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Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**THE 2002 MEDITERRANEAN SEMINAR ON THE MEDIA AND NEW
TECHNOLOGIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS,
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

(Rhodes, Greece, 4-5 November 2002)

Consolidated Summary

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I General Information

1 Venue

The Seminar was held from 4 to 5 November 2002 at the Sofitel Capsis Hotel, Rhodes, Greece.

2 Participation^{*)}

- 2.1 Twenty two OSCE participating States took part in the Seminar.
- 2.2 Four Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Tunisia) were represented, as well as two Partners for Co-operation (Korea and Thailand).
- 2.3 The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was represented.
- 2.4 The following international organizations and institutions were represented: UNESCO, Council of Europe, League of Arab States, and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.
- 2.5 Representatives of non-governmental organizations were able to attend and contribute to the Seminar in accordance with the relevant OSCE provisions and practices. Nine NGOs were represented.

3 Timetable and Organizational Modalities

- 3.1 The Seminar began at 9:00 a.m. (opening ceremony) on 4 November 2002 and ended at 6 p.m. on 5 November 2002.
- 3.2 The Seminar was conducted in four sessions.
- 3.3 The opening session was chaired by the Chairman of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, Ambassador Justus J. de Visser, Netherlands. The closing session was chaired by Ambassador Bruno Joubert, France.
- 3.4 Each session had a moderator and a rapporteur.
- 3.5 The working languages were English and French.
- 3.6 Arrangements were made for press coverage.
- 3.7 Other rules of procedure and working methods of the OSCE were applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Seminar.
- 3.8 The seating arrangement is shown in the Annex.

^{*)} See chapter V - List of Participants

4 Agenda

Monday, 4 November 2002

- 9 a.m. Opening Ceremony
- Chairman: Ambassador Justus J. de Visser, Netherlands, Chairman of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation
- Opening addresses:
- Ms. Lee Minaidis, Deputy Mayor of the city of Rhodes
 - Ms. Vera Fernandes, Deputy Co-ordinator, Representative of the Portuguese OSCE Chairmanship
 - Ms. Hannie Pollmann-Zaal, Head, Office of the Secretary General, on behalf of the Secretary General of the OSCE
 - Mr. Panagiotis Kammenos, Vice-Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
- 10 a.m. Session 1: The media and new technologies – a general exploration of basic factors
- Moderator: Ambassador Avraham Toledo, Israel
- Rapporteur: Dr. Thomas Kurz, Germany
- Keynote statement by Professor Dr. Jo Groebel, Director-General, The European Institute for the Media, Düsseldorf, Germany - “After disillusionment: possibilities and challenges of the digital future” (20 minutes)
- Speakers: (15 minutes)
- Ms. Christiane Hardy, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
 - Prof. Niv Ahituv, Tel-Aviv University
 - Mr. Gordan Paunovic, Website Editor, B92
- 11.15 a.m. Coffee break
- 11.45 a.m.- 1 p.m. Discussion
1. p.m. Buffet lunch hosted by H.E. Ambassador Justus J. de Visser, Netherlands, Chairman of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

- 3 p.m. Session 2: The media and new technologies: implications for Governments
- Moderator: Ambassador Afif Hendaoui, Tunisia
- Rapporteur: Ms. Martina Petek Stupar, Croatia
- Speakers: (15 minutes)
- “Experience with e-government”
- Mr. Claudio Grech, Malta
 - Ambassador Dr. Muhyieddeen Touq, Jordan
 - Mr. Luis Francisco Martínez Montes, Spain
 - Mr. Keith Sangway, European Commission
 - Dr. Diamantis Bassantis, Communication Consultant –Journalist, Greece
- 4.15 p.m. Coffee break
- 4.30-6 p.m. Discussion
- 8.00 p.m. Dinner hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, at “Dinoris” restaurant, old city of Rhodes

Tuesday, 5 November 2002

- 10 a.m. Session 3: The media and new technologies: implications for international organizations and international diplomacy
- Moderator: Ambassador Guido Lenzi, Italy
- Rapporteur: Mr. Demetrios Ioannou, Greece
- Speakers: (15 minutes):
- Ms. Rosa M. Gonzalez, UNESCO
 - Mr. Jack Hanning, Council of Europe
 - Mr. Achim Koch, Mobile.Culture.Container.
 - Mr. Konrad Becker, The Institute for New Culture Technologies
- 10.45 a.m. Coffee break
- 11.45 a.m.-1 p.m. Discussion
- 1 p.m. Lunch hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece

- 3 p.m. Session 4: The media and new technologies: implications for civil society
- Moderator: Ambassador Heinrich Reimann, Switzerland
- Rapporteur: Ms. Amy Carlon, U.S.A.
- Speakers: (15 minutes):
- Mr. Peter Noorlander, Article 19, Global Campaign for Free Expression
 - Ms. Fifi Benaboud, North South Centre, Council of Europe
 - Mr. Gus Hosein, London School of Economics
 - Ms. Maria Fernanda Gabriel, National Radio and TV of Portugal
- Discussion
- 4.15 p.m. Coffee Break
- 4.45 p.m. Closing Session
- Chairman: Ambassador Bruno Joubert, France
- Reports by session rapporteurs
- Closing remarks:
- Ambassador Aristides Sandis, Greece
 - Ambassador Shamel Nasser, Egypt
 - Mr. Karel Vosskuehler, Netherlands
- 6 p.m. End of Seminar

II Summary of opening and closing sessions, including an indicative list of proposals submitted during the seminar

Elizabeth Abela, OSCE Secretariat

During the **opening session**, chaired by Ambassador Justus J. de Visser (Chairman of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and incoming Chairman of the Permanent Council), the Deputy Mayor of the city of Rhodes, Ms. Lee Minaidis, inaugurated the seminar on behalf of the host Government.

For the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Ms. Vera Fernandes stated that all efforts to promote the interests of the Mediterranean should be developed to ensure a true and effective dialogue throughout the region. Through regular meetings of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and seminars the OSCE was able to share its experience with these countries as well as through high-level Ministerial Council meetings and Summits.

There were three main tasks to be developed in the Mediterranean region: promotion of dialogue; co-ordination of strategic and security interests from both sides of the Atlantic; and strengthening regional and international instruments that develop co-operation. It was important to seek ways that promoted mutual confidence between the northern and southern shores, that would consolidate positions in all fields: economic, political and military. The inclusion of a strong economic component was essential.

Within the OSCE framework, and through bilateral and regular encounters, the Mediterranean dialogue should contribute to an atmosphere of openness and co-operation, namely through the continued development of confidence and security-building measures, adapted to the situation of the Mediterranean States. As allies and Europeans, it was important not only to be preoccupied with stability in Eastern and Central Europe but also in the South. She thanked the Government of Greece for hosting the seminar, the Dutch Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group and the OSCE Secretariat for organizing the event.

The topic of the seminar was of relevance to both participating States and Mediterranean Partners stated Ms. Hannie Pollmann-Zaal, Head of the Secretary General's Office, on behalf of the Secretary General of the OSCE. New technologies empowered civil society while they also called for a different role of policy makers and governments. At the horizontal level, individuals and members of civil society networked with increased effectiveness thanks to Information Communications Technology (ICT). At the same time, ICT was empowering civil society vertically, as in many countries, it had become a useful means to bridge relations between individuals and policy-makers. In view of the fact that access was not available to all, many saw the digital divide as one of the major challenges. Further challenges, such as cybercrime, arose with the introduction of new technologies.

At the international level, there had been a greater call for the harmonization of efforts among governments. Networks today crossed boundaries and jurisdictions while different legal systems existed in different parts of the world. As a comprehensive security organization with 55 participating States and nine Partners for Co-operation [six Mediterranean Partners and three Partners in Asia], the OSCE could contribute to information sharing on the subject.

Mr. Panagiotis Kammenos, Vice-Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly indicated the high importance that the President of the OSCE

Parliamentary Assembly - Mr Bruce George - attached to the Mediterranean. He referred to various activities of the Assembly pertaining to the Mediterranean, such as the seminar held in Limassol, Cyprus, in September 2002 and the Parliamentary Conference on Security in the Mediterranean held in Madrid last October. He concluded by stating that Rhodes, a Mediterranean city that made important efforts to promote new technologies, was the ideal location for such a seminar.

The seminar that was conducted in four sessions (see rapporteurs' reports) led to lively discussions and a fruitful exchange of views. At the request of the Chair of the Mediterranean Contact Group, following is an indicative list of concrete proposals submitted during the seminar for practical follow-up within the framework of the OSCE Mediterranean dialogue:

- Organize an OSCE Mediterranean Forum for Media, with the goal of assessing the existing difficulties, sharing information and creating mechanisms to establish a productive and sustained dialogue (Doc. No. 5);
- Invite the Mediterranean Partners to express interest in the 'Mediterranean Network of Media Regulatory Authorities' (sub-regional dimension of European Platform of Regulatory Authorities -EPRA- a forum set up in 1995 for informal discussion and exchange of views between regulatory authorities in the broadcasting media), and benefit from possible co-operation in this field. To this end, the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media could examine the possibility of facilitating assistance in drawing the OSCE Mediterranean Partners closer to the Mediterranean Network of Media Regulatory Authorities (Doc. No. 18);
- Consider developing the concept of digital CBMs that would throw positive light on the cultural diversity enriching the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and possibly engage those concerned in using both the media and the internet as bridgeheads that further strengthen mutual understanding with the Mediterranean Partners (Doc. No. 18);
- Establish a co-operative model on the development and implementation of e-Government for Mediterranean countries (Doc. No. 21).

In the **closing session**, chaired by Ambassador Bruno Joubert of France, the Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE, Ambassador Aristidis Sandis underscored that communication was always the invigorating power of diplomacy. In the era of new technologies, the communication/information avenues, would inevitably become the vascular system of the world, stimulating contacts and understanding among people. As one of the keynote speakers had rightly underlined "we cannot fight technology". During the upcoming Greek EU Presidency (first semester of 2003), his country would place a special emphasis on further strengthening of co-operation in the Mediterranean.

Greece had always strongly supported the Mediterranean dimension of the EU, through the Barcelona process, the Mediterranean Forum, the Mediterranean dialogue of NATO and, self evidently of the OSCE. In the historic Helsinki Conference that laid the foundation of the Organization, there was no doubt in the minds of all participating States that peace in Europe was inextricably linked with peace in the Mediterranean. Greece would continue to undertake its utmost for the realization of this very difficult but not impossible goal.

The Seminar had well served the purposes of the OSCE's Mediterranean Partnership. A clear message was that new media and technologies, properly used, could contribute to overcome existing gaps and serve as tools of closer cooperation and interaction between peoples in an ever changing environment, facilitating, among others, the broader dissemination and better understanding of the ideas, values and principles of the OSCE.

Ambassador Shamer Nasser of Egypt expressed his gratitude to all that had made the seminar successful, the host country, the representative of the Chairman-in-Office and the OSCE Secretariat. He commended especially the Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group, the Netherlands, which throughout the year had undertaken considerable efforts to enhance relations between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. Egypt was satisfied with the pace of the dialogue but at the same time was willing to explore further avenues of co-operation and was receptive to proposals in this regard. In this context, reference was made to the OSCE Secretary General's proposals that he had made in his speech [SEC.GAL/179/02] to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Conference on the Mediterranean held last October in Madrid. Egypt also attached great importance to its co-operation with the OSCE and with international organizations that pursued a dialogue with the Mediterranean.

Mr. Karel Vosskuehler, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Netherlands Mission to the OSCE, welcomed the interaction on the subject of media and new technologies that had taken place during the seminar, as well as the submitted proposals that deserved follow up. He had hoped that all six Mediterranean Partners would have been present at the seminar. In concluding, he thanked, once again, the co-organizers, the Greek authorities for the excellent input and warm hospitality and the OSCE Secretariat, the moderators, rapporteurs and speakers as well as all participants.

III Reports by Session Rapporteurs

1 Session One: The media and new technologies – a general exploration of basic factors

Rapporteur: Thomas Kurz, Germany

The keynote statement was given by Dr. Jo Groebel, Director General of the European Institute for the Media, Düsseldorf, on the topic: “After disillusionment: Possibilities and challenges of the digital future”. Dr. Groebel outlined the advantages and challenges of the Internet in different areas (technology, society, media) leaving no doubt that for him the advantages clearly outweighed the disadvantages.

Dr. Groebel started by focusing on technological aspects. The immediate availability of information had an impact on the way business was conducted, and beyond. There was increased pressure to react immediately; big companies already profited and there were real opportunities, even for remote regions. The Internet had an integrative aspect because it was independent from time and space. It would further contribute to the creation of an “option society” which would enlarge the scope of individual choice in ever more respects.

However, a number of problems had to be taken into account in that context: access to the Internet, costs, standardization and ease of use. The availability of the Internet would have serious effects on the future of the economy and in fact would further develop the market by creating a 24-hour (world-wide) economy, by involving everybody (and not only the young) and by encouraging world-wide collaboration and alliances.

In this context, serious challenges had to be met. A tendency to form monopolies stood against the advantage of global access; in nations, the standards of social security and social hygiene were challenged; the North-South gap had to be overcome and changing growth modes had to be dealt with (more players, not only nations, were co-operating).

As far as society was concerned, the Internet afforded enormous opportunities to overcome the still prevailing analogue divide (compared to the digital divide). To this end, the Internet might be used for (continuing) job-training, in order to close the existing age and knowledge gap.

Among the particular challenges to the development of society, Dr. Groebel identified the growing lack of privacy, effects on human dignity and the potentially dramatic consequences inherent in the current vulnerability of the system.

With regard to the future of the media, the Internet had ambiguous effects: It was helping enhance freedom of expression, but it was also a factor in the growing market orientation of the media. Dr. Groebel concluded by listing a number of paradoxical effects of the availability of the Internet which in particular constituted challenges to politicians.

In her contribution, Ms. Christiane Hardy, from the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, placed special emphasis on the impact of the Internet on human rights issues. She also came to the conclusion that the benefits outweighed the challenges. It would not be acceptable to deny access to the Internet or to control its content because it was also used to promote hate speech, etc. The flow of information over the Internet was too important as a basis

for civil society. Therefore, increased access to the Internet needed to be promoted in some parts of the OSCE region. A task for the OSCE and other Organizations, Ms. Hardy went on to say, lay in the development of people's technical competencies and literacy, because only educated users would be in a position to evaluate the material they found on the Internet.

Prof. Niv Ahituv, from Tel-Aviv University, placed special emphasis on the dangers that George Orwell had already foreseen for modern societies, namely, the power to adapt the collective memory to present needs and the permanent surveillance of individuals. Prof. Ahituv illustrated both factors with striking examples and stressed that these things had been made possible by modern technology. In his conclusion, he expressed his conviction that it was useless to try to fight against new technologies. Instead, the focus should be on efforts dealing with controllable parameters, mainly through laws and regulations and collaborative efforts by scientists, government agencies, lawmakers and philosophers.

Mr. Gordan Paunovic, web-site editor of B92 in Belgrade, reported on his own experience in Yugoslavia in the 1990s. For him, the Internet had played an important role in securing freedom of speech under a dictatorship and in wartime. But, especially in a society with limited access to the Internet, it could only be successful in combination with other, traditional media. That might mean, for example, that information provided through the Internet was broadcast from outside the country. In times when other means of communication were not available, the Internet was a means of choice. In his conclusions, Mr. Paunovic recommended that the international community provide maximum support for communication mechanisms in situations of suppression and dictatorship.

The ensuing discussion was dominated by two issues which were raised by one delegate, namely, the danger of emerging monopolies in the media sector and the limits of a free flow of information when it came to hate speech, discrimination and support for terrorism, for example. With regard to the latter, the delegate in question made reference to the relevant conclusions of the Human Dimension Meeting in Warsaw in 2001.

Once again addressing the danger of emerging monopolies in their responses, one speaker expressed the view that they could hardly be avoided, while another saw an economic justification for monopolies which would be under the control of relevant legislation. Regarding the question of possibly controlling the content of the Internet (hate speech, etc.), he said that there was no ready-made solution, but that judgements had to be made on a case by case basis. According to him, self-regulation of the media only worked in an economically sound situation. In addition, official regulations were needed. In this context, one speaker made reference to the work that the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights were doing.

In addition, another delegate pointed out that in dealing with the more problematic aspects of the Internet, politicians had to accept their responsibilities better than they had thus far.

2 Session Two: The media and new technologies: implications for Governments

Rapporteur: Martina Petek Stupar, Croatia

The second session on *The Media and New Technologies: implications for Governments*, enabled participants, generally speaking, to gain a better understanding of the whole range of areas in which modern technology has an impact on modern governments as well as on governance.

As the moderator of the session, Ambassador Afif Hendaoui, said, the development of new technologies could be readily compared to the revolution that had been set in train by the invention of the printing press. It opened up many opportunities, but at the same time presented major challenges for governments. To respond to those challenges, governments should develop appropriate legislation, establish international co-operation and acquire sufficient funding.

The session was enriched by the contributions of five principal speakers, namely Mr. Claudio Grech, e-government programme manager from Malta, Ambassador Muhyieddeen Touq from Jordan, Mr. Luis Francisco Martinez Montes representing Spain, Mr. Keith Sangway on behalf of the European Commission and Dr. Diamantis Bassantis, a communications consultant and journalist from Greece. Most of the speakers provided an overview of how their governments or institutions were dealing with new technologies, and described the programmes and projects being established in order to make the best use of them. The speakers also offered insight into various forms taken by utilization of new technologies, and their impact on modern societies. The main points raised during the presentations are outlined below.

- In Malta's experience, e-government was not only limited to the delivery of public services, but was also radically changing the way government operated and was bringing about a re-invention of communication channels and avenues of interaction with clients, stated Mr. Grech. As an important consequence of a ten-year public service reform programme on Malta, the development of e-government had first been concentrated on an enabling framework and capacity-building in public service structures. In less than two years, the whole architecture had been built, and today, all e-government services could be obtained from any public entity. In view of the great success of the programme, he proposed the establishment of a co-operative model for the development and implementation of e-government for Mediterranean countries. That would not take the form of a series of sporadic meetings, but would be a strategic political initiative based on analyses of the Maltese model by the Mediterranean countries, with the aim of eventually making mutually available their experience in the implementation phase. In that respect, he looked forward to the reaction of the Mediterranean Partners, and pledged his Government's commitment in realizing this initiative in the mutual interest.
- Ambassador Muhyieddeen Touq of Jordan, presented an overview of information and communication technology in Jordan, development of which had started more than three years earlier, initiated by His Majesty King Abdullah II. At that time, the REACH initiative had been launched as a strategy to develop a vibrant, export-oriented information technology services sector in Jordan. Its main purpose had been to support the country's IT sector and to maximize its ability to compete in local, regional and global markets. The REACH initiative had embodied a clear action plan to be implemented by the private sector, the Government and the stakeholders. After REACH I had been evaluated and had shown significant

progress, it had been followed by REACH II, under which the role of the government had been envisaged as an additional thrust of IT strategy. The most recent part of the programme, REACH III, was based on an assessment of Jordan's e-readiness, which was measured by five main attributes: connectivity, e-leadership, information security, human capital and the e-business climate. Among other things, the assessment had shown that e-government was moving forward in a careful and deliberate fashion, with business registration and telecom licensing already offered electronically. The Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies was strengthening e-government through on-going training and by working with e-government managers in other agencies, holding workshops with the private sector and spearheading eight fast-track e-services programmes, which would be implemented shortly.

- The third speaker, Mr. Luis Francisco Martinez Montes of Spain, addressed the general issue of globalization and the emergence of the so-called “information society” and its impact on States and governments. In his view, States would be able to rise to the challenge of the Internet mainly by absorbing new technologies and using them to serve their purposes. That was born out by the fact that all around the world, governments of various kinds (democratic or authoritarian, secular or denominational, centralized or decentralized), were using information technologies in their pursuit of different, even contradictory, agendas. Rather than being sidelined by the network, States and governments were repositioning themselves and the growing practice of e-government was considered as a main tool in that process. The new technologies, as Mr. Montes pointed out, were greatly affecting the way governments and other political actors operated, increasingly adopting the Internet for three main purposes:
 - For gathering, analyzing and disseminating information;
 - For implementing and marketing policy decisions, and
 - For providing public services on-line.

Mr. Montes ended his presentation with the overall conclusion that, according to the Spanish experience in the development of new technologies, e-government had not been an instrument for changing the nature of politics. On the contrary, relevant economic, social and political changes in the country had led to the development of the information society, including the practice of e-government.

- The next speaker, Mr. Keith Sangway, European Commission, addressed the issue of the development of e-government in the European Union. The e-Europe 2002 Action Plan had been adopted by the European Council in June 2000, and it had already proved a great success. It had placed the Internet at the top of the political agenda across the EU and beyond, and national action plans had been launched in all the member States. The e-Europe 2005 Action Plan, as a continuation of e-Europe 2002, had been approved in May 2002. That plan was based on three core layers, which were designed to reinforce each other and were aimed at improving the productivity of business and government, and supporting greater economic growth, employment and social cohesion. Mr. Sangway emphasized that the key target of e-Europe was to make essential public services available online, and substantial progress was already being made in that area. Also, the purpose of e-government was to increase productivity, to accelerate innovation and to increase inclusion by achieving an open and democratic information society.

- Dr. Diamantis Bassantis, a journalist and communications consultant from Greece, provided an interesting perspective on the subject by stating that the “opposite forces”, as he called the Internet and the newspapers, were not endangering each other as much as had been expected. Huge changes that had taken place in the media industry connected with the development of new technologies and with its economic and political implications, had not markedly decreased the importance and the circulation of newspapers. The "old media" had not disappeared, they had been transformed by drawing inspiration from the new technologies to give them a presence in the new era of communication. Governments should take into account all the changes and developments that had taken place in the media sector, in order not to suppress its freedom.

In the discussion that followed emphasis was placed on the following main points:

- Significant consideration must be given in future to the socio-economic implications of the development of new technologies;
- Attention must also be focused on the fragmentation of the public, owing to the plurality of the media;
- The consumers of information should not be underestimated, since they would themselves be sensitive to quality, and in that regard no government intervention was needed;
- The role of the Seminar was mentioned: was it to gain a clear idea what should be regulated in the area of new technologies?
- A clarification of the distinction between the terms "e-government" and "e-governance" was offered: *e-government* was when government was trying to become more transparent and available by putting various kinds of forms and information on the web; on the other hand, *e-governance* was a more complex matter, and referred to the way government was controlling and monitoring the use of new technologies in the country through legislators and social scientists;
- It was proposed that governments should adopt laws on misconduct in the Internet area. The scope of the problem should be defined and the currently applicable legislation identified and on that basis, the definition should be expanded;
- Although, according to most opinions, new technologies brought so-called “immediate democracy”, reference was made to the need to achieve international consensus on establishing a mechanism that would “organize democracy in this area”.

3 Session Three: The media and new technologies: implications for international organizations and international diplomacy

Rapporteur: Dimitrios Ioannou, Greece

In his opening remarks, the Moderator drew a broad picture of the current situation in the Mediterranean countries regarding the advancement of new technologies and stressed that the combined political and economic pressures exerted on the societies in these countries were a positive factor, since they gave rise to a motivation to adopt a robust pace of change in that respect.

The first speaker, representing UNESCO, focused her intervention on three issues that she considered particularly important: exploitation for the sake of development of the potential embodied by the media and new information technology; the overcoming of the digital divide in terms of access and content that existed between the developed and the developing worlds and, the need to build an international consensus on principles, policies and partnerships required in order to respond to the ethical questions of knowledge societies. She referred to the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity that has been produced by UNESCO in 2001 and unanimously adopted by its Member States as a very useful tool for countries that were aiming at developing their cultural and communications potential while safeguarding their own identities.

The next speaker, representing the Council of Europe, focused in his intervention on two clashing views, which had been known through the ages, according to which the phenomenon of information society was perceived and interpreted: the optimistic or “utopian” and the pessimistic or “dystopian”. He said that each one reflected certain aspects of a plural and ever-changing reality and encompassed as many pitfalls and dangers as challenges and opportunities. The Council of Europe was responsible for several conventions that addressed all the crucial questions and had an unwavering commitment to the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and of information. The speaker ended by pointing out that a newly emerged challenge was represented by “information overload”, namely, an amount of information so great that an individual could absorb it only with difficulty, but that at least offered an opportunity to search for useful answers to a new series of vital questions.

The next speaker described a specific project that had been implemented in a conflict-ridden area of the Balkans, which had been designed to offer young persons from the opposing sides an opportunity to discuss their common future, using among other things, the tools of information technology and digital media as means for expression and communication. The experiment had been deemed to be very successful, given that the technical equipment had provided very good opportunities for young persons to get involved together, in many activities, expressing their feelings in a collaborative manner. Notwithstanding a campaign that had been waged in certain media against this initiative, a new tour is scheduled for the period between March and July of next year, under the title, “In defence of our future: In defence of the Freedom of the Media”.

The next speaker endeavoured to alert the meeting about looming dangers emanating from the fact that there was an obvious tendency to favour the producer over the consumer of the products of new information technology. If that was really the case then, according to the speaker, society would run the danger of experiencing a considerable decline in the level of respect of human rights. The adoption of a basic set of universal digital human rights was something that could greatly enhance the ability of societies to exert control over new technologies, granting all

citizens a right of access to the electronic domain, the right to privacy and the right to freedom of expression and association online. The speaker equally put forward the notion of digital ecology to describe an environment where information was accessible to all citizens regardless of their social and economic status and for all States regardless of their level of development or membership in a bloc. In this context, the development of a “digital commons” to be used for research, free of subscription fees, could be a very powerful tool in the hands of civil society and of developing societies. Securing cultural heritage was, according to the speaker, another priority that could be realized through a concerted effort in the legal, technical, scientific and financial spheres. Overall, the speaker advocated the idea of co-ordinated control by the social body over the information revolution and of an effort to make the rights of users prevail over those of suppliers.

In the discussion that followed, a number of interesting questions were raised including:

- Whether and to what extent governments had the right to regulate the market for information technology;
- How positive discrimination in the use of the Internet could be applied in order to support and enhance cultural diversity;
- How the local production of IT items in the developing countries could be promoted so that they would not need to be imported from the developed world;
- Whether it is right and ethical to establish normative rules regarding references to crucial issues such as race.

Two more speakers pointed out that, in East Asia and in the southern Mediterranean area, societies took an optimistic approach and were keen to upgrade their level of use of information technologies; they did not share the anxieties about certain of the dangers that had been referred to by some representatives of Western countries.

The representative of the Islamic Conference informed the meeting about the special interest that his organization had taken since 1981 in the advancement of new technologies, and described the concerted efforts of the Islamic nations to co-operate in introducing all the new developments in the field of information technology in a homogeneous and collaborative way.

4 Session Four: The media and new technologies: implications for civil society

Rapporteur: Amy Carlon, USA

In the fourth session, the participants in the Mediterranean Seminar considered the implications for civil society of the media and new technologies. There were four speakers, followed by a discussion session.

The first speaker was Mr. Peter Noorlander, from the non-governmental organization Article 19, Global Campaign for Free Expression. After introducing his organization, which derives its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Mr. Noorlander spoke about States' obligations in terms of freedom of expression. He said that States must exercise their obligations to ensure that citizens had access to information and the ability to exercise their right to freedom of expression. The Internet, according to Mr. Noorlander, could be a key instrument to that end. Regarding regulation of the Internet, Mr. Noorlander pointed out that existing laws applied to the Internet as they did to other media and that illegal content (such as child pornography) was probably already covered under those laws. The main complications, he said, were jurisdiction and the suitability of existing laws. Mr. Noorlander also discussed other potential threats to freedom of expression, including self-regulation by Internet service providers (ISPs) and registration requirements for Internet users and providers. In closing, Mr. Noorlander stated that one of civil society's roles in the realm of the media and new technologies was to ensure that the right of freedom of expression was realized and other interests were protected.

Ms. Fifi Benaboud, from the Council of Europe North-South Centre, was the second speaker. She approached the issue of the media and new technologies from the point of view of the southern Mediterranean region and its relationship with Europe. She pointed out that some states in the southern Mediterranean region had been marginalized with respect to the classic media and the same was now occurring with the Internet. While television could help to provide information that otherwise might be accessed on the Internet, Ms. Benaboud said there was a clear need for further investment and aid to stop the growth of the digital divide. With respect to media content, Ms. Benaboud mentioned the somewhat schizophrenic situation of viewers seeing very different images on television and in their everyday lives. She discussed the danger of such standardized content and how it could lead to a negative perception of the West, and even the radicalization of society. On the issue of freedom of expression, Ms. Benaboud noted that some authorities in the region still exercised censorship and repression of free media. Regarding social development in the southern Mediterranean region, Ms. Benaboud classified information technologies as a catalyst for development and a means to an end rather than a separate sector. Civil society, she said, could help spread the benefits of an open information society that could have lasting effects on democratization and development. Ms. Benaboud concluded her statement by discussing the synergy between organizations of civil society and European institutions.

The third speaker, Mr. Gus Hosein from the London School of Economics, addressed trends in laws and policies regulating the Internet and the implications and challenges of such trends for civil society. The first trend in laws and policies that Mr. Hosein mentioned was reflected by the fact that countries had begun to co-operate more closely to fight terrorism and other types of crime across borders, particularly since the events of 11 September 2001. Another implication of 11 September was that some States had reverted to applying older policies and regulations, which might not have been used for some time. He cited as an example that some ISPs were

now being required to keep transaction records for Internet users for up to seven years. The third trend described by Mr. Hosein was towards increased powers for governments and reduced protections for citizens and civil society. Finally, he said that States were updating old laws to make them “technology-neutral,” which he said was not necessarily a sign of progress. He then outlined the implications of those trends, starting with the statement that cybercrime policies were not about cybercrime, just as anti-terrorism policies were not just about terrorism. He also said that no level of harmonization actually provided harmonization, because all countries could interpret laws differently. The third implication was that technology law was not neutral because technology itself was not neutral. Finally, Mr. Hosein pointed out that an international solution might not be the best way to deal with an international problem. Regarding the challenges to civil society, he questioned whether civil society and industry were really involved in the development of laws and regulations, particularly since 11 September. He also mentioned the difficulty of getting non-media NGOs interested in media and technology issues. In conclusion, Mr. Hosein said that States needed to bring more actors to the table to balance the interests of national security and civil society.

Ms. Maria Fernanda Gabriel, a representative from Portuguese National Radio and Television, was the fourth speaker. She addressed the practical implications of the media and the new technologies for journalists. She said that new media technologies had changed the lives of journalists, but she was not sure whether the quality of life was better or worse – while the production of newspapers was now easier, the high running costs had forced publishers to stop producing some newspapers, leaving many journalists jobless. She also pointed out that while the Internet facilitated easier access to the foreign press, reading on the Internet was not as pleasurable as reading a physical newspaper. She stated that there were disadvantages to transmitting information quickly and anonymously over the Internet. She warned that it was very difficult to verify sources and confirm facts on the Internet. In addition, she mentioned the lack of hierarchy, which allowed information to be posted to the Internet without managerial approval or editing. The pressure to be first with a story sometimes made journalists less careful, she said, or alternatively made them passive. Regarding the digital divide and e-government, she said that States could and should provide information to the public via the Internet, but they must be aware that not everyone had access to that information. She concluded by calling for increased investment in infrastructure and training for users of new media technologies.

In the discussion session, one delegate pondered about how to make new media technologies purposeful and functional for governments. He suggested that States develop best practices in media technologies, first at the national level, then by co-operating in regional and international bodies. Another delegate stated that satellite television remained the cheapest and most widely used type of medium in the southern Mediterranean region, and the influence of traditional forms of press was declining. The discussion continued with another delegate highlighting the dilemma of the Internet and the need to preserve freedom of expression. He pointed out that the speakers’ opinions ranged from advocacy for no regulation at all to support for international harmonization of laws and treaties. In reply, one speaker responded by saying that national regulation was better than international, and he thought bilateral agreements would be concluded regardless of the involvement of international organizations. Another delegate spoke of the importance of clearly distinguishing between print and electronic media and said that he saw television and personal computer usage merging. Another speaker concluded by stating that users must take decisions about the legitimacy of information and Internet sources. He also stressed the difficulty of regulating the Internet across borders, considering the differences in national laws.

IV List of documents circulated during the Seminar

Number	Author	Document
001	OSCE Secretariat	Annotated Agenda
002	OSCE Secretariat	Preliminary List of Participants
003	Ms. Hannie Pollmann-Zaal, Head, Office of the OSCE Secretary General	Opening statement
004	OSCE Secretariat, Section for External Co-operation	Background paper on Freedom of Expression and New Technologies
005	Ms. Vera Fernandes, Portuguese OSCE Chairmanship	Opening statement
006	Cancelled	
007	Mr. Luis Francisco Martínez Montes, Spain	E-Government: The Spanish experience within the European Union Context
008	OSCE Secretariat, Section for External Co-operation	Background paper on OSCE relations with Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation
009	Ambassador Jan Kubis, OSCE Secretary General	“The OSCE and the Mediterranean” – statement delivered during the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Conference on the Mediterranean, Madrid, 3-4 October 2002
010	Mr. Keith Sangway, European Commission	Statement
011	Mr. Goran Paunovic, B 92	“Authoritarian Society and Information Guerilla: Discovering the Values of Civil Society with the Help of the Net (The Case of B92)”
012	Ambassador Dr. Muhyieddeen Touq, Jordan	Information and Communication Technology in Jordan: Implications for the Government
013	Mr. Jack Hanning, Council of Europe	Statement
014-E	Council of Europe	Convention on Cybercrime (English version)
014-F	Council of Europe	Convention on Cybercrime (French version)
015	Council of Europe	Draft additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems
016	Mr. Peter Noorlander, Article 19	Statement
017	Mr. Konrad Becker, The Institute for New Culture Technologies, Vienna	“Freedom of Expression and New Technologies” – Statement
018	Ambassador Dr. Noel Buttigieg Scicluna, Malta	Statement
019	Prof. Niv Ahituv, Tel Aviv University, Israel	Handout “The Open Information Society” by Niv Ahituv, June 2001/Vol.44, No.6 Communications of the ACM
020	Ms. Maria Fernanda Gabriel	Statement (in French)
021	Mr. Claudio Grech, Malta	Statement
022	Mr. Ahmed Ould Imigine, Organization of the Islamic Conference	Statement (in French)
023	Ambassador Shamel Nasser, Egypt	Concluding Statement
024	Mr. Gus Hosein, London School of Economics	“An Academic's Response to The Media and New Technologies: Implications for Civil Society” – Statement (made available after the seminar)

V List of Participants

Albania	
Ms. Marsela XHANGOLLI	Chief of IT Sector, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Germany	
Mr. Thomas KURZ	Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE
United States of America	
Ms. Amy CARLON	Political Officer, U.S.A. Delegation to the OSCE
Bulgaria	
Mr. Ivan KOTOV	Counsellor, MFA
Cyprus	
Ambassador Stavros EPAMINONDAS	Head of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the OSCE
Mr. Ioannis SOLOMOU	Director, Press and Information Office
Mr. Spyros ATTAS	Counsellor, Deputy Head of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the OSCE
Dr. Eleonora GAVRIELIDES	Senior Press and Information Officer Press and Public Information Office, Cyprus
Mr. Andreas CHRISTODOULOU	Head of Media Section, Ministry of the Interior
Mr. Themis TEMISTOCLEOUS	Director General, Cyprus News Agency
Ms. Marina YIANNIKOURI	Radio-Television Officer, Cyprus Radio-Television Authority
Croatia	
Ms. Martina PETEK-STUPAR	Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the OSCE
Denmark/European Union /European Commission	
Mr. Keith SANGWAY	Principal Assistant, OSCE and Council of Europe Unit, Directorate General of External Relations, European Commission
Spain	
Mr. Luis Francisco MARTÍNEZ MONTES	Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Spain to the OSCE
France	
Ambassador Bruno JOUBERT	Head of Delegation, Permanent Representation of France to the OSCE
United Kingdom	
Mr. Stuart ADAM	Second Secretary
Greece	
Ambassador Aristides SANDIS	Head of the Permanent Mission of Greece to the OSCE
Mr. Demetrios IOANNOU	Embassy Counsellor a Class/Head of OSCE Department D3 Dir.
Mr. Titus-Christos MANTELOS	First Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Greece to the OSCE
Italy	
Ambassador Guido LENZI	Head of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the OSCE
Malta	
Ambassador Noel BUTTIGIEG SCICLUNA	Head of Delegation
Mr. John Paul GRECH	Counsellor

Mr. Claudio GRECH	E-Government Programme Manager, E-Malta Executive Secretary; Private Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Local Government
Norway	
Mr. Eric PAULSEN	Second Secretary, Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE
Netherlands	
Ambassador Justus J. DE VISSER	Head of Delegation, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the OSCE
Mr. Karel VOSSKÜHLER	Deputy Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the OSCE
Ms. Marcia VALKENHOFF	Second Secretary, Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the OSCE
Poland	
Mr. Peter WYSOCKI	Expert, Department of Information Systems, MFA
Dr. Boguslaw SWIETLICKI	Minister Counsellor, Mission of Poland to the OSCE in Vienna
Portugal/Chairmanship of the OSCE	
Ms. Vera FERNANDES	Deputy Coordinate, MFA
Romania	
Ms. Elisabeta Maria DAVID	Expert, MFA, OSCE Department
Russian Federation	
Mr. Igor DEGTYAREV	Senior Counsellor, MFA
Mr. Valery TIKHONOV	Counsellor, MFA
Sweden	
Ambassador Krister BRINGÉUS	Head of he Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE
Switzerland	
Ambassador Heinrich REIMANN	Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE
Turkey	
Ambassador Ömur ORHUN	Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OSCE
Consul General Nilüfer FEYIZOGLU	Consul General of Turkey – Rhodes
Yugoslavia	
Mr. Slavica PETROVIC	Counsellor, Information Department, MFA
PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION	
Korea	
Ambassador Young-jin CHOI	Ambassador of Korea to Austria
Thailand	
Mr. Varapote Jim CHENSASVADJAI	Second Secretary, Embassy of Thailand in Vienna
MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION	
Egypt	
Ambassador Shamel NASSER	Head of the European Organizations and Communities for strategic and security matters, MFA
Israel	
Ambassador Avraham TOLEDO	Embassy of Israel in Vienna
Professor Niv AHITUV	Vice President and Director General, Tel-Aviv University
Jordan	
Ambassador Dr. Muhyieddeen TOUQ	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Jordan to the International Organizations in Vienna
Tunisia	
Ambassador Afif HENDAOU	Ambassador of Tunisia to Austria

OSCE Secretariat	
Ms. Hannie POLLMANN-ZAAL	Head, Office of the Secretary General
Dr. Monika WOHLFELD	Head of External Co-operation
Ms. Elizabeth ABELA	Senior External Co-operation Officer
Ms. Aldona SZYMANSKI	Senior External Co-operation Assistant
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media	
Ms. Christiane HARDY	Senior Adviser
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly	
Mr. Panagiotis KAMMENOS	Vice-Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Mr. Gustavo PALLARES	Adviser to the President
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	
UNESCO	
Ms. Rosa GONZALEZ	Programme Specialist, European Desk
Council of Europe	
Mr. Jack HANNING	Head of Division of Relations with International Organisations and Non-member States, Directorate of Political Affairs
Ms. Fifi BENABOUD	Senior Advisor to the Executive Director of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity
League of Arab States	
Dr. Mahmoud ABDUL-AZIZ	Director, Media Department
Organisation of the Islamic Conference	
Mr. Ahmed OULD IMIGINE	
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND MEDIA	
Dr. Diamantis BASSANTIS	Communication Consultant – Journalist, Greece
Mr. Konrad BECKER	Director General, The Institute for New Culture Technologies
Dr. Stephen CALLEYA	Deputy Director, Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, Malta
Ms. Maria Fernanda GABRIEL	(1) Strasbourg correspondent for RDP (Radiodifusao Portuguesa)/RTP (RadioTelevisao Portuguesa)/ and Diario de Noticias (2) Conseillere Municipale de la Ville de Strasbourg (3) Secretary General of the European Association of Parliamentary Journalists
Professor Dr. Jo GRÖBEL	Director-General, The European Institute for the Media
Mr. Gus HOSEIN	Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics
Mr. Achim KOCH	Director, Mobile Culture Container
Mr. Peter NOORLANDER	Legal Officer, Article 19, Global Campaign for Free Expression
Mr. Gordan PAUNOVIC	Website Editor, B92, Yugoslavia
Interpreters	
Ms. Francoise BRON-HADZINICOLAOU	
Ms. Julianna HOGAN	
Ms. Yannick QUERO	
Ms. Alix SEHR STEWART	

VI Seating arrangement

	Opening ceremony	Representative of the OSCE SG Host Country Chair Portugal/CIO OSCE PA
	Closing session	Rapporteurs Host Country Chair Egypt Rapporteurs
	Sessions	Representative of the OSCE SG Keynote Speakers Rapporteur Moderator Keynote Speakers
Albania Germany United States of America Bulgaria Cyprus Croatia Denmark/ EU/ <i>European Commission</i> Spain France United Kingdom Greece Italy Malta Norway Netherlands Poland Portugal/OSCE Chairman-in-Office Romania Russian Federation Sweden		OSCE Secretariat OSCE Mission to FRY OSCE PA OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media ^ ^ ^ NGOs, Academic Institutions and Media v v v OIC League of Arab States Council of Europe UNESCO Thailand Korea Yugoslavia Turkey Switzerland
	Egypt Israel Jordan Tunisia	