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OSCE  
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The cartoon issue: Turning crisis into opportunity  
Reconciling rights and responsibilities

Police and ethnic minorities:  
Unleashing the power of partnerships

For peace's sake:  
Serbian journalists go "on the war path"



tolerance

mutual respect

freedoms

rights

understanding



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The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is a pan-European security body whose 55 participating States span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

## OSCE Chairmanship 2006: Belgium

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Forum for Security Co-operation, *Vienna*  
Secretariat, *Vienna*  
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, *Vienna*  
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *Warsaw*  
High Commissioner on National Minorities, *The Hague*  
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, *Copenhagen*

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OSCE Mission to Georgia  
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The Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference

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OSCE Mission to Croatia  
OSCE Mission in Kosovo  
OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje  
OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro

# Message from the Chairman-in-Office

Three months into my term as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, I am pleased to have this opportunity of giving a brief overview of the Chairmanship's activities so far.

Right at the outset, one of our priorities was facilitating progress in ending the frozen conflicts in Moldova-Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgia. Several visits to the region and high-level meetings have taken place, aimed at encouraging the parties to continue their dialogue and to contribute constructively to conflict settlement.

I visited Serbia and Montenegro in mid-February in view of the challenges that the State-Union is facing — most importantly, the discussion on the future status of Kosovo and the coming referendum in Montenegro.

We have also been engaged in raising the profile of the politico-military and the economic and environmental dimensions of the OSCE's work.

A high-level seminar in Vienna on 14 and 15 February examined the impact of globalization and technological developments on military doctrines. And the Economic Forum, following a new format, is focusing on the dual role of transport: fostering greater regional co-operation and stability, and enhancing security in the OSCE region.

The Chairmanship is devoting considerable attention to the human dimension as well. A comprehensive agenda of events has been drawn up, with valuable contributions from OSCE delegations and institutions. Democratization, human rights and fundamental freedoms are the subject of regular and candid discussions with participating States and NGOs, notably on my visits.

Promoting the ratification and implementation of the Palermo Convention against organized crime was the subject of a seminar organized with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in March. Other related events are scheduled for April and throughout the year.

Following the important decision taken at the Ministerial Council Meeting in Ljubljana to strengthen the effectiveness of the OSCE, I am happy to say that our work in this area has begun. The Chairmanship hopes to conclude this matter at the Ministerial Council Meeting in Brussels at the end of the year.

Dealing with unexpected events is, obviously, a natural part of the Chairmanship's activities. We should always be prepared to tackle new challenges, such as those stemming from the energy debate sparked off early in the year, and the controversy regarding the publication of cartoons in some OSCE countries.

I stand ready to contribute as best I can towards a positive outcome to every one of these issues, highlights of which will be featured regularly in the *OSCE Magazine*.

Karel De Gucht  
Foreign Minister of Belgium  
31 March 2006



OSCE/MICHAEL LEVISTARIEV

Belgian Chairmanship website: [www.osce2006.be](http://www.osce2006.be)

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# The cartoon issue: Turning crisis into opportunity

## Reconciling rights and responsibilities

BY BERTRAND DE CROMBRUGHE

The publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohamed in several newspapers — first in September 2005, and then again at the start of this year — caused controversy and concern in the global community. Alarmed by the escalating violence and stirred passions, world leaders made a plea to maintain calm and to use common sense.



OSCE/ALEXANDER NITZSCHE

In a statement on 7 February, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, urged that freedom of expression be upheld, while also reminding media professionals of their responsibility towards society at large.

He acknowledged the challenge of the constant balancing act between freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs and traditions. “The freedom to express one’s opinion is a cornerstone of all democratic societies,” the Chairman-in-Office said, “but responsible media can also play a supportive role in the promotion of dialogue, mutual respect and understanding.”

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, Secretary

General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, Javier Solana, had struck a similar chord in their joint response. Freedom of the press, they said, “entails responsibility and discretion, and should respect the beliefs and tenets of all religions”.

In a joint article that appeared in key international newspapers, Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of Spain and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey appealed for an end to the “spiral of hatred and obfuscation”.

Pledging they would never relinquish the right to freedom of expression, the co-founders of the UN-backed Alliance of Civilizations said that although publication of the cartoons had been perfectly legal, they had lent themselves to “many misunderstandings and misrepresentations of cultural differences that are perfectly in harmony with our commonly shared values”.

For their part, the OSCE participating States have consistently reaffirmed their profound attachment to freedom of expression and, equally, to the principles of tolerance and mutual respect between people holding differing opinions and beliefs. These core commitments are set out jointly and comprehensively in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975.

At the OSCE Budapest Summit in 1994, world leaders once again took the opportunity to strongly reaffirm their commitment to freedom of expression as a fundamental human right, and to independent and pluralistic media as vital to free and open societies.

Most recently, at their annual meeting in Ljubljana in December 2005, Foreign Ministers adopted a decision calling attention to “the need for consistently and unequivocally speaking out against acts and manifestations of hate, particularly in political discourse, and working in favour of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding”. The decision builds on the OSCE conferences on tolerance — in Vienna (June and September 2003), Berlin (April 2004), Brussels (September 2004) and Cordoba (June 2005).

With the onset of the cartoon controversy, principles long perceived as compatible and non-controversial suddenly found themselves under threat. To avert a further polarization of positions, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office called urgently for an informal meeting on 16 February.

All key OSCE “stakeholders” were represented: 55 participating States and 11 Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, the three Personal Representatives

on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Secretary General and the Parliamentary Assembly.

This unprecedented brainstorming session set the stage for an earnest and vigorous debate. The gathering also served as a platform for participants to air their views and to present immediate and longer-term measures aimed at overcoming differences.

Speakers underscored the power of the media to shape opinion and convey messages that, in some instances, are positive and conciliatory but, in others, could prove divisive or even inflammatory. Yet, many expressed disapproval of any form of direct interference with the functioning of a press if it were to remain free. They questioned whether governments should take it upon themselves to exercise “editorial wisdom”.

At the same time, representatives stressed that governments should be able to distance themselves from media content that was deemed offensive. In addition, they underlined the importance of rejecting outright the identification of terrorism and violent extremism with any religion or belief, culture, ethnic group, nationality or race.

Participants agreed that the OSCE needed to speak with one clear and coherent voice in responding to the crisis. They felt strongly that activities to combat hate and prejudice should be expanded and that civil society should be drawn closer to these efforts. Repeated calls were made for existing OSCE commitments to be implemented to the fullest extent possible.

The special discussion, along with intense follow-up consultations, enabled the Chairmanship to chart the OSCE’s future course. Drawing on the broad range of proposals, the Chairmanship prepared a joint work plan to guide the immediate task at hand: to develop a concerted approach to addressing the challenges that came to the fore during the crisis.

The work plan’s key elements include:

- Exchanges with the High-Level Group of the UN Alliance of Civilizations;
- A Ministerial or Permanent Council Decision bringing together the principles of dialogue, mutual respect and human rights, including freedom of expression. This would send the strong political message that, in functioning democracies, these are complementary, not contradictory values;
- An NGO roundtable to be initiated by the ODIHR, in co-operation with the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the

three Personal Representatives on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, and members of the ODIHR’s Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion and Belief;

- An event to discuss the values inherent in media freedom. The initiator would be the Representative on Freedom of the Media, with journalists, illustrators and experts from participating States and Partner States from Asia and the Mediterranean taking part;
- An upgrade of the level of representation at the human dimension implementation meeting on tolerance in Almaty in mid-June, which will deal with inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic understanding;
- New or expanded projects and programmes, involving participating States as well as Partner States. Activities could include a set of guidelines for education on tolerance, a study on free expression and possible legal limitations, and expanded coverage of ODIHR’s Database on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination to include good practices; and



OSCE/ALEXANDER NITZSCHE

- Increased synergy with, among others, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership/Barcelona Process, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, the Council of Europe, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

No doubt, the scope of this programme is ambitious. But with the willing contribution of each and every participating State and Partner for Co-operation, the 2006 Belgian Chairmanship hopes to turn the unfortunate controversy into an opportunity — an opportunity to demonstrate that mutual respect and understanding within the OSCE can take the upper hand, even among countries that have a free media.

**Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrughe has been Permanent Representative of Belgium to the OSCE since August 2003. He currently serves as Chairman of the Permanent Council, the Organization’s main standing body for political consultation and decision-making.**





OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

Answering questions at an outreach campaign of the *gendarmerie nationale*.  
Photo: Sirpa-gendarmerie  
A/C Pruvot

# Police and ethnic minorities

## Unleashing the power of partnerships

Amid periods of relative calm and stability, societies across the OSCE region occasionally experience a rude awakening to the ugly face of inter-ethnic conflict and upheaval. It does not have to be so, says Rolf Ekéus, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM).

The former Swedish ambassador believes that if national minorities are integrated into the mainstream of governance, and if their right to maintain their ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural identity is respected, minority-related tensions can be prevented altogether or at least reined in before they spiral out of control.

Over the past 14 years, the HCNM, based in The Hague, has been initiating and advocating a series of expert recommendations designed to help shape education, public and socio-economic life, language use and broadcasting in multi-ethnic societies.

In an interview with the *OSCE Magazine*, the High Commissioner explains why it is now the turn of policing issues to take centre stage and why the HCNM's latest recommendations are just as much about effective policing as they are about the rights of national minorities.

**OSCE Magazine: Why did the High Commissioner on National Minorities decide to devote his attention to the issue of policing at this time?**

**Ambassador Rolf Ekéus:** As you know, my role is to identify — and seek early resolution of — ethnic-related tensions that affect peace and stability, or relations between OSCE participating States.

My intervention is especially effective whenever I can assess a specific situation first-hand. This explains why country visits and discussions with government and minority representatives are part and parcel of my *modus operandi*.

During these meetings, it happens that people raise the same sets of concerns again and again: education, the use of languages, broadcasting in minority languages and political participation, to name just a few. The theme of policing is one of these “usual suspects”.

Leaders of national minorities complain to me that police officers do not understand

the problems of their communities and that they often abuse their power. They also find recruitment practices discriminatory. Chiefs of police, in turn, tell me how frustrated they feel about the unco-operative attitude of minority groups and their lack of interest in working with law enforcers to ensure safety and security in their communities.

I must add that there are some bright spots. I have been impressed to see for myself how even the most modest partnerships between police and minorities at the local level go a long way towards fostering an atmosphere of constructive dialogue and mutual trust and respect.

All this has led me to zero in on policing in multi-ethnic societies, using the same consistent approach that the HCNM has been taking over the years: clarifying international standards and pointing policy-makers and minority communities in the right direction through our recommendations.

To launch the process, last year the Strategic Police Matters Unit in the OSCE Secretariat and I brought together a group of internationally respected experts, including senior police officials, to examine every angle of the issue. On 9 February, I presented the group's catalogue of concrete recommendations to the Permanent Council in Vienna. These deal with recruitment and representation, training and professional development, means of engaging with ethnic communities, operational practices, and prevention and management of conflict.

**Why is it even necessary to consider the diversity factor in policing? Shouldn't good policing simply be "colour-blind?"**

I am strongly convinced that there is a vital correlation between the quality of policing and the state of inter-ethnic relations. Police officers operate at "street level" and often represent the sole "face" of law enforcement. So it's not surprising that police authorities exercise considerable leverage in shaping the way minorities perceive their efforts to be fair, to be accountable for their actions, and to operate within the rule of law. Experience shows that countries that fail to understand this leverage advantage pay a high price.

As for the second part of your question, I agree that law enforcers should be "colour-blind" — most of the time. An everyday example that comes to mind is that no individual should be singled out for unwarranted stop-and-search on the basis of ethnicity.

However, certain situations call for police management to make an exception, as in the



**"We agree with Ambassador Ekéus that inter-ethnic tension very often fuels conflicts in the world today. Who can deny the role that ethnic tension played in contributing to the painful history of the Balkans in the past decade? Multi-ethnic policing is not only the right thing to do in terms of the democratic standards we all have adopted, it is also the smart thing to do."**  
*—Ambassador Julia Finley, U.S. Mission to the OSCE, at the Permanent Council, 9 February 2006*

case of recruitment. In order to reflect the population they serve, police services should undertake special efforts to encourage applications from ethnic minorities, directly targeting them through information campaigns, helping them meet basic standards, and removing any direct or indirect discriminatory barriers to their recruitment.

**Wouldn't this be tantamount to practising "affirmative action" to the detriment of professionalism and fairness in hiring?**

My preferred approach is to set a target — the desired ethnic composition to be reached within a certain time frame. It is crucial that high professional standards be maintained. In fact, it is precisely police officers from minority backgrounds who would likely be concerned the most that standards not be lowered; they would not want to be regarded as "second-class police officers".

Having said that, there will always be situations that call for a quota system, especially in post-conflict settings in which the police force needs to be created from the ground up.

**Isn't there a danger that citizens will play the "minority card" in certain situations?**

Yes, unfortunately there is such a risk — which puts undue pressure on the political leaders and police authorities, causing even

Friendly patrolling at the marketplace in multi-ethnic Osh, South Kyrgyzstan



How would you respond to those who feel that these latest recommendations are not suited to situations where the police fail to respect the most basic human rights?

It is hard to imagine how good practices in multi-ethnic policing can be introduced in a police force that fails to respect basic human rights and basic policing standards. That said, this should not be a legitimate excuse for doing nothing. The recommendations offer a degree of flexibility in the way they are implemented; they take into account a State's specific situation, including such factors as ongoing police reform and the

The Greater Manchester Police care about reflecting diversity.

more antagonism between all parties and making it difficult to arrive at a compromise. In dealing with these sorts of sensitive issues, I make it a point to call on all sides for restraint and to urge them to co-operate to the utmost in searching for solutions.

It is a two-way street. Members of national minorities should not lose sight of the fact that along with their rights come responsibilities. This explains why the recommendations on policing are also directed at minority groups — to make them realize that they bear joint responsibility for ensuring their community's safety.

Community policing in France

actual situation on the ground.

In fact, the expert group was highly sensitive to the fact that police services in individual States are at varying stages of development. The group ensured that their recommendations are deeply rooted in the most fundamental human rights standards in policing, including the *United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials* and the Council of Europe's *European Code of Police Ethics*.

**These codes have been available as guidelines for many years. What is the "value added" of the HCNM recommendations?**

The recommendations developed within the HCNM's purview focus on a specific aspect of policing. They are, as I pointed out, rooted in existing standards and best practices, but bring the ethnicity and diversity factors into the spotlight. The document also serves as a detailed road map for political leaders and police authorities in their efforts to build trust and confidence between police and national minorities.

**The HCNM's focus seems to be on the Balkans and the CIS region. Are these policing recommendations aimed primarily at countries "east of Vienna"?**

The group behind the document was made up of 15 individuals from all across the OSCE region; they intended the recommendations to be universally applicable and useful. There is something for everyone.

And by the way, the theme of ethnicity and policing emerged in the countries "west of Vienna" some 20 to 30 years ago. That was when the deep mistrust and wariness between minority communities and the police grew to such an extent that it ultimately led to violence. Several of the recommendations are directly drawn from the painful lessons that emerged from that era.



SIRPA-GENDARMERIE AG PRIVAT

"We must fear that ethnic tensions, within and between nations, will prove the most dangerous threat to stability and the common security on our continent in the years to come."  
 — *Netherlands Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek, at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Stockholm, December 1992*



I should add, though, that the police-minority divide in some countries in the West persists and still requires constant vigilance.

**How will you ensure that the recommendations aren't just filed away but serve as an indispensable reference guide for day-to-day policing and planning?**

I agree that some politicians and police administrators might see the document as yet another attempt to lecture them about human rights and impose certain modes of behaviour on them. This, I can assure them, is not the intention.

Right at the outset of the document, the experts emphasize that a police-minorities relationship built on a spirit of co-operation, trust and confidence clearly benefits both sides:

- Police operations are enhanced by the inflow of information provided by minority recruits, who also inject the police force with new skills and knowledge.

- Minority groups are able to take on more responsibility for the safety of their own communities when police are more attentive to their concerns. They also gain better access to the justice system and to opportunities for resolving conflict peacefully.

With its vast experience in this area, the OSCE can prove to be a great help in strengthening ties between police and minorities. I believe that we have already been putting some of the recommendations into practice in the field and should be proud of our record. I hope that the positive examples highlighted in the document serve as encouragement.

As I mentioned to the Permanent Council, the HCNM, in co-operation with the Special Police Matters Unit and other OSCE structures, is prepared to provide States with practical assistance in carrying out the recommendations.

JØRGEN HILDEBRANDT/PRESSSENS BILD



“The OSCE took the ground-breaking decision [in 1992] to establish the post of High Commissioner on National Minorities. I say ‘ground-breaking’, because at no time before — or after, for that matter — had an international organ been given the right, and the duty, to intervene in the internal affairs of States to address what are often sensitive issues, namely relations between a majority and minorities, with the ultimate objective of preventing future conflicts.

“As a precondition for awarding a right of such intrusive character to the HCNM, governments demanded that it be required that the High Commissioner would ‘work in confidence’ and ‘independently of all parties’.

“The fundamental concept on which the HCNM bases its policy is that of ‘integration with respect for diversity’. It is not a matter of either/or, but rather of finding the right balance.”

— Ambassador Rolf Ekéus, at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vienna, 23 February 2006

**In your view, which countries with a strong multi-ethnic composition have been making strenuous efforts to raise the standards of their policing services?**

I would not like to single out specific examples. I am convinced, however, that it is in the best interests of all the OSCE participating States to assess their police services through the prism of these recommendations and to translate them into action.

## *Expert advice on integrating minorities while respecting diversity*

Since 1992, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) has been serving participating States as “an instrument of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage”. To guide key officials in building legal and political mechanisms in support of harmonious inter-ethnic relations, the following documents have been drawn up by independent experts under the auspices of the HCNM:

- \* The Hague Recommendations regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities (1996)

- \* The Oslo Recommendations regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities (1998)
- \* The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life (1999)
- \* Guidelines on the Use of Minority Languages in the Broadcast Media (2003)
- \* Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies (2006)

The documents are available in several languages at [www.osce.org/hcnm](http://www.osce.org/hcnm).



Sarajevo National Library, 1992: Vedran Smailović, the cellist who never stopped playing for peace. Photo: Mikhail Evstafiev

# For peace's sake

## Serbian journalists go “on the war path” in Bosnia and Herzegovina

*“Let’s establish the facts once and for all and then start living like normal people, instead of having a situation every 50 years in which one generation has to rebuild what a previous generation has burned down and destroyed.”*

— Hatidža Mehmedović, one of thousands of women who lost their sons and husbands in the bloodbath in Srebrenica

**BY IVAN JOVANOVIĆ**

These resolute words were quoted in a powerful three-part series in October 2005, in *Politika*, a leading daily in Serbia and Montenegro. The in-depth reporting was by Dragan Vlahović, one of 14 Serbian journalists who had seized the opportunity offered by the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro to visit sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) that figured prominently during the war of 1992-1995.

The OSCE Mission had initiated the ground-breaking trip to enable journalists from Serbia to see with their own eyes how war crimes were being researched, investigated and tried in their neighbouring country.

The Sarajevo Media Centre set the stage for the visit with a screening of the provocative documentary, *Slijepa Pravda* (“Blind Justice”). Produced by two young Bosniacs,



it explores how war victims in BiH from different ethnic backgrounds perceive the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in meting out justice.

This was followed by a spirited discussion between the Serbian journalists and ten of their counterparts in BiH on the media's crucial role in reporting war crime-related issues.

At the State Court of BiH, which is responsible for trying the country's war-crime cases that are deemed sensitive, the group's conversation with Judge Meddžida Kreso, President of the Court, was the first of a series of golden opportunities to exchange views with leading authorities.

Marinko Jurčević, Chief State Prosecutor of BiH, reminded the journalists of their professional responsibility to help heal the wounds of war.

"Justice and reconciliation in our countries cannot be achieved by penal law alone," he said. "We in the judiciary, you in the media, and members of NGOs and religious communities — we must all work together to build a positive climate."

The next stop was the small Sarajevo office of the ICTY. The journalists were briefed on the Tribunal's strategy to complete its work by 2010, on the transfer of five cases from the ICTY to the domestic BiH court — involving 12 accused — and on the close interaction between the ICTY and the national judiciary.

#### CONFERRING DIGNITY

Mirsad Tokača, head of the War Crimes Research and Documentation Centre, a Bosnian NGO with a solid reputation, said that his institute's painstaking research was aimed at putting an end to the manipulation of statistics and at conferring dignity on — and putting a name to — every single victim.

When asked for hard facts relating to casualties, Mr. Tokača said preliminary statistics showed that of the more than 91,000 BiH citizens who perished, 69 per cent were Bosniacs, 25 per cent were Serbs, and 5 per cent were Croats.

A meeting with representatives of the Commissions for Missing Persons of the BiH Federation and Republika Srpska shed further light on the search for war victims, a painful task that continues to this day.

For many of the journalists, the mere fact of walking down the streets of Sarajevo was enough to fill them with a sense of awe of this multi-ethnic capital, still marked with so many scars of suffering and destruction.

Memorial cemetery in Potočari, 11 July 2005: Bosnian Muslims pray at the tenth-anniversary commemoration of the massacre in Srebrenica.



## Helping Serbia deal with its recent past

The 12 journalists who took part in the organized trip, from 25 to 28 October 2005, represented television broadcasters RTS, B92 and TV5 Niš; *NIN* weekly; *Politika*, *Večernje novosti*, *Glas javnosti* and *Kurir* dailies; and Tanjug, Beta, Fonet and ANEM news agencies.

The project was made possible with the financial support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Belgrade and with the co-operation of the office of Serbia's War Crimes Prosecutor, whose spokesperson traveled with

the group. The OSCE Mission plans to organize a similar visit for Serbian journalists to Croatia in 2006.

The visits are part of the OSCE Mission's larger efforts to strengthen the capacities of Serbia's institutions to deal with the legacy of war crimes and to foster public discussion on the recent past. Other related Mission activities include monitoring trials, fostering inter-State co-operation, drafting legislation and mobilizing outreach campaigns.





OSCE MISSION TO SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Former army general Jovan Divjak guides Serb journalists around the city he defended.

One of the programme's highlights was a special tour of wartime Sarajevo, guided by none other than controversial Sarajevo resident, former Serb general Jovan Divjak, who had been Deputy Chief of Staff of the Bosnian army during the war. Regarded as a hero by Sarajevo citizens and vilified as a traitor by many Bosnian Serbs, Mr. Divjak, now in his 70s, gave forthright answers to the endless stream of questions posed by the journalists.

The ex-general gave a running commentary on the sites made famous during the siege of Sarajevo: the front lines, the zones where the fiercest fighting took place, the sniper and shelling positions of the Bosnian Serb army, the sites where executions were carried out, and the secret tunnel under the Sarajevo airport that served as the only escape route from the beleaguered city.

The border-town of Bratunac, near Srebrenica, provided the group with a change of pace. The journalists were impressed with the work of "Women of Podrinje", a small grass-roots NGO run by Bratunac residents Stanojka Avramović, a Bosnian Serb, and Zegneba Sarajlić, a Bosniac whose husband was killed by Serb forces. Both women have won international recognition for their passionate pleas for tolerance and for the return of refugees, regardless of ethnicity.

The journalists proceeded to the nearby town of Srebrenica, which has come to symbolize the whole horror of the Balkan wars. At the memorial centre and cemetery in Potočari, some 50,000 visitors had gathered on 11 July 2005 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the massacre of 1995.

About a dozen Bosniac women who had



OSCE MISSION TO SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Edis Kolar shows journalists a map of Sarajevo under siege. He and his father turned their family house into a museum devoted to the tunnel that served as the city's lifeline during the war.

lost sons, brothers, husbands and other male family members in the genocide shared their personal stories with the journalists. They led the group to the exact locations in the former United Nations base in Potočari where they had been inhumanely detained and separated from their families during the capture of Srebrenica by Bosnian Serb forces.

A harrowing account of atrocities committed against the Muslim population in 1992 was narrated to the journalists in the town of Čelopek, which straddles the border of Serbia and BiH at the Drina river. The spokesperson of Serbia's War Crimes Prosecutor, Bruno Vekarić, told the group that the massacre was to be the focus of a trial set to take place in Belgrade in November [2005], to be monitored by the OSCE.

Not a single journalist came away unmoved from the four-day programme.

"Reporters covering war-crime trials should make a point of visiting the sites that played a role in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, so that they are better able to reconstruct the mosaic of events," said Gordana Petrović, a journalist with Radio Television of Serbia (RTS).

"No court document can ever serve as a substitute for the experience of being right there at the crime scenes, taking one's own pictures, and speaking to victims, witnesses and officials involved in the quest for justice."



**Ivan Jovanović, a lawyer, is the National Legal Adviser on War Crimes in the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro.**



LETTERS FROM ECOLOGY CAMP

# Samal of Semyonovka

## The making of a passionate environmentalist

Ten days in Almaty: Students gather around a mentor on ecology and the environment. Camp photos: Centre for Radiation Protection and Ecology/I. Khvoshnyanskaya

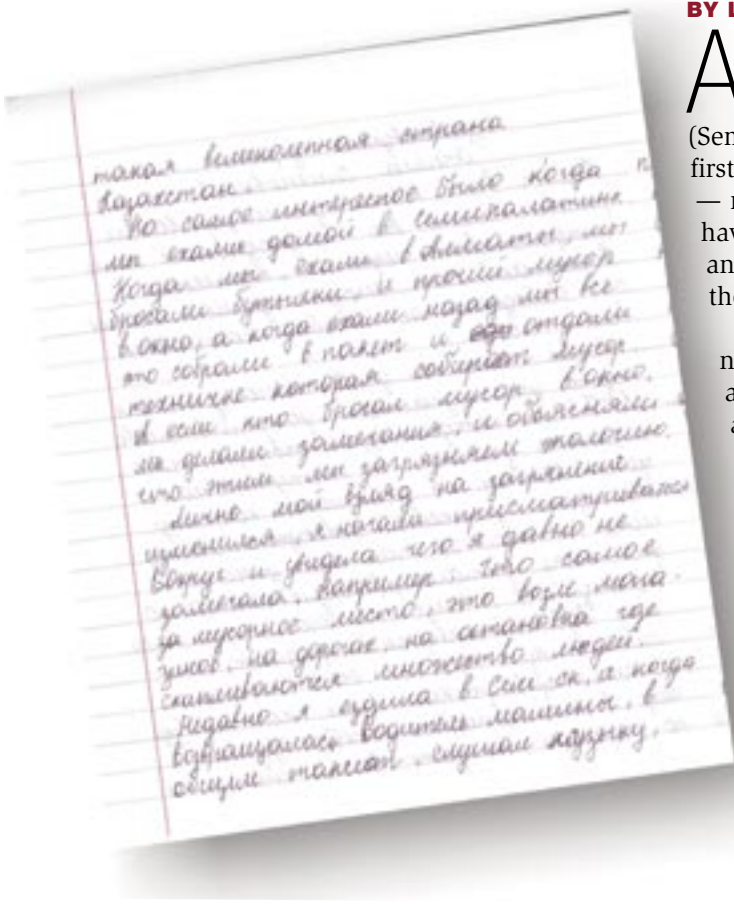
**BY LORA KUDAIBERGENOVA AND MADINA BAKIEVA**

At the height of their summer vacation in July 2005, 25 teenagers, aged 15 to 17, set off for the big city of Almaty from seven different villages surrounding the former Semipalatinsk (Semy) nuclear test site in north-eastern Kazakhstan. It was the first time most of them would venture out on such a long trip — more than 20 hours by bus and by train. Each one felt special, having been handpicked to learn the rudiments of radiation safety and environmental protection at a summer camp organized by the OSCE Centre in Almaty.

Once settled in their simple but comfortable quarters for the next ten days, the participants immersed themselves in lectures, a specially written textbook and interactive games. The focus of activities was not limited to keeping safe and well in radiation-contaminated areas; treasuring nature and the environment was also emphasized.

The unique experience, from 9 to 19 July 2005, made a powerful impression on Samal Mashrapova, a 16-year-old in her last year of school in the village of Semyonovka in East-Kazakhstani oblast. Cut off from instant communications on her return home, she lost no time writing letters to the Almaty-based Centre for Radiation Protection and Ecology, the OSCE Centre's partner at the summer camp.

Samal's letters reveal the frustrations and concerns, as well as the hopes and dreams, of a young adult who is suddenly seeing her world with different eyes — and who desperately wants to change it.



On the train, all along the way to the summer camp in Almaty, we were throwing beverage bottles and all kinds of litter out the window. On our way home, we found ourselves collecting our rubbish in a big plastic bag and handing it over to the cleaning woman. And whenever we spotted fellow passengers and wagon conductors thoughtlessly tossing refuse out the window, we went out of our way to explain to them how they were ruining their environment by their actions.



Ambassador Vikki joins the group for a special presentation.

Recently, on a trip to Semipalatinsk, the bus driver, who was playing some music, tossed some old cassette tapes out the window. I reproached him, but he just laughed in my face, saying: "Just look at this environmental defender!" I retorted: "I am an ecologist and I protect nature and I love it." But he would not listen.

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We celebrate Ecology Week every year in December, but this time, I think it will be especially challenging because I — now the holder of a "Consultant on Environmental Protection" certificate — will be responsible for the event. I don't regret having taken this initiative, even if it is time-consuming, because it is interesting, serves as my way of helping everybody, and brings me back to the happy days in Almaty.



Teens and trainers record a life-changing experience.

We walked several kilometres along the highway collecting refuse, followed by a tractor to transport the sacks. We must have collected 200 sacks. I see now how careless our people are; they throw away their waste wherever they please. My classmates and I were dragging a heavy sack for several kilometres. Not a single boy offered to help. One of them said: "No one asked you to fill the sack. Throw away what you've collected, this whole place around us is a dump."

A trainer guides group work.



The future generation is not interested in nature. It is so pleasant to walk in the steppes, smelling the forest and yellowed grass. Why don't we have "ecology" as a subject in our curriculum?

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Together with our biology teacher, we have prepared an environmental curriculum for the rest of the 2005/2006 school year. I will be busy working with children who have an interest in ecology. I would really like to do something so that my stay in Almaty will not have been in vain. Perhaps no one will join this hobby group, but I won't be disappointed; after all, there is never any harm in trying. We will announce a competition in drawing, writing and poetry revolving around environmental topics.

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We had a history lesson devoted to Kazakhstan's ecological problems. The teacher was able to take a break while I conducted the whole session, explaining the most urgent issues we are facing. The students asked questions non-stop, such as "How much radiation are we getting? Is it too much?" It was easy to provide the answers, thanks to the OSCE summer camp. The 45 minutes devoted to the topic were not enough, and the students continued asking questions even during the break.

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I realize now that many people do not care about cleanliness, and that if our souls are clean, if we look at nature with different eyes, we will understand that all this pollution has been caused by people — by us. Where there are human beings, dirt and garbage appear. Where there are no people, a place remains clean. But every year, there are more and more people, and their needs and demands continue to grow.



The OSCE Centre in Almaty hopes to invite Samal to assist the next summer camp in June 2006.



Measuring radiation close to “ground zero”

a number of activities in 2004, many of which are still in progress.

- In April 2004, the OSCE Centre and its implementing partner, the Centre for Radiation Protection and Ecology, launched an information campaign covering practical tips ranging from ways to ensure the safety of drinking water to how to obtain free medical care.
- A brochure, *The Semipalatinsk Test Site: Misinformation and Reality*, a video on radiological safety and protection, and awareness-raising posters were produced and disseminated.
- A series of public lectures for people from 28 villages and shepherd settlements on basic radiological safety and recommended practices was held from September to December 2004.
- In 2005, the Centre organized a summer school camp on environment and ecology in Almaty. Another one is planned in 2006.
- At a seminar in December 2005, local authorities in East Kazakhstan, Pavlodar and Karagandy oblasts were briefed on a specially produced map-scheme, indicating the contaminated areas. The map-scheme will continue to be widely disseminated to village, district and regional administrators as a tool for making decisions on quality-of-life issues.

**Lora Kudaibergenova is an Economic and Ecological Assistant and Madina Bakieva is a National Political Media Officer at the OSCE Centre in Almaty.**

## OSCE Centre in Almaty: Bridging the information gap at the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site

During the Cold War, the north-eastern steppes of Kazakhstan served as the testing grounds for nuclear weapons. By the time the Semipalatinsk test site, 800 km north of Almaty, was closed after 40 years in 1991, 456 nuclear explosions had taken place in the air, on the surface and underground.

For the past several years, the test site — covering about 19,000 square km — has been the focus of enormous but largely uncoordinated research efforts by national and international experts. Their challenge has been to gauge the health risks posed by radioactive residues and to assess the damage to human health and to the environment.

So far, the studies have not been sufficiently comprehensive to

warrant drawing definite conclusions. Authoritative attempts to interpret the preliminary scientific findings to the communities surrounding the site — an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 people — have been sorely lacking.

How is a resident, for example, to understand what is at stake if annual gamma radiation doses are found to be in the order of 20 to 100 millisieverts? Where is it advisable to settle permanently or temporarily? What kind of practical precautionary measures can one take in preparing food and putting cattle to pasture? What sorts of risks are entailed in collecting scrap metal around the test site?

To fill the information gap and clarify inaccurate reports stemming from rumours and newspaper accounts, the OSCE Centre initiated



Wild irises on the steppes



Ambassador Vikki with national partners



“Atomic lakes” created by nuclear explosions



A local "spot" shows how a *Çifteli*, an Albanian musical instrument, is crafted.

Forty-two children in one room may sound like a sure-fire recipe for chaos, but not on Friday mornings at a primary school tucked away in Çabër/Çabra in the mountains of northern Kosovo. The five-to-seven-year-olds wait expectantly in their chairs, all eyes fixed on Përparim Shala as he sets up a VCR player, a projector and a video cassette.

It does not take long before shrieks of delight run through the room as a familiar figure appears on the screen. "It's Gonzo the

Great!" says a wide-eyed little girl. *Rruga Sesam*, the Albanian-language version of Sesame Street, unfolds at a quick pace, transporting everybody into the world inhabited by Bert and Ernie and Big Bird and Cookie Monster and Elmo.

"We knew that the animation and the antics of the lovable Muppets would be a big hit, but we were not prepared for this level of enthusiasm," says Mr. Shala. "Sometimes the kids don't want to leave; they insist on watching another episode."

# Sesame Street goes off-the-beaten-path in Kosovo

BY MEVLYDE SALIHU AND SILVIAN SURUGIU





The multi-ethnic and multilingual public broadcaster, Radio-Television Kosovo (RTK) has been broadcasting the show in Albanian and Serbian on Saturdays since late 2004, but there are some places that lie outside its broadcasting zone.

To make up for this, once a week Mr. Shala, Democratization Programme Assistant, drives 20 minutes to Çabër/Čabra from the OSCE Mission's office in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica to screen one half-hour episode for the village children.

Çabër/Čabra (population: 1,500) is a Kosovo-Albanian village in Zubin Potok, a municipality where Kosovo-Serbs form the majority. Pre-school teacher Valdete Hajra hopes that, through the influence of *Rruga Sesam*, her pupils will become much more open to ethnic, religious and cultural diversity than their parents.

"Three generations have grown up learning their ABCs and 1-2-3s by watching Sesame Street since its launch in the U.S. in the late 1960s," says Ms. Hajra.

"Most of the people my age in Kosovo followed the series on German television in the 1980s. These kids are

fortunate to be able to watch it in their own language. They can go beyond the colourful images and catchy tunes and absorb the lessons from the featured themes."

"I learned that it's important to brush my teeth in the morning and before bedtime, and that I should not be afraid to go to the dentist," says seven-year-old Armend when asked what he remembers most from this week's show.

"I'm pretty sure that once they're more familiar with the characters, they will be able to get even more out of it," says first-grade teacher Selvie Bajrami.

Roma kids from Gjakovë/Đakovica are tickled pink at learning from Grover.

Pre-school education being an unknown concept in Kosovo, some parents confess to having been perplexed when the screenings were first announced.

"I asked myself, 'Is school a place for learning or for entertainment?'" says the father of five-year-old Blerim. "But after the teacher explained what the show was all about, I was happy at the thought that my son would not only be learning to read and count but would also be helped to see the world differently."

He adds almost as an afterthought: "Besides, I feel better knowing that he is safe in school and keeping out of trouble."

He had in mind a tragic event in July 2005, when three children from Çabër/Čabra drowned in the Ibar river. Although it was obviously an accident, it had brought back painful memories of March 2004, when another incident involving children triggered an outbreak of inter-ethnic violence throughout Kosovo, leading to the death of some 20 people, injuring hundreds and rendering thousands homeless.

"We are firmly convinced that our special efforts to introduce *Rruga Sesam* to these parts will help bring about some positive changes to village life," says Përparim Shala. "These kids deserve all the opportunities we can offer."

Just like Kosovo's north-western tip, the southern municipality of Dragash/Dragaš (population: 35,000) is out of RTK's broadcasting reach, further isolating 37 mountain villages in the regions of Gora and Opoja.

This time, the Dragash/Dragaš Community Centre that was established by the OSCE in January 2003 was assigned the task of taking *Ulica Sezam* — Sesame Street in Serbian — to several villages under a "mobile cinema" scheme.

Fun and games at the Kosovo launch



Elvir Ilijazi, project co-ordinator, says that the children of Orushë/Orçuša village in Gora were initially reluctant to come and watch the show. “They are not used to strangers and feel uneasy when they encounter unfamiliar situations,” he says.

“However, the second screening attracted greater numbers and the children actually asked questions and were more lively. Now we can talk about the show’s content together and they can hardly wait until *Ulica Sezam* visits again.”

Brod, another isolated village in Gora, is also on Mr. Ilijazi’s route. “There, the children are more active and spontaneous. This is possibly the first children’s programme they have seen in their young lives,” he says.

The language spoken by the people of Goran, called “Našinski” (“our language”) is a mixture of Macedonian, Turkish, Bosnian and Serbian. “Gorani children have to be guided to fully appreciate parts of the show because of language nuances, but this doesn’t pose too much of a problem,” Mr. Ilijazi says.

Still another weekly stop for him is the popular Community Centre of Bresane in the Opoje region, which attracts droves of mostly Kosovo-Albanian children.

Angela Tenbruck, who co-ordinates the Sesame Street project from the Prishtinë/Priština headquarters of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, says that efforts to reach both the northern and the southern ends of Kosovo are continuing.

“We want to be true to Sesame Street’s tried-and-true model that offers the same fun and laughter and learning to children across and within cultures and countries,” she says.

“Whether they are in the big cities or in the tiniest villages, the children of Kosovo deserve to enjoy the same high-quality educational television programming that is widely available elsewhere in the world.”

*Mevlyde Salihu is a Public Affairs Assistant in the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, based in Prishtinë/Priština. Silvan Surugiu was a Media and Democratization Officer in Mitrovicë/Mitrova.*

## Kosovo gets a taste of “Muppet diplomacy”



Gary Knell introduces enthusiastic Elmo to some new-found friends.

When *Rruga Sesam* and *Ulica Sezam* made their debut on RTK in December 2004, Kosovo joined a community of 125 countries and regions that subscribe to Sesame Street’s philosophy that all children should be given a chance to achieve their highest potential.

The project is a joint initiative of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, the UNICEF office in Kosovo, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the Sesame Street Workshop, the New York-based non-profit organization that is behind the show’s locally co-produced adaptations around the world.

With RTK as the main broadcaster, the show is also beamed to audiences in Kosovo-Serb areas by DTB (Children’s Television Station) in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region, TV Most in Zvečan/Zveçan and TV Hertz in Štrpce/Shtërpçë.

The project’s educational package consists of:

- 52 half-hour episodes from Sesame Street’s international

library. These were carefully selected for dubbing into separate Albanian and Serbian versions.

- 26 action-filled two-to-three-minute “spots” co-produced with a Kosovo team. These feature children from different ethnic groups, demystifying for young viewers the day-to-day lives of other communities and exposing them to a language other than their own.

- 15,000 activity kits for children and 1,500 kits for children and parents in Albanian, Serbian and Bosnian. These were produced by UNICEF to introduce Sesame Street as part of early-childhood education. A new series is planned.

Both the local spots and the activity kits follow an educational curriculum that was designed around the findings of comprehensive research by educators representing various communities.

The curriculum’s overarching goal is to help children in Kosovo to be more aware of their rich cultural heritage and the multi-ethnic society in which they live, to develop healthy social and emotional attitudes and skills, and to help build a foundation for respect and understanding among social and ethnic groups.

“Today’s young children are growing up in a complex world, a world that knows no technological boundaries and where cultures, religions and ethnicities intersect in ways previously undreamt of,” says Gary Knell, President of the Sesame Street Workshop, who flew to Kosovo for the launch of the project.

“As children recognize and enjoy authentic representations within their own cultural context, the hope is that they can begin to learn more about children they rarely encounter in their daily lives. By humanizing ‘the other side’, we aim to open up the minds of children and their parents.

“We may not be getting world leaders to sit at the same table, but using a few friendly furry faces, we hope that our “Muppet diplomacy” is having an impact on the thinking of today’s children, who are tomorrow’s leaders.”



Belgrade: Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Miroslav Labus (left) meets Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad.

**Hans Ola Urstad** of Norway assumed the position of **Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro** on 7 February, succeeding Maurizio Massari of Italy.

Ambassador Urstad has extensive and intimate knowledge of the region, having served as Norway's Ambassador to Yugoslavia — later Serbia and Montenegro — from 2001 to 2005. It was during his term, in September 2004, that the Royal Norwegian Embassy took over as NATO's Contact Point Embassy in the country.

"I am very happy to be back in Serbia and Montenegro and am fully committed to assisting our host country in the reform process on its way to achieving OSCE standards and European integration," said Ambassador Urstad. His new appointment came just a few months after he had returned to Oslo from Belgrade to serve as Senior Adviser in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.

"The Mission has established excellent co-operation with a wide range of

governmental and non-governmental partners, and I look forward to continuing and strengthening this."

After joining the Foreign Ministry in 1980, he served at the Norwegian Embassy in Warsaw and the Norwegian Delegation to NATO in Brussels. In 1989, he was appointed Head of the Ministry's Personnel Division. From 1991 to 1995, he was Head of the International Department of the Norwegian Parliament, as well as Chief of Staff of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

In 1995, Hans Ola Urstad was appointed Consul General in San Francisco, covering the 12 western states of the United States. Back in Oslo, he served as Special Adviser on Stability Pact issues in the Foreign Ministry, before becoming Norwegian Ambassador to Yugoslavia.

Ambassador Urstad holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and British and Nordic studies, and a master's degree in political science and international relations from Oslo University.



**Kevin Carty** has been named the OSCE's **Senior Police Adviser and Head of the Strategic Police Matters Unit in the Secretariat** as of 20 February. He holds the rank of Assistant Commissioner in the National Police of Ireland (*An Garda Síochána*).

During the course of a distinguished career, he has held lead responsibility for the Policing Sections of the National Drug Bureau, National Surveillance Unit and the National Criminal Investigation Unit; Ireland's State Security Intelligence Service; and the Border Region with Northern Ireland. In 2004, he was appointed as Police Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Region.

Mr. Carty has chaired various working groups of the European Commission and served as project manager for several European projects designed to enhance global security strategies.

He has gained extensive international experience working

with the European Union and the United Nations. From March 2004 to December 2005, he served as Commissioner of the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As Head of the first policing operations of the EU under its European Security and Defence Policy, he oversaw some 470 international police officers and 60 civilian personnel. He also served as international policing expert on the Police Restructuring Commission for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Prior to his EU assignment, Mr. Carty served as special adviser to the Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel in Iraq, which examined the implications for the UN security system in the aftermath of the bomb attack on UN offices in Baghdad in August 2003. He was subsequently appointed a member of the UN's Security in Iraq Accountability Panel.

His academic background includes a bachelor's degree in police management and administration from the National University of Ireland, and advanced studies in public administration and information technology. An Eisenhower Fellowship in the United States enabled him to examine interagency co-operation in law enforcement.

Mr. Carty succeeds Richard Monk of the United Kingdom, who served as the first OSCE Senior Police Adviser from February 2001 to early 2006.



Seoul: South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon (left) and Martin Nesirky at a Reuters interview

**Martin Nesirky** took up his post as OSCE **Spokesperson and Head of Press and Public Information** on April 10. He was born in London, graduated in German and Russian from Bath University in England and then spent more than 23 years with Reuters news agency, most recently as Bureau Chief in Seoul, where he covered North and South Korea.

Mr. Nesirky is a newcomer to Vienna, but knows the region well and is keen to improve and update his knowledge with help from across the OSCE.

His previous assignments took him to many parts of Europe, tracking the Cold War, the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the new realities

and challenges that then emerged across the continent. During his assignment on the divided Korean peninsula, he found much interest in the OSCE's confidence-building measures.

His work and earlier studies closely tracked OSCE — and OSCE — activities right from his first schoolboy trip to Moscow in the mid-1970s.

"The OSCE's grassroots work deserves to be even more widely recognized, and I look forward to hearing from the missions so we can spread the word," Martin Nesirky said. "The Organization's activities and planned reforms remain relevant to all the participating States and Partners for Co-operation. The Press and Public Information Section can help to show how."

shared values

dialogue

diversity

co-operation

responsibility

