



**Mediating and Monitoring:
On the scene in Georgia**

**Action plan on Roma and Sinti:
Keeping track of progress**

**First Model OSCE:
It's a long, hard road towards consensus**





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Message from the Special Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office

Right at the outset of its OSCE Chairmanship, Finland was determined to devote itself energetically to promoting the resolution of the protracted conflicts in the OSCE area. Over the past nine months, I have been acting as the Special Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office responsible for helping to defuse tensions, build confidence between communities, and foster negotiations to resolve the conflicts in Transdniestria in Moldova, South Ossetia in Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh, between Armenia and Azerbaijan.



OSCE/MIKHAEL EVSTAFIEV

The tragic events in Georgia in August marked a turning point: They challenged the existing security structures in Europe and put the role of regional and international organizations alike to the test. Several articles in this issue of the *OSCE Magazine* describe how the Organization has been at the forefront of international efforts. When the fighting broke out, the OSCE's Finnish leadership did its utmost to defuse tensions, negotiate and strengthen the ceasefire, and promote a peaceful settlement. Reaction was swift, with participating States taking a prompt and vital decision to send additional Military Monitoring Officers to the area.

I believe that the OSCE should continue with this proactive approach. It should give robust support to future negotiations and use the expertise of its Mission to Georgia to maximum advantage. The Organization will also need to work closely with the United Nations and the EU.

This brings us to the next crucial step: Traditionally, the OSCE has dealt with the conflict in South Ossetia and the United Nations with the conflict in Abkhazia. The Chairmanship is convinced, however, that the most feasible option at our disposal now is to create a common forum to consider both conflicts together. This is our hope and this is what we will try to explore in Geneva in mid-October. Clearly a lasting solution will not emerge overnight, but the Ministerial Council meeting in Helsinki in December could step up the process.

It is still too early to make a comprehensive assessment of the implications of the Georgian crisis for the other protracted conflicts. This year has seen positive movement in the Transdniestrian settlement process. The developments in Georgia have brought the issues concerning status to the fore and have infused a new sense of urgency into our efforts. That said, prospects for progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict appear rather limited in 2008, an election year for both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

As we gear ourselves up for Helsinki, the Finnish Chairmanship will ensure that the unresolved conflicts are kept high on the agenda. The OSCE must invest even more time, energy and effort in pursuing the settlement of the protracted conflicts and making the most of every window of opportunity that opens up. It is in the interest of the whole OSCE community to back up these efforts with steadfast commitment and political will.

Heikki Talvitie
 Helsinki, 1 October 2008

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Front cover: A newly deployed OSCE Military Monitoring Officer on patrol in the areas adjacent to South Ossetia, Georgia. Photo: OSCE/David Khizanishvili
Back cover: Roma youngsters listen to music over a tiny radio in the remote hills of Chibed, a village in Transylvania. Photo courtesy of Zoltan Krisztian Bereczki and the Decade of Roma Inclusion



Georgia and the world community

The next steps

BY ALEXANDER STUBB

The hope that we had banished war from the face of modern Europe was dashed in early August when Georgian and Russian troops engaged in a pitched battle in Tskhinvali, capital of the separatist Georgian region of South Ossetia. Since the conflict broke out, the OSCE has been actively contributing to efforts aimed at an immediate ceasefire and at setting the stage for international negotiations.

On 10 August, as hostilities spiralled dangerously out of control, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner of France, which holds the rotating EU presidency, and I flew to Tbilisi to initiate immediate peace talks. We also managed a quick visit to Gori, in the Shida Kartli region, just about

an hour's drive from the Georgian capital. Seeing the devastation around us strengthened our resolve to come up with a sustainable solution for peace and stability — and fast.

Minister Kouchner and I worked in tandem to lay the foundations for a ceasefire and drew up a four-point peace plan that was signed by Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili in Tbilisi and presented to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, current President of the Council of the EU, then sealed an agreement with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and President Saakashvili on an elaborated six-point peace plan.

When I returned to Gori on 21 August, I saw for myself how volatile the humanitarian situation still was, even though relief efforts were going relatively well, with only minor hitches. This was confirmed by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Food Programme, and by the Governor of the Shida Kartli region.

During our short visit, Ambassador Terhi Hakala, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, and I met several elderly people who had been displaced from their homes in the village of Heiti. In Tbilisi, we also visited a centre for

Tbilisi, 21 August,
OSCE Chairman-in-Office
Alexander Stubb (right) talks
to families displaced from Gori
and other villages.
Photo: OSCE/German Avagyan

Gori, 21 August. Displaced people from several outlying villages arrive with their belongings.



OSCE/GERMAN/AVGVAN

people who had been displaced within Gori itself or who had been brought there temporarily from other villages affected by the conflict.

Meanwhile, in Vienna on 19 August, OSCE participating States agreed to increase the number of Military Monitoring Officers in Georgia by up to 100. The first 20 have now joined the eight monitors who were already stationed in the country as part of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. We needed them to be on the ground as quickly as possible to help prevent further violence. They can also play a role in ensuring that progress in humanitarian work and the return of people to their homes is unhindered and unimpeded.

Beyond the humanitarian work, much remains to be done to address the wide-ranging consequences of the conflict.

First and foremost, we need to do our utmost to ensure that the ceasefire agreement is strictly adhered to and that its implementation is based on fundamental OSCE principles.

Second, the international community should explore how efforts towards a peaceful settlement in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia, can be re-tooled and re-energized in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

Since the early 1990s, responsibility for international efforts to resolve these two conflicts has been split between the United Nations and the OSCE. I am convinced that the time has come for us to come up with a new global negotiating platform supported by the UN, the OSCE, the EU, and other stakeholders as well. During my talks at the United Nations in late September, I found there was broad agreement that the Geneva talks in mid-October provide a good opportunity to start building this platform.

The OSCE has been at the forefront of international efforts to stabilize the situation in Georgia. I am confident that the OSCE and its Mission to Georgia will continue to be a key

actor in the region. There will be no shortage of tasks for the Mission and its more than 200 staff members as they begin to tackle new challenges related to the human, economic and environmental, and politico-military dimensions of security.

I look forward to seeing all 56 participating States continuing a constructive dialogue in the months ahead so that the OSCE can keep playing a pivotal role in the region.

Alexander Stubb is the Foreign Minister of Finland and Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE.

What do Military Monitoring Officers do?

Under the guidance of the Head of Mission and the direct supervision of the Chief Monitoring Officer, unarmed Military Monitoring Officers:

- contribute to the full implementation of the six principles for the resolution of the conflict by monitoring the situation on the ground
- interact with the relevant authorities and military and civilian representatives, and co-ordinate liaison with other monitoring contacts
- prepare reports on observations

What is the typical profile of an OSCE Military Monitoring Officer in Georgia?

- is seconded from an OSCE participating State
- is active or reserve military personnel, authorized to be in uniform with rank insignia during the assignment
- holds an advanced degree and is trained as an Officer or Warrant Officer
- has at least six years of relevant professional experience including significant background in arms control, peace-keeping operations or other relevant areas of military-related affairs
- experienced in negotiations and liaising with governmental and military authorities



OSCE/DAVID KHIZANISHVILI



From Vienna to Vladikavkaz

Solidarity with refugees and OSCE staff

BY MARC PERRIN DE BRICHAMBAUT

On 16 and 17 August, at the request of Chairman-in-Office Alexander Stubb, I flew to Vladikavkaz, the capital of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, to meet refugees from South Ossetia, Georgia, and carry out a first-hand assessment of the humanitarian situation in the wake of hostilities.

With me were Ambassador Anvar Azimov, the new head of the Russian delegation to the OSCE, and Ambassador Klaus Korhonen, who was representing the Organization's Finnish Chairmanship.

The media followed the visit with keen interest. The minute we stepped off the domestic flight from Moscow, we were surrounded by television crews and reporters, and several press cars followed our delegation to its various destinations.

Our first stop was in Beslan, to lay flowers at a monument honouring the more than 300 victims of the school hostage tragedy that thrust this small town into the world's consciousness in September 2004.

As we moved on to Vladikavkaz and met refugees, we were overwhelmed by the unfolding human drama. The flow of people who fled the region of South Ossetia after the start of hostilities had by then reached 34,000. This was according to Mikhail Tyurkin, First Deputy Director of the Russian Federal Migration Service, who along with his staff was confronted with the challenging task of registering the refugees and helping them with their immediate needs.

Some people took shelter in schools and summer camps in and around the small town of Alagir, 54 km west of Vladikavkaz. Others were given the option of moving to other parts of Russia. We learned that quite a few families were ready and willing to return to their homes and that the authorities had offered to transport them by bus to Tskhinvali or to outlying villages.

I was truly moved by the stories I heard from refugees and from injured civilians in the central hospital of Vladikavkaz. One could not help but feel compassion for all, regardless of ethnic background. I know from my contacts with the Chairman-in-Office that he heard similar accounts during his two visits to Georgia.

Near Alagir, North Ossetia, 16 August. A refugee describes her ordeal during the conflict to Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut (right) and OSCE Press Officer Mikhail Evstafiev. Reuters/Vasily Fedosenko

I also had informal meetings with North Ossetian officials — President Taimuraz Mamsurov, Prime Minister Nikolay Khlyntsov and his First Deputy Yermak Dzansolov, and the Speaker of Parliament Larisa Habitseva, as well as with the North Ossetian members of the Joint Control Commission.

The visit to Vladikavkaz would not have been complete without seeing at least some of our local colleagues from the Tskhinvali Field Office of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. At short notice, I was able to get together with ten of them, which represented about half of the local staff. Each one had a dramatic and poignant story to tell. Some had lost family members and friends.

Now it is time to move on and start the hard work of helping people settle back into their homes so that they can rebuild their lives. As always, the OSCE stands ready to fully engage itself in this crucial process and to steer all parties firmly along the path of reconciliation.

Marc Perrin de Brichambaut is the Secretary General of the OSCE.

Secretary General starts second term

Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut of France has been reappointed for a second three-year term as Secretary General of the OSCE starting on 1 July. He assumed his position in June 2005.

Reflecting on his first three years in office, the Secretary General said that he remained inspired by the Organization's unifying role. "Despite difficulties and differences, the OSCE binds the North Atlantic, Europe and Eurasia within a forum of permanent dialogue and joint action," he said.

The Secretary General's role is multifaceted: He is the Organization's chief administrative officer, head of its Secretariat in Vienna and focal point for co-ordination and consultations across the Organization.

Supporting and representing the Chairman-in-Office is also a key task. "The rotating Chairmanship is vital for the good health of the OSCE because it provides a source of constantly renewed political will and guides activities in new directions," Ambassador Perrin de Brichambaut said. "The Secretary General is here to provide the Chairmanship with expert, advisory, material, technical and legal assistance. This includes assisting in policy-related issues, promoting the process of political dialogue and negotiations among participating States, and assisting the Chairmanship in raising the visibility of the Organization."

The OSCE Mission to Georgia

The OSCE Mission to Georgia is one of the Organization's oldest field operations. Based in Tbilisi, the Mission launched its activities in December 1993 shortly after the Sochi Ceasefire Agreement of June 1992 ended the violent fighting that broke out in South Ossetia in late 1991. In 1997, the Mission set up a field office in Tskhinvali. Over the past 15 years, the Mission's main tasks have gradually expanded and now comprise:

Politico-military dimension activities

- promoting negotiations between the conflicting parties and building confidence in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict
- supporting the peace process in the zone of the Georgia-Abkhaz conflict, which is under the responsibility of the United Nations with a separate negotiation mechanism
- destroying, dismantling or recycling surplus and obsolete ammunition stockpiles
- assisting police reform and enhancing capacity to deal with terrorism
- strengthening national capacity to manage borders and ensure border security

Human dimension activities

- assisting the Government to fulfil its OSCE commitments concerning human rights, rule of law, democratization and freedom of the media by, for example, supporting electoral, judiciary, penitentiary and civil registry reform; promoting the role of civil society; strengthening the fight against trafficking in human beings; and integrating Georgia's national minorities into the mainstream of society

Economic and environmental dimension activities

- supporting the economic, energy and environmental sectors through, for example, small and medium enterprise development, legislative reforms, anti-corruption and good governance initiatives, environmental education and a river monitoring project

The OSCE Mission to Georgia has more than 200 national and international staff members. This number includes the original eight Military Monitoring Officers who were already on active duty before the recent hostilities. On 19 August, participating States agreed to increase the monitors by up to 100, 20 of whom had taken up their posts by early September.



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Diplomatic journal

Georgian crisis dominates agenda of Finnish Chairmanship



Tbilisi, 7 July. An OSCE delegation, comprising ambassadors and representatives of permanent missions in Vienna, exchanges views with Prime Minister Lado Gurgenzidze. Over three days, the group held discussions with several key officials of the Georgian Government and visited the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

When Finland unveiled its priority themes at the beginning of its 2008 Chairmanship, addressing protracted conflicts in the OSCE area was high up on its agenda. The Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, wasted no time in embarking on a series of visits to key capitals to ensure continuity and inject fresh impetus into the various negotiations. He also issued a strong signal in appointing as his Special Envoy the experienced diplomat Heikki Talvitie, who once served as the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and as Co-Chairman of the Minsk Group, which deals with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

As the developments in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict started taking a turn for the worse early in the year, it became clear that the Chairmanship and the OSCE would indeed need all the energy and skill they could muster to help the sides address the potentially explosive situation posed by the tension on the ground and the dialogue vacuum.

In early August, the worst fears were realized when open conflict did break out. The consequences of the brief but intense fighting have been profound — not only for the immediate parties involved but for the very concept of common and co-operative security.

“This crisis has totally changed the nature of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship,” the Chairman-in-Office said. “The rapid response of participating States to increase the number of Military Monitoring Officers on the ground is commendable, but it is only a first step. We urgently need to stabilize the situation, do our utmost to help with relief efforts, and work as intensively as we can to revive the dialogue.”

The following summary is far from comprehensive, but it reflects the intensity of diplomatic and political activity before and shortly after the August events, much of it conducted behind the scenes. It tells a story of constant early warning action and attempts to de-escalate tensions, followed by immediate work to halt the war and move towards normalization — by the Chairmanship, the Mission to Georgia, OSCE institutions and the OSCE decision-making bodies in Vienna. The story is far from over.

27 February, Tbilisi The OSCE Chairman-in-Office meets Georgia’s leaders to discuss the country’s parliamentary elections in May and emphasizes the Organization’s role in promoting stability and democratic reforms. He calls for progress in the settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

13 March, Vienna Head of Mission Terhi Hakala provides the Permanent Council with a wide-ranging report on the OSCE’s activities in Georgia, the core aim of which is to assist both sides to achieve a peaceful and comprehensive resolution of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. “The political process has continued to be at a standstill,” and “the past twelve months have seen little to no improvement in the security situation in the zone of conflict,” she says. “Despite this, the Mission continues to do its utmost to find any kind of platform to which all the parties can subscribe.”

She singles out one bright note in confidence-building work, namely, the €8 million OSCE-led Economic Rehabilitation Programme in the zone of conflict, which is being financed by 20 participating States. “Many of the projects have been completed by mixed teams of Georgian and South Ossetian workers, demonstrating that despite the challenging security environment, joint work at the community level towards mutually agreed aims can succeed.”

28 March, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office deplores the series of bomb explosions in the zone

Sveri, a mixed village with a Georgian majority to the north of the zone of conflict in South Ossetia, 9 July. Dutch Ambassador to the OSCE Ida van Veldhuizen-Rothenbücher, along with diplomats from Vienna, visited several projects under the donor-funded Economic Rehabilitation Programme, such as this village school that was undergoing major refurbishment. A library and clinic were also planned. Donors: Czech Republic and Italy.



OSCE/DAVID KHIZANISHVILI

of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and calls on both sides to resume dialogue.

17 April, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office expresses concern over the Russian Federation's decision to establish official ties with the de facto authorities of Georgia's two breakaway regions, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. He reaffirms the Organization's support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and regrets that existing negotiation mechanisms have not been fully utilized. "I call on the parties to look for ways to build confidence and engage in efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflicts," he says.

29 April, Tbilisi Ambassador Heikki Talvitie, Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, discusses with Georgian authorities the shooting down of a Georgian unmanned aerial vehicle over Abkhazia on 20 April. He reiterates the OSCE's support for UN actions in Abkhazia.

30 April, Vienna The OSCE Permanent Council convenes a special session to discuss the airspace incident over Abkhazia, while the Forum for Security Co-operation examines its politico-military implications.

30 April, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office states that recent developments in the zones of conflict, including a military build-up, have considerably increased tension in the region. He speaks on the phone with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, urging them to defuse tensions through dialogue and confidence-building measures. "All parties should refrain from unilateral measures and threats to use military force," he says.

30 May, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office meets Georgian Foreign Minister Ekaterine Tkeshelashvili regarding the situation in Georgia's breakaway

regions. "OSCE confidence-building measures should be used by participating States to calm tensions and foster dialogue," he says. He also says it is time to explore possibilities for a new negotiating format that will be acceptable to the parties to the conflict.

2 July, Astana The Chairman-in-Office addresses the annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, drawing attention to the worrying situation in the South Caucasus.

4 July, Tbilisi Following a recent series of incidents resulting in loss of life and serious injuries in the zone of conflict, the Chairman-in-Office calls on all parties to "use all necessary tools at their disposal to restore dialogue, which is a pre-condition for building confidence."

7-9 July, Tbilisi and Tskhinvali Led by Finnish Ambassador Antti Turunen, Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, ambassadors and representatives of 21 OSCE participating States engage in a series of intensive discussions with key members of the Georgian Government and the main stakeholders in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. Ambassador Turunen urges all parties to stop the violence, resume dialogue and undertake more confidence-building measures to de-escalate tensions. The need for more OSCE Military Monitoring Officers is also discussed.

The OSCE representatives travel to the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict for two consecutive days and meet leaders from the South Ossetian side. They are briefed by the the Commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces and the Military Monitoring Officers in the Mission's Tskhinvali office. They visit projects of the OSCE-led Economic Rehabilitation Programme, which was designed to build confidence between communities in the zone of conflict and adjacent areas. They also visit two sites that figure prominently



Roki Tunnel connecting South Ossetia and North Ossetia, 8 July. The OSCE delegation of ambassadors and representatives visited the zone of conflict for two consecutive days and met South Ossetian leaders.

OSCE/MARTHA FREEMAN

in Permanent Council debates concerning the conflict — the village of Didi Gupta and the Roki Tunnel, which leads to North Ossetia-Alania in the Russian Federation.

7 July, Moscow Special Envoy Heikki Talvitie meets Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko to discuss the situation in Georgia's breakaway regions.

10-11 July, Tbilisi and Tskhinvali Ambassador Talvitie holds meetings and consultations with key officials and the Commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces to try to advance the conflict settlement process.

14 July, Vienna The OSCE Permanent Council devotes a special meeting underscoring the urgency of the resumption of dialogue between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali to de-escalate tension. Ambassador Heikki Talvitie briefs participating States on his recent consultations with all sides.

17 July, Washington, D.C. The Chairman-in-Office meets U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Georgia's frozen conflicts are at the top of their discussion agenda.

2 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office deplores and condemns the latest escalation of violence in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, including the night-time shooting that killed and wounded several people. "The international community is watching developments with mounting concern and expects the sides to do their utmost to de-escalate tension," he says. He appeals to them to take up his offer to facilitate dialogue and consultations.

7 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office deplores the fact that a planned meeting of Georgian and South Ossetian representatives has failed to take place. Once again, he extends an invitation to the parties to meet in Helsinki as soon

as possible. "The situation in the conflict zone is extremely tense and requires immediate de-escalation," he says, urging them to stop all military action and re-establish direct contacts.

7-8 August, zone of conflict, Georgia Hostilities break out.

8 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office continues to be in contact with Tbilisi, Moscow, and all international actors involved in resolving the conflict. He announces that Special Envoy Heikki Talvitie will travel to Georgia immediately to defuse tensions and seek ways to launch humanitarian action. "The intense fighting in the South Ossetian conflict zone is at risk of escalating into a fully-fledged war, which would have a devastating impact for the entire region," he says. "I urge the Georgians, South Ossetians and Russians to cease fire, end military action and stop further escalation." Condemning the shelling of the OSCE Mission premises in Tskhinvali, he says that the OSCE Mission to Georgia is working intensively with all parties to defuse tensions and that its work and mandate must be respected by all parties to the conflict. Minister Stubb announces that he is ready to increase the number of OSCE Observers as soon as the situation allows.

8 August, Vienna The OSCE Permanent Council convenes a special meeting on the situation in Georgia.

9 August, Tbilisi Special Envoy Heikki Talvitie meets EU officials and other international actors.

10-11 August, Tbilisi and Gori The Chairman-in-Office travels with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, whose country holds the EU presidency. "The overriding priority of the OSCE and the EU is to broker a ceasefire as soon as possible," Minister Stubb says. "After that, we need to launch a humanitarian effort, given the

Tbilisi, 21 August. The Chairman-in-Office is briefed by Steve Young, Chief Military Officer at the OSCE Mission to Georgia.



OSCE/BERNARD AWAGYAN

number of civilians who have suffered in this needless fighting.” He says that additional Military Monitoring Officers are needed to supplement the eight already on the ground and that he will seek agreement from participating States to provide them. Minister Stubb and Minister Kouchner meet Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili with an OSCE/EU-drafted ceasefire plan and visit Gori, close to the conflict zone, which had briefly come under bombardment.

12 August, Moscow The Chairman-in-Office presents the proposed agreement to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. He welcomes the decision by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to halt the military operation in Georgia, saying that the OSCE stands ready to help monitor a ceasefire and assist in humanitarian relief efforts. President Medvedev and French President Nicolas Sarkozy hold talks and meet the press to announce that Russia has endorsed a six-point peace agreement. (President Saakashvili later accepts the six-point ceasefire plan. He and President Sarkozy present an outline of the document at a press conference.)

13 August, Brussels The Chairman-in-Office takes part in an emergency meeting of EU foreign ministers focusing on the agreed plan and the role of the OSCE and the EU. “We have a ceasefire, we do not yet have peace,” he says.

13 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office, who is in constant contact with the OSCE Mission to Georgia, expresses “grave concern” about the continuing violence and the safety of civilians in and around the South Ossetia conflict area. “The ceasefire agreed on yesterday must be strictly adhered to. The OSCE should do its utmost and deploy additional Military Monitoring Officers as soon as possible,” he says. “I expect all measures

necessary to be taken to ensure the safety of non-combatants, regardless of their ethnic origins, and that obligations under international humanitarian law will be respected.”

14 August, Vienna At a special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, Special Envoy Heikki Talvitie briefs participating States on the “fragile” situation in and around the South Ossetia conflict area. He relays to participating States the request of the Chairman-in-Office to increase the number of OSCE Military Monitoring Officers by up to 100, adding that they could monitor the ceasefire and withdrawal of forces and help establish and maintain a humanitarian corridor for international relief efforts. “All sides must abide by the ceasefire. International monitoring of the ceasefire and of the humanitarian situation in and around the South Ossetia conflict area is urgently needed,” he says. Several participating States pledge financial and material assistance for humanitarian purposes.

16-17 August, Vladikavkaz At the request of the Chairman-in-Office, OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut travels to the North Ossetian capital to meet refugees from South Ossetia and assess the humanitarian situation (see page 6).

18-19 August, Brussels The Chairman-in-Office takes part in meetings aimed at co-ordinating the international community’s further action concerning the conflict in Georgia. He has talks with Belgian Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht, whose country holds the presidency of the UN Security Council (since succeeded by Burkina Faso), and meets U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. In his capacity as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, he takes part in a meeting of NATO foreign ministers with the OSCE Ministerial Troika (Spain, Finland and Greece). He also meets EU officials to co-ordinate efforts in Georgia.



OSCE/DAVID KHIZANISHVILI

Gori, 21 August. Lado Vardzelashvili, Governor of Shida Kartli region (centre), OSCE Chairman-in-Office Alexander Stubb and Ambassador Terhi Hakala, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, assess the humanitarian situation.



OSCE/DAVID KHIZANISHVILI

Tbilisi, 3 September. New Military Monitoring Officers are briefed and trained at the OSCE Mission to Georgia before their deployment.

19 August, Vienna After intense negotiations at a special meeting of the Permanent Council, the 56 OSCE participating States agree to increase the number of OSCE monitors in the Mission to Georgia by up to 100. The decision calls for 20 unarmed Military Monitoring Officers to be deployed immediately to “areas adjacent to South Ossetia”, with the specific details for the remaining monitors still to be discussed further.

19 August, Brussels “I hope that today’s decision by the OSCE will contribute to the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement and facilitate the prompt opening of humanitarian corridors to assist the civilian population and prepare for a return of refugees and internally displaced persons,” the Chairman-in-Office says. “I also hope that the OSCE Military Monitoring Officers will very soon be ensured safe and free movement throughout Georgia.”

21-22 August, Tbilisi and Gori The Chairman-in-Office assesses the security and humanitarian situation. He visits Tbilisi and Gori where he talks with displaced people. He also discusses the crisis with Georgian officials, stressing the importance of implementing the ceasefire and the role of the OSCE Military Monitoring Officers. He calls for support in providing humanitarian assistance and sets out the OSCE’s priorities in the region (see page 4).

25 August, The Hague The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek, expresses profound concern over recent comments by leaders of participating States on the right of States to protect their citizens and in particular those national minorities residing abroad. “Both the past and the present have shown us that when States take unilateral action to defend, protect or support their citizens or ‘ethnic kin’ abroad, there

is a risk of increasing political tensions, including inter-State conflict and regional instability,” he says in a statement.

26 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office condemns Russia’s decision to recognize the independence of the breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as violating fundamental OSCE principles.

28 August, Vienna Georgian Foreign Minister Ekaterine Tkeshelashvili addresses the participating States. “The OSCE has been very prompt in responding to the realities of the situation,” she says at a special session of the OSCE Permanent Council. “The Chairmanship has been instrumental in facilitating the ceasefire agreement and at the same time has committed itself to the monitoring and assurance of the implementation of the ceasefire.” The Foreign Minister calls for “adequate modalities” to permit the Military Monitoring Officers to meet needs on the ground.

28 August, Helsinki The Chairman-in-Office sends a letter to all OSCE foreign ministers, laying emphasis on the implementation of the ceasefire agreed upon by the French and Russian presidents. He calls for support in providing humanitarian assistance, refers to the role of OSCE Military Monitoring Officers and proposes a new international platform to deal with the conflicts in Georgia.

1 September, Brussels In his role as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb attends a special EU summit to discuss the Georgian crisis.

4 September, Vienna Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut reports to the Permanent Council that almost all the 20 additional Military Monitoring Officers have joined their eight colleagues on the ground and are already patrolling

in different areas. (By 9 September, they had all been deployed.) He thanks the participating States that responded to calls for contributions in cash and in kind, which have enabled the monitors to start their work without delay.

5-6 September, Avignon Alexander Stubb briefs an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers, which is largely devoted to Georgia.

10 September, Vienna The OSCE and its Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) must take into account the changed politico-military situation in the OSCE area brought about by the crisis in Georgia, says Pauli Järvenpää, who heads the department for defence policy at the Finnish Ministry of Defence. In a speech ushering in Finland's four-month FSC chairmanship, Mr. Järvenpää says that the challenge now for the Forum and the OSCE is how to ensure the effective implementation of arms control and confidence-building regimes in a new and more difficult situation.

15 September, Brussels OSCE Chairman-in-Office Alexander Stubb, Chairman of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers Carl Bildt, Secretary General of the Council of Europe Terry Davis, and the Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General Paul Fritch meet and issue a statement calling for strict adherence to the six-point ceasefire agreement. The participants remind Russia and Georgia that they are bound by human rights obligations and commitments that must be respected in all circumstances. They agree on the importance of continuing to assess human rights in war-affected areas, including South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

15 September, Tskhinvali Terhi Hakala, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, meets Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. "We discussed the question of access of OSCE Military Monitoring Officers to South Ossetia, the need for restrictions to be lifted on freedom of movement of the OSCE Mission, and the possibility of reopening the OSCE Field Office in Tskhinvali," says Ambassador Hakala. She emphasizes the importance of protecting the civilian population in war-affected areas and of the delivery of humanitarian aid as soon as possible. She also visits the premises of the OSCE Field Office and meets local staff.

18 September, Vienna The Finnish Chairmanship of the Permanent Council issues the following statement: "The Chairmanship regrets to inform the OSCE participating States that negotiations on the draft decision on the modalities for additional Military Monitoring Officers in Georgia have not brought any results. There was no basis for consensus. Therefore, the Chairmanship has come to the conclusion with the parties involved that there is no point in continuing negotiations in Vienna at this stage. The Chairmanship worked intensively with the parties involved until

yesterday to explore all possible avenues for a compromise."

22 September, Vienna The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklós Haraszti, calls for journalists to be allowed safe access to the crisis regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and urges unbiased reporting from all sides. "The war in Georgia has claimed the lives of professionals dedicated to informing the public, in addition to those of innocent civilian victims," he says. "The post-Yugoslav wars have demonstrated what devastation propagandistic coverage and hateful comment can cause between nations. Investigating claims of genocide, reporting on the plight of civilian victims, documenting demolished villages and visiting refugees are best done by independent reporters, and what they need is not guided tours but free and safe access."

23 September, The Hague The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek, reports on his visit to Georgia from 14 to 20 September, aimed at assessing the inter-ethnic situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He says that detailed interviews with internally displaced persons in Tbilisi and Gori who had fled Abkhazia and South Ossetia and reports by representatives of international organizations raise "serious concern" about the situation in South Ossetia and the adjacent areas under Russian control. "I reiterate that international norms and standards require that any authority exercising jurisdiction over population and territory, even if not recognized by the international community, must respect the human rights of everyone, including those of persons belonging to national minorities," the High Commissioner says. He regrets having been prevented from visiting South Ossetia and urges the de facto authorities to allow him to make a full assessment of the situation on the ground.

23 September, New York At the invitation of the Chairman-in-Office, Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, foreign ministers from the five countries holding the 2007–2011 OSCE Chairmanships meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, joined by OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut. Together with Minister Stubb, Ministers Miguel Ángel Moratinos of Spain, Dora Bakoyannis of Greece, Marat Tazhin of Kazakhstan and Petras Vaitiekūnas of Lithuania recognize the important role played by the OSCE in contributing to the achievement of the ceasefire and in sending additional Military Monitoring Officers to Georgia. They agree that the OSCE should continue to play an active role in the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and in seeking a lasting settlement to the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, co-ordinating their efforts with the United Nations and the European Union.

Rating action on Roma rights

Keeping track of progress

Five years since the OSCE participating States adopted a wide-ranging action plan to tackle discrimination and prejudice against Roma and Sinti, the prescribed measures are as vital as ever, says Andrzej Mirga, the OSCE's key official responsible for Roma and Sinti issues. In an interview with Jens-Hagen Eschenbaecher, Spokesperson of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Mr. Mirga discusses why implementation is lagging behind good intentions and why a genuine breakthrough remains elusive. The interview took place ahead of the European Union's first summit addressing problems faced by Roma, held in Brussels in mid-September.



ODIHR/JENS ESCHENBAECHER

Jens-Hagen Eschenbaecher: In the past few months, a number of articles in the international press have presented a gloomy picture of the plight of Roma and Sinti in Europe. The *Economist*, for example, described the latest social indicators on Roma as “shocking”. Do you share this assessment?

Andrzej Mirga: I don't have any serious disagreement with the analysis. Everyone knows that in most countries, the gap between Roma and the majority population in practically all aspects of life is still enormous. A status report just published by ODIHR makes this clear. Discrimination and exclusion still characterize the lives of most Roma and Sinti today. They are constantly confronted with racist violence and

hatred, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and high infant mortality.

But the picture is not entirely bleak. There is much more awareness of the problems today than there was just a few years ago. New laws and policies have been adopted. In many countries, funding to support the integration of Roma has gone up significantly.

Did the creation of the OSCE's Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues almost 15 years ago play a role in heightening awareness?

In fact, the creation of the Contact Point in 1994 within ODIHR was historic in itself. It was the first time an international organization set up a structure devoted exclusively to Roma and Sinti issues. The OSCE was among the first to

recognize this community's specific problems, which had taken a turn for the worse in the late 1980s and early 1990s after the fall of communism and during the conflicts in Yugoslavia.

Another milestone was the adoption of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti at the Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht in 2003. The plan, drawn up in close consultation with Roma representatives, was considered a major achievement. It provides governments with guidance in developing strategies and lays out clear objectives aimed at improving the lives of members of Roma and Sinti communities in the OSCE area.

Since then, there has been no shortage of good intentions to carry out the detailed recommendations. But, clearly, that is not enough. What is crucial now is to continue strengthening the political will to implement the plan in earnest.

Why do you think there has been so little progress in integrating Roma and Sinti into the mainstream of society?

There are many reasons, and the answer depends on the specific context. In some countries, Roma issues figured on the political agenda relatively late — unfortunately often only when tensions were threatening to escalate into violence or a situation had reached boiling point.

In other countries, the sheer numbers of Roma and the scale of the problems have militated against quick and easy solutions. Effective integration requires considerable financial investment — and we know how difficult it is in some countries to rally political support for public funding to benefit a minority that faces widespread discrimination and prejudice.

One area where we *are* seeing visible progress and positive change is, as I said, in the development and adoption of national strategies. However, there has been less success in translating these strategies into meaningful action.

Finland, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland, Slovenia and Spain are among the countries that have made tangible steps forward; they have adopted clear mechanisms for financing and programme implementation. In Hungary and Romania, elite groups of well-educated Roma have emerged. They are playing a dynamic role in parliaments, in public administration, and in policy-making on Roma matters.

Hungary has ensured the availability of substantial funds for Roma-related programmes. Similarly, Poland has committed about €3 million for concrete activities every year for a ten-year period. Montenegro is earmarking 0.2 per cent of its annual budget for its Roma strategy; this year, it adds up to €400,000. These are encouraging developments that we can build on.

Whether their total number is closer to 8 million or 12 million, Roma and Sinti and other groups such as Travellers and Gypsies make up the largest minority population in the OSCE area. Comprising a rich and diverse palette of ethnic, linguistic and cultural communities, they are believed to have migrated from the Indian subcontinent between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. Because of their long history of persecution and personal experience of blatant discrimination or outright hatred, many Roma have been reluctant to declare their ethnic identity. This is reflected in the wide disparities in unofficial estimates of the Roma population in a sample of OSCE countries. Romania, not included in the graph below, has the largest Roma and Sinti community, estimated at between 1.2 million and 2.5 million.

Estimated (unofficial) Roma and Sinti populations in a selection of OSCE countries





OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Regional Centre in Tuzla, 2007. Outstanding Roma students are interviewed on FTV (Federal BiH Television) on International Roma Day (8 April).

OSCE/SAMIR-ALIC

The challenges posed by the migration of Roma from south-eastern to western Europe have been at the centre of controversy in some western capitals. How should governments be responding?

Roma are not the only ones moving west. Since the opening of borders following the end of the Cold War, and as the EU has expanded, millions of people from central, eastern and south-eastern Europe have been moving westwards to seek better job opportunities and improve their lives. Although Roma are only a small part of this phenomenon, they are more visible and tend to migrate not as individuals, but with their families.

Of course any migration movement needs to be managed, but it has to be done on the basis of the rule of law and international standards. Issuing alarmist statements and introducing measures such as a state of emergency hardly contribute to the search for constructive solutions.

Speaking of solutions, is the media doing its share to avoid being part of the problem?

The media is often blamed for stereotyping and inciting tensions between Roma and the majority population. No doubt there are negative examples, but I think it is wrong to generalize. We also have to ask ourselves: Who is giving the media ammunition? Often, we find that it is politicians who are exploiting the presence of Roma in a populist manner for political gain.

There have always been myths surrounding the Roma community. Which specific ones should be forcefully dispelled?

One of the most common is that Roma have a propensity to commit crime. I have heard the most incredible exaggerations concerning crime rates among Roma. I am not saying that Roma never break the law, but that we should be careful about blanket statements that contribute to the criminalization of Roma in general.

Andrzej Mirga assumed the position of Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues in 2007, succeeding Nicolae Gheorghe who served from 1999 to 2006. He heads the OSCE's Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues in the OSCE's Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Mr. Mirga, 54, was born in the small Roma settlement of Czarna Gora in Poland to Polish Roma parents. He was the first Roma student at Krakow's Jagiellonian University, specializing in ethnography. After teaching there from

1981 to 1992, he decided to devote his time and energy to activities on behalf of Poland's Roma community and to undertake further studies in Roma culture and society.

Since then, he has held various senior positions in several international Roma organizations and advisory bodies. As chairman of the Association of Roma in Poland, he served as a mediator between the Roma community and the Government after violence broke out against Roma in the town of Mlawa in 1991. During his 14 years with the Project

on Ethnic Relations, an international NGO based in Princeton, New Jersey, he testified several times in the U.S. Congress on the situation of Roma in central and south-eastern Europe.

Mr. Mirga has written and lectured extensively on Roma matters. He taught at Rutgers in New Brunswick, New Jersey, for three academic years between 1999 and 2001. He and Nicolae Gheorghe wrote "The Roma in the Twenty-First Century. A Policy Paper", for the Project on Ethnic Relations, Princeton, 1997.

Roma Action Plan: The Contact Point and the OSCE as catalysts and active agents

Beyond providing advice to governments, serving as a clearing house for best practices and expertise, and supporting initiatives of civil society, the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti issues within ODIHR also carries out specific programmes and projects, often in co-operation with field operations and other OSCE institutions such as the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

In 2007, these activities focused on combating racism and discrimination, drawing Roma and Sinti closer to the electoral process, ensuring that their fundamental rights are respected in crisis and post-crisis situations, and co-operating with other organizations to combat trafficking as it affects Roma and Sinti populations.

Much of the work of the Contact Point aims at assisting governments and NGOs to implement the *Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area*. Five years after the plan was adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht in 2003, ODIHR recently issued its detailed status report (see cover, right) examining how participating States have fared in carrying out the plan. The report also looks at the roles of the Contact Point, other OSCE institutions and field operations as catalysts and as active agents for the realization of the plan's recommendations. www.osce.org/odihr



Crimes are committed by individuals, not by communities.

Another popular myth is that Roma do not care about education. This argument conveniently places the blame on Roma themselves for their plight and ignores how difficult it is for Roma families to break out of the vicious circle of isolation, extreme poverty and illiteracy.

I should add that we don't hear enough about positive examples of individual Roma who have attained success in business, in academia, in the arts and as professionals. They, too, exist.

So what else is needed to finally make some headway? After all, the OSCE has its Action Plan, several organizations have also taken up Roma and Sinti causes, more funding is available from the EU and others, legislation and policies are in place across the region, and there is an active NGO community.

If we want to achieve any genuine breakthroughs, the different international actors should co-ordinate more closely, especially in defining the areas that need attention most urgently. We already have a good number of comprehensive plans and programmes, but the action taken is often sporadic and piecemeal, limited in scope, and insufficiently funded. As a result, it has no lasting impact.

One strategic priority is education, especially pre-school education, which contributes significantly to a child's performance in school. We have to make sure that the next generation of Roma is sufficiently fit and prepared to progress through the educational system. Education opens many doors: It provides access to jobs, a way out of exclusion and the means to lessen discrimination.

Of course this will require a significant flow of investments, as I said, but the rise of a new generation of economically self-reliant and socially engaged Roma will benefit everyone. With its unique instruments — its specialized

institutions and field operations — the OSCE is especially well placed to make an important contribution.

Is this vision of integration not at odds with the wish to preserve Roma culture and traditions?

Not at all. This is another myth, and one that is perpetuated by some Roma. Integration does not mean loss of identity. Identities change over time; they can be redefined and reshaped. As the world around us changes, we cannot go through life pretending that we are not affected. Certain professions, traditions and lifestyles may simply not be able to survive in a rapidly developing world. This is a normal process. The future of Roma culture does not lie in isolation. We need to forge a new and modern Roma identity — one that shows that we are striving to live to our fullest potential and are enjoying the same rights and opportunities as the rest of the population.

City Hall, Rome, 25 June 2008. The human rights situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy is the focus of discussions between the Mayor of Rome, Giovanni Alemanno (right), and Andrzej Mirga, who heads ODIHR's Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues. Representatives of the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities also took part in the field visit to Italy.





Roma pre-schoolers emerge from the shadow of the Gazela bridge

BY MARIA DOTSENKO

Wide-eyed Bajram says he wants to be a pilot when he grows up so he can take his friends on an airplane ride around the world. But the six-year-old knows how to set his priorities: “First, I need to learn how to add and subtract.”

Eleven-year-old Sladjana is the oldest pupil in her class but she doesn’t mind. “It’s never too late to start studying,” she says. “Every day for five hours I learn so many new things and I’m also making friends.”

Sladjana says her mother and father never went to school and could not understand why she should. Didn’t it make more sense for their daughter to supplement the meagre family income?

“But now,” Sladjana adds, “I can read out newspaper articles to them and that makes them very proud. This has encouraged me to go on to the next level — primary school!”

Bajram and Sladjana both live under the Gazela bridge in the heart of Belgrade, along with about 1,000 other Roma, including refugees from Kosovo and returnees from western Europe. Despite their wide age gap, the two youngsters found themselves enrolled together in pre-school classes in April this year as part of an OSCE pilot

project supported by the city of Belgrade, Spain and the European Agency for Reconstruction.

To draw out the shy pupils and those who felt awkward using the Serbian language, a Romani-speaker was available in each class, ready to assist non-Roma teachers every time children needed someone to explain the Serbian alphabet and basic numbers in their mother tongue. Support also came in the form of bus transportation, clothes and shoes, and hygienic items.

Four months later, in July, Bajram and Sladjana completed their first formal schooling, along with 79 other Roma children between six and twelve years old. “These kids now have the basic abilities and social skills needed to start primary school,” says Jovanka Stojić, director of one of the three schools that hosted the classes.

The OSCE Mission and the City of Belgrade are working closely to ensure that parents can enrol their children in the local school of their choice. Meanwhile, the Norwegian Embassy has announced its financial support for two Roma teachers’ assistants, textbooks and other school supplies.

BETTER DAYS

This first crop of pre-school graduates may not realize it, but they are a harbinger of better days to come for many of the 280 children in the

Roma children of various ages from the Gazela settlement are brought together in pre-school classes in the Branko Pešić School in Belgrade’s Zemun municipality.
Photo: OSCE/Milan Obradović

Gazela settlement. About 133 families — out of a total of about 237 — are expected to move to the outskirts of Belgrade, into individual prefabricated houses paid for by the city.

The OSCE Mission to Serbia played a significant advisory role in the comprehensive relocation plan, working closely with city authorities and Roma leaders to ensure that residents would be integrated into the socio-economic fabric of their new surroundings. This task emerged from the Mission's long-standing work on behalf of the country's Roma, which includes a €2 million programme funded by the European Agency for Reconstruction.

As anyone familiar with Belgrade knows, the Gazela community has long been crying out for a means of breaking its vicious cycle of poverty and marginalization. It is the largest and most visible of the city's 150 informal Roma settlements. Families live cheek by jowl in 250 ramshackle dwellings in sub-human conditions within an area of hardly half a square kilometre.

Close by, railroad tracks connect the international rail service to the main railway station. Overhead, tens of thousands of vehicles traverse the *Most Gazela*, which serves as a principal road into the centre and is part of a key transit artery for the region. The bridge itself is in urgent need of upgrading, but the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will only make its funds available for the start of the massive reconstruction works when the residents below are resettled.

"We have taken full advantage of our close ties with the Roma community and of the domestic partnerships we have built up over the years," says OSCE staff member Matthew Newton, who manages the Roma Assistance Programme. "Prior to this, whole settlements were moved without much thought being given to residents' rights of access to health, education and employment opportunities and services. This time around, if everything goes well, Serbia's other Roma settlements will be able to look to the Gazela plan as a model."

RIGHT ON THE MARK

Given the dismal statistics — 60 per cent of Serbia's Roma have not completed primary school and more than 35 per cent are illiterate — the OSCE's assistance programme is right on the mark, with most of it being targeted on education. The strategy seeks to increase the number of Roma children in primary schools by employing Roma teachers' assistants, a practice adapted from Hungary and introduced in Serbia by the Education Ministry in 2006 with the support of the OSCE Mission.

So far, the programme has hired and trained 54 Romani-speaking people, most of whom have some experience in NGO work, with the OSCE



OSCE/MILAN OBRADOVIC

and the Education Ministry initially sharing the costs of salaries. The aim is to expand the pool of qualified assistants, to continue training them and to develop their positions into stable and well-defined jobs.

"It's easy to see why this approach works," says Ivana Radojević, teacher of six-year-old Bajram. "The teachers' assistants share the same language, the same culture and the same background as the pupils' parents. When Bajram's parents, for example, could not see much point in his going to pre-school, he asked the Roma teacher's assistant to talk to them. Bajram turned out to be one of the most active pupils. In fact, his enthusiasm was so infectious that his elder brother later joined the class."

Beyond the classroom, teachers' assistants keep in close touch with Roma families through regular visits in settlements and informal meetings at school to explore solutions to some of the problems faced by parents. The hope is that these exchanges will lead to workshops where Roma women can be taught to read and write, and be given information on their special needs as wives and mothers.

"The Roma teachers' assistants are able to present themselves to parents as proof that education holds the key to a better life," says Ms. Radojević.

Matthew Newton, who spent 12 years in the region working on return and integration issues, is encouraged by the promising start of the pre-school scheme in the Gazela slums. "It shows that Roma communities are willing to integrate and that for programmes to succeed, they should be sensitive to cultural diversity and be aware that mutual mistrust runs deep. And of course, firm political and financial backing is absolutely essential."

Maria Dotsenko is Head of Press and Public Information in the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

Teacher Ivana Radojević with her pupils from the Roma community below the Gazela bridge.



Trained mediators open up a healthier world for Serbia's Roma

BY MARIA DOTSENKO

Sladjana Stanković had been living in Belgium for three years when she decided to return to her native Serbia, hoping to make a difference in the Roma community. When she heard that the Health Ministry was looking for Roma women who could serve as “health mediators” within their own municipalities, she knew this was her chance.

Once on the job at the health centre in Palilula, Belgrade's biggest municipality, she wasn't quite sure how much of an impact she could make — until she got to know a Roma couple with ten children.

“No one in the family had any identification papers,” she relates. “The woman had lost track of her children's birth dates. Not a single one had been immunized against childhood diseases. A nurse at the health centre told me that the woman refused to let her even see her children.”

On one of her regular visits to the settlement, Ms. Stanković spent several hours with the family talking about the importance of proper health care. They were surprised to hear that they could apply for a wide range of social services if they had the proper documents.

“I am proud and pleased that all the children have now been vaccinated and their mother has started using contraceptives,” she says. “Recently,

their neighbours asked me if I could provide them with similar help as well.”

As their name implies, health mediators, who speak Romani, act as a bridge between public health staff and Roma communities. They visit families, assisting them to apply for national health cards and talking to women about their rights and about immunization programmes, basic hygiene and reproductive health issues. A trusting relationship is easily fostered because the mediator comes from the same municipality.

In the process, a whole new world opens up for families, Ms. Stanković says. “As you know, life is tough for Roma. Sometimes everyone in the household is illiterate. Disease is rampant, since illegal settlements often have no running water or sewage facilities. People feel abandoned; they don't believe that the State can help them. Women and children are the most vulnerable. They are easy prey for traffickers and criminals.”

Sladjana Stanković was among the first 15 women to be hired and trained as health mediators in 2007 under the Roma Assistance Programme of the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

“It's a truly collaborative venture with the Health Ministry, the Roma National Council and the Roma National Strategy Secretariat,” says Lazar Divjak, project assistant in the OSCE Mission. “The Health Ministry handles recruitment. It publicizes vacancy notices widely, on Roma

Palilula municipality, Belgrade. Roma Sladjana Stanković (left) visits Roma families regularly as part of her work as a health mediator and also serves as a role model.
Photo: OSCE/Milan Obradović

radio for example, and pays the salaries. Roma community representatives take part in every aspect of planning and implementation.”

The OSCE is responsible for training, which is funded by the European Agency for Reconstruction. Topics focus on basic health care, human rights, legal and social assistance, and communication and advocacy work. After an initial training course lasting up to four days, the continuing education of health mediators is assured through courses held twice a month.

“This is the first activity of its kind in Serbia and the results are clearly visible after just one year,” says Dubravka Šaranović Račić, an adviser in the Health Ministry. “In the first 15 municipalities with a health mediator, including south Serbia, the number of immunized Roma children has gone up and women have started taking better care of their special health needs.”

Ms. Račić was part of a small group that visited Bucharest last December to find out what Romania was doing effectively in this area. “It’s a concept that has been working there very well for some time now,” she says. “With the help of the OSCE Mission and the Romanian Government, we were able to build good contacts with the health authorities and learned a lot from them.”

One crucial mistake that the Romanians made initially, which their counterparts in Serbia are not about to repeat, was the use of male health mediators. “In the Roma culture, it is

not appropriate to discuss reproductive health care issues with men,” Ms. Račić explains.

“We’re trying to learn from others because we know that, apart from our own political commitment to this initiative, the key to its sustainability is the support of the Roma community,” she continues. “We hope to add 15 mediators in 2009 and another 15 in 2010. We plan to expand the programme until the Roma community is fully integrated into the health system.”

When that day comes, Roma health mediators will be ready to move on as assistant nurses in municipal health centres, thus filling a glaring gap in Roma personnel in Serbia’s public health system.

The role of health mediators, after all, is not to create permanent “ghettos” of services, as some critics fear might happen, but simply to break through the barriers that block thousands of Roma from exercising their basic human right to medical and social care.



OSCE/MILAN OBRADOVIC

Roma health mediators reach out to mothers and educate them on how to obtain help for their special needs.

Getting to know the Roma community in Serbia

Promoting the rights and improving the welfare of Roma in Serbia — estimated by the Council of Europe to be as high as 450,000, or about 6 per cent of the population — has always been a key aspect of the activities of the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

But the close working relationship between the Roma community and the OSCE Mission did not just happen overnight. “Our mutual trust and confidence has been nurtured over the years. This is why we are able to keep building on our joint achievements, which have been backed by the Government’s commitment,” says Head of Mission Hans Ola Urstad.

The creation of the Roma National Strategy Secretariat in 2004 was among the initiatives supported by the Mission and was to prove a significant step in institution-building. It also paved the way for the OSCE’s Roma Assistance Programme, which received €2 million funding from the European Agency for Reconstruction.

The Mission also helped shape Serbia’s national action plans for Roma, focusing on the four priority areas of the Decade of Roma Inclusion — education, employment, health and housing.

The Roma Decade 2005 to 2015 is an “unprecedented political commitment” by governments in central and south-eastern Europe to improving the socio-economic status of Roma. The Decade’s founders include the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues within the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the World Bank, and the Open Society Institute.

Ambassador Urstad notes that Serbia took over the Decade’s one-year presidency from Hungary last July. “We hope that Serbia and our Roma partners will take this opportunity to showcase the results of our joint efforts, including adapting good practices from others,” he says. “The two activities that we chose to highlight in this issue of the *OSCE Magazine* describe how we applied the experiences of Hungary and Romania to Serbia’s situation.”

www.osce.org/serbia



OSCE/MILAN OBRADOVIC

Mladenovac, Belgrade, 16 October 2007. Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad hands out schoolbags and supplies to Roma children as part of the OSCE’s efforts to improve their access to education.



MAX VAN DER STOEL AWARD

Fighting for justice

Dynamic rights group serves as legal lifeline for Roma

BY DZAVIT BERISA

The news that the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) had been awarded the Max van der Stoel Award for 2007 for its “extraordinary and outstanding achievements” caught me and my 22 colleagues completely by surprise. We were delighted and excited, but above all proud of what the award signified: Just 12 years after its foundation in 1996, the ERRC had earned a place among the leading human rights organizations “aimed at improving the position of national minorities in the OSCE participating States”.

At the award ceremony on 16 October 2007 at Het Spaansche Hof, an imposing palace in The Hague, Knut Vollebaek, the OSCE’s recently appointed High Commissioner on National Minorities, paid tribute to the ERRC’s “long-term commitment to combating discrimination against Roma and its laudable efforts to attract attention to this pressing problem facing Europe as a whole”.

We were pleased to learn that our combination of grassroots activism, extensive research, and national and international advocacy had impressed the international jury. I believe that it is in fact these ingredients that have helped us to convince policymakers and NGOs that Roma should not be regarded solely as a social

problem but as individuals and groups that are systematically discriminated against. This shift in mindset is, in its turn, making itself felt in policies and strategies that have slowly moved away from social welfare to rights-based measures aimed at counteracting discrimination and promoting equal treatment.

We decided to use part of the €50,000 prize money to help finance the assignment of a qualified local person to monitor the Roma situation in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where we are strengthening our efforts to oppose segregated education. In doing so, we aim to build on an important victory won by the ERRC at the European Court of Human Rights in November 2007. I am referring to a case we took up in 1998 on behalf of 18 Romani children from the Czech city of Ostrava who had unjustifiably been placed in schools for the mentally disabled.

IMMENSE POSSIBILITIES

My own personal story serves as a living testimony to the impact of the ERRC’s advocacy and grassroots work — and to the immense possibilities that still lie ahead.

In June 1999, shortly after the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, my wife Bojlie and I were forced to abandon our home in Kosovo. One day in September, after almost three months of being displaced within Kosovo itself, we — and about 500 other Roma — took a risk and walked

The Hague, 16 October 2007, Max van der Stoel Award 2007 ceremony. Left to right: OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek; Dzavit Berisa, the author; Foreign Minister of the Netherlands Maxime Verhagen, who presented the award; Vera Egenberger, former ERRC Executive Director; Dutch diplomat Max van der Stoel, the first High Commissioner (1993–2001), in whose honour the award was established by the Netherlands Foreign Ministry in 2001; and his successor, Swedish diplomat Rolf Ekéus (2001–2007). Photo: HCNM

several hours to reach Blace, the main border-crossing into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. From there we were taken to the Stenkovec II refugee camp and granted humanitarian status.

In 2001, we volunteered to be repatriated to Kosovo, where I had a job waiting for me as an interpreter with KFOR, the NATO peacekeeping force. However, in June 2002, we found ourselves having to flee to Skopje a second time.

Our application for asylum in Skopje was rejected again and again by the courts, until finally, on 29 May 2003, we were notified that we had to leave the country within 30 days or face forcible expulsion. The authorities caught up with us on 15 September 2003, when my wife and I were accosted on the street and taken to the police station in the town of Bitola in the south. After ten hours in detention, we were told that the police would deport us back to the Serbian border. From there, we proceeded to Kosovo but were targeted for further violence.

In the midst of all this turmoil, some friends advised me to look up the ERRC website. This proved to be my lifeline. With the help of the staff, we decided to seek asylum in Hungary. On 1 October 2003, we arrived in Budapest and lived in the refugee camp in Debrecen. The following December, we were granted asylum, again with the help of the ERRC.

A year later, we were reunited with our 11-year-old daughter Fidzirije, who had stayed behind with relatives in Skopje when we were deported. Not long after, I started working with the ERRC. As I write this, we have just bought a home in Ráckeve, a small town along the Danube south of Budapest.

Today, when I reflect on how my life has changed since 1999, I cannot get over how I ended up working for the very organization that transformed my life. I am aware that my family is one of the more fortunate ones. The thought that there are thousands of others who experience discrimination every single day makes me realize that the ERRC will be around for many years to come.

Dzavit Berisa, 31, is the Publications Officer of the European Roma Rights Centre, an international public-interest legal organization based in Budapest. He was born in Obilić, a municipality adjacent to Pristina, Kosovo, to parents belonging to the Egyptian minority. A trained miner, his plans to study law were shattered when the conflict in Kosovo broke out.

www.errc.org



Vienna, 10 July. Activists protest against ethnic profiling in connection with the Italian Government's plans to fingerprint Roma and Sinti living in camps in Italy. The opportunity to make their views known arose during a meeting organized by ODIHR to discuss the role of local authorities in integrating Roma into the social fabric.

Vollebaek: Discrimination against Roma a "major problem in Europe"

"Persistent discrimination against Roma is still a major problem in Europe," says High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek. "Roma have to a large extent been left out of the new security and prosperity in Europe."

He explains why the security implications of recent developments in the OSCE area concerning the migration of Roma and Sinti should be a cause for concern.

"Firstly, these communities have become even more vulnerable to physical, economic and social threats than they were before. Secondly, relations between Roma and other groups — whether belonging to a minority or to the majority population — are put to the test. These issues lie at the core of the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, with its emphasis on providing early warning and, whenever possible, early action to prevent conflict."

High Commissioner Vollebaek believes that while the country of origin should bear responsibility for the well-being of its nationals, the new country of residence also has a set of obligations to fulfil.

"In their home countries, Roma should be able to tap into opportunities and have access to rights, just like everyone else," he says. "And by the same token, as far as the so-called new migration is concerned, Roma should be able to enjoy freedom of movement as EU citizens and should not be discriminated against because of their ethnicity."

Both perspectives will be taken into account in a forthcoming study that will examine the impact of new trends in the migration of Roma and Sinti since the enlargement of the EU and consider how governments are responding in policy and practice.

The study is a joint undertaking by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights. A first draft is expected by the end of the year.

Standing up for Roma against cyber-hate



BY ROMANI ROSE

The underlying message of the article “The fight for online freedom: Tackling attempts to censor the Internet” in issue 2/2008 of the *OSCE Magazine* is correct in principle, because guaranteeing freedom of the media and the free flow of information also contributes to the worldwide protection of minorities from threats.

However, it is misleading to refer to the blocking of hate sites directed against minorities as “censorship” in the same breath as the filtering of the Internet for political purposes as practised in some countries. Let me explain why.

Having been victims of the Holocaust during the Nazi era, Roma and Sinti have in recent years increasingly been the target of racist campaigns and propaganda on hundreds of neo-Nazi hate sites and forums on the Internet. These sites have become more and more inflammatory, to the extent that readers are now directly incited to commit acts of violence. This is why I strongly believe that when State bodies and Internet providers decide to take measures against these sites, they should not be regarded as exercising censorship but as fulfilling a social and security-related obligation.

Online sales of music aimed at arousing hate and violence against Roma and Sinti have been on the rise. The song “Zigeunerpack” (“Gypsy Vermin”) by a right-wing extremist band, for example, includes the lines:

Sinti and Roma, as they call themselves ...

If you spit in their face, they get what they deserve.

This song and others like it are banned in Germany on the grounds that they are “liable to corrupt the young”. The group has also been declared a criminal organization by the law courts.

Countless sites carrying harmful material exist in a variety of languages in practically every OSCE participating State, often making direct reference to specific places and individuals. Hungary’s Commissioner for Roma Affairs has recently lobbied successfully for the blocking of a Hungarian Internet portal that hosted a hate site calling for the grave violation of personal rights of Roma and Jews.

Closer to the OSCE, Anastasia Crickley, Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, has recently condemned calls for hate and violence against Roma and Sinti and other minorities as illegal and not to be accepted idly.

The Amsterdam-based International Network Against Cyber-Hate (INACH), which was established in 2002, laid the foundation for international co-operation between European

hotlines and organizations working against racism. One of its goals is to deprive neo-Nazi websites and racist campaigns of a platform on the Internet. INACH’s “network nodes”, such as the German institution jugendschutz.net, have made some notable strides forward.

This sort of co-operation is crucial to international efforts to combat extremist websites and was highly welcomed by the OSCE participating States at their conference on the relationship between hate crimes and racism on the Internet, held in Paris in June 2004. However, it is clear that more resources should be placed at the disposal of cross-border initiatives such as INACH and jugendschutz.net to enable them to extend their work beyond individual cases.

It is worth noting that the main objectives of the fight against cyber-hate were first set out at the international conference on “Dissemination of hate in the Internet” initiated by the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles and held in Berlin in June 2000 under the auspices of the German Government and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. It was the first conference devoted to this subject.

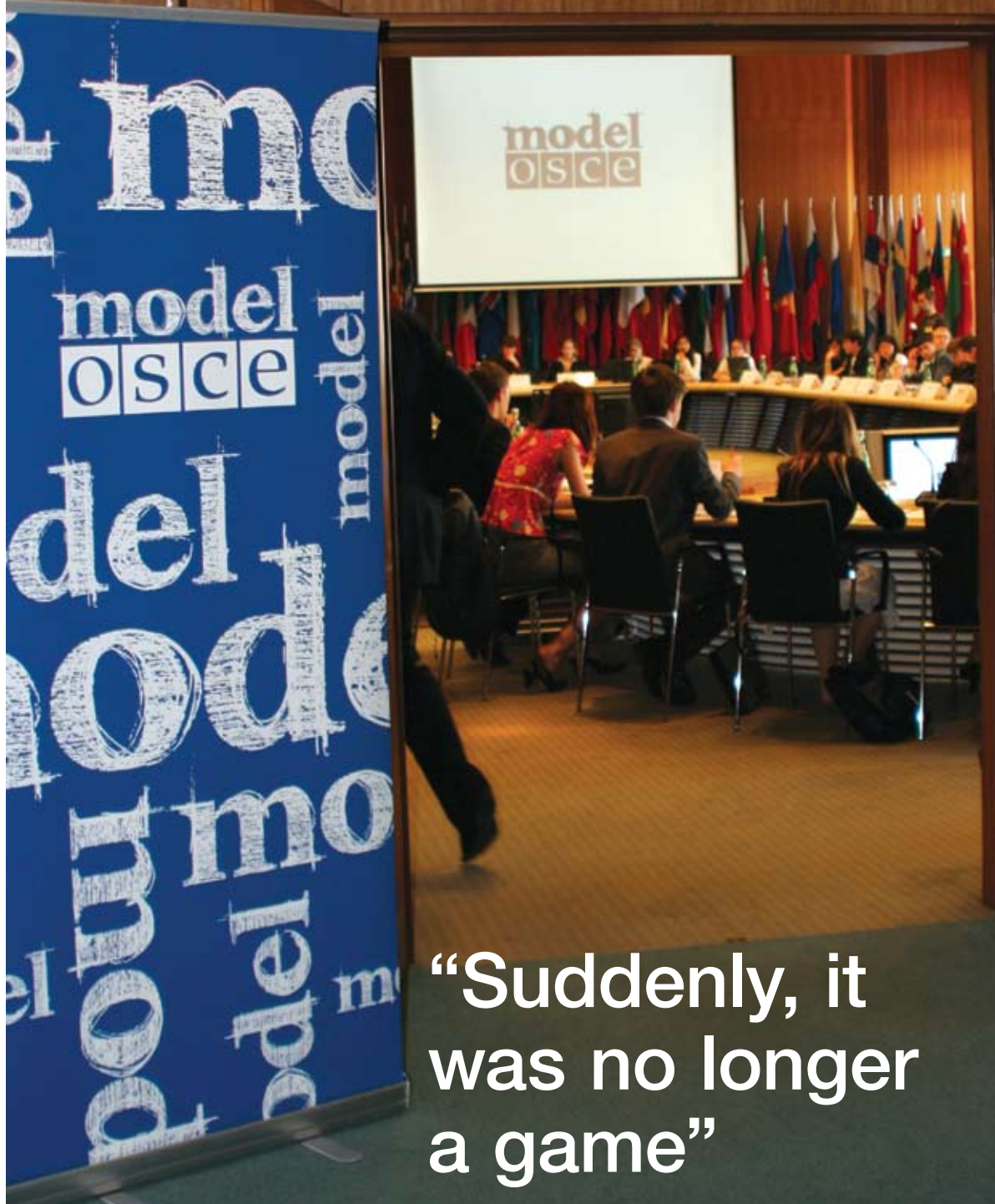
The participants ranged from European justice ministers and U.S. legislators to executives of major media concerns and heads of police and intelligence services. They agreed on one overriding principle: “What is illegal offline must also be illegal online.” They said they would not “tolerate passively or simply accept criminal offences on the Internet and the global dissemination and commercial exploitation of socially destructive cyber-hate”.

As the global community continues to engage in healthy debate on the fine line between freedom of expression on the Internet and the need for censorship, let us reflect on a passage from the Berlin Declaration:

“... politics, trade and industry, and civil society [should] form a global coalition for combating the dissemination of hate in the Internet, in order to ensure that the Internet can make its contribution to the peaceful co-existence of all human beings in the future as a medium for the free discussion of all cultures.”

Romani Rose is on the Advisory Board of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency in Germany and is Chairman of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma. Born in Heidelberg in 1946 to a German Sinti family, he lost 13 relatives in concentration camps. He is the author and editor of several books and articles.

www.sintiundroma.de



“Suddenly, it was no longer a game”

BY SABA GVETADZE

It all started early this year when our professor at the University of Georgia in Tbilisi told me and my friends Nino and Salome about the first Model OSCE due to take place in Vienna in July. The project was still in its initial phase and he could not tell us too much about it yet. In the meantime, however, the thought that I might be given the opportunity to take part in the event kept me in a state of suspense, especially as I had never been abroad before.

The concept behind this conference for young people — namely, that participants would represent a different country from their real one — appealed to me. I felt that my independent streak would serve me in good stead in such a

setting. But first things first: Since I didn't know too much about the OSCE, I immersed myself in studying its history and its structure.

I'll never forget the look of disbelief and excitement on my friends' faces when our professor confirmed that, yes, we *were* going to Vienna. And that was not all — the OSCE Mission to Georgia would pay for our fares and accommodation. We started screaming at the top of our lungs out of sheer joy. It would be a while before I would come into contact with the OSCE, but my relationship with the Organization had already become intensely personal. And it was going to have a direct hand in translating my youthful dreams into reality.

I decided early on that the Georgian team would have to be among the best participants.

Hofburg, 8 July. Model OSCE participating States were euphoric when they reached consensus on three security dilemmas despite their initial differences.
Photo: OSCE/Susanna Löf



Theresianum, Vienna, launching of the Model OSCE, 7 July. Left photo: Thomas Rantasa (left) and George Bazinas of the American International School in Vienna sing their own composition, the national anthem of “Agitania”. Right photo: Saba Gvetadze from Georgia at a question-and-answer session with the (real) OSCE Secretary General and the French, Russian and U.S. ambassadors to the OSCE. Photos: OSCE/Dragan Pilic

We found ourselves working harder than we had ever done before. I made sure I would not miss a single preparatory session on the three scenarios we received from Vienna.

I was pleased to be given responsibility for conflict prevention around the Syr Daria River in Central Asia — the economic and environmental dimension scenario — but was a bit worried that no one could give me any first-hand advice. I had never been faced with such a dilemma before. Slowly, it dawned on me that the OSCE is a mechanism that enables people confronted with complex issues to come up with a joint solution after a great deal of trying.

Suddenly, it was no longer a game. It had become real life! I can’t explain exactly how the Model OSCE changed us. All I know is that I emerged from the intense three days feeling different from my old self in ways I could not have imagined. While the experience awakened the

patriotic side of me, for the first time I felt like a cosmopolitan citizen of the world. I became determined to make a contribution to my own country and to its relations with other States.

I found out that I truly cared about the OSCE’s three dimensions of security. Not even for one minute could I tear myself away from the conference hall at the Hofburg when “members” of the “Permanent Council” were having a lively exchange of strongly held views on water as a source of potential conflict, the plight of Roma and Sinti, and terrorism and the Internet.

Through the many good people I met from all over the OSCE area, I gained fresh insights about myself. For one, I would like to think that my friends and I have left our narrow thinking and self-centredness behind us. For another, I am now more convinced than ever that one is free to choose which path to take, and that one is completely free to pursue one’s goals and ideas no matter how out of reach they seem to be.

Yes, we *can* do it, I thought, as we boarded the plane back to Tbilisi. We’ll make the world a better place yet.

Saba Gvetadze, 18, is a freshman at the University of Georgia’s School of Politics and International Relations in Tbilisi. He and his friends were assigned to represent Spain at the first Model OSCE conference. Georgia’s interests were, in turn, represented by Irish students.

“We truly look forward to observing you negotiating and, hopefully, finding consensus on a number of documents that some students playing the role of OSCE officials have drafted and distributed. Consensus is a key word at the OSCE. It is built into our genetic code. To adopt a document, we need the agreement of each and every one of the participating States. This is another way of saying that each State holds veto power. Good luck in your search for dialogue and consensus! And I’d like to once again thank Austria, Finland, France, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States for their generous support.”

Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut
Model OSCE welcoming ceremony, 7 July 2008

The Model OSCE: It's a long, hard road towards consensus

“Intense and dynamic and exciting from beginning to end”: This was the general feeling among 140 students from 30 OSCE participating States after representing countries other than their own at the first Model OSCE conference in Vienna from 7 to 9 July. All born in the 1980s or even in the early 1990s, the participants were challenged to think about their common future. In working groups and committees, in the corridors and over coffee, they debated and sought consensus on three major issues: tackling terrorists’ abuse of the Internet while protecting human rights and freedom of expres-

sion (first dimension); defusing tension and preventing conflict over water resources in Central Asia (second dimension); and combating the trafficking of Roma and Sinti children (third dimension). An eight-minute film capturing the spirit of the negotiations is available for viewing on YouTube and on www.modelosce.org Here are some of the students’ impressions of the three-day experience:



On Monday morning, the representatives of the participating States of “Tristan” and “Tramanstan” told me they were exhausted. They said they had stayed up late debating the issues underlying the three scenarios and searching for specific points they could agree on. We had three major goals during the Model OSCE exercise. Firstly, we had to achieve consensus. It was anything but easy, but we did manage to find common ground. Secondly, to have fun — and we did precisely that! And thirdly, to try to make a contribution to the real OSCE participating States. In our model Permanent Council, we engaged in a real debate, we had a lively exchange of ideas, and we presented, I think, more world views than are presented at the real PC.

Raphaël Ténaud, 24 years old, French
(Model OSCE Secretary General), Diplomatic Academy of Vienna

There were times when there was a lot of strife and contention, but everyone seemed to be very dedicated to discussing the new threats to security. The intense desire to “fix” things kept everyone going.

Christina Hawley, 24 years old, Austrian
(Model OSCE Chairman-in-Office), Diplomatic Academy of Vienna

What am I going to take home from the Model OSCE? A first experience in close-to-real negotiations. Having played the role of Sweden, I now yearn to make my own contribution to the development of co-operation between Europe and Central Asia.

Farrukh Ashrapov, 20 years old, Tajik
Russian-Tajik Slavionic University

A few months have gone by since the first Model OSCE took place, but we are still reeling from the breathtaking event and are still under its spell. The second scenario on water resources in Central Asia taught us that safeguarding the environment is a key component of security. Through negotiation and dialogue, the countries of “Tristan” and “Tramanstan” were able to agree to share their natural resources and to apply good governance practices in the region. Armenia is in the process of developing co-operation with its neighbouring countries, so we were particularly interested in the tools that the OSCE uses to move these efforts along. After experiencing the Model OSCE and playing the country of “Tristan”, how we wish that our generation were more active and better informed! We are not even aware of our rights. Looking in from the outside, the OSCE seems accessible and inclusive. But the Model OSCE gave us a wonderful chance to explore it fully and be an integral part of it. This amazed us greatly. Up close, we learned that the OSCE is like a mechanical watch where every small detail is of utmost importance for the functioning of the whole. Although the three days were hectic and packed with events, interacting with the participants gave us a rush of positive energy.

Tatevik Vardanyan and Nadezhda Tzolakyan, 20 years old, Armenian
Yerevan State Linguistic University after V. Brusov

My keen interest in meeting new people was what motivated me to take part in the Model OSCE conference. But when I read the three scenarios, I began to get really passionate about the whole thing. The third scenario, focusing on discrimination against Roma and Sinti, really touched me. It was not easy to prepare for the event. I found it difficult to put myself in the shoes of a diplomat from a country that was “foreign” to me. I had to learn as much as I could about the Netherlands within a short time. Fortunately, my teacher walked us through the whole process. Then, in Vienna, I met the students from the Netherlands (who were, in turn, playing the role of Turkey) and they also enlightened me on several issues. At the opening of the conference, a guy stood up and asked the distinguished panel: “So what is so sexy about the OSCE?” I could not believe anyone would ask senior diplomats a question like that in front of an audience — at least, I would not have phrased it that way myself. But then everybody, including the OSCE officials, started laughing and tried to respond as best as they could. “Thank goodness they are not as formal as they look,” I thought to myself!

Danijel Stefanovic, 25 years old
Singidunum University, Serbia

I was pleasantly surprised by the level of professionalism of my fellow delegates; it was much higher than in previous model conferences I have taken part in elsewhere. I hope this will be maintained when and if it is decided to make the Model OSCE into a tradition — which I hope will be the case. The extremely friendly and positive attitude shown towards us by the real OSCE representatives also made a big difference. I think the total consensus system suits a model conference extremely well, as everyone has to co-operate and everyone’s opinion matters. The ability to compromise while sticking to one’s principles is the key to success and, I believe, was positively used throughout the discussions.

Olli Päiväsalo, 18 years old, Finnish
(representing the Czech Republic)
Kulosaari Upper Secondary School, Helsinki



Action plan on Roma: Keeping track of progress (page 14).
Photo: "Children of the Hills" by Zoltan Krisztian Bereczki, Romania

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