

ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE FOR 2004

1. Introduction

The agenda for the OSCE in 2004 was largely set by the decisions taken at the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting at Maastricht in December 2003, particularly the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century and the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. The Bulgarian Chairmanship therefore decided that implementation should be the main theme for the year.

The outcome of the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting demonstrated the need for strengthening the sense of common purpose in the Organization. The Chairmanship stated that it would aim at a more comprehensive understanding of the broad spectrum of opinions when articulating OSCE policies and taking specific decisions.

Reform of the OSCE became a major theme in 2004, focusing, *inter alia*, on the relevance of the OSCE and possible ways of transforming it.

Work to intensify the co-operation between the OSCE and other international organizations engaged in maintaining security and stability in the OSCE area featured prominently among the activities of the Bulgarian Chairmanship.

Tolerance and non-discrimination were the topics of three high-profile meetings in 2004. The participating States took important decisions on combating anti-Semitism, as well as tolerance and the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination, and promoting tolerance and promoting freedom of the media on the Internet. Measures were agreed on to ensure effective follow-up.

Another major theme was outreach. The OSCE launched its first out-of-area operation by sending an Election Support Team to Afghanistan before the presidential elections of 9 October. Relations with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation were intensified, and Mongolia was welcomed as the newest Partner. In the last days of the Bulgarian Chairmanship, a training needs assessment visit by a group of experts from the OSCE Secretariat and the ODIHR was organized to the Palestinian Territories, at the time of the presidential elections on 9 January.

2. Reforming the OSCE

Reform has been on the OSCE's agenda for some time, but in 2004 the debate gathered considerable momentum and acquired a certain prominence in the OSCE agenda. The enlargement of the EU and NATO has redrawn the political map of Europe, with implications for other organizations such as the OSCE. New threats and challenges to security have changed strategic priorities. It was suggested that ten years on from the

transformation of the CSCE into the OSCE, the Organization should be reassessed, adapted and strengthened. Some participating States were particularly outspoken about the need for transforming the OSCE. On 3 July 2004, the presidents of nine CIS states issued a statement on the need to reform the OSCE, which was followed on 15 September by an appeal by eight CIS foreign ministers meeting in Astana.

The Chairman-in-Office (C-i-O) was personally involved in the reform debate, particularly as manifested in his address to the Thirteenth Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Edinburgh on 5 July 2004. There, and on subsequent occasions, he emphasized the need to make the OSCE less bureaucratic, better match resources with priorities, shift resources from South-Eastern Europe to the Caucasus and Central Asia, change the location of human dimension and Economic Forum meetings to better reflect the geographic diversity of the OSCE area, update the rules of procedure, improve the effectiveness of field activities and strengthen the role of the Secretary General. These and other ideas were discussed in the Working Groups on Reform and on Improving the Functioning and Effectiveness of the OSCE Field Operations.

For the first time since 1973, work was done on updating the rules of procedure, and significant progress was made in that direction. At the Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, in Sofia, a decision was taken that clarifies the role of the Secretary General.

In line with the prevailing view that the OSCE could be more effective, the Ministers decided at Sofia to establish a Panel of Eminent Persons on Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE, to be followed by specially convened high-level OSCE consultations in 2005 in order to provide a strategic vision for the OSCE in the twenty-first century.

The process is a continuous one and will certainly be a topic for debate in 2005, when the OSCE celebrates a number of anniversaries and looks ahead to the future.

3. The Fight Against Terrorism

Terrorism remains one of the gravest threats to the individual and common security of the OSCE participating States. The horrendous attacks in Beslan and Madrid in 2004 further demonstrated how terrorism is a clear and present danger in the OSCE area. Reinforcing the Organization's role in combating terrorism therefore remained a high priority of the Bulgarian Chairmanship.

The Chairmanship broadened the mandate of the Informal Group of Friends on Combating Terrorism, established in 2003. This allowed the Group, chaired by the Ambassador of Sweden, not only to review the implementation of previous commitments, but also to turn its attention towards responding to other current and emerging terrorist threats.

The high degree of attention paid to terrorism by the participating States was also demonstrated at the second Annual Security Review Conference.

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) — in the framework of its specific mandate — made a significant contribution towards enhancing the OSCE's role in curbing the terrorist threat.

The success of the work of the Informal Group of Friends and the FSC was evident in the number and range of decisions on combating terrorism that were taken at the Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, namely, on: combating the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes; enhancing container security; reporting lost/stolen passports to Interpol's database; establishing principles for export controls of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), principles on the control of brokering in small arms and light weapons, (OSCE) standard elements of end-user certificates and verification procedures for SALW exports; further implementing the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition; and endorsing PC decisions on further measures to suppress terrorist financing, and on solidarity with victims of terrorism. The Sofia Ministerial Statement on Preventing and Combating Terrorism reaffirmed the resolve of the participating States to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Also contributing to the global effort against terrorism were a number of practical OSCE conferences and workshops that served to exchange among relevant practitioners from the OSCE participating States information, experiences and best practices in countering urgent terrorist threats such as the MANPADS threat to civil aviation at airports.

In its efforts to guide OSCE's counter-terrorism work, the Chairmanship clearly focused its attention on the fundamental principle that the fight against terrorism cannot be used to restrict human rights and civil liberties in any way.

In clear recognition of OSCE's growing role in the area of counter-terrorism and of its successful interaction with other organizations, the OSCE hosted, in co-operation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the third Special Meeting of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNCTC) with International, Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations in March 2004.

4. Border Security and Management

With the adoption of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century at the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting, in Maastricht, the participating States agreed on developing an **OSCE Border Security and Management Concept**. An informal working group of friends on borders was set up in January 2004 under the chairmanship of the Ambassador of Belgium. The informal working group started its work, on the one hand, by exchanging information and experiences on what had been done so far in the field of border-related issues, both inside and outside the OSCE, and, on the other hand, by promoting a focused discussion among the participating States, in order to derive a clear understanding of what should be the aim and the scope of such a concept. Between June and October 2004, extensive work was done on drafting the concept. In view of the complexity of the issue, some participating States considered that the time was not yet ripe to agree on such a concept on borders in the OSCE. At the twelfth Ministerial Council meeting, in Sofia, the Ministers decided upon political goals, principles and considerations to be taken into account when completing the work of preparing the concept in 2005.

The OSCE's **South-Eastern Europe Cross-border Co-operation Programme** (OSCCP) was implemented as a response to the OSCE's commitment to the Ohrid process in terms of civilian aspects of training and advice to border police, assistance to and facilitation of institution building and promotion of regional co-operation. The first phase of this Programme consisted of six seminars, all based on the results of a needs assessment mission

that took place in the autumn of 2003. The Programme responded to the most urgent needs and demands in this field and addresses senior and middle management at the regional and subregional levels. It aimed at accelerating the process of regional cross-border co-operation among the respective border police forces, as well as setting the scene for more specific topics to be followed up during the second phase of the Programme in 2005. All the seminars were well attended by participants from the countries concerned and their neighbouring States. The participants were unanimous in agreeing that the aims had been successfully met throughout, and in particular through the “quick impact” solutions to problems that the Programme had set out to achieve.

On 7 and 8 September 2004, the Bulgarian Chairmanship organized a **Joint OSCE/UNODC Technical Experts Conference on Border Management and Security**. The aim of the Conference was to share international organizations’ experience in promoting more effective border management and security, and to develop a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to delivering international assistance. Almost 200 participants from all 55 participating States, Partners for Co-operation and international organizations such as NATO, the European Commission (EC), CIS, Europol, Interpol, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe attended the Conference, which set the scene for ensuring, *inter alia*, better and closer co-operation between those international organizations with border management and security-related mandates.

Also on the subject of borders, in 2004, the Chairmanship, the Secretariat and the OSCE Mission to Moldova developed contingency plans for an OSCE Border and Customs Monitoring Operation (BCMO) at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. As at the end of 2004, implementation of the BCMO had not yet been possible.

5. Education

At the outset of its tenure, the Bulgarian Chairmanship included education, in the widest sense of the word, among its priorities. Taking into account the global interest in security in the Central Asian region, one of the main focuses of the Bulgarian Chairmanship was to draw the attention of the participating States, as well as that of other international organizations, to the topic of education in Central Asia. This was deemed important, as high educational standards in this region can help to foster stability and security in the area and can give further impetus to the reform process in general.

In light of the above, a one-day **Ministerial Conference on Education as an Investment in the Future** was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 5 April 2004. The Conference was organized by the Bulgarian Chairmanship and hosted by the Uzbek Government. It brought together Ministers of Education of Central Asian States and Afghanistan and institutions and international organizations active in the region, including international financial institutions and development agencies, as well as research institutes from within and outside the region. The Chairman-in-Office (C-i-O), Bulgarian Foreign Minister Passy, addressed the Conference.

The main objectives of the Conference were to offer a platform to the States of the region to illustrate their achievements, to foster increased co-operation and synergies with all actors, and to take stock of ongoing supporting activities by international organizations. The Conference issued a number of recommendations, including the following: (i) the

internationalizing of education systems; (ii) achieving quality education for all; (iii) providing higher salaries to teachers; (iv) strengthening of vocational training; (v) training of staff at the ministries of education; (vi) developing an education financing framework, based on medium-term targets and on associated costs of inputs; (vii) and developing ideas for regional co-operation, following the example of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship further encouraged synergies with other education-related work of the OSCE, given that the topic cuts across dimensions, and facilitated education-related activities in the framework of:

- Field operations, in particular the curriculum development in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Latin script schools in Moldova, and the youth and education programme of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK);
- The OSCE conferences on anti-Semitism in Berlin (28–29 April), and on tolerance and the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination in Brussels (13–14 September);
- The ODIHR’s Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Human Rights Education and Training held on 25 and 26 March;
- The Twelfth Economic Forum, which developed recommendations for education, capacity-building and training programmes;
- The High Commissioner on National Minorities; and
- The Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Furthermore, the Chairmanship tasked the Secretariat’s Conflict Prevention Centre with preparing an **OSCE-wide survey** of all past, present and future OSCE education-related activities. The survey highlighted the fact that the scope of the OSCE’s involvement in education covered activities from capacity-building of educational institutions to vocational training, as well as awareness-raising activities and advocacy for OSCE values and commitments. The findings reconfirmed a considerable role and investment on the part of the OSCE in education as it relates to conflict prevention.

6. Politico-Military Dimension

Forum for Security Co-operation

The Bulgarian Chairmanship welcomes the efforts of the OSCE in promoting the fight against illicit trafficking of **small arms and light weapons (SALW)**. The implementation of the Document on SALW adopted in 2000 was high on the FSC’s agenda in 2004. The FSC’s determination to reduce the risk of diversion of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) into illicit markets led to the adoption of a decision on OSCE principles for export controls of MANPADS in May 2004. Furthermore, a decision on OSCE principles on the control of brokering in SALW was adopted just before the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia. This decision aims at improving the control of arms-brokering, thus minimizing the risk of diversion of SALW into illegal markets and, *inter alia*, into the hands of terrorists and other criminal groups. Finally, the FSC recognized the need for stricter export controls in

order to prevent the destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of SALW. This resulted in the adoption of two decisions on verification procedures for SALW exports and standard elements of end-user certificates. The Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia endorsed all these decisions.

The Chairmanship also notes the risks and challenges to human security and to the environment caused by the presence of **stockpiles of conventional ammunition**. The Chairmanship welcomes the principles and procedures agreed to by participating States and the steps already taken to implement the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. The Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia therefore tasked the FSC with submitting a progress report on the implementation of the Stockpiles Document to the thirteenth Ministerial Council meeting, in 2005.

The Chairmanship strongly believes that the implementation of the documents on SALW and on stockpiles of conventional ammunition will **enhance security in the OSCE area**. The OSCE has already received several requests for assistance from participating States. Two States indicated their willingness to receive operational assistance for the destruction of SALW and four States requested assistance for the destruction of surplus ammunition. Considerable financial means will be required for these operations. The Chairmanship encourages participating States to continue to address this issue in the future.

Annual Security Review Conference

The Chairmanship welcomes the results of the second **Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC)**. The 2004 ASRC was convened by the Chairmanship on 23 and 24 June 2004, drawing on support by the Secretariat for its preparation and follow-up. The aim of the event was to review activities undertaken in the previous year in the field of security, to enhance exchange of information on major security issues, as well as to fix strategies and define priorities for the coming year. The Conference consisted of four sessions, each of which was opened by two keynote speeches. Participants from all the 55 participating States, with reinforcement from capitals, took part in the discussions, together with all ten OSCE Partners for Co-operation and a number of key international partners of the OSCE. A particular focus was placed on terrorism-related activities, border-related activities, traditional politico-military activities and the way forward, touching specifically on the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century and the need to make it operational. The discussions were fruitful, with over a hundred new proposals and suggestions emerging from them.

7. Economic and Environmental Dimension

The agenda in the economic and environmental dimension for 2004 was largely set by the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. The Office of the OSCE Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), with guidance from the Economic and Environmental Sub-Committee, was brought into a number of activities with a view to implementing the Document in the areas of economic co-operation, good governance, SME development, anti-trafficking, human capacity-building and sustainable development.

Special emphasis was placed this year on improving the OSCE's performance in the areas of early warning and implementation of existing commitments. To that end, a

memorandum of understanding on co-operation was signed at the Sofia Ministerial Council meeting between the OSCE and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

The theme of this year's Economic Forum was "New Challenges for Building up Institutional and Human Capacity for Economic Development and Co-operation". The C-i-O suggested that, in the future, Economic Forum meetings should be organized in a different way and held in other parts of the OSCE area. At the Sofia Ministerial Council meeting, a decision was taken on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Economic Forum, and offers have been received from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to host meetings of the Economic Forum in the future.

The OCEEA assessed the recommendations made at the Twelfth OSCE Economic Forum and suggested concrete follow-up in the fields of SME development, investment, building of human capacity, economic integration and the fight against corruption. In Sofia, the Ministerial Council adopted a decision on combating corruption.

8. Human Dimension

The Chairmanship's activities in the human dimension followed several tracks. A number of them were channelled through the regular OSCE human dimension meetings: the **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), the Human Dimension Seminar and the three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings (SHDM)**. Other activities resulted from decisions taken at the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht, such as the **OSCE Conferences on Anti-Semitism and on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, the OSCE Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes**, as well as the work on the **2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality**.

The three SHDMs organized in co-operation with the ODIHR were devoted respectively to human rights education and training, electoral standards and commitments and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The first of these meetings was organized in Vienna on 25 and 26 March. The theme "**Human Rights Education and Training**" was chosen to give the opportunity to all interested parties, including international organizations and NGOs, to consolidate ongoing efforts to promote human-rights education and training in the OSCE region. Participants shared best practices, discussed such topics as formal human-rights education, human-rights education in school curricula, human-rights education and training of public officials, and informal human-rights education. Useful recommendations on ways of improving the quality of human-rights education and training were elaborated.

The second SHDM took place in Vienna on 15 and 16 July and focused on the topic "**Electoral Standards and Commitments**". It provided a forum for discussions on the implementation of existing OSCE commitments for democratic elections and follow-up to ODIHR recommendations. It was recognized by several delegations that the participating States should consider the possibility of supplementary commitments, in addition to the existing ones. The SHDM underlined the need to address emerging challenges, such as electronic voting, trends towards low turnouts, recall elections and referenda.

The third SHDM was devoted to the theme “**Internally Displaced Persons**” (IDPs) and took place in Vienna on 4 and 5 November. The main objective was to discuss practical approaches that OSCE institutions and participating States can adopt to alleviate the plight of IDPs in the OSCE area. The meeting featured general discussions on States’ responsibility towards IDPs and fundamental rights and freedoms of IDPs, as well as more focused debates on durable solutions, including return and resettlement, reintegration and property restitution. The participants called on participating States to develop detailed laws and policies to protect IDPs.

As called for by Permanent Council Decision No. 353 of 1 June 2000 on the OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues, the OSCE participating States developed an **OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality**, which aims to set out the priorities of the OSCE in promoting gender equality, both in the Organization and in all the participating States, and to ensure the monitoring of its implementation. The Action Plan was endorsed by the Sofia Ministerial Council meeting.

The annual Human Dimension Seminar in 2004 was devoted to the topic “**Democratic Institutions and Democratic Governance**” and took place in Warsaw from 12 to 14 May. The meeting provided a forum for renewing the debate on the current state and future of democratic institutions and democratic governance. Among its key recommendations, the meeting underscored the urgency of fostering a more developed understanding of the workings of the democratic process. Moreover, the need to develop a culture of respect and to take an active part in developing effective and inclusive mechanisms of interaction between the citizenry and government authorities was stressed.

As tasked by Decision No. 4/03, of the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting, on tolerance and non-discrimination, the Chairmanship followed up the work started in 2003 and in co-operation with host countries organized two OSCE conferences on issues addressed in the Decision. A **Conference on Anti-Semitism** took place on 28 and 29 April in Berlin, and a **Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination** took place on 13 and 14 September in Brussels. The two conferences confirmed the determination of the participating States to work together in combating racism, xenophobia, discrimination and anti-Semitism. Two decisions by the Permanent Council assigned further tasks to the ODIHR in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination. The conferences highlighted the key role of the ODIHR in serving, *inter alia*, as a data collection point and urged all the participating States, NGOs and others to work in partnership with the ODIHR. At the end, the C-i-O summed up the proceedings of the conferences in what he called the “Berlin Declaration” (see Annex 1) and the “Brussels Declaration” (see Annex 2).

As urged by the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht, the Chairmanship, in co-operation with France, organized a special **Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes** on 16 and 17 June in Paris. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of fully respecting the rights to freedom of information and expression, reiterated the commitment to combat hate crimes and stressed the importance of promoting tolerance, mutual respect, dialogue and understanding, including through the media and the Internet. At the end of the Meeting, the Chairmanship issued its conclusions.

The **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM)** took place from 4 to 15 October in Warsaw. During the first week, a comprehensive review of all the OSCE

commitments in the Human Dimension took place, while the second week was devoted to three specifically selected topics: promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination; freedom of assembly and association; and complementarity and co-operation between international organizations in promoting human rights. During the special day devoted to freedom of assembly and association, the participants highlighted a need for continued OSCE attention to the protection of defenders of human rights. Other recommendations included continued political dialogue with the participating States, training of government officials, introduction of changes in administrative practices and intensification of the co-operation between international organizations in promoting human rights.

On 10 March 2004, following a silence procedure on the appointment by the Ministerial Council, the C-i-O appointed Mr. Miklos Haraszti to the position of OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

In line with Decision No. 2/03 of the eleventh Ministerial Council meeting, on combating trafficking in human beings, the C-i-O appointed Mrs. Helga Konrad as a Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for a two-year period beginning on 10 May 2004.

As part of the overall fight of the OSCE in combating discrimination and promoting tolerance, on 22 December 2004, the C-i-O appointed three personal representatives: Mrs. Anastasia Crickley as Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions, Mr. Gert Weisskirchen as Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism and Ambassador Ömur Orhun as Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

9. Operational capacity of the OSCE

OSCE Troika

The OSCE Troika continued to function as an important tool for co-ordinated action and mid-term planning. In 2004, the **OSCE Troika** met twice at the level of foreign ministers (in January and in July) involving also the Secretary General, the heads of institutions and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE

The Chairmanship continued its close co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly (PA) of the OSCE, including through the PA's special representative in Vienna.

The C-i-O addressed the Winter Session of the OSCE PA, held on 19 February 2004 in Vienna, stressing the need for enhancing the co-operation between the PA and the other OSCE institutions and bodies.

The C-i-O also addressed the Thirteenth Annual Session of the OSCE PA, which took place on 5 July 2004 in Edinburgh and focused on the theme "Co-operation and Partnership: Coping with New Security Threats". He commended the choice of such a timely topic and underlined the role of the PA as an important institution promoting the OSCE's values. In his address, the C-i-O presented a number of ideas for transformation of the OSCE in order to

further improve the Organization's efficiency and keep it fit to deal with its contemporary security priorities. Those recommendations and ideas found support among the parliamentarians and were included in a resolution of the PA.

10. Financial issues

Following the activities in 2003 of the working group of the informal Financial Committee on scales of contribution, and guided by the two relevant Permanent Council decisions on matters relating to scales adopted in 2001 (No. 408) and in 2002 (No. 468), the Bulgarian Chairmanship undertook steps aimed at reaching a timely agreement on the matter. In the process of negotiations, systematic efforts were made, through consultations in different formats, to overcome the diverging views, reach an acceptable compromise and move further towards "capacity to pay" levels. From the outset, it was openly stated that reaching consensus on the scales of contribution would only be possible if all the participating States applied creativity, realism and a clear political will in the endeavour to reach such a consensus.

In December, after several "Chair's Guesses", the Chairmanship introduced a final proposal for the two scales which followed the basic criteria of Permanent Council Decisions Nos. 408 and 468, as well as the methodology developed by the working group in 2003. The Chairperson's proposal avoided both large increases and decreases in the contributions, achieved through limitations in the fluctuation. Ultimately, only one participating State remained outside the consensus on this proposal.

11. Regional issues

In 2004, a priority for Bulgaria's Chairmanship of the OSCE was to support the process of democratization in Georgia, to reinvigorate the process of dialogue in Moldova and to maintain effective co-operation with all the States in which the OSCE had field activities. During the course of the year, the Chairmanship had to respond quickly to developments in Ajara and South Ossetia in Georgia, a flare-up of violence in Kosovo/ Serbia and Montenegro, and mass protests in Ukraine after the presidential elections.

South Caucasus

One of the Chairmanship's main priorities in the Southern Caucasus was to promote the peaceful settlement of the existing conflicts and to prevent occurrence of new conflicts in the region.

In 2004, **Georgia** underwent significant political changes, making OSCE activities in the country particularly challenging and also demanding increased attention from the OSCE Chairmanship.

Following the pledges of support by participating States at the eleventh OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht in December 2003, the Georgia Election Assistance Programme (GEAP) was set up by the Mission to Georgia to assist the country in the conduct of extraordinary presidential and parliamentary elections on 4 January and 28 March 2004.

The Chairmanship took an active stand in response to the crisis around Ajara. In particular, during the peak of the crisis in mid-March, the C-i-O flew to Poti to promote a peaceful settlement. He met with Georgian President Saakashvili and Prime Minister Zhvania, and had a telephone conference with the then-Head of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, Mr. Abashidze. The Chairmanship also supported the increased activities of the OSCE Mission to Georgia in Ajara, particularly in relation to the development of local free media and human rights protection organizations.

In the summer of 2004, violence erupted in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. The OSCE appealed repeatedly to Tbilisi and Tskhinvali to cease hostile actions and to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. The C-i-O discussed the situation with President Saakashvili, Prime Minister Zhvania, and South Ossetian leader Kokoity. He also discussed issues related to the settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and US Secretary of State Powell. In support of the existing OSCE efforts to reduce tensions, the Special Envoy of the C-i-O, former President of Bulgaria Zhelyu Zhelev, visited Georgia from 25 to 28 July. He held talks with representatives of both sides, urging them to exercise maximum restraint and implement commitments entered within the framework of the settlement process.

Throughout the crisis, the OSCE actively monitored developments on the ground, and sought to reduce tensions. On 6 August, the Permanent Council decided to enhance the staff of the Mission by adding two monitoring officers. After a cease-fire agreement had been reached on 13 August, a group of 20 heads and members of OSCE delegations, accompanied by a representative of the C-i-O, visited Georgia from 5 to 9 September to get first-hand information on the situation in the country, in particular on developments related to the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

The OSCE actively sought and welcomed the resumption of the high-level dialogue between the Georgian and South Ossetian leaderships. On 5 November, Prime Minister Zhvania and the South Ossetian leader Mr. Kokoity met and agreed on a number of issues, including the phased demilitarization of the zone of conflict and the need to support economic development and to ensure freedom of movement of people and goods in the area. Building on these developments, the Chairmanship offered to host a high-level meeting in Sofia devoted to identifying possibilities for resolving the conflict. The Chairmanship also welcomed the acknowledgement by the parties of the positive role of the OSCE in the settlement process, including its financing of the demolition of military fortifications, its support for the setting up of a Secretariat of the Joint Peacekeeping Force and its active role in the implementation of confidence-building projects, as well as the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure in the zone of conflict.

Regarding the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, the OSCE has continued to support the United Nations's efforts to bring about a comprehensive settlement and is closely following developments in the region. The Chairmanship hopes that negotiations will be resumed as soon as possible, once a decision on the future political leadership of Abkhazia is reached. The Chairmanship supports the OSCE's work with the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) with a view to opening a Gali branch of the UN Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia (HROAG).

The OSCE Border Monitoring Operation (BMO) in Georgia played an important confidence-building role, thus contributing to the promotion of security along the Ingush,

Chechen and Dagestan segments of the border between Georgia and the Russian Federation. However, at the end of 2004, the mandate of the BMO was not extended due to lack of consensus.

The OSCE continued to support **Armenia** in the process of electoral and constitutional reforms, with a special focus on reform of the Electoral Code and constitutional amendments. In addition, the OSCE continued to promote the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments in all three dimensions, including through special attention to the fight against corruption, freedom of the media, action to combat trafficking, prevention and combating of terrorism, penitentiary reform, police assistance and economic and environmental activities in the country. The preparation for implementation of the Police Assistance Programme and the Project on Elimination of Rocket Fuel Component (Melange) as a typical OSCE cross-dimensional activity were in the focus of the OSCE activities as well.

The Chairmanship closely followed developments in relation to opposition rallies held in April of 2004 in Yerevan. The attacks against opposition supporters as well as journalists that took place during these rallies were strongly criticized by the OSCE. The OSCE continued to emphasize the importance of dialogue between the authorities and the opposition and the participation of all factions in the parliament's law-making activities.

In **Azerbaijan**, the OSCE continued to promote the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments in all the OSCE dimensions, with a special focus on the rule of law, good governance and freedom of the media, including through the carrying out of projects in the areas of assistance to the police and economic and environmental development.

During his visit to Azerbaijan on 16 March, the C-i-O raised the question of democratization and respect for human rights in the country and also voiced concern over the fate of those detained and awaiting trial after the October disturbances. The C-i-O welcomed the decision of President Ilham Aliyev of 17 March to pardon 129 people and release them from prison. The OSCE expressed its concern over the conduct of the trials, including the decision taken by the Court of Appeals on 19 November 2004 to uphold the prison sentences of seven senior opposition members. In the framework of the ODIHR Trial Monitoring Programme, the Office in Baku together with local lawyers monitored the trials and prepared a report to be discussed with the Government.

The Chairmanship was actively involved in the promotion of a political settlement of the **Nagorno-Karabakh** conflict. Close co-operation involving the Chairmanship, the Personal Representative of the C-i-O on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, and the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group was further pursued under the Bulgarian Chairmanship. In his contacts with the parties, the C-i-O assured them of his and the OSCE's commitment to finding a solution to the conflict and of his support for the positive momentum gained during the year in the course of the meetings of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan under the auspices of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group, and in the framework of the so-called "Prague Process", through which the Foreign Ministers of both countries methodically explored all the parameters for a future settlement. It was encouraging to have an agreed statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict at the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia.

In addition, the C-i-O asked the former Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Mr. Philip Dimitrov, to visit Armenia and Azerbaijan from 20 to 24 September as his Special Envoy for the conflict, with the task of giving impetus to the peace process. In Baku and Yerevan, Mr. Dimitrov reaffirmed the support of the C-i-O for the efforts of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and his Personal Representative. He also called on the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to take into account the framework presented to them by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group in mid-September in Astana that could serve as a basis for a settlement. Mr. Dimitrov was reassured in Baku and Yerevan that the sides were committed to reaching a peaceful solution to the conflict.

The activities of the Personal Representative of the C-i-O on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference were instrumental in reducing tensions along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and the line of contact, particularly during the summer, when a number of violations of the cease-fire agreement took place.

Northern Caucasus

With regard to the situation in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation, the Chairmanship continued the dialogue initiated by the Netherlands Chairmanship with the Russian Federation aimed at agreement on a long-term OSCE programme of technical co-operation in Chechnya.

South-Eastern Europe

In 2004, the OSCE made clear its commitment to continue to foster peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe through enhanced regional co-operation, the promotion of and support for legislative reform, respect for human and minority rights, and institution- and capacity-building. It made further concrete efforts, in co-operation with its partner organizations, to facilitate the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons, to assist in enhancing the capacity of the domestic judiciaries and to monitor domestic war-crimes trials.

The C-i-O visited **Kosovo/Serbia and Montenegro**, together with the NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, to assess the situation following the violence in March. In Pristina on 23 March, he called the violence “unacceptable” and said that “it is not welcome on the path to Europe”. The C-i-O conveyed the message that the OSCE, working with its international partners in Kosovo, was prepared to continue to work to secure peace and stability. He also pledged the OSCE’s assistance for free and democratic elections in October 2004. Thereafter, the C-i-O visited Belgrade to discuss the situation in Kosovo with the Serb leaders. At the invitation of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the C-i-O and the OSCE Secretary General attended meetings in September at UN Headquarters in New York, which focused on the way forward in Kosovo, including the international community’s tasks and responsibilities in the foreseeable future.

On 29 March 2004, the C-i-O visited **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. During the visit, he reiterated the OSCE’s continued interest in and support for the political stabilization and the ongoing process of reforms in the country, in particular with regard to defence and education.

On 10 and 11 May 2004, the C-i-O visited **Croatia**. His visit focused on return of refugees, property restitution, occupancy tenancy rights, and co-operation with the

International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The C-i-O and Croatia's Prime Minister Ivo Sanader made field trips to Zadar and other communities to observe at first hand the situation of refugees and returnee families and to assess the efforts of the Croatian Government to facilitate the return and reintegration of refugees, including the reconstruction of destroyed properties, repossession of occupied properties, and the provision of alternative accommodation to Bosnian Croat settlers.

The Special Co-ordinator of the **Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe**, Dr. Erhard Busek, was invited by the Chairperson to address the Permanent Council on 20 May 2004. There was a common understanding that priority should be assigned to the repatriation of refugees and IDPs, as that could pose an obstacle to long-term stability in the region. The continued co-operation between the OSCE and the Stability Pact in matters such as stabilization of population movements, combating of organized crime, trafficking in human beings, and border management was noted with appreciation, as was the OSCE's contribution to the follow-up to the Ohrid Conference.

Between 18 and 21 October, the C-i-O toured South-Eastern Europe, visiting **Skopje, Pristina, Belgrade, Podgorica and Tirana**. In Kosovo, the main purpose of his visit was to become better acquainted with the situation on the ground and the activities of the OSCE on the eve of the elections to the Kosovo Assembly on 23 October. While in Pristina, he urged politicians from all sides to reach out to the electorate, inviting them to participate in the elections. He strongly encouraged the Kosovo Serbs to take part. In Skopje, he discussed the implications of the referendum on 7 November concerning decentralization. In Belgrade and Podgorica he urged Serbia and Montenegro to speed up reforms related to their OSCE commitments to achieve their objective of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The C-i-O also discussed concrete forms of co-operation between the OSCE and the various countries, taking into account their foreign policy objectives.

The C-i-O strongly supported an initiative co-ordinated by the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) designed to enhance **inter-State co-operation in war crimes proceedings**. The CPC, together with three OSCE Missions in South-Eastern Europe and the ODIHR, have considered ways in which the OSCE could facilitate a direct, concrete dialogue among practitioners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro for the purpose of enhancing inter-State co-operation in dealing with war crimes proceedings (investigations, prosecutions, and trials). "Witness issues" was the topic of a first expert-level meeting by the OSCE facilitated that took place in Palic, Republic of Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro), on 29 and 30 November 2004. The meeting in Palic, conducted in a spirit of regional ownership, was appreciated as an excellent starting point in the broader, more technical process that the OSCE has launched in this important field.

Central Asia

The Bulgarian Chairmanship drew increased attention to the Central Asian region and offered assistance to the five participating States of Central Asia in pursuing their path of political, social and economic reform. The Chairmanship aimed at enhancing the awareness of the Central Asian participating States as to what the OSCE could offer them and how a balanced approach to the three OSCE dimensions could help to further the reform process.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship sought to enhance the relationship between the OSCE and Central Asian countries by maintaining an open and regular dialogue. In this context, the

C-i-O visited all five Central Asian States as well as Afghanistan in April 2004. He was received by the five Heads of State and met with the respective Foreign Ministers and with representatives from civil society.

During the C-i-O's visit to **Uzbekistan**, education, the fight against terrorism in the light of the bombings in Tashkent in April and election preparation were among the key topics discussed. The C-i-O opened the Ministerial Conference on Education as an Investment into the Future, held in Tashkent on 5 April, and underlined in his statement the key role of education in building security, ensuring political stability and reducing poverty.

In **Kazakhstan**, the discussions revolved around Kazakhstan's bid for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2009, water resource management, anti-trafficking activities and elections. In **Kyrgyzstan**, the C-i-O stressed the importance of regional initiatives such as the OSCE Academy, elections, action to combat terrorism, prison reform and border issues. In **Tajikistan**, the talks focused on issues pertaining to de-mining, tax reform, labour migration, the media and elections. During the C-i-O's visit to **Turkmenistan**, enhanced co-operation between the OSCE and Turkmenistan, media issues and the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking were discussed. In addition to the visit of the C-i-O to Central Asia in April 2004, Mr. Younal Lutfi, Vice-Chairman of the Bulgarian National Assembly, visited Turkmenistan at the beginning of December 2004 at the request of the C-i-O. Issues relating to the upcoming elections, action to combat terrorism, education, national minorities and access to prisons for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were reviewed.

The reappointment of President Martti Ahtisaari, the former President of Finland, as **Personal Envoy for Central Asia** further demonstrated the importance the Bulgarian Chairmanship attached to continuity and engagement with the five Central Asian participating States. President Ahtisaari maintained contacts at the highest political level in all five States and followed up on issues that had been discussed during the C-i-O's visit in April. Mr. Ahtisaari visited Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan twice in 2004 and Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan once each. In his discussions, President Ahtisaari focused especially on elections, freedom of the media and other issues related to political, economic and environmental developments in the individual countries.

Moldova

The Bulgarian Chairmanship was actively involved in seeking solutions to the Transdniestrian conflict. The Chairmanship's efforts began with consultations between the mediators convened in Sofia during the month of January, resulting in promising reactions from both the Moldovan and the Transdniestrian parties to the proposals tabled. As a result, subsequent consultations between the mediators were held in February in Belgrade, culminating in the first round in negotiations in the five-sided format in Tiraspol and Chisinau in April. These were the first such talks in six months. A follow-up meeting was held in May.

The C-i-O visited Moldova in June, meeting all the parties and voicing support for the documents proposed by the mediators as a basis for a political settlement, as well as expressing concern over the lack of progress in the implementation of the OSCE Istanbul Summit commitments concerning the Russian military forces.

The Chairmanship also closely followed the developments linked to the crisis involving the Moldovan schools teaching in the Latin script in Transdnistria. Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister Petko Draganov visited Moldova in July to assist in the efforts of the OSCE Mission in Moldova to find solutions to the rising tensions between the two parties over this issue.

As the crisis deepened, the C-i-O appointed former Bulgarian President Petar Stoyanov as his **Personal Envoy for Moldova**. President Stoyanov's visit to Chisinau and Tiraspol in September demonstrated the Chairmanship's commitment to seek an overall settlement of the dispute. However, despite the continuing work of the mediators and some positive developments, during the first half of the year, there was a lack of progress towards a comprehensive political settlement.

The Chairmanship tried to break the deadlock in the negotiation process by convening a meeting of the mediators in Sofia on 11 and 12 October. This was followed by a meeting in Varna, Bulgaria, on 8 and 9 November, with the participation of the mediators and representatives of the Republic of Moldova and of Transdnistria. Work on confidence- and security-building measures were carried out up to the end of the year.

In all contacts, the Chairmanship called upon the parties to the conflict to establish and to strengthen a working dialogue which could lead to a more effective and lasting solution. Additional efforts are still needed to find a formula for a comprehensive settlement on the basis of a strengthening of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova while ensuring a special status for Transdnistria.

Belarus

A representative of the Chairmanship paid a visit to Minsk in March for consultations on relations between the OSCE and Belarus, during which preparations for the visit of the C-i-O were also discussed. The C-i-O visited Minsk in June in order to discuss ways of enhancing co-operation between the OSCE and the host country, in the light of OSCE commitments and to collect first-hand information on the situation in Belarus. The C-i-O also took the occasion to convey the OSCE's message in relation to some issues of concern, such as the trend towards the deterioration of the situation with civil society, NGOs, the mass media and political parties. In anticipation of the parliamentary elections of 17 October, the C-i-O stressed the need to conduct a free and fair poll. The Chairmanship supported the OSCE Office in Minsk in pursuing the activities set out in its mandate, in co-operation with the Belarusian authorities and civil society, in order to promote the country's performance vis-à-vis the Organization's principles and standards.

Ukraine

From the time of his meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Gryshchenko on 14 April 2004, the C-i-O was forthright in outlining the assistance that the OSCE could provide to the electoral process in Ukraine, beginning with the first round of the process on 31 October 2004. Similarly, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine was involved in the run-up to the elections through implementation of the project, "Assistance in further improvement of the election process in Ukraine".

The Presidential elections in Ukraine put that country and the OSCE in the spotlight. The OSCE/ODIHR were outspoken in their criticism of some aspects of the election process. Following the second round of voting on 21 November, and the subsequent electoral crisis, the C-i-O, in a statement issued on 24 November, urged the Ukrainian authorities “to investigate, in a proactive and timely manner, the irregularities which were identified”. He also designated OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubiš as his envoy to join other international mediators in the round table discussions mandated to facilitate an end to the crisis.

On 4 December, the C-i-O issued a statement welcoming the decision of the Supreme Court of Ukraine to declare the second round of the presidential elections invalid and pledged full support of the OSCE in the re-run of the vote. He noted that the Supreme Court decision echoed the findings of international observers including the OSCE/ODIHR and said that “the decision will make it possible to find a peaceful outcome to the present political crisis”. He called on the Ukrainian authorities to ensure a fair campaign and underlined, in particular, the need for unbiased reporting by State-controlled media.

Ukraine was also on the agenda of the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia. In his opening remarks, the C-i-O said that the winners in the process were democracy and the rule of law, and emphasized the OSCE’s key role in election monitoring and as facilitator. He called on participating States to support the international monitoring effort for the re-run of the second round.

The OSCE was able to launch a significant monitoring effort, with over a thousand monitors in Ukraine for the re-run on 26 December.

12. Co-operation with other international organizations

Further development of relations between the OSCE and partner organizations and institutions was one of the priorities of the Bulgarian Chairmanship in 2004.

The establishment of closer working relations with the United Nations was supported throughout the year by the Chairmanship. In July 2004, the C-i-O took an active part in the United Nations Security Council meeting with regional organizations on co-operation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes. The C-i-O, together with the Secretary General, participated at the invitation of the United Nations, together with high-level representatives of the European Union and NATO, in a meeting which provided for an exchange of views on the way forward in Kosovo. In October, the Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister addressed the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on co-operation between the UN and the OSCE.

Efforts were made throughout the year to further develop relations between the OSCE and the European Union. Meetings between the OSCE and the EU Ministerial Troikas were held during the Irish and the Dutch Presidencies, on the margins of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in January and July 2004. Further meetings of the OSCE and the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) troikas were hosted in Vienna in February and October 2004. The fact that the Netherlands held the OSCE Presidency and was part of the OSCE Troika at the same time made matters easier. Close ties were also maintained by the Bulgarian Chairmanship with the EU Presidency, the Council Secretariat and the European Commission at the policy level. One major concern for the Bulgarian Chairmanship was also to maintain a dialogue with EU member States on relevant

developments within the OSCE and to promote the formulation of EU positions supportive of the OSCE's policy. In order to promote a flow of information and co-ordination, several representatives of the EU were invited to address the Permanent Council, including the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Ireland and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as well as the EU Commissioner for External Relations.

Relations with the Council of Europe featured especially prominently on the OSCE agenda this year. The C-i-O of the OSCE responded positively to the initiative of the Norwegian Chairmanship of the CoE Committee of Ministers to strengthen synergy and launch closer co-operation between the two organizations. This was one of the main items on the agenda of the meeting between Foreign Ministers Passy of Bulgaria and Petersen of Norway, which took place in Sofia on 13 October. The Ministers agreed that there was scope for enhanced interaction to ensure that the OSCE and the CoE avoided unnecessary duplication and fully met the expectations of participating and member States. On 2 December, the OSCE Permanent Council adopted a decision on enhanced co-operation between the OSCE and the CoE which will, *inter alia*, lead to the establishment of an OSCE/CoE co-ordination group.

The Chairmanship made a systematic effort to have a regular dialogue with NATO. In the course of the year, the C-i-O addressed the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in January and November respectively, bringing issues related to OSCE-NATO co-operation to the attention of the member and partner States. In January, on the occasion of his address to the NAC, the C-i-O met with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer to discuss further enhancement of OSCE-NATO co-operation at all levels. Members of the OSCE Troika were also involved in working-level consultations between the OSCE Secretariat and representatives of the NATO International Staff.

The Chairmanship also participated in the regular Tripartite Meeting between the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN, as well as the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the ICRC, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the target-oriented meeting at expert level in an expanded tripartite format, hosted by the OSCE, in Vienna. The Tripartite Meeting was devoted to addressing threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century and co-operation in the field, while the target-oriented meeting considered activities of, and co-operation between, partner international organizations in the Southern Caucasus.

The Chairmanship conducted a series of consultations with partner organizations on the ad hoc consultative mechanism. This mechanism, proposed in the Maastricht Strategy, is a tool offered by the OSCE as a flexible framework for consultation through the initiation of contacts with relevant organizations and institutions whenever a specific threat arises or is intensified.

A strengthening of co-operation with other regional and subregional organizations was also promoted by the Chairmanship. In May 2004, the C-i-O participated in the Arab Summit held in Tunisia.

13. Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

In 2004, further to the decisions adopted at the Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht, there was a marked increase in contacts at various levels between the OSCE and its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation. Based on the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, the participating States adopted PC.DEC/571/Corr.1, in which they decided, *inter alia*, to identify additional fields of co-operation and interaction with the Partners for Co-operation for the purpose of enhancing mutual security and to encourage them to voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles and commitments as a means to further interaction with the OSCE. A comprehensive report was developed by the Informal Group of Friends, chaired by the Ambassador of Finland, taking into account all three OSCE dimensions. As a result, the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia adopted a decision (MC.DEC/17/04) on the OSCE and its Partners for Co-operation, emphasizing the importance of the report (PC.DEL/366/04/Rev. 4), which is based on an exchange of various views, including with the OSCE Partners for Co-operation. The decision tasks the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation to remain seized of the matter.

The Partner States were also **invited more frequently** as observers to Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation meetings. They participated in more regular meetings of the Mediterranean and Asian Contact Groups, which bring together the OSCE participating and Partner States.

Representatives of the Partners for Co-operation took part in the OSCE events to promote awareness regarding tolerance and non-discrimination, the Annual Security Review Conference and a Technical Experts Conference on Border Management and Security organized by the OSCE and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The OSCE-Japan Conference, co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the OSCE, on the topic: “The Search for Effective Conflict Prevention in the New Security Circumstances: European Security Mechanisms and Security in Asia”, took place on 15 and 16 March, in Tokyo. The Chairmanship was represented by the Bulgarian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, who emphasized that the Conference afforded an excellent opportunity to share experiences on conducting crisis prevention activities and to discuss ways of further promoting dialogue between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-operation on security matters. The participants called attention to the fact that both regions faced similar challenges and had a common interest in finding appropriate responses to them in the new security environment. A number of proposals for follow-up were made, and were discussed during the meetings of the Asian Contact Group. Following the OSCE-Japan Conference, an informal meeting of its participants with participants in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) workshop on preventive diplomacy, co-chaired by Japan and Thailand, took place on 16 and 17 March in Tokyo with the objective of sharing among ARF members the conclusions of the OSCE-Japan Conference and the experience of the OSCE in preventive diplomacy.

The annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminar, jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and the OSCE, on the topic: “Addressing Threats to Security in the Twenty-First Century: Interaction between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation”, was convened in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 18 and 19 November 2004. At the meeting, the C-i-O said that the OSCE was happy to share its considerable experience in

confidence-building and in fostering tolerance and non-discrimination with the Mediterranean countries as a contribution to building a just and lasting peace in the region. A number of concrete suggestions were made, e.g. on further joint work on issues of tolerance and respect, and on the question of the integration of migrants, including their rights and obligations, and those of the hosting countries. Several participants proposed that the OSCE play a role in the Palestinian elections scheduled for 9 January 2005.

A highlight of 2004 was the OSCE's engagement in Afghanistan. In response to an invitation from the Government of Afghanistan, the OSCE deployed an **OSCE Election Support Team** to Afghanistan. This was the first time the OSCE has deployed an operation outside its region.

Closer and deeper interaction between the OSCE and Partner States was highlighted during the two **Ministerial Troika meetings** with the counterparts from the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation that were chaired by Foreign Minister Passy on 5 December on the eve of the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia. The participants felt that, in 2004, significant steps had been taken on joint work and activities, and that the outcome provided a solid basis for further work next year.

In his remarks to the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia on 6 December, the C-i-O called on his colleagues to go even further in reaching out, since the OSCE had a lot to offer.

**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE
concluding the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism held in Berlin**

Distinguished delegates,

Let me sum up the proceedings of this Conference in what I would like to call “Berlin Declaration”. Based on consultations I conclude that OSCE participating States,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which proclaims that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, religion or other status,

Recalling that Article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights state that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling also the decisions of the OSCE Ministerial Councils at Porto and Maastricht, as well as previous decisions and documents, and committing ourselves to intensify efforts to combat anti-Semitism in all its manifestations and to promote and strengthen tolerance and non-discrimination,

Recognizing that anti-Semitism, following its most devastating manifestation during the Holocaust, has assumed new forms and expressions, which, along with other forms of intolerance, pose a threat to democracy, the values of civilization and, therefore, to overall security in the OSCE region and beyond,

Concerned in particular that this hostility toward Jews — as individuals or collectively — on racial, social, and/or religious grounds, has manifested itself in verbal and physical attacks and in the desecration of synagogues and cemeteries,

1. Condemn without reserve all manifestations of anti-Semitism, and all other acts of intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, wherever they occur;
2. Also condemn all attacks motivated by anti-Semitism or by any other forms of religious or racial hatred or intolerance, including attacks against synagogues and other religious places, sites and shrines;
3. Declare unambiguously that international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE
concluding the OSCE Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against
Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination held in Brussels

Distinguished delegates,

Let me sum up the proceedings of this Conference in what I would like to call “Brussels Declaration”. Based on consultations I conclude that OSCE participating States,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Recalling in particular that Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights state that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

Recalling the Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (MC.DEC/4/03) as well as previous decisions and documents, and committing ourselves to intensify efforts to combat racism, xenophobia, discrimination and anti-Semitism and to promote and strengthen tolerance and non-discrimination,

Recalling also the OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism in Berlin on 28 and 29 April 2004 as well as the OSCE Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes in Paris on 16 and 17 June 2004 and their results; and that the Conference in Berlin expressed concern and condemned anti-Semitism as a distinct and specific form of intolerance and developed operational recommendations for combating anti-Semitism,

Recognizing that acts of intolerance pose a threat to democracy, the values of civilization and, therefore, to overall security in the OSCE region and beyond,

1. Condemn without reserve all forms of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism and other acts of intolerance and discrimination, including against Muslims, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, wherever they occur;

2. Condemn organizations and individuals promoting hatred or acts of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, or related intolerance, including against Muslims, and anti-Semitism;
3. Urge participating States to adopt effective measures to combat acts motivated by intolerance and to speak out publicly against such acts;
4. Examine the need for a structural follow up within the OSCE to ensure implementation of the commitments on tolerance and non-discrimination;
5. Reject firmly the identification of terrorism and extremism with any religion, culture, ethnic group, nationality or race;
6. Declare unambiguously that international developments or political issues never justify racism, xenophobia or discrimination.