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The OSCE marks ten years in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introducing the Belgian Chairmanship

Lithuania finds its niche



Forging ahead  
beyond the  
Dayton Decade



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

### OSCE Chairmanship 2006: Belgium

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

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

##### Central Asia

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- OSCE Centre in Dushanbe
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- OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- OSCE Mission to Croatia
- OSCE Mission in Kosovo
- OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje
- OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro

## Message from the Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

OSCE field missions are, by nature, temporary things. But conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation often take quite a bit of time.

The OSCE has been involved on both these fronts in Bosnia and Herzegovina for more than a decade. Its representatives first bravely ventured in during the war that nearly rent the country asunder.

The current OSCE presence took on its form after the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina — better known to the U.S. military as “the Geefap” and to the rest of us as the Dayton-Paris Peace Accords — that ended the conflict and assigned the OSCE specific tasks in elections, human rights monitoring and military stabilization.

Over time, these tasks, like Bosnia and Herzegovina itself, have evolved in line with progress made in what is known locally, if somewhat infelicitously, as “peace implementation”.

Elections, for instance, are now entirely out of our hands as Bosnia and Herzegovina has proven its ability to organize and run its own elections in accordance with the highest international standards. With the assistance of the OSCE and others, the country has moved forward remarkably quickly to having a single professional army, so that some of the arms control responsibilities assigned to the OSCE under Dayton no longer apply.

However, at a conference in December this past year sponsored by the Slovenian Chairmanship to mark the tenth anniversary of Dayton, several distinguished participants — including the High Representative, Lord Paddy Ashdown, and his predecessor, Wolfgang Petritsch — noted one lesson learned from this experience: the international community had neglected, until it was too late, aspects of the “soft side” of peace implementation.

They cited as examples two areas in which the OSCE Mission still works: civil society development and education, both clearly long-term endeavours. They also argued that these will only increase in importance in the years ahead.

My personal conclusion from all this is that, while “thematic missions” may soon be the latest addition to the OSCE’s bag of tricks, there remains no substitute for a sustained presence on the ground in troubled lands if we are to help establish peace, stability and security in Europe.

I very much hope that the articles in this issue of the *OSCE Magazine* about the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina will lead readers to the same conclusion.



Douglas Davidson  
 Sarajevo, 16 January 2006

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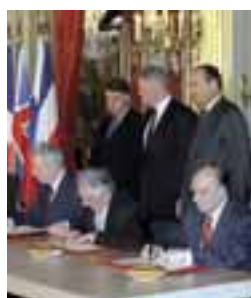
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Front cover: Illustration by Ray Bartkus for *OSCE Magazine*. Back cover: Illustration on the Dayton negotiations by Ray Bartkus for *Time Magazine*, 6 November 1995.

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# Belgian Chairmanship lays out “ambitious but realistic” vision



Karel De Gucht assumed the position of Belgium's Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2004. He has also held the Minister of State portfolio since 2002. He was a member of the European Parliament from 1980 to 1994 and a member of the Flemish Parliament from 1995 to 2003. Minister De Gucht holds a Master of Law from the *Vrije Universiteit Brussel* (Free University Brussels).

The absence of a joint declaration was clearly not ideal, but the results at Ljubljana were better than had been expected. A total of 19 decisions were adopted, including a rather important one on the reform of the Organization. This road map provides us with the necessary mandate to breathe new life into the OSCE.

I would also like to draw attention to the joint statement on Georgia and the decision to hold a seminar on military doctrines in February. In the human dimension, there were decisions on tolerance and on the prevention of violence against women.

Belgium takes over the rotating leadership of the OSCE with “enthusiasm and optimism”, the new Chairman-in-Office, Karel De Gucht, told the Permanent Council in Vienna on 12 January. The Belgian Foreign Minister hailed the road map adopted by the Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana, saying it would “breathe new life” into the Organization. In an interview with the *OSCE Magazine*, he emphasized the role of the Chairmanship as an “honest broker” and described Belgium's strategy in combating international crime and promoting the rule of law, balancing the Organization's activities, and seizing “windows of opportunity” towards making progress in solving long-simmering conflicts.

**OSCE Magazine:** As you begin your Chairmanship of the OSCE, how would you assess the achievements of the preceding Slovenian team?

**Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht:** Considering the situation in the OSCE at the beginning of last year, there is good cause for satisfaction. In fact, the outcome of the Ministerial Council meeting was more than satisfactory. It helped the Organization out of its budgetary impasse. Thanks to the agreement on the scales of contribution by participating States and on the budget for 2006, Belgium is able to start its Chairmanship under favourable conditions.

## What are your priorities for the 2006 Chairmanship?

We have ambitious plans, but we must be realistic at the same time. In an organization in which the decision-making process is based on consensus, the Chairmanship must first of all play the role of honest broker, aiming to serve the interests and meet the expectations of all its members.

Our first task, as in every changeover, is to ensure the smooth functioning and continuity of the Organization. And then of course there are our own priorities.

We have four major thrusts:

- Combating international crime and promoting the rule of law will have pride of place in our Chairmanship. These are issues that every citizen is concerned about.
- Belgium will play an active role in the institutional reform of the OSCE.
- In the interests of ensuring a better balance between the Organization's politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions, we will devote attention to strengthening economic activities and we will seek to introduce into the

OSCE the co-operative mechanism of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, particularly in the transport sector.

- Finally, the Belgian Chairmanship will step up efforts to find a solution to the “frozen” conflicts.

### How do you view your role in resolving tensions and conflicts in the OSCE area?

Europe today is generally at peace and the region is now in the midst of reconstruction. The weapons have become silent in the Balkans, not least thanks to the OSCE and to the valuable work performed by its field missions.

During our Chairmanship, Kosovo will obviously occupy a very prominent place in our agenda, particularly at this time when the question of its future status is being considered. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is planning to wind down its activities by the end of 2006, which will obviously entail a transfer of tasks and competencies to other partners, including the European Union and the OSCE.



OSCE/LJUBLJANA/ROTEK

Intensified dialogue and close collaboration between these two organizations will therefore be crucial, and we will aim to ensure that the OSCE can play its role to the full. For a start, I will be visiting the region in mid-February.

## “A community of dialogue”

... The OSCE is instrumental in turning Europe, as a whole, into an area of peace, stability, freedom and economic development. Still, scepticism too often prevails when it comes to the effectiveness of the OSCE.

The question is sometimes asked: Is the OSCE a community of values or a community of commitments? The question, it seems to me, is of a rather semantic nature. Values are relevant in the measure that they are implemented.

What is true in all cases is that the OSCE is a community of dialogue, especially when there are disagreements about implementing commitments. The OSCE’s main role is not to sanction but to assist every participating State in implementing its obligations under the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris.

This is the main function of the OSCE and its institutions and the field missions. Each one therefore needs our collective support.

Decisions within the OSCE require consensus. But consensus is not an end in itself nor should it be seen as a veto right. It is a means to achieve, democratically, a common objective. It is the sovereign right of each participating State to take part in a decision. But this right imposes on each one of us a significant measure of responsibility towards all of us collectively and towards future generations.

Inherent within the rule of consensus is the need for tolerance, understanding and responsibility — and therefore also the need for responsible compromises



OSCE/MIKHAL ENSTAFIEV

*The new OSCE Troika meets the press on 13 January: Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht (Belgium) is flanked by Dimitrij Rupel (Slovenia), and Miguel Angel Moratinos (Spain).*

whenever they are necessary for the sake of the OSCE and its integrity.

A Chairmanship can only achieve what participating States agree to. True, it is for the Chair to instil vision, a sense of purpose and the necessary dynamism. But it is for all of us, collectively and individually, to do what is needed for the common good of Europe.

— Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, in his closing statement at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting, Ljubljana, 6 December 2005

Then there are also “frozen” conflicts — as they are often called — inherited from the past. In the absence of long-term solutions, these threaten the balance within Europe. I am of course referring to Moldova-Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Georgia-South Ossetia-Abkhazia.

These conflicts represent a danger for emerging democracies and are also a source of economic stagnation. Clearly, the solutions will have to be based, above all, on agreement between the parties themselves and on the greater willingness and determination on the part of the main regional actors. The Belgian Chairmanship will be available to play a mediating and facilitating role to ensure that the decision-making process is as constructive as possible.

I will be visiting the Caucasus in January to meet the authorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan. I believe that a window of opportunity could open on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

**What is the Chairmanship's strategy in combating organized crime?**

Alongside terrorism, this scourge poses one of the most serious threats to society, affecting every citizen in every OSCE participating State, whether in the East or in the West. The impact of organized crime seeps into all three dimensions of the OSCE's work, aptly illustrating the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to security.

As Chairman-in-Office, I shall of course make use of the instruments that are already at the Organization's disposal. The OSCE has a Special Representative as well as a unit within the OSCE Secretariat responsible for combating trafficking in human beings. The Strategic Police Matters Unit offers assistance in police-training in the field. And combating

money-laundering and corruption is one of the tasks of the office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities.

Our Chairmanship hopes to consolidate this multi-dimensional approach and give new impetus to OSCE activities. For a start, I would like to initiate a dialogue on risk and threat assessments within the OSCE. The aim would be to identify common elements that could lead to the development of measures to be agreed on by all participating States.

We also need to promote international co-operation on legal issues among OSCE participating States. I have in mind the exchange of information and ensuring the protection of personal data. As Chairman-in-Office, I hope to encourage greater international collaboration both between police forces and between judiciaries.

It goes without saying that we should not embark on this fight with blinders on. The fight against international crime must not be detrimental to the *acquis* that the OSCE has built up in the human dimension. Respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law *are* and *remain* inviolable OSCE values.

**Will Pierre Chevalier, who has been appointed Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairmanship, be *de facto* a Deputy Chairman-in-Office?**

Mr. Chevalier will “deputize” for me at meetings and negotiations that I cannot attend. In the recent past, he has served as Belgium's Secretary of State for Foreign Trade. In view of his political stature and international experience, our Special Envoy will provide first-rate support and will strengthen the activities of the Belgian Chairmanship.



OSCE/MIKHAEL EVSTAFIEV

**Special Envoy of the Belgian Chairmanship of the OSCE**

Pierre Chevalier represents and assists Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht in all his functions as Chairman-in-Office. For the past three years, he has been serving as Senator and as Personal Representative of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister to the EU Intergovernmental Conference. Earlier high-level posts included Chairman of the Committee for Foreign Relations of the Belgian Parliament and Secretary of State for Foreign Trade. He holds a Master of Law and a Master in Criminology from the University of Ghent.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov urged his colleagues to redouble their efforts to transform the OSCE into “a thoroughly viable, democratic, effective and useful organization for all its participating States”.



Among the Foreign Ministers at the 13th OSCE Ministerial Council meeting were (front rows): Vuk Drašković, Serbia and Montenegro; Ilinka Mitreva, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenia (outgoing Chairman-in-Office); Benita Ferrero-Waldner (EU Commissioner and former Austrian Foreign Minister); Ursula Plassnik, Austria; and Kolina Grabar-Kitarović, Croatia. Photo courtesy of STA

## *Ljubljana decisions and documents*

The 13th OSCE Ministerial Council meeting, held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 5 and 6 December 2005, adopted decisions on the following matters:

- the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General (Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, for a period of three years starting 21 June 2005);
- migration;
- combating transnational organized crime;
- combating the threat of illicit drugs;
- further measures to enhance container security;
- supporting the effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) (on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction);
- further efforts to implement the OSCE Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons and on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition;
- an OSCE seminar on military doctrine on 14 and 15 February 2006;
- tolerance and non-discrimination: promoting mutual respect and understanding;
- the promotion of human rights education and training in the OSCE area;

- upholding human rights and the rule of law in criminal justice systems;
- combating trafficking in human beings;
- women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation;
- preventing and combating violence against women;
- ensuring the highest standards of conduct and accountability of persons serving on international forces and missions;
- strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE;
- the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2008 (Finland); and
- the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council (Belgium, 4 and 5 December 2006).

### **The Ministerial Council also adopted the following documents:**

*Ljubljana Ministerial Statement on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism*  
*The Border Security and Management Concept*  
*Ljubljana Ministerial Declaration on the 20th anniversary of the disaster at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant*  
*Ljubljana Ministerial Statement on Georgia*  
*Statement on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Group*

Ljubljana scenes: STA, OSCE/A. Nitzsche, BOBO





## “An excellent laboratory”

### The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 1 January 1995, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) became the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. This was considerably more than a name change. It transformed what had been a periodic forum for dialogue into an international operational body with its own Secretary General and Permanent Council.

Elysée Palace, Paris, 14 December 1995: (Seated, left to right) Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović sign the General Framework Agreement for Peace in BiH, ending four years of war in former Yugoslavia. Behind them are: Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzales, U.S. President Bill Clinton, French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, British Prime Minister John Major and Russian Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin. The Accord had been initialled earlier, on 21 November, at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.  
Photo: AFP

**BY ROBERT BEECROFT**

In Vienna, the first Ambassador of the United States to the OSCE, John Kornblum, described the newly minted organization as “an excellent laboratory”. He recognized that the OSCE, through its field missions, would be confronted with a multitude of complex challenges in the rapidly evolving post-Cold War world. The new organization’s primary focus would be on early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The field missions would not have identical mandates; each mandate would necessarily evolve along with the host-country situation. The missions, if they were to have the desired impact, would have to be focused, flexible, creative and results-oriented.

Less than a year later, the Dayton Peace Accords, officially signed in Paris on 14 December 1995, assigned to the OSCE important responsibilities in the challenging

and uncertain post-conflict environment of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH):

- to elaborate and implement agreements on confidence- and security-building measures and regional and sub-regional arms control;
- to adopt and put in place an elections programme, supervise the preparation and conduct of elections, and establish a Provisional Election Commission; and
- to appoint, through the good offices of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, a Human Rights Ombudsman.

This made it clear at the very outset what the key priorities of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina would be: Security, democratization and human rights were — and still *are* — at the core of its work.

#### **MISSION PERSONALITY**

For a full decade, in regular consultation with the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna and its 55 participating States, the Mission has placed its emphasis on issues and programmes that are essential to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s development as a democratic, multi-ethnic State in which citizens and elected officials put a premium on the rule of law and actively protect and reinforce the fundamental rights of every individual.

Two components of the OSCE Mission’s



“personality” have been crucial to its success: its staff, and its country-wide presence.

First and foremost are its staff members. The Mission team is drawn from more than 30 of the OSCE’s 55 participating States, with a majority coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. They have brought exceptional experience, expertise and commitment to a broad range of programmes and activities.

Some of these tasks, such as election support and media development, have been concluded. Others, such as education reform, public administration reform and security co-operation, are more recent additions. Still others, such as human rights and democratization, have endured in one form or another since the Mission’s early days. But all are essential to a Bosnia and Herzegovina that is to take its place in the family of democratic States.

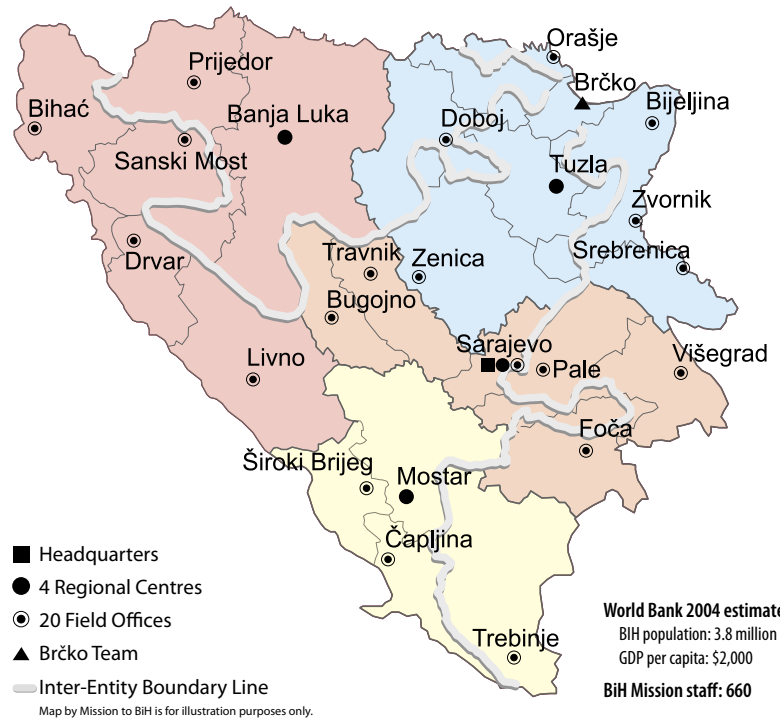
Then there is the OSCE’s widespread presence. The OSCE Mission has never been Sarajevo-centric. Practically from day one, the team has been systematically deployed throughout the country. With its four regional centres and 20 field offices, the OSCE team — attuned to the realities of democratic development and human security at the local and regional level — has long served as an essential resource for the larger international community.

#### PORT OF CALL

Even more importantly, the Mission’s local offices have repeatedly been the first port of call for citizens who have been treated unfairly. If the OSCE Mission to BiH had not existed, it would have had to be invented.

But the tenth anniversary of Dayton is an appropriate moment not only to look back

## OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina



but also to look ahead. In looking to the future, two questions immediately come to mind.

What should be the future size and role of the international community presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

At what point, and in what ways, will the country “graduate” — in the view of its people, its authorities and the outside world — from being an essentially passive “importer” of outside aid and authority to being an “exporter” of experience, creativity and know-how into a world desperately in need of all three?

On the first question, the debate is already well under way, which is in itself a

## War and recovery

- 】 It is believed that some 100,000 people lost their lives in the 43-month-long war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- 】 Out of an estimated BiH population of 4.4 million (1991 census), more than 2 million people abandoned their homes during the 1991-1995 conflict, making it the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War.
- 】 In mid-2004, a milestone was reached when a total of one million displaced persons had been able to return to their rightful homes. The process was difficult as homes had either been destroyed or were being occupied by new tenants. A significant factor that accelerated minority returns after 2000 was the country-wide enforcement of property laws.
- 】 Latest available figures reveal that some 55 per cent of returnees were internally displaced persons (IDPs), with the remaining 45 per cent returning after having sought refuge outside BiH.
- 】 An estimated 2.5 million uprooted persons have returned home in all areas of the Balkans since the mid-1990s. However, some 620,000 civilians — or possibly more — are still waiting their turn to go back, the major problem being the return of ethnic Serbs and other minorities to Kosovo. Thousands of others have permanently settled overseas.
- 】 In January 2005, the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro, together with the European Union, the OSCE and the UNHCR signed an agreement in Sarajevo, the “3 x 3 Initiative”, in which they agreed to resolve all outstanding refugee and international displacement cases throughout the Balkans by the end of 2006.

Sources: UNHCR and OSCE



Robert Beecroft's teaching background proved invaluable when the OSCE Mission was asked to spearhead education reform in BiH.

Sarajevo, 28 October 2002: Ambassador Beecroft, High Representative Paddy Ashdown and schoolchildren launch the education reform campaign in BiH. Photos: Mission to BiH/Nermin Podžić

timely and welcome development. Its outcome will affect not only the OSCE Mission, but *all* the organizations that have emerged from the international response to the war.

As Head of Mission, I used to ask my staff not to get “hung up” on matters of process, but instead to imagine an acceptable outcome, work backwards to the present, and draw a line connecting the two. Once this is done, the process tends to define itself and the way forward becomes clear.

Such an approach can be useful in imagining the country’s future in Europe, in the Euro-Atlantic community, and in the world. Ten years after the war, one now sees the outlines of a viable democratic State — increasingly impatient with corruption, concerned about achieving a fair balance between individual rights and community rights, and preoccupied with developing its economy.

The sooner the outlines are filled in, the sooner the international community presence will be reduced to what it is in most places around the world: bilateral embassies and development agencies. The primary foreign presence in the country should consist of investors and tourists, not international civil servants.

The answer to the second question flows from the first. All too often, the image of Bosnia and Herzegovina overseas is that its people are passive and that they have, over the centuries, developed a “recipient” mentality into a fine art. I know from personal experience in hundreds of communities all over the country how unfair and inaccurate that image is. To counter it, however, will require visionary domestic leadership of a high order.

Examples of Bosnian readiness to “give back” — to engage positively beyond the

country’s borders — already exist:

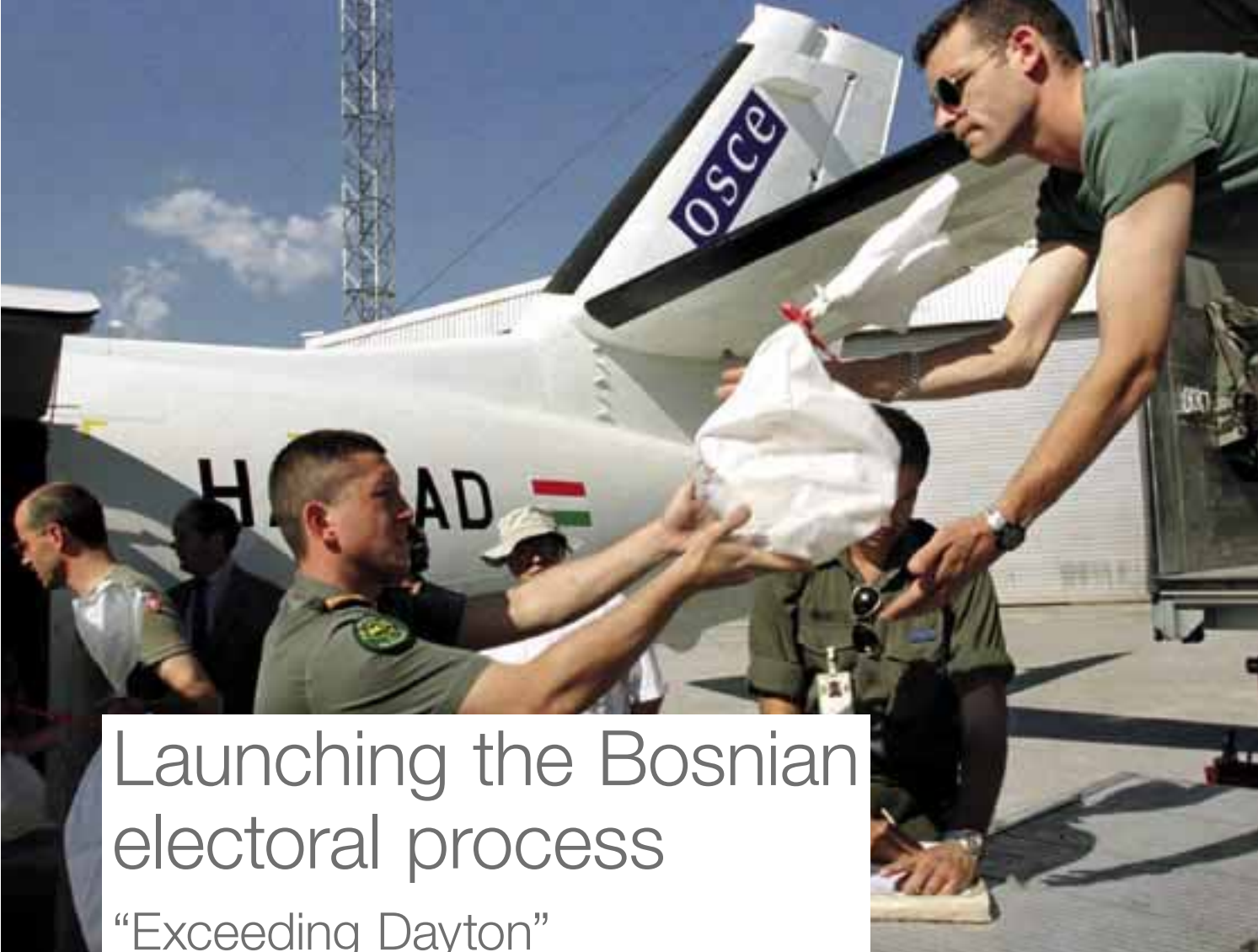
The world-class expertise of Bosnian DNA experts made a significant impact in my country in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The dedicated police officers from BiH in East Timor demonstrated both professionalism and inter-ethnic teamwork — an important message in an island-State with its own ethnic problems. The brave and dangerous mission of soldiers of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Iraq is the latest example, and one which every citizen in the country can be proud of.

As Bosnia and Herzegovina gains in self-assurance, I look forward to additional confirmation that it sees itself as a committed traveller on a two-way street and as a constructive partner in a world full of challenges.

In a democracy, it is not enough to sit back and leave one’s political leaders to define the future. Rather, it is up to every one of us to play a part by being actively involved and by making our personal expectations clear — in the voting booth, through local initiatives, by volunteering, even by sending off a letter to a newspaper. Such positive activism can be contagious, and it can even energize politicians.

Ten years ago, few people would have bet that by 2006 Bosnia and Herzegovina would have reached its current hopeful state of recovery and development. Let us now think ten years ahead. Where would we like the country to be in 2015? And how, working together, can its citizens get there?

**Ambassador Robert Beecroft was the Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina from July 2001 to July 2004. He currently teaches at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C.**



# Launching the Bosnian electoral process

“Exceeding Dayton”

In November 1995, the negotiators of the “General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina” in Dayton requested the OSCE to assume responsibility for three key tasks in the post-war peace process. Of these, the highest and most immediate priority was assisting the authorities in a democratization programme to include the supervision of free and fair elections.

**BY ROBERT FROWICK**

To draw up an effective approach to meeting this set of challenges, the OSCE’s Chairman-in-Office for 1995, Hungarian Foreign Minister László Kovács, established a Task Force in Vienna. The OSCE had no previous experience in supervising elections and had to start from scratch in developing a vision on how to proceed.

Fortunately, we were assisted by experts. First came a group of international specialists who gave us invaluable advice and recommendations. Next, Sweden hosted an informal meeting of experts who provided additional counsel. Once the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina was under way in Sarajevo, we closely followed all this initial advice.

Sarajevo, September 1997: An OSCE aircraft transports ballot papers of BiH refugees who voted in the first post-war municipal election. Photo: Reuters

At Dayton, it was decreed that elections should take place within six to nine months under conditions of freedom of association, expression and movement in a neutral political environment. As the OSCE’s first Head of Mission in the country, I regarded this combination as completely unrealistic. There were still too many strains from the war. However, I thought we had to do our best to achieve a new democratically elected structure of governance.

I sought to develop an effective balance between honoring the integrity of the Dayton compromises and achieving mandated deadlines. We worked seven days a week to build up a Mission presence throughout the country while pursuing intensive civilian and military consultations internally and externally.

**SUFFICIENT STRENGTH**

From four of us in December 1995, we grew within five months to an international staff of 400 and an additional 400 to 500 locally hired personnel. We established a main office in Sarajevo, six Regional Centres and 25 field offices.



Banja Luka, June 1996: Bosnian Serb women demand information about their missing family members.

ignoring the indictment and continuing to serve as President of Republika Srpska (RS) and the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS).

Carl Bildt, former Prime Minister of Sweden and the first High Representative in Sarajevo, began steps to strip away Mr. Karadžić's powers as RS President, and I resolved to effect his removal from the SDS Presidency before the start of the electoral campaign. I discussed my position with the SDS leadership, the OSCE's Permanent Council and Parliamentary Assembly, President Slobodan Milošević in Belgrade, and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov in Moscow.

On the eve of the campaign, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, head of the U.S. negotiating team in Dayton, came to the region and hammered out an agreement in Belgrade finalizing Mr. Karadžić's departure from all aspects of public life. This gave a boost to the launch of the campaign.

The September poll, in which displaced persons and widely scattered refugees participated, took place without violence — but with noteworthy irregularities. War-time arrangements gave way to a new inter-ethnic BiH Presidency, BiH House of Representatives, Federation House of Representatives, RS Presidency, RS National Assembly and Federation Cantons.

In rapid succession, we simultaneously created a Provisional Election Commission, Political Parties Consultative Commission, Media Experts Commission, and Elections Appeals Sub-Commission, while our Directorate General for Elections was taking shape. By June 1996, I thought we had sufficient strength to proceed with elections.

And so it was that I recommended at a Peace Implementation Council conference in Florence that general elections be held on 14 September 1996 — exactly nine months after the signing of the Peace Agreement in Paris. I then met with Swiss Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti, OSCE Chairman-in-Office for 1996, to discuss what to do about Radovan Karadžić, indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) but who was

14 September 1996: Despite the daunting obstacles, the first post-war elections in BiH proceed under OSCE auspices.



### POLITICAL STRUGGLES

We postponed highly contentious municipal elections in order to ease pressures on the rest of the electoral process. By early 1997, a definitive agreement was reached with Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Peterson, then OSCE Chairman-in-Office, to schedule municipal voting the following September. Carl Bildt decided that the OSCE should not only supervise but also implement results of the local voting. Implementation was bound to be most difficult, since major political struggles over control of key cities were continuing.

Ambassador Richard Ellerkmann of Germany, who succeeded Sir Kenneth Scott as the OSCE's Deputy Head of Mission in late 1996, developed a thorough implementation plan that was approved by Foreign Ministers at Sintra, Portugal, in May 1997. Officials of the SDS and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) consistently threatened to boycott but ultimately partici-

pated in generally effective local elections, again without violence.

Meantime, a crisis erupted in Republika Srpska when President Biljana Plavšić began opposing the SDS old guard, dissolved the RS Assembly, and called for OSCE supervision of elections of a new Assembly. Complex legal hurdles and hesitancy by much of the international community were gradually overcome.

I consistently argued to the Contact Group and OSCE Permanent Council that Ms. Plavšić should be supported. Our Mission's Political Director, Ambassador Vladimir Kuznetsov of the Russian Federation, helped us navigate through the situation. Finally, a new RS Assembly was elected in November 1997.

Having achieved a stunning victory, Biljana Plavšić began to put together an inter-ethnic governing coalition, and strengthened ties with the international community. In turn, her people began receiving greatly increased international aid. At the time, this represented a significant breakthrough in the peace process.

In my farewell statement to the Peace Implementation Council in Bonn in December 1997, I recalled all the electoral results of 1996 and 1997, our Mission's advances in building up democratization and human rights programmes, and our



regional stabilization initiatives that included overseeing the dismantling of 6,580 armaments. I concluded that the OSCE Mission had in most respects exceeded the tasks requested of it at Dayton.

On completing this extraordinary diplomatic experience, I considered it a great privilege to have participated in the early post-war efforts to consolidate a peace with justice.

October 1996: Children play in the ruins of Sarajevo.



Ambassador Robert Frowick was the first Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, serving from December 1995 to December 1997.

13 July 1997, Zvornik: An explosion destroys an OSCE vehicle, a grim reminder of the tense post-war environment.

April 2000, Sarajevo:  
Ambassador Barry  
announces results of  
municipal elections to  
the press.  
Photo: Reuters



# Boarding the train for Brussels

## Can Bosnian leaders part with war-baggage?

After nearly a decade, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has ended its involvement in elections. It is time to consider what we tried to do and how well we succeeded.



**BY ROBERT L. BARRY**

**M**y own role in elections began with my appointment as Head of Mission and chair of the Provisional Election Commission in January of 1998. The previous month, the Peace Implementation Council meeting in Bonn had signalled strong dissatisfaction at the slow pace of implementation of the Dayton Accords, the return of refugees and democratization.

The Bonn communiqué gave new powers to the High Representative and encouraged the OSCE to implement the results of the 1997 municipal elections and to prepare for national elections in 1998 which would contribute towards the return of refugees and displaced persons.

The first task of the OSCE Mission and its then 27 field offices was to press hard for the formation of multi-ethnic municipal

governments, combining incentives and sanctions. At the same time, we began the process of modifying the provisional election rules and regulations with the aim of promoting co-operation among ethnic groups.

An important first step was to bring new members into the Provisional Election Commission to lessen the impact of the nationalist parties. Adding representatives of civil society and “others” — those who did not feel they belonged to the Bosniac, Croat, or Serb ethnic groups — improved the atmosphere in the Commission and led to a number of reforms, most of which had been recommended by Commission members themselves.

### **ELECTORAL REFORMS**

Before the national elections in September 1998, steps were taken to increase the representation of women, ban paid political advertising on electronic media, require candidates

and elected officials to file financial disclosure statements, prevent the candidacy of individuals illegally occupying others' homes, and prevent incendiary media broadcasts.

Other reforms were introduced during the drafting of the election law, again designed to favour moderate candidates. Requiring candidates for office to give up positions on management boards of State companies helped avoid conflicts of interest and the diversion of State funds to political parties.

The introduction of open-list voting and the preferential voting system improved the chances of candidates with an appeal across ethnic lines. The removal of provisions enabling one constituent people to use the House of Peoples to block action on any legislation caused great controversy but cleared the way for a more workable system of government. Legal steps allowing the OSCE to audit political party financial records provided an important tool for fighting corruption.

#### **RIGHT TO RETURN**

In addition to the reform of electoral rules and the removal of candidates and elected officials blocking implementation of the Dayton Agreement, the OSCE Mission devoted a great deal of attention to promoting the return of those displaced by the conflict.

We felt that the right to return was a key human rights issue and could serve as a means to create a constituency for inter-ethnic co-operation. Because the OSCE Mission had the largest number of field offices among all the international organizations, it was able to play a key role in helping people apply for the return of their property and, later, in supporting returnees' political and economic rights. While both the OSCE and the High Representative took the position that refugees and displaced persons had the right to choose whether or not to vote at their pre-war constituencies, the OSCE made every effort to support their right to do so.

Besides administering the elections, the OSCE Mission's Democratization Department sought to improve the functioning of institutions of governance. We trained thousands of female candidates and continued to offer training to those who were elected. The press conference we organized during the Stability Pact Summit of July 1999 featuring women from all over south-eastern Europe was a high point in the effort to promote gender equality in the region.

The OSCE programme of work with municipal governments on financing issues made a genuine difference in terms of

transparency and inter-ethnic co-operation. Training and support for entity and national parliamentary assemblies resulted in progress, for example, in establishing the principle of civilian control of the military.

A key innovation during my time in Sarajevo was the founding of the Association of Election Officials of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which sets professional standards for election administrators and provides training to those on the frontlines of elections — members of polling station committees, election registrars, and the like. Today, this non-governmental organization plays a vital role in grassroots democracy.

#### **SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS**

Looking back from the perspective of 2005, it is clear that the country has made significant progress. The local elections on 2 October 2004 were the first to be organized *and* funded by Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens. The report of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission indicated that the election met international standards, and that the first direct elections of mayors worked well.

Nevertheless, the process of political and economic reform has been disappointing. Many leaders of nationalist parties continue to work behind the scenes for a future outside the framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite many calls to board the train for Brussels, these same leaders refuse to part with the baggage they cannot bring on the train. Most political party leaders resist steps to promote intra-party democracy. The lack of political reform continues to stand in the way of foreign investment and job creation.

In Washington, D.C., in November [2005], the three members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina agreed to a U.S. proposal that they negotiate amendments to the Dayton Constitution by March 2006. The goal is a simplified, affordable system of government that would promote accession to the EU. To achieve this goal, all three ethnic groups will have to put aside some of the baggage they have been encumbered with for the past decade, making it possible to get on the train to Brussels.

**Ambassador Robert L. Barry was Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina from January 1998 to June 2001. He considers the past three decades a "personal voyage with the CSCE/OSCE". Since leaving Sarajevo, he has either headed or taken part in a number of OSCE/ODIHR election observation or support missions.**



MISSION TO BIHRADIMLJA TRIFKOVIC

# Return to Prijedor

## Homecoming in the hamlet of Ališići

Prijedor emerged from the war radically changed. Almost all the Bosniacs and Croats — half of the town's total population of 112,000 — were forced to leave by the Serb municipal government that had assumed control of the area by ousting the elected mayor. Thousands of residents were killed or have never been heard from again.

Ališići village, December 2005: Returnee Almir Merdžić beaming in front of his reconstructed house.

**BY MASSIMO MORATTI**

Outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, I doubt if the name Prijedor rings a bell. So, eight years ago, when my family and friends would ask me where exactly in Bosnia and Herzegovina I had been assigned to, I would draw attention to images that were beamed around the world in the early 1990s — of masses of emaciated prisoners huddled together, staring blankly behind barbed wires. And inevitably, they would remember.

The discovery of several mass graves in the area has since confirmed that Prijedor

ranks next to Srebrenica at the top of the list of sites where the most heinous crimes against humanity were committed during the war. So far, indictments issued by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia have included 19 individuals from Prijedor.

My arrival in Prijedor in November 1997 coincided with Dayton's two-year anniversary. The first arrests of war-crime suspects by SFOR troops had occurred a few months earlier, when SFOR units arrested Milan "Mićo" Kovačević and killed Simo Drljača when he allegedly tried to resist. Apart from that, however, the situation had changed little, with Prijedor still labelled as a "black hole".

On one side, there were the Serbs — grappling with a complex past and dismissive of every allegation of war crime. To make matters worse, thousands of Serb refugees and displaced persons from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been relocated to houses that had been abandoned in haste.

On the opposite side, there were the tens of thousands of Bosniacs who, despite the trauma associated with their previous homes, were determined not to waver in their resolution to return where they belonged.

In the middle, there was the international community, whose mantra, starting in 1998,

Old Prijedor



PRIJEDOR/BA TEAM



was: “This is the year of returns.”

As a newly arrived OSCE human rights officer, I was not quite sure what this meant. Return where? To which houses? A more accurate description was *remains* of blown-up houses — eloquent reminders that they were not meant to be returned to. Just a year earlier, some 100 partially destroyed houses had been turned into rubble by anti-return thugs after the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced that their former occupants were planning a much-anticipated first visit since they fled.

But the tide was about to turn. The Peace Implementation Council had decided that the time had now come for displaced persons and refugees to come home at last — or at least that it was time to embark on the long road ahead. The message trickled down quickly to the people on the ground, to field officers like myself and other national and international personnel who would be responsible for implementing the process.

In Prijedor, this meant enforcing domestic officials’ compliance with the commitments signed up to by the country’s leaders at Dayton, and ensuring that they approved a municipal returns plan. The Peace Implementation Council, in 1997, had required every municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina to designate specific areas to which the first groups of people could return. Resettlement was discouraged. I still remember the fear and mutual suspicion prevailing among the communities and within the municipal council at that time.

From among the countless number of war-ravaged hamlets in the municipality, Ališići was deemed a good a place to start carrying out the plan. It was close to the town centre and to a major road junction, was almost half-way between the municipalities of Prijedor and Sanski, and was not far from the Inter-Entity Boundary Line.

As soon as it was decided that Ališići was *it*, no time was wasted. The first beneficiaries — no doubt the bravest and most hopeful among the expelled — were identified by the Lutheran World Federation, an international non-governmental organization that was also to carry out reconstruction work throughout the spring and summer.

By the beginning of October 1998, the first returning families were ready to spend the first night in their homes. The celebratory mood of the villagers (most of them with the last name “Ališić” of course), the Bosniac Deputy Mayor of Prijedor and the international development workers portended even better things to come.



It was a privilege for us to be part of their homecoming. In one of the newly rebuilt houses, we toasted our *rakija* to the families who, six years after being forced to flee from their own homes, dared to return to one of the most notoriously dangerous spots in the country.

Beneath this giddiness, however, we found it hard to disguise our anxiety and concern about the very real threat of attacks on the returnees. An OSCE colleague suggested that we spend the night with the families. Perhaps our OSCE-marked vehicles could serve as a deterrent? Reason prevailed, however, and we decided that the presence of SFOR troops patrolling the area would be precaution enough.

That was the beginning of one of the major return movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war. Fortunately, the widespread fear that violence would erupt proved wrong. It became clear that Serbs in Prijedor would tacitly accept the returns as something that simply had to happen; slowly, they too started to come to terms with their war-time past.

Today, more than 25,000 Bosniacs are believed to have moved back into their rebuilt homes in Prijedor. And it all started that memorable night in an otherwise obscure hamlet called Ališići.

**Massimo Moratti served as an OSCE Human Rights Officer in Prijedor from November 1997 to June 2000, after which he moved to the Sarajevo headquarters of the OSCE Mission where he served as Senior Human Rights Officer and Legal Advisor for Property until April 2004. He is now Executive Director of the International Committee for Human Rights, an independent human rights NGO based in Sarajevo.**

Ališići, Prijedor, December 2005: The road to recovery





OSCE MISSION TO BIHERMIN PODZIC

Crni Lug, near Bosansko Grahovo in northwest BiH: This Serb returnee has been able to move back into his newly restored home.

## Against all odds, OSCE field staff succeed in boosting respect for property rights

By Elmira Bayrasli

The Dayton Agreement was unequivocal: “All refugees and displaced persons have the right freely to return to their homes of origin,” reads Article 1 of the Agreement’s Annex 7. “They shall have the right to have restored to them property of which they were deprived in the course of hostilities since 1991 and to be compensated for any property that cannot be restored to them.”

During the first three years after Dayton, however, the right to return was conspicuously absent from local legislation. Authorities continued to apply a complex array of laws that served to hinder returns and to reinforce segregation and “ethnic cleansing” — to use a term that seeped into the world’s consciousness during the Balkan wars.

With the largest field presence in the country, the OSCE found itself at the forefront of enforcing property laws. Field staff responded to citizens’ complaints promptly and pursued cases relentlessly. The safe and secure environment of OSCE centres and offices boosted citizens’ confidence in the claims process.

Most property in the former Yugoslavia belonged either to the State or to State-owned companies. Up to 60 per cent of housing in the major cities of BiH fell within this category. Employers allocated apartments among employees and their families, granting them permanent “occupancy rights”, which meant less than full ownership. Occupancy rights could neither be bought nor sold but could be inherited by household members.

If occupants were absent from their apartment for more than six months, their right to live in it could be revoked.

This was the fate of thousands of families that had to leave their homes during the conflict. Their apartments were often reallocated among the inflow of refugees and displaced persons. Sometimes the new occupants were granted “temporary permits” and sometimes they simply moved in illegally. Often considered “spoils of war”, abandoned dwellings were also doled out to soldiers, police officers and other high-ranking officials in the community.

The campaign to reform the country’s property rights legislation turned out to be the longest and most contentious ever conducted by the international community. In 1998, laws concerning abandoned properties were repealed through the efforts of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) with the support of the OSCE Mission to BiH and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). New laws were drawn up, setting into motion an administrative procedure to process claims filed by returning refugees and displaced persons.

The new laws encountered a huge wave of resistance. Authorities in both BiH entities circumvented implementation by rigging property legislation with anomalies and loopholes. The new occupancy rights held by members of the majority group were protected against claims for repossession. Authorities made the process as difficult as possible by refusing to recognize the validity of documents, or by demanding evidence that claimants simply had no access to, or by using sheer intimidation.

The role of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in helping returnees to surmount these hurdles was to prove crucial. Strong international pressure and vigilance also ensured the proper implementation of Annex 7.

Monitoring by OSCE staff ensured that administrative authorities adhered to proper and transparent procedures. Whenever an obstruction took place, the OSCE notified its other international partners, especially the OHR, whose “Bonn powers” led to the dismissal of more than 30 unco-operative municipal officials, including some mayors.

As 2005 drew to a close, some 93 per cent of cases filed had resulted in the restoration of pre-war property — a remarkable achievement by the standards of any post-conflict society. Had it not been for the concerted efforts of the international community, it is unlikely that the injustices of war would have been redressed. A new legal order would have been built on the post-war status quo, and property disputes would have remained a source of conflict indefinitely.

Today, the right to recover “lost” property is widely recognized throughout the country. Nowhere else in the world has this right been applied so effectively.

**Elmira Bayrasli was the Spokesperson of the OSCE Mission to BiH from November 2003 to December 2005. This article is partly based on a document issued by the OHR, the UNHCR and the OSCE on the Property Law Implementation Plan (PLIP), designed to ensure that property rights are recognized and enforceable regardless of political considerations. The Plan represents the most complex legal component of the implementation of Annex 7.**



# Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Learning how to lobby results in returns

Along with other ethnic groups, the Roma community in Bosnia and Herzegovina suffered from massive displacement as a result of the 1991-1995 war. However, reclaiming their former dwellings has proved far more complex than for any other community. This hardly comes as a surprise, as many Roma families have traditionally lived in “informal settlements” — in homes that have been built without any construction permits, and on land that has been occupied without any legal titles.

**BY HÉLÈNE HARROFF-TAVEL**

“The war virtually wiped out Roma settlements, giving non-Roma free rein to take them over,” says Dervo Sejdić, the OSCE Mission’s Roma Monitor who also serves as Co-ordinator of the Council of Roma, an advocacy tool that he set up at the State level. “Companies built warehouses in their place. Sometimes the sites were designated as specially protected water-supply areas, as municipal lands or as buffer zones.”

The OSCE Mission has been working with Roma activists to help clarify and improve the community’s arrangements concerning residential and land use.

“Our role is to serve as political counselors, assisting Roma in their efforts to advocate and articulate their own interests *vis-à-vis* other parties so that families are able to obtain the rights to full ownership of the homes and property they are occupying.”

Today, more than 70 per cent of Bosnian

Roma are homeless — a severe setback for an already greatly marginalized community. In a study in late 2003 focusing on legal issues, the OSCE Mission found that in a sampling of 35 informal Roma settlements (out of an estimated total of 100), 23 stood on public land and 12 on private land. Most of the families did not have any security of tenure, making their residents — some 22,000 in total — vulnerable to eviction.

The success story behind Gorica, a hilly urban settlement in the heart of Sarajevo, aptly illustrates the unique challenges confronting Roma as they strive to bring a semblance of stability into their precarious socio-economic standing.

As Roma started the slow trek back home, they found themselves hard-pressed to prove where they had once lived — despite the fact that their dwellings had obviously been destroyed during the siege of the city.

“Establishing a permanent settlement in Gorica became a matter of survival,” says Ramiz Sejdić, President of “Roma Prosperity”, the non-governmental organization that is leading the project. “Donors were offering to help us rebuild, but disputes over ownership arose. The land was partly owned by a State enterprise and partly by the municipality. Sorting out our dilemma was taking enormous time and effort as we had no paper trail to speak of.”

Gorica residents knew they had to act

The Roma settlement in Gorica (left) stands in sharp contrast to others in the country such as one near Banja Luka (right). Photos: OSCE Mission to BiH/Hélène Harroff-Tavel



MISSION TO BIH/HELENE HARROFF-TAVEL

NGO leader Ramiz Sejdić has been leading efforts to rebuild Gorica.

drastically. They had been petitioning local authorities for this land for more than 50 years, and now the destruction of their homes had raised the stakes considerably.

They mobilized several international organizations, including the OSCE, to help settle their housing status once and for all. The OSCE Mission focused on teaching community leaders how to present their case to the authorities in Sarajevo. A series of workshops was organized to teach Roma how to write letters petitioning for the recognition of their property rights.

Learning the art and skill of advocacy as part of an intense lobbying campaign has paid off. With financial backing from the Netherlands Government, Roma have since been able to build a permanent settlement to replace their pre-war homes. A neat row of pristine white houses are now home to 48 families with some 400 members.

Ramiz Sejdić has just moved into one of the new units with his wife and six children. "We used to live in makeshift quarters here in Gorica," he says, looking back at the tumultuous past. "Then, just before the war broke out, I had to go to Germany with my daughter to seek medical treatment for her. Little did I know that my whole family would soon join me there as refugees."

Five years after the war, the Sejdić family decided to return. "I knew that our home was in ruins but somehow I felt I just had to take part in rebuilding the country," Mr. Sejdić says. "We found refuge in an abandoned and partially destroyed house before we finally moved into this new place."

Although the rebuilding of the Gorica settlement has dramatically improved the lives of Roma in the capital, the quest for durable solutions to the problem of securing legal tenure for those who live in informal settlements is by no means over. In Mostar, for example, it is not uncommon for Roma to sleep in the streets or in abandoned and war-torn buildings pending a decision on their right to return to their pre-war homes.

Useful lessons can be drawn from Gorica, says Roma Monitor Dervo Sejdić:

"Firstly, although the expertise of the OSCE and the international community is crucial in navigating political and legal processes, Roma themselves are the only people who can provide the major impetus to clarifying the legal ambiguities surrounding their living conditions.

"Secondly, Roma should be made aware that the road to legitimate housing calls not only for long term-commitment but also for courage, persistence and vision.

"Thirdly, and no less importantly, making the transition from uncertain to secure housing is possible only if local authorities, Roma communities and civil society work together in a spirit of mutual confidence and co-operation."



Héléne Harroff-Tavel is an Intern with the Press and Public Information Department of the OSCE Mission to BiH.



MISSION TO BIH/HELENE HARROFF-TAVEL

Two young Roma girls pose for a picture with Richard Medić, OSCE spokesperson in Mostar.

## Roma demographics

- A BiH-wide survey by the OSCE in 2002, financially supported by the Council of Europe, identified about 100 informal Roma settlements in more than 30 municipalities. The community in Sarajevo is estimated at about 8,000.
- The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Council of Europe estimate the country's total Roma population to be between 30,000 and 60,000, but some NGOs put it between 80,000 and 100,000.



**BiH Volonterski kamp**  
Bosanska Krupa 2002  
07. - 27. juli



# Democracy from the ground up in BiH

## NGO centres keep OSCE legacy alive

**BY JOSH LAPORTE**

Back in 1997, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina hit upon an untried and untested idea: creating special spaces in neglected and politically sensitive areas around the country designed to offer citizens a wide range of hard-to-obtain publications at their fingertips.

From these humble beginnings, the “Reading Rooms” project of the Mission’s nascent Democratization Department eventually blossomed into *Nove Nade* (“New Hope”), a nationwide network of up to nine non-profit Democracy Centres that aim to foster the development of civil society through local initiatives.

Nearly nine years later, after being weaned off OSCE funding in 1999, many of the Democracy Centres are surviving — and indeed thriving — and continue to be a pivotal part of grassroots efforts to inject transparency and openness into the political process. Most significantly, the Centres remain true to the OSCE Mission’s original intent: to integrate the citizenry into the democratization process.

In Višegrad, which shares its eastern border with Serbia and Montenegro, Mila Gračanin has reason to be proud of the self-sufficient Democracy Centre that she heads. “And to think I was clueless about NGOs when I first applied to work in the town’s

newly opened Reading Room,” she says.

It did not take long for Ms. Gračanin, one of thousands of displaced Sarajevo residents, to fully grasp the vital role civil society can play in her country’s transition to democracy. She threw all her energy into the project, weathering some early storms.

“During the post-war years, most people did not place much trust in the ‘not-for-profit’ sector, associating it with corruption,” she says, referring to the unfortunate cases of bogus NGOs that ran away with grant money. “We had to endure a lot of name-calling.”

Boro Ninković, Secretary of the Višegrad Municipal Assembly, says that it was *Nove Nade* that turned this negative image around.

Meanwhile, at the opposite end of the country, as the Višegrad Reading Room was taking off, Samir Halilović was also busy getting another Reading Room up and running in the northwestern town of Bihać. Now Director of the Bihać Democracy Centre, Mr. Halilović looks back on the heady era of “information de-blockade”, when newspapers first started appearing all across the country.

Mersiha Čaušević, the OSCE Mission’s Deputy Spokesperson, was a Press Officer in Bihać in those early years. “The Democracy Centre was immediately embraced by the people. They considered it

Bosanska Krupa, summer 2002: Student volunteers from Democracy Centres all across BiH repair a small bridge near Bihać. Photo: Bihać Democracy Centre/ Samir Halilović



Mila Gračanin (right) is proud that Višegrad's Democracy Centre, which she runs, is self-sufficient.

an extension of the OSCE field office itself, which made it highly credible in their eyes.”

By spring 1999, the Mission decided it was time to withdraw its support from the Centres, nudging them towards independence — but only after it had presented them with furniture and computers and had gathered the Centres’ directors in Sarajevo for training on fund-raising, marketing and other sustainability issues.

Ms. Gračanin recalls this time poignantly, and the panic that came with it. “I didn’t think I could come up with any solutions that would make the Višegrad Centre run itself,” she says. “I didn’t think I had the necessary survival skills, but the meetings in Sarajevo gave all of us the confidence at least to try.”

What happened next is a classic tale of survival of the fittest. The Centres in Livno, Mrkonjić Grad and Bijeljina simply closed down, while their more assertive counterparts such as those in Višegrad and Bihać vigorously launched joint fund-raising activities, sought out partners and consortiums, reached out to potential donors and took on active membership in the *Nove Nade* network.

Through connections, Ms. Gračanin quickly forged a partnership with the Swedish Olaf Palme Foundation, securing funding for four years that enabled her to expand the Centre’s services.

In Bihać, Mr. Halilović teamed up with the Open Society Institute and CARE International on programmes for young people and reproductive health issues, leading to the creation of the Bihać Democracy Centre’s own in-house facilities for the youth and for the media.

Both directors have continued to attract a succession of grants and projects. The Centre in Višegrad has recently received USAID funding to be part of “Teledom”

— a network of 24 Internet clubs across the country where users can access online information free of charge.

Following the same developmental path taken earlier by NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe, the Centres are increasingly tapping into private and commercial sponsorships and into their own potential to generate income.

In Višegrad, computer classes are held for employees of the Drina River hydroelectric plant, while in Bihać, English lessons are proving very popular among the general public.

Further funding, albeit modest and largely symbolic, comes from the municipalities themselves. “Our civil society support programme adds credibility to the NGO sector, serving as a sort of municipal seal of approval,” says Zdravko Žuža, spokesperson of the Mayor of Višegrad. “This is important in a country where civil society organizations are still generally viewed with suspicion.”

Both Centres maintain links with their respective OSCE field office, working jointly with them on the Mission’s democratization projects — from nurturing entrepreneurship among young people to promoting freedom of information at the level of municipalities.

Mila Gračanin and Samir Halilović look forward to many more years of dynamic partnership with local citizens and the international community. They know that the sustainability of their Democracy Centres rests squarely on their shoulders and that they are the guardians of the OSCE’s rich legacy.

To anyone who will listen, they never tire of repeating: “If you don’t fight for your rights, don’t expect anybody else to do it for you.”



**Josh LaPorte is a Senior Public Information Officer in the Mission to BiH.**



# Trebinje's Neighbourhood Watch takes on a life of its own

Trebinje is known for its rich architectural heritage and its picture-postcard setting.

BY JOSH LAPORTE

“What if a cow is walking towards the centre of town? Who do you call?” asks Željko Vukanović, Democratization Officer at the OSCE Mission’s field office in the city of Trebinje, on the extreme southeast corner of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The question is not frivolous: It cuts to the heart of an OSCE-initiated project that has caught on rapidly among residents, the police force and municipal leaders.

The Neighbourhood Watch Programme — more descriptively known in the Bosnian language as “Police and Local Inspections in

Local Communities” — came about after a public opinion survey carried out by a radio station in Trebinje in early 2004 revealed that safety and security issues ranked high in the list of residents’ concerns. A city of 40,000, Trebinje borders on



Trebinje’s police: at the service of the neighbourhood.

both Croatia and Montenegro.

The field office immediately swung into action and brought all interested parties together at regularly scheduled discussions. “It gave people their first chance to speak directly with their elected officials and with the police about issues related to crime and quality of life issues,” says Dušan Kolak, who was the city’s first project co-ordinator.

Not all went smoothly initially. The hangover from communism and the war had left most citizens wary of law-and-order authorities.

“The biggest obstacle we faced was people’s fear of reporting anything to the police,” says Mr. Kolak. Neither did they have high expectations of their municipal officials: “Around here, the general mentality was, ‘Don’t tell — and if you do, nothing will happen anyway’.”

The OSCE’s Mr. Vukanović confirms this view. “People simply didn’t understand that the municipal administration is supposed to be a service, and that public servants should be held accountable for their actions and for their use of public money.”

In the early days of the programme, complaints focused on speeding drivers, illegally dumped garbage, vandalized street lights, car theft, and of course those stray cows. Then, amazing things started happening after the regular community dialogue: the police began responding to complaints — and doing so quickly. This “novel” concept — that if one turns to the local police, they will in fact listen and try to come to help — gained acceptance.

Within months, a 24-hour hotline was hooked up directly to the police and to city inspectors, financed from the municipality’s coffers. Requests from the public shot up 30 per cent. The project is now fully funded by the city, which plans to increase the budget in the coming years.

“Once citizens saw results, they became less fearful and less cynical,” says Vedrana Lugonja, current city co-ordinator of the project. “The programme began to take on a life of its own.”

Indeed, the city’s Neighbourhood Watch risks becoming a victim of its own success: minor-offence cases at the municipal court now have a waiting period of up to three years. The city is attempting to settle some cases out of court and to assist judges in organizing their case-loads.

Plans are afoot to expand the programme around the Trebinje area, moving northwards to the smaller towns of Bileća and Gacko. With the OSCE taking the lead, city officials will provide training to their less experienced counterparts to help them implement “best practices” in their own Neighbourhood Watch projects.

For Mr. Kolak, the project’s most useful lesson is that safety and security issues are a two-way street. “Citizens have to be the eyes and ears of the police,” he says. “Without this help, there is no way police officers can do their job.”

“In Trebinje we knew that the project had become self-sustaining when we saw how the concept had become ingrained into the local culture,” says Željko Vukanović. “People have learned to communicate with the police and with municipal officials — and with one another.”

As for the local cattle population, their days of strolling into town are numbered.

# OSCE's role in BiH remains crucial

The OSCE will increasingly provide the “eyes and ears on the ground for the rest of a slimmed-down international community”, Lord Paddy Ashdown told the Permanent Council in Vienna on 15 December. It was his last appearance before the OSCE body as High Representative and European Union Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, a double function he had held for three and a half years. Former German minister Christian Schwarz-Schilling succeeded him on 31 January. Here are excerpts from Lord Ashdown's address:

A decade after the bloodletting of the early nineties, a new Bosnia and Herzegovina has emerged. Remarkably, despite the bitter fighting during the war, the people of Bosnia are together building the structures of a modern European State.

The armies that fought each other are in the process of being unified under the command of the State, due in large measure to the leadership of NATO and the OSCE. ... In providing a home, staff and expertise for the Defence Reform Commission, the OSCE Mission's Department for Security Cooperation has made a signal contribution to one of the greatest successes BiH has registered over the past three years.

The 13 police forces that were established under the Peace Agreement have started a reform process that will reach its conclusion with the creation of one BiH-wide police force.

One million refugees have returned to their homes. The Mostar bridge has been re-built and the city has been unified.

There is a single tax system, a single customs service, one judiciary and one intelligence service — in short, the outline structure of a modern, European and highly decentralized State.

All these have been achieved through the fortitude and talent of the people of BiH.

On 25 November [2005], BiH Statehood Day, Commissioner Olli Rehn opened negotiations on Bosnia's Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). This honoured the EU's commitment to the people of the Balkans, made publicly at Thessaloniki in June 2003, that full EU integration is their natural and ultimate destiny.

At a time when EU member States are starting a genuine debate about the desirability of further enlargement, it is crucial that no one should be in any doubt that Europe is the only glue that binds the Balkans to a single, peaceful future.

Amid intense public discussion of the SAA process and, at the same time, heightened debate about the need for constitutional reform, this is an appropriate time to consider the inter-



OHR MOSTAR/MA. BERKIC

Mostar: High Representative Paddy Ashdown, the leading civilian authority in BiH under Dayton, on one of his regular visits with common folk.

national community's continued role in BiH. It is fair to say that without the international community's commitment and engagement, BiH would not have come this far so quickly.

It is also right to argue that the phase of intensive and intrusive State-building in BiH must now come to an end. The Office of the High Representative (OHR), in particular, has had extraordinary powers to deliver progress by removing recalcitrant officials and imposing legislation. These were necessary policy instruments in the immediate post-conflict period, when an obstructive housing official could prevent refugees returning to Srebrenica, or key government functionaries were regularly shown to be protecting war criminals.

But today, the situation has fundamentally changed. BiH is now on the highway to Europe. It is time to leave the days of coercion and imposition behind.

The biggest responsibility must now fall to the people of BiH and their elected representatives. The citizens of BiH must re-engage in public life.

With the progressive withdrawal of the temporary organizations, following the opening of SAA negotiations, greater responsibility will fall upon the permanent international organizations that will outlive the OHR: the EC, the international finance institutions, and of course, the OSCE.

The OSCE's agenda contains some of the most important keys to ensuring that BiH reaches its full potential. Many of the priorities that will be uppermost in 2006 are currently in OSCE's mandate. These include:

- Functional and public administrative reform, reducing the cost of government, and allowing SAA negotiations to proceed effectively. No State can build citizens' loyalty when 70 per cent of their taxes are spent on bureaucrats, not services;
- Strengthening civil society and voter education in the run-up to October 2006, the first that will be premised on the SAA reform agenda; and above all,
- Mobilizing the young people of BiH and tackling the scandal



of a woefully — and in many cases needlessly — under-funded school and university system.

Despite all the OSCE's efforts, progress in education reform has been too slow, and differences in the quality of educational provision across the country remain far too great.

The education system as a whole must be a bulwark against ethnic, religious, cultural and any other kind of prejudice or segregation. We cannot be said to have succeeded as long as children from different ethnic backgrounds go to school at different times in different classrooms, to be taught different history by different teachers.

This, I think, is where the OSCE Mission to BiH still has a crucial part to play.

Fortunately, the issues on the OSCE's agenda are mutually reinforcing. The reform of education, the affirmation of the rule of law, the protection of human rights and the maturation of civil society *can* and *should* constitute a virtuous circle — and serve to underpin all the innovations in administration and governance that the EU accession process will necessarily entail. Successful implementation of all these is essential for BiH to reach its potential.

But as we shift from “hard” to “soft” peace implementation in the transition period that follows the opening of the SAA, we will rely increasingly on the “soft power” of multilateral bodies such as the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

As the OHR progressively withdraws from the field to concentrate on monitoring at higher government levels, the OSCE Mission to BiH will have much to do. It will increasingly provide the eyes and ears on the ground for the rest of a slimmed-down international community.

The opening of the SAA marks a new phase in which the international community needs to hand over the lead responsibility for reform to the BiH authorities. The OSCE Mission will need to be in the thick of this discussion over the next year or so. We need to get the formula right.

Despite the progress evinced by the opening of SAA negotiations, it is foolish to think that scars that run so deep will heal themselves quickly. It takes decades to change the chip in people's brains. Anyone who thinks that the Bosnia's EU accession process will be the same as, say, Lithuania's should visit Sarajevo and Srebrenica.

We need to offer tailor-made solutions for the very complex challenges that this country continues to pose. And we need to pull all those elements together as a determined team. We should not expect the solutions to come overnight; peace-building is measured in decades.

But in the end, how these challenges are resolved is not up to the international community. It is up to the people of BiH.

BIH FOREIGN MINISTER MLADEN IVANIĆ

## “Results of OSCE's work speak for themselves”

Mladen Ivanić was one of nearly 40 Foreign Ministers and some 860 representatives from 60 countries who took part in the 13th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Ljubljana on 5 and 6 December 2005. An economist by training, he served as Prime Minister of Republika Srpska from 2001 until his appointment as Foreign Minister in 2003. Here are excerpts from his speech on 5 December 2005:

**J**ust two weeks ago, and 10 years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, Bosnia and Herzegovina found itself at a significant juncture in its history: It opened negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union.

This brought us much closer to full membership of the European Union than we have ever been. Although we still have a long road to travel, our citizens now have a much clearer view of the horizon.

Alongside their efforts in transforming the political landscape, BiH authorities have also been tackling reforms in the defence sector. Starting on 1 January 2006, instead of three ministries of defence, we will have only one — at the State level.

Concerning the remaining requirement — full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia — the performance of our leaders in 2005, especially those of Republika Srpska, is testimony to our determination to fulfil our obligations.

To prepare the way ahead, the leaders of eight major political parties recently held talks in Brussels and Washington, D.C., to explore constitutional changes. Despite the many challenges and the varying views, I personally am convinced that gradually we will come to agreements on specific issues, demonstrating our readiness to make major decisions.

We consider the OSCE name synonymous with professionalism and skill in carrying out reforms that are relevant to each and every BiH citizen: raising democratic standards, assisting refugees to return, implementing property laws, monitoring war-crimes trials, and helping bring about the many changes in our defence, education and judiciary systems. The excellent results speak for themselves.

Despite these achievements, we need the continued engagement of the international community.

The OSCE's expertise, experience and three-dimensional approach have proved especially relevant to BiH, which is why we welcome the Organization's new instruments and initiatives aimed at combating terrorism and organized crime, and preventing trafficking in human beings. In combining our efforts to tackle these threats, we realize how essential it is to intensify cross-border co-operation in the region.

You can count on the support of Bosnia and Herzegovina for projects and activities to be undertaken by the OSCE and its institutions in the coming years.





BOBOS/SHUAN ZHU/OLYCOM

The OSCE should not lose sight of the fact that “action on substance rather than perpetual reform of its working structures” is ultimately what matters most, said Lithuanian Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis in his address to the Permanent Council shortly before the Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana. The Foreign Minister spoke with the *OSCE Magazine* about how his country’s “special geographical place” and unique democratization experience were being used to advantage within the Organization.

INTERVIEW: FOREIGN MINISTER ANTANAS VALIONIS OF LITHUANIA

## Lithuania finds its niche

### Dynamic “good-neighbour” policy serves as role model

**OSCE Magazine:** Do you remember where you were when the Helsinki Final Act was signed 30 years ago?

**Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis:** I remember the momentous event that took place in Finlandia Hall in 1975. I was 25 years old then. Although I was working in a totally different area, I was fully aware of the implications of the historic gathering and of the many Helsinki Committees that citizens formed to monitor the signatories’ compliance with the Agreement’s human rights provisions.

Things were very different for us then, and the Helsinki Accord presented us with many new opportunities. We concentrated on human rights-related issues, such as freedom to worship, which was frowned upon within the USSR.

Then in 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev was elected Soviet leader and we witnessed the unfolding of *perestroika*. Lithuania seized the chance to declare independence on 11 March 1990. We have come a long way since then.

In fact, I am sure you will agree that your early participation in the Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE) served you in good stead.

Things moved quickly from the time we became participants in the CSCE on 10 September 1991 and signed the Helsinki Final Act the following October. At the end of that year, we signed the one-year-old Charter of Paris, the landmark agreement within the Helsinki Process that signalled the beginning of the post-Cold War era. The CSCE’s contribution towards ensuring the withdrawal of Russian troops from Lithuania — completed in August 1993 — was a very important one. More than a decade later, in April 2004, we were accepted as members of NATO. The following May we joined the European Union.

**What are your thoughts on the future of the OSCE 30 years after the Helsinki signing and 10 years after the CSCE’s transformation into the OSCE?**

The period surrounding the anniversary is a difficult one for the OSCE. In my address to the Permanent Council on

27 October [2005], I tried to put things into perspective by emphasizing that whatever the outcome of the reform discussion, we should never forget that the OSCE's purpose is to act on substance rather than to undertake perpetual reform of its working structures.

My feeling is that it is the willingness of decision-makers to devote full attention to contentious issues such as "frozen" conflicts — rather than to the structures themselves — that gets the OSCE into gear. Strengthening regional co-operation at all levels would go a long way towards maintaining peace and stability in the OSCE countries.

Having said that, we should not forget that we have made remarkable progress on our basic priorities — democratization, human rights, and security and stability in the OSCE region — and this remains our biggest success.

**From the perspective of a new EU and NATO member such as Lithuania, what are the remaining advantages of being an OSCE participating State?**

It's true that there *are* many forums in which the same issues are being discussed. But the composition of these bodies is not exactly the same. The Russian Federation, the United States, and the countries of Central Asia, for example, do not belong to the European Union. Russia-NATO consultations are important but remain limited. Here at the OSCE, our format is all-inclusive, and the scope and range of the issues discussed are definitely wider.

From Lithuania's point of view, since the OSCE is a regional security organization, one of its enormous advantages is that it can count on about a dozen sub-regional groups and organizations, including those of its Partners for Co-operation.

Take the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), which was formed in 1992 and currently consists of 11 States. Lithuania believes that, within the OSCE, this group should draw up new partnerships with counterparts in south-eastern Europe, the Black Sea area, the Caucasus and in Central Asia in fields such as environmental and energy security.

We also believe strongly in the OSCE's potential to manage and help resolve conflicts, especially frozen conflicts, which I've already mentioned.

In many cases, what is sorely lacking is the political will to provide the OSCE with the resources it needs to be active in the entire crisis cycle — from fostering political dialogue, to improving field offices' ability

to monitor issues, assess local needs, and build local authorities' capacities in policing and other key areas.

We also value the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and strongly urge that its tools be strengthened so that it can carry out its tasks properly. By the way, I'm proud to say that Lithuanian nationals take part in election observation missions and that this contribution will continue to grow.

**A small and stable country steeped in the tradition of both Eastern and Western Europe as well as a model of good neighbourliness: these are what people associate most with Lithuania. How are you using that to advantage within the OSCE?**

It is indeed true that we are located in a rather special geographical place. From a political vantage point, we can say that our "East" — Russia's Kaliningrad region — is in the West. Some 30 km from our capital, Vilnius, we have another neighbour — Belarus. We share a border with Poland, which is an EU and NATO country just as we are.

And of course we share the well-known "Baltic experience" not only with Latvia and Estonia but also with our Nordic neighbours. This continues to serve us all well in many areas, in the fight against trafficking in human beings for example.

This is what drives Lithuania's dynamic foreign policy. We are interested in sharing our experience with our eastern neighbours, especially those in the Southern Caucasus. Since we were able to complete negotiations for EU accession and are now fully-fledged members, we can serve as a good role model.

At the same time, we have good and pragmatic relations with Russia. I think Europe can feel secure about our neighbourhood. If Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and Russia reach a stage when they can be called truly democratic, Europe will be in an extremely favourable strategic situation indeed.

In this connection, the agreement reached between Tbilisi and Moscow in May [2005] on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia makes me optimistic that this long-drawn out issue will finally be resolved within the next few years.

**How would you sum up Lithuania's unique democratization experience?**

Lithuania's transition to being a democratic country with a market-oriented economy is still at the work-in-progress stage. The tasks may seem simple since the guidelines are there, but the most difficult



### Lithuania Facts & Figures

<b>Population</b>	3.4 million
<b>Shared borders</b>	Belarus (724 km), Latvia (610 km), Russia (303 km), Poland (110 km), Baltic Sea coast (99 km)
<b>Ethnic composition</b>	Lithuanians (83.5 per cent), Poles (7 per cent), Russians (6 per cent), Belarusians (1.5 per cent), Ukrainians (1 per cent), others (1 per cent)
<b>GDP per capita, 2004</b>	5,264 euros. Since 2001, GDP has been growing by an average of 7.3 per cent a year, among the highest growth rates in Europe.

part is by no means over: changing people’s way of thinking. We are still tackling many negative aspects of life in Lithuania — in the areas of human rights and corruption, for example.

This is why we are now focusing on improving people’s socio-economic situation by modernizing our economy as much as we can. We have had five very successful years. We are doing well; our impressive growth rates have been among the highest in Europe.

But you never believe politicians when they say everything is all right, do you! We still have a lot to do. Real life is more complex than that, and besides, people’s expectations are usually greater than politicians’ ability to fulfil them. The march towards progress has to continue every day.

**In July 2004, Lithuania applied for the OSCE chairmanship in 2010. What was the driving force behind this move?**

We value the OSCE’s huge potential for strengthening co-operative security, democratic values and human rights in the whole Euro-Atlantic area.

And I believe it is time to move from being “consumers” of democracy and security to becoming more active participants who can help determine the destiny of the

region. Lithuania participates in a number of international missions, including those in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The Provincial Reconstruction Team that has been hard at work in Afghanistan’s Ghor Province since June 2005 is Lithuanian-led.

We have gained some valuable experience in the Council of Europe where I chaired the Committee of Ministers in 2001-2002 for six months. Having personally experienced the intense efforts that these crucial positions demand, I can well imagine what a huge challenge it will pose for the future Foreign Minister to be at the helm of the OSCE. The OSCE’s membership is larger — 55 against the 46 in the Council of Europe — and the position lasts one full year.

**Do you foresee your being that Foreign Minister?**

I have held this post for a total of five years in three separate terms. My first appointment started on 9 November 2000 and I’m still here. The job involves travelling abroad about 160 to 170 days a year. That means being airborne about 260 hours a year — which adds up to more than 10 days. No, I don’t think I’ll be the Foreign Minister in 2010, but wherever I’ll be, don’t worry, I’ll still be active!

**Your visit follows shortly after the opening of an exhibition of the works of Lithuanian-American artist Ray Bartkus.**

Art and artists have always had an enormous following in Lithuania. Ray Bartkus, who was born and educated in Lithuania, decided to live in the United States not too long ago, so, unlike his compatriots before him, he left under comparatively more “normal” circumstances. We have struggled to bring about the free movement of people, goods and capital, which has made it possible for people like Ray to settle in a place of their own choosing and where they feel they can be most creative.

**Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis started his career as a foreman at the Kaunas Meat Processing Plant, moving on to a senior post in the Ministry of Agriculture. He later headed Lithuania’s Delegation responsible for EU Accession Negotiations and was his country’s Ambassador to Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. He holds a PhD in Political Science from Warsaw University. He is also a graduate of the Kaunas Polytechnic Institute’s Faculty of Mechanics.**

# Art as commentary

## Treading the delicate waters of OSCE diplomacy



Shared values and deep historical and cultural ties within the OSCE community were put on artistic display when the Lithuanian and U.S. Missions pooled efforts to bring the published lithographs, etchings and pencil drawings of artist Rimvydas (Ray) Bartkus to Vienna in October 2005. A graduate of the Vilnius Art Academy, Mr. Bartkus, 44, is one of the most successful illustrators in the United States today. The *OSCE Magazine* spoke with the New York resident after the opening of his exhibition at the Hofburg.

**OSCE Magazine:** “Connectivity Power”: What exactly did you have in mind when you chose this as the theme of your exhibition?

**Ray Bartkus:** It was actually U.S. Ambassador Julie Finley who turned it into the title of the show after coming across it in one of my illustrations. Americans are great at marketing and come to think of it, the choice seemed very appropriate.

**What were your prime considerations in choosing which works to display at the Hofburg?**

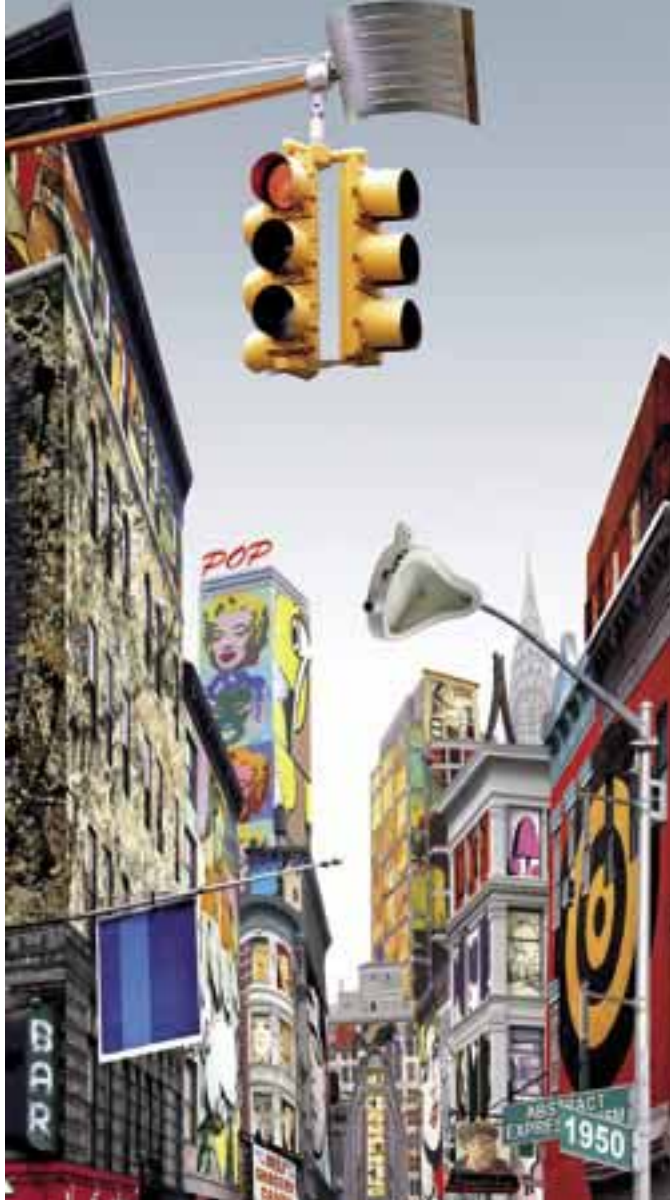
As I was going through hundreds of my sketches and art work, I was surprised to see how many took quite a critical or

sarcastic or ironic view towards world affairs. I had a hard time selecting those that would be relevant and at the same time “inoffensive” to the OSCE ambassadors present. But hey, we like to criticize everybody and everything in New York — it makes the world spin and maybe improve a little.

**Does one have to be a “political animal” to be able to illustrate global concerns such as nuclear proliferation and terrorism?**

Politics, the economy, science and the arts affect everyone — unless one is an ignoramus. Some of us choose to express an

“Psychomanhattananalysis”  
by Ray Bartkus for *New York Times Book Review*, 1995



1



2



3



4



5

Illustrations by Ray Bartkus

1 "Paint City", *New York Times Book Review*, 25 December 2005

2 "Deglobalization", *Harper's Magazine*, 2004

3 "Witch", *New York Times Book Review*, 2001

4 "Cleanup of Ground Zero", *New York Times Book Review*, 2002

5 "Peace Now?", *Time Magazine* cover, 6 November 1995

idea or two through an artistic medium — and those who are not “political animals” might actually have a fresher perspective. **Do give us a peek into the world of magazine illustration, especially in a city known for its vibrancy and its diversity.**

Every day, art directors at the better magazines receive up to 50 portfolios from all over the world from artists and illustrators hoping for a “gig”. It is this diverse competition that keeps me on my toes.

Once in a while it so happens that I’ve had too many conflicting deadlines, and I’ve had to refuse assignments, but that’s risky — that art director might never call again. **What is it like to be on the covers and in the pages of some of the most prestigious publications in the United States?**

The pay is good and the assignments are extremely interesting — most of the time anyway. I’ve had the opportunity to illustrate the writings of Salman Rushdie, Francis Fukuyama, Margaret Atwood, to name just a few.

**How easy or difficult is it to illustrate articles whose editorial line or message you don’t agree with?**

I am always interested in listening to an opposing opinion, and I am rarely forced to be very literal and to follow the text exactly. A strong visual image is more important than a literal explanation.

**When is an illustration more effective than a photograph?**

Computer programmes such as Photoshop have blurred the line between the two media.

Recently, with the help of Photoshop, I created a fictional Greek god for a book on ancient Greece. Later, I received a few e-mails from prominent scholars asking me which museum had the piece!

**What’s the shortest time you’ve been given for an assignment?**

Three to four hours is quite standard for *The Wall Street Journal*.

**Any favourite publications to work for and why?**

This is my ideal scenario: The editor has given the art director a great deal of free-



dom and responsibility to carry out a vision for the publication's overall design and concept. The art director in turn gives the artist the freedom and responsibility to create a needed illustration — from conceiving the idea to its final realization.

In my 15 years of working in this field I know of only one publication that operates under conditions similar to these, and I am proud to say I work for it: It's the *New York Times Book Review* under Art Director Steven Heller.

**How can someone with deep Lithuanian roots illustrate articles by (mostly) American writers so effectively?**

Years ago, when foreigners would come to a Soviet bloc country, they would notice all the red banners on every corner advertising the Communist Party. Growing up in this environment, I hardly took notice of them. Sometimes it takes an outsider to point out the most obvious aspects of American life, to come up with a different interpretation. Luckily for me, New Yorkers are accepting of differing points of view.

**What role did the exhibition at the OSCE play in your personal and professional life? And in your parents' lives?**

It's always good to observe one's works from a different light — their faults and strengths can be seen more easily. As for my parents, they were of course thrilled to be present at the opening. Ten years ago, they would have had to apply for a visa from the Austrian Government. And some 15 years ago, Soviet authorities wouldn't have allowed them to travel abroad at all, especially to meet a son who works for the "rotten mouthpieces of capitalism". At that time, too, to have been able to afford to fly from Vilnius to Vienna just for a show would have been the stuff of fairy tales. I am thrilled by the opportunities that the expansion of the EU has opened up. Connectivity Power!



Ray Bartkus: "I consider myself a 'Vilniuser' in New York."



U.S. MISSION/PETER KLOPF

"The United States, a nation of immigrants, has always been enriched by the talents of those who came to our shores," U.S. Ambassador Julie Finley said at the opening of "Connectivity Power" at the Hofburg's *Neuer Saal*. "Mr. Bartkus, who will always draw from his Lithuanian roots, now takes his energy from the vibrancy of New York."

Lithuanian Ambassador Rytis Paulauskas added: "Working as an illustrator is a delicate task in this rapidly changing world. Rimvydas' creations must quickly and accurately reflect political and cultural developments. Although the art of illustration seems to focus on the fleeting, the artist's reflections on the issues are lasting and relevant to us all."



U.S. MISSION/PETER KLOPF