

OSCE

NEWSLETTER

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Solana: OSCE links with EU will deepen after enlargement

The European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, outlined his views on the shape of future co-operation between the OSCE and the EU to the OSCE Permanent Council on 25 September. He also reviewed OSCE and EU activities in the Western Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia and explained why the two organizations' "co-operation, complementarity and concertation" was inevitable in a wider Europe.

Calling the European Union and the OSCE "natural-born partners", Javier Solana told the 55 OSCE



Growing EU-OSCE partnership: EU High Representative Javier Solana, with Ambassador Francisco Seixas da Costa of Portugal, Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council



The people of Kosovo are acquiring expertise in the polling booth as well as in organizing elections

Kosovo Municipal Elections 2002: locals take on larger organizational role

As the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) prepares to organize municipal elections on 26 October, national staff are starting to take on new responsibilities. When the organiza-

tion held the first municipal poll in 2000, a huge operation – staffed mainly with international personnel – planned and executed every step of the process. But as the situation in

Kosovo has become more stable, the Mission has put the focus on sustainability – to move towards the day when the province will become self-reliant.

delegations he believed both organizations had a common future.

"Both were born out of the cold war, with a similar desire – to establish forms of co-operation in Europe which would defuse the tensions between former enemies and prevent further conflict on the continent," he said.

"With enlargement, the EU will soon make up half of the membership of the OSCE, so we shall soon share even greater common ground. As both institutions have grown in dimension and evolved in their competencies into the EU and the OSCE respectively, so too has their partnership grown and evolved," Mr. Solana told the Permanent Council.

Noting that the EU Council meeting in Copenhagen (in December) would likely agree to the admission of up to ten new countries to the European Union, Mr. Solana said: "It is not only our relations with individual countries

which we must re-evaluate, but also with the OSCE, with whom our relationship will naturally deepen in the wake of enlargement."

In his address, Mr. Solana singled out specific regions in which both the OSCE and the EU are active. He said that he had been particularly impressed by the "comprehensive and highly effective role of the OSCE" in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, "including through police training and, most recently, through its great work in ensuring peaceful and democratic parliamentary elections".

"The flexibility and the expertise of the OSCE is, and will remain, essential all over the Western Balkans," he said.

The EU High Representative also emphasized the important role played by the international community in conflict prevention and crisis management. "In our co-operation with the OSCE, I believe pragmatism should be our start-

ing point. Let's build on what we have already achieved, by benefiting from the experience of one another and by exchanging information, co-operating on the ground, and developing compatible methods and standards," he said.

The full text of Mr. Solana's speech is available on the OSCE website at: www.osce.org/press_reli/documents/2002-503-ec_solana-speech.pdf

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"The OSCE is not going to stay in Kosovo forever", says Gazmend Kelmendi, the first local staff member to serve as Associate Director of Elections. "So we are preparing for the day when we, the people of Kosovo, will organize our own free and fair elections."

Mr. Kelmendi, 45, says the main challenge is the transfer of skills and knowledge. "Before the OSCE came to Kosovo in 1999, we had never held elections according to international standards", he says. "Now that many of us have gained experience by working with the OSCE, the idea is to gradually transfer responsibility to us and bring us, our capacity and our structures up to Western norms and standards."

To do that, as early as last year the OSCE started identifying capable and talented candidates from Kosovo to be trained under a new programme; they could then be promoted as National Professional Officers to replace international staff and fully take on their responsibilities.

"They had to go through a rigorous recruitment process", says Joe Flood,

Elections Co-ordinator in Pristina. "There was also quite a bit of training and capacity-building that they had to complete. Not everyone was able to make the grade, but those who did really proved their mettle."

Impartial information

After two years of working with the OSCE, Bujar Basha, a 31-year-old Kosovo Albanian, was among those who passed the test and was then promoted to the position of National Election Officer. His main job is to act as liaison person for political parties and the Municipal Election Commissions.

As a contact point for political parties, he provides them with impartial information about election campaign regulations, rules for election observers and financial disclosure requirements. For the Municipal Election Commissions, which are composed entirely of people from Kosovo, Mr. Basha acts as the bridge between decision-makers in the OSCE and people in the field who carry out essential tasks such as accrediting local observers, preparing polling centres and



Marija Sindic is proud to be leading the weekly Political Party Consultative Forum Bujar Basha, National Election Officer, places a premium on impartiality

reporting the vote count on election day.

He says the OSCE's policy of placing national staff in the lead to deal with local institutions has brought about a synergy that benefits both sides. "As National Election Officers, we're able to go to the Election Commissions and put more on their shoulders than they had before and draw them closer to the process."

"Maintaining independence is crucial to the role of National Election Officers, who must stay above party politics and stand aside from ethnic conflicts. "What's really important in my role is impartiality, meaning not belonging to any political party, and treating people from all ethnicities equally", Mr. Basha says.

Joe Flood described a recent meeting he and Mr. Basha held with Kosovo Serb political entities in the ethnically mixed municipality of Obilic to prepare for election day. It started out acrimoniously, he said, with disputes between the entities and a general misunderstanding of the regulations. But it ended with an agreement about how to proceed.

"It didn't matter that the people we were meeting were Serbs and Bujar is Albanian. They looked at each other and saw that he's from Kosovo, they're from Kosovo, and they communicated and resolved these issues among themselves", Mr. Flood says. "All I had to do was sit

there and nod my head a few times."

The chance to contribute to his birthplace has been a strong pull for Mr. Basha. Despite having a potentially promising career in Western Europe, he decided to return to Kosovo in 2000, just as he was about to complete a university degree in Germany. Working with the OSCE, he said, has given him the chance to take part in Kosovo's future – and bring it closer to Europe.

Trust factor

Kosovo Serbs working for the OSCE are also talking on the challenge of new responsibilities in organizing elections. Marija Sindic, 23, was promoted this year to the post of National Election Officer in the Leposavic field office after three years of working with the OSCE Mission. Working her way up from secretary to assistant election officer, Ms. Sindic then completed a series of thorough OSCE training courses in report writing, facilitation, mediation and conflict resolution to prepare for her new job.

"Now I'm on my own, leading the weekly Political Party Consultative Forum", she says. "In the main person from the OSCE working with the parties on implementation issues like ballot certification, registration of candidates and co-ordinating everything else from the field to headquarters."

She says that being from Kosovo makes a world of difference in communicating with local political leaders. "We speak to each other in our language, so I'm more relaxed and they too are more open." But, she adds, she felt like an outsider when she first started working in Leposavic, in Serbian-majority northern Kosovo, because she was new to the area after being displaced from Pristina in 1999.

"The head of the Municipal Election Commission really helped me. He introduced me to the people in Leposavic and since then we have established a very productive co-operation."

Undoubtedly, part of the advantage of promoting nationals to replace internationals is financial, lowering the OSCE's costs of organizing elections. But it's much more than that, Mr. Flood says.

"Where I see the advantage for the local staff is the trust factor. It's not that the political entities, for example, don't trust the internationals, but the problem they run into is that every six months they see a new face. But when they see Bujar, they know this guy is going to be around for a while. They know he's invested personally in his job because it's his future as well as theirs."

Jeff Wisley is Public Information Officer in OMIK's Department of Operations.

Hopes for Kosovo: vigorous campaign, strong turnout, peaceful elections

Pascal Fieschi, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK), has called the municipal elections on 26 October "the most important to be held in Kosovo to date", adding that the OSCE was expecting both a vigorous campaign and a strong turnout at the polls.

Some 5,500 candidates – representing 28 political parties, one coalition, 28 citizens' initiatives and 11 independents – will be running for seats in Kosovo's 30 municipal assemblies.

"Elections are a right, a privilege and an opportunity", Ambassador Fieschi told the crowds in Pristina at the kick-off party of the 45-day election campaign period on 10 September. "It is a privilege because in many countries people are still struggling for the right to vote. Elections are an opportunity, an occasion for all people to have their say and to voice their concerns."

He mentioned three reasons why he felt these municipal elections were significant: "Firstly, because municipal assemblies are responsible for services at the most local level.

Secondly, officials who are locally elected have the most direct relationship with the population.

And thirdly, members of municipal assemblies are elected for four years, during which time Kosovo will undergo considerable change. It is important that these changes continue to take place with the participation of all the people from all communities."

The goal of the OSCE's election preparations, which began as far back as a year ago, has been to attract as many – and as diverse – political entities and registered voters as possible. "Now that the campaign is under way, it is time to channel all your energies into your involvement", Ambassador Fieschi urged. "We look forward to the political parties' activism and a strong turnout of voters."

Peaceful but energetic

Also welcoming the official start of the campaign, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz called, from Lisbon, for a peaceful but energetic period focused on local issues.

He stressed that these second municipal elections would be important as the Kosovo communities would be assuming even greater responsibility in forming truly sustainable institutions of self-government at the local level.

"There is great international interest in these elections and in the progress Kosovo's political entities and its electorate are making to meet democratic standards", Minister Martins da Cruz said. "Strong local government based on democratic elections will be the best foundation for a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. The elected municipal governments and the people will work together and all communities will be able to have elected representation at the local level."

OSCE contributes to peaceful democratic change in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

By Keith Jinks

One of the largest election observation missions ever conducted in Europe by the OSCE's election watchdog body, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was conducted successfully in September in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The deployment of almost 900 observers from 41 different nations on polling day – 15 September – helped maintain confidence and transparency so that, with the exception of a handful of isolated incidents, voting took place peacefully. Observers, including 200 staff of embassies and other international bodies based in Skopje, fanned out over the

entire country which was divided into six electoral districts.

Even before the results were known, election experts were describing the day as a "victory for the democratic process."

In a first statement, the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz, welcomed the generally peaceful environ-

ment in which the parliamentary elections were held. He commended the work of the ODIHR team, the international observers and the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje.

"The joint and concerted efforts of the international community contributed to the holding of successful elections", he said. "Now, through their high level of participation, the citizens of the country have clearly demonstrated their commitment to peace and their confidence in democracy and reconciliation."

The elections were held just over a year after the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement brokered by the international community between the representatives of the Macedonian Government and armed ethnic Albanian insurgents. This ended a seven-month conflict that claimed many lives and brought the country to the brink of civil war. As a result, some commentators had raised doubts about whether an election could be held so soon without a recurrence of serious incidents disrupting the campaign.

Massive effort

The massive polling day effort by the OSCE was part of a two-month long Election Observation Mission (EOM) that began in July. It included over 40 core staff and long-term observers who monitored the entire election campaign. Headed by Julian Peel Yates (United Kingdom), the team included legal staff and experts on the running of elections, as well as information technology, telecommunications and logistics specialists.

The observers from the ODIHR were joined on polling day by a team from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) who, together with the delegations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the European Parliament, made up the International Election Observation Mission. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office designated Kiammo Kijunjen, Vice President of the OSCE PA, as Special Co-ordinator and head of all the OSCE observers.

"This was an enormous collaborative effort by the international community", Mr Peel Yates told the press con-



Julian Peel Yates (United Kingdom) led one of the largest OSCE election observation missions ever deployed

ference held by the IEOM on 16 September to release its preliminary statement on the conduct of the elections.

"When I arrived here in July, I said I believed this country had the technical and democratic capacity to hold fair elections. By the commendable resilience of the electoral process, the high turnout of voters and the efficient conduct of the State Election Commission, the country has clearly demonstrated that capacity."

Restoring stability

"Proclaiming the elections to have been largely in line with international standards, the heads of the three parliamentary observation groups congratulated the Macedonian authorities, the political parties and citizens on a well-prepared and well-conducted election.

"The citizens of this country have achieved a successful electoral process which could represent a major step towards restoring stability, reconciliation and democracy in the country", Mr Kijunjen told journalists. Bjorn von der Esch, head of the CEPA delegation, added: "We are confident that these elections will contribute significantly to the ongoing process of reconciliation, after last year's crisis."

Doris Pack, who led the delegation of the European Parliament, said it was crucial that the new Parliament take up its work swiftly and that all its members tackle the reforms needed for the implementation of the Association and Stabilization Agreement with the European Union.

The Head of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, Ambassador Craig Jenness, joined the others in congratulating the nation, adding that democratic elections had been crucially important in a post-crisis situation.

"The security forces, with whom the OSCE Mission worked closely during polling day, conducted themselves professionally and in the interests of all citizens, to ensure an atmosphere where such a large number of people felt free to vote", he said. "Police quickly detained persons allegedly responsible for the most serious incident, where a ballot box was forcefully taken in Lesok, near Tetovo."

Acknowledging that the campaign had sometimes been hard-fought, Ambassador Jenness noted that competition was part of democracy. "Above all", he added, "Sunday was a victory for the democratic process and for the overwhelming majority of the citizens of this

country who want peace, stability and a good future for their families.”

Nonetheless, a number of violent incidents, which at times created a tense atmosphere, had marred part of the election campaign. These incidents included the killing of three police officers, hostage-taking, and attacks on party offices and media representatives. The Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council and other OSCE delegations condemned these “cowardly acts of violence” that were aimed at undermining the country’s stability and the implementation of the Framework Agreement.

While the media as a whole offered a wide range of information and views, the state media coverage of the campaign was biased in favour of the incumbents, said the preliminary statement of the IEOM.

The statement added that election day itself was characterized by a high

turnout of voters, few and isolated incidents of violence, and in general an orderly process, except for a high incidence of group voting.

Police training

Earlier, more than 3,500 police officers completed a special training course jointly organized by the Ministry of the Interior and the Police Development Unit of the OSCE Mission to Skopje. The solid and comprehensive one-day training curriculum focused on how to ensure security during the parliamentary elections, in line with international policing practices.

“As a result of this project, the police were better prepared to effectively provide a secure environment for the elections in full accordance with relevant international standards and national legislation,” said Ambassador Gerard Stoudmann, Director of ODHR. “This

also helped to increase the level of public confidence in the electoral process and the role of the law enforcement authorities.”

The elections ended in a victory for the main opposition alliance led by the social democrat SDSM, under Branko Cervenkovski, who served as prime minister until 1998. The victory was gracefully conceded by the outgoing prime minister, Ljubeq Georgievski, in a late-night television broadcast.

The elections also resulted in the strong emergence of a new Albanian party, the Democratic Union for Integration, under the former insurgent leader, Ali Ahmeti, which overtook the Democratic Party of Albanians, a member of the ruling coalition since 1998.

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Partners in OSCE area launch dialogue to strengthen anti-terrorism efforts

OSCE seen as valuable resource in focusing counter-terrorism agenda

On the eve of the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the United States, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe brought together regional and subregional groups with its traditional partner organizations to discuss progress, map out new initiatives and forge closer co-operation in preventing and combating terrorism.

Much has been achieved since 11 September 2001 – a black day for humanity – but it is only the beginning of our fight against terrorism”, OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis told the unique gathering on 6 September in Vienna.

In a first meeting of its kind, leaders of regional and subregional organizations and initiatives in south-eastern Europe, the Baltic and Black Seas and

Central Asia sat down with high-level representatives from the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and NATO to explore how they could most effectively harness their counter-terrorism activities for the safety and security of the region.

Ambassador Francisco Seixas da Costa, Representative of the Chairman-in-Office and Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, said that the Portuguese Chairmanship had identified the fight against terrorism as a top priority of its programme of work.

Negotiations were under way, the Ambassador said, on a Charter for Preventing and Combating Terrorism, with a view to adopting the document at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Porto in December. The Charter would be “a political document reaffirming the

OSCE support and contribution to the United Nations-led international efforts against terrorism, and which underlines OSCE principles and objectives in preventing and combating of terrorism.”

Berlin Declaration

Addressing the meeting as Chairman of the Defence Committee of the House of Commons and as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Bruce George reviewed the work being done at the levels of national legislatures and international parliaments in counter-terrorism. He outlined the “Berlin Declaration”, recommendations for concrete action in a number of security areas in Europe that were adopted by the 11th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in July.

Jan Troejoborg, Personal Representa-

tive of the OSCE Chairmanship for Preventing and Combating Terrorism, said the OSCE was focusing its efforts in areas where it had a comparative advantage: policing, border security, fighting trafficking and countering the financing of terrorism. In addition, the Organization’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), would concentrate its efforts on assisting states to develop anti-terrorism legislation and monitoring anti-terrorism measures and their compliance with international human rights standards and commitments.

Participants in three discussion sessions welcomed the Organization’s initiative to promote better interaction between the various organizations in the OSCE area to avoid duplication and to maximize efforts. This was in keeping with the Organization’s nature as a “regional arrangement” under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The meeting was also seen as a significant first step towards the creation of networks between participants from the OSCE region.

The OSCE Secretary General, who chaired the meeting, noted that the Organization’s newly formed Action Against Terrorism Unit could serve as a focal point for regional efforts to fight terrorism, complementing the work of the United Nations, which had the lead role in the global action against terrorism.

Ambassador Kubis also drew attention to the OSCE’s considerable experience in police-related issues, especially in multi-ethnic police training in south-eastern Europe. Its new Strategic Police Matters Unit was receiving an increasing number of requests, particularly from Central Asia and the Caucasus, to assist law enforcement agencies in resisting the threat from violent extremism.



Ambassador Curtis A. Ward of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations, and OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis meet the press

“The appointment of a Senior Police Adviser at the start of 2002 has laid the groundwork for a full range of activities in helping national authorities to build up their police capacity”, he said. “Many of these activities directly or indirectly counter the appeal, and the practice, of terrorism.”

The meeting launched a strong appeal to search for a balance between combating terrorism and respect for human rights and democracy, and between security and freedom. One of the ways this could be done was by focusing more attention to legislation in the OSCE region.

Pragmatic proposals

Participants gave broad support to the Secretary General’s concrete proposals to improve the co-ordination of the anti-terrorism agenda in the region. Specifically, the Secretary General:

- invited the regional and subregional organizations and initiatives to share information on major developments in their work through the OSCE’s regular

channels, such as the Permanent Council and the Secretariat;

- encouraged closer interaction between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and parliamentary bodies of regional and subregional organizations and initiatives, building on the indispensable role of parliaments in shaping public opinion and promoting public awareness;

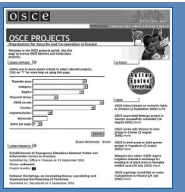
- suggested establishing links at the working-level, including the appointment of special liaison officers, between OSCE’s permanent structures and working bodies, and regional and subregional groups; and

- proposed creating links between public websites of regional and subregional groupings and the OSCE public website dedicated to current OSCE projects on preventing and countering terrorism.

The Secretary General proposed that a follow-up meeting of heads of regional and subregional organizations and initiatives be held in mid-2003 to discuss progress achieved and identify the next steps to be taken.

Anti-terrorism projects now online

A new OSCE public online project database featuring a special anti-terrorism section was launched on 6 September at the Meeting of Regional and Subregional Organizations and Initiatives on Preventing and Combating Terrorism. The database devotes a page to each of the Organization's 50 anti-terrorism projects, including background information, photographs and links to related OSCE news releases. Detailed search criteria will allow users to easily identify projects according to their interests and priorities. The database is accessible from the OSCE home page or directly at www.osce.org/osceproject



Building a mosaic of partnerships in anti-terrorism

Yugoslav Foreign Ministry official urges further strengthening of democratic institutions

About 50 high-level representatives of 25 organizations and initiatives participated in the OSCE counter-terrorism meeting on 6 September. Here is what some of them said.

Ambassador Curtis A. Ward, Advisor on Technical Assistance, Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations, emphasized the role of the OSCE and other organizations in building capacity in such areas as training for police, customs and border guards. "This conference is very important in building a mosaic of assistance by the donor community of states and organizations", he said. He pointed out that most states needed urgent help in drafting legislation, covering areas mandated by Security Council Resolution 1373, which imposes binding obligations on all countries to take appropriate measures to suppress and prevent terrorism.

Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General, Council of Europe, said that "the combat proper against terrorism is only a part of the international community's reaction" and that "the global political agenda is further reshaped in many

other ways". He reminded the group that at the OSCE meeting in Lisbon, the international community promised to work together to address a broader political agenda, including poverty reduction, effective law enforcement, human rights, minority protection, greater social justice and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue." He welcomed the Organization's current efforts to intensify the interaction, in the area of security, with the Organization of Central Asian Co-operation and other similar sub-regional organizations.

Uzbekistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Iltom Nohmatov, National Co-ordinator of the Organization of Central Asian Co-operation (OCAC), said Central Asia was particularly exposed to the threat of international terrorism because of its proximity to Afghanistan. "We understand that to fight international terrorism successfully, we need to adopt an integral approach, secure joint multilateral efforts involving national governmental and international institutions, and bring the advantages of each international organization, including those of the OSCE, to bear on this." **Erhard Busek, Special Co-ordina-**

tor of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, said the Pact was working with the European Union, NATO and the OSCE in developing a more comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to border security and management issues. "The Stability Pact, which operates under the auspices of the OSCE, is fully committed and active in this area, and can fairly be judged one of the leading actors in South Eastern Europe", he said.

Hells Degen, Commissioner for Democratic Development, Council of Baltic Sea States, said it was essential that the right balance be struck between freedom and security. "I would strongly emphasize that human rights should not be sacrificed on the altar of fighting terrorism", she said.

Other subregional organizations represented were: the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Central European Initiative, GULAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova), the South East European Cooperation Process and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative.

Nurturing the democratic process: "a long-term objective needs long-term involvement"

Departing CPC director urges OSCE to adapt more quickly to new challenges

Marion Kruczynski was appointed Director of the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre in 1998, a post he held until August this year. He has returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary where he started his diplomatic career in 1980. His close involvement with the OSCE dates back to the early days of the Organization's forerunner, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Before leaving Vienna, Ambassador Kruczynski spoke to Keith Jinks, Senior Press and Public Information Officer, about his views on the OSCE – past, present and future.

Hungary took over the Chairmanship in December 1994, just as the CSCE transformed itself into the OSCE. In 1995, you chaired the Permanent Council. What were the most important achievements of this historic Hungarian Chairmanship?

It was a very eventful year: we started out by setting up the Assistance Group to Chechnya and finished by implementing the Dayton Accords. I am particularly proud of the April decision of the Permanent Council on Chechnya. I believe that decision mapped out, more clearly than any other document, the road to a political settlement of the conflict there. Then, by taking another PC decision, we strengthened the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan so that it could take over some key tasks from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

You also acted as the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office in 1996 and 1997.

Yes, I was responsible for the implementation of the Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This period was one of the most rewarding of my professional career. I think I have visited almost every barracks, military base, installation, and storage site in both of the country's entities, the Federation and the

Republika Srpska.

You later supervised the Mission Staffing Section during the difficult time of the deployment of the Kosovo Verification Mission. Was that more of a success or a failure?

I had to act under enormous pressure. The rather rudimentary staffing system of the OSCE – one single professional responsible for the staffing of all field operations – was virtually crushed by the burden of assigning 1,500 international observers in the field in about four months. We had to design new rules, new procedures and a new system of standard job descriptions, introduce staffing decisions by panels rather than individuals, and set up the integrated mission staffing system, which later, through some modification, became the basis for REACT [Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams]. My proposal to set up the Department for Human Resources, made as the Chairman of the REACT Task Force, was a logical consequence of this sobering experience with the staffing system of the Organization.

Do you believe, as some commentators have suggested, that the OSCE is going through a crisis?

No more than any other multilateral organization or institution. What we usually call the new challenges of the 21st century – terrorism, illegal migration, trafficking in human beings, drug smuggling and other forms of organized crime – have become a hotly debated issue. They cannot be ignored. Their effects are multiplied by globalization. As states respond differently to these challenges, so do the different international organizations and institutions offer different solutions and different strategies.

Improving military capabilities or strengthening border security by developed countries are necessary steps and the OSCE cannot really contribute to these efforts. However, it can contribute in a no less important area: it can assist

its participating States affected by conflict, instability, difficulties of transition, lack of properly functioning democratic institutions, and so on, to gradually overcome these problems and so become reliable and effective partners of the rest of the OSCE community in the long-term fight against these new scourges.

If there is a feeling of crisis, it is the result of the OSCE adapting too slowly. Many feel that the Organization has not responded rapidly and effectively enough to these new challenges. There is no sense in denying that this has somewhat weakened political support among a number of participating States.

What about the argument that the OSCE's role overlaps with other organizations and it could be replaced either by them or simply by the trend towards bilateral action?

I hope not. Globalization is an immensely powerful, irreversible process. Again and again, it shows everybody that security is indeed indivisible. Decisions that affect the security of the citizens of developed countries are made not only in Brussels or Washington, but also in the Ferghana Valley of Central Asia or the hills of the Macedonia-Kosovo (FRY) border.

There is a huge and growing number of problems that require multilateral action. Nothing can be a substitute for effective multilateral organizations – be it the United Nations or regional arrangements. The OSCE has a very important "niche" among multilateral organizations because of its inclusive membership and its impressive set of shared values and commitments, as well as its innovative tools, such as the institutions and field missions.

How can the OSCE better adapt itself to the new realities and improve its effectiveness to regain or strengthen political support?

While remaining an important tool



Martin Krasznai led the CPC between 1998 and 2002

for early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management (including the possibility of peacekeeping operations mandated by the OSCE), the Organization should become an efficient and professional provider of highly needed "public goods" in its area of responsibility. That is, it should provide assistance in institution-building, establishing the rule of law, strengthening good governance (what UN Secretary-General Kofi

Annan called "structural conflict prevention"). These new priorities should be clearly spelled out – maybe at the next Ministerial Council – and made credible by the necessary transfer of resources from OSCE activities or areas where other organizations have recently developed undeniable comparative advantages.

But the OSCE has been active in these areas for a long time and some

critics would claim the results are, at best, mixed.

I think most of us have underestimated the distorting effects on democratic institutions of a number of factors – under-development, growing poverty, serious social tensions, a heavy historical legacy, conflict and outside interference. Any of these problems would deliver a serious blow even to well-established and strong democratic institutions in the industrialized countries. Imagine an election campaign in a Western European country after a 50 per cent drop in per capita GDP, which would push millions under the poverty level.

To create and nurture democratic institutions and processes in countries heavily affected by many of these problems is an immensely difficult task. Fully-fledged and strong democracy – or a well-developed market economy for that matter – in these countries can only be a long-term objective. And this requires a long-term strategy, and a long-term, stable involvement of the international community.

What would this mean in more concrete terms for the Organization?

A number of steps could be taken to better equip the OSCE for the long-term tasks of democratic institution-building. Its institutions, the office of the Senior Police Adviser and others should provide continuous professional support to field operations. The first two specialized regional meetings in the Balkans, convened and chaired by the ODHR (the first one in Belgrade, in April 2002, the second in June 2002, in Sarajevo) were steps in the right direction. Of course, both the institutions and field operations should improve their ability to work together.

The ODHR, while continuing the important task of election monitoring, could devote more attention and resources to the democratization part of its mandate. It would be equally important to improve the ability of field missions to recruit and retain high-quality experts for a longer period. Missions should phase out "generalists" and be staffed with legal, police, economic, environmental and other experts, who should stay long enough to get to know

the host country, and to design and implement meaningful institution-building programmes.

Do you think that the OSCE should ever engage in large-scale economic and environmental projects, too?

Not at all. There are agencies that are much better equipped and financed, with vast experience in these areas, such as the IMF, the World Bank or the European Commission. Through strengthening its missions professionally, the OSCE should be able to formulate in a coherent way a long-term strategy for institution-building – country strategies, if you will – which would dovetail and produce maximum synergy with the programmes of the other international actors.

What about the future of OSCE's co-operation with these other international actors?

The intention of NATO to enhance its presence in the OSCE area by opening Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

Regional Offices is a promising one. It improves the chances that the OSCE and NATO can jointly design and implement projects in a number of areas such as security sector reform, the politico-military Code of Conduct, or controlling trade in small arms and light weapons. The Council of Europe has become a close partner in legal reform, training of judges, and other areas. A more pronounced OSCE role in democratic institution-building would make this co-operation even more important and substantial.

During the current debate on reform of the OSCE, a number of States have suggested the Conflict Prevention Centre could assist the Chairmanship more effectively. What should be done to achieve this?

I am very proud of the team I built: a group of young, energetic, bright professionals with real team spirit. I hope that by delegating as much as possible to Mission Programme Officers, giving them

the feeling of responsibility for their area, and by continuously improving the information flow within the CPC, I and my deputy, Fredrik Schiller, managed to sufficiently motivate them – not an easy task in a non-career organization. I am fully convinced that the CPC has the capacity to provide first-rate support to the Chairmanship Troika and to field operations. It would help if delegations were able to formulate their requests and expectations more clearly and collectively.

Finally, on a personal note, who gave you the most help during your long career in the OSCE?

My wife. She never complained when I arrived home from work very late or received a telephone call at four o'clock in the morning. She accompanied me on many of my trips to the field and her immense sensitivity to human suffering and misery has often helped me to overcome the inevitable frustration with slow progress or failure.

The Conflict Prevention Centre

The Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), part of the Organization's Secretariat, is often described as the "information hub" for all the field activities of the Organization.

It supports the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary General in implementing the Organization's tasks in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The CPC was created by the Summit of Heads of State or Government in November 1990 in Paris. It was the first unit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) to operate as an independent office in Vienna in March 1991, providing the foundation for the current OSCE headquarters.

The structure of the CPC is designed to enable the OSCE to take a coherent and co-ordinated approach and to provide timely and sound support to the Chairman-in-Office in all its activities.

The Mission Programme Section serves as the focal point of managerial co-ordination within the Sec-

retariat for all specific mission activities. Its 12 Programme Mission Officers communicate daily with the Chairmanship and are in constant contact with the 19 OSCE missions and field activities in matters relating to OSCE political decisions.

The Forum for Security Co-operation Support Unit provides support to the Forum and its working bodies in implementing Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs). It also assists with the implementation of the 1994 Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security and the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The Operation Centre serves as a planning cell for future missions and field operations and also as a primary early warning tool within the Secretariat, identifying potential crises and activating initial responses.

The Situation/Communication Room is staffed in shifts around the clock to guarantee continuous contact with the missions and field activities. It acts as a flexible emergency management cell, observes the situation in the OSCE region and gathers data on developments.

Lamberto Zannier is new Director of Conflict Prevention Centre



Lamberto Zannier

Lamberto Zannier, a 48-year-old Italian career diplomat specializing in politico-military and security affairs, has been appointed to suc-

ceed Marton Krasznai as Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC).

"I consider my new job quite a challenge, but I am reassured by the outstanding quality of the CPC team", he told the *OSCE Newsletter* on 2 September, upon assuming his post. "I see a key role for the CPC in the present and prospective activities of the OSCE in the field of early warning, conflict prevention and, more generally, in promoting co-operative security."

Prior to his OSCE assignment, Mr. Zannier was Deputy Chief of Mission of his country's embassy in The Netherlands and Italy's Permanent Representative to the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. He was also responsible for co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

As Deputy Chief of Mission of Italy to the OSCE from 1997 to 2000, he was in charge of politico-military issues. He chaired the Negotiation on the Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional

Armed Forces in Europe from the summer of 1998 until the signing of the Agreement (also known as the Adapted CFE Treaty) by OSCE Heads of State and Government at the Istanbul Summit in November 1999.

"I am keen to restart the excellent co-operation that I had with Permanent Delegations during my earlier time in Vienna – albeit in a different capacity – particularly in the run-up to the Istanbul Summit", Mr. Zannier remarked.

Between 1991 and 1997, Mr. Zannier was on secondment to NATO as Head of the Disarmament, Arms Control and Cooperative Security Section, Political Affairs Division.

Mr. Zannier's earlier Foreign Ministry assignments took him to Rome, Vienna and Abu Dhabi. He is the author of various articles on arms control, non-proliferation, peacekeeping and co-operation between security institutions, including NATO and the OSCE. He holds a doctorate in law, specializing in international law, from the University of Trieste.

Rethinking prisons

ODIHR leads the way to changes in concept and practices

By Jens-Hagen Eschenbächer

Being sent to prison in many countries in transition to democratic systems amounts to a double punishment: not only are convicts deprived of their liberty, often they are also exposed to extremely poor, sometimes even life-threatening, conditions.

More than a decade after the collapse of Communism, the situation in a typical prison in many countries still looks grim: cells and

colonies are overcrowded, standards of hygiene are appalling, and there is a high incidence of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. Consequently, innumerable prisoners do not live to see the day of their release. At times, tensions between inmates and insufficiently trained prison staff erupt into open rebellion.

Recognizing the urgent need for improvements, a number of OSCE countries have embarked on the enormous task of reforming their prison systems.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) supports this process with a programme of assistance projects.

"We are working for the demilitarization and democratization of penitentiary systems", explains Gerald Staberock, who deals with prison issues at ODIHR. A first important step in this direction – which some countries have already taken – is the transfer of authority over the prison system from the Ministry of the



Mosques, churches and prayer rooms are now a standard feature in Kazakhstan's correctional facilities

Interior to the Ministry of Justice – that is, from law enforcement to the administration of justice.

Conceptual change

However, as pointed out by several participants at the OSCE meeting on prison reform on 8 and 9 July in Vienna, structural reform should not be an end in itself; it should also go hand-in-hand with a comprehensive conceptual change leading to improvements in the physical conditions inside prisons, better training for prison staff, more transparency, well-functioning monitoring and complaints mechanisms, and better protection of the rights of inmates.

The OSCE meeting developed a set of concrete recommendations on what governments and the OSCE can do to accelerate the reform process (see www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/shdm/finrep_shdm_8-9july2002.php).

It became clear that national approaches must be kept under constant review across the whole OSCE area, as even in many well-developed democra-

cies, there is a gap when it comes to implementing international prison standards.

For the past few years, ODIHR has been carrying out large-scale training programmes for prison personnel in many OSCE countries. A recent training workshop for the staff of pre-trial detention facilities in Kazakhstan explored how to bring about better conditions in these centres by measures such as improving the relationship between detainees and personnel.

The ODIHR also places a special emphasis on assisting OSCE countries to create effective national mechanisms to implement their prison-related commitments. Considerable emphasis is placed on increasing transparency and involving civil society in monitoring penitentiary facilities as a safeguard against human rights abuses.

Transparency and accountability

"Like any other democratic institutions, prisons and detention facilities must be transparent and accountable to society", says Mr. Staberock. National human rights institutions such as that of

the ombudsman can play an important role in the implementation of international standards. In Georgia, for example, ODIHR is working with the ombudsman to set up a system of regular inspections of detention facilities in police stations.

Given the struggling economies of many countries in transition, one of the key obstacles to prison reform is lack of resources. However, this must not be used as an excuse to do nothing, Gerald Staberock says. "We always stress in our seminars and discussions with authorities that one can do a lot as a prison director without having to spend a lot of money. Clean prison cells, proper lighting, allowing more visits by relatives and changing the behaviours and attitudes of prison personnel hardly cost anything, but improve the prison conditions considerably and thus make prisons much safer."

While the meeting in Vienna generally acknowledged the need for reform, several participants emphasized that any reform should be accompanied by a novel approach to imprisonment itself. The ultimate goal, they agreed, should be to strictly limit the use of prison sanctions to the most serious crimes and real threats to public safety. Increasing the use of alternative sentencing will never make prisons superfluous, but it can solve many of the most burning problems in a cost-effective way.

Jens-Hagen Eschenbächer is Spokesperson of ODIHR and Chief of its Public Affairs Unit.

Humanizing Kazakhstan's prisons

Fairness and justice are at the core of changes in the country's penal system

By Piotr Posmakov

Piotr Posmakov, Chairman of the Penitentiary Committee of Kazakhstan, was a keynote speaker at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), held in Vienna on 8 and 9 July. In his address, he explored the meeting's theme of prison reform "through the prism of our experience". Excerpts from his remarks follow.

Kazakhstan is unique in that it was turned into a country of prison camps back in the 1930s, having been the designated end-station for criminals and what were known as "people's enemies" from all over the Soviet Union.

This explains why Kazakhstan has the world's third highest number of convicts per 100,000 people (after the United States and the Russian Federation). In fact one family in nine counts a convict among its members.

Not surprisingly, in the past ten years, independent Kazakhstan has had to confront a host of problems in its penitentiary facilities: overcrowding, lack of food, low hygiene, poor health care, an alarming incidence of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, and a high mortality rate in places of detention.

First changes

The first positive changes were introduced when the penitentiary system was still under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Remand prisons and correctional facilities were renovated. Living conditions of prisoners were as far as possible brought into conformity with international standards. A number of unsound restrictions and limitations were lifted.

For example, regulations on correspondence became more lax. Prisoners were allowed to wear sports outfits after work. Wristwatches were permitted. Prison cell windows were widened and steel shutters were removed to let in natural light and

fresh air. Wooden floors were laid. The quality of meals was improved. Deaths from tuberculosis dropped considerably.

Behind the transfer

It would seem that everything was in order. However, in 2000, our Head of State took the political decision to transfer the penitentiary system from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Justice. The transfer went into effect at the beginning of 2002, after 11 legislative acts and 13 resolutions had been amended. The transfer of remand prisons is expected to follow once several organizational issues have been settled.

What lay behind this decision?

Law enforcement agencies tend to regard people held in custody as criminals even before they are prosecuted. Almost inevitably, correctional facilities take on the role of crime detection agencies, making it difficult to avoid breaches of the law. If the penitentiary system – including remand prisons – is under the Ministry of Justice, it is easier to ensure compliance with human rights during criminal prosecution.

As part of our efforts to move towards a more humane system, we have amended 21 instructions expanding the list of food items and goods that convicts can purchase and allowing cost-free telephone conversations. Prisoners can now sport a trimmed moustache and a beard. These may seem like trifles but are very important for persons deprived of liberty.

At the same time, we are drafting the law "On the Penal System", which will define the tasks, guidelines and legal status of institutions and bodies within the penal system. In accordance with experience in other countries, the Penitentiary Committee has also centralized its regional branches into a single structure so that matters related to correctional facilities can be dealt with promptly.

Starting point

The transfer to the Ministry of Justice should, however, be regarded only as the starting point of reform. During the past few years, we have been fortunate to visit detention places in many countries, which has helped us identify the correctional facilities suitable for Kazakhstan. Our inmates currently live in barracks, which do not sufficiently meet their personal security needs and those of the wardens. For the future, we envision a combination of cells and barracks to allow us to pursue an approach tailored to the personal traits of convicts.

Converting penal systems into a civilian structure is a challenge worldwide. In Kazakhstan, we need to gradually stop using the services of paramilitary guards. At present some 5,500 troopers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs serve as guards of correctional facilities. They are mostly trained in military issues, which hold little relevance for the safety of prisoners.

Education and training

We also realize that further reforms in the penal system are impossible without officers qualified to work in the context of the new realities. Detection work was the focus under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Today, what is essential is to be familiar with penitentiary psychology, the latest methods of rehabilitation and international standards of treatment of convicts.

We plan to convert the Pavlodar Law College, now under the jurisdiction of the penal system, into an institution for the higher education of penitentiary officers and a research centre. Special programmes are now being prepared in cooperation with the OSCE.

We realize, too, that no matter how much the conditions for convicts and officers' training are improved, correctional facilities still need constant monitoring

to guarantee that the rights of convicts are respected. Kazakhstan has several control mechanisms vested in the executive, the judiciary, the prosecution and the penal system itself.

But we also know that without the participation of civil society, it is difficult to proceed with penal reform. Much has been, and continues to be, achieved together with international non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations.

For example, since 1999, the Penitentiary Committee has organized – jointly with OSCE/ODIHR and in co-operation with the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law – a number of training activities for our staff. Most notable are the projects on "Penitentiary reform and human rights in the context of international norms and standards" and the "Educational programme for penitentiary system in the Republic of



Piotr Posmakov

Kazakhstan". These have helped improve the morale, the psychological atmosphere in prisons and relations between officers and convicts.

Closer co-operation between the penal system and NGOs and the media's wide coverage of the problems and achievements of our penal system reflect the first steps towards more openness and transparency.

Religion has assumed a more significant role in the moral and ethical education of convicts in Kazakhstan. There are now 39 mosques, 14 churches and 38 prayer rooms in correctional facilities.

Criminal policy reform

A discussion on prison reform in Kazakhstan would not be complete without mentioning criminal policy reform. Within the framework of the "alternatives to imprisonment" project, laws are being drafted to introduce amendments into the Criminal Code and other related

codes, directed at the humanization of sentences.

We had the opportunity to discuss our concept of prison reforms at the international conference recently held in Алматы on 13 and 14 June. The two-day meeting was jointly organized by the Penitentiary Committee, OSCE/ODIHR, the OSCE Centre in Алматы, Penal Reform International, and the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute. The discussions, which drew more than 100 participants, greatly enriched our concept and served to shape our priorities in the continuing reform process.

To give you a better appreciation of the progress made in our penal system over the past decade, let me confess that if I had heard what I am telling you now ten years ago, I would not have believed it myself!

Mr. Posmakov played an instrumental role in the transfer of Kazakhstan's penitentiary system from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Justice. Editor's note: On 27 August, Kazakhstan announced that it had freed more than 10,500 inmates under an amnesty declared last year to mark the tenth anniversary of the country's independence.

Changing of the guard in Tirana

Albania says goodbye to Ambassador Ahrens, welcomes Ambassador Lipponen

"Looking back over the past three years, it is clear that in several areas, work has been done that, in my opinion, places Albania at the forefront of reform in the region". Ambassador Geert-Hinrich Ahrens told the OSCE Permanent Council in his farewell address on 29 August.

When he took office in August 1999 as Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, gangs still operated throughout the Albanian countryside, the north-east was plagued by lawlessness and political life was characterized by an extreme confronta-

tion between government and opposition parties.

"Three years on, we can see that impressive progress has been made in all of these areas, among many others", Ambassador Ahrens said. "Of particular importance is that we have just witnessed an orderly transfer of



The outgoing Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania

power from one President of the Republic to another. These achievements have brought Albania to the threshold of opening negotiations for a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union."

Albania is the first country in Europe to have drafted a poverty reduction strategy, a new requirement for countries that receive concessional funding from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

"In addition to this, Albania should also be recognized for its efforts in police reform and decentralization, developing its Anti-Corruption Plan and National Strategy on Trafficking in Human Beings, demilitarizing its 1.6 million anti-personnel landmine stockpile within an 18-month period and destroying approximately 120,000 small arms and light weapons", the Ambassador said.

"The problem of trafficking in persons, of course, still exists in Albania and in the region", he said. "Its connection to drug trafficking is also worrying. However, trafficking is no longer a taboo subject. The police have been increasing the number of arrests of traffickers, as opposed to merely arresting the victims of trafficking for prostitution – a key concern of the OSCE Presence, which is working with the authorities to draft wit-

ness protection legislation.

"Nevertheless, Albania had to start from a very low level of development because of its unfortunate past and has therefore still ground to cover. In this, the OSCE can continue to make an important contribution." While welcoming the creation of institutional structures for fight-



Ambassador Osmo Lipponen

ing corruption, Ambassador Ahrens stressed that it was now necessary to ensure consistent implementation of reform and application of the law.

A German career diplomat who speaks most south-east European languages, including Albanian, Geert-Hinrich Ahrens now joins the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington D.C., where he

will write a book on his close involvement with conflict mediation in the former Yugoslavia.

Change of guard

Ambassador Osmo Lipponen has been designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz, as the new Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania as of 1 September.

The Finnish diplomat was his country's Ambassador in Zagreb from 1998 until his OSCE appointment. Before his assignment in Croatia, he was Consul-General in St. Petersburg.

Earlier assignments after joining Finland's diplomatic service in 1973 were in Geneva, Tokyo, Paris and Moscow.

Osmo Lipponen, 58, holds a masters degree in social science from the University of Jyväskylä. He started his career as a journalist and part-time teacher in political science. His brother, Paavo Lipponen, has been the Prime Minister of Finland since 1995.

Making the most of the OSCE

Safeguard OSCE's assets, Swedish ambassador urges

Looking back on his five years as Head of the Permanent Delegation of Sweden, Ambassador Nils Daug urged participating States to make their capitals aware of the OSCE's many unique assets. In a farewell address to the OSCE Permanent Council on 5 September, he cautioned against excessive soul-searching. He also shared his personal views on the assets of the OSCE and his recommendations for the future.

My personal observations may be obvious to this distinguished gathering, but sometimes it is not such a bad thing to repeat the seemingly obvious.

The OSCE's assets:

■ The OSCE is inclusive. It is the only regional security organization in Europe where no one is excluded. This gives legitimacy and ownership. We sometimes hear that soon almost half the members of OSCE will also be members of the European Union and NATO and

all that it implies. Yes, but the reverse is equally true. For many years still, more than half will not be. Despite the sometimes valid criticisms of the lack of influence of smaller states, we are a consensus organization where each participating State in the end has to agree. And we are the regional organization in Europe under the United Nations Charter's Chapter VIII.

■ The OSCE sees security in its broadest sense. In this multidimensional approach, we were the pioneers. Today it

is generally accepted that human rights violations and economic deprivation have an effect on security. But the OSCE continues to be the regional organization with the broadest set of tools at its disposal – deal with all the new challenges – from international terrorism, to trafficking in human beings, not to speak of the "old" tasks like election monitoring and minority rights.

■ The OSCE is operative. For many years, we were the only operational civilian crisis management body in Europe. I am not just thinking of our 19 missions. The institutions, special representatives and others also spend a lot of their time in participating States, not to speak of thousands of election observers. Now the EU is acquiring a crisis management capability, but it will become operational only gradually and I can see no reason why this should preclude the OSCE from continuing its work.

■ The OSCE is best on co-operation with other organizations. In Istanbul, we launched the so-called Platform on Co-operative Security. We have taken great strides in developing our contacts with the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe and NATO. However, we still have some work to do here, but I am convinced that today's multifaceted challenge can only be met by concerted action, where each contributes their special skills and assets.

■ The OSCE is flexible. I know that some colleagues would like to insert the little word "too" here. And I grant you that there is scope to increase transparency and participation in the information and decision-making processes. But developments in recent years have also clearly illustrated the need for, and the occasional lack of, quick action by the international community. In this regard, the OSCE's record is better than most. Let not the very legitimate demand for order and participation become the enemy of the ability to act decisively to save human lives and to safeguard the principles on which we stand.

■ Safeguard our unique assets. The High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights are doing so many useful things, not always getting due credit in our capitals. We must also get away from the notion that the often extremely useful presence of an OSCE mission represents a stigma. This may take some effort on the part of the host countries, but the real need for change lies in the attitudes of, and measures taken by, the rest of us.

■ Raise awareness in capitals. The competition for the time of our political



Ambassador Nils Daug

masters is gruesome. We, of course, have to accept that in most ministries the UN, EU and NATO have an upper hand. However, following important meetings of other organizations this autumn, there is a window of opportunity next year to relaunch the OSCE as an effective complement. Let us use that opportunity!

■ Always co-operate with other organizations. I particularly wish to encourage EU and NATO colleagues to foster this co-operation. My feeling is that 2003 will be a better year in this regard. ■ We undoubtedly need further reform in the way we work in Vienna. Participation, transparency, continuity and visibility are important challenges. We need to look again at the roles played by the Chairman-in-Office and Secretary General. I personally think that a summit next year would serve the purpose of focusing our own minds, and raising awareness in capitals, as well as putting the seal on progress achieved.

Let us all together make the most of the OSCE!

Ambassador Nils Daug was the Head of Sweden's Permanent Delegation to the OSCE from September 1997 to September 2002. He is now his country's Ambassador to Ireland.



FROM THE FIELD

Nine municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina make strides in governance

Nine municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) have received a Certificate of Recognition for completing the OSCE's Municipal Infrastructure Finance and Implementation (MIF), an intensive programme aimed at promoting good local governance through training seminars and on-site technical assistance.

In early September, Iljiaz, Gorazde, Gradiska, Tesanj, Velika Kladusa, Gradacac, Kalesija, Trnovo (Federation) and Trnovo (Republika Spiska), were the first municipalities to finish the project since it was established in 1998. Based on the assessment of an independent evaluator, they have made considerable improvements in the efficiency of their local administration, financial management practices, responsiveness to community needs, and citizen participation in policy-making.

The evaluation shows that the MIF project has had a significant impact on participating municipalities, demonstrating the benefits of continued assistance to local governments in capacity-building. This year, a total of 35 municipalities are taking part.

OSCE holds first forum on education development in BiH

The first in a series of co-ordination meetings on educational reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place on 1 August in Sarajevo. Co-ordinating and facilitating the development of a consolidated strategy in education is a top priority of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The main issues that were discussed by some 100 local and international participants were: providing equal access to education; modernizing and improving the quality of primary, secondary, higher and vocational education; financing and managing education; and reforming edu-

cation legislation.

Participants expressed their support and appreciation for the OSCE-led efforts to reinvigorate the education system by fostering national and international partnerships. Working groups have been established to help shape a system that reflects European standards.

OSCE opens new political resource centre in Brcko

A new Political Resource Centre (PRC) in Brcko, funded by the Netherlands, was opened on 1 August by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Mission's network of PRCs, 13 so far, was launched in 1998 to provide political parties and independent candidates with resources enabling them to help create a pluralistic and multi-ethnic political environment.

The PRCs are helping political parties to build contacts and are fostering co-operation among opposition parties. Political parties are now able to establish and maintain direct contacts with their supporters and to reach out to new voters. The Centres are also enabling citizens in local communities to make their voices heard and are encouraging elected representatives to be more accountable to the people.

Regional NGO refugee network launched in Yugoslavia

A cross-border network of regional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide refugees with legal aid was launched by the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 29 August. The project will support the fledgling assistance mechanisms run by NGOs, strengthen their regional co-operation and enhance their ability to provide legal aid.

The network's first meeting, held in Belgrade on 29 and 30 August in Belgrade, included participants from key NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia. The meeting was an

opportunity for the NGOs to streamline their activities, find a common approach in resolving difficult issues and make known their needs for logistical and expert support.

Serbian, Montenegrin and Yugoslav co-ordinators meet on human trafficking

The Serbian, Montenegrin and Yugoslav governmental co-ordinators for combating the trafficking in human beings met for the first time on 26 August, hosted by the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The OSCE Mission and its Office in Podgorica have welcomed the closer co-operation between the three multidisciplinary teams and the governmental co-ordinators as well as the strengthened working relationship within Yugoslavia.

Dutch financing to boost Yugoslav judicial and prison reform

Further OSCE activities aimed at judicial and prison reform in Yugoslavia are now assured with the signing, on 23 August, of agreements on their funding by the Netherlands Government.

The Dutch contribution of almost 325,000 euros is earmarked for a number of projects: workshops on prisons and the mass media, activities to strengthen relations with NGOs, training for prison staff and officials, conferences on the International Criminal Court, war crimes trials in Serbia and Montenegro, and an Internet website for the Serbian Judges' Association and the Public Prosecutors' Association. Training for prison staff started in a prison in Novi Sad in January 2002.

Negotiations process restarts on Transnistrian settlement

Negotiations on a Transnistrian settlement restarted in Chisinau, the Moldovan capital, on 22 August. The meeting, held in the offices of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, was the first of the

so-called "Chisinau Round" of negotiations.

The closed-door meeting took place at the invitation of the mediators of the conflict: the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the OSCE. It was intended to build on the goodwill generated at a session in Kiev, Ukraine, in early July when the mediators presented a "non-paper" draft agreement to the representatives of the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria, calling for the federalization of Moldova.

"Melange project" in Georgia concludes successfully

The OSCE Mission to Georgia has concluded its "melange project", which transformed 400 tons of highly dangerous liquid missile fuel stored at the former Soviet airfield in Meria, Western Georgia, into fertilizer for the region's acid soil.

The OSCE's implementing partner was the Institute for Physical and Organic Chemistry of the Georgian Academy of Science, assisted by German experts. Financial contributions for the OSCE-supervised project came from the Governments of Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Irrigation channel in Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone is restored in exchange for handover of weapons

Repair work on a 30-kilometre irrigation channel system that runs through villages in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone was completed in mid-September under the supervision of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. The Kekhvi Vanati canal has been handed over to the local residents, who helped implement the project under the joint efforts of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development and the OSCE.

The repairs were part of a programme of the OSCE Mission to Georgia and the Joint Peace Keeping Forces (JPKF) aimed at reducing the number of arms in the conflict zone by collectively compensating community groups and agencies that turn in arms. As of September, 1,320 units of arms and ammunition

and 210 kilograms of pure explosives had been handed over to the JPKF; more than half have been destroyed.

As the irrigation canal leads to a water reservoir which can hold fish stocks, the project is expected to help increase the food supplies of both Georgians and Ossetians who live in the area. The OSCE Mission will continue to seek support from international donors for similar small projects that address people's basic needs. Potential follow-up efforts include the rehabilitation of a hydro-power station with a capacity of up to five megawatts linked to the irrigation channel and the water reservoir.

Steps taken to reduce discrimination against women in Tajikistan

Participants at a roundtable on equality between men and women in Tajikistan stressed the need for quick and efficient mechanisms for enforcing legal provisions especially at the community level. The roundtable focused on the compliance of Tajik legislation with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which Tajikistan ratified in 1993.

Participants noted that the country's institutions and national legislation were sufficiently progressive to drive the Convention's implementation forward; however, a number of shortcomings in various legal codes and mechanisms needed to be addressed to protect women and other vulnerable groups.



Tajikistan is making efforts to protect its women through legal provisions

The event was organized on 5 August by the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan, in co-operation with the UN Office of Peace-Building to Tajikistan (UNTOP). Its findings and recommendations will be published in a report with the financial support of the Government of Switzerland.

The OSCE currently has missions or other field activities in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo (Yugoslavia), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

New Chairman of Permanent Council assumes duties

Ambassador Francisco Seixas da Costa of Portugal assumed his new position as Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council on 1 September. He succeeds Ambassador João de Lima Pimentel as head of the delegation of Portugal to the OSCE and as Chairman of the Permanent Council.

Ambassador Seixas da Costa, who has written widely on European affairs,



Ambassador Francisco Seixas da Costa

was Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations in 2001 and 2002. Prior to his OSCE appointment, he was Vice-President of the United Nations General Assembly. He was Portugal's Secretary of State for European Affairs from 1995 to 2001.

The Portuguese diplomat joined his country's Foreign Ministry in 1975 after completing his studies in social and political sciences at the University of Lisbon. He has served as President of the Second Committee of Economic and Financial Affairs of the UN General Assembly, Vice-President of the UN Economic and Social Council, and Portugal's negotiator of the Nice Treaty. He presided over the Bosnia and Herzegovina Peace Implementation Council and, in 1997, was President of the Schengen Agreement.

OSCE commemorates 11 September attacks

The OSCE Permanent Council observed a minute's silence on 11 September in honour of the victims of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington one year ago. "OSCE participating States are united in their resolve to fight terrorism while upholding their human rights commitments and are determined to ensure that terrorism will never be allowed to triumph", Secretary General Jan Kubis said after the meeting.

In a statement, the Portuguese OSCE Chairmanship said: "If we want to defeat the terrorists, then we must attack them from the highest moral plane... There is no inconsistency in pursuing terrorists with human rights in mind - in ensuring that the campaign against terrorism is neither used to suppress legitimate dissent nor to suppress people presenting their views to their governments. If we are to prevail over terrorism then we must do it in a way that respects both human dignity and the rights of men and women."

Chairman-in-Office urges Russia, Georgia to prevent escalation in tension

The OSCE Chairmanship was "deeply disturbed" by the increasing tension between Georgia and the Russian Federation, the Chairman-in-Office (C/O), Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz, said in a statement on 13 September issued from New York.

He noted that the letter from President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and other world leaders had stated: "... unless the Georgian leadership takes practical action to liquidate terrorists and if bandit raids continue to

originate in its territory, Russia, while acting in strict compliance with the international law, shall take adequate measures to resist the terrorist threat".

Against this background and in accordance with the OSCE's responsibilities as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE Chairmanship had initiated urgent consultations with the parties involved, as well as with other OSCE participating States.

The C/O called on the Russian Federation and Georgia to abstain from any action that might have grave consequences for the security and stability of the Caucasus and the whole of the OSCE area. He expressed his conviction that the OSCE, including through the activities of its Border Monitoring Operation (BMO) in Georgia, would be able to help to restore confidence between the parties.

Earlier, on 23 August, the OSCE Chairmanship had issued a statement from Lisbon expressing deep concern about OSCE border monitor reports that targets in Georgia were subjected to aerial bombardment. The Chairmanship regretted the loss of life, appealed for an end to all violent acts and called on all those involved to refrain from any steps that could further increase tension in the region.

OSCE Chairman-in-Office expresses condolences on deaths of Russian servicemen

The OSCE C/O, Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz, expressed condolences to the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, over the deaths of Russian servicemen in Chechnya on 19 August. "The OSCE Chairmanship regrets the recent occurrence involving a military helicopter in Chechnya and the dramatic loss of life", he said. "As OSCE Chair, Portugal expresses the hope that the internal situation in Chechnya can be dealt with in a satisfactory way for the local population, and that the

achievement of a peaceful and long lasting solution will result in a military de-escalation, with lesser risks of such tragedies."

Chairmanship urges Belarus to comply with OSCE commitments

The Portuguese OSCE Chairmanship issued a statement from Vienna on 10 September regarding the non-extension of the visa of one of two remaining international members of the Advisory and Monitoring Group (AMG) in Belarus, saying that this attitude did not contribute to the desirable normalization of relations between Belarus and the OSCE.

The Chairmanship urged the Belarusian Government to comply with its obligations undertaken within the OSCE. The work of the AMG had to be considered a key element of the co-operation. "Under the present circumstances, the AMG is no longer in a position to perform its duties", the Chairmanship said, adding that the OSCE was ready to pursue consultations on the future work of the OSCE in Belarus; indeed, it had already informed the Belarusian authorities of its intentions to urgently pursue contacts with them to discuss concrete proposals.

Foreign Minister reaffirms Kazakhstan's support for OSCE's anti-terrorism efforts

Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kassymzhamart Tokaev said the OSCE Permanent Council on 11 September

that he welcomed the establishment of an anti-terrorism unit in the OSCE Secretariat and commended the introduction of the post of Senior Police Adviser as well as the reinforcement of the anti-terrorism dimension in the work of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE

Government was considering the introduction of a death penalty moratorium, and that a phased transfer of correctional facilities to the Ministry of Justice was under way.

The Danish Presidency of the European Union welcomed these steps and



Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kassymzhamart Tokaev

Economic and Environmental Activities.

The Foreign Minister told the OSCE Delegates that Kazakhstan would open an ombudsman office with the assistance of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). He added that the Kazakh

said that Kazakhstan had made considerable progress in the "humanization" of the penal system. "We hope that, based on the already good co-operation between the OSCE Centre and the competent authorities, this process will be continued", the EU said in a statement.

www.osce.org/photos

Visit the OSCE photo archive online to view more than 1,500 images related to the work of the Organization. The archive features advanced search options. High-resolution versions of most images are available upon request.



PRESS PROFILE

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

GEORGIA

Interfax, 8 August

The OSCE observer mission monitoring the Chechen and Ingush stretches of the Georgian-Russian border have evidence that a Georgian border area came under an air attack on August 2. Volker Jacoby, spokesman for the OSCE Mission to Georgia, told Interfax.

Le Monde, 9 August

According to a Western source contacted in Tbilisi, OSCE observers deployed two years ago near the border could "count the craters of the 200-kilogram bombs used by the Russian air force and also confirm that mortar shells were shot".

AFP, 23 August

Georgia's Foreign Minister proposed ... to involve the OSCE in the investigation. "The OSCE can be an objective arbitrator in an honest and reliable investigation", the ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Irakli Menagarishvili as saying.

Novosti, 29 August

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov said that Moscow could not rely on the OSCE information, because representatives of the organization failed to check the Georgian-Russian border. Chechen terrorists cross the border unhindered under the nose of the OSCE observers, as they did this July, the Minister stressed.

AFP, 31 August

The OSCE, a pan-European security body, has confirmed witnessing unidentified aircraft entering the Pankisi gorge from the North, which is the direction of Russia. The OSCE has also reported hearing an explosion after the aircraft entered Georgian airspace. However, the Organization has never directly accused Russia of bombing Pankisi.

MOLDOVA

Novosti, 8 August

The authorities of Transnistria ... have not yet given permission for the installation of new equipment for recycling ammunition from Russian army dumps in the area of the Chisinau airport, said David Swartz, Head of the OSCE Mission in Chisinau ... He said that the matter concerns the detonation chamber and melting furnace, which were acquired on money from a special OSCE foundation and were meant to speed up the process of the disposal of the munition...

Basopress News Agency, 23 August

International negotiations on the fate of Moldova's breakaway Dniester region, which were revived during a Kiev summit in early July by a proposal to federalize Moldova, have got back on track after a false start earlier this month followed by a pre-meeting in Moscow last week. According to the OSCE, which is mediating the talks along with Ukraine and Russia, the federalization plan proposed in Kiev is at the top of the agenda.

ELECTIONS

AFP, 5 August

Local elections will be repeated in 11 polling stations in a southern Yugoslav district after Serbs refused to accept the victory by an ethnic-Albanian mayoral candidate ... [Albanian Party for Democratic Action] PDD chief Riza Halimi told Radio B92 that "a very tense situation has been created" and appealed to officials from the Yugoslav Government as well as the OSCE to intervene.

Radio Free Europe, 11 August

The OSCE has criticized Montenegro for adopting what it sees as a series of flawed laws about the media and leg-

islators' rights. An OSCE statement ... said the amendments had mostly been rushed through the parliament without broad consultation with political parties, resulting in what it called a "muddled environment".

Washington Post, 20 August

[From an opinion article by Milo Djukanovic, President of Montenegro] The democratic Government of Montenegro will continue to seek assistance from the OSCE and other relevant bodies in the international community in its efforts to provide for fair and democratic elections.

OTHER MISSION AREAS

AFP, 6 August

The Bosnian Serb Government announced it had amassed the funds necessary to enable the army to be slashed by almost 20 per cent ... According to estimates from the OSCE, military expenditure in Bosnia as a whole is currently more than eight per cent of gross domestic product, while the European average is 1.5 per cent.

Neue Zuercher Zeitung, 14 August

According to the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the Co-ordination Centre for Kosovo) Nabolisa Covic, the 40,000 KFOR soldiers under NATO command and the new police trained by the OSCE could not manage to protect the non-Albanian people of Kosovo effectively. Indeed, the return of the Serbian people is moving very slowly. The UNHCR figures show that only 3,600 non-Albanian refugees – exclusively Roma and Serbs – have returned to Kosovo in the past 2.5 years.

Newsweek, 12 August

[from an article on EU's eastward expansion, entitled "Trouble Next Door"] The larger challenge is dealing with countries that have pushed them-

selves into isolation with questionable policies. A prime example is Belarus, where President Lukashenko has been feuding with the West ever since the OSCE accused him of stealing last year's election. Since the beginning of the year, he has barred three OSCE monitors from the country. [Editor's note: now four.]

Interfax, 22 August

Belarus is ready to co-operate with the OSCE to reconstruct confidence and establish partnership relations ... [Belarusian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Pavel Latushko said ... The terms of the OSCE's presence in Belarus "are a derived, secondary question, and its solution will depend on the readiness of that Organization to develop open and politically unmotivated co-operation", he stressed.

Interfax, 31 August

The press service of the Combined Federal Forces in the North Caucasus on Saturday officially apologized to the OSCE Assistance Group for Chechnya for information circulated on August 17, which claimed that part of humanitarian aid falls into the hands of members of illegal armed formations. The press release of the Combined Federal Forces describes this as "incorrect information and a mistake".

Novosti, 17 August

The press release [of the Combined Federal Forces] announced that in the nearest future 100,000 were to be transferred into an account of the OSCE mission staying in the settlement of Znamenskoye. In the opinion of the Combined Federal Forces, "formally the money was intended to provide material

assistance to families of victims, but actually and taking into account local realities, to a greater extent to relatives and accomplices of militants".

Frankfurter Rundschau, 22 August

According to the OSCE, the new law, which was adopted by the parliament [of Kazakhstan] in June and which last week passed the Constitutional Council, is against the trend of limiting the prosecutors' power, a trend that is seen in most of the former Soviet states.

AFP, 2 August

The outgoing Head of the OSCE's Centre in Almaty [Kazakhstan] Heinrich Haupt, said in a farewell speech last month that almost all critical media in the country had disappeared while the rest face threats and uncertainty about their future.



UPDATE

OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

ELECTIONS

Strengths and weaknesses noted at southern Serbia's municipal by-elections

The ODIHR observed the municipal by-elections in the southern Serbian municipalities of Bujanovac, Presevo, and Medvedja on 28 July and concluded that they were generally conducted in accordance with OSCE commitments relating to democratic elections.

The 110 international observers deployed by the ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe noted that the representation of all national minorities and political parties in elec-

tion commissions and in the electoral process at all levels contributed to creating a positive atmosphere. The media generally abided by a code of conduct that was aimed at fostering balanced coverage. Broad access to the electoral process was provided to both domestic and international observers.

While noting the strengths of the electoral framework, the observers also pointed to some shortcomings, especially in the accuracy and transparency of voter registers. Further amendments to the election legislation were seen as necessary.

Following complaints, voting was repeated at several polling stations in Presevo and Bujanovac. ODIHR experts remained in southern Serbia to assist the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in assessing repeat and run-off elections in Presevo

and Bujanovac on 4 and 11 August. In general, the repeat elections reflected improvements in voting and counting procedures, with some technical shortcomings.

Azerbaijan's electoral reforms receive assistance

Continuing its assistance to the reform of Azerbaijan's election framework, the ODIHR called on the authorities in early July to ensure transparency and inclusivity in the process leading to the adoption of new election legislation.

At the Government's request, the ODIHR will issue recommendations on the draft election code, reflecting international standards. Following the draft election code's publication by the Azerbaijani authorities, it will be discussed at a series of roundtables. Prior to this, the ODIHR will distribute its comments

to ensure a fully informed debate. The ODIHR believes that the draft election code's timely release will contribute to the inclusiveness, openness and transparency of the process.

New election reports on the OSCE/ODIHR website

The following reports are available on www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reportselection_reports: final report on the parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic held on 14 and 15 June; comments on the Law on Political Parties in Kazakhstan; assessments of the Election Law for the elections on 5 October in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and amendments to the legislative framework of elections in the Republic of Montenegro/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.



DEMOCRATIZATION

Foreigners' registration in Russia, Belarus and Central Asia reviewed

Together with the Regional Centre for Migration and Refugee Issues, a Central Asian non-governmental organization (NGO), the ODIHR organized a roundtable in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, on 11 and 12 July to review registration procedures for foreigners in the Russian Federation, Belarus and the countries of Central Asia.

Currently, foreign visitors to these countries are obliged to register with the authorities within 3 to 5 days after their arrival; failure to do so is considered an administrative offence and is punishable by a fine. The roundtable explored ways to improve the efficiency of registration procedures without compromising, on the one hand, border security and prevention of illegal immigration, and respect for human rights on the other.

The participants, most of whom were officials from the relevant ministries, agreed to convene an expert meeting aimed at developing model registration systems and a strategy for harmonizing

registration requirements in the region. To raise awareness of existing registration requirements, the Regional Centre on Migration and Refugee Issues will produce leaflets and distribute them at embassies, airports, railway stations, border checkpoints and other key locations.

Prison reform in Armenia is subject of roundtable

The ODIHR continued its support to the reform of Armenia's prison system in August through expert advice on the new draft concept for the reform of social and psychological rehabilitation services in prisons and pre-trial facilities. In addition, a roundtable, organized in co-operation with the OSCE Office in Yerevan, discussed the goal and scope of social and psychological rehabilitation in a democratic society. The ODIHR also provided advice on the imminent creation of a board of public monitors as a mechanism for civil society to monitor the prison system. The establishment of a board had emerged as a key recommendation of an anti-torture roundtable conducted by the ODIHR in Armenia last year, and this year's human dimension seminar on judicial systems and human rights.

Kazakhstan's pre-trial detention staff receive training

Two training seminars for staff of pre-trial detention facilities in the northern and eastern regions of Kazakhstan were organized by the ODIHR from 26 to 29 August in co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior of Kazakhstan and Penal Reform International, an NGO. Discussions focused on international standards in pre-trial detention. The trainers, from Sweden and Poland, stressed that better prison conditions, fair treatment of suspects and respect for human rights, improve the security of both detainees and staff. The trainers emphasized that during the pre-trial period, it was essential to maintain a presumption of the detainees' innocence and to limit human rights restrictions to an absolute minimum. The experts also

stressed the importance of control mechanisms involving civil society. Increasing transparency was in the interest of prison staff as it helped improve their performance and the system's public profile.

Azerbaijani law enforcers discuss efforts to combat domestic violence

The second in a series of workshops for law enforcement personnel on combating domestic violence, which took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, succeeded in raising awareness of the full range of issues among the participants, 30 teachers of the Azerbaijani Police Academy. Topics included working with NGOs, establishing shelters in co-operation with the Ministry of Interior, and taking appropriate legislative measures. As a concrete result of the workshop, held from 8 to 10 July, the ODIHR will draft a chapter on women's rights and violence against women for the Police Academy's human rights curriculum. The Academy has also requested the ODIHR to train teachers to conduct the new course.

Armenia strengthens education in women's rights

A 'Gender School' for 30 gender teachers from Armenian universities and high schools was organized by the ODIHR and the Association of Women with University Education from 12 to 24 August. The event was part of ODIHR's programme to integrate gender issues into the country's educational system. The aim is to strengthen and expand the knowledge of university teachers on gender issues and training methodology, introduce new topics, and expand the pool of gender teachers in Armenia. The programme also serves as an efficient tool for establishing gender studies as an academic subject in its own right and for introducing academic courses on gender issues into the system of higher education.

Following the Gender School, which included the development of a curriculum for university courses on gender equality and women's rights, the partic-

ipants will conduct gender courses for students in six universities and six high schools throughout Armenia.

Armenia's regions build training capacity on gender issues

The ODIHR and the OSCE Office in Yerevan launched a training workshop in late August for future gender trainers, aimed at building local training capacity on gender issues in the regions of Armenia.

The 22 participants, mostly students, journalists, teachers and doctors from the various regions of the country, were trained on women's rights, gender equality and promoting women's involvement in issues affecting their lives and their communities. Basic training techniques and methodology were included to enable the participants to conduct seminars themselves.

Participants will conduct five one-day seminars in their home regions. These regional seminars are expected to raise awareness of women's rights and gender equality, and to motivate women to participate more actively in society.



ROMA & SINTI

Roma in south-eastern Europe take part in capacity-building workshops

The Contact Point held a roundtable in Pristina, Kosovo, in late August to discuss ways of resolving internal differences and promote networking among Kosovo's Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Community advocates and local contact points of the various groups participated, along with representatives of international organizations and NGOs.

Through the sharing of experiences in self-organization between Roma communities, the meeting helped to create channels for better communication and capacity-building of NGOs. Another workshop aimed at building the capacity of local contact points and NGOs was held in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, from



Ashkali mother and child in Kosovo

31 August to 2 September. Participants received training in communication, lobbying and negotiation skills. The involvement of Roma in the Macedonian parliamentary elections on 15 September was also discussed.

The Roma Refugee Committee, one of the regular NGO participants in ODIHR capacity-training events, was actively involved in the resolution of a dispute between Roma refugees from Kosovo and the UNHCR during which the refugees picketed the local UNHCR office for four weeks.

Migration of Romania's Roma examined

Issues relating to Romania's migration from Romania to France were addressed by the ODIHR Contact Point in a series of meetings with Romanian parliamentarians, NGOs and government representatives.

In recent weeks, the French media and the governments of France and Romania have devoted close attention to the Romanian Roma's legal and illegal immigration. Of special concern was their involvement, either as victims or perpetrators, in the trafficking of women, children and disabled persons and their exploitation by begging networks.

Participants in an ODIHR roundtable in Sibiu on 22 and 23 August adopted a declaration reaffirming the civil and political rights of Roma, including the right to freedom of movement and asylum. It spelled out recommendations on how Roma NGOs could contribute to combating trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of women and children. The declaration received wide media coverage and served as a platform for follow-up discussions with the Romanian parliament on 27 August.

The meetings served to launch a public debate and to increase the awareness among Romania's Roma of the controversial aspects of their migration to other European countries. For the first time in Romania, these matters were openly discussed with the broad involvement of Roma leaders, government officials and the media.

Poland's Roma benefit from civic and electoral education

A training workshop for some 30 leaders of Roma communities in southern Poland was organized by the ODIHR Contact Point on 3 and 4 July as part of its efforts to strengthen the political par-

tipulation of Roma in society. Participants came from the Malopolska and Slask regions, which have the highest concentration of Roma in Poland.

The training focused on civic education and the coming local elections in Poland. The workshop concluded with a plan to draw the Roma closer to the electoral

process, which represented an initial stage in a long-term programme aimed at increasing Roma's participation in southern Poland's regional and political life.

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UPDATE

HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

OSCE comments on Croatia's minority law

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, continued his involvement over the summer in support of a new draft constitutional law on the rights of national minorities in Croatia. Before the draft law was submitted to parliament for the first reading at the end of July, Ambassador Ekeus sent a letter to Foreign Minister Tomio Puclica with his comments.

The draft law has been under revision since May 2000 when the Croatian parliament amended the constitutional law then in force, reintroducing some suspended provisions related to proportional representation of the Serb minority, but repealing the guarantees related to minority self-government. At the same time, the parliament adopted a conclusion instructing the Government to pre-

pare a completely new draft constitutional law regulating the rights of national minorities.

The Government's efforts to introduce a draft law into parliament was aborted in February 2002 when a proposal reviewed by the Venice Commission and the High Commissioner was withdrawn. Since then, the international community has been urging Croatia to reinstate the process.

Ekeus: "Practicing what we preach" to prevent conflict

Ambassador Ekeus took part in the Regional European Union Conference on Conflict Prevention in Helsingborg, Sweden, on 29 August. In his remarks, the High Commissioner spoke about the importance of putting common values into practice to prevent conflict and build more harmonious and integrated soci-

eties. For the full text of his remarks, please access: www.osce.org/hcnm. At the conference, the High Commissioner had meetings with the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Gunther Verheugen; the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Portugal's Foreign Minister, Antonio Martins da Cruz; Romania's Foreign Minister, Mircea Dan Goana; and Hungary's State Secretary, Andras Barsonyi.

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UPDATE

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Parliamentarians assess election preparations in Skopje

Four Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) visited Skopje from 26 to 28 August together with colleagues from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to assess preparations for the parliamentary elec-

tions on 15 September.

The OSCE PA delegation was led by the PA Vice-President, Rita Süssmuth (Germany), and was composed of Pieter De Crem (Belgium), Helena Demakova (Latvia) and Kjell Eggebretsen (Norway). The visit took place on the initiative of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission

to Skopje.

In a statement issued at the end of the visit, the delegation said they had been impressed by the efficiency and professionalism of the State Election Commission and welcomed its well-balanced composition. They concluded that the electoral law laid out the right conditions

for democratic elections, and that overall, the campaign had been peaceful and constructive so far.

The joint OSCE-Council of Europe delegation had an extensive programme which included talks with the President of the Parliament, Stojan Andov; the President of the State Election Commission, Mirjana Lazarovska-Trajkovska, and representatives of the major political parties, non-governmental organizations and the media.

OSCE PA Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen (Finland) has been appointed by the Chairman-in-Office to lead the OSCE observers on election day and to deliver the preliminary post-election statement. The OSCE PA delegation is expected to include more than 40 parlia-

mentarians from 12 OSCE participating States.

PA President attends EU Regional Conference

On 29 and 30 August, PA officials Bruce George, President, and Spencer Oliver, Secretary General, attended 'Partners in Prevention', the Regional European Union Conference on Conflict Prevention, in Helsingborg, Sweden.

The conference debated the need to increase co-operation and build effective partnership for conflict prevention, in line with the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, which had been endorsed by the Gothenburg European Council in June 2001. The conference also served as a follow-up to the

fourth high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations in New York in February 2001.

PA President visits International Secretariat

In conjunction with the conference, Mr. George paid a working visit to the OSCE PA International Secretariat in Copenhagen from 28 August to 2 September. His goal was to familiarize himself with the Secretariat and to plan the Assembly's work for the coming year. Mr. George consulted with members of the senior staff and heard their reports on planned activities. The PA President also held talks with the Speaker of the Danish Parliament, Ivær Hansen, and senior Nordic Council officials.

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UPDATE

REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

Bridging the divide in Mitrovica/a

Mobile culture container pitches tent over the Ibar river

By Achim Koch

Mitrovica/a, Kosovo, Saturday, 31 August, shortly before 8 p.m. There is a great deal happening at the main bridge over the Ibar river. Armed French soldiers of the NATO-led KFOR, assisted by American soldiers, are swarming all over the place. The tension in the air is palpable.

On the southern part of the bridge, groups of mostly young Albanians are gathering. After making it through the security check, the rest of the way to the bridge is more relaxed. Half-way on the

bridge, a stairway built by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), leads to the middle of the river. From there, a footbridge serves as a direct avenue to the mobile culture container.

On the northern end of the bridge, a similar scene is taking place. Under the watchful eyes of KFOR, the mostly-Serb crowd walks to the middle of the bridge to no-man's land: the temporary tent town of 16 containers to which there is no other access.

The big event is the official opening of the OSCE-led project, now on its ninth city since it started travelling through south-eastern Europe in May 2001. The most recent stops were in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Novi Pazar in Serbia-Montenegro was scheduled in early October.

The stay in Mitrovica/a holds special significance. In contrast to most of the world's bridges, the bridge over the Ibar has unwittingly become synonymous with the separation of national groups:



Connection, not division: the Mobile.culture.container opens its doors over the Ibar River in Mitrovica

70,000 Albanians live in the southern part of the city, 15,000 Serbs – and Bosniaks, Roma, Turks and Ashkali – live in the northern part.

Since the end of the conflict in the region three years ago, the situation in Mitrovica has hardly changed. How does the road ahead look for young people in such a setting? What do they occupy themselves with? What is their vision of the future, and how do they defend it? Helping the 14-to-21 age group search for hopeful answers is what drives the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to continue bringing the *mobile.culture.container* right at the doorsteps of societies that are recovering from conflict.

"We are not here to bring people together who don't want to come together," says Freimut Duvé, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, to attentive, expectant faces. "There is a reason why we are here though. We want to help young people find their own way

and preserve their future, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation."

UN Special Representative Michael Steiner, Head of UNMIK, speaks about a "magic moment", when he saw how young people from both sides of the Ibar took the stairs together, walking side by side, to the *mobile.culture.container*: "If I could define this project, I would say it is a contribution to bringing back stolen time."

Morning discussion groups, creative workshops on the Internet, theatre, filmmaking, photography and newspaper publishing, and evening programmes featuring debates, movies, and dances: these make up the contents of the *mobile.culture.container*. One of the most-awaited highlights in Mitrovica is a radio station to be set up by the residents with the help of KFOR experts.

Tuesday, 10 September. Ten days after it opens its doors, the container has already attracted more than a thousand participants from north and south. The

expectations in this city are high. But even now, it has already won firm believers. "I think the *mobile.culture.container* can stop the bridge from separating the people of Mitrovica and, instead, start connecting them", remarks Florent Hajrizi, a young Albanian.

Achim Koch is Director of the mobile.culture.container project, which is administered by the Defence of our Future foundation.

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Recent events

9 to 19 September, Warsaw. OSCE human dimension implementation meeting. Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and OSCE Chairmanship

23 and 24 September, Vienna. Review of implementation of Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Forum for Security Co-operation

2 to 4 October, Madrid. OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Standing Committee meeting and OSCE parliamentary conference on the Mediterranean: Ensuring peace, democracy and prosperity in the region. OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

10 and 11 October, Baku, Azerbaijan. Conference on religious freedom and combating terrorism. ODIHR and Azerbaijan State Committee for the Work with Religious Associations.

UPDATE

SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE SECRETARIAT

**Secretary General addresses
GUAM Group summit in Yalta**

Secretary General Jan Kubis was a guest of the summit meeting of GUAM (grouping Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) in Yalta, Ukraine, on 19 and 20 July, along with representatives of the United Nations, European Union, European Commission, the Black Sea Economic Co-operation, Greece, Poland, Romania, Russia, Turkey and the United States. He addressed the summit, which was preceded by a GUUAM ministerial meeting. In their statements, the Heads of State and Foreign Ministers mentioned the OSCE, the United Nations and the Council of Europe prominently as international partners organizations. The summit adopted several documents, including a Declaration on joint efforts to ensure stability and security in the region and an Agreement on the Establishment of a GUUAM Free Trade Area.

**OSCE views presented at Euro-
forum Forum Alpbach**

At the invitation of Erhard Busek, the President of European Forum Alpbach and Special Co-ordinator of the Stability

Pact for South East Europe, the Secretary General took part in the Alpbach Political Symposium on 25 and 26 August. His statement focused on "The New Foreign Policy".

**Partners in Prevention event held
in Helsingborg**

At the invitation of Sweden's Foreign Minister, Anna Lindh, the Secretary General attended the Regional EU Conference on Conflict Prevention – "Partners in Prevention" – held in Helsingborg, Sweden, on 29 and 30 August. It was the first meeting of senior representatives from all European regional organizations and the United Nations to review their joint work informally and the collective challenges that lie ahead. Also attending from the OSCE were the Chairman-in-Office, Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz; the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus; his predecessor, Max van der Stoep; Romania's Foreign Minister, Mircea Geoana, who represented the OSCE Troika; and other representatives of the wider OSCE family.

The Helsingborg Agenda, which lays out the conclusions of the discussions,

seeks to assist partner organizations in further promoting an active and dynamic co-operation in operational activities and other joint endeavours dealing with conflict prevention.

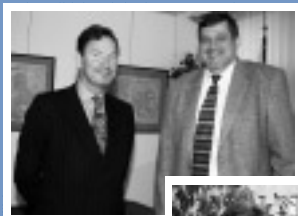
On the panel devoted to "Common Commitment", the Secretary General underlined the need for key international actors to have more open information-sharing in activities relating to early warning and prevention, and joint evaluation and planning. He also emphasized the co-ordinating role that OSCE missions can play on the ground. The joint work of the OSCE, the EU and NATO with the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and other partners, was frequently mentioned as an example of pragmatic inter-institutional co-operation.

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New Heads of Delegation

The Secretary General welcomed four new Heads of Delegation over the summer.



OSCE/Alyhan Evrensoy



OSCE/Alex Nizovchev



OSCE/Alex Nizovchev



OSCE/Alyhan Evrensoy

Secretary General Jan Kubis meets with Ambassador Krister Bruggen, Sweden's Head of Delegation since 13 September

Ambassador Mette Kangshern assumed the post of Head of Delegation of Norway on 2 September

Ambassador Vladimir Matek, Head of Delegation of Croatia, took up his assignment on 3 September

Ambassador Dieter Boden has been Germany's Head of Delegation since 16 August



OSCE/ODHR

polling day, said Craig Jenness, Head of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, was "a victory for the democratic process in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and for the overwhelming majority of the citizens of this country who want peace, stability and a good future for their families." The rallying and partying (above) went on way past polling hours.



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