

Ambassador Ján Kubiš of Slovakia appointed OSCE Secretary General



Ambassador Ján Kubiš of Slovakia (left) with Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona of Italy (right)

Ambassador Ján Kubiš of Slovakia has been appointed the new Secretary General of the OSCE. Ambassador Kubiš will succeed Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona of Italy, who will complete his three-year term on 14 June.

Ambassador Kubiš, a career diplomat, brings to the job several years of experience with the OSCE. Most recently, from July 1994 to July 1998, he served as Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, which oversees OSCE operations and Missions in the field. Under the 1992 Czechoslovak Chairmanship of the CSCE, Ambassador Kubiš was Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials (now Senior Council). As Head of the Security and Arms Control Section of the Foreign Ministry of Czechoslovakia, he also participated in several key CSCE negotiations, including the Vienna CFE

mandate talks. From January 1993 to June 1994, Ambassador Kubiš was Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic at the United Nations Office in Geneva. On 15 July 1998 Ambassador Kubiš was awarded the OSCE Medal for his outstanding services to the OSCE. He is the second recipient of the medal.

For the past year, Ambassador Kubiš served as Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan and Head of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan.

Ambassador Kubiš was born in Bratislava on 12 November 1952. He was educated at the Moscow State Institute for International Affairs and entered the diplomatic service in 1976. Ambassador Kubiš will be the third Secretary General of the OSCE, following Dr. Wilhelm Höynck

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of Germany (1993-1996) and Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona (1996-1999). Based in Vienna, the Secretary General acts as the representative of the Chairman-in-Office (CiO) and supports him or her in all activities aimed at attaining the goals of the OSCE. He is the OSCE's chief administrative officer and is responsible for the management of OSCE structures and operations. He works closely with the CiO in the preparation and guidance of OSCE meetings and ensures the implementation of OSCE decisions.

The Permanent Council of the OSCE expressed its "gratitude to the outgoing Secretary General for his invaluable contributions to strengthening the OSCE and to developing its activities and for his dedication and integrity in the discharge of his duties."

Seventh Economic Forum focuses on “Security Aspects in the Field of the Environment”

From 25 to 28 May, the Seventh Meeting of the Economic Forum took place at the Czernin Palace in Prague. The Economic Forum was established in 1992 to strengthen the focus of the OSCE on the economic and environmental dimensions of security. The Forum meets once a year at senior level to suggest practical means of strengthening OSCE involvement in these areas.

The theme of this year’s Forum was “Security Aspects in the Field of the Environment”. It was attended by high-level participants from the participating States responsible for shaping economic and environmental policy in the OSCE area, including Ministers and Deputy Ministers, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Discussion focused on three key subjects:

(a) Energy and the environment: security and the importance of sustainable energy development; institutional and legal settings, including the implementation of international conventions and instruments;

(b) Security aspects of shared water resources and regional co-operation, taking into account the different institutional and legal settings, including the implementation of international conventions and instruments;

(c) Public participation: the role of civil society, the UN/ECE Aarhus Convention, NGOs and the business sector in achieving sustainable development; the involvement of the OSCE.



The subject of “Environmental Security” was also addressed.

On the first day of the meeting the participating States reviewed the implementation of commitments in the economic dimension, taking stock of what had been achieved with respect to the Bonn Document, the Charter of Paris, and the Helsinki and Budapest Summit Documents. Mr. Thomas Price, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, gave a keynote address at the session. It was noted that all participating States had declared their commitment to market reforms. The prospect of accession to the EU, as well as membership or the prospect of membership in other international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), had reinforced the economic policies of the participating States concerned and helped them implement their commitments to market reforms. Continued reform of legal and institutional frameworks was, however, still important.

Some instances of non-compliance with the commitments were noted. Continued reform of economies in transition to market-oriented economies contributed to economic stability and development which in turn enhanced long-term security.

The Forum formally opened the next day, with an address by Ms. Guro Fjellanger, the Norwegian Minister for the Environment. Participants stressed the relevance of the overall theme of the Forum for long-term security and stability in the OSCE area. It was highlighted that the role of the OSCE in the economic dimension is to give political impulses to co-operation among participating States and to the work of specialized intergovernmental organizations.

Energy and Environment

Regarding the question of energy and security, participants reiterated the fact that energy is a dominant geopolitical and economic factor. The participants

reviewed the challenges and opportunities inherent in the development and distribution and use of energy resources in the OSCE area. It was noted that secure supplies of energy were a prerequisite for long-term stability and security. The OSCE participating States shared common interests in the energy sector, such as ensuring secure energy supplies (including diversification of supplies and markets, properly regulated energy trade and transit), competitiveness and efficiency, together with reconciling energy developments with environmental obligations. The participants emphasized the fact that the OSCE had a capacity to enhance dialogue on this issue and to facilitate the sharing of best practices, encouraging the transfer of technology and the development of stable framework conditions for commercial investments.

Water Resources

Good management of scarce freshwater resources is of utmost importance to security in the OSCE area. Participants felt that the existing conventions should be signed, ratified and effectively implemented. Agreements dealing with all aspects of water resources management should be elaborated and would serve as important instruments for preventing potential conflict. Key conditions for successful water-sharing regimes were

political will, equity and effective control of the management and monitoring activities by affected parties. The participants agreed that, building on existing international instruments, the OSCE could give political impetus to and promote, in appropriate fora, further consensus-building on general principles and rules to apply to transboundary water resources. It was also agreed that the OSCE, with its comprehensive approach to security, should play an important role in encouraging countries with scarce water resources and/or transboundary water management issues to engage international and local organizations, NGOs and private sector organizations dealing with the issue in concerted efforts to initiate a political co-operation process.

Public Participation

Public participation and the role of civil society is crucial. Those participating States that had not acceded to and ratified the Aarhus Convention (the UN/ECE Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters) were encouraged to do so, thus confirming their commitment to public participation. The relationship between the values inherent in the Human Dimension of the OSCE and the values behind the Aarhus Convention was emphasized.

Participants argued that public participation in decision-making with regard to the environment, the right to know about environmental problems and access to justice in environmental matters, were all important for security. The OSCE could help facilitate programmes to promote participatory democracy by strengthening NGOs and by establishing networks to develop and improve communication among NGOs, and between governments and NGOs. Participants agreed that in its own work, the OSCE should intensify co-operation with NGOs, applying in this respect the principles of the Aarhus Convention, and consider including this in the work programme of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

In closing, participants emphasized the fact that the Economic Dimension now needed to go further into operational considerations. The importance of a more active involvement of NGOs and the business community, and enhanced co-operation between the OSCE and specialized economic, environmental and financial institutions as well as sub-regional organizations, was underlined. Participants also commended the idea of topical regional seminars leading up to the Forum, as had taken place this year, and it was agreed that the same approach should be adopted in the year 2000.



Workshop in Sarajevo

On 10 and 11 May, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina organized a workshop on the activities of the Mission. Topics included the 1999 municipal elections and the Mission's regional stabilization, human rights and democratization programmes. Special attention was given to the spillover effects of the Kosovo crisis and the future of the OSCE Mission to

Bosnia and Herzegovina. The workshop was open to all OSCE participating States, the Mediterranean partners for co-operation (MPCs), and the other Partners for co-operation. In addition to briefings in Sarajevo, participants visited the Travnik Field Office, where they were informed about the activities of the office. Representatives of almost all the Mediterranean partners for co-operation attended the workshop. This was the first time that representatives of the MPCs had visited an OSCE Mission.

Seminar in Sofia

From 17 to 19 May, the OSCE organized, in co-operation with the Bulgarian Government, a seminar on “Co-operation among International Organizations and Institutions: Experience and Prospects in South-Eastern Europe” in Sofia. Delegates from 39 participating States, international organizations, NGOs as well as OSCE missions and institutions took part. The seminar was a follow-up to the seminar held in 1997 in Portoroz, Slovenia, which focused on the lessons learned from Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Sofia, participants discussed a wide range of issues, including lessons learned in Bosnia and Herzegovina, post-conflict rehabilitation in Albania and Croatia, and crisis management throughout the OSCE area. The participants agreed that there needs to be long-term investment in the security situation in South-Eastern Europe and that the policy of “sending in fire brigades” should be changed to one of “preventing fires from breaking out”. A consolidated summary of the seminar and all documents distributed during the seminar are available upon request from the OSCE Secretariat. The consolidated summary is also available on the OSCE Website – <http://www.osce.org>

CiO Statement on Belarus

On 20 May, OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, expressed his support for the democratic movement in Belarus. The CiO called on the President of Belarus to engage in meaningful dialogue with the opposition with the goal of building democratic institutions and holding free, fair and internationally observed parliamentary elections in Belarus in the year 2000. Mr. Vollebæk also reiterated his earlier



Ms. Nadezhda Mihailova, Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona, OSCE Secretary General, and Ambassador Kai Eide, Chairman of the Permanent Council, opening the seminar in Sofia.

appeal to President Lukashenko to release Mr. Chigir, Former Prime Minister of Belarus, immediately and to investigate the disappearance of Ms. Vinnikova, former President of the National Bank, and of Mr. Zakharenko, former Minister of the Interior.

Private OSCE Donation for Elderly and Handicapped Refugees in Albania

During a visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Director for Resources of the OSCE, Ambassador Ferdinand Mayrhofer-Grünbühel, handed over four wheel-chairs and a large number of walkers, crutches and walking-sticks for the use of refugees in the Stenkovec camp. The equipment, valued at ATS 130,000, had been purchased from the proceeds of the annual “OSCE Ball” held at the Hofburg in Vienna, resulting from the contributions by OSCE delegation members and staff.

The OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission had arranged for the production of the

equipment by a local firm in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with excellent results. The representatives of the ICMC, a humanitarian organization assisting the elderly and the handicapped in particular, took custody of the equipment and praised its high quality. The small hand-over ceremony was attended by the Deputy Head of the Kosovo Verification Mission, Major-General. P. Grant-Peterkin, and other OSCE staff. Mr. Mayrhofer-Grünbühel expressed his pleasure at being able to hand over this small but meaningful and extremely useful contribution.

At the same time, an additional sum of ATS 100,000 was transferred to the Austrian charity “Nachbar in Not” in support of its efforts to alleviate the humanitarian disaster triggered by the Kosovo crisis.

PRESS PROFILE



The Economist, 8 May

“The (European) Council is by no means the only group with a role in post-war Kosovo. Aside from the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), with 55 members, works in similar areas: defending human and minority rights, building democratic institutions. It has more than a dozen missions, scattered from Georgia to Latvia, helping to defuse ethnic and political tensions.”

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 10 May

“For the time being, an international protection and peace-keeping force will be needed, like in Bosnia, in order even to start building the basis for stability. To be able to carry out its risky task, this force must be powerful, well armed and equipped. The failure of the lightly armed UN peace keeping force in Bosnia and that of the totally unarmed verification mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Kosovo are the best arguments for that.”

Le Monde, 12 May

“Once the representatives of diverse NGOs and the 1,400 verifiers of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) left, and in the absence of representatives of the international press, not much is filtering through about the internal situation in Kosovo.”

Irish Times, 22 May

“Among the worst affected by Serbia’s ethnic cleansing of Kosovo have been the translators and local staff employed by the monitoring mission of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The monitors pulled out four days before the NATO air strikes. But more than 1,400 translators, drivers and office staff, many known to be at risk, were left by the OSCE to fend for themselves. Many are still missing.”

Financial Times, 26 May

“While Mr. Ahtisaari and Mr. Bildt have been given individual roles to play, the Norwegian government also has a mandate to fulfil as the current head of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Knut Vollebæk, the Norwegian foreign minister and chairman of the OSCE, expects the organisation to have an important role in implementing non-military aspects of any peace deal in Kosovo, such as organising elections and establishing civil institutions.”

Die Presse, 28 May

“It remains to be seen whether the United Nations and the OSCE in the end phase of the conflict will manage to somewhat retrieve their importance by contributing to a solution and its implementation.”

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 27 May

“The conflict was predictable. Hardly had the Croatia Mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) presented its newest report before the polemics began. In Zagreb, there is a feeling of being misunderstood, even subjected to slander. (The report) gives a sinister picture. This will surely not become any lighter when the government in Zagreb angrily rejects almost all criticism and ascribes the dark colouring of the report to a sort of political colour-blindness of the outgoing Head of the OSCE Mission.”

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 22 May

“The OSCE Mission in Minsk is above all trying to get government and opposition together into a political dialogue. This week, the leader of an OSCE working group visiting Minsk recognized the growing influence of pluralistic political movements. The participation of many Belarusians in the attempted elections merited the respect of democratically governed countries. However, in order to involve all political forces in the elections process, the OSCE is preparing an informal meeting in June in the Romanian capital Bucharest.”



News from the Field

The OSCE currently has Missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo (FRY), Latvia, Skopje (FYROM), Moldova, and Tajikistan as well as an Assistance Group to Chechnya, a Presence in Albania and an Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus. The following are highlights from the work of some of the field operations during the past month.

Recent Events in Bosnia

Throughout May, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina organized several conferences and events relating to its work in the fields of democratization, media development, human rights, elections and regional stabilization.

From 4 to 7 May key military representatives from both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in a "Defence Resource Planning Seminar" in Salzburg, Austria, hosted by the OSCE Mission and the George Marshall Centre in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. The purpose of the seminar was to assist the parties from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the development of a defence planning system.

On 5 May, the Mission held the first in a series of country-wide journalists seminars aimed at promoting inter-entity communication and co-operation between Bosnian journalists. Held in Sarajevo, the seminar focused on the OSCE's Permanent Election Law Information Campaign. The Mission also announced a long-term media law initiative, under which the OSCE plans to provide training to lawyers on media law, organize a media research group, and provide advice to professionals working on Bosnia and Herzegovina's media laws and standards. The Mission is also evaluating project proposals for the second round of small grant awards, a programme designed to promote media pluralism, independence and professionalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Over 200 members of Local Elections Commissions, OSCE Election Officers, journalists and representatives from non-governmental organizations met in Vogošća from 16 to 17 May for the Second Congress of Elections Officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The primary goal of the congress was to update participants on the development of an Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The association will be instrumental in promoting professional development, confidence-building, information-sharing, and the development of a code of conduct for election officials.

Voter registration for the 1999 municipal elections is well under way, with most of the municipalities having opened their Voter Registration Centres on 14 May. Registration of political parties and independent candidates is also in progress.

The Mission is also distributing a book on Bosnia and Herzegovina law, written by four prominent Bosnian lawyers. The book is comprehensive and provides easy access to Bosnia and Herzegovina laws in force. It will be distributed to judges and prosecutors throughout the country.

Assistance Group Continues to Provide Humanitarian Support to Chechnya

Operating from temporary premises in the Norwegian Embassy in Moscow, the OSCE Assistance Group (AG) to Chechnya continues its efforts to contribute to the stabilization of the situation in Chechnya.

An important part of the AG's activities remains humanitarian aid. The Group is carrying out consultations with voluntary contributors concerning food and health-related projects. A "Wheat/Flour Programme", under which the Group distributes flour to Chechnya residents, is coming to a successful finish, with the last planned distribution being scheduled for June. Plans are being drawn up for the "Food for Chechnya 1999-2000" programme which will replace it. The AG has also been approached by contributors willing to provide funds for the purchase of medicines for the Children's Hospital in Grozny and assist with other health care projects.

The Group continues to closely monitor developments in and around Chechnya.

Intensified Dialogue in Croatia

Following the release of the OSCE Mission to Croatia's fourth progress report on the fulfilment of international commitments by the Republic of Croatia, the Head of Mission, Ambassador Tim Guldimann, held several meetings with the Prime Minister and high-ranking government officials. In these meetings several measures were identified to intensify the dialogue between the Mission and the Croatian Government. It was suggested, inter alia, that bilateral working-level contacts between the various Ministries and appropriate departments of the Mission should be established and that, prior to releasing its next progress report, the Mission should discuss key points with

relevant Ministries. It was also suggested that informal, high-level meetings be held between key international representatives, the Prime Minister and high government representatives on a monthly basis.

The current Head of Mission, Ambassador Guldemann of Switzerland, left his post at the end of May. He will be replaced by Ambassador Bernard Poncet of France, as of 17 June.

Mission to Estonia Focuses on Upcoming Local Elections

As part of its mandate to promote integration and better understanding between communities in Estonia, the OSCE Mission has been monitoring issues related to the local elections scheduled for October 1999. Questions remain as to how Estonian electoral legislation will be applied to the non-citizen population. The legislation regarding this question is complex, allowing the Government to choose several options. Depending on the course of action taken by the Government either as many as 240,000 or as few as 20,000 non-citizens will be allowed to vote. The Estonian Government has reiterated its commitment to granting non-citizens the right to vote. The Mission will continue to monitor developments regarding this issue.

Mission to Georgia Assists Local NGOs and Monitors "Elections" in South Ossetia

The OSCE Mission to Georgia continues to contribute to the Georgian-South Ossetian settlement process. On 7 May the first-ever meeting between Georgian and South Ossetian NGOs was organized by the OSCE Mission to Georgia. Around 40 NGOs participated in the round table, which included topics such as the legal aspects of NGO activities

and possible areas of activity for local NGOs. The participants agreed that the meeting was beneficial and decided to schedule a series of subsequent meetings on specific topics.

The Mission also monitored events surrounding the South Ossetian "parliamentary elections" on 12 May. Mission members held several meetings with South Ossetian representatives stressing the necessity of preserving a safe security environment and preventing inter-ethnic tensions. During the actual "elections", Mission members visited ethnically mixed areas in order to monitor developments. No security incidents were reported.

Moldova Mission Assists in Bridge Repair

At the suggestion of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the European Union has budgeted 2 million euros for the restoration of the Gura-Biculi bridge over the Dniester river. This is the last of the Dniester bridges damaged in the 1992 conflict in Moldova to be repaired. The project will, to the extent possible, employ local labour and materials. The restoration of the bridge will restore the high-

way link that leads from Odessa to Brest near the Polish border with Belarus.

The Mission also continued to assist in and contribute to the dialogue between the Moldovan and Transdniestrian parties. Overall progress remains, however, slow. Regular talks between experts are yet to resume and a draft settlement document presented by mediators has been rejected. A summit meeting in Kiev has been postponed twice without a new date being set. Mission members continued to meet with representatives of both parties in order to try and stimulate greater cooperation.

Civic Education for Women in Tajikistan

As part of its tasks aimed at promoting political reconciliation, democracy-building and respect for human rights in the country, the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan is continuing a series of seminars on women's issues. The current round of seminars is focusing on family and marriage issues, family violence and reproductive health. The Mission also organized a "Training of Trainers" workshop in Dushanbe, during which 20 experts were trained in preparation for conduct-



The damaged Gura-Biculi bridge over the Dniester river

ing seminars in districts in southern Tajikistan. Other such workshops are scheduled and a total of 750 women will be trained throughout the country.

The Mission also continued meetings with senior Tajik politicians on questions of national reconciliation. Mission members explored, inter alia, the possibility of

a broad amnesty for persons presently under investigation as well as the introduction of a moratorium on the death penalty.

REPORT from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) is located at Prinsessegracht 22, NL-2514 AP The Hague, The Netherlands, tel.: (+31-70) 312 55 00, fax: (+31-70) 363 59 10, e-mail: hcnm@hcnm.org

Estonia

The High Commissioner visited Estonia on 6 and 7 May where he was received by President Meri. The High Commissioner also had meetings with members of the OSCE mission, concerning the planning of a round table on the so-called Oslo and Hague recommendations on linguistic and educational rights (which was recently postponed), and with ambassadors of OSCE participating States.

Latvia

On 4 and 5 May, experts from the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, together with an expert of the Council of Europe, met with the committee of the Latvian Parliament that is preparing the law on the State language.

The High Commissioner visited Latvia on 24 and 25 May. The main subject that he discussed during his visit was the draft law on the State language. Experts of the High Commissioner's office together with the Council of Europe came to the conclusion that a number of provisions in the draft law, as it was formulated after the second reading by the relevant parliamentary committee, were not in conformity with international standards. The main point of concern was the intrusiveness of the law into the private sphere.

The High Commissioner was also informed about the naturalization process in Latvia. Since the amendments proposed by the High Commissioner (abolishing the so-called "window system") were adopted, the number of applications has increased considerably.

Another issue which was raised was the importance of the State Latvian language training programme. The High Commissioner is currently working with the Latvian Government to find international donors to fund a considerably expanded programme of Latvian language courses.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Between 9 and 11 May the High Commissioner visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The aim of the visit was to form a comprehensive view of the current situation in the country, particularly as regards inter-ethnic relations, in the wake of a massive influx of Kosovar Albanians. On the basis of his observations, he addressed the Permanent Council in Vienna on 12 May and issued a formal warning regarding the tense situation in that country. This is the first time that the High Commissioner has made use of the formal "early warning" mechanism of his mandate.

In a press release issued after his address to the Permanent Council, Mr. Van der Stoep said that "The increase in the population of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by more than 10 per cent within a few weeks, resulting in a major change of the inter-ethnic balance, is proving to be too big a burden for the country. It is essential to substantially reduce the number of refugees in the country in the next few weeks." He said that "a concerted effort is needed to speed up the departure of refugees to states which have offered hospitality to them." He said that this is needed "to avoid an acute crisis in case new waves of refugees arrive in the country."

He also underlined the need for the UNHCR to receive more financial support from the donor community in order to enable it to improve the conditions in the camps. He said that "this is urgently needed for humanitarian and health reasons, but also in order to reduce the risk of incidents in the camps which could potentially have serious consequences."

Noting that the "economic crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia caused by the conflict in the Balkans increases the risk of social discontent and inter-ethnic tensions", he called on donor countries to increase their level of assistance to the country.

The High Commissioner has been asked by the Chairman-in-Office to continue to follow the situation closely and to report back to the Permanent Council in the near future.

Lund Recommendations

From 6 to 9 May, a group of 18 independent experts met at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at the University of Lund (Sweden) to finalize the “Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life.” These recommendations aim to provide

guidance on the modalities and alternatives for integrating minority interests in the governance of democratic States. The initiative for the Lund Recommendations came from the High Commissioner as follow-up to the Conference on “Governance and Participation: Integrating Diversity” held in Locarno, Switzerland, in October 1998. The recommendations will be publicly available in early summer.

Seminars and Meetings

In May, the High Commissioner participated in a number of seminars including one on “Minority Rights in the Southern

Caucasus” in Tbilisi on 15 and 16 May (organized by a London-based NGO called LINKS), an OSCE Seminar on “Cooperation Among International Organizations and Institutions: Experience and Prospects in South-Eastern Europe” held in Sofia from 17 to 19 May, and a seminar in Bergen on 21 May, co-organized by the Council of Europe and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, on the subject of “Culture and Conflict Prevention”.

On 27 May the High Commissioner held consultations with the European Commission in Brussels concerning potential new members of the European Union (EU).

REPORT of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media is located at Kärtner Ring 5-7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria, tel.: (+43-1) 512 21 45-0, fax: (+43-1) 512 21 45-9, e-mail: pm-fom@osce.org

Duve’s Plan to Support Independent Media in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 4 to 5 May, where he met with editors, journalists and writers from the country and from Kosovo. Freimut Duve made a number of proposals in support of independent media, publishers and cultural events in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. On 12 May he presented them to the OSCE Permanent Council. These proposals include: (1) Publishing books on the Macedonian market, including children’s books, for further free distribution in the refugee camps. This would provide additional financial support to the local publishers and much needed reading material for the refugees. (2) Extending the free distribution of

newspapers to the refugees. Koha Ditore, a leading Kosovo newspaper, has published 10,000 copies that were distributed in the refugee camps. More copies should be printed. Other publications should also be encouraged to distribute among the refugees. Duve stressed that there would be a need for additional funding for these projects. (3) Publishing texts now written by deportees, including fiction and poetry, in the local media of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia through international financial support. (4) Buying advertising space in local newspapers that can be used for discussions among intellectuals from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo.

Duve Visits Ukraine

On 17-19 May, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media paid an

official visit to Ukraine where he met with senior government officials, parliamentarians, Supreme Court justices, senior editors and journalists. He also spoke at a conference organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Ukrainian Foreign Policy Association.

Continued Concern for the Independent Media in the FRY

Throughout May Freimut Duve continued to be concerned for the fate of independent media in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). In supporting the media, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media brought to the attention of the international peace negotiators for Kosovo the views of the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) on the post-conflict development of media in the country. On 25 May, Freimut Duve raised with Živadin Jova-

nović, the FRY Foreign Minister, the case of Halil Matoshi, a senior editor with the Albanian-language weekly *Zeri*, who had been arrested in Priština on 20 May.

Co-operation among International Organizations in South-Eastern Europe

Alexander Ivanko, Adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, spoke on media-related issues at the OSCE Seminar on Co-operation among International Organizations and Institutions: Experience and Prospects in South-Eastern Europe, held in Sofia on 17-19 May. The participants discussed lessons learned in Bosnia and Herzegovina, post-conflict rehabilitation, crisis management and other issues relevant to the region.

Continued Focus on Central Asia

On 12 May, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media addressed the OSCE Permanent Council where he focused on the media situation in the Central Asian participating States. In a comprehensive review, Freimut Duve analysed the current state of events in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Duve

pointed out that “One would be mistaken to over-generalize about the status of media freedom in these nations. We can go to Kyrgyzstan with considerable media freedom; to Turkmenistan with a virtual absence of media freedom; to Kazakhstan which until 1997 enjoyed a relatively high degree of media freedom; to Uzbekistan with its particular problems; to the special case of Tajikistan, just coming out of a five-year-old war.” The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media proposed the establishment of a Media Fund for Central Asia.

Concern over Censorship in Uzbekistan

On 11 May, Freimut Duve wrote to Abdulaziz Kamilov, Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, stressing that during his trip to that country numerous officials had reassured him that censorship was illegal and non-existent in Uzbekistan. “I was therefore appalled,” wrote Duve, to find the staff of the newspaper division of the Government Committee on Printing perusing newspaper articles for unacceptable coverage. Duve noted that he was informed that this kind of work was being done on a day-to-day basis. “I am sure you are well aware of the fact that

such outright censorship of media contradicts not only the OSCE principles, but also the domestic law of Uzbekistan,” noted Duve.

The Case of Orlanda Obad, a Journalist from the Croatian Daily *Jutarnji List*

On 11 May, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media wrote to Dr. Mate Granić, the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, raising the case of Orlanda Obad, a journalist from the Croatian daily *Jutarnji List*, who had been indicted by a Zagreb public prosecutor on 7 May 1999 for revealing and publishing details of President Franjo Tudjman’s wife’s bank accounts. Freimut Duve wrote that without going into the details of this story he believed that there was legitimate public interest in the assets of family members of leading politicians, especially since the information obtained by the journalist seemed to contradict official declarations of family assets. The decision against Orlanda Obad clearly violated international covenants, including the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Croatia was a signatory, noted the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

UPDATE from the ODIHR

The OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is located at Aleje Ujazdowskie 19, PL-00 557 Warsaw, Poland, tel.: (+48-22) 520 06 00, fax: (+48-22) 520 06 05, e-mail: office@odihhr.osce.waw.pl

ODIHR Visit to Central Asia

From 6 to 17 May the ODIHR Director, Ambassador Stoudmann, led a joint delegation to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The goals of the visit included an evaluation of the overall state of democratization and conditions for upcoming elections, the implementation of projects in the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) signed with the ODIHR, and the

launching of the Joint European Commission/ODIHR Programme on Advancing Human Rights and Democratization in Central Asia, from which approximately 50 per cent of the MOU projects are financed.



Press conference in Kazakhstan

The delegation was composed of representatives from the ODIHR, the European Commission, UNHCR, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCHR), the Constitutional and Legislative Policy Institute (COLPI) of the Open Society Institute, and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. A smaller delegation also visited Turkmenistan on 17 May.

The delegation met with the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the Foreign Ministers of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and the Speakers of Parliaments, Chairs of Central Election Commissions and representatives of political parties and non-governmental organizations.

In Kyrgyzstan the ODIHR held the first of its NGO/Government meetings (detailed below) and hosted a round table on the new election law, producing a number of recommendations including the improvement of conditions for detainees, the drafting of an annual human rights strategy, shortening the registration period for political parties and effective implementation of the new election law.

In Kazakhstan a press conference was held and a press release issued on the situation of human rights in the country. The new Kazakh election law was adopted without taking into account the opinions of political parties and non-governmental organizations in the country, and, according to the ODIHR, falls far short of OSCE standards. The ODIHR urged the Kazakh authorities to address the serious shortcomings in the law. The delegation later held talks with the Kazakh Central Election Commission, which presented draft measures to address these concerns.

In Uzbekistan, Ambassador Stoudmann signed a communiqué with the Government of Uzbekistan, reaffirming commitments made as part of the Memorandum of Understanding of October 1997. They agreed to continue co-operation and consultations on issues relating to the development of civil society, the development of political parties based on principles of pluralistic democracy, respect for the rule of law, the drafting of new election legislation and the development of election administration bodies. The communiqué also mentioned the promo-

tion of women's roles in social and political life, the strengthening of confidence and tolerance between religious congregations and the broadcasting of ODIHR/BBC programmes on human rights to the widest possible audience on national media.



Election observation in the Slovak Republic

An ODIHR election observation mission, headed by Ms. Siri Skare, seconded by the Government of Norway, was established on 19 April and observed the first round of the Slovak presidential elections on 15 May and the second round on 29 May. Observers visited approximately 450 polling stations.

The mission found that the election was held in accordance with the electoral provisions, and that it was administered efficiently and in accordance with OSCE commitments. The observation mission also concluded that the Election Law created equal campaign conditions for all candidates and provided clear rules regarding campaigning in the media. However the provisions related to the campaign silence period were violated. The ODIHR election observation mission welcomed the Central Election Commission decision to accredit two domestic observer groups, thus increasing the transparency of the process.

Election Observation in Armenia

A full election observation mission for the 30 May parliamentary elections in Armenia was launched on 19 April, under the leadership of Mr. Nikolai Vulchanov, ODIHR Election Adviser. Twenty-five long-term observers and core team members and 168 short-term observers were



Voting in Slovakia

deployed. The short-term observers were headed by Ms. Tone Tinsgård, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO) and Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. On election day, observers visited some 700 polling stations. The observation mission concluded that, in general, the 1999 parliamentary elections were an important step towards compliance with OSCE commitments. While improvements had been made to the electoral framework and environment in Armenia, the observation mission called for further improvements.

Joint OSCE/UN Election Assessment Mission to Tajikistan

The ODIHR and the United Nations conducted the first of a number of joint assessment missions to Tajikistan from 21 to 28 May. The aim of the mission was to assess and encourage preparations for the upcoming elections.

Election Legislation Workshop in Tajikistan

Together with UNDP and IFES, the ODIHR organized a workshop on the development of election legislation in

Dushanbe from 26 to 28 May. The aim of the seminar was to provide international expertise and assistance to the Tajik authorities during the initial phase of the elaboration of a new election code.

Technical Assistance in Armenia for the Election

A training programme for Regional Election Commissions was carried out in Armenia during May. The technical election assistance team which organized and conducted the training worked independently of the OSCE election observation mission also present in Armenia during the election campaign. This project was implemented under the Memorandum of Understanding between Armenia and the ODIHR.

DEMOCRATIZATION



Women in Politics in Kazakhstan

Twenty-five government and non-governmental organization (NGO) participants from across Kazakhstan attended a "Women in Politics" workshop held in Almaty from 3 to 8 May. The workshop project, under the ODIHR Memorandum of Understanding with Kazakhstan, was organized in conjunction with the OSCE Centre in Almaty, and was designed to assist women from government and NGOs with presentation, campaigning, lobbying and training skills.

The event was opened by Mrs. Samarkova, Head of the National Commission on Women and Family Affairs under the President of Kazakhstan, and by Ambassador Schoening of the OSCE Centre. Two trainers from the Active Learning Centre in the United Kingdom ran the workshop, which was evaluated as "excellent" by the participants.

Each participant is now required to run at least one follow-up workshop by the end of July. Given the success of the project so far, it is hoped that the trainers can go back to Kazakhstan later in the year for further follow-up and evaluation.

Civil Society Assistance in Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan the first two in a series of meetings between government officials and representatives of civil society was held in Bishkek on 8 May and in Osh, South Kyrgyzstan, on 27 May. These meetings, organized under the Memorandum of Understanding signed last December, follow a series of five meetings organized in 1998, and the project aims at furthering dialogue on human rights issues between representatives of the Government and civil society. The first meeting was moderated by the Head of the ODIHR Election Section, Hrair Balian, and both meetings discussed the draft election code and a future ODIHR project to train domestic election observers.

Training for Uzbek Border Guards

The ODIHR project Human Rights Training for the Border Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan entered its second phase from 23 to 29 May 1999, when a training course was held at the Polish Border Guards Academy, in Ketrzyn, Poland.

Seven border officials from Uzbekistan received training on issues relating to existing laws on border control and entry into and exit from Uzbekistan and their conformity with relevant OSCE commitments and other internationally accepted standards.

To ensure the sustainability of human rights training for officials of the State Border Service of Uzbekistan, assistance in establishing an ongoing human rights

training programme is planned for the year 2000. Support in reviewing the curriculum of the Uzbek Border Guards School is foreseen as phase three of the project, rather aimed at the training of sergeants and other non-commissioned officers.

The project was made possible by the excellent support of the Polish Border Guards Academy, Ketrzyn, Poland, and the OSCE Central Asia Liaison Office and was partially filmed by Polish television and recorded by Polish radio for broadcast in mid-June.

Action against Trafficking

The ODIHR co-financed a national conference on Action against Trafficking in Poland on 13 to 14 May. In addition, the ODIHR appointed a new Adviser on Trafficking, Jill Thompson, seconded by the Government of the United States of America.

Law School in Shkodra, Albania

An ODIHR project at the Shkodra Law School in Albania was completed in May.

The project, which included a course on the International Protection of Human Rights given by an ODIHR expert, ran from 18 March to 26 April. Based on the course, a set of course material will be published in the Albanian language for use in future human rights classes, and the project also provided basic technical assistance on matters such as computers.

The ODIHR expert in Albania also conducted a seminar for lawyers, judges and students on the European Court of Human Rights and other issues relevant to Albania, such as the death penalty, property rights, the rights of detainees as well and the right to a fair trial. The seminar took place on 27 April and was attended by 40 people.

Police Training in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

In reaction to the refugee crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the ODIHR, together with COLPI (Soros Foundation), conducted, in co-operation with the UNHCR and the UNHCHR and the Ministry of the Interior, a two-day training seminar with police comman-

ders on subjects such as stress management, the use of force and the role of international organizations. The seminar took place from 25 to 26 May in Ohrid, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and was attended by more than 20 senior police officers. The participants greatly appreciated the chance to discuss issues related to the refugee crisis systematically and in a calm atmosphere. A follow-up seminar is planned for the beginning of July.

Television Programmes in Armenia

The second in a series of television programmes on human rights was broadcast on Armenian television on 19 May. The series, made in agreement with the Armenian Government under the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the ODIHR, focuses on the human rights of vulnerable groups in Armenia. The second programme was on the rights of detainees and the third programme, on the rights of women, is currently being produced. All programmes are produced by local television crews, in close consultation with local and international non-governmental organizations.

REPORT from the Parliamentary Assembly

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Presidential Activities

President Degn's Visit to Paris, 4-5 May 1999

The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), Ms. Helle Degn, visited Paris from 4-5 May at the invitation of the President of the French National Assembly, Mr. Laurent Fabius.

In addition to Mr. Laurent Fabius, Ms. Helle Degn also met with the Minister of Defense, Mr. Alain Richard; the Minister of Justice, Mrs. Elizabeth Guigou; and the Minister for Development Co-operation, Mr. Charles Josselin. On the parliamentary level Ms. Degn had meetings with the Vice-President of the National Assembly in charge of international par-

liamentary co-operation, the chairpersons of the committees on defence and legal affairs, and the leaders of the three major political groups.

During her visit Ms. Degn had detailed discussions concerning the most urgent global problems and the OSCE role in establishing peace and democracy in the

OSCE area. Resolution of the Kosovo crisis, the role of the European Union, NATO and the OSCE in Europe and the Charter for European Security were high on the agenda. Much attention was paid to the democratic deficit in the OSCE and to gender problems.

OSCE PA President Degn particularly commended the active participation of the French Delegation, headed by Mr. Michel Voisin, in the activities of the OSCE

Parliamentary Assembly. Senator Claude Estier is a Vice-President of the OSCE PA and Mr. Jacques Floch chairs the Assembly's General Committee on Economic Affairs. He initiated the holding of conferences on subregional co-operation within the OSCE area. The second subregional conference will be held in the French city of Nantes next October.

President Degn Addresses OSCE Permanent Council, 20 May 1999.

On 20 May, President Helle Degn, for the second time, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna. In her address Ms. Degn reaffirmed the Parliamentary Assembly's readiness to play a full and active role in the resolution of the Kosovo conflict and the implementation of a peace settlement. President Degn also made practical suggestions as to how the OSCE PA could assist with the implementation of a settlement in Kosovo. The Parliamentary Assembly has already accumulated substantial experience in assisting newly democratic OSCE nations. Using this knowledge as a basis, the President suggested that a "Democracy Team" be formed out of



President Helle Degn meets the President of the French National Assembly, Mr. Laurent Fabius.

experienced parliamentarians. Such a parliamentary dimension would be a useful addition to the construction of democratic institutions in the post-conflict environment. Ms. Degn also noted that "Democracy Teams" had already been used with success in Belarus and Moldova.

President Degn informed the Permanent Council of recent Parliamentary Assembly and Presidential activities, including her visits to various Missions. Ms. Degn also raised the issue of gender inequality in the OSCE. She stated her appreciation that this topic had finally been addressed by the Organization. However, she remarked that the OSCE should seek to do more in practical terms to reverse the current imbalance.

A further issue that President Degn raised was the Parliamentary Assembly's proposal for "approximate consensus". She reminded the Council that the present version of the consensus principle, where one vote can block the will of all the other States, is inconsistent with the proactive and dynamic role that the OSCE should play in these challenging times. She

explained that although the individual State would lose its ability to block progress on a particular subject, the Organization would gain immeasurably through its new democratic dynamism and its ability to take rapid action. In relation to reform, President Degn also stated that the OSCE was not the only international organization seeking to develop its democratic credibility and reform its structures. The European Union was also on the verge of reforming its decision-making processes,

as were the Council of Europe and the WEU. Moreover, Ms. Degn announced that at this year's Annual Assembly in St. Petersburg, a resolution addressing the democratic deficit of the OSCE would be introduced.

OSCE PA President Helle Degn Visits the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania, 31 May – 4 June 1999

From 31 May to 4 June 1999, OSCE PA President Helle Degn paid visits to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Albania. These were part of a series of visits by President Degn to draw attention to the role the OSCE plays in the region, to observe and highlight the work of OSCE Offices, Centres and Missions and to meet high-ranking government and parliamentary officials. Both in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania, particular attention was paid to the humanitarian situation created by the conflict in Kosovo.

In Skopje President Degn met with the President of the Republic, Mr. Kiro Glig-

orov; the President of the Assembly, Mr. Savo Klimovski; the Vice-President of the Government, Ms. Radmila Kiprijanova; the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Aleksandar Dimitrov; and the Minister of Defence, Mr. Nikola Kljusev. On the first day of her visit Ms. Degn visited the refugee camps at Stenkovec and Blace. At a press conference in Skopje on 2 June, President Degn underlined that the Kosovo conflict was having a dramatic spillover impact on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in terms of huge waves of refugees, which presented serious humanitarian, political, economic and security implications for a small country. President Degn called on the international community to assist the country with massive and timely financial help to compensate for its huge economic losses.

In Albania President Degn met with the President of the Republic, Mr. Rexhep Meidani; the Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Skender Gjinushi; the Prime Minister, Mr. Pandeli Majko; and the Foreign Minister, Mr. Paskal Milo. Ms. Degn also met leaders of the Democratic Party, Mr. Sali Berisha and Mr. Genc Pollo, as well as leaders of other major parties. On 3 June, the President visited two refugee camps in Durres. At her press conference in Tirana on 4 June Ms. Degn said she was very moved and touched by her visits to the refugee camps and she praised the Albanian people for their solidarity, support and hospitality. The OSCE PA President was also extremely pleased to hear that the Albanian authorities and political parties generally thought very highly of the contributions made by the OSCE Presence in Albania in strengthening democracy and the rule of law in Albania. She noted that, while there had been progress in the development of Albanian civil society, much work still remained to be done. She also hoped that

all Albanian political parties would participate in the work of the Parliament.

Other Activities

OSCE PA Democracy Team Visits Opposition Presidential Elections in Belarus, 14-18 May 1999

Representatives of the ad hoc Working Group on Belarus of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly visited Minsk from 14 to 18 May 1999, a visit timed to coincide with the opposition presidential elections being organized by opposition forces on 16 May. The visit was conducted at the invitation of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus (AMG). The OSCE PA Democracy Team unofficially watched voting in the elections, which were supported by the 13th Supreme Soviet and opposition political parties, and held to take into account the expiration of the presidential mandate under the 1994 Constitution. "Although the elections were not expected to meet OSCE commitments," said the Democracy Team's Chairman, Adrian Severin (MP, Romania), "they constitute an important step towards the needed political dialogue between government and opposition." Noting the participation of many Belarusian citizens in the largely symbolic poll, Severin added that the elections, "which many countries consider due this year, deserve the respect of democratically governed countries within the family of OSCE States."

The Democracy Team also met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus, government and parliamentary officials, opposition representatives, members of the diplomatic corps, and representatives of non-governmental organizations and the media. Another purpose of the visit was to continue preparations for a meeting to be held in Bucharest on 10 to 12

May for representatives from the Government, the opposition and the non-governmental sector to explore ways and means of bringing about democratic elections in Belarus which would be acceptable to all sides. Mr. Severin was accompanied on this visit by Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen (MP, Finland) and Mr. Eric Rudenshiold, the Parliamentary Assembly's Director of Programmes.

OSCE Parliamentarians Monitor Parliamentary Elections in Armenia, 30 May 1999

Ms. Tone Tingsgård, Head of the Swedish Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, served as Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to lead the short-term observation mission to the Armenian parliamentary elections held on 30 May 1999. Ms. Tingsgård, together with Mr. Nikolai Vulchanov, Head of the ODIHR Election Observation Mission, presented the preliminary statement for the OSCE which concluded that the 1999 Armenian parliamentary elections demonstrated an improvement over prior elections, representing a relevant step towards compliance with OSCE commitments.

The Parliamentary Assembly delegation included twenty-six observers representing twelve OSCE participating States. Prior to the elections, the parliamentarians were given extensive briefings, which included meetings with the President of the Republic of Armenia, the Foreign Minister, the Speaker of Parliament, the Central Election Commission, the media, national minorities, and the major parties running for election. On election day, the PA delegation was divided into teams which visited polling stations across Armenia. Delegation members also observed the opening and closing of polling stations and followed counting procedures.



Recent Publications about the OSCE

Ghebali, Victor-Yves, *L'OSCE et la démocratisation de la Biélorussie, défense nationale*, April 1999, pp. 116-125.

Ghebali, Victor-Yves, *L'OSCE au Kosovo: vers un rôle de shérif adjoint de l'OTAN dans les Balkans, Revue Internationale et Stratégique*, No. 33, spring 1999, pp. 72-84.

Leue, Michael, *Die Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa (OSZE) und ihre Instrumente zur friedlichen Streitbeilegung, Peter Lang-Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften*, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Bern, New York, Paris, Wien, 1999.

The 1998 Edition of the OSCE Decision Manual is now available. The manual contains the texts of all decisions adopted by the Organization's policy-making bodies in 1998. For ease of reference, the manual contains a keyword index to the decisions. Previous editions for 1993-1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997 are also available upon request. You can order your copy, for FREE, from the Prague Office of the OSCE Secretariat by contacting us at:

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OSCE NEWSLETTER

The OSCE **NEWSLETTER** is published monthly by the Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

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