the mission and the host country about the work to be undertaken, preferably together. The activities in the OSCE Mission in Serbia and Montenegro, for example, are carried out in full co-operation between the OSCE staff and the host country's authorities, NGOs and civil society. The Centres in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan also work quite closely with the host governments.

You recently travelled to Turkmenistan. What was the purpose of that visit?

As you know, the Netherlands Chairmanship is stepping up its efforts to draw the participation of these countries closer to OSCE activities. The trip to Ashgabad [on 3 March] was the first of several planned visits to all five Central Asian republics, in keeping with this topmost priority.

I think the visit was significant in that I was able to personally discuss the Dutch Chairmanship's agenda with President [Saparmurat] Niyazov, as well as various issues of concern, including human rights. I had the opportunity to express some criticism, and the Turkmen president adopted an equally critical stance on certain OSCE activities. This confirmed that the door has not been shut on the OSCE, setting the stage for a continuation of the dialogue.

How open are government leaders to constructive suggestions?

I must say that on my visit to Ashgabad, and especially in my meeting with President Niyazov, I detected a clear willingness on the part of the Turkmen authorities to keep the discussion with the Organization going on a number of issues that are essential to OSCE-Turkmenistan relations. I am not claiming that the talks were easy, since, after all, the subjects we touched on were quite delicate.

How is the OSCE going about enhancing democratic reforms in Central Asia?

Our strategy consists of our being there on the spot through our Centres, Institutions and experts. Part of it also involves the Chairmanship's own direct and constructive engagement: persuading the authorities to work with and within the OSCE and developing new ideas for co-operation, such as the institution of personal envoys.

On 13 March, you announced the appointment of former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari as your Personal Envoy for Central Asia. What exactly is his mandate?

The appointment is further proof of the Netherlands Chairmanship's reinforced efforts to accelerate positive movement in the region.

I have asked former President Ahtisaari to hold consultations on current OSCE issues at the highest political levels in all the Central Asian states to strengthen the Organization's long-term relations with them. I have also encouraged him to engage in talks not only with governments but also with independent institutions, NGOs and civil society. He will focus on both domestic and regional issues that affect stability and security within and between the five States. Mr. Ahtisaari will in turn provide recommendations to me in my capacity as Chairman-in-Office.

President Ahtisaari's visit to Tajikistan was his first on behalf of the Chairmanship. What was achieved?

The visit served as an opportunity for him and President [Emomali] Rahmonov to discuss a wide range of issues in some detail: action on mines, training programmes for border guards, the fight against trafficking in drugs and the freedom of movement for Tajik citizens abroad. Mr. Ahtisaari also raised the subject of a moratorium on the death penalty and its eventual abolition in Tajikistan.

Also discussed were Tajikistan's plans to hold a referendum on amendments to the Constitution [on 22 June], and the decision of the Tajik authorities to sign and ratify the *United Nations Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*. As in the case of Turkmenistan, there was a clear willingness on the Tajik side to continue and broaden the co-operation with the OSCE.

With the Chairman of the Upper Chamber of Parliament, the Personal Envoy also discussed action to modernize Tajikistan's legislation, especially specific laws dealing with the media and elections. His meetings with national minorities and media representatives also enabled him to gain a comprehensive overview of what is happening in Tajikistan.

I think it's fair to say that Tajikistan's process of post-conflict rehabilitation, after years of civil war, has gained momentum, and that stabilization and normalization are under way.

Thanks to the progress made in the

past few years, the priorities of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe have shifted to a new domain. The Centre's mandate, which was adopted in October last year, now includes co-operation in the economic and environmental field and it has intensified efforts in police-related activities, border control and anti-trafficking.

Earlier, on a brief stopover in Bishkek on 22 March, Mr. Ahtisaari met Kyrgyz-

stan's Foreign Minister, Askar Aitmatov, who briefed him on recent developments in the country and in the region, including the human rights situation. The Personal Envoy noted the country's progress in establishing the Council of Democratic Security, in implementing constitutional reforms, regional co-operation and cross-border water management, and in advancing the privatization process of

small and medium-sized enterprises. He promised to return to Kyrgyzstan soon.

The OSCE Newsletter would like to thank IRIN News, which operates within the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for permission to reprint excerpts from this interview. For the full transcript, visit www.irinnews.org.

Martti Ahtisaari lends prominent voice to Chairmanship in Central Asia

The Chairman-in-Office's Personal Envoy for Central Asia, Martti Ahtisaari, was President of Finland from March 1994 to February 2000.

Since leaving office, Mr. Ahtisaari has continued to be a prominent figure in global affairs, winning recognition for his work. He is the Founder and Chairman of the Crisis Management Initiative, Chairman of the International Crisis Group and Co-Chairman of the EastWest Institute. Among his post-presidential activities have been inspecting Irish Republican Army arms dumps as part of the Northern Ireland peace process and monitoring Austria's human rights and political situation on behalf of the European Union.

Earlier in his career, he served as Finland's Ambassador to several African countries, after which he served in senior positions at the United Nations, including those of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Namibia and Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management.



Crisis Management Initiative

Former President Ahtisaari is the recipient of several peace awards

Afghanistan becomes tenth OSCE Partner for Co-operation

by Elizabeth Abela

"It's a great moment for my country," said Afghanistan's representative, Chargé d'Affaires Farid Amin, reacting to the decision taken by the OSCE Permanent Council on 3 April granting Afghanistan the status of Partner for Co-operation. In a later meeting with OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis, he expressed the hope that Afghanistan, with the help of the international community, would get back on its feet.

The participating States' decision – "noting with satisfaction Afghanistan's intentions towards sharing the principles, values and goals of the OSCE" – clears the way for a regular political dialogue between Afghanistan and the Organization. Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah of the Islamic Transitional State of Afghanistan had stressed in a letter in February to the Chairman-in-Office, Dutch Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, that his Government

placed high value on the experience of the OSCE in peace-building activities and maintaining stability in various regions of the OSCE area, particularly Central Asia.

Afghanistan shares common borders and security interests with three OSCE participating States in Central Asia – Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

[Addressing the Permanent Council on 8 April, Ruud Lubbers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said:

"I am encouraged by the interest that the OSCE has shown in Afghanistan, even though this lies outside the OSCE area. Strengthened security and co-operation in adjacent areas of Central Asia is an important factor for the overall stability of countries in the OSCE region."

[Earlier, on 26 March, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Antonio Maria Costa, told the Permanent Council that his organization was committed to helping rebuild Afghanistan through assistance in law-enforcement training, border control, drug interdiction and criminal justice reform. "Given your own activities in Central Asia, this is an area where the OSCE may wish to become involved," he said.]

Along with the nine other Partners for Co-operation, Afghanistan will be invited to take part in major OSCE events including Summits, Ministerial Council and high-level Ministerial Troika meetings and other regular meetings on economic, human dimension and security matters.

On 5 May, Afghanistan took part for the first time in a gathering of the informal Contact Group with the Partners for



OSCE/Alexander Nitrosh

Ambassador Zia Uddin Nezam of Afghanistan (left), who took up his post on 13 May, and Portuguese Ambassador Seixas da Costa, Chairman of the informal Contact Group with the Partners for Co-operation in Asia

Co-operation in Asia (Japan, Korea and Thailand). The Group brings together participating States and the Asian Partners within the framework of the Permanent Council to discuss trafficking in all its forms, confidence- and security-

building measures, combating terrorism and an OSCE-Asia academic network – among several issues of mutual interest. Elizabeth Abela is a Senior External Cooperation Officer in the OSCE Secretariat.

CPC for the Mediterranean?

Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia addressed the Permanent Council on 27 March, stating that the OSCE's long-standing dialogue with its six Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation – Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia – required fresh impetus attuned to the nature of the challenges facing them.

The Foreign Minister said his country believed that the Mediterranean Partners should be "more involved, rather than merely concerned with the elaboration of the new European security policy, which borders their geopolitical space".

He recalled his country's proposal on the establishment of a Conflict Prevention Centre in the Mediterranean, saying that the area's security depended above all on a close, solid and equal relationship between the countries on both shores.

Currently, the Organization is conducting an outreach programme for Partner States at their request, notably in the Mediterranean. This involves training sessions and briefings on subjects of the Partners' choice in which the OSCE has gained extensive experience.



OSCE/Ayhan Evrensel

Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia

Experts agree: Trafficking in drugs devastates national economies

By Ivo Kersten

The obvious and the hidden economic costs of trafficking in drugs for countries in the OSCE area, a subject that has received insufficient international attention, was the focus of a seminar in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 17 and 18 March. Some 170 experts took part in the final event leading up to the 11th Economic Forum, which takes place in Prague from 20 to 23 May. The first two seminars focused on trafficking in small arms and light weapons (Sofia, Bulgaria, 11 and 12 November 2002) and trafficking in human beings (Ioannina, Greece, 17 and 18 February), also from an economic perspective.

The third seminar in the series, organized by the Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), was held at an appropriate place: about 75 per cent of the world's total illicit production of opium takes place in neighbouring Afghanistan. However, the issue's relevance extends to several Western countries – the destination of the bulk of the drugs smuggled through Central Asia, as well as the sites of industrial laboratories producing synthetic drugs.

"Drugs trafficking devastates national economies," said Ambassador Daan Everts, Personal Representative of the Netherlands OSCE Chairmanship in his opening address. "The violence and insecurity brought by trafficking in narcotics stop serious foreign and local investors from investing. Criminal networks are increasingly infiltrating the legitimate economy – not just with their money but also with their ethics."

In analytical detail, discussions revealed the shared characteristics of different forms of trafficking. Trafficking networks often function like well-organized multinational companies. They are interlinked with other criminal activities, including terrorism and violent conflict.



About 170 experts, including Uzbek officials, examined the hidden and obvious economic consequences of trafficking in drugs.

They bribe customs and other authorities and infiltrate state structures. They launder profits from trafficking and reinvest them in other illegal – and even legal – financial operations.

"In the late 1990s, some 30 armed conflicts worldwide were fuelled, in whole or in part, by the proceeds from heroin, cocaine, marijuana, hashish and synthetic drugs," said Jan van Dijk, Chief of the Crime Reduction and Analysis Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Mr. van Dijk's keynote speech paved the way for an exchange of experiences and expertise on the less obvious socio-economic costs of trafficking in drugs: the strain on countries' law enforcement forces, as well as on justice and prison systems; the loss of productivity through addiction and the rising costs of health care; and saddest of all, the impact on societies' most vulnerable sectors, including women and young people.

The meeting called for improved

international co-ordination and presented wide-ranging proposals which will contribute towards the main event in Prague. Participants, including representatives of several non-governmental organizations, praised the Netherlands' choice of anti-trafficking in all its forms as an urgent priority under its OSCE Chairmanship, also noting that the OSCE's political influence and its active field presence made it an excellent partner in the international fight against drug trafficking.

The seminar was organized in co-operation with the Netherlands Chairmanship with the assistance of the OSCE Centre in Tashkent. Support came from the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Centre for Drugs Control, under the Cabinet of Ministers.

Ivo Kersten is an Adviser in the OCEEA, which organizes the OSCE's annual Economic Forum and its preparatory seminars.

The OSCE and anti-trafficking: Dealing with the linkages

Recent activities in the field illustrate how the links between the different forms of trafficking and organized crime are being addressed by the OSCE and its partners.

Armenia and Azerbaijan. The fight against money-laundering and the financing of terrorism was the focus of a workshop in Yerevan (24 and 25 March) and in Baku (27 and 28 March).

Focus. To promote the adoption of comprehensive national laws and the creation of administrative mechanisms for financial analysis, criminal investigation and prosecution, and practices based on good governance and the rule of law.

Participants. High-level representatives from the office of the Prime Minister, parliament, the Central Bank, key ministries, the judiciary and the Prosecutor's Office, as well as international organizations; experts from several countries and their counterparts in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Organizers. In Azerbaijan: the OSCE Office in Baku in co-operation with the OCEEA, the Global Programme Against Money Laundering (GPML) of the UNODC and the Azeri Government; in Armenia: the OSCE

Office in Yerevan in co-operation with OCEEA, the GPML/UNODC and the Armenian Government, with the support of the Council of Europe.

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Ukraine. Five two-day training seminars on legal assistance in combating money laundering will be held throughout the country over a ten-month period.

Focus. To instruct prosecutors and investigators from the General Prosecutor's Office (GPO) and law enforcement bodies in the use of mutual legal assistance and extradition treaties with other countries.

Participants. At the first seminar, held in Kyiv on 31 March, experts from the GPO, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States conducted briefings. Law enforcement experts from the Czech Republic, Poland and Russia took part.

Organizers. The GPO, with the OSCE Project Co-Ordinator in Ukraine, the American Bar Association/Central and East European Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI), International Organization for Migration and Winrock International.

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Brdo, Slovenia. A meeting on

action taken so far to combat trafficking in small arms in south-eastern Europe was held on 11 and 12 March. The meeting's recommendations will be used to attract donor funding for integrated programmes aimed at removing weapons from society and preventing their illegal circulation

Focus. Export controls, weapons collection and border management and security were discussed, as well as good practices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro.

Participants. United Nations Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis and government representatives.

Organizers. It was the first time the OSCE and the United Nations made joint efforts to promote the implementation of two mutually reinforcing agreements: the OSCE's Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the United Nations' Programme of Action on the illicit small arms trade in all its aspects. The event was made possible through the financial contributions of Germany, Hungary and the Netherlands.

Fresh funding boosts economic-environmental work in Central Asia

By Alexander Nitzsche

Since the start of the year, the OSCE has been making a major effort to improve the balance in its activities in Central Asia. The five OSCE Centres in the region have received a fresh infusion of funds for new and existing projects addressing the economic and environmental aspects of the Organi-

zation's comprehensive approach to security. The OSCE's field officers specializing in this sector describe the enormous tasks to be tackled.

It's the economy, the economy, the economy!" The mantra might as well have been coined for the

OSCE's fine-tuned priorities in Central Asia. Having rechannelled funds of about one million euros to the OSCE Centres in the region for this purpose, the Organization is now able to support more projects in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

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A shoemaker in Bishkek does his share for the Kyrgyz economy

The money is being poured into new ideas for building up the countries' economic structures as well as for alleviating ecological problems. Projects range from developing small and medium-sized enterprises and fostering women's participation in business, to supporting water management schemes.

"When a country has 30 per cent or more unemployment, when young people don't have any realistic opportunities, when the educated are trying to leave – then there is greater potential for economic and political instability," says Helen Santiago-Fink, Senior Economic Affairs Officer in the Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities.

"People with no hope are more likely to turn away from the state and get involved in arms trafficking, drugs dealing and other illicit activities," she adds. "This is where one sees the linkage between the economic situation and security issues."

Formidable factors

Kyrgyzstan is an example of a country grappling with these new threats. "Here, we are face-to-face with extreme poverty, a fledgling economy and disrupted regional trade relations," says Mykola Melenevsky, the Economic and Environmental (EEA) Officer in the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. "Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the national economies of all five Central Asian states were highly interdependent. Since these links are gone, the most important step to take towards economic recovery is re-establishing these relationships."

This is easier said than done. In carrying out their tasks, the OSCE's EEA officers are up against formidable factors in the region: weak governance, lack of transparency, corrupt practices and bureaucratic hurdles.

"The main problem in my area is a trans-boundary one," says Joep Cuijpers, the EEA officer in the OSCE's field

office in Osh, in the south of Kyrgyzstan. "Several of the countries are putting up economic walls around themselves, and this affects trade and the economy negatively on all sides."

"In Turkmenistan, regional and trans-boundary work is a complete no-go," confirms Markku Visapaa, the EEA officer in the Centre in Ashgabad. "In addition, we have virtually no statistical information on the situation in the country, and there is a near-total lack of non-governmental organizations to work with."

So what can the OSCE do? Larger international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, are involved mainly in projects focusing on macro-economic recovery and structural adjustment.

One of the Organization's key economic development programmes in Central Asia targets small and medium-sized enterprises. "We have been organizing training seminars for the past few years to provide local entrepreneurs with opportunities to network and to help them run their operations more efficiently," explains Douglas Tookey, EEA Officer in Uzbekistan. "We are trying to design these projects in such a way that they can be replicated in all the Central Asian republics."

Although these activities are still relatively young, a few early success stories can be told. "After going through our training seminars and learning all about proper financial procedures, some of our participants were able to access credit facilities to benefit their businesses," Mr. Tookey says. "One of them, a businesswoman with a cattle-breeding operation, has managed to increase her production of dairy products considerably by applying efficient management practices which she picked up in our seminars."

With capital of 150,000 euros, Torbjorn Bjorvatn, Economic Officer in the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, can now move ahead with a micro-credit project in Tajikistan, based on a successful financing concept initially developed by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

While the OSCE's economic programme for Central Asia clearly domi-

nates the agenda, some projects are geared towards environmental concerns: in Kyrgyzstan, water management schemes are being developed, and in Turkmenistan, providing people with access to environmental information, as prescribed under the Aarhus Convention, is the goal.

Ecological issues

A key ecological issue that the OSCE is dealing with in Central Asia concerns the radioactive waste dumps in Mailuu Suu, in southern Kyrgyzstan.

"This area, which is located very

close to the river basin of the Syr Darya, has a total of 23 dumps," Mykola Melenevsky explains. "These dumps have not been attended to since 1967, when the mining of uranium was stopped; now the risk of the waste being washed into the river is quite high and this poses a serious radioactive pollution threat to the entire region."

A step towards remedying the problem was made in mid-April, when the OSCE Centre in Bishkek gathered high-level political representatives and international and regional experts at a two-day seminar. The result: participants will

create a technical and strategic task force, which will be responsible for drawing up a strategy to rid the region of this looming danger.

Several of these initiatives will be discussed at the May 2003 Economic Forum in Prague, where the main topic will be on another fault line between security and the economy: the fight against trafficking in drugs, human beings and small arms and light weapons.

Alexander Nitzsche is a Press and Public Information Officer in the OSCE Secretariat.

Anti-trafficking education as antidote: The case of Albania

By Ambassador Osmo Lipponen

The OSCE Presence in Albania held a three-day meeting early this year to evaluate the results of an OSCE project that is making inroads in educating Albanians to combat trafficking in human beings. The Head of the Presence, Osmo Lipponen, has also been briefing the media to draw attention to the project's early impact. The OSCE Newsletter invited Ambassador Lipponen to describe the concept behind the education project and give an overview of the Organization's strategy to help prevent and fight trafficking in Albania.

Albania's socio-economic problems of transition after the fall of communism have been a crucial factor in its emergence as a major place of origin for trafficked women. As the country started opening up to the outside world more than a decade ago, Albanian society found itself confronted with the growing plague of trafficking in human beings. Stories of women and girls being trafficked from all over Albania, lured by promises of marriage and jobs, or through coercion and kidnapping, continue to be widely reported in the world's press.

There are no reliable figures on the actual number of trafficked persons

from Albania. What is certain is that thousands of women left the country between 1991 and 1998, many ending up earning a living as prostitutes in various cities in Western Europe.

In a report published in 2001, the non-governmental organization, Save the Children, estimated that some 30,000 Albanian women fell prey to trafficking for sexual exploitation between 1991 and 2001. Estimates from other sources are considerably higher. The country is also frequently mentioned as a main transit route for trafficking in people from Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Bulgaria.

In November 2000, when the OSCE Presence in Albania and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) launched WRATE – the Women's Rights and Anti-Trafficking Education project – it was one of the few initiatives aimed at bringing an extremely sensitive issue out into the open at the grassroots level.

The project's goals were clear-cut:

- to make communities more aware of women's rights under domestic law and international human rights con-

ventions, and to inform them about how trafficking abuses these rights. Especially targeted are groups at risk (women in rural areas, teenagers, students), those well-placed to advocate changes (healthcare providers, teachers, social workers, university professors, women's non-governmental organizations, journalists), and those who need to have a firm grasp of issues involving gender-based violence (police, state administration, political parties, the People's Advocate).

■ to develop networks on gender matters through which trafficking and violations of women's rights can be fought and prevented. So far, the Presence has been able to develop a solid network of trainers who, in turn, have been fostering links with NGOs. Our goal is to have a well-established core of trainers capable of promoting women's rights and anti-trafficking on a self-sustaining basis.

■ to strengthen the capacity of communities and NGOs so that they are equipped to help in anti-trafficking efforts, while actively promoting women's rights.

Satisfying results

In January this year, the OSCE Presence in Albania brought 14 people together to take stock of the project's achievements so far. We were pleased with the reasonably successful results. Over the past two years, the Civil Society and Gender Unit of the Presence carried out 105 one- to two-day workshops throughout the country. These provided some 1,600 men and women with the expertise needed to deal with women's rights and trafficking issues.

During the first two days of the meeting, the Albanian National Training and Technical Assistance Resource Centre provided 12 WRATE trainers with further teaching skills focusing on advocacy and lobbying. The participants devoted the third and final day to evaluating the series of regional workshops under the project, exchanging lessons learned and identifying areas for improvement.

The group expressed appreciation for the opportunity to exchange views candidly at the WRATE workshops. Many participants admitted that they had been ignorant about their rights and the Government's commitments and obligations to protect these rights. Several spoke about their personal experiences with domestic violence and trafficking. They said they had not been aware that Albania had legislation aimed at countering these acts and that the perpetrators could be brought to justice.

Obviously, we still have a long way to go in putting our prevention efforts in place. However, I believe that the feedback on the WRATE project confirms that our strategy is on the right track: that the most efficient way of combating trafficking is to make people realize that any involvement in trafficking is simply unacceptable, and that it is gnawing at the country's socio-economic fabric.

Raising people's consciousness about the relationship between human rights, women's rights and anti-trafficking issues is at the heart of the WRATE project, and we intend to stay the course by maintaining the momentum of the awareness campaigns. We plan to continue holding regional workshops and extend them to the north-eastern part of



Some 1,600 Albanians who have completed WRATE workshops are now qualified to deal with women's rights and trafficking issues

OSCE Presence in Albania

the country, an extremely poor and isolated border area where women are particularly vulnerable.

Our target groups will be national minorities, rural residents, high-school students and teachers, university professors, healthcare providers, police anti-trafficking units, judges, prosecutors and media representatives.

We will also be asking OSCE missions and offices working in the territories that border Albania to explore possibilities of expanding WRATE activities throughout the region. At the same time, we plan to conduct training in gender issues and anti-trafficking work for our mission staff and our colleagues in other international organizations.

Empowering Albanians

As I reported to the Permanent Council in early February, the Presence has kept up its assistance to the authorities in the implementation of the National Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings. Through our six field stations, we work closely with the anti-trafficking police teams as well as with district prosecutors. The OSCE Presence chairs the Witness Protection Task Force, which was established in May 2002 to address a growing frustration among prosecutors: their work is being seriously hin-

dered by frequent cases of witnesses withdrawing their testimonies after receiving threats or being bribed.

A Victims Assistance Project, launched in September 2002, will establish a team within the national police to screen victims of trafficking who have been repatriated to Albania. The aim is to provide staff with the capability to counsel victims and provide them with legal advice on their rights. So far, 70 people have been assisted under the activity's first phase, which is being supported by the ODIHR Anti-Trafficking Project Fund.

Especially at this time of easing political tensions in the country, we are challenged by our vision to empower Albanians in every aspect of the OSCE's democratization activities. We plan to do this by co-operating more closely with governmental organizations and NGOs. A step in this direction is organizing joint training with the Committee for Equal Opportunities under the Albanian Ministry of Labour, an idea we are exploring. In the final analysis, the only way to fight this tragic phenomenon is to act together wisely and responsibly.

Ambassador Osmo Lipponen has been Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania since September 2002.

Partners in anti-trafficking

Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director, United Office on Drugs and Crime, addressing the Permanent Council on 25 March 2003

“When it comes to the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) and its *Protocols on Trafficking in Human Beings, Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Firearms*, the OSCE is an important partner to the UNODC, working with their respective States to ratify the instrument and ensuring support for effective implementation, through both legislative and criminal justice reform. Of the 55 participating States of the OSCE, 52 have signed the TOC Convention, and 15 have ratified it.

“Countering the problem of traf-

ficking in human beings must remain a focus area. The Balkans is a key transit area: of the estimated 700,000 women who are transported over international borders to meet the requirements of the sex trade, as many as 200,000 are taken to or through the Balkans.

“My Office is examining new ways of protecting asylum seekers who have fallen prey to traffickers or who are potential victims. For example, in Albania, the UNHCR is an active player in a rapid screening exercise designed to ensure proper channelling and follow-up of individual cases entering Albania. The UNHCR co-operates with other actors in an initial assessment, detecting potential cases of trafficking to ensure that they are channelled to the agencies and institutions best

equipped to deal with their needs.”

Ruud Lubbers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, addressing the Permanent Council on 8 April 2003

“I hope that the OSCE’s anti-trafficking action plan will have as its base a fundamental protection rationale, especially in the two areas of particular relevance to us – namely, victim protection and legislative developments.

“From our perspective, it is also crucial that such a plan does not undermine the protection safeguards for refugees contained in the existing legal framework. The *Declaration on Trafficking in Human Beings* adopted at the Ministerial Council in Porto offers a firm foundation upon which we can build further.”

Older and wiser: Election observation benefits from lessons learned

Four years of overseeing OSCE’s election operations

Hrair Balian joined the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in 1999 to head its Election Section. A U.S. national who was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1948, he was a lawyer in the United States before moving to Europe in the 1990s to devote his energies to minority issues, human rights and conflict resolution.

As Mr. Balian prepared to leave to take up his new post as Director of Special Programmes at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, he spoke with Jens Eschenbächer, Spokesperson of ODIHR and Head of its Public Affairs Unit, about some lasting impressions of the past four years.

Jens Eschenbächer: Why is there still a need to observe elections?

Hrair Balian: Firstly, the presence of international observers serves as a deterrent to irregularities: gross manipulations and severe cases of fraud are less likely when there are observers on the ground. Secondly, election observation can serve as a confidence-building measure: it can provide the margin of confidence needed to convince opposition parties or domestic observer groups to participate in an election process. Thirdly, observing elections is a tool for the prevention of conflicts: without our presence, the parties involved might be more likely to settle their differences on the streets rather than through legal and democratic means.

Looking back on your four years as head of ODIHR’s election operations, what trends have you seen emerging?

Some countries have made a great deal of progress, but we have also experienced deep disappointments. All too often, the authorities continue to flout the will of the people, and elections are not decided at the polling stations but through manipulation in the backrooms and sometimes even before the elections take place. However, we need to look at the regions and countries individually to be able to draw sound conclusions.

In south-eastern Europe, the picture is mixed: in some countries the next observation mission is likely to be the



Hrair Balian (right) on a visit to Chechnya in March

last, while in others our involvement might have to last a little longer. Frankly, in a few countries in the region, I don't see an end to international observation just yet.

In the Caucasus, the situation poses many more difficulties. Although the authorities have been co-operating with ODIHR to improve the framework for elections, implementing these improvements in practice is a different matter. As for Central Asia, I'm afraid there is still a long way to go.

Recently, the ODIHR has also begun observing elections in long-standing democracies such as the United States, France and Turkey. Why is that?

The general public has seen how older democracies are not immune to election-related problems – relating to the role of the media or campaign-financing, among other examples. In the United States, it was acknowledged that deficiencies in the electoral process resulted in protracted counting battles – raising questions about the outcome.

Of course, all these countries have

functioning administrative and judicial systems and strong civil societies, which can – and do – address these problems. By sending assessment teams to developed democracies, we can look at how “hiccups” in their election processes are handled, and since we often include experts from emerging democracies in our missions, they can apply these experiences back home.

By covering some of the elections in these countries, we also demonstrate that we don't ignore problematic elections in the “West” and we contribute to eroding the perception that the OSCE follows double-standards in carrying out its work.

How do you respond to criticism that there is too much focus on elections in the Organization?

I don't believe this criticism – directed largely at the election activities of OSCE field missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo – is justified at all. It is true that the Organization has been channelling massive efforts into organizing elections in these places, but there was a real, concrete need for this,

as spelled out in the OSCE's specific mandates on the ground.

In the other regions, the OSCE missions have little to do with elections; it is the ODIHR that is at the helm of observing elections and assisting in improving electoral frameworks. Having said that, election work makes up only a relatively small part of the ODIHR's range of activities, and considering its rather limited resources, I believe we do make a significant impact. The perception you refer to could have been created by the media's high-visibility coverage of elections – and rightly so, since these are key events in a country's political process.

How do you ensure effective follow-up to your election reports?

After each election observed by ODIHR, we offer assistance in remedying the shortcomings and in building on the strengths that we have identified. In some countries, we remain intensely engaged in the post-election period, as well as during the preparations for the next election. Clearly though, there is room for improving our follow-up work, especially at the political level. Partly, this can be done through our own means and resources; and partly, we would need stronger support from other OSCE governments.

What do you consider your most significant achievements as Head of the Election Section?

First, let me say that the past four years have been the most fascinating in my career.

To have been able to provide countries with very concrete assistance in developing and strengthening democratic institutions has been tremendously rewarding. It has been a pleasure to work with a highly dedicated team here in Warsaw. I am also grateful for the confidence that the OSCE has placed in me.

Certainly there have been setbacks as well, but overall, I think one can say that our work has made a difference. Take Albania as an example: our involvement during and after the last elections helped usher in an atmosphere of consensus after years of extreme polarization. Or

the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: the presence of our observers during the first elections after the 2001 crisis was a crucial part of the peace process. In some countries, by exposing fraud, we managed to put pressure on the authorities to change their old and outdated ways.

We in ODIHR have grown in maturity over the past few years in the way we examine election processes. Issuing criticism is not enough. We have learned to identify and recognize the strengths of the processes in each country, and then

build on them. Another development I consider noteworthy is the increased participation of experts and observers from emerging democracies in our missions, which has added considerable credibility to our activities.

What is the key “lesson learned” that you would like to share with your successor?

Approach this job with humility, and try to understand, while not necessarily always accepting, why things are done in a certain way in some countries, always

bearing in mind that people have experienced a different past.

ODIHR, the leading election observation institution in Europe, has monitored well over 100 electoral events over the past decade. The ODIHR’s Election Section, with eight international staff, deploys several thousand long- and short-term observers to election sites in the OSCE area every year. ODIHR observation missions generally last more than a month and deal with the full range of aspects in an electoral process.

OSCE stays the course in Serbia and Montenegro

Fighting organized crime stepped up in post-Djindjic era

By Rory Keane

“The OSCE Mission strongly condemns this inhumane and cowardly act of violence and reaffirms its full commitment to supporting the Serbian Government in combating crime and moving the country towards the European mainstream,” said Ambassador Maurizio Massari, Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro. He was reacting to news of the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic on the streets of Belgrade on 12 March.

Representing the Organization at the Prime Minister’s funeral on 15 March, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dutch Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, said: “I expect that the progress made in recent years in moving the country closer to European and international organizations in the field of security and human rights will not be derailed by this unacceptable attack on the process of democratization and the rule of law.”

After the funeral, Ambassador Massari said it was a particularly difficult moment for Serbia and Montenegro. “The obvious difficulties faced by any transition country have been further compounded by the killing of the reform-

minded leader,” he said. “It is extremely important that the Djindjic-led reforms are now built upon and consolidated in the interest of the country, and as a tribute to the late Prime Minister.”

Intensified response

At the height of the emergency period [12 March to 22 April] in the wake of Mr. Djindjic’s assassination, the Mission brought the donor community together in an informal meeting with the Serbian Justice and Interior Ministries to examine how all parties could co-ordinate their efforts more effectively in the stepped-up anti-crime campaign.

During the discussions on 3 April, Ambassador Massari outlined progress in the Mission’s plan of action, which has been directed towards improving the professionalism and transparency of the police and the criminal justice system. The Mission’s activities to reform the police place a strong emphasis on continuing education, accountability to the public and better internal control, fighting organized crime, and improving expertise in forensics, border policing and community policing.

Turning to the judiciary, Ambassador

Massari said that the Mission would continue its support to enhance the capability of judges and prosecutors to carry out their work. Assistance will also be provided to the courts, to enable them to conduct domestic war crimes trials in line with international standards. The restructuring of the prison system and the government’s crackdown on corruption are two other areas that the Mission has taken on as priorities.

He also welcomed the Serbian Government’s initiative to increase the security and safety of its citizens through a decree on 27 March, aimed at collecting illegally-held weapons. The decree is in line with the spirit and provisions of the *OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons*, which commits participating States to reducing the level and use of small arms. In 2001, the Mission supported the destruction of more than 50,000 pieces of weapons by the Yugoslav Army, under a Stability Pact project.

Support for new state union

Both the Mission and the authorities are convinced that the best way to fight organized crime and its associated ills is to build institutions capable of governing

effectively and maintaining the rule of law.

This is why support for the new state union of Serbia and Montenegro in its path towards membership of European and trans-Atlantic institutions will continue to underpin the Mission's work programme. Specifically, the Mission will assist in strengthening governmental structures, including the union's five joint ministries and the committees of the union's new parliament.

Related to this is the Mission's offer of support towards putting the new Constitutional Charter into practice. This would involve direct assistance to the Constitutional Commission in its task of either creating new constitutions for the two republics, or – in the case of Montenegro – amending the current one.

International and domestic war crimes trials

The Mission also continues to be a strong advocate of greater co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Miroslav Radic, indicted to the ICTY on suspicion of responsibility for war crimes that took place in November 1991 in the area of Vukovar, voluntarily surrendered to The Hague on 21 April. This development reflects Serbia and Montenegro's more constructive engagement with the ICTY, which figures significantly in the fight against crime.

The ICTY, the international community and the Serbian authorities agree that parallel to the trials in The Hague, trials of war crimes in domestic courts should be pursued more vigorously and professionally. The Mission is drawing up a plan to



Ambassador Maurizio Massari keeping the media informed

make this possible by providing judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers with training and special facilities.

On a visit to Serbia and Montenegro on 22 April, the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Dutch Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, addressed both issues. He expressed support for domestic war crimes trials and advocated a role for the Organization in raising people's awareness of the need for co-operation with the ICTY.

Anti-trafficking

It is no secret that criminal networks in south-eastern Europe feed on the trafficking of human beings, drugs and weapons. The Mission's newly established anti-trafficking task force is devising a strategy to address the causes as well as the consequences of trafficking. Protecting the victims of trafficking in human beings will be a crucial element. Since traffickers operate across the

region, the task force will also co-operate with neighbouring countries.

Southern Serbia

The Mission's work in nurturing the peace process in southern Serbia through multi-ethnic policing and a variety of confidence-building measures is also expected to help curb criminal activities.

Now that local communities have agreed to embrace the policy of multi-ethnic co-operation through democratically elected institutions, the Mission is gradually shifting its attention to assisting in bringing about the fruits of democracy: steady economic progress and properly functioning social services, a relevant educational curriculum, responsive state institutions and a society that can place its confidence in the rule of law.

Rory Keane is the Spokesperson of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro.

Serbia and Montenegro in 2003: Recent developments

27 January: National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopts new Constitutional Charter of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro and agrees to change the name to "Serbia and Montenegro".

29 January: Assembly of the Republic of Montenegro adopts new Constitutional Charter of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro and agrees to change the name to "Serbia and Montenegro".

4 February: Assembly of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia adopts and promulgates the Constitutional Char-

ter, which dissolves the former federation and renames the country, following the Belgrade Agreement of 14 March 2002.

13 February: The OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is renamed "OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro".

31 March: Parliament of Serbia and Montenegro ratifies statute of the Council of Europe.

3 April: Serbia and Montenegro is accepted as a full member of the Council of Europe.

A return to normalcy: "The best tribute to the late Prime Minister"

"I believe that a return to a normal situation, a continuation of reform and a concerted effort to move towards Europe is the best tribute that Serbia can give to the late Prime Minister Djindjic," the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dutch Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, said upon learning of the lifting of the state of emergency in Serbia on 22 April. The news came on the day of his official visit to Belgrade, Podgorica and Pristina to discuss current developments with key political leaders. In an interview in Belgrade with the most widely read Serbian daily, Vecernje Novosti, he was asked about the fight against organized crime in the area. Excerpt:

Vecernje Novosti: In your view, was the state of emergency in Serbia unavoidable?

Chairman-in-Office Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: May I first say that the OSCE Chairmanship is very pleased with Prime Minister Zivkovic's recommendation to Acting Serbian President Natasia Micic that the state of emergency be lifted.

I think that the state of emergency was called for, given the gravity of the situation. It allowed the authorities to carry out a swift hunt for Mr. Djindjic's killers and those who ordered his assassi-

nation. The Serbian police have also made serious progress in their crack-down on organized crime, which is to be applauded. In any state of emergency, however, one has to carefully weigh the consequences of special measures on the functioning of regular democratic institutions, including the press and the judiciary.

The best thing for the country now is to return to normal. From the OSCE's perspective, it is important that a country can deal with serious and unexpected crises and blows to its political life, relying on regular state organs and existing legislation. If these are not up to standard, the OSCE is here to assist and help in establishing the appropriate legislative framework.

At a recent session of the OSCE Permanent Council, George Soros, Chairman of the Open Society Institute, warned that even though public attention has shifted to another region, the Balkans must remain a priority, especially in terms of financial and technical assistance. Will the OSCE accept such a recommendation?

The OSCE certainly remains focused on the Balkans. Don't forget that our biggest Missions are still in

this part of Europe. Think of the Missions in Sarajevo, Pristina or Skopje. Clearly, there are many reasons why the OSCE presence on the ground is still required. The Organization's involvement is needed to assist the authorities in the fight against organized crime, in the reforms in the judiciary, the police system and the media, and in support for parliaments and democratic institutions.

So I agree with Mr. Soros' viewpoint. At the same time, one cannot deny that in south-eastern Europe, significant progress has been made in recent years.

Furthermore, I have noticed firsthand during my recent travels, for instance to Turkmenistan, that the OSCE is very much needed there too. You must be aware that while the OSCE is one of the many institutions active here [in south-eastern Europe], especially with a view to bringing it closer to European structures, in the Central Asian region the OSCE is practically the only European security organization that is present and active.

So I do not deny that I support a certain shifting of attention to that part of the world. In countries such as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the needs are enormous.

Permanent Council hears strong pitch for harnessing power of partnerships

The power and potential of close partnerships was a common thread running through the statements of recent guest speakers at the Permanent Council. The President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Jean Lemierre; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Antonio Maria Costa; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Ruud Lubbers; and international financier-philanthropist George Soros spoke highly of their mutually supportive relationship with the OSCE. They also presented concrete proposals on how their organizations and the OSCE could jointly expand their common vision of achieving lasting peace and security in the region.

EBRD President Jean Lemierre, 6 March



OSCE/Whelan Evershed

Mr. Lemierre noted that the OSCE and the EBRD had similar origins and common goals; they complemented one another and reinforced each other's efforts because of the strong link between economic growth and socio-political stability.

Reviewing progress across the 27 countries in which the Bank operates, all of which are OSCE participating States, Mr. Lemierre said the region was much more stable than just a few years ago, with most of the countries undergoing a sound process of reform. But the transition towards a stable and predictable political environment – essential for attracting much-needed foreign investment – was far from complete.

He urged the OSCE participating States to support small and medium-sized businesses, “the backbone of wealthy economies”, to increase energy efficiency and to encourage regional trade as a way of stimulating economic growth.

UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa, 26 March

“UNODC and OSCE are logical partners in dealing with the new threats to security,” Mr. Maria Costa told the Permanent Council. “Both organizations have consistently reinforced the same building blocks to ensure effective governance and the rule of law, aiming to counter the growth of ‘uncivil societies.’”

Working with other organizations on the basis of their comparative advantages was a demonstration of the “power of partnership” and was a “positive-sum game”, he said. “The arguments for the OSCE and UNODC to act in partnership are strong. We are both concerned with countering the ‘new threats’ to state security – trafficking in drugs and in human beings, organized crime and corruption, and terrorism.”

Mr. Maria Costa said that fighting terror in Central Asia and other equally important joint initiatives had deepened the UNODC-OSCE relationship, “serving to broaden the audience that each can reach individually, avoiding duplication and multiplying the cost-effectiveness and impact of the work of each organization”.

UNHCR Ruud Lubbers, 8 April

Noting that the OSCE and UNHCR

were important partners in south-eastern Europe and in the Caucasus, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ruud Lubbers, told the Permanent Council that both organizations continued to work together on issues related to forced displacement, statelessness and citizenship, and minorities. He was particularly encouraged by the OSCE’s increased support to minority returns and by the commitments addressing problems concerning statelessness in the *Charter for European Security*, which participating States adopted in Istanbul four years ago.

Mr. Lubbers urged participating States to recognize the distinction between human trafficking and smuggling. “Many OSCE countries are faced with mixed migratory flows including refugees, asylum-seekers, economic migrants who resort to smugglers for lack of a legitimate alternative, and persons trafficked for the purpose of exploitation,” he said.

“We need to find more effective ways of managing the asylum-migration nexus, so that people in need of international protection find it, people who wish to migrate have appropriate opportunities to do so and abusive manipulation of entry possibilities is curtailed.”

George Soros, Chairman of the Open Society Institute, and Founder, Soros Foundations Network, 10 April

“In many ways the OSCE is a similar organization to my own: we have a common agenda in tackling the problems facing the OSCE region,” international financier and philanthropist George Soros told the Permanent Council. Many of his 30 foundations had already undertaken productive work with the OSCE’s Institutions and field offices, he said, adding that the Organization should continue tapping into the network’s expertise.

Mr. Soros said that the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security, with its three dimensions, was “the only sensible approach to take”: it was what distinguished the Organization from others and made it particularly well adapted to deal with the new threats to security.

Commenting on the issue of re-balancing the dimensions, he urged the OSCE not to lose sight of its core mission. “By all means allocate more resources to the other two dimensions [politico-military and environmental-economic], but on no account do this at the expense of the human dimension,” he said. “Without progress here, there is little hope for any lasting progress in the other two.”

He cited practical examples of how the dimensions could interconnect even more: “The Annual Security Review conference provides an excellent opportunity to concentrate the politico-military dimension on such issues as policing according to international standards and involving civil society in security issues. And the occasion of the Economic Forum in Prague in May provides an opportunity to expand the focus of the second dimension to cover issues of governance and the rule of law.”

Mr. Soros shared his personal perspectives on both progress and setbacks in individual participating States on their path towards democratization. He praised the OSCE’s work on conflict prevention – “where the OSCE is most successful” – and welcomed the increased emphasis on Central Asia, while warning that the southern Caucasus and south-eastern Europe should not be neglected.

Later in the day, Mr. Soros was a keynote speaker at a two-day conference on Roma and Sinti organized by the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The event focused on the development of an OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti, cross-border movements of Roma within Europe and prospects for the Roma refugees’ return to post-conflict areas in south-eastern Europe [see the next issue of the *OSCE Newsletter*].



OSCE/Ahmed Esmail



OSCE/Ahmed Esmail



OSCE/Ahmed Esmail



FROM THE FIELD

Uzbekistan: Implementing inter-related priorities



Ambassador Ahmet Erozan

As part of the OSCE's efforts to strengthen its activities in the politico-military and economic and environmental dimensions [see story, page 7], the Centre in Tashkent has received an additional 450,000 euros for several new projects in areas as diverse as developing small and medium-sized enterprises, managing water resources and combating trafficking in drugs and arms.

"Everything we are working on in Uzbekistan is interrelated," said Ambassador Ahmet Erozan, Head of the Centre in Tashkent since November 2002, in an interview with the *OSCE Newsletter* in March. "Water issues involve security and economic issues. Similarly, trafficking in drugs has consequences for both the economy and security."

He underlined the importance of the co-operative approach in defining the Centre's strategy for 2003. "We should not forget that we are working *for* and *with* Uzbekistan. The authorities did not have any further comments when we submitted our draft strategy to them. I take this to mean that the country's needs have been reflected in a well-balanced manner."

Stressing that the repositioning would not be to the detriment of other areas, the Ambassador said: "One of our main priorities lies in the

reform of the prison system. We would also like to set up an Internet café for journalists to give them access to information free of charge. In addition, Uzbekistan will have parliamentary elections in 2004 and we hope that in the coming weeks, new political parties will register and that they will be able to play the role of genuine opposition parties."

The Head of the Tashkent Centre served as Ambassador of Turkey to Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1998 to 2002. Previous assignments included Kinshasa, Moscow and NATO in Brussels, but his specialization is Central Asia and the Caucasus. "Having been Deputy Director-General for Central Asia and the Caucasus in the Turkish Foreign Ministry from 1996 to 1998, going to Tashkent was like coming back home," he said.

Tajikistan: OSCE Centre in Dushanbe opens field office in Kulyab

The fifth Field Office of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe opened on 27 February in Kulyab, the country's third biggest city, some 200 km. southeast of the Tajik capital. The Kulyab office covers ten districts, with an estimated population of two million.

Civil education and gender programmes are already under way. A Legal

Adviser is jointly subsidized by the Open Society Institute and the OSCE. The creation of the Field Office falls under the new mandate of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, which was adopted in October 2002 by the Permanent Council.

Tajikistan: Preparing for 2005 parliamentary elections

Participants at a conference in Dushanbe on 3 April agreed on the need to improve Tajikistan's election legislation and procedures ahead of the parliamentary elections two years from now. A working group was created to draft recommendations, which will be forwarded to parliament.

The conference was organized by the Tajik parliament with the support of the OSCE.

Turkmenistan: Roundtables to promote Civil Procedural Code

The OSCE Centre in Ashgabat has launched seven roundtables aimed at promoting the adoption of Turkmenistan's new Civil Procedural Code, a follow-up to the Turkmen Civil Code of 1998.

The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, the *Mejlis* (the Turkmen parliament), the Supreme Court, the General Prosecutor's Office and the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights under the Turkmen President were represented at the first roundtable on 18 March.

Kazakhstan: New project to develop economic courts

Twenty-six judges from all over Kazakhstan have taken part in a project to develop economic courts, which were introduced to the country a year ago. The judges were trained in court practices from 25 to 28 March and participated at a



Heads of OSCE delegations who visited the Kulyab Office on 9 May received a warm welcome by local leaders

roundtable on 29 March.

The activities were organized by the OSCE Centre in Almaty in co-operation with the Financial Police Academy and the Supreme Court's Committee on Court Administration.

Kyrgyzstan: Security and democratization – contradiction or interdependence?

The relationship between security and democracy in Central Asia was examined by leading global and regional experts at a workshop on 31 March. This was the first event hosted by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek in its premises since its establishment in December.

Speakers called on the OSCE and the international community to support the modernization process in Central Asia but not impose ready-made solutions. They called on the OSCE Academy to investigate the risks to the democratization process and ways of preventing violent consequences.

Participants included Ambassador Gerard Stoudmann, Director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and former Director of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; Ambassador Aydin Idil, Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek; Professor Wolfgang Zellner, Director of the Centre for OSCE Research in Hamburg; Arno Truger, Director of the Austrian Peace Centre; Professor Georg Frerks from the Clingendael Institute in The Hague; Professor Saidanvar Shokhumorov, Deputy Director of Tajikistan's Institute of Oriental Studies; and Sergei Smirnov from Kazakhstan's Institute of Strategic Research.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ten more municipalities benefit from better management

Ten municipalities have completed an OSCE project that has enabled them to tighten their development planning and financial management, freeing up funds for urgently needed improvements for their citizens.

New roads and sports centres have been built; traffic signals, street lights and electrical lines have been installed; and water and sewage systems have been

improved. The roles of elected officials and parliamentary procedures have also been clarified.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Education reform gains momentum

The swift adoption of the State law on primary and secondary education and the design of a common core curriculum before the next school year were the focus of an education forum held in Sarajevo on 8 April. Participants comprised some 200 stakeholders in education, including the Education Ministers of the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the Federation's cantons.

The *Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education* and a common core curriculum for children are part of the post-accession commitments of the BiH to the Council of Europe.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Campaign encourages responsive local governance

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council of Europe (CoE) launched a campaign on 10 April to strengthen the impact of the *European Charter of Local Self-Government in BiH*. The Charter sets the legal foundation for a strong system of local self-government based on common European principles.

By translating the Charter, making it better understood and publicizing and disseminating it throughout the country, the OSCE Mission and the CoE aim to promote its implementation.

Kosovo: Conditions for minority communities remain concern

Improvements in the overall well-being and security situation of minority communities remain limited to certain areas in Kosovo and to certain groups, according to the OSCE and the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) in their tenth joint report, published on 10 March.

The assessment finds that while many areas have improved, concerns remain about the minority communities' security and freedom of movement in Kosovo, their property rights and their access to basic services, and justice,

political and civil structures. Reviewing progress made in 2002, the report emphasizes the need for a more sustainable community-based approach to enable a large-scale return in the near future.

The report is available on www.osce.org/kosovo/documents/reports/ in three languages.

Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro): Roundtable initiates debate on minority role in elections

An OSCE roundtable on 28 March launched a broad discussion aimed at the participation of minorities in Montenegro's electoral process. The initiative follows last year's agreement between the main political forces in Montenegro to amend the Republic's election law.

More than 40 representatives of political parties and the Albanian, Bosniak, Croat and Roma communities took part in the event, which was organized by the OSCE Mission's Office in Podgorica and the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Skopje: Young entrepreneurs trained in business skills

Interactive workshops in the Kicevo valley and Kumanovo have taught 50 young people from various ethnic groups how to develop creative business concepts and draft a basic small-business plan.

The workshops were organized in March and April by the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje with the Southeast Europe Enterprise Development, a World Bank-affiliated non-profit organization specializing in helping develop small and medium-sized enterprises.

Skopje: Local media associations receive support

Five media associations have developed their business plans and long-term strategies as part of a new training programme launched by the OSCE Mission to Skopje on 25 March.

The initiative is aimed at helping the associations – which represent the interests of the country's media – to strengthen their professionalism and financial operations.



PRESS PROFILE

Excerpts from a recent selection of articles on the OSCE and its activities

Albanian News Agency, ATA, 4 March

[Albanian President] Alfred Moisiu, during talks held Friday with the OSCE's Head of Presence in Tirana, Osmo Lipponen, emphasized that "preparation of the law on the restitution and compensation of properties and completion of the work by the bipartisan committee on electoral reform are priorities of the work of Albanian institutions in co-operation with the OSCE."

Interfax-Ukraine, 18 March

The international organization Human Rights Watch has announced that the Presidential Administration of Ukraine ... blatantly violates freedom of expression through explicit instructions on how television stations may cover the news ... [Human Rights Watch recommended] that international organizations such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE continue to assist and monitor the Ukrainian government in securing freedom of expression.

Itar-Tass, 21 March

Another echelon of the Russian military hardware was dispatched from the Dniester region on Friday. A source at the headquarters of the Operative Group of Russian Forces ... believes the high tempo of evacuation of Russian armaments from the Dniester region offers hope that the obligations assumed by Russia [for full withdrawal from Moldova by the end of the year] will be fulfilled on time.

AFP, 7 April

Turkmenistan on Monday claimed a near 100 per cent turnout in weekend elections to a top advisory body and thousands of local councils, in a throwback to Soviet times in this remote Central Asian state... The pan-European OSCE was not invited to observe the voting and voiced doubts that the elections

would prove to be truly democratic.

AFP, 21 March

Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov is committing "mind-boggling" rights abuses and the OSCE will ask the UN to condemn his rule, according to a report ... "The contrast between the law as it is presented and the reality marked by terror and fear is mind-boggling" in the Central Asian country, says the 106-page document drawn up by OSCE rapporteur Emmanuel Decaux. The report examines the authoritarian president's tough security response to an alleged assassination attempt in November.

AKIpress, Bishkek, 17 March

The OSCE intends to set up a model police unit in Kyrgyzstan in its fight against terrorism and trafficking in drugs, human beings and weapons since it [the OSCE] believes that the situation in this republic lends itself to this initiative. The project will be implemented by April 2004, with 3.6 million euros in funding. ... [Kyrgyz President Askar] Akayev stressed that the OSCE should be a catalyst for international assistance in Central Asia, focusing on economic and ecological development and strengthening the region's potential to combat international terrorism, drugs and other threats.

New York Times, 12 March

An opposition journalist in Kazakhstan, sentenced to three and a half years in jail on charges of child rape, has had his appeal rejected, while a Dutch diplomat suggested in a new report that the charges against the journalist were fabricated at the behest of the country's authoritarian leadership... The OSCE previously called Mr. [Sergei] Duvanov's trial flawed. Today a spokesman for the organization's press freedom office expressed serious concern about the expulsion of foreign observers and said

it would be raised when the group's council meets on Thursday.

Reuters, 28 March

The pro-Moscow leader of Chechnya [Akhmad Kadyrov] said on Friday this week's overwhelming vote in favour of a constitution entrenching the region in Russia had made separatist leaders irrelevant ... But the OSCE, the continent's largest rights body, was lukewarm on the vote, saying it remained uncertain whether it would bring peace.

AFP, 24 March

Max van der Stoep, the special rapporteur on Iraq for the UN Commission on Human Rights between 1991 and 1999, told the Dutch *Volkskrant* daily he felt war against Saddam Hussein is justified ... Van der Stoep, who was also the first High Commissioner for Minorities of the OSCE from 1992 to 2001, said that his investigations into human rights abuses in Iraq were always refused and sabotaged by Saddam's regime.

Financial Times, 31 March

Freimut Duve, the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media, told the *Financial Times*: "The type of 24-hour war coverage [of the Iraq conflict] we have seen in the United States and some European countries has presented war as a form of entertainment. This is a very dangerous step for the television media to take."

AFP, 1 April

Duve said he planned to investigate reports that "embedded" journalists were cut off mid-report by military personnel who found their reporting too critical. He also criticized the bombing of the building housing Iraqi state television, as he had criticized the bombing of Yugoslav television in Belgrade during the war in Kosovo in 1999.



Update

OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Coming events

- 25 May.** Observation of parliamentary elections and referendum in Armenia
- 25 May.** Observation of municipal elections in Moldova
- 27 and 28 May, Sarajevo.** South-eastern Europe regional roundtable on Prison Staff Development and Training Centres
- 27 and 29 May.** Training of trainers workshop for senior prison officials in Armenia (first in a series of events)
- 28 and 29 May, Bishkek.** Conference on *Criminal Procedure Standard of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: practice and implementation in Kyrgyzstan*
- 28 and 29 May, Moscow.** Anti-trafficking training seminar with the Russian Association of Crisis Centres and La Strada Ukraine

Recent events

- 19 and 20 May, Vienna.** Third expert group meeting on international election standards
- 18 and 19 May, Warsaw.** Assessment meeting on *Western European advocacy campaign: promoting the rights of trafficked persons*
- 13 to 15 May, Warsaw.** Human Dimension Seminar on participation of women in public and economic life
- 11 May.** Observation of repeat presidential elections in Montenegro
- 1 May.** Assessment of assembly elections in the United Kingdom (Scotland, Wales)
- 10 and 11 April, Vienna.** Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti
- 7 to 25 April.** Regional seminars for prison staff in three regions of Kazakhstan
- 3 April.** Working conference on preparation for 2005 general elections in Tajikistan
- 1 to 4 April.** Early assessment visit in connection with November parliamentary elections in Georgia
- 28 March.** Roundtable on minority participation in elections in Montenegro
- 27 and 28 March, Vienna.** Second expert group meeting on international election standards
- 24 to 26 March.** Working meeting of Bipartisan Committee of Albanian Parliament, ODIHR, OSCE Presence in Albania and Venice Commission
- 21 to 24 March.** Expert Group visit to the Russian Federation in connection with referendum in Chechnya
- 12 to 31 March.** Needs assessment mission to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on continuation of prison reform
- 5 March.** Observation of second round of presidential election in Armenia
- 26 February to 3 March.** Joint ODIHR-Council of Europe Assessment Mission to the Russian Federation in connection with referendum in Chechnya

For more information on these and other activities of the ODIHR, please visit osce.org/odihr

HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

HCNM visits Abkhazia, Georgia

The High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, visited Georgia from 24 to 27 March as part of his on-going co-operation with the Georgian Government in matters relating to inter-ethnic relations and integration.

In Tbilisi, discussions with President Eduard Shevardnadze, Foreign Minister Irakli Menegarishvili and other senior officials focused on inter-ethnic issues in the context of Georgia's security situation and the High Commissioner's conflict prevention activities in Samtskhe-Javaketi.

On this visit, the situation in Abkhazia received special attention. The High Commissioner flew by helicopter to Sukhumi to meet representatives of the breakaway regime and staff of the United Nations/OSCE Human Rights Office. Mr. Ekeus is concerned about the plight of schools in the Gali district that are encountering difficulties in teaching in Georgian. He conveyed his concerns to the *de facto* authorities and reminded them of their obligations to the people living in the region. He also expressed his support for the opening of a branch office of the UN/OSCE Human Rights Office in Gali.

Hungarian "Status Law": almost there

The High Commissioner has continued to encourage the Hungarian Government to amend the *Law on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring States* in line with international standards. He has also been discussing the amendments with States affected by the law.

The High Commissioner and his staff are in frequent contact with leading representatives of Hungarians abroad, and with experts and senior government officials from Hungary and neighbouring States, particularly Romania and Slovakia, to iron out

remaining differences.

On 13 February, Ambassador Ekeus visited Budapest to meet Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs and leaders of the European Integration and Foreign Affairs Committees. On 4 and 5 March, he visited Bratislava where he met Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda, Deputy Prime Minister Pal Csaky and the Chairman of the Hungarian Coalition, Bela Bugar. It is evident that differences have been narrowing, although some issues, such as support for education, remain unresolved.

"At the end of the day, this much-discussed law is the responsibility of the Hungarian National Assembly," Ambassador Ekeus told the OSCE Permanent Council on 20 March. "But the law must be in line with international standards, and if some of its provisions are to be implemented outside the jurisdiction of the Republic of Hungary, then it will need the consent of the States where it has effects." He added: "We are almost at a point where compromises can be reached without compromising basic principles and minimum standards."

Discussions focus on implementation of Framework Agreement

The High Commissioner visited Skopje and Tetovo on 17 and 18 March to discuss various aspects of the implementation of the Framework (Ohrid) Agreement with government officials and minority representatives.

The discussions focused on education, the use of symbols, decentralization, the representation of minorities in public life and the use of languages. Ambassador Ekeus offered to assist the Government in language legislation reform, noting the importance of publishing accurate results from the November 2002 census as soon as possible because many Ohrid Agreement commitments – in areas such as lan-

guage, participation and decentralization – depend on these statistics.

In Skopje, the High Commissioner met the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Education and Science, and Local Self-Government. He also held discussions with the European Union Special Representative, Alexis Brouhns.

In Tetovo, Ambassador Ekeus was briefed about continuing difficulties in building closer ties between the South Eastern European University and the unrecognized Tetovo University. He also met the leader of the Democratic Party of Albanians, Arben Xhaferi, and the Vice President of the Democratic Union for Integration, Teuta Arifi.

Legislation in south-eastern Europe receives High Commissioner's support

The High Commissioner has continued to support the process of legislative reform in south-eastern Europe. In mid-February, he forwarded comments on the *Charter of Human and Minority Rights* to members of the Constitutional Commission of Serbia and Montenegro. In his remarks to the Permanent Council on 20 March, Ambassador Ekeus noted that "the Charter, which was finally adopted at the end of February, provides a good framework for the guarantee of minority rights in conformity with international standards and practices of good governance".

In Croatia, the High Commissioner has been following the process of transforming the guarantees established in the *Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities* (adopted in December 2002) into the country's legislative framework. On 27 February, he forwarded his comments to the Croatian Parliament on the *Draft of the Law on Amendments to the Law on the Election of Members of Representative Bodies of Local and Regional Self-Government Units*.

Parliamentarians visit Albania

A delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), including seven members of parliament representing five countries, visited the OSCE Presence in Albania from 24 to 26 March to learn more about its work and the overall situation in the country. The group was headed by Roberto Battelli, MP (Slovenia).

The Head of the Presence, Ambassador Osmo Lipponen, told the Delegation that the OSCE was the only international organization that was actively interacting with the Albanian parliament, which enabled the OSCE to provide capacity-building support to the parliament's budget oversight, administrative staff training and other key areas.

The Ambassador highlighted the importance of close co-operation between the Presence and the PA. The Delegation met Albanian President Alfred Moisiu, Speaker of Parliament Servet Pellumbi, Prime Minister Fatos Nano, Foreign Minister Ilir Meta, Ambassador James Jeffrey of the United States and senior representatives of the European Commission.

During a visit to Durres, the delegation was briefed on efforts by the Albanian authorities to demolish more than 700 illegal buildings between Vlora and Durres and to clean up the pollution caused by the Durres Chemical Plant in the Porto Romano area.

Previous visits of OSCE parliamentarians to the Organization's field offices have included Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Croatia.

PA President Bruce George holds talks in Rome

At the invitation of the Head of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE PA, Marcello Pacini, PA President George visited Rome from 31 March to 1 April. He met the Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Pier Ferdinando Casini; the

Deputy Speaker of the Italian Senate, Domenico Fisichella; the Chairpersons of the Defence and Foreign Affairs Committees of the Chamber of Deputies, Luigi Ramponi and Gustavo Selva; Defence Minister Antonio Martino; and the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Margherita Bonier.

The role of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE PA and current issues affecting the OSCE area were discussed. The impact of the war in Iraq on the international situation, although outside the scope of the OSCE, was also a major concern at talks with Italian parliamentarians and governmental officials, as well as with Archbishop Tauran, who is responsible for relations with States at the Secretariat of State of the Holy See.

Mr. George discussed the preparations for the Autumn Conference, to be held in Rome in October, along with the Mediterranean Forum and a meeting of the PA's Standing Committee. *Freedom of Religion* is the theme of this year's Autumn Conference. The one-day Mediterranean Forum will analyze, among other issues, the prospects for strengthening the dialogue and co-operation with the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

PA President George addressed the topic, *The OSCE and the new European Security Environment*, at a conference organized by the Italian Society for International Organizations on 31 March. Members of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE PA, high-ranking diplomats accredited in Rome, and students were among some 150 participants.

Preparations for PA Annual Session in Rotterdam under way

The Role of the OSCE in the New Architecture in Europe will be the theme of the Twelfth Annual Session of the Assembly, which will be held in Rotterdam from 5 to 9 July.

An Agreement between the OSCE

PA and the Netherlands parliament on arrangements for the Session was signed at The Hague on 25 March by OSCE PA President Bruce George, the President of the Dutch House of Representatives Frans Weisglas and Senate President Gerrit Braks.

In The Hague, President George also held meetings with the head and members of the Dutch Delegation to the OSCE PA and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. He also took part in a roundtable at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael. The meeting focused on research in OSCE-related topics, including an Institute paper on *The Effectiveness of OSCE Missions*.

OSCE PA participates in European Parliament hearing

Senator Anne-Marie Lizin (Belgium), a member of the PA's Parliamentary Team on Moldova, took part in a hearing on *A New European Union Strategy for South Eastern Europe* at the European Parliament in Brussels on 18 March. Parliamentarians from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Moldova were also present.

In her statement, Senator Lizin emphasized the role of OSCE field missions in south-eastern Europe. She stressed the importance of fighting organized crime, including trafficking in human beings, and developing proper border controls between states in the region.

Senator Lizin was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Pentti Vaananen, who held talks with the Secretariat of the European Parliament. They discussed preparations for the *Parliamentary Conference on the Stability Pact*, to be hosted by the European Parliament in Brussels on 21 and 22 May, and the *Parliamentary Seminar on Federalism*, to be hosted by the OSCE PA in Moldova in late spring.



Update

REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

Media in multilingual societies: Combating prejudice and intolerance

By Ana Karlsreiter

What do the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Luxembourg, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro and Switzerland have in common? All are multilingual societies, posing special challenges to the media. To enable media professionals from the five countries to learn from each other's most effective practices, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, and the Media Institute in Bern, Switzerland, pooled resources for a joint conference on 28 and 29 March.

The conference was the culmination of a pilot project that was initiated by Mr. Duve's Office to encourage media in multilingual societies to play a constructive role in combating prejudices and promoting tolerance.

"What we should focus on is not how language divides us but on what all of us are united by – and that is, being a citizen of a country where we live. The key word here is *citizenship*. Of course, all of us have different backgrounds, but as citizens we have a common responsibility, that to our home country," Mr. Duve told the conference participants.

Members of the media, government officials and representatives from non-governmental organizations gathered in Bern to evaluate the results of a study by independent experts on the situation of the media in the multilingual societies of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Luxembourg, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro and Switzerland.

The exchange of views and information revealed both positives and nega-



OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

The editorial staff of POINT, a student newspaper in the Tetovo region, have every reason to be proud. The paper, founded with the financial support of the Mission to Skopje, was cited as a role model at the 'Media in Multilingual Societies' conference. It is published every two weeks with a print run of 10,500, of which 2,500 are in Macedonian and 8,000 are in Albanian. A Turkish edition is also planned.

tives in the media landscape in the different countries:

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, hate speech has disappeared from the media scene and quite a high number of media outlets are operating in different languages. However, the media still mirror society's existing parallel worlds.

In Luxembourg, a multilingual society, Luxembourgish, French and German are used according to several practical, written and non-written rules. To argue in favour of monolingual media could lead to social segregation and a "dilution" of citizenship. The cultural identity of Luxembourgers is strongly linked with an equal co-existence of national language and multilingualism. This type of multilingualism is specific

to Luxembourg and probably is unique in the world.

In Moldova, independence has given rise to scores of new publications and broadcast outlets reflecting a wide spectrum of opinions on political and economic developments. However, this has not extended to linguistic and cultural diversity so far. Although the population includes more than ten ethnic groups, the Moldovan and Russian languages continue to monopolize the printed pages and the airwaves. Publications in most of the minority languages

depend on private donations and appear irregularly.

In multiethnic and multilingual Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro), the media in the languages of the ethnic communities remain under-developed: the infrastructure is weak, staff rarely meet professional standards and programming is limited and generally of poor quality.

In Switzerland, the populations who speak German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romanic have been able to develop their own media, thanks to the compactness of the language regions. While these "old-language" groups have been able to maintain their own identity within their own linguistic-regional media, there has been a segregating effect: the groups live back-to-back and

tend to orient themselves towards the neighbouring country that speaks the same language. Overall, however, Switzerland is sufficiently integrated as a nation.

The participants concluded that, although the factors determining the working environment for the media are different in each country, government

support is crucial to the survival of minority media everywhere. The conference urged that State institutions in multilingual societies be made more aware of their special responsibilities to their citizens and create – if it is still missing – a legal framework that makes media development possible in different languages.

The conference recommendations and the five country reports will be presented to the OSCE Permanent Council and published in June in English.

Ana Karlsreiter is Project Manager, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The OSCE, the Internet and media freedom



A first: the Internet Café for journalists in Almaty, Kazakhstan

Cyberspace provides Internet users with more information than any other source. The Web is supposed to be World Wide, but is it really? And what impact has this technology been having on freedom of the media and freedom of expression worldwide?

Freimut Duve, the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media, has been addressing the issue of Internet and media freedom through several projects. A workshop in Vienna in November 2002 will be followed by a conference on *Freedom of the Media and the Internet* in Amsterdam on 13 and 14 June.

In the preface to *From Quill to Cursor – Freedom of the Media in the Digital Era*, a recently published booklet based on last year's workshop in Vienna, Mr. Duve wrote:

“While the Internet is rapidly becoming more widespread and accepted, so are attempts to curtail this new freedom of expression. The development of new technologies also brings new challenges for law and order and thus

the risk of new means of censorship.”

Acknowledging that criminal content and hate speech are also accessible on the Internet, Mr. Duve said that the advantages for freedom of expression far outweighed the dangers of misuse. “Although there might be a legitimate need for regulation, this process must be closely monitored to prevent any forms of censorship from being imposed on this new and unique infrastructure,” he wrote.

Internet Cafés in Central Asia

In a related project to promote freedom of the media in Central Asia, the OSCE Centre in Almaty has opened an Internet Café for journalists within its premises with the support of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. The OSCE Centres in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Dushanbe, Tajikistan; and Tashkent, Uzbekistan, are also expected to open their own Internet Café.

Equipped with three computers, a printer and a scanner, the facilities in Almaty offer access to the Internet free of charge. Journalists and students specializing in media or related fields are encouraged to take advantage of the services. They are also welcome to use a library of books and publications on media matters, courtesy of the International Foundation for Freedom of Expression, *Adil Soz*, and *Internews Kazakhstan*.

The project seeks to address journalists' lack of access to the Internet while promoting the free flow of information. Most of the media outlets in Kazakhstan are self-financing or privately funded and cannot afford the high cost of computer equipment and Internet connection – **Ayhan Evrensel**

For more information on freedom of the media and the Internet, and to access the booklet, *From Quill to Cursor*, see www.osce.org/fom.

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OSCE

NEWSLETTER

SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE SECRETARIAT

Brdo pi Kranju, Slovenia: OSCE-UN conference on SALW, 11 March

Secretary General Jan Kubis took part in the United Nations-OSCE Sub-regional Conference on the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The conference recognized the contribution of the OSCE to the reduction of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in south-eastern Europe. [See related article, page 7.] The Organization was urged to share its experience with other regions at the United Nations biennial meeting on SALW from 7 to 11 July.

In Ljubljana, the Secretary General had separate meetings with Slovenian Prime Minister Anton Rop, Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mitja Strukelj, and State Under-Secretary Matjaz Kovacic who heads the Department for Multilateral Affairs. He also had a discussion with the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Policy of the National Assembly, Jelko Kacin, as well as with the members of the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE.

Discussions focused on co-operation between Slovenia and the OSCE and its Secretariat in light of the country's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005.

New York: UN Counter-Terrorism Committee meeting, 6 March

At the invitation of the Chairman of the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), the Secretary General took part in a meeting with international, regional and sub-regional organizations. Also attending were the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Daan Everts, and Ambassador Thorudr A. Oskarsson, Head of the Permanent Mission of Iceland to the OSCE, who chairs

the *Informal Open-Ended Group of Friends of the Chair on Assistance of the Implementation of OSCE Commitments and Activities on Combating Terrorism*.

The meeting focused on global standards in counter-terrorism, and the role of regional and sub-regional organizations in strengthening global counter-terrorism capacity and facilitating assistance. Information-sharing, focusing on comparative advantages and identifying priorities in counter-terrorism activities, were examined as means to improve global co-ordination. The CTC stressed the need for States to implement their counter-terrorism commitments and to request assistance when necessary.

The Chairman of the CTC, Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, recommended that the OSCE and the Organization of American States (OAS) develop "starter-kits" for other organizations to help them establish the same high level of co-operation and counter-terrorism efforts that have already been achieved by the OSCE and OAS.

New York: Bilateral meetings; CREATE conference, 6 and 7 March

The Secretary General had a meeting with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, which was organized by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari on 6 March. They discussed the possibility of improving interoperability and communication among the key organizations dealing with crisis management. The Secretary General also had a discussion with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Sir Kieran Prendergast.

On 7 March, the Secretary General addressed the Crisis Response Executive Advisory Team (CREATE) Conference, which was chaired by ex-President Ahtisaari. Representatives of the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, as well as the OSCE and the private sector

gathered to discuss how crisis-management organizations can benefit from partnerships with commercial industry. The Secretary General pledged OSCE support for Mr. Ahtisaari's Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), which aims to respond to new security challenges.

During bilateral meetings at United Nations headquarters, the Secretary General described the OSCE's management agenda and discussed several aspects of mutual co-operation and co-ordination concerning a range of regional issues. He met UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette; the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, and other UN officials.

He also met the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Ambassador Adolfo Zinser, who expressed Mexico's willingness, in its role as upcoming Chair of the UN Security Council, to invite selected regional organizations to meet with the Council in April 2003.

Brussels: Meeting of Ministerial OSCE-EU Troika, 25 February

The Secretary General accompanied the Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, to a ministerial-level meeting with the European Union Troika.

Vienna: Meeting with CIDA, 21 February

The Secretary General met Peter Daniel, Vice-President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Head of its Central and Eastern Europe Branch. CIDA has been generously contributing to various OSCE activities and projects. Mr. Daniel expressed CIDA's willingness to continue this support. The discussion also underlined the need for the Secretariat's early completion of its work on a

comprehensive project management system.

Vienna: Meeting with UNODC, 17 February

OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis and Antonio Maria Costa, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) met to discuss how to strengthen the working arrangements between the OSCE and UNODC. Initially, an informal stock-taking meeting will be organized to examine traditional practices and explore new mechanisms and areas of co-operation.



OSCE/Alban Evrnest

Ambassador Walter Balzan (left), who assumed his duties as Head of the Delegation of Malta on 2 April, with Secretary General Jan Kubis

Geneva: High-Level Tripartite Meeting, 14 February

Secretary General Jan Kubis took part in the annual High-Level Tripartite Meeting between the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the OSCE. The meeting was hosted by the United Nations Office at Geneva, and chaired by its Director General, Sergei Ordzhonikidze.

As in previous years, the European Commission, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration also participated under the "Tripartite Plus" arrangement. The Secretariat of the Council of the European Union was represented as a full participant for the first time.

This year's Tripartite Meeting, which usually precedes the working-level Target-Oriented Meeting, focused on trafficking in human beings and co-operation among international organizations. Experts from the Commonwealth of Independent States took part.

The OSCE will host the next Tripartite and Target-Oriented Meetings in February 2004 in Vienna.

Geneva: Meeting with UNECE, 14 February

At the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Secretary General met Deputy Executive Secretary Paolo Garonna and Regional Advisor Geoffrey Hamilton. They dis-

cussed how the UNECE could continue providing support to the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension, both in the work of the Economic and Environmental Subcommittee as well as in the development of a new OSCE Strategy Document on the economic and environmental dimension.

Vienna: Senior Management Retreat, 14 and 15 February

The Secretary General convened a retreat of the senior management of the Secretariat on 14 and 15 February. Discussions focused on the 2003 priorities of the OSCE and the Secretariat, including the implementation of the Integrated Resource Management system (IRMA).

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NEWSLETTER



IMPLEMENTING IRMA:

Countdown to the OSCE's integrated resource management system

By Philip Hatton

"The OSCE, IRMA and the Yellow Laptop", an article in the July/August 2002 edition of the OSCE Newsletter, introduced the concept behind the Organization's plans to streamline and modernize the management of its resources and its operations. Much has happened in the past nine months to turn vision into reality. The planning is over and the real work has begun.

The overarching goal of IRMA is simple and straightforward: to establish an integrated system for managing people and resources throughout the OSCE that can be accessed from a single laptop, enabling the Organization to deploy operations more quickly, more efficiently and more effectively to the field.

It is not just about software and computer systems. It means simplifying and improving the way we do everything – from hiring staff to buying cars and computers. It means giving managers better control over the budgets they are given to implement their mandates – and then holding them clearly accountable for the way they spend the funds entrusted to them by participating States.

IRMA also means that instead of constantly striving to "reinvent the wheel", all parts of the OSCE will operate with standardized systems and procedures. Someone with experience working in one field mission will not have to start from scratch learning new systems and procedures when they move to another. The apparently endless list of paper forms requiring multiple signatures will be replaced by simpler online forms that can be processed more quickly.

Getting the system up and running, however, is complex, and needs expert advice and support. Following a long and detailed selection process, the OSCE chose Accenture Consulting to assist in

the project's implementation. The company, which has amassed substantial experience in carrying out similar programmes in other international organizations, demonstrated a clear understanding of the specific issues of concern to the OSCE.

Considerable efforts went into drawing up the detailed requirements of IRMA, resulting in a series of *Vision Papers* in October 2002. The papers painted a picture of what the system will look like once it has been implemented, and provided a model on which the development of IRMA can proceed. Using the Oracle ERP (enterprise resource planning) system, Accenture will define and drive the processes supporting the vision.

A project team has been formed in the Secretariat under the leadership of Michael von der Schulenburg, Director for Management and Finance. Composed of the lead managers of the Organization's key resource functions – finance, human resources and materials and contract management – the team will work closely with the Accenture consultants. Supporting the team are selected experts from OSCE's Institutions and field operations, who will play a key role in ensuring that IRMA meets the requirements of those who need it most – our staff in the field.

The IRMA project has been divided into three phases:

Phase 1, completed in mid-April, has developed a programme strategy that is in line with the model presented in the *Vision Papers*. Accenture led a series of workshops for the lead managers to ensure that IRMA is properly designed to meet users' real needs. The result of this exercise is a project blueprint of the management model. The good news is that the core functional requirements that had been identified in the *Vision Papers* can be delivered by Oracle.

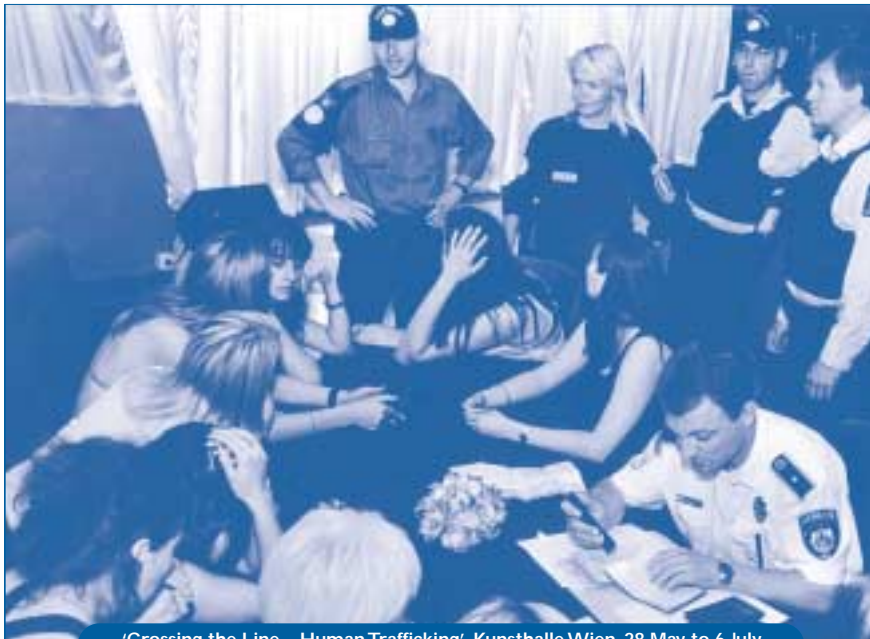
Phase 2, estimated to take about four months, will focus on designing the Oracle-based technical solution to be applied towards implementing the agreed management model. This phase will be highlighted by the *Conference Room Pilot Process*, which will refine solutions by testing them through users in a classroom environment. By the end of the year, the IRMA model will be ready for launching in all the OSCE Institutions and throughout the field operations.

Phase 3, which will be completed by January 2005, covers IRMA's implementation period. Instead of taking a 'big-bang' approach, IRMA will proceed phase by phase, with different parts of the Organization adopting the new system under a carefully planned timetable. The work will be reinforced by a wide-ranging training programme to make users thoroughly familiar with the new IRMA systems.

IRMA is an ambitious and exciting project. As work processes are streamlined and more precise management information is made available, IRMA will, inevitably, pose many new challenges. The team will pay close attention to the proper management of change. To make sure that everyone is kept updated on the key developments, effective communications will be at the heart of the project team's work in the next several months. Additionally, to make maximum use of the system's potential, a comprehensive training package will be offered to both users and managers, and briefings will be given regularly to all staff.

If you have any questions concerning IRMA, please contact the project team at IRMA@osce.org.

Philip Hatton is Senior Project Manager for Change Management, Department of Management and Finance.



'Crossing the Line – Human Trafficking', Kunsthalle Wien, 28 May to 6 July

The picture, by Dutch photographer and anthropologist Teun Voeten, shows employees of a nightclub in Pristina undergoing questioning by international police and investigative officers in Kosovo. The nightclub owner was eventually found guilty of being involved in trafficking in women. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo co-operates closely on the spot with the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration and other partners in the fight against trafficking in human beings [see OSCE Newsletter, March 2003].

Teun Voeten is one of six featured artists at Kunsthalle Wien exploring the impact of trafficking in 'modern-day slaves' through photography, film and installations.

The exhibition, from 28 May to 6 July, is sponsored by the Netherlands' OSCE Chairmanship 2003 in co-operation with the Netherlands Photo Institute and with the support of the Netherlands Embassy in Vienna and the Mondriaan Stichting, Amsterdam.

The OSCE **NEWSLETTER** is published by the Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The views expressed are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the OSCE and its participating States.



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