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Spotlight

on projects



Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje



Dear Readers,

The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje is pleased to share with you the fifth issue of Spotlight on Projects newsletter.

The timing of its publication gives us a unique opportunity to congratulate our host country on receiving a positive opinion from the European Commission regarding candidate status for the European Union. At the same time we welcome the new European Union Special Representative and the Head of the

Delegation of the European Commission, Ambassador Erwan Fouéré.

Along with the positive opinion from the Commission came a check list of reforms that must be implemented in order for the country to move forward on the path of Euro-integration. On behalf of the OSCE Mission, Ambassador Carlos Pais, the Head of the Mission greeted Ambassador Fouéré at the OSCE Mission headquarters.

“We are looking forward to continuing the fruitful co-operation that we enjoyed with the EUSR Office and the Delegation of the European Commission,” said Ambassador Pais.

“The priorities highlighted in the Commission’s Opinion in many ways parallel those of the OSCE, particularly concerning the enhancement of rule of law and election reform.”

The Mission intends to work closely with Ambassador Fouéré and his colleagues on assisting the authorities with these reforms. This intention was echoed by Ambassador Fouéré:

“The Mission’s many activities in support of the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement provide a good basis for the continued assistance needed to insure fulfillment of the requirements set forth by the European Commission in the Opinion, therefore co-operation between our two Missions will be invaluable.”

Spotlight magazine highlights only a few of the Mission’s projects and activities, which are made possible by the contributions of the OSCE participating States and the Mission’s other donors and partners.

We hope you enjoy reading.



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Cover Photo: OSCE / Peter Booker. Border area near Tetovo, controlled by the Border Police, who were trained with the assistance of the OSCE Mission to Skopje.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

E-Revolution Spreading

OSCE supports the development of e-society

Democratization, freedom of expression, free access to information, freedom of the media, security standards are all principles the OSCE promotes in its 55 participating states from Vancouver to Vladivostok. This applies not only to the real world, but also to the cyber world. Along with the development of new technology and faster communication, the Internet brings new challenges with a revolutionary speed. The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje teamed up with the local organisation Metamorphosis and the OSCE's Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media to encourage discussion about issues related to this new "e-society" and the opportunities it presents.

The project, which builds on the National Strategy for Information Society, was launched with an international conference in October. Well known IT experts and freedom of media promoters from Austria, Bulgaria, China, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and United States came to Skopje to share knowledge and exchange their best practices with local experts and policy makers.

"I am glad that lately an awareness of information technology has been created and understood, especially its role in the overall economic, educational, cultural development of our society," said Minister for Transport and Communications, Xhemali Mehazi as he opened the conference.

"It is very important for everybody to understand its role in raising quality of living in a country and in meeting the necessary standards that a country must have in order to be able to enter the European family, a goal we are all striving for."

Four more technical round tables followed the main conference, each focusing on a different issue: e-government, e-media and freedom of the media on the Internet, e-education and the prevention of cyber crimes. Three of these were conducted outside of Skopje, in Tetovo, Ohrid and Bitola in order to make the public outside the capital also aware of e-society issues. During the roundtable discussion



The international e-society conference opens in Skopje

on media and the internet, Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media, focused on the importance of protecting the freedom of the media on the internet, in accordance with OSCE commitments. He said: "All the classic freedoms granted to journalist must be given to internet journalists as well. The internet must be tackled as a media and not just a technology in national legislation, which means special protection for pluralism – pluralism in terms of providers and in terms of content."

Pluralism was also raised in terms of e-education as representatives from educational institutions analysed the level of access to resources that the internet

offers for teachers and students. The presenters at the discussion on e-government also pointed out the democratic functions of the internet with examples of how government can use it as a mechanism for transparency and getting input from citizens.

Each event attracted participants from a variety of backgrounds including policy makers, students, teachers, industry and civil society representatives, and others. "This was really a cross cutting project in that we had broad participation from people in all sectors. For instance, at the e-government discussion we had mayors and council members, and at the cyber crime discussion we had police officers together with public prosecutors and law students," commented Borce Manevski of the Mission's Media Development Unit, who coordinated the project.



The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, listens intently during the panel on freedom of the media on the internet

Anyone who missed the events, can find all the e-conference materials on the web at www.e-society.org.mk. Conference proceedings will be published in print form as well to introduce the topics to those who have yet to discover the potential of the internet.

RULE OF LAW:

Increasing Transparency and Efficiency

OSCE-supported project increases public trust in the judiciary

Judicial reform is one of the government's key priorities and is also one of the most important steps towards the country's integration into European and North-Atlantic structures. Results from the recent public opinion survey, conducted by the local Association for Citizen's Tolerance and Cooperation from Prilep, set out a clear agenda for this reform, confirming that the court system needs to strengthen its efficiency, transparency and independence.

The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje supports a range of projects that contribute to national judicial reform. One of them is the project "Transparency and Access to Information-Model for Independent Court System", aimed at increasing the court's openness to the public.

Judge Lazar Nanev, Deputy President of Kavadarci Basic Court, initiated this unique project in cooperation with the Council for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency.

"Nanev believes that increased public access to the courts is crucial for restoring the citizens' trust and confidence in the judicial system in the country," says



PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

Judge Lazar Nanev explains his access to information model

Florian Razesberger, Rule of Law Officer from the OSCE Mission.

The culmination of this project came in September 2005 when the Kavadarci Basic Court presented to the public and media its new online service. The website contains regularly updated information on ongoing and completed cases, trial schedules, court procedures and verdicts, judges' profiles and other useful statistical data.

"The Kavadarci Basic Court is a unique example of having a website, which also contains annual and monthly reports on judges' work. We strive to be as transparent as possible," explains Judge Nanev.

"The transparency has even improved the performance of the judges. In the beginning, some of them were skeptical as to what this openness may mean, fearing that it may compromise their work. But now the judges see that it improves their time management and stimulates their professionalism."

"The website also enables public feedback and offers an online question and answer service for us, if we have questions on issues such as court fees, taxes, court procedures, and filing an allegation. Answers are sent back from the court staff within five days. It was so easy to receive the information on the court fee in my case," explained Ivan Micev, a resident of Kavadarci.

"It took just a few clicks to review the background experience of the judge who will consider my case. I feel that I trust her more now."

The Kavadarci Basic Court also takes care of those who do not have internet access at home. There are six monitors installed in the court building. These monitors display the same information as the website.

The project has an added bonus as Judge Nanev explains, "these monitors also help us to keep silence in the court building during a trial because citizens are focused on the screens."

The initiative has proven to be so successful that the project has expanded to other courts countrywide. The Appeal and Basic Courts in Skopje, and the Basic Courts of Tetovo, Stip and Strumica recently published similar information on court proceedings and judges' records in annual reports and presented them for public. Unfortunately the judiciary lacks sufficient funds to make this universally available online, as in Kavadarci. These other courts are looking for additional assistance to increase their transparency.

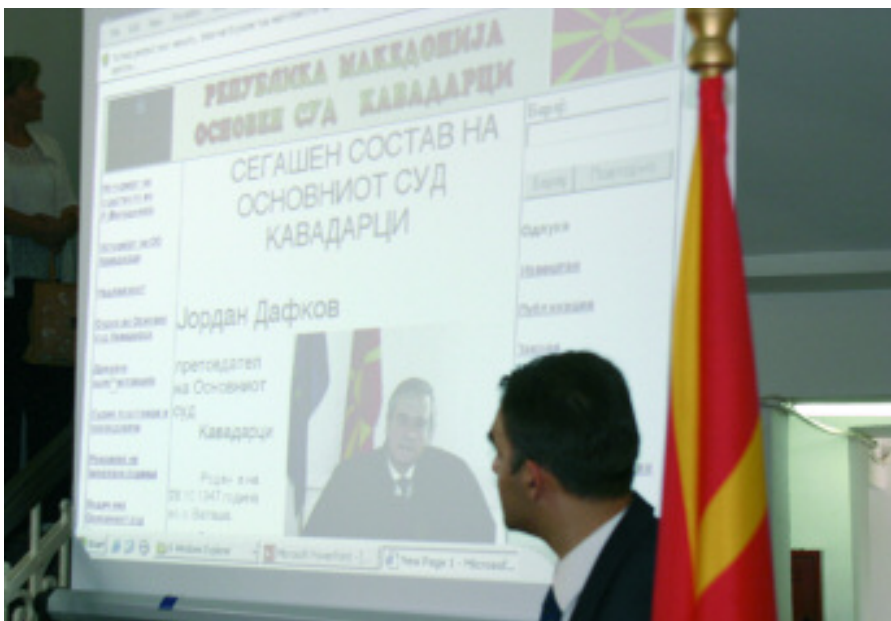


PHOTO: OSCE / BORCE MANEVSKI

Kavadarci Basic Court presents its internet database to the public

ROMA ISSUES:

“I want to help my Roma people to live better.”

Young Roma train to be leaders in their communities

Twenty five year old Toci Gulfer from Gostivar and her husband are volunteers for the organisation “Mesecina,” which has been working to improve the position of local Roma for the last 12 years. This year Toci is participating in the Roma Young Leaders Training Project supported by the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, with funding from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

“I want my Roma people to live better. That is the reason I started volunteering for a Roma NGO, but to be able to more effectively advocate for our human rights, first of all I need to know what those rights are and then I need to be the kind of leader that can share this knowledge,” says Toci, “Later I want to study law at the University because the Roma community is lacking good lawyers.”

Toci and her 25 colleagues from 15 different Roma organisations took part in a three day leadership training carefully tailored to their needs. The young participants aged 18 to 25 were carefully selected from among 70 applicants by the Youth Association Perpetuum from Skopje, which initiated the project.

“At the course I learned how to effectively communicate in an inter-ethnic environment, how to build meaningful dialogue and to find common ground. I also made many friends and plan to stay in touch with them,” says Toci with enthusiasm. This bright-eyed young woman is not only incredibly dedicated to the Roma movement, but is also the mother of two children, a ten year old boy and an eight year old girl.

In order to cover different aspects of leadership training, the project has two phases. During the first phase, a three day training workshop, participants learned basic leadership, organisational and inter-ethnic communication skills. By the end of the training they better understood what democracy and human rights means for their communities.

“The Mission helped us not only financially but also by sending Robert Rustem, its Roma Focal Point to facilitate the training and be one of the instructors. His professionalism and enthusiasm were well matched with the energy and curiosity of



Young Roma leaders work together in a team building exercise

PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

audience,” says Ljupka Bakardzieva, Evaluation and Reporting Officer of Perpetuum, “Now we have to maintain that energy as the new leaders work on their various activities.”

During the second phase of the project, upon returning home to their respected communities, these young leaders are busy sharing their newly obtained knowledge with their peers within their organisations, as well as with other community leaders, at workshops that they organize themselves. Through brain-storming sessions they identify the most pressing needs of Roma in their communities and plan future activities to satisfy them. After

three months, during a follow-up three day workshop, the participants will come back together to share the results of their needs assessments and learn project writing and fundraising techniques. At this time they will also finalize the initiatives planned during the workshops they held in their communities.

Sunai Demirovski, a 21-year Roma young leader from the Delcevo-based organization Romaversitas, and political science student at the University in Skopje explains, “the Roma do not have enough leaders in politics. I want to be a politician. I want to advocate for Roma rights not only at the community level, but also at the national level among decision-makers in the Assembly. I am eager to learn how to lead my community and then I will teach other Roma.”

Sunai believes that the leadership training will also help him with his studies in the University, which are made possible by a scholarship programme initiated by the Foundation for Open Society Institute and co-funded by the Mission. Both this scholarship programme and the young leaders training project are supported by the Mission within the framework of Roma Decade aimed to help integrate minority youth into mainstream society.



Participants in the leadership training absorb new knowledge

PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

POLICE DEVELOPMENT:

From Safety on the Ro

Road Safety for All: OSCE supports the efforts of local police to improve safety on the roads



PHOTO: OSCE

“Would you kill me to run a red light...” reads this billboard in two languages



PHOTO: OSCE / GERD PETERSON

A Police Officer and the OSCE Road Safety for All Project Coordinator present the posters still “hot” from the print house



PHOTO: OSCE

“Would you kill us in order to get faster...” billboards were placed throughout the country

“Would you kill me to run a red light?” Of course, not... This shocking question catches your eye as you enter the Skopje-Veles highway. You can see this and similar questions on billboards along other major roads and in towns throughout the country.

The country-wide public awareness campaign was one of the main segments of the ambitious “Road Safety for All” project, initiated by the Ministry of Interior (Mol), supported by the OSCE

Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, with funding from the U.S. State Department. It complimented the other Road Safety components: training of traffic police on legislation and law enforcement procedures, and engaging police in teaching children basic principles of safe behaviour on the roads.

It may be difficult to see dramatic changes in traffic participants’ behaviour immediately, but according to research conducted by Stratum research agency

to assess the impact of the campaign, a majority of passing drivers who saw the billboards were slowing down and thinking about their driving behaviour as a result.

Goran Pavlovski of the Mol commented: “Touching personal stories, featured on six national television and radio stations, newspaper advertisements, complemented by posters, billboards and flyers, convey the message in a very special way, focusing on victims’ personal feelings and stories linked to violations of traffic rules.”

The “Road Safety for All” project, including the campaign, forms part of the Mission’s overall police development programme.

“This kind of public outreach allows us in the long run to increase people’s confidence in the police and encourages them to take on some of the responsibility for their own safety,” comments Philip Tolson, Head of Police Development Unit (PDU) of the OSCE Mission to Skopje.

In line with the Mission’s tradition of developing capacity within the Mol, a selected group of traffic police officers were trained first as trainers in order to educate other traffic police around the country. To deepen their theoretical knowledge, the graduates received the *Traffic Police Rule Book*, developed by the Mol in co-operation with European



PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

Traffic police officers participate in a training of trainers in which they learned to educate their colleagues on traffic legislation, law enforcement procedures, and the use of special equipment

Roads to a Safe Society



PHOTO: OSCE / DMYTRO OSCHEPKOV

A child offers an answer to one of the traffic police officers, who are traveling around the country and educating children on the basics of road safety



PHOTO: OSCE / MIRVETA MUSTAFA

Ambassador Carlos Pais, Head of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, Paul Wohlers, Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy and the senior officials from MoI and MoE launch the "Road Safety for All" campaign



PHOTO: OSCE / DMYTRO OSCHEPKOV

An officer demonstrates one piece of the 85,000 euro worth of equipment donated by the Mission to the MoI

Police Mission (Proxima), and the OSCE Mission.

The second course focused on the training of traffic police officers on road safety instructions for children. Upon completion of the course, conducted by the Mission's Police Instructors, the participants began working in elementary schools across the country with children aged 8-10 years old. During the 2005 – 2006 school year, they are expected to reach nearly 80,000 children, a number which should grow, as the training continues in the future.

"Because of the degree of cooperation we have seen so far in the implementation of this project, we are confident that this programme will last well into the future, maintained by the MoI and the Ministry of Education (MoE)," said Gerd Petterson, a Police Instructor in the PDU.

Some officers have already noticed the impact of their engagement in the classrooms and the effects of the campaign in their communities. Blagoja Kotev, a traffic police officer from Skopje referred to the initiative as an "ice melting tool" between police and the community.

"While I am on duty, I have noticed that kids are more careful when crossing the street near the school. They treat us, police officers, as their friends greeting us on the street and introduce us to their parents."

The PDU instructors and Community Police Trainers monitor the implementation of the project by paying regular visits to regional traffic police units and communicating with both officers and representatives from schools and communities. According to Dmytro Oschepkov, the enthusiastic Team Leader for the "Road Safety for All" project, these visits also give the Mission valuable information for the development of new assistance or capacity building activities. He says: "We get a clearer picture of the specific needs of

each regional traffic police unit and the local police are often coming to us with new ideas and initiatives."

"Creating road safety for all - drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and others - requires co-operation among police, other state and local authorities and each and every participant in traffic. I am confident, that as the result of this co-operation, the roads in our town will be safer," said Branko Reckoski, Commander of Ohrid Traffic Police Unit.



PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

An enthusiastic group makes use of the polygon, bicycles and other specially developed training materials in one of the mobile trailers used by Regional Traffic Police Units to give children practical classes on the road safety issues

RULE OF LAW:

Breaking the Walls of Distrust

OSCE supported the opening of six Regional Ombudsman Offices

If you want to know how the Ombudsman institution works, you can ask Z. M.¹ from Kumanovo, who will tell you his own success story. Last summer, Z.M. was in a dispute with his neighbour regarding the wall between their properties. The case was considered by the local Kumanovo court: however, Z.M. was not satisfied with the court's decision to demolish the wall, believing that the judge had not considered all the evidence and, consequently, that his rights were violated. Z.M. was frustrated and had no idea what to do and how to protect his rights.

"Then I read in the newspaper that Naser Vejseli had been appointed as the Kumanovo Regional Ombudsman, so I went to talk to him. Mr. Vejseli listened carefully to me and reviewed the materials from the court proceedings. He referred the case to the relevant Sector for Inspection in Kumanovo for a special inspection to be undertaken".

"Now, while the case is being reviewed, the decision to demolish the wall is suspended until further notice. No matter what the decision says, I will respect it. The Ombudsman institution is new to me, but I am confident that it is able to protect my rights," Z. M. states firmly.

For the past two years, the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje has supported efforts to establish the six Regional Ombudsman Offices in Kumanovo, Strumica, Tetovo, Bitola, Stip and Kicevo. These efforts reached fruition this autumn with opening ceremonies for each of the new offices, attended by local officials and media. All activities are integral to the OSCE's ongoing work in the area of rule of law to promote the role of enhanced Ombudsman institution in the country.

An enhanced Ombudsman Institution was foreseen in the Ohrid Framework Agreement and included the establishment of the regional offices. This led to the necessary Constitutional amendments and the passage of a new Law on the Ombudsman. Furthermore, the Ombudsman Office now also has a specific mandate to focus on non-discrimination and the equitable representation of communities.

The regional Deputy Ombudsmen were appointed in July 2005, and they have already begun to accept cases from citizens at the regional level.

"The establishment and efficient functioning of the Regional Offices is an

important milestone in the strengthening of the Ombudsman Institution. Thanks to the support of the OSCE, and with the assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency and Italian government, all six offices have been fully renovated and provided with the necessary furniture, equipment and vehicles to become fully functional," said Idzet Memeti, National Ombudsman, at the opening ceremony of the Tetovo Regional Office.

The regional Ombudsman Offices will increase public access to the Ombudsman institution and will further promote citizens' understanding of the Ombudsman role in the protection of their rights.

All the newly appointed regional Deputy Ombudsmen are experienced lawyers, familiar with human rights protection issues. Marina Obadic, the Tetovo Deputy Ombudsman proudly said: "The professional relations with judges and local authorities, which I established previously while working as a lawyer, and my local knowledge of the specifics of this multi-ethnic region will be extremely useful in helping all citizens in my area."

Until the end of the year efforts will continue to ensure that citizens are aware of the institution and how the Ombudsman can assist in the promotion and protection of their rights. The local non-governmental organisation Kaldurma, with the support of the OSCE, is cooperating with the Ombudsman institution to implement a public awareness campaign. The campaign includes television and radio spots on the local media as well as public debates across the country and the distribution of information leaflets.

"With these offices fully functional and the complimentary public awareness campaign implemented, we will significantly increase the ability of the Ombudsman Institution to serve the country's diverse population," said Uranija Pirovska, State Adviser for Public Relations and International Cooperation at the National Ombudsman Office.

¹ The full name is not mentioned in order to preserve the confidentiality of the case.



Head of the OSCE Mission's Rule of Law Unit, Victor Ullom, talks to the newly appointed Kumanovo Deputy Ombudsman, Naser Vejseli, during the office opening ceremony

PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

CONFIDENCE BUILDING:

Learning in a New Way

OSCE supports human rights education for children project

International Human Rights conventions can be difficult to understand for adults, so teaching ten to twelve year olds about them takes real creativity. This is the driving force behind the "Our Rights" pilot project launched this autumn by the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje. The project is part of a larger initiative by the Slovenian Chairmanship to introduce human rights education for school children in all 55 OSCE participating states.

"It aims to assist governments in implementing OSCE commitments in the field of human rights education using a booklet called "Our Rights" as a teaching tool, designed for 10 to 12 year old children and based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child," explains Dr Alenka Verbole, Head of the Education Division within the Mission's Confidence Building Unit.

"The booklets draws on creative and interactive methods to introduce the basic concept of human rights – that they have rights that must be respected and that they must respect the rights of others."

The "Our Rights" booklet and accompanying didactic materials were prepared by Slovenian experts and adapted into five local languages by the Mission.

Julijana Trickovic from Kumanovo is one of the teachers implementing the project in her classroom. She comments: "It is a very timely project for our country in transition. These children will learn from a very young age how to respect, promote human rights and appreciate their ethnic and social diversities."

Teachers form the backbone of the "Our Rights" project. The teachers were carefully selected from 13 schools by the school management in consultation with the OSCE Mission's Education Team representatives. Most of the twenty three selected are teachers of history, linguistics and literature and have some familiarity with human rights.

According to Brenda Gallagher, one of the Mission's education trainers the training that the teachers received on using the "Our Rights" curriculum mirrored the techniques they will be using later in the classroom, such as brain-

storming and role playing. She points out: "This project is not just about reaching the children with the human rights curriculum, but also about challenging the teachers to use different and new methods of teaching that they can use for teaching human rights and other subjects as well."

Parental involvement and support from the community is a key factor in the success of the "Our Rights" project. Therefore, the Mission also arranged for representatives of civil society organisations that work on child rights issues to participate in the training for the teachers.

"Our task is to teach children to know and respect each others' rights. We also plan to discuss the children's rights with their parents. This is a two way street and it's important to have the support of the families," commented Elez Bislim from the Roma organisation Sumnal during the training.

Nearly 600 children and their families will be reached by the "Our Rights" project this school year. As this is a pilot project the intention is that the curriculum will be spread to more schools and to more children in the years to come. Because of this, the support of the Ministry of Education is essential to the project's success.



PHOTO: OSCE / BORCE MANEVSKI

Teachers learn new training techniques for educating on human rights

"Our government gladly participates and fully supports this OSCE initiative, which also complements the United Nations World Programme for Human Rights Education, the Council of Europe's European Year of Citizenship through Education, and the European Union's European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights", said Dragan Nedeljkovic, Director of the Department of Promotion of Education in the Minority Languages within the Ministry of Education.



PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

Children celebrate their rights and responsibilities during the "Our Rights" class

POLICE DEVELOPMENT:

Virtual Reality in Police Academy

OSCE assists with judgmental training for police officers



PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

Senior Inspector from the Police Academy, Dusko Kostadinovski, shows the simulation equipment to a senior Border Police Officer

“Imagine: you are a police officer on patrol and suddenly witness something suspicious, possibly illegal. You have to make a decision right here and right now. It is only you who has to prevent or to stop the wrongdoing and fully control the situation. You can’t have a coffee break, relax and think it through, you can’t postpone the decision, you can’t look it up in the manual and read the instructions or call your colleague for advice,” said Dusko Kostadinovski, Senior Inspector for Use of Firearms and Deadly Forces from Idrizovo Police Academy, setting the scene for his course on practical judgment. To observers he explained:

“As police officers, one often has a fragment of second to evaluate all the consequences of one’s own and the criminal’s actions, make a decision and professionally execute that judgment. The most important thing that we teach our students is that there is no room for mistakes. The price can be too high.”

The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje actively supports many projects aimed at strengthening the professional skills of local police through co-opera-

tion with the Police Academy. In February of 2004, the Police Academy decided to add to the curriculum a course on practical judgmental training based on best practices learned from Great Britain, Ukraine, Croatia, and other countries. OSCE Police Instructor, Volodymyr Samoilenko introduced the programme to local instructors at the Academy. The Mission funded the purchase of unique computer laser simulation equipment. Two British trainers used the equipment to educate five local instructors and assist them and the OSCE instructors in the development of the training methodology.

Samoilenko and his local colleagues who together are responsible for implementing the training are pleased with the response so far. “This is one of the courses where the trainer can’t get rid of students even after class hours. Sometimes so many officers want to practice that the room is too small for them,” he laughs.

The equipment consists of a computer with special software that provides numerous choices of modelling and adjustable training scenarios as well as

a screen, LCD and laser projectors, and two laser guns. The course starts with study of legal procedures and police officer’s duties and responsibilities. Then practical lessons begin.

For the practical simulations, forty short films were prepared by the Mission and Academy instructors. They allow each student to be a virtual participant in a scenario that challenges him or her to judge the situation and execute a decision and then explain and justify his or her actions. Instructors find it extremely useful that afterwards they can replay the film and lead the group in a discussion to analyse and evaluate the decision-making process. This gives them an opportunity to explain the legal and psychological issues related to each decision and how to avoid repeating mistakes in real life.

“Even in a tense situation, often an officer can prevent possible illegal activity just by calm confident orders. Human life is precious and our job is to protect it. I often joke with students that they should use only laser guns and only in virtual reality,” says Officer Kostadinovski.

“We train them to judge the situation and react appropriately, using alternative prevention measures, including oral commands and psychological pressure, physical force, rubber baton, tear gas spray - usage of firearm is the last possible option.”

So far, nearly 1,300 officers from all over the country, including cadets, regular and border police have passed the course having learned the techniques of on-the-spot decision-making and improved their judgmental skills by practicing on real life scenarios. Students from the Law Faculty interested in criminal law have also taken advantage of this unique training opportunity.

The news about this useful initiative is spreading throughout Balkans and even reached Caucasus. The Police Academy is delighted to share its experience. Police officers from Georgia, Serbia and Montenegro, while visiting the Police Academy recently, listened with attention to the presentation of the course. Other counties from the region are also interested in providing this type of judgmental training for their police officers.

Fresh Wind of Decentralization

OSCE supports public discussions on decentralization

"I am proud of two main achievements in my municipality. Firstly, we have helped the citizens of the Veles area become active participants in the decision-making process through debates, public hearing and meetings. We do not sit in our offices waiting for citizens to approach us, but go out to the villages and towns and talk to citizens. Secondly, the public has online access to municipal documents and regularly receives published municipal bulletins; even budget expenditures are discussed via Internet," shared Ace Kocevski, two time Mayor of Veles during a discussion workshop with other elected officials and civil society leaders.

This workshop was one in a series of five country-wide discussions jointly organized by the Foundation Open Society Institute -Macedonia (FOSIM) through its NGO Support Centres and the Association of Municipalities (ZELS) with support from the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje.

These discussions were planned to increase the participant's knowledge about the decentralization processes and provided them with an opportunity to learn from each other's positive and negative experiences. In addition, these events promoted ZELS's *Handbook for Locally Elected Official*, recently supported by the OSCE and distributed to all municipalities, in order to strengthen the co-operation between central and local governments.

The topics of discussion for each municipality were selected based on prior assessments of the most pressing needs in each area. For example, in Kicevo municipality the discussion was



Ace Kocevski, Mayor of Veles and Sonja Prendzova-Jurukova from the Veles Municipality discuss the results of the workshop

PHOTO: GORAN CUCUKOVSKI

about urban and rural planning. In Prilep it covered the financing of municipalities. In Gostivar they discussed citizen participation in decision-making, and in Stip, regional cooperation for cleaner environment was the key focus.

Each event was well attended, for instance in Veles, where the topic was education in decentralization, participants included the mayors and councilors from 11 central and eastern municipalities and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science.

Dr Tale Geramitcioski, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, contributed to the dynamic discussion on decentralization by explaining the new system of financing of education, known as "financing per student." He also answered questions regarding the appoint-

ment of school directors, the transfer of earmarked grants and the transfer of ownership titles for school buildings. Representatives from other relevant Ministries participated in each of the other discussions as well, providing information on the topic from the point of view of the central government.

"The OSCE Mission is supporting the full implementation of decentralization reform, which is one of the country's key priorities," said Dr Philipp Stiel, Head of the Public Administration Reform Unit of the Mission.

"We are pleased to see effective co-operation among municipalities, national institutions and civil society organisations in the promotion of decentralization and discussion of the key issues involved."

The organisers confirm that the end of the series of workshops will not be the end of discussion on the topics covered. "Analysis of the discussions' results show that the successful implementation of decentralization depends on the efficiency of co-operation, communication and mutual understanding between central and local governments; especially in the areas of education, urban planning, construction management and the process of transfer of property ownership. Assistance in the solution of all of these issues will keep us busy for at least the next year," said Vesna Skortova from NGO Support Centre from Veles.



PHOTO: OSCE

Participants in a workshop in Veles listen to their elected leaders explain decentralization of the education system

Community Police Reforms in Skopje inspire Georgian Police

ბულითადად შესაღებია!

“Gulitatdad vesalmebit!” These words are a cheerful Georgian greeting that for one week this autumn could be heard in the OSCE Mission to Skopje, at the Idrizovo Police Academy, in Tetovo regional police units and even at one Citizen Advisory Group meeting.

A group of Georgian Police Officers was in Skopje in November studying the best practices of police reform, particularly in community policing. This visit was supported by the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and the OSCE Mission to Georgia, in co-operation with the respective Ministries of Interior.

“For many years the OSCE Mission to Skopje closely co-operates with the Ministry, and supports the strengthening of the community policing in the country. We are proud that the success of police reforms has inspired the Georgian Police to come to Skopje in order to learn from local experience,” said Yurii Derevianchenko, Police Instructor from the OSCE Skopje Mission.

The Georgian Police Officers were impressed by many successes and the serious work of their hosts. They met with representatives from the Mission’s Police Development Unit, colleagues from the European Union Police Mission (Proxima), as well as with high-level officials from the Ministry of Interior. They visited the Idrizovo Police Academy to meet with the instructors and observe some of the courses and participated in a Citizen’s Advisory Group meeting in Kumanovo to see community policing in action.

“We absorbed so many new ideas from the management of Idrizovo Police Academy. We were especially impressed by the judgemental training done through computer simulation and with the training courses they have developed with OSCE for combating organised crime,” said Chief Inspector Levan Keburia, of the Community Police Development Unit (CPDU) within Georgian Ministry of Interior.

“We learned about one idea that was completely new for us - the Citizen Advisory Group. We appreciate that the OSCE supports this type of exchange, since we often have common problems and are looking for common solutions. Back home, in Tbilisi, I will share my knowledge with colleagues, who are keen to learn and implement fresh ideas,” shares Inspector Tamar Nodia, from the Georgian CPDU.



PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

A Georgian Community Police Officer greets his new friend from Skopje



PHOTO: OSCE / MARIA DOTSENKO

Police Instructor from the OSCE Mission, Yurii Derevianchenko, shows the Police Academy to the Georgian Police delegation

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