

JULY 2006

OSCE

Republic of Montenegro is welcomed
as OSCE's 56th participating State

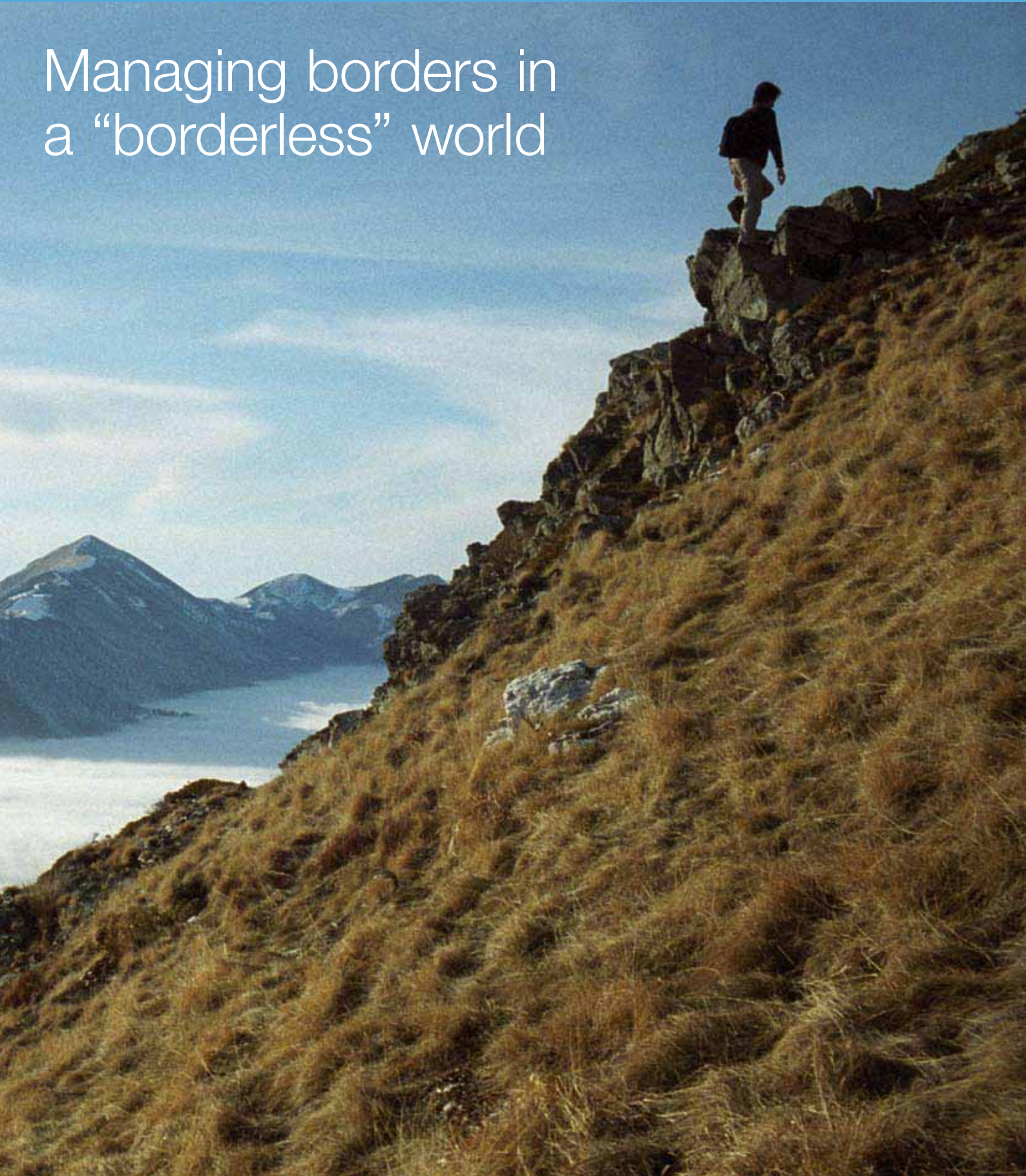
MAGA

The OSCE and the EU:
Complementing each other's strengths

ZINE

Decentralizing decision-making:
More than just a buzz phrase in Skopje

Managing borders in a "borderless" world





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The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is a pan-European security body whose 56 participating States span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

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- OSCE Mission to Serbia
- OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

Message from the Director of the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre



OSCE/MIKHAIL LEVSTAFEV

Managing borders and keeping them safe and secure from today's new threats have become a priority concern in the OSCE area, and understandably so. Whether the fight is against terrorism, transnational organized crime, illegal migration or illicit trafficking, it means tackling a whole range of complex issues related to borders.

Many of these boundaries were created at the end of the Cold War, which had led to the emergence of a number of fledgling States. It is crucial that these new frontiers serve as gateways for co-operation rather than as obstacles to good-neighbourly relations.

The articles in this issue of the *OSCE Magazine* describe how the Organization is now in a sufficiently strong position to promote closer co-operation between participating States in border-related issues.

Our work in south-eastern Europe, aimed at promoting joint cross-border activities as an integral part of modern border management systems, offers some useful lessons. One that stands out is the importance of creating regional and international partnerships to support the reform of border management agencies at the national level.

The participating States signaled their collective political will to work more closely together on border matters when they adopted the OSCE's first Border Security and Management Concept at the Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana in December 2005.

Since then, States have been developing ways and means of implementing the Concept through the most effective use of OSCE structures and institutions, best existing practices and lessons that have been learned.

With the Concept serving as a framework for co-operation, we are now one step closer to realizing the OSCE's commitment to promote open and secure borders in a free, democratic and more integrated OSCE area without dividing lines.

Lamberto Zannier
 Vienna
 July 2006

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Cover: The popular Brezovica resort in the Shar Mountain serves as the border of Kosovo with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
Photo: OSCE/Lubomir Kotek

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Open, safe and secure

Managing borders in the OSCE area

“Border”: What does the word really mean? Edge, margin, frontier, limit, dividing line or obstacle? For most people — indeed, for entire nations — it is the equivalent of all these. Some of us, though, grew up using another term: the “Iron Curtain” and the “Berlin Wall”, the cause of human misery that was only too painfully real for us. Still other synonyms for border in many parts of the world are “exit visa”, and worse, mine-littered fields around one’s home.

Ebertstrasse, Berlin, 1989

Reproduced with permission by Brian Rose from his book, *The Lost Border, The Landscape of the Iron Curtain*, Princeton Architectural Press, September 2004. Available at Amazon.com

BY MARIANNE BEREZCZ

Governments, too, interpret borders in many different ways. The way they manage and secure their borders holds tremendous political, economic, ecological and humanitarian consequences for their citizens and their communities — and beyond.

But on one thing governments agree: Borders pose difficulties and challenges, and national officials are duty-bound to protect people from the dangers that lurk



around crossing-points, whether they be trafficking, smuggling or terrorism.

At the same time, most authorities are also fully aware of their fellow citizens' yearning to live in freedom and to enjoy the right to criss-cross State frontiers as a normal part of daily life — to learn more about other cultures, conduct business and trade, or simply visit family and friends who live “on the other side”.

Policy- and decision-makers, therefore, must ensure that they approach the issue from two angles: providing open borders while making them secure.

The notion of “open and secure” borders emerged formally within the Organization with the adoption of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century by the Ministerial Council in Maastricht, in December 2003.

The official document provided the OSCE with a mandate to develop a security and management concept, based on two main assumptions:

- Threats of terrorism and organized crime are often interlinked. Since the challenges of globalization and security threats are inherently transnational, these need to be countered with a set of common synergetic approaches.

- With qualified experts at their disposal and a vast reservoir of experience to tap into, participating States as well as the OSCE itself *can* tackle these new threats and challenges.

In 2004, work towards developing a border security concept was launched under the Bulgarian Chairmanship. Progress was well under way within an informal working group led by Belgian Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrugghe. However, remaining discrepancies in positions between participating States could not be ironed out in time for the group to present the concept to the Ministerial Council in Sofia in December 2004.

Paying tribute to the group's valuable accomplishments thus far, the OSCE foreign ministers decided that it would be wise to carry the discussions over into 2005. They agreed on basic parameters to keep the negotiations on track, based on proposals and ideas that had been drawn up by participating States.

In the meantime, since Ambassador de Crombrugghe was poised to take up a new set of responsibilities related to the 2006 Belgian Chairmanship under the OSCE Troika, the 2005 Slovenian Chairmanship chose me to succeed him as head of the working group.

Comprehensive and flexible: Assistance in border management reflects OSCE philosophy

Building on earlier commitments and international obligations, the OSCE's Border Security and Management Concept reflects the Organization's cross-dimensional work and comprehensive and flexible approach.

The Concept covers the principles and goals of co-operation and spells out concrete ways and means to achieve them, based on “realism and pragmatism”.

A strong emphasis has been placed on the OSCE's support for collaboration between border-related agencies within

a State, as well as co-operation at the national, regional and international levels between States.

The potential role of the OSCE is defined — as facilitator, as provider of general and specialized forms of assistance, and as a forum for exchanging good practices. Activities are open to the OSCE's 11 Partners for Co-operation.

The Concept is also designed to strengthen the capability of the Organization to tackle threats stemming from outside the OSCE area



Skopje, January 2006: Mountain border police are taught emergency first-aid.

through better co-ordinated and more targeted co-operation with international organizations.

— Marianne Berez



Zagreb's main customs checkpoint: Croatia's efforts to prevent illegal cross-border activities without impeding legitimate trading have been paying off.

Looking back, I have to admit that the group's deliberations during this phase were far from easy. We had been given a clear signal from Sofia to hammer out a framework for co-operation among participating States, and we had the advantage of building upon the previous year's discussions. So why was the work proving so difficult?

Ironically, a major stumbling block was precisely the fact that delegations were keen to come up with a well thought-out concept. Experts had their own distinct understanding of what such a concept should look like, according to their respective States' national interests and objectives.

Some countries consider the military as their most effective means of securing their borders; others, having earlier decided to protect their borders through a joint approach with their partners and neighbours, are now introducing a shared, structured mechanism of administrative measures and institutions based on common norms and standards.



CHEV WILKINSON

Ambassador Marianne Berez has been Head of the Hungarian Mission to the OSCE since January 2003. Her engagement in European security issues started in 1986-1989, when she was a member of the Hungarian delegation to the Third CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna. Later, she was appointed Head of her Foreign Ministry's OSCE Division, and, later on, Deputy Director-General of its Department for Security Policy and Arms Control. She completed her studies in Moscow, specializing in international affairs and journalism.

Further complicating the matter is the fact that borders in the OSCE area present a widely diverse picture. Some borders are fading away, remaining only on paper, or imprinted in the memories of aging parents and grandparents. Several are not even regulated or delineated. Others merely exist in history books, their lines traced according to the authors' nationality. And then there are those that continue to be reinforced by killing minefields.

These are just some of the reasons why it took the OSCE two years to draw up its Border Security and Management Concept.

Our work in border management did not come to an end with the Concept's much-awaited stamp of approval from participating States at the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana in December 2005. On the contrary, the stage had merely been set for actual implementation. The Working Group on Non-Military Aspects of Security, established by the Belgian Chairmanship and headed by Ambassador Peter Lizák of Slovakia, has been exploring the way ahead in translating the concept into practice.

After my close involvement in the subject during the past year, I dream that one day, in the not-so-distant future, borders between States will simply vanish from our maps and our minds. Who knows, perhaps delegations of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in the Galaxy (OSCG) will be discussing the elements of an inter-galactic concept of border security and management.

Till then, however, we have to do our utmost here on Earth to make the lives of its inhabitants not only more free and more open, but also more safe and more secure.



The changing face of borders

Common security concerns call for shared solutions

The pendulum has swung from isolationist policies in the direction of closer cross-border co-operation in the OSCE area, calling for greater clarity and coherence in the border strategies of neighbouring countries, says OSCE Border Adviser Johann Wagner in an interview with Patricia N. Sutter, Editor of the *OSCE Magazine*. A former investigator of transnational criminal activities with the Bavarian Border Police, he explains why border security managers need to look beyond improved personnel skills, expensive gadgets and new uniforms.

What's the most popular misconception about borders and keeping them secure from today's new threats?

Most people are aware of certain aspects of border management; everyone has crossed a border at some point in their lives. But that does not give the whole picture.

We usually don't think of "green" and "blue" borders — land and water border zones between two control points — where there is no visible demarcation to indicate the existence of a border. It is difficult, almost impossible, for officials to monitor these zones around the clock, metre

by metre. This makes them attractive entry points for the new threats you refer to — from the smuggling of drugs, weapons and humans, to illegal migration.

Is there such a thing as a "borderless Europe" and "open borders"?

Not in the strict literal sense. Western Europe's Schengen regime, for example, has resulted in greater freedom of movement across frontiers because of looser controls at internal borders, but it does not mean that there are no longer any national boundaries. These are matters that fall under the sovereignty of States.

Some years after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the break-up of Yugoslavia, emerging developments — globalization, the European Union's enlargement and contemporary security challenges — presented the new States with a new dilemma: How do they go about ensuring that their borders allow human, economic and cultural interaction to take place with the minimum of restrictions, while keeping out illegal and criminal elements?

So, you see, borders have started taking on a different role. Security is no longer just a national concern. Since the threats have

Management of borders in Northern Dalmatia, Croatia, has been upgraded.
Photo: EC/A.Zrno



EGZ ZESTIC-FONET NEWS AGENCY

A border official describes procedures at Horgos in northern Serbia.

become shared ones, border strategies and policies have to have greater clarity and coherence than ever before.

Surely an effective border security and management system doesn't just involve monitoring, which was emphasized in earlier OSCE activities?

The OSCE's new Border Security and Management Concept makes it clear that a professionally-managed system covers everything from adequate facilities and technology to the continuing education of border staff and police forces. Proper policies and an operational framework must be in place. Agencies responsible for immigration, customs, anti-terrorism and judicial matters should co-ordinate and exchange information more systematically with border authorities.

What border-related situations did you encounter in post-conflict areas?

When I joined the United Nations' border service team in Sarajevo in October 1998, one of my first tasks was to help survey each and every metre of the borders of

The Kosovo-Macedonian green border runs across the summit of Mt. Kobilica.



SPILLOVER MONITOR MISSION TO SKOPJE/PETER BOOKER

Bosnia and Herzegovina with its neighbouring countries. This was three years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. We worked with SFOR — the NATO-led Stabilization Force — in creating a data base and registered our findings in the Global Positioning System, or GPS.

Many of the border bridges had been blown up, so we had to go off the main paths. We were never absolutely sure when we might stray into areas littered with anti-personnel landmines. It could be quite scary.

Later, I headed activities to train the border police, focusing on major land crossing points and four international airports — Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar and Tuzla. Don't forget that the country had been deeply "embedded" within Yugoslavia and had not had any international borders, so the border police had to start from scratch.

I must say we were encouraged by the results of these first efforts. At the Sarajevo airport alone, over one year, officials were able to detect about a thousand false travel documents. Most were found on travellers destined for the Schengen area. That meant that some people were making piles of money producing those papers! Some were professional criminals, some were merely desperate.

Now, just eight years later, look at Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its border security operations have improved with the help of its international partners. The country is now a strong candidate for membership in the EU. Progress doesn't happen overnight, but it *does* happen.

Has this positive record been repeated throughout south-eastern Europe?

In fact, last year, the south-eastern European region marked a turning point when most of the countries finished transferring responsibility for the control of borders — including both green and blue borders — from the military to a civilian border police.

A major task — training ex-soldiers to become civilian border police — is almost completed. What's needed next is to push ahead with their transformation into a special branch of the police force. But even if improved skills and new uniforms and equipment are important, the transformation should not stop there; border police should also be vested with the authority to investigate criminal activities at the border.

After all, we're always talking about countering crime and other illegal cross-border activities such as the smuggling of

stolen cars, and this can only be tackled by professional border police with a strong executive mandate. That's our concept of modern border policing in western Europe. Right now, not all border police forces in the Balkans are authorized to carry out investigations themselves. This weak position also gives rise to bribery and corrupt practices at the border.

But doesn't this trace back to the fact that border and police authorities are poorly paid in many countries?

It's no secret that some border officials do enrich themselves, especially those in countries with inadequate rule-of-law institutions. The temptations are just too great. But at the same time, you also come across border personnel, just like the ones I saw in Afghanistan, who don't even own a decent pair of shoes. These are the people whom we expect to be at the forefront of combating terrorism and preventing the smuggling of weapons of mass destruction!

But of course the whole issue is much more complex than it appears. It's also tied in with lack of reform and the need to design and adopt proper legal structures. In some cases, old and inadequate border laws still apply, pending parliamentary approval of new border-related legislation.

How can the OSCE best make a contribution to improving the way borders are managed?

The OSCE is not a funding agency. Besides, even if financial resources go a long way towards purchasing modern technological tools, for example, that's not everything. I believe there should always be a good balance between the provision of technical assistance, training and equipment.

There is broad agreement that the OSCE is in a favourable position to concentrate its overall efforts on promoting cross-border co-operation at either the bilateral or the multi-lateral level.

In July, the OSCE is organizing a regional workshop in Dubrovnik which will give national authorities a chance to tell us, their international partners, where we made mistakes and where we succeeded in helping them to co-operate across borders.

A related event, but on a larger scale, will take place in October in Vienna. Participants will be able to share good practices with one another.

And of course an essential assistance route is through our OSCE field missions and operations. [See pages 12 and 13.]



OSCE MISSION TO BIAHARIN POZJIC

What valuable lessons have been learned from the past?

As I said earlier, some States had had no experience at all in border management, so the initial tendency was to put up an expensive border-control infrastructure designed to keep former "brothers" out. Now old neighbours are uniting again. The willingness to search for common solutions is reflected in the OSCE's first large cross-border co-operation programme, which is helping authorities in south-eastern Europe to work together to meet EU standards. The pendulum has swung in the other direction, and the region is better off for it.

Border units at the "Pavloviča Most" crossing between northeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia are especially vigilant.



OSCE/MIKHAIL EVSTAFIEV

Johann Wagner, Border Adviser, joined the border team of the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre in December 2005. He is a graduate of the Bavarian Police Academy in Munich with almost three decades of practical experience in border management in south-eastern Europe and in Ukraine and Afghanistan.



Cross-border co-operation

South-eastern Europe shows the way forward

Having come from an international NGO devoted to the humane treatment of people held in custody, I was used to dealing with only one side of the interaction between civil society and the State. Since joining the OSCE's border team less than two years ago, I believe I have gained a far better understanding of the concerns and interests of both sides of the equation.

BY ANTON PETRENKO

I have become much more aware about how crucial it is to support the State, too, in its own efforts to secure the safety of its citizens in a manner that respects their rights and freedoms.

This was precisely the goal of the just-ended South-Eastern Europe Cross-Border Co-operation Programme, so far the largest of its kind carried out by the OSCE. The initiative traces its roots to the Ohrid Border Process [see box, page 11], in which the OSCE is one of the four main actors.

In the course of 2004 and 2005, the OSCE co-organized 11 three-day regional seminars with the Governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenia. The aim was to enable border officials to learn from each other's national experiences and to adopt cross-border co-operation agreements in such areas as the exchange of operational data and the establishment of border police liaison offices with neighbouring countries.

Participants included 172 border practitioners and officials from five south-eastern

European countries and 52 of their counterparts from Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, Turkey and Italy. A number of international organizations, among them NATO, the EU, the Stability Pact, and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), sent a total of 34 observers.

When I took on the role of Programme Manager in October 2004, the project's first phase was just winding up. My immediate task was to prepare and co-ordinate the final and second phase, comprising five regional workshops in 2005.

I was impressed by the calibre of the border officials taking part as they presented their ideas on a host of issues, including the demilitarization of border control, regionally co-ordinated advanced training for border police and for surveillance of blue borders, inter-agency co-operation, and practical aspects of cross-border co-operation along green borders.

A remark by one of the officials unwittingly captured the spirit of the gathering: "As long-serving members of our national security services, many of us directly experienced the trauma of the conflict that tore our region apart. We then had to struggle to establish our newly independent State borders. Now, here we are, actively re-building professional contacts and co-operating with one another to improve security on both sides of our State borders."

Upon completion of the Programme, we

Lezha, Albania, April 2006.
Border and migration police
are trained on the use of
surveillance equipment.
Photo: OSCE/Jack Bell

ran a survey to assess the activities' immediate and longer-term impact on the participants and the countries they represented. We also sought to draw lessons from the exercise that could be replicated elsewhere.

Most respondents said the seminars had enhanced their professional knowledge, expanded their network, and restored mutual confidence. They also appreciated the on-the-spot opportunity to familiarize themselves with EU guidelines concerning integrated border management and to develop standard operating procedures according to their needs.

As encouraging as this feedback is, the shortfalls of this first regional programme are proving equally invaluable to our efforts to ensure that the OSCE lives up to its commitments under the Ohrid Border Process. In designing future activities, the OSCE borders team will bear these key lessons in mind:

- It is clear from the mixed performance of countries in concluding cross-border co-operation agreements during the seminars that any follow-up action should take a targeted approach, taking full consideration of countries' specific circumstances. We should not forget that the resources placed at the disposal of border agencies vary widely from country to country — as does the political will on the part of national authorities to implement border co-operation.
- Although the Programme served as an appropriate forum for sharing good practices within the region, future OSCE activities should integrate various experiences by recognizing that some countries, such as Croatia, are further along in following EU standards in border manage-

ment than others and should be given a more prominent role to play.

- In carrying out the Programme, the OSCE established close co-ordination between international partners to avoid duplication. However, more needs to be done to achieve maximum efficiency.

Perhaps the most significant lesson we learned was that no effort should be spared to ensure that countries take ownership of the process of improving the way they manage their borders. The international community can only assist.

One participant expressed it best: "Considering our countries' different stages of transition and degrees of acceptance of EU standards, we could not have 'crowned' our work at the OSCE seminars solely with the signing of final agreements. This does not diminish the value of the seminars; on the contrary, we will apply the knowledge and expertise we gained from them towards drawing up concrete documents on cross-border co-operation."

Anton Petrenko is Programme Management Officer in the Conflict Prevention Centre's border team. Prior to this, he headed the International Programmes Department of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, based in Copenhagen. He managed technical assistance for some 100 treatment centres in five regions in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, working with victims of organized violence.



OSCE/MIKHAIL EVSTAFIEV

The Ohrid Border Process

It all started with a NATO initiative, launched in early 2002, aimed at strengthening stability in the south-eastern European region by developing a strategy to tackle border security issues.

Later placed under the umbrella of the Stability Pact with the participation of the EU and the OSCE, the initiative was expanded to reflect the European concept of an integrated border management system.

To guide the Process, the following principles were adopted:

- The ultimate goal should be the adoption of EU standards on integrated border management.
- The common goal should be the creation of open borders with security guarantees.
- Effective co-operation at regional and sub-regional levels should be promoted.

At the landmark Regional

Conference on Border Security and Management that took place at Lake Ohrid on 22 and 23 May 2003, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro and their four partner organizations committed themselves to a **Common Platform** — core goals and principles that would be followed in implementing agreed guidelines.

They also endorsed the **Way Forward Document** — a plan of action, set within a time frame, oriented towards the reform of national legislation and structures, and the development of regional co-operation.

The participating countries reaffirmed the principle of regional ownership, with their four international partners offering to give strong support to their efforts. The OSCE's contribution was to focus on



NATO HQ SKOPJE PHOTO

Ohrid, 22 May 2003. The heads of the Stability Pact, the OSCE, NATO, the host country and the EU meet the press.

improving civilian aspects of training of border police, assisting in institution-building and promoting regional co-operation.

To take stock of progress achieved and identify any gaps and constraints in the Ohrid Border Process, three review meetings have been held so far: in Belgrade (November 2003), Tirana (October 2004), and Sarajevo (November 2005).

This year represents a milestone since the target for com-

pletion of the measures under the **Way Forward Document** is 31 December 2006. Recently, participants at an intermediate review meeting assessed the implementation of the action plan and agreed to continue the Process for one more year. A formal decision will be taken at the next annual review meeting in November 2006.

Jean-Claude Meyer
Military Liaison Officer
Conflict Prevention Centre

Tailoring responses to individual needs

Relevance and practicality are the hallmarks of the OSCE's on-the-ground activities in border security and management. The Organization responds to individual requests for assistance from host countries, working closely with Ministries of the Interior, target groups, and national and international partners. Some recent examples:

» OSCE PRESENCE IN ALBANIA

Focus: Enhancing the operational capability and effectiveness of the Albanian Border and Migration Police in dealing with cross-border and organized crime.

Activities, led by the Presence's Department of Security Co-operation, include:

- » Supporting and facilitating regular joint border co-operation meetings between the Albanian Border and Migration Police and their counterparts in neighbouring States;
- » Training 120 police personnel assigned to Albania's green border in the use of night-vision equipment, recording devices and navigational tools;
- » Training 12 police instructors to conduct courses independently and to promote wider use of the equipment;
- » Providing police with operational support for the installation of solar generator systems as back-up in case of power cuts at eight key border-crossing points;
- » Conducting training, within the EU CARDS programme for the Western Balkans, to help police in handling irregular migration and in combating



Lezha, Albania, April 2006. Albanian border and migration police improve their skills in map-reading.

trafficking in human beings by emphasizing the importance of a pre-screening system; and

- » Helping key police personnel assigned at major border-crossing points to improve their communication skills in English.



Skopje, May 2006. Border police simulate real-life situations to improve their response capability.

» OSCE SPILLOVER MONITOR MISSION TO SKOPJE

Focus: Supporting the establishment of the country's border police.

Since 2004, the Mission's Police Development Department has:

- » Trained some 1,435 personnel from the Ministry of Defence to become border police officers. Five sessions were held in 2004 and 2005, each course comprising two months of instruction in basic policing and one month in specialized border policing matters;
- » Trained members of the border police, staff of the Ministry of Interior, and instructors of the Idrizovo Police Academy to develop their leadership, managerial and communication skills;
- » Provided training to station commanders, who serve as first-line managers; and
- » Supported the efforts of members of the border police to upgrade their professionalism in such areas as identification of forged documents, computer skills, first aid, self-defence, and language training in English, Greek and Albanian.

» OSCE MISSION TO MOLDOVA

Focus: Co-operating closely with the EU Border Assistance Mission (EU BAM), which has been operating at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border since December 2005. The shared goal is to promote transparency and stability in the region.

The Head of the OSCE Mission is on the Advisory Committee of EU BAM and a Mission staff member attends the monthly co-ordination meetings. The OSCE provided EU BAM with assistance during its early phase, before its deployment. Since then, the Mission has been providing EU BAM with objective information on conditions within Transnistria through:

- » Daily patrols and monitoring in the Transnistrian region; and
- » Meetings with Transnistrian officials and business leaders as well as with Moldovan authorities.



Moldovan-Ukrainian border crossing point, summer 2005. The international border at Khristovaya is controlled by Transnistrian authorities. The OSCE Mission patrols the Transnistrian region regularly and shares information with the EU BAM.

OSCE MISSION TO MOLDOVA/CHAD MCGOUGAN



Georgia, April 2006. Training for border guards includes helicopter search-and-rescue operations in mountainous areas.

OSCE/DAVID KHIZANISHVILI

» MISSION TO GEORGIA

Focus: Helping the Georgian border guards to build their capacity to manage the country's borders under a quick-impact training assistance programme. Since early 2005, a team of 50 people, including 30 international experts, has been implementing the training assistance programme from the OSCE Mission headquarters in Tbilisi and from four other regional centres.

Early achievements reflect the Mission's experience in border-monitoring from 2000 to 2004:

- » A total of 700 mid-level and non-commissioned officers in the Georgian border guards service have successfully completed training. Some have been identified as potential future instructors.
- » Skills needed for summer and high-altitude winter conditions were taught, covering rescue operations and security rules in hazardous mountainous areas; planning and management of border units during the day and at night; patrolling, observation and reporting; maintenance of special equipment; and map-reading, communications and first aid; and
- » Helicopter search-and-rescue operations in various types of mountainous terrain and all kinds of weather conditions were the focus of a recent three-week training course for 18 Georgian border guards, pilots and flight engineers.

In the meantime, preparations are under way for the Mission's new Capacity-Building Programme for the Georgian Border Police starting on 1 July. To be implemented over one year, activities will assist the Border Police to create their own training system, operate more effectively, and enhance their ability to conduct joint operations with neighbouring services.

A team of 50 personnel, including 26 international experts, will implement the programme from Tbilisi, as well as from two other regional centres in Lilo and Omalo.



Margit Waestfelt has been Head of the Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE since December 2002. Upon completing her studies in Law and French at Graz University and graduating from the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, she joined the Austrian Foreign Ministry in 1978. Her overseas postings have included Paris and Moscow.

Ambassador Waestfelt delivers statement after statement — often switching easily between English and French — at the weekly Permanent Council meetings in the Hofburg.

Each text is the result of many hours of preparation involving delegations representing OSCE countries that are also part of the EU or are on the path to membership.

Critics argue that the EU's practice of speaking with one voice at the OSCE results in watered-down statements and spoils the debate — whether it is about the latest human rights developments in a participating State or the cartoon controversy earlier this year.

Ambassador Waestfelt, however, argues that the EU position is beneficial to the OSCE: By agreeing on a single stand, the countries give the Organization a head start in its search for consensus.

"The EU is working ahead, so to speak," she says. "It doesn't mean that the EU works in isolation, draws up its position and says, 'That's it, take it or leave it!'" On the contrary, we consult in a variety of ways."

Throughout the week, she holds a series of meetings with a wide range of EU and non-EU countries for an exchange of views. In addition, individual EU country delegations sound out their partners at separate meetings.

"Taken together, these regular encounters provide a wide reservoir of knowledge and opinions which the EU presidency takes into account," she says. "So the relationship is much more interlinked than it might appear."

There are basic guidelines, though, and they come from European Council Conclusions reached in Brussels, which serve as what Ambassador Waestfelt calls "the real fundament of our work".

Reaching agreement on what the EU and its associates should say and how to say it can be challenging. Delegations debate heatedly and — taking into account last-minute instructions from their capitals — often hash out final details right up to the time the ambassadors are about to take their seats at the *Neuer Saal*.

"Fortunately, we have never found ourselves in a situation where we could not

INTERVIEW WITH AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR MARGIT WAESTFELT

The OSCE and the EU: Complementing each other's strengths

BY SUSANNA LÖÖF

It's a demanding task that calls for tough negotiations, skillful diplomacy and endless hours. But that's not what Austrian Ambassador Margit Waestfelt chooses to dwell on in an interview about her role representing the European Union presidency in the OSCE in the first half of 2006. Instead, she speaks about the excitement and exhilaration that the position brings. "The thrilling thing about it is that one gets to work closely with the decision-making mechanisms," she says, adding that this is what she will miss the most after Austria passes on the revolving presidency to Finland on 1 July.

agree on a text. Otherwise, the consequence would be no text,” Ambassador Waestfelt says. “The Union’s coherence is strong enough for us to be able to send out a joint message. The process relies on common values and a spirit of shared attitudes.”

This ability to reach a final agreement marks a main difference between the EU and the OSCE, Ambassador Waestfelt says.

“The EU is a union, which means its members stand on solid common ground — and this is why, despite our differences, we do eventually succeed in coming together,” she says, “whereas in the OSCE, although we share common values, we still have some way to go before achieving a strong sense of unity of understanding. Therefore, well, that’s why we have the OSCE.”

OSCE-EU DECLARATION

Co-operation between Vienna and Brussels is close, but even so, the Austrian and Finnish EU presidencies have proposed that a joint OSCE-EU declaration be drafted to reaffirm the complementary way the two groupings work together.

Some think this initiative unnecessary, pointing out that the interaction functions quite well. Ambassador Waestfelt believes, however, that this does not diminish the potential usefulness of a document setting out forms of OSCE-EU co-operation.

“Anything can change, so I think to confirm something that is already happening naturally is always an advantage,” she says.

And things *are* certain to change as the European Union expands to encompass even more of the OSCE’s participating States. Currently, the EU comprises 45 per cent of OSCE countries, with the proportion likely to increase in the next few years.

Two OSCE participating States — Bulgaria and Romania — have acceding country status, while Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey are contenders for membership. Three others — Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro — have begun the Stabilization and Association Process, which could lead to eventual membership. Serbia and Montenegro was suspended from the process on 3 May because of insufficient co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. [For the latest developments on the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, see page 17.]

“Of course the OSCE’s character will change as the EU enlarges, but that’s in the nature of the Organization,” Ambassador Waestfelt says. “Last year, when we celebrat-



SPILLOVER MONITOR MISSION TO SKOPJE/MICHEL COUPLAN

ed the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, we were reminded how much the CSCE/OSCE had evolved through the years. And it will continue to do so. There is no such thing as a task that is completed. The need for comprehensive security will always be with us.”

The EU will always remain an active partner in the OSCE process, the Ambassador said.

“Within the OSCE are the EU, the United States and Russia working alongside countries that do not belong to any of these large entities,” she says. “In a real sense, their participation in the OSCE is what brings — and keeps — them together.”

But with such an enlarged Union, will there really be a need for the OSCE? Austria and the European Union would answer that question with a resounding “Yes!”

“We have always believed in the OSCE and we want the OSCE to continue being an active player in European security,” Ambassador Waestfelt says. “We are convinced that no one organization can cope with all the problems confronting us —

“Police Open Day” in Kumanovo, near Skopje: The OSCE and the EU are working side by side to strengthen relations between the police and the community.



Austria and Finland are proposing a joint OSCE-EU declaration.

whether they relate to traditional security issues, or new threats, or the so-called frozen conflicts, or any phenomena that might arise. Each organization has specific goals and tackles a problem from its particular perspective.”

The Ambassador is convinced that the EU and the OSCE cannot and should not exclude each other from their work. “On the contrary, they should continue

exploring how they can best co-ordinate with one another and complement each other’s strengths. This holds true for other organizations as well, especially the Council of Europe and NATO.”

Susanna Lööf is a Press Officer in the OSCE Secretariat’s Press and Public Information Section.

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“Communities based on shared values”

The EU, for many reasons, is conscious of its great responsibility towards the work of the OSCE, particularly as, through its member States, it covers three-quarters of the Organization’s budget.

By way of example and to illustrate how co-operation between the EU and the OSCE can be developed, allow me to recall the success that we can look back to in the EU:

- Between member States, the era of violent conflicts is over for good;
- More and more obstacles to economic relations between member States are being removed; and
- Within each member State, civil liberties are better guaranteed than ever before in history.

In the OSCE, we are concerned with comparable problems and expectations:

- Averting traditional and new dangers in the security area;

- Removing political and other obstacles to economic development; and
- Removing restrictions on the freedom, rights, creativity and spirit of enterprise of human beings.

I see it as our immediate task to strengthen the confidence of all participating States in the OSCE as a regional security organization with a comprehensive security concept, which places the individual human being at the centre of attention.

Despite the differences between the two organizations, the EU and the OSCE are both communities based on shared values; their interests and goals coincide to a considerable degree.

Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik, in her address to the Permanent Council on 2 February 2006



BERNHARD J. HOLZNER/PHOTOMEDIA

The difference between [the EU and the OSCE] is where the strength of the EU lies: to some extent this is in its exclusivity and selectivity... Once you are a member of the EU, you are assured not only of support and solidarity, you are also assured that your laundry will not be washed in public.

The OSCE has had the exact opposite of that approach: at the OSCE, nothing is taboo. We spend a lot of time, usually on Thursdays, criticizing other participating States, most of the time for good reason.

Armenian Ambassador Jivan Tabibian, in his response to Foreign Minister Plassnik



OSCE/MIKHAIL ENSTATIEV

The inclusion of our countries in the priorities of the Austrian presidency confirms the EU’s commitment to the full European integration of the Balkans. This is particularly important in light of the pending resolution of certain open issues in the Balkans...

We assure you, Madame Minister, that our countries intend to seize this momentum and justify the confidence vested in them by continuing the process of reforms, strengthening our regional co-operation, implementing in full the recommendations of our individual European partnerships, and meeting all necessary conditions and criteria to achieve the goal of EU membership.

Albanian Ambassador Zef Mazi, in his response to Foreign Minister Plassnik on behalf of the delegations of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro



OSCE/MIKHAIL ENSTATIEV



OSCE welcomes Montenegro as 56th participating State

Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrugghe presents Montenegrin Ambassador Vesko Garčević to the Permanent Council.
Photo: OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev

BY MARTIN NESIRKY

It's not often ambassadors raise a glass in the Permanent Council. But then it's not often a new country joins the OSCE.

The newly independent Republic of Montenegro took its seat in the OSCE's main negotiating and decision-making body on 22 June, making its debut on the international stage as the OSCE's 56th participating State and the first newcomer since Andorra signed up in April 1996.

There was little fanfare, but there was a genuinely warm welcome for Montenegro's Head of Delegation, Ambassador Vesko Garčević, when the Council's Belgian Chairman, Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrugghe, brought him into the Permanent Council chamber, passing the thick cluster of national flags that now includes Montenegro's double-headed eagle on a rich red background.

Ambassador Garčević took his new place at the table between Monaco and Norway, and behind a temporary nameplate — such was the speed of Montenegro's accession. Having been the Head of Delegation for the former State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, he was already well known in diplomatic circles and was well acquainted with the Organization.

"Like an actor who plays two subsequent roles in the same play, I am both a newcomer and a familiar character," Ambassador Garčević said before his colleagues, who toasted Montenegro with sparkling wine or juice, an unusual if not unprecedented gesture in the Permanent Council.

Montenegro's accession followed the dissolution of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro after an independence referendum monitored by the OSCE in May, and the formal declaration of independence by the Parliament of Montenegro on 3 June.

"The new State that was born on 3 June chose the

OSCE as the first organization it would join," Ambassador de Crombrugghe told the Permanent Council. "There is no better way to express confidence in this Organization, with all the norms and principles it represents and the democratic governance it promotes."

The decision by the OSCE to accept Montenegro came into effect on 21 June, following a one-week "silence procedure" to hear any objections. None came.

Serbia, as successor State of the now-dissolved union, acceded automatically to the world's largest regional security arrangement. It had already taken up its seat in the Permanent Council under its new shorter name.

Montenegro's Ambassador went out of his way to praise his erstwhile Serbian colleagues.

Serbia's *Chargé d'Affaires*, Miroslava Beham, warmly welcomed Montenegro to the Organization.

She described how Prince Nikola of Montenegro paid a visit to King Aleksandar of Serbia in Belgrade in 1896 after years of rivalries and tensions between the two sovereign States. The *Chargé d'Affaires* quoted Prince Nikola as having said that the two countries' peoples should be "striving compatriots and neighbours of other happy nations in promoting progress, development and civilization".

Pausing for effect, the *Chargé d'Affaires* added: "There is nothing to add to that."

Martin Nesirky is OSCE Spokesperson and Head of Press and Public Information.



The Montenegrin flag is added to the display in the Hofburg Congress Centre.



Promoting good governance by decentralizing decision-making

More than just a buzz phrase at the Skopje Mission

Decentralization may not sound like the most stimulating of subjects, but the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and its host country are encouraged by the progress they have achieved during the past year in translating dry-sounding concepts such as “capacity-building” and “good governance” into sound and workable practices.

BY MARK NAFTALIN

High up on the sixth floor in the headquarters of the OSCE’s Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, the Public Administration Reform Unit works exclusively on local government and decentralization issues. The aim is to assist in the efficient and effective transfer of various responsibilities from the country’s central Government to 85 local self-government units — 84 municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Brief flashback to early 2001: Armed conflict is breaking out in the north and west of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Ethnic Albanians demand substantially greater rights from the Government, claim-

ing they are significantly under-represented in the public sphere. After mediation by the international community, including the OSCE, the opposing sides sign a peace treaty — the Ohrid Framework Agreement — on 13 August 2001.

As well as marking the official end to the seven-month conflict, the Agreement incorporated several key demands made by ethnic Albanians. Among these were the “development of decentralized government” (article 3) and “non-discrimination and equitable representation” (article 4) within decision-making bodies.

These two important articles underpin the decentralization process that is now taking place. Although the notion of devolving more power to local institutions was not new to the country, its actual implementation was boosted by the provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

The Agreement unambiguously spells out that many of the central Government’s functions should be directly transferred to the local level:

Zelino Municipality, March 2006. OSCE Mission member Zage Filipovski briefs local officials on decentralization and citizens’ participation. Photo: OSCE/Mark Naftalin

“...Enhanced competencies will relate principally to the areas of public services, urban and rural planning, environmental protection, local economic development, culture, local finances, education, social welfare, and health care.” (Article 3.1)

Since the onset of peace, the Government has undertaken several major reforms aimed at paving the way for an ambitious decentralization programme. For example:

- Constitutional amendments established Albanian as an official language in certain areas.
- A Law on Local Self-Government was enacted, defining the new legal responsibilities of municipalities.
- Municipal elections, observed by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), were held in March and April 2005. A total of 85 mayors and 1,341 municipal councillors were voted into office.

In July 2005, with the appropriate conditions finally in place, the two-year “interim” process of decentralization — a probationary period — officially started. For the first time ever, duly elected municipal officials had the authority to carry out decisions on local governance issues that had formerly been vested in the capital.

The significance of this change is not lost on Ace Kocevski, Mayor of Veles, where Macedonians form an 85 per cent majority.

“Citizens have become active participants in the decision-making process through debates, public hearings and meetings,” he says. “At the same time, we — mayors and councillors — do not just sit in our offices waiting for people to approach us; we go out to the villages and towns and talk to them.”

“Decentralizing power to municipalities encourages good governance, transparency, democratization and administrative reform,” says Ambassador Carlos Pais, Head of the Skopje Mission. “It’s an area with a strong



human dimension, so the OSCE is perfectly equipped to assist.”



Fifty kilometres northwest of Skopje, in the heart of the former crisis zone around Tetovo, lies Bogovinje. The scene is much like that in any other small village in the country: old men drinking coffee and smoking in cafés, women doing their daily marketing and tractors carrying labourers to the fields.

To the first-time visitor from the capital, however, some things seem somewhat unusual. The normally ubiquitous monasteries are nowhere in sight, and street and store signs are in an unfamiliar language.

That’s because, just like in many parts of the country that border Kosovo, Bogovinje’s 30,000 residents are largely ethnic Albanians. Not surprisingly, decentralization is hugely popular. It has allowed the municipality to be run “by Albanians and for Albanians”, as resident Nebi Maniri describes it. “We feel much more involved in making decisions that affect our municipality,” he says, “and naturally we also feel more respected.”

Many, however, are still in the dark about the actual role of local government, which

Tetovo: Decentralization seeks to give ethnic Albanians and other minority groups a greater voice in decision-making.

Empowering 84 municipalities and the City of Skopje An overview of OSCE assistance

- Organizing and leading regional conferences on decentralization;
- Training more than 1,000 municipal officers countrywide;
- Creating 15 municipal gender equality commissions within local governments;
- Supporting a major workshop for mayors and other officials to discuss inter-community commissions under the provisions of the Law on Local Self-Government;
- Producing and disseminating 2,000 copies of various manuals on local taxation;
- Building the capacity of local NGOs to work on decentralization issues;
- Installing an information hotline, launching a citizens’ information centre and funding special publications on decentralization;
- Creating a data base of information on 1,500 neighbourhood self-governments; and
- Upgrading municipal computers so that local financial statements can be produced.

differs considerably from that of the old ruling structure.

“People do not yet fully understand what decentralization means for them,” says Bogovinje’s mayor Nevzat Elezi. “In the former Yugoslavia, people were far more aware of the duties of the neighbourhood self-government units, or *Mesna Zaednica*.”

Because the success of decentralization hinges on how well-informed citizens are about the responsibilities of their newly elected officials, the OSCE Mission has been mobilizing countrywide information campaigns. At least one citizens’ information centre has also been set up by the Mission, in the northern municipality of Cucer Sandevo, where people can keep track of their representatives’ latest activities and help themselves to OSCE-sponsored brochures and leaflets.

The availability of explanatory material is especially appreciated in the north and the west, where the country’s mountainous terrain hinders residents and their officials from having a regular dialogue.

The Mission has also provided funds for manuals and handbooks aimed at educating municipal officials in budgeting and financial reporting. Publications have been supplemented with training through a series of workshops carried out in co-operation with the Association of Municipalities.

The fact that the Mission has been hosted by Skopje since September 1992, making it the Organization’s longest-serving field presence, is proving especially useful in decentralization efforts. Backed by extensive experience and expertise on the ground, the OSCE is able to offer a broad range of technical support especially tailored to a municipality’s specific needs and aspirations.



New translation equipment, courtesy of the OSCE, is facilitating dialogue in the multilingual municipality of Cucer Sandevo.



OSCE MISSION TO SKOPJE/ MARK NAFTALIN

A case in point is Cucer Sandevo, where 37 per cent of the 8,000 residents speak Macedonian, 29 per cent Serbian, and 23 per cent Albanian. The OSCE has recently made simultaneous translation equipment available, allowing listeners to follow discussions in the language of their choice.

“Initiatives of this kind are helping different communities within the municipality to come together and truly benefit from its multicultural environment,” says Philipp Stiel, who heads the 11-member team in the Public Administration Reform Unit. “The technology is not just for Municipal Council sessions; it is also being used by local NGOs and by citizens at their open debates on community issues.”

Prospects for decentralization are looking bright a year after it all began, helping nudge the country along its path towards EU membership.

“The principle of multi-ethnicity is firmly embedded in your Constitution and is now in the process of being implemented throughout the country,” José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, told national parliamentarians early this year. “Diversity has become a guarantee for the unity of the country.”

Addressing the same audience in April, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht sounded the same optimistic note: “Decentralization has been a positive factor in the overall improvement of inter-ethnic relations. It has multiplied contacts between the various communities — and not only *within* but also *between* neighbouring municipalities. The OSCE will continue to actively support the process.”

Mayor Nevzat Elezi thinks that the residents of Bogovinje should be helped to understand the impact of decentralization on their lives.

Mark Naftalin worked in the Public Administration Reform Unit in the OSCE’s Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and was an ODIHR election observer in the countrywide municipal elections in 2005.



Florence Agreement lives up to arms-control promise

By Peter Konstanty and Emil Schreiber

The significance of the “Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control” for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its neighbours may not be apparent to most people, but a recent ten year-anniversary reunion of about 50 high-level representatives has left no doubt about the Agreement’s continuing wide-ranging impact on peace and stability in the region.

The Agreement, modelled on the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, stemmed from Article IV, Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Accords of 1995. It was signed on 14 June 1996 in Florence, Italy, after more than five months of negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE.

The aim was to seek a balance between the armed forces of the States Parties, covering the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the then-Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now the Republic of Serbia) by:

- setting ceilings in five categories of conventional armaments;
- reducing armaments to the agreed ceilings;
- exchanging annual information and notifications; and
- verifying compliance with the Agreement’s provisions through an inspection regime.

At their reunion in Florence on 13 and 14 June 2006, the Parties and their international partners had reason to be pleased as they reviewed the impressive progress achieved in the past decade under the Agreement.

Within the first 16 months, the Parties were able to fulfil their commitments, destroying some 6,580 weapons systems ranging from 82 mm-calibre mortars to battle tanks, attack helicopters and combat aircraft. On a voluntary basis, the Parties have reduced armaments by an additional 2,200 so far.

Since the Agreement entered into

force, 557 inspections have verified the Parties’ compliance with the Agreement. On behalf of the OSCE and co-ordinated by the Vienna-based Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Article IV, 848 assistants from some 30 OSCE participating States have taken part in the inspections. As a result of the arms reductions and the ongoing reform processes being undertaken by the Article IV Parties, units that would have been subject to inspection have decreased significantly — from 350 in 1997 to 106 in 2006.

“These results were made pos-



14 June 1996. Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini (centre) and (to his right) the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Swiss Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti, with the signatories to the Florence Agreement and other dignitaries.

sible due to the extreme willingness, co-operation and full consideration demonstrated by all Parties to the Agreement,” Italian Brig.-Gen. Claudio Sampaolo, Personal Representative since July 2004, told the distinguished group. “Your presence here today is evidence that every crisis can have peaceful and diplomatic solutions and that, even after a war, there are always possibilities for good co-operation and partnership.”

He paid tribute to his predecessors — Ambassador Vigleik Eide (1996-1997), General Carlo Jean (1998-2001) and General Claudio Zappulla (2001-2004). Ambassador Eide and General Zappulla, who were present, shared

their reflections on the historical process. The most recent milestone was reached in March 2006 when Bosnia and Herzegovina started implementing Article IV as a single Party with a single verification agency, at State level.

The gathering, hosted by Italy, also served as the fifth in a series of major conferences held to review the fulfilment of obligations under Article IV, and as the 35th meeting of the Sub-Regional Consultative Commission, the body that oversees the Arms Control Agreement.

“The level of relations achieved among the Parties is the best proof that the launching and implementation of the Agreement were justified,” stated the three Parties in a Final Document at the end of the review conference. They expressed their readiness to continue strengthening good-

neighbourly relations and regional co-operation — an essential precondition to their Euro-Atlantic integration.

Everyone agreed that the Article IV Agreement was a “living” document that would continue to adapt to developments within the States Parties until the day when it could finally be absorbed into a broader, more comprehensive arms control regime.

Lt.-Col. (ret.) Peter Konstanty is a Data Analyst and Lt.-Col. Emil Schreiber is an Operations Staff Officer in the office of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Article IV.

The OSCE's future noble residence

BY PATRICIA N. SUTTER

A rambling but unpretentious-looking early nineteenth-century *palais* in the heart of Vienna is set to become the permanent quarters of the OSCE.

Developments have been progressing smoothly since December 2001, when Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel met then-OSCE Secretary General Ján Kubiš to discuss the conditions under which Austria would provide the Organization with its own dedicated premises.

By February 2005, Austrian Federal President Heinz Fischer was ready to announce details of the almost €32 million-project. "As the host country, Austria remains committed to ensuring that the OSCE is strong and effective," he told OSCE parliamentarians at the Hofburg.

"If you take a walk towards the city centre, you will see, just a few hundred metres from here, clear evidence of our efforts: Renovation work is under way to create a new headquarters for the OSCE in the historic Palais Pálffy at Wallnerstrasse No. 6. I am confident that the Organization's identity and visibility will be enhanced by the new accommodations."

Members of OSCE delegations and senior managers in the Secretariat have been among the first visitors to the site. The seemingly unhurried pace of construction — of artisans carefully restoring some of the original décor, for example — can be deceiving: the completion date of November 2007 is on target.

When the OSCE Secretariat's more than 300 staff members move from a commercial complex on the Ringstrasse into a State-owned cultural jewel, it will have been some 14 years since the CSCE/OSCE Secretariat was relocated from Prague to Vienna, starting with a handful of personnel.

The five storeys of the Wallnerstrasse building cover a total floor area of 9,180 square metres, almost double that of currently rented OSCE space. This will enable the offices of the Representative on Freedom of the Media to be under the same roof as the Secretariat.

"The challenge faced by the architects was converting the rooms into modern offices while preserving and restoring the historic character of the nearly 200-year-old building," says the Secretariat's Director for Management and Finance, Joe Hili, who is serving as director of the project.

"The working environment will be completely different because offices will revolve around an open-plan style. The aim is to make the best possible use of available space and natural light."

New features will include double-flooring, flexible partition walls, meeting rooms and a common staff area on every floor, three elevators, a drive-up reception for high-level visitors and delegates, and upgraded security arrangements.

Palais Pálffy on Wallnerstrasse — not to be confused with another Palais Pálffy on Josefsplatz — traces its origins to the fifteenth century. After it was destroyed by a fire, Hungarian nobleman Johann Count Pálffy von Erdöd commissioned French architect Pierre-Charles de Moreau to build a residence in its place.

Constructed between 1809 and 1813, the *palais* is considered a rare example of classical French villa architecture in Vienna. The Empire style of the interiors, designed by Raphael von Rigel, contrasts with the façade's almost stark simplicity. An original marble-decorated staircase, a grand banquet hall and three inner court yards evoke the life and times of the aristocracy of two centuries ago.

Time and again, participating States have expressed appreciation to the Government of Austria for its exceptional generosity as host country, not only in endowing the OSCE with a prestigious address that reflects its status as the world's largest regional security organization, but also in bearing most of the costs of refurbishment.

To ensure that the closing down of the old offices and the move to the new premises proceed smoothly, the Secretary General has created a Steering Committee comprising departmental representatives under the coordination of Philip Hatton, Deputy Director for Management and Finance.



Wallnerstrasse No. 6 is getting a massive facelift.



Village Boats, oil on canvas, 2006

Global nomad, roving artist

When Mikhail Evstafiev sent out invitations to his first solo art exhibition in May, his colleagues had no idea what to expect. Some were familiar with his photography and knew about the novel he had published about the war in Afghanistan. But oil on canvas? Could these creations be up to par with his black-and-white images featured in serious photo-journalism books?

But even the most discriminating among his guests at the Hofburg Congress Centre were in for a revelation. The urban landscapes and remote villages in more than 30 paintings seemed hauntingly abandoned but still pulsated with life.

“Technique? Well, for now, I’ve abandoned brushes for a palette knife,” he told the *OSCE Magazine*. “Instead of imitating reality, I prefer

to interpret it, at times distorting it to achieve an emotional effect, playing with shapes, forms and colours, scratching a finished canvas to reveal the inner beauty of the layers beneath.”

He recalls a Moscow childhood surrounded by sculptors and artists in his mother’s and grandmother’s studios. Not to be outdone, his father taught him the basics of photography and unravelled the mysteries of the dark room.

After studying international journalism at Moscow State University, Mikhail pursued a career as a writer and photo-journalist with leading international news organizations. He covered the break-up of the Soviet Union, armed conflicts in Bosnia, Chechnya, Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Tajikistan and Transdniestria, and the political

scene at the Kremlin. Before joining the OSCE as a Press Officer, he worked in London and Washington, D.C.

In a sense, his Hofburg exhibition, entitled “Somewhere Else”, addresses a question many of his friends at the OSCE often ask themselves: “When years of travel pile up, does a home still exist? Or is home where one happens to be at the time?”

Mikhail adds another philosophical dimension to the puzzle: “How do you know when a painting is finished? The same way you know that it’s time to move on to a new destination.”

www.evstafiev.com



Sunday Afternoon Stroll, oil on canvas, 2006



The Fire Escape, oil on canvas, 2006