

## Chairman-in-Office Visits New OSCE Group in Minsk



*Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, speaking at the opening of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group premises in Minsk. On the far left is the Head of the Group, Ambassador Hans-Georg Wieck.*

Photo: Melissa Fleming

On 27 February the Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, visited Minsk to open the premises of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus. The Group, which has already been operational for a few weeks, is under the direction of Ambassador Hans-Georg Wieck of Germany.

During his one day visit to Minsk, the Chairman-in-Office was accompanied by Ambassador Jerzy Nowak, Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the Polish Chairmanship, the respective representatives of the other

two Troika countries, Director Jensen (Denmark) and Ambassador Traavik (Norway), OSCE Secretary General Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona and the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Ambassador Gerard Stoudmann.

In his opening remarks at the Group premises, the Chairman-in-Office stressed that the OSCE presence in Belarus is of a co-operative character and that the Advisory and Monitoring Group "is fully open and to Belarus authorities and civil society." He said that the

Group "will offer advice for the development of democratic institutions and the implementation of all OSCE principles, in particular those that refer to human rights, rule of law, pluralistic democratic structures and [the] free form of economic activities." He noted that "it is up to the Belarus authorities" and civil institutions "to take advantage of the OSCE possibilities" and said that the OSCE "will spare no efforts to respond constructively and eagerly to the needs of this country."

Mr. Geremek stressed the pragmatic approach of the Group, saying that it

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would assist in looking at how to introduce various options for democratic structures. He said that the OSCE could offer practical assistance on issues like the separation of powers, internal democratic checks and balances, and the democratic procedures regarding elections.

He concluded his remarks by expressing the wish that “these premises become not only a symbol of assistance on democracy but also . . . a place of practical initiatives [for the] development of Belarus, as well as a genuine

meeting place for a pluralistic society”. He said “I am sure that these premises also bring Europe closer to Belarus and Belarus, in turn, closer to Europe.”

Mr. Geremek's remarks were followed by an extensive exchange of views between the OSCE delegation and Belarusian officials on the objectives and work methods of the Advisory and Monitoring Group.

After these discussions the Chairman-in-Office and Belarusian Foreign Minister Antonovich addressed an audience of

150 guests which included members of the Government and opposition groups, the diplomatic corps and the media. Later the Chairman-in-Office met with a small group of members of social and political groups in opposition to the Government.

In a concluding news conference Mr. Geremek said that “we believe that the opening of this permanent Group will help build civil society in Belarus, found a respect for human rights, civil rights and establish democracy.”

## OSCE Seeks Dialogue on Kosovo

An increasing amount of international attention is being focused on Kosovo. The OSCE is no exception.

Between 17 and 20 February, Mr. Max van der Stoel, Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Kosovo, visited Belgrade and Priština. This was Mr. van der Stoel's first visit to the region since his appointment in February 1997. Previous attempts had been blocked by the refusal of Belgrade authorities to grant him a visa.

During his visit he met with a number of individuals in order to form a clearer view of the situation in Kosovo and to look at existing possibilities for dialogue between the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and representatives of Kosovo Albanians.

In Belgrade he met with the Director of the Multilateral Co-operation Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugo-

slavia, Ambassador Branko Brankovic, who presented the position of the Government of the FRY regarding the problem of Kosovo. He also had meetings with representatives of Serbian parties, non-governmental organizations, ambassadors of the OSCE Troika and of other OSCE States, and with members of the academic community.

In Priština Mr. van der Stoel met Professor Ibrahim Rugova, President of the Democratic League of Kosovo, Professor Fehmi Agani, Deputy President of the Democratic League of Kosovo, and with other Kosovo Albanian politicians and NGO representatives. He also had a meeting with representatives of the Serbian Resistance Movement as well as the USIS and UNHCR heads of office in Priština, and with Professor Roberto Morozzo from the Community of Sant'Egidio.

Mr. van der Stoel's visit came two weeks after Belgrade-based representa-

tives of the Troika visited Kosovo on 2 and 3 February to urge the parties to show moderation and seek dialogue, and to collect information on the current situation.

The OSCE has been closely monitoring the situation in Kosovo since the early 1990s. At that time, Kosovo was considered in the context of overall developments in what was referred to as “the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” (particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina).

A decision taken at an emergency meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (the precursor to the Senior Council) on 12 May 1992 strongly condemned the violations of CSCE commitments by the authorities in Belgrade and the JNA (Yugoslav National Army). The Yugoslav delegation did not give its consent to the text of the declaration, but could not prevent its adoption because of the application of paragraph

16 of the Prague Document (31 January 1992) which states that “in order to safeguard human rights, democracy and the rule of law through peaceful means. . . appropriate action may be taken by the Council or the Committee of Senior Officials, if necessary in the absence of the consent of the State concerned, in cases of clear, gross and uncorrected violations of relevant CSCE commitments.” In effect, through this “consensus minus one” procedure, Yugoslavia was suspended.

Despite the suspension of Yugoslavia, in a decision taken on 7 July 1992 it was agreed that the nameplate and flag of “Yugoslavia” would be kept at CSCE meetings. They remain there to this day.

With Yugoslav officials no longer able to withhold consensus on resolutions concerning developments in the former Yugoslavia, the rest of the CSCE participating States moved to keep up the pressure on the Belgrade authorities. A fact finding mission was dispatched at the end of May 1992 to determine the military situation in Kosovo. In August 1992 the first CSCE mission was established. It was referred to as a mission of long-term duration

to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina (to differentiate it from short term fact finding missions). Its mandate was “to promote dialogues between authorities concerned and representatives of the populations and communities in the three regions,” “to collect information on all aspects relevant to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and promote solutions to such problems,” “to establish contact points for solving problems that might be identified,” and “to assist in providing information on relevant legislation on human rights, protection of

Missions had a common office in Belgrade.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Belgrade on 28 October 1992, the duration of the Missions was limited to an initial period of six months; extension of this period was subject to mutual agreement of the CSCE and the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In a Protocol signed on 29 April 1993, the period was extended to 28 June.

There was no further agreement on extension thereafter as the Government of the FRY took issue with the suspension of its participation in the activities of the CSCE and said that it would only co-operate on the basis of an equal footing.

The Missions were withdrawn after expiration of the Memorandum of Under-

standing. Since then a watch group was established to collect information and discuss developments at weekly informal meetings in Vienna, followed by a discussion at the plenary Permanent Council meeting. This group, within the division of tasks among the Troika, is currently directed by Denmark.



minorities, free media and democratic elections.”

The Mission to Kosovo was based in Priština (with permanent presence in Peć and Prizren), the Mission to Sandjak in Novi Pazar (with permanent presence in Priepolje) and the Mission to Vojvodina was in Subotica. The



The **Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Mr. Hubert Vedrine**, addressed the Permanent Council on 12 February. He noted that in the present security environment and structures “the OSCE's particular vocation is to define the fundamental principles which are to underlie indivisible and common security.” In that respect he stressed the importance of the draft Security Charter and the various elements that are under discussion. In his remarks Foreign Minister Vedrine also highlighted the OSCE's activities in ongoing crises like those in the former Yugoslavia. He emphasized the urgency of finding a solution to what he described as “the increasingly disturbing question of Kosovo”. He also called for a stability and confidence pact for the whole of South East Europe.

On 17 and 18 February the Conflict Prevention Centre of the OSCE, together with the Foreign Ministry of Turkmenistan, conducted a **seminar** in Ashgabat on **Regional Security, Stability and Co-operation in Central Asia**. The seminar was the third in a series designed to assist Central Asian participating States

following their admission to the OSCE (in 1992). It dealt with present and future security challenges and priorities as well as regional co-operation and politico military aspects of security including the implementation and development of agreed Confidence- and Security-Building Measures.

The **first conference to review the implementation of the Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina** took place in Vienna from 16 to 20 February. Taking part were delegations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, under the Chairmanship of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, General Carlo Jean. The Agreement – concluded in Vienna on 26 January 1996 in accordance with the provisions of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina – outlines a set of measures to enhance mutual confidence and reduce the risk of conflict. At the conference, implementation was reviewed and several decisions were taken to update existing articles and measures. The participants will hold another review conference in February 1999.



*A Streetcar Named Tolerance. This tram with the word "Tolerance" in a mixture of Latin and Cyrillic letters painted on it will run on the streets of Sarajevo for three months beginning 10 February.*

*The symbol shows two figures with raised arms joined together, whose inner contours make up the outline of a house with a lighted window in the middle.*

*It is part of an information campaign on democratic values and human rights which is being promoted by the Democratization Branch of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with local NGOs. The campaign also includes radio and television spots.*





## News from the Field

*The OSCE currently has ten Missions in the field as well as the Assistance Group to Chechnya, the Presence in Albania and the Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus. The following are highlights from the work of some of the field operations during the past month:*

### **Albania Still Fragile**

The situation in Albania remains fragile. Looting and violence, apparently organized by a small band of criminals, broke out in the northern city of Shkodra on 22-23 February. The OSCE Presence, which has a field office in Shkodra, reports that several municipal buildings including the city hall, police headquarters and court house were damaged and two banks were bombed. Order was restored by Albanian special forces on 24 February. The Head of the Presence, Ambassador Daan Everts, visited the city on 24-25 February to meet with local leaders.

On 24 February the Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek, issued a statement saying he is "deeply concerned by the unrest and senseless violence" in Shkodra. He appealed to all parties "to refrain from inflammatory action and language, which fuel a climate of distrust, civil disobedience and insecurity in which crime thrives." He also called on all Albanians citizens to support government efforts to combat criminal activity. He said that "law enforcement action should not be exploited for partisan political purposes." The Chairman-in-Office urged the international community to "step up implementation of quick impact assistance projects that would bring early, visible and tangible benefits to the population, especially in deprived areas."

The Presence is playing an important mediating role between opposition

groups and the Government. It was instrumental in successfully ending the hunger strike of a group of judges protesting against certain articles in the law on the judiciary. The Presence has since been approached by two delegations of ex-political prisoners with a request to mediate in their dispute with the government on a legal matter. An expert review of the law and the disputed amendments was initiated and the hunger strike was ended. In an effort to head off future difficulties in a similar vein, the Presence issued a press release stressing the need for "early and broad consultations on legislative reforms in the Republic of Albania."

It is also working on follow up to the tri-parliamentary mission (representatives of the OSCE and Council of Europe Parliamentary Assemblies and the European Parliament) which visited Albania at the end of January.

### **Implementation Process Almost Complete in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

On 28 February the Provisional Election Commission approved final certification for 13 municipalities, bringing the total certified to 106 out of 136—nearly 80 percent. The prospect of final and binding arbitration for municipalities that fail to meet the requirements of Final Certification led to a hectic period of implementation activity in the final days of February. Of the remaining thirty municipalities, the Mission expects several mediated solutions to be consummated in early

March. The possibility of arbitration is possible in a few cases, notably Zepce and Srebrenica.

Related to the implementation process is the introduction programme for newly elected municipal councillors. Approximately 80 such seminars have been held to date and attending councillors have expressed an interest in learning about democratic governance, exchanging information and opinions with other councillors, and employing newly learned skills in their work.

As well as assisting in the process of installing candidates from the last elections, the Mission is already preparing for the next elections, which are scheduled for 12-13 September 1998. This process includes updating voter registration and reassessing the election rules and regulations.

After a one-year recess, the arbitration hearings on Brčko resumed in Vienna. The deadline for the decision on the status of Brčko is 15 March.

### **Mission to Croatia Stresses Need for Return and Reconciliation**

In a press conference given on 26 February after briefing the plenary meeting of the Permanent Council, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia, Ambassador Tim Guldemann (in the presence of two Deputy Chairpersons of the National Committee for Restoration of Trust) reiterated the need for full compliance with

and implementation of commitments undertaken by the Croatian authorities to facilitate peaceful and non-discriminatory reintegration. The remarks came as a result of observations by the Mission that ethnic Serb displaced persons are losing faith in the Government's ability to safeguard their rights and well-being.

Signs of improvement in some areas are evident. On 9 February the Croatian authorities decided to abolish the controversial decree on the lease of apartments in the Danube region. Furthermore, at an informal Permanent Council meeting on 25 February, the Croatian representative announced that new legislation would be introduced to facilitate the process of integration.

It is acknowledged by all sides that economic difficulties are one cause of the problems in the Danube region. The Mission has recently looked at the flows of international assistance to Croatia and has floated the idea of an international donors conference. Ambassador Guldemann has stressed, however, that the continued provision of international economic aid is conditional upon political development.

### **Mission Monitors Incidents in Georgia**

During the month of February the OSCE Mission to Georgia kept a close eye on developments in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia, particularly in the capital Tbilisi where, on 9 February, President Eduard Shevardnadze survived an assassination attempt.

In a press release issued on 10 February the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, condemned the assassination attempt saying "such a ruthless attempt

to bring down the leader of the Republic of Georgia is appalling and can not be tolerated." Mr. Geremek, expressing his relief that the President had emerged unharmed, appealed for calm and stability in the country. He noted the crucial role Mr. Shevardnadze has been playing in building a democratic and stable Georgia.

In Abkhazia the still unresolved political situation was thrown into sharper focus by the expiry of the Russian peacekeeping mandate on 31 January. The continued volatility of that region of Georgia is evident by a number of attacks in February on representatives of international organizations, most notably the hostage taking of four UN personnel.

### **Developments in Moldova**

The OSCE Mission to Moldova reports that on 17 February President Lucinschi of Moldova met with Trans-Dniestrian leader Igor Smirnov in Tiraspol for some six hours in the presence of ministers, advisors, agency heads and representatives of the three mediating parties (Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE). They signed a series of protocols which deal primarily with issues such as transport, energy, customs and crime-fighting. The Mission reports that the overall tenor of the meeting was constructive and positive and that this co-operative spirit bodes well for the period leading up to the parliamentary elections in Moldova scheduled for 22 March.

### **Monitoring Activities Suspended in Nagorno-Karabakh**

Since August 1995 the Chairman-in-Office (CiO) of the OSCE has had a

Personal Representative to cover issues related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (also referred to as the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference).

Among the tasks of the Personal Representative, together with his field assistants, is the monitoring of the Line of Contact between the parties. After an incident in mid-February in which a monitor team was shot at – seriously wounding a high-ranking accompanying officer from Karabakh – monitoring activities have been suspended. This is the second time since the ceasefire was declared in 1995 that the OSCE monitors have suspended their activities because of insufficient security guarantees.

The process of negotiating a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is stalled. The co-chairmen of the Minsk Group (France, the Russian Federation and the United States) met in Paris on 17 and 18 February and agreed that further diplomatic activity by the Group would be taken up after the presidential elections in Armenia scheduled for mid-March. President Levon Ter-Petrosian of Armenia resigned on 4 February, as a result in part of criticism that he was taking too conciliatory a position on the resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. He is replaced, until the elections, by Prime Minister Robert Kocharyan who led Nagorno-Karabakh from 1993 to 1997.

In a plenary meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council on 26 February, participating States expressed concern about the latest incidents along the Line of Contact and called on the parties concerned to provide sufficient guarantees of security to allow the

monitors to resume their activities, which are considered to be one of the major elements of enhancing the cease-fire.

### **Reconciliation Continues in Tajikistan**

Although the security situation in Tajikistan remains tense, the process of reconciliation is reportedly back on track. The OSCE Mission to Tajikistan reports that in February the first representatives of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) were formally appointed by Presidential Decree to five ministerial posts under the power-sharing mechanism of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord. A total of fourteen national government posts will be given to the UTO. In another example of national reconciliation, 109 UTO supporters were released under

the amnesty law, according to government sources.

The Mission, through its central office in Dushanbe and field offices in Shahrituz, Kurghon-Teppa and Dusti, is continuing to monitor the reconciliation process as well as the overall security situation.

### **Mission to Ukraine Assists in Citizenship Question**

Over the past several months the OSCE Mission to Ukraine has devoted a considerable amount of attention to the problem of securing citizenship for Crimea's returned deportees and their descendants, almost half of whom are technically stateless or else citizens of other CIS countries (in most cases Uzbekistan). Working closely with Ukrainian authorities, and in support

of programmes led by the UNHCR, the Mission has assisted with a public relations campaign to convince the deportees (overwhelmingly Crimean Tartars) to make application under recently simplified procedures for acquiring Ukrainian citizenship.

Supplementing this effort, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the UNHCR have closely co-ordinated a recent approach to the authorities of Uzbekistan urging them to work with their Ukrainian counterparts on easing the procedure allowing citizens of Uzbekistan to changeover to Ukrainian citizenship. Citizenship rights for disenfranchised voters, particularly Crimean Tatars, is a contentious issue in the build-up to the Ukrainian parliamentary elections scheduled for 29 March.

## **NEW ON THE WEB**



Don't forget to check out the OSCE website at <http://www.osce.org> (or the old address of [www.osceprag.cz](http://www.osceprag.cz)).

New features which have been added recently include the Newsletter in a revised format, an inter-active map of the OSCE region (showing field activities), and the new organigram (under Institutional Structure).

Selected speeches by OSCE Secretary General Giancarlo Aragona can be found in the Secretariat section.

Of course, the vacancy notices, Permanent Council journals and press releases are always being updated.

If you visit the OSCE website, contact us and tell us what you think!

If you would like to automatically receive the OSCE Newsletter in digital form every month, please contact [webmaster@osceprag.cz](mailto:webmaster@osceprag.cz) and we will add you to the list.

## **REPORT** from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

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### **Romania**

Between 4 and 6 February the High Commissioner visited Romania where he was received by President Emil Constantinescu. He also had meetings with Foreign Minister Andrei Plesu, Minister for National Education Andrei Marga, and Minister Delegate for the Protection of National Minorities Gyorgy Tokay.

In the Parliament, the High Commissioner met with the President of the Senate and the President of the Chamber of Deputies, the Chairmen of the Committees on Foreign Affairs and on Education in both chambers of Parliament, and with minority representatives.

Discussions focused mainly on matters connected with the ongoing parliamentary debate on amendments to the 1995 Law on Education. These included the issues of teaching certain subjects and holding entrance examinations in minority languages, and the possible establishment of separate universities for minorities. Also discussed were the efforts being made by the Romanian Government to integrate ethnic Roma and related measures taken within the Romanian schooling system.

### **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

Between 9 and 11 February the High Commissioner paid another visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. He was received by President of the Republic Kiro Gligorov. The High

Commissioner held talks with Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski, Minister of Foreign Affairs Blagoj Handziski, Minister of Education Sofija Todorova, and Minister of Internal Affairs Tomislav Cokrevski.

He also met leaders of political parties representing the Albanian community, the PDP and DPA and other coalition and opposition parties in the country. A meeting also took place with the UNPREDEP Chief of Mission.

Discussions during the visit concentrated on current developments in the field of inter-ethnic relations, with a special emphasis on ways of improving educational opportunities for the country's Albanians, including at the tertiary level. The Government reaffirmed its determination to ensure the effective functioning of the Pedagogical Faculty that provides for Albanian language teacher training. Also discussed were international standards in the field of minority language education, including private tertiary education. Interlocutors in the Government assured the High Commissioner that the country would live up to its international commitments in this field.

The High Commissioner emphasized the role of dialogue in solving specific inter-ethnic issues. He reiterated his position that solutions should serve mutual inter-ethnic understanding and integration of the whole society and expressed his opposition to parallel institutions.

### **Hungary**

On 24 and 25 February the High Commissioner visited Budapest where he met with Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs, Minister for Education and Culture Balint Magyar, and the Parliamentary Commissioner (Ombudsman) for the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities Mr. Jenő Kaltenbach. He also had meetings with Parliamentary State Secretary Csaba Tabajdi, Deputy President of the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities Otto Heinek, as well as with representatives of the Slovak minority. Subjects discussed included the question of parliamentary representation of minorities, and the teaching of and in minority languages in schools in the context of maintaining the cultural identity of the Slovak minority.

### **Vienna Seminar on Oslo Recommendations**

On 27 and 28 February the High Commissioner participated in a seminar organized by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations (FIER) to launch the Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities. The seminar, held at Schlosshotel Wilhelminenberg in Vienna, brought together a selection of representatives of governments and minorities from about a dozen OSCE States where the High Commissioner has been considering the substance and the general thrust of the Recommendations as conceived and elaborated by eleven internationally recognised independent experts.



During the seminar, expert presentations were made on the following subjects: equality and non discrimination as fundamental principles of minority language rights; the relationship between innate dignity, cultural identity and minority language rights; an overview of the Oslo Recommendations. Case studies examined ways in which language diversity was being accommodated in Catalonia and Finland.

The Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, and Explanatory Note, were

drawn up by independent experts brought together by FIER at the request of the High Commissioner with a view to clarifying the content of relevant international standards and providing a useful reference for States in the development of policies and laws consistent with their international obligations and commitments. The Recommendations (which are to be read together with the previously elaborated Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities) address the following issues, domains and situations in relation

to the use of language: names; religion; community life and NGOs; the media; economic life; administrative authorities and public services; independent national institutions; judicial authorities; and deprivation of liberty.

Copies of the Oslo Recommendations may be obtained from the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations located at Prinsessegracht 22, 2514 AP The Hague, The Netherlands. Tel. (+31 70) 363 6033, fax (+31 70) 346 5213.

## **UPDATE** from the ODIHR

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### **Technical Assistance Team Completes Its Work in Montenegro**

The OSCE/ODIHR Technical Assistance Team providing advice and guidance to Montenegrin lawmakers on a number of election-related laws has now completed its work. Before leaving Montenegro the experts handed over a comprehensive compilation of recommendations and advice on election issues, and in particular on election systems, media regulations and voter registration issues. The Technical Assistance Team established good and constructive co-operation with the Montenegrin officials as well as with all parties involved in the process of preparing the legislation. The three revised laws on Voter Registration, Public Information and the Election of Counsellors and Representatives were adopted during the parliamentary session of February 1998.

### **Preparing for Parliamentary Elections in Moldova....**

An Election Observation Mission headed by Mr Kåre Vollan (seconded by the Norwegian Government) has now been established in Moldova, and nine long term observers have been seconded to follow the pre-election process and campaign leading up to the parliamentary elections on 22 March 1998. The ODIHR has called on the OSCE participating States to provide 80 short term observers to follow the polling on election day and the vote count and aggregation. A press statement will be delivered shortly after election day.

### **... in Ukraine....**

Mr Kåre Vollan is also the On-site Co-ordinator in charge of the Election Observation Mission in Ukraine, which has

been operating since 2 February 1998. Eight to ten long-term observers are, or will be, deployed throughout the country to monitor the situation prior to the parliamentary elections, which are scheduled for 29 of March. Some 150 short-term observers have been requested to cover the events on election day and the vote count.

### **... and in Armenia**

Following the resignation of President Ter-Petrosian, presidential elections have been called in Armenia and are expected to take place on 16 March 1998. The ODIHR appointed Mr. Christopher Shields as Technical Co-ordinator of the Election Observation Mission, which is expected to comprise 11 long-term observers. One hundred short-term observers have been requested to arrive in Yerevan shortly before election day.

Mr. Sam Brown of the United States has been appointed Special Representative for the Election Observation Mission. He will be travelling to Yerevan on 1 March and will be delivering the Preliminary Statement shortly after election day.

### **ODIHR Notes**

At the request of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, the ODIHR sent an expert's mission to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from February 23 to 26 to assess recent developments concerning voter registration issues, in anticipation of the upcoming parliamentary elections expected later this year.

The Final Report on the Re-run of the Presidential elections in the Republic of Serbia/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, held on 7 and 21 December 1997, is now available from the ODIHR Election Section and on the ODIHR Election Monitoring Website.

The ODIHR is pleased to announce that on 20 January 1997 Mr. Peter Eicher took over the position of First Deputy Director. Mr. Eicher joins the ODIHR following twenty-five years with the United States Foreign Service, most recently with the State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

### **The ODIHR in Central Asia**

The ODIHR wishes to cordially thank the Government of Denmark for its generous contribution of over ATS 6 million for the implementation of several projects specifically designed by the ODIHR in Central Asian countries. The package calls for a variety of activities: assistance in preparation for the elections, to the national human rights institutions, in the

area of rule of law, civil society, and human rights training. In addition, the Government of Denmark has seconded one of its Foreign Service officers and a former Mission member in Tajikistan – Ewa Chylinski – to work with the ODIHR for a period of six months as Fund Manager.

### **Civil Society Programme**

A Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Government of Uzbekistan, National Human Rights Centre and the ODIHR sets out a number of specific projects to be undertaken. Interest expressed by neighbouring governments led to a decision to organize similar projects in other countries of Central Asia, which was possible thanks to the voluntary contribution mentioned above.

The first introductory Government-NGO meeting in Kyrgyzstan under ODIHR auspices was held on 26 February. It will be followed by a series of one-day round tables each focusing on a specific issue and aiming to produce suggestions for improvement and other recommendations for action by government institutions.

In Uzbekistan, two such meetings have taken place already and a third is scheduled for 23 March. The role of NGOs will be the leading theme of the event which is organized with the assistance of and in co-operation with the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia and National Human Rights Centre of Uzbekistan.

### **Election Assistance Strategy Meeting**

The ODIHR Election Section held a Central Asia Election Assistance Strategy Meeting on 10 February 1998 in Warsaw. The main objective of the meeting was to share information and

present the activities of those organizations involved in offering assistance in the various aspects of the election process in Central Asia.

The meeting was attended by representatives from various organizations including the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division and UNDP, European Commission, USAID, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS), International Republic Institute (IRI), and the American Bar Association. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia, the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan and ODIHR experts were also present.

All participants stressed the need to increase co-operation and the co-ordination of technical assistance in elections among international donors and organizations. Each project should be devised in accordance with the particular needs identified for each country, and within a specific timeframe, which the local authorities should commit themselves to respect. The ODIHR was proposed as the regional focal point to centralize and circulate information concerning the various election assistance programmes in Central Asia. It was suggested that country focal points organize roundtables and working groups in the country concerned with the involvement of all organizations present in the field of elections.

### **Correctional Officer Training Programme**

Three on-going training projects continued in February in Albania, Croatia and Moldova. Following a joint OSCE/ODIHR - Council of Europe As-

assessment Mission, the ODIHR began implementation of its assistance programme to the Albanian prison service with an apprenticeship programme in England and Wales. The programme, in which the Deputy Minister of Justice and Chief of the Prison Police participated, included visits to four prisons and practical training in the areas of staff training, regimes for female and young offenders and non violent control and restraint training. The project was co-ordinated through the prison system of the United Kingdom.

As a follow-up to its training programme implemented last year, a technical assessment and consultation mission was dispatched to Croatia. The Mission evaluated the impact of the ongoing project by meeting with the Minister of Justice and other officials to discuss new legislative initiatives for the creation of a training academy. Once the new legislative package has become law, and following a request by the Minister of Justice, the ODIHR will offer a targeted assistance programme to support the development of the academy.

A training manual for correctional officers was completed by the Moldovan Ministry of Justice in February and will be distributed shortly. The manual, the fourth phase of the ODIHR training programme, was prepared in association with the Polish Association of Legal Education with funding from the Westminster Foundation.

### **Expert Mission to Turkey**

In co-operation with the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the OSCE, the ODIHR arranged for an ombudsman expert mission to visit Ankara between 18 and 21 February. It was a follow-up to the ODIHR proposal made in conjunction

with the visit of Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz to the OSCE Permanent Council 6 November 1997. The purpose of the mission was to consult with national authorities on the matter and to hold a relevant round-table in Ankara with the participation of the Irish Ombudsman.

Two round-tables were held during this mission, each of them with very high level representatives of the Government of Turkey. One addressed the 16 members of the inter-ministerial drafting committee, which was established in November 1997. The experts were impressed by the knowledge already accumulated on the topic, which translated in specific comparative analysis and the formulation of very relevant technical questions.

The idea of establishing a genuinely independent ombudsman institution seems on the right track and has gained enormous support among Turkish experts. The international and national experts and the OSCE/ODIHR representative agreed to consult on the preparation of the draft law and the provision of relevant documentation. The ODIHR will continue to assist the process as requested and will be able to put the Turkish experts in touch with existing international networks on the matter.

### **Upcoming Events**

*Election Section Project of Technical Assistance.* Workshop on election administration for Central Asian election officials jointly organized with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) on 16-18 March in Stockholm.

*Mission to Transcaucasus.* An assessment mission headed by Ambassador

Gérard Stoudmann to the three Transcaucasian States will take place on 14-31 March. The representatives of the High Commissioner of National Minorities, UNHCR, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission will take part in it. The goal of the mission is to assess the human rights situation in the three Transcaucasian states and to discuss technical assistance projects aimed at promoting human rights and democratization. During the Georgia leg of the trip, in addition to visiting Tbilisi, the delegation plans to visit Abkhazia and South Ossetia. While in Armenia, the delegation will observe the second round of presidential elections.

*Baku Workshop on Techniques to Combat Organized Crime.* This workshop, to be held between 17 and 20 March, will be attended by national experts from several countries. The Department of Justice, Law and Society of the American University, Washington DC, is providing technical assistance for the workshop.

*NGO-Government Meeting in Georgia.* The ODIHR and OSCE Mission to Georgia will hold a second meeting with representatives of NGOs and government institutions in Tbilisi on 20 March 1998.

*OSCE/ODIHR Human Dimension Seminar.* The Seminar on Ombudsman and National Human Rights Protection Institutions will take place in Warsaw on 25-28 May. The event will be organized in close co operation with the United Nations Development Programme, the Council of Europe and the Polish Ombudsman Office. The European Ombudsman Institute and the International Ombudsman Institute will also be invited to co-operate.

## List of Available ODIHR Publications

- *OSCE/ODIHR ELECTION OBSERVATION HANDBOOK*  
OSCE/ODIHR, Warsaw 1997, second edition (in English and Russian)
  - *OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION*  
Documents of the Human Dimension of the OSCE, collection prepared by  
Dr. Dominic McGoldrick, OSCE/ODIHR, Warsaw 1995 (in English and Russian).
  - *HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE JUDICIARY*  
A collection of International Documents by Dr. Frederick Quinn.  
OSCE, Vienna 1996 (in Russian)
  - *U.S. SUPREME COURT, CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS*  
S. Frankowski, R. Goldman, E. Letowska, Warsaw 1997 (in Russian)
  - *1996 ELECTION REPORTS*  
Compilation (in English)
- IN PREPARATION
- *1997 ELECTION REPORTS*  
Compilation (in English)

For information and copies of this material please contact the ODIHR.

## **REPORT** from the Parliamentary Assembly

*The Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is located at Rådhusstræde 1, DK-1455 Copenhagen K, Denmark, tel.: (+45-33) 32 94 00, fax: (+45-33) 32 55 05*

### **Standing Committee Meets in Vienna**

The Standing Committee, which comprises Heads of National Delegations and Officers of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly met in the meeting room of the OSCE Permanent Council in Hofburg Congress Centre on 19 and 20 February.

The Committee meeting began with an address by the Chairman-in-Office, Mr. Bronisław Geremek, who then took questions from the floor. The members of the Standing Committee were then extensively briefed on the latest OSCE developments by senior OSCE officials including Secretary General Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona, Director of the

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Ambassador Gérard Stoudman, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Freimut Duve and Advisor to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Frans Timmermans.

The meeting was also addressed by the Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Viktor Klima, and the President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Dr. Heinz Fischer.

The Standing Committee deliberated on preparations for the Seventh Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which will be held from 7 to 10 July 1998 in Copenhagen. It was decided that the main theme for the

upcoming Session would be "The Development of the Structures, Institutions and Perspectives of the OSCE". The members of the Standing Committee also considered a report on the Seminar on Regional Security and Political, Economic, Social and Humanitarian Issues in Central Asia and the Caucasus held from 23 to 24 September 1997 in Tashkent. A report on the Parliamentary Conference on Sub-Regional Economic Processes, which was held in Monaco, was presented by Mr. Jacques Floch, Chair of the Economic Committee of the OSCE PA, on whose initiative this conference was organized. France invited the OSCE PA to host another Sub-Regional Conference in Paris in 1999. The



*Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, addressing the Standing Committee while PA President Javier Ruperez and PA Secretary General R. Spencer Oliver look on.*



Standing Committee also considered budgetary questions and election monitoring programmes.

A resolution denouncing the terrorist attack on the life of the President of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze was unanimously adopted. The resolution "reaffirmed strong support for independence, territorial integrity of Georgia and supported the democratic reforms" and "underlined that political terrorism is the greatest threat to democratic development of the states and human rights and that any force that tries to achieve political means by terrorism should be condemned and isolated." The OSCE/PA will organize a meeting of its Expanded Bureau in Georgia next October in conjunction with a regional parliamentary seminar on democratic development.

Changes to the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE/PA were prominent on the agenda of the Standing Committee which final-

ly adopted an amended text. Mr. Gert Weisskirchen (Germany) was appointed Chairman of the Third Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Freimut Duve.

### **OSCE Parliamentary Observers Attend Three Elections**

More than fifty observers representing thirteen member States of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly have joined delegations monitoring elections in March: one delegation to monitor the presidential elections in Armenia on 16 March, a second delegation to monitor parliamentary elections in Moldova on 22 March, and the third delegation to monitor parliamentary elections in Ukraine on 29 March. The Parliamentary Assembly delegations are assisted by, and work in conjunctions with, the OSCE Observer Missions in Yerevan, Chisinau, and Kiev. All OSCE observers are now deployed in co-operation with the ODIHR, as provided for in the joint

agreement between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the ODIHR signed last year.

Since 1993 more than 600 short-term observers from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly have monitored 26 elections in the OSCE region. Having been engaged almost exclusively in short term observation, the Parliamentary Assembly has played a prominent role in election observation in transitional and developing democratic systems. Under the co-operative agreement between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the ODIHR, short- and long-term observers will be co-ordinated and deployed under a unified plan. A unified statement for the observers is then delivered by a Special Co-ordinator, appointed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office upon the recommendation of the President of the OSCE/PA. The Special Co-ordinator is generally chosen from senior OSCE Parliamentary Assembly officials.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**



The Department for General Affairs of the OSCE Secretariat in co-operation with the Government of Moldova, plans to hold a **seminar** in Chisinau, from 13 to 14 May 1998, on **Inter-Relationships between Central and Regional Governments**. Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations may attend and participate in the Seminar in accordance with OSCE rules. Interested NGOs are requested to contact the OSCE Secretariat, Department for General Affairs, at telephone: (+43-1) 514 36-190, fax: (+43-1) 514 36-96, or E-mail: pm-dga@osce.or.at.

On 27 March there will be a **reinforced Permanent Council** meeting in Vienna to assess progress in the work on a document-charter and to take a decision on the next OSCE Summit.

On 29 April the Polish Chairmanship is organizing an **informal ad hoc meeting of the Permanent Council on the follow-up to the OSCE Human Dimension Seminar on Women's Participation in Society** which took place in Warsaw between 14 and 17 October 1997. The Seminar addressed a number of specific issues related to women in decision-making processes, women in social-economic life and women in conflict situations including war crimes and violence against women. A number of recommendations were also made at the Seminar. The intention of the Chairmanship is to discuss these recommendations and the possibilities of their implementation with a broad audience. It therefore invites to the meeting, in addition to the participating States, non-governmental organizations having relevant experience in the fields in question.

All NGOs wishing to participate are requested to register with the ODIHR/NGO Liaison Adviser not later than 20 March.



The logo for the OSCE Newsletter. It features the letters 'OSCE' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, each letter contained within a dark blue square. Below this, the word 'NEWSLETTER' is written in a smaller, dark blue, all-caps, sans-serif font.

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