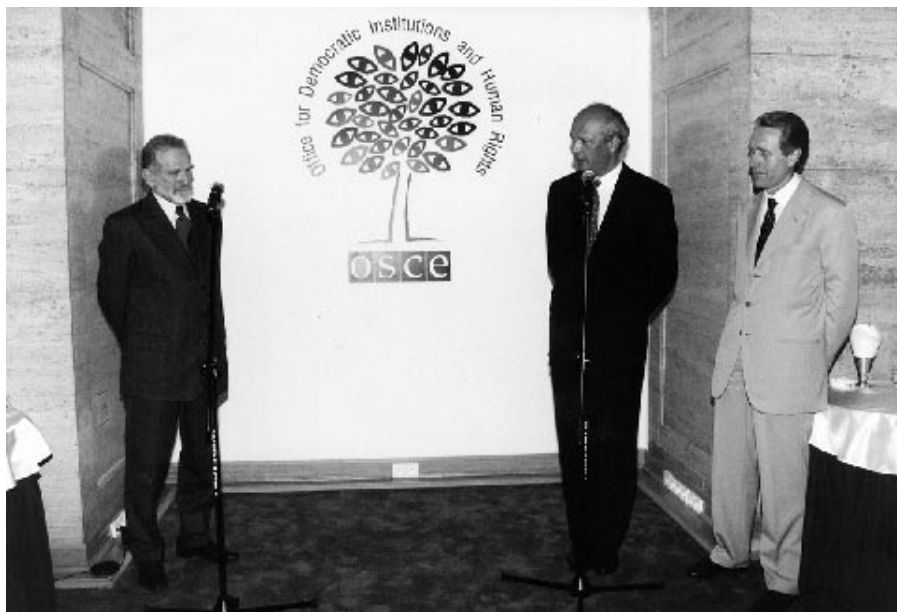


OSCE Police Monitors to be Deployed in Croatia



Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann (center), Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) welcomes the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek (left) and OSCE Secretary General Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona during the inauguration of the new ODIHR premises in Warsaw. See story page 11.

The OSCE will deploy civilian police monitors in Croatia starting this autumn. Under Decision No. 239 taken by the Permanent Council on 25 June, the OSCE monitors will assume the responsibilities of the United Nations Police Support Group (UNPSG) personnel deployed in the Croatian Danube region when their mandate expires on 15 October 1998. This will be the first time that the OSCE will take on a police monitoring role.

The UNPSG was established on 15 January 1998 for a single period of up to nine months (UN Security Council resolution 1145, adopted on 19 December

1997) in order to maintain a police monitoring presence in the Croatian Danube region after the expiry of the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES).

In response to the request of the international community, the Government of Croatia has agreed that the OSCE will assume the responsibility of monitoring and assisting Croatian law enforcement authorities in the Danube area under the terms of the Mission's present mandate. This will include not only the monitoring of operational aspects of traditional police work, but also providing assis-

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tance and expertise to Croatian police and other law enforcement authorities in dealing with issues including community-oriented policing and protection of human rights of displaced persons, refugees and persons belonging to national minorities.

The total number of OSCE police monitors deployed in the Danubian region will not exceed 120. These personnel will work together with the approximately 60 international Mission staff members who are currently assigned to the Mission Co-ordination Centre in Vukovar and its field offices in the Croatian-Danubian region. The under-

standing between the Government of Croatia and the OSCE is that the monitors will be dressed in a standardized way and will wear OSCE colours as well as their national and OSCE identification patches.

Contingency planning is now underway between the UN and the OSCE in order

to ensure a seamless transition from the UNSPG to the OSCE monitors.

Speaking in the Permanent Council after the adoption of decision 239, Ambassador Mario Nobile, Head of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the OSCE, said that "The experience of police monitoring, new to

the OSCE, represents an important precedent for our Organization. In that regard, Croatia is determined to do its utmost [in order] that this experience [will] be a positive one and serve as a valuable contribution to any future management of post-conflict areas or transition societies".

Little Progress on a Diplomatic Solution in Kosovo

As the situation in Kosovo deteriorated in June, there was little progress on a diplomatic solution.

Evidence of the worsening situation in Kosovo was apparent to OSCE border monitors in the north of Albania, who noted a steady stream of refugees crossing the border from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The monitors, from their vantage points in the mountains in the north of Albania, also observed tank movements, artillery shelling, attacks by helicopter gunships, and the devastation of villages on the FRY side of the border.

The crisis is being monitored by the OSCE Mission in Skopje for possible spillover to the neighbouring former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It reports that the situation along the whole of the northern Macedonian border with the FRY remains stable and calm.

Information on the situation in Kosovo was reported by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 20 June as part of the OSCE's regular updates to the UN on the crisis, pursuant

to paragraphs 13 and 16 of Security Council resolution No. 1160 (1998).

In order to further strengthen the OSCE's border-monitoring capabilities in Albania, the Permanent Council decided to increase the number of monitors to 30. A new field office and several sub-offices were opened in northern Albania, and the co-ordination headquarters in Tirana was strengthened.

On 11 June Mr. Geremek issued a statement in which he said that he was "deeply disturbed by the latest reports by OSCE monitors and other international observers of the grave deterioration of the situation in Kosovo and by an intensified campaign of destruction by Serb security forces of whole towns and villages". He deplored "the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by Serb military and police units which has brought the crisis to the brink of war and threatens international peace and security".

He condemned in the strongest possible terms violence by either side and urged an immediate cessation of hostilities. He also expressed his "deep concern about the continued flow of refugees driven by violence across the border into Albania"

and called on the Belgrade authorities to facilitate the return of displaced persons and refugees.

The Chairman-in-Office reiterated his demand that the ICRC, UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations, as well as representatives of international organizations, embassies and journalists, be granted full access to all parts of Kosovo. He also urged President Milošević to create conditions for immediate resumption of dialogue.

These sentiments were echoed in a statement issued after the Contact Group Ministerial Meeting in London on 12 June. In it the Ministers again underlined "the importance of the early launching of the mission of the Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE in order to establish a dialogue across the full range of the FRY's relations with the OSCE, and of the return of the long term OSCE missions".

Meanwhile, in the framework of possible coercive action by the international community, on 15 June 83 planes from 15 NATO countries embarked on a five-hour military exercise along the border between Albania and the FRY.

Expectations for a possible diplomatic breakthrough in the crisis were raised by a meeting between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević in Moscow on 16 June. In a joint statement the Presidents “reaffirmed their position of principle on the need to maintain the territorial integrity and to respect the sovereignty of the FRY, condemn any forms of terrorism, separatism, [and] the armed actions affecting civilian population”.

The FRY stated its readiness “to start negotiations with the OSCE simultaneously on the receiving of its mission in Kosovo and on the restoration of the FRY membership in that Organization.”

Many observers described the talks as “promising” but noted that the statement of intentions would only be meaningful if followed up by corresponding actions. In a letter to President Milošević on 19

June, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Bronisław Geremek said that “the international community as a whole, OSCE included, expects that the violence and hostilities are ceased without any delay and meaningful talks begin”. He drew Mr. Milošević’s attention to the fact that several ways and means of starting talks had already been proposed by the Chairmanship and that “these proposals continue to be valid”. One of the means suggested by the Chairman-in-Office, at a meeting of the Central European Initiative in Brioni on 6 June, was to convene a round-table dialogue concentrating on a special status for Kosovo.

Mr. Geremek discussed the Kosovo crisis with his Troika colleagues, Foreign Ministers Niels Helveg Petersen of Denmark and Knut Vollebæk of Norway, when they met on the margins of the Seventh Conference of the Baltic

Sea States Session in Nyborg, Denmark, on 25 June. In a joint statement the three Ministers confirmed that “the OSCE stands ready to offer its conflict management capabilities and expects a constructive and co-operative reply from Belgrade”. They said that “acceptance of an OSCE mission in the FRY as well as full co-operation with the OSCE in relevant fields would be a significant step in this process and in the interest of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the OSCE.”

On 24 June the Foreign Minister of the FRY, Živadin Jovanović, informed the Chairman-in-Office through a letter that the FRY had designated a delegation for talks with the OSCE and he invited OSCE representatives to come to Belgrade to meet with the Yugoslav delegation. These exploratory talks will be held on 3 July.

Economic Forum Addresses Energy Issues

The Sixth Economic Forum of the OSCE took place in Prague between 1 and 5 June. This year’s Forum consisted of two separate but linked events: a meeting on “Security Aspects of Energy Developments in the OSCE Area” from 1 to 3 June, and the “Economic Dimension Implementation Review Conference” on 4 and 5 June.

The participants in the Economic Forum included high-level representatives of OSCE participating States, representatives of international organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

The Forum was established in 1992 to address issues relating to economic

aspects of security and to promote co-operation in economics, science, technology and the environment. The OSCE believes that co-operation among States in these fields greatly contributes to comprehensive security and stability in Europe.

This was a point taken up by the Chairman of the Forum, Mr. Jerzy Kropiwnicki, Minister, President of the Government Centre for Strategic Studies of the Republic of Poland, in his opening statement. He said “we are aware of the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, the importance of economic, social and ecological factors for security and co-operation in Europe as well as the

security risks that can arise from crisis-related developments in these areas.” On the latter point, he cited the importance of early warning and conflict prevention in activities relating to the economic dimension.

Minister Kropiwnicki reiterated the common belief of OSCE participating States (as laid out in the 1990 Bonn document) that “security in Europe largely depends on the degree of success of countries in transition in establishing viable market economies well integrated into the international economic and financial system”. He said that “‘security through prosperity’ is our motto today”.

The meeting covered topics such as the security implications of the division of Caspian Sea resources; nuclear safety and the environmental implications of nuclear waste problems; the deregulation, liberalization, privatization and/or reform of energy markets; and the impact of energy distribution networks on national and regional security.

Participants called for greater international energy co-operation at all levels in order to improve trade, investment and technology transfer, stimulate energy sector reforms and consolidate confidence among partners. It was also acknowledged that the development and reinforcement of energy infrastructures, including energy networks, are a key element in improving energy security in the OSCE region. The importance of regulatory and market reform was raised, as was the need for greater attention to the environmental aspects of energy production and consumption.

It is foreseen that a follow-up seminar to the 1998 Economic Forum will take place in early 1999 under Norwegian auspices with the theme of "Regulatory frameworks in the field of energy". Other seminars are planned, including a joint OSCE/OECD conference to be held on 15 and 16 July 1998 in Paris on "Natio-

nal and international approaches to improving integrity and transparency in government".

The second part of the Economic Forum, devoted to a review of the implementation of commitments in the economic dimension, took stock of what has been achieved in relation to the OSCE commitments in this field, particularly since the 1996 Economic Dimension Implementation Review Meeting.

Many improvements were noted, particularly as regards the rights to establish enterprises, freedom of movement, and access to markets. The importance of creating a stable and transparent institutional framework for promoting industrial co-operation and investment was emphasized, as was the need to protect intellectual property rights. It was noted that reform of the financial sector constitutes a major challenge faced by transitional economies. The importance of regional, subregional and transborder co-operation for promoting and facilitating economic co-operation and fostering good-neighbourly relations was stressed by a number of delegations.

One of the conclusions drawn by the Chairman in his summary was that "certain economic and environmental prob-

lems could increase the probability of a potential conflict becoming a real one." He said that "the OSCE should be ready to respond rapidly and creatively to such risks as they emerge. In particular, OSCE field activities should be linked more closely to economic and environmental aspects of security, thus providing for early warning and creating opportunities for effective conflict prevention". The importance of closer co-operation between the OSCE and other international organizations was also stressed in this regard.

According to Tom Price, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, "preparation for next year's Forum should begin early, with a coherent series of subregional seminars aimed at helping participating States define their priorities and ideas in the economic and environmental aspects of security so that they can participate even more actively in Forum '99".

Next year's Chair, Norway, announced that the Seventh Economic Forum would take place in Prague on 25 to 28 May 1999 on the overall theme "Security aspects in the field of the environment", subject to approval by the Permanent Council.

Successful Implementation of Article IV Leads to Negotiations on Article V

Between 15 and 19 June, a conference was held in Vienna, under the Chairmanship of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, General Carlo Jean, to review the implementation of Article IV of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The five Parties to the Agreement (Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) underlined the pivotal role of the Agreement as a security and stabilizing factor in the area of application and reaffirmed their commitment and determination to continue with the process of establishing a stable military balance in the region while at the same time, limiting the armaments held by Parties to the lowest feasible levels.

The Parties agreed on numerous instructions designed to solve some technical issues for an improvement in the level of implementation of the Agreement. These will be given to the Sub-Regional Consultative Commission, a collective body comprising the Delegations of the five Parties and chaired by the Personal Representative.

The Parties noted with satisfaction that nearly 6,600 pieces of heavy equipment have been destroyed and that nearly all the 180 inspections which have so far been conducted have been handled with transparency and co-operation, and that no major discrepancy with the information exchanged by the Parties has emerged. Inspections will continue.

The Review Conference re-emphasized the relevance of arms control and of the OSCE's role in post-conflict military stabilisation. The Article IV process, which is considered a success by the Personal Representative and the Parties, has been an important confidence-building measure and an essential part of the peace-building process in the region.

The successful implementation of Article IV has always been an implicit precondition for the negotiation of Article V. As the goal of Article V is "to establish a regional balance in and around the former Yugoslavia", stabilizing the subregional environment was an essential first step. According to General Jean, "the goal now is to integrate the subregion into a larger regional arms control context in order to more broadly consolidate peace and security".

That process is being led by Ambassador Henry Jacolin of France, who was appointed at Copenhagen Ministerial as Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office "to help organize and conduct negotiations under Article V". Over the past few months, he and his team have been carrying out consultations on a precise mandate for the Article V negotiations.

The team of the Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Article V organized a workshop on 8 and 9 June for officials and experts from Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Slovenia in order to broaden their knowledge and practical experience in dealing with confidence- and security-building measures and arms control. Austria also took part as an observer.

On 15 June the draft of the mandate of the negotiations on regional stabilization was distributed to the countries that have expressed an interest in negotiations under Article V. The negotiating team expects that the mandate will be approved before the summer break and that negotiations will start in September.

Chairman-in-Office Calls for More Emphasis on Conflict Prevention

In an address to the Permanent Council on 17 June, the Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, emphasized the importance of the OSCE's role in conflict prevention. His remarks were in the context both of recent developments in Kosovo and of the ongoing elaboration of a Document-Charter on European Security.

Professor Geremek outlined four trends that he described as having "a bearing on the role and function of the OSCE". These are the speed of change in international relations, the inter-linkage between various aspects of security, the greater possibilities for small and medium-sized States afforded by the end of bipolarity, and the conflicting trends of disintegration and universalism. He said that in these circumstances, OSCE participating States have "a good opportunity to act effectively by upholding common values and developing a comprehensive approach to security and a flexible conflict prevention system".

He noted that "recent developments on the international scene have confirmed my belief that the OSCE is an indispensable component in the system of security being formed throughout the OSCE area." Nevertheless, he said, in places like Kosovo "all our potential and possibilities have not been exhausted". He stated that in this and other conflict situations "the time is ripe to give

more consideration to the question of how root causes of conflicts should be identified and dealt with".

He placed particular emphasis on the need for early warning and improving inter-institutional synergy in that field. He stressed the need for "practical forms of co-operation at all levels, in particular in the field."

Professor Geremek reviewed a wide range of crisis and activity areas in which the OSCE is involved and noted some common features among them. He said that in all areas where the OSCE is involved, with the exception of Kosovo, "there are no hostilities, but at the same time political solutions have not been found." He said that "we face a complicated dilemma between two fundamental principles of international law: territorial integrity and the right to self-determination. Our ability to find a balance between them in a long process of careful talks and other actions will determine our own effectiveness."

Kosovo is a case in point: he said that it will "remain in the forefront of our activities" and that he expects the Permanent Council and the Secretariat to be ready to dispatch a mission to Kosovo without delay, "if and when it would prove to be possible". He repeated his suggestion that a round-table dialogue on special status for Kosovo could

be "helpful in moving away from political rhetoric and turning to concrete matters such as the functioning of legislative and executive powers [in Kosovo], assuring local identity, development of local government and education".

The Chairman-in-Office also identified the advancement of negotiations on a Document-Charter on European Security as "an important challenge in the security field". He said that "by the end of the year we would like to see the general framework for this document." He added that "our aim should be to establish a system based on the role of international law, fundamental common moral values established in European tradition, solidarity with States menaced by the threat or use of force or by hegemonic tendencies. Non-hierarchical, mutually reinforcing co-operation by different organizations would largely contribute to the creation of such a system."

He stressed that the Charter should "give expression to the real state of affairs rather than being just an intellectual, formal exercise". He encouraged participating States to "think again about how to creatively use new tendencies in our security environment so that the constructive potential of action of all OSCE States may serve our common cause."



News from the Field

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

By-elections and Parliamentary Monitoring in Albania

In addition to its active border monitoring role (see story page 2), the OSCE Presence in Albania has been involved in several other important activities. The Presence, together with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (Council of Europe), assessed the by-elections held on 21 June in seven municipalities and nine communes. In compliance with its mandate, the OSCE Presence closely followed the electoral process, assessing the preparation for the election and the electoral campaign. The Presence, along with other international organizations, was available to the Central Election Commission for consultation throughout the entire process. Election day was also closely appraised. A joint OSCE/Council of Europe statement described the by-elections as “a solid step forward in the consolidation of democracy in Albania”, although they noted that the by-elections “reconfirmed the need to increase trust between various political forces at the national level, and to improve the election administration process, particularly the accuracy of voter registers”.

The Presence has also continued its monitoring of parliamentary activities. On 29 and 30 June it facilitated the second Tri-Parliamentary Mission to Albania. This mission, a follow-up to the first mission, which was launched in January 1998, included representatives of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and

the European Parliament. The Mission looked at a range of issues, including the drafting of the Albanian constitution, independence of the judiciary, access to public media, recruitments and appointments to the civil service, and parliamentary practice.

Pre-Election Activity Intensifies in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In June, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina intensified its activities relating to the elections scheduled for 12 and 13 September. The huge task of voter registration (overseen by 465 internationally seconded registration supervisors) and the distribution of the majority of voter cards was completed on 27 June. The process involved a large public awareness campaign both in the country and for out-of-country voters in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Croatia and around the world. The deadline for the submission of candidate lists and registration for alliances was 29 June.

Throughout the month, the Head of Mission, Ambassador Robert Barry, held a series of meetings with prominent leaders on election-related matters. Mission members attended political party congresses to keep abreast of political developments, particularly as regards the building of party coalitions and alliances.

For the September elections, the OSCE is preparing to open 15 political party service centres, which will provide par-

ties and candidates access to phones, faxes, computers, photocopiers and space for meetings. The Mission's Media Monitoring section is expanding its operations as the elections approach.

The issue of return remains a prominent one. The Mission is closely monitoring the process and has carried out several initiatives, such as seminars and town meetings, to encourage tolerance and reconciliation.

The Mission is also following the issue of property rights, particularly the implementation of new property laws, and is participating in a public information campaign designed to notify property owners of their rights to reclaim property.

Assistance Group Continues Work in Chechnya

Being the only international organization presently functioning in Chechnya, the OSCE Assistance Group (AG) is actively looking for potential donors and sponsors, co-ordinating their activity and monitoring the implementation of different projects. On the initiative of the AG, a co-ordination meeting of Chechen non-governmental organizations was held on 26 June. The possibility of establishing an NGO Resource Centre was discussed. The AG has been involved in other projects. The Grozny Forensic Laboratory is now practically operational, although not yet officially opened. An orphanage, the renovation of which was funded and monitored

through the AG, opened on 25 June. The AG also facilitates the delivery of medical supplies and financial support to the Children's Hospital in Grozny.

Return Programme Announced in Croatia

The OSCE Mission to Croatia played a central role in co-ordinating the work of international experts who provided input on the draft of the Croatian Government's "Programme for the Return and Accommodation of Displaced Persons, Refugees and Resettled Persons". In a press conference on 24 June, the Mission's spokesman, Mark Thompson, said that the Mission welcomed the plan and that "if the document is properly implemented, it will represent a breakthrough". He said that the Mission believed that "the Govern-

ment has made a genuine effort to address the concerns that the international community has raised". He noted in particular the plan's commitment to the unconditional right of individuals to return freely to their homes of origin and its establishment of a procedure for the repossession of property. He also said that "it is particularly welcome that the new Housing Commissions will have to address this question of repossession".

This Programme was presented to Parliament as part of a longer report describing the background of the problem of refugees and displaced persons in Croatia, as well as the issue of reconstruction. Taking also into account the concerns of the international community, the Parliament adopted the Return Programme as a separate document.

In an effort to assist the Government, the Mission continues to look for ways of facilitating and implementing the two-way return of refugees. It is also preparing for the deployment of OSCE civilian police monitors in the autumn (see story page 1)

The extent to which the OSCE is involved in Croatia can be seen by a series of visits and meetings in June. On June 4 the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, visited Croatia. Representatives of the OSCE Troika together with the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Ambassador Marton Krásznai, and representatives of the Secretariat visited Croatia on 14 and 15 June. On 29 June the Head of Mission, Ambassador Tim Guldemann, met with Prime Minister Zlatko Matesa.



Ambassador Marton Krásznai of Hungary took up the post of **Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre** at the beginning of June. He takes over from **Ambassador Ján Kubiš** of Slovakia, who had held the post for four years. Ambassador Kubiš has been appointed as the

Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Tajikistan.

Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, addressed the Permanent Council on 4 June. He said that in the face of armed and violent conflict, two objectives should be pursued: "to seek a political-military settlement while rooting out the underlying causes of the crisis" and to alleviate the effects of the crisis in humanitarian terms. He listed the establishment of a permanent international criminal court, the prohibition and destruction of anti-personnel land-mines and the prohibition of child soldiers as issues that the ICRC fully supports. He also said that "the ICRC is convinced that regular dialogue

between humanitarian organizations and regional and global political entities is crucial and that it forms part of active, credible humanitarian diplomacy". In that respect he praised the good working relationship between the ICRC and the OSCE.

A seminar on the relationship between the OSCE and the Council of Europe was held in the Hague on 5 June. The seminar was hosted by the Government of the Netherlands as a follow-up to the proposal by Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo to create an "Alliance for Human Rights and Democracy". Participants discussed ways of improving co-operation and complementarity between the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

On 10 June the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, met in Warsaw with the French, Russian and United States **Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group**. The Co-Chairmen informed the Chairman-in-Office about their recent trip to the region of the conflict after the change in the leadership in Armenia and on the results of their meetings with the leadership of all the parties. They

noted the need to overcome new obstacles to the settlement of the conflict and expressed their intention to intensify efforts aimed at resumption of the negotiations for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the OSCE Minsk process. The Chairman-in-Office and the Co-Chairmen emphasized the importance of the continuation of the existing cease-fire on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and along the Line of Contact. They welcomed the statements to this effect by the representatives of the parties. They also expressed satisfaction at the resumption of the OSCE monitoring activities, which were instrumental in consolidating the cease-fire regime. The Chairman-in-Office informed the Co-Chairmen of his plan to visit the region and expressed the hope that significant progress would be achieved by that time towards a political resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and that the visit would add further impetus to this process.

Ambassador Gret Haller, Human Rights Ombuds-person for Bosnia and Herzegovina, addressed the Permanent Council on 17 June. She reported on the Human Rights situation in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. She stated that the pace of progress had been slow but that there had been positive developments on issues concerning human rights, particularly on property legislation and the start of minority return.

On 19 July the Government of **Japan** decided to make a **voluntary contribution** of USD 1 million to the OSCE “for the purpose of assisting the smooth and successful implementation of the election in Bosnia and Herzegovina to be held on 12 and 13 September 1998”. The contribution will be used for the production of ballot papers, polling station kits and other election-related activities. Japan, which is an OSCE partner for co-operation, has provided considerable support for the civil aspects of peace implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including financial support to the OSCE totalling USD 2.5 million for election-related activities

in both 1996 and 1997. Japan also intends to dispatch a certain number of election supervisors and observers to Bosnia and Herzegovina as it did in 1996 and 1997.

Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, addressed the Permanent Council on 24 June. She outlined the existing co-operation between the OSCE and her Office and discussed possibilities for strengthening and enhancing co-operation in the future. She expressed her appreciation for the centrality of the human dimension in the OSCE’s work and emphasized the commonality between the OSCE’s approach to human rights and her own. She noted two common operational concepts: standard setting and implementation, and active work in the field. Ms. Robinson noted the importance of the human dimension in preventive diplomacy and post-conflict rehabilitation. She stressed the need for continued close co-operation between the OSCE and UNHCHR and mentioned the possibility of practical co-operation in the area of human rights training for field operations. She concluded by recalling that 1998 is the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and stated that the development of closer ties between the OSCE and UNHCHR would be a fitting contribution to that year.

The same Permanent Council meeting was addressed by **Søren Jessen-Petersen, Assistant United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**. He focused his remarks mainly on the situation in the Commonwealth of Independent States and former Yugoslavia noting that these are priority areas for the UNHCR and the OSCE and are areas where co-operation between the two organizations is of particular importance. He cited examples of co-operation between UNHCR and the ODIHR, the HCNM and OSCE Missions. He stressed the important link between political and humanitarian action and the common goals and objectives of the OSCE and the UNHCR.

REPORT from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) is located at Prinsessegracht 22, NL-2514 AP The Hague, The Netherlands, tel.: (+31-70) 312 55 00, fax: (+31-70) 363 59 10, e-mail: cscehcnm@euronet.nl

Uzbekistan

On 1 and 2 June the High Commissioner on National Minorities visited Tashkent, where he met with Minister for Foreign Affairs A. Kamilov, Minister for Education J. Yuldashev, and Speaker of the Parliament E. Khalilov. Other meetings included those with the directors and staff of some of the main institutes in Tashkent, and with resident representatives of international organisations.

Several of the High Commissioner's interlocutors drew attention to the problems of Islamic fundamentalism and its effect on inter-ethnic relations, citing the dangers of political extremism. While noting the concerns expressed, the High Commissioner used the opportunity provided in his meetings to emphasize the primary importance for States to adhere to generally recognized international standards in human rights.

Kyrgyzstan

On 3 to 5 June the High Commissioner visited Kyrgyzstan, where he was received by President Askar Akayev. He participated in a seminar on "Managing Inter-Ethnic Relations", which was organized with the help of the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations in The Hague. The aim of the seminar was to provide the governors of various regions in Kyrgyzstan with a better insight into how to handle inter-ethnic issues and relations. Participants at the seminar included President Akayev, who made a speech in which he strongly urged his officials to treat minorities

on the basis of equality and to show understanding for their problems.

During his visit to Bishkek the High Commissioner met with Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs T. Kydyrov, the Chairman of the Commission on Religious Affairs to the Government of Kyrgyzstan, E. Kaptagaev, and the Chairman of the Assembly of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan, S. Begaliev.

Georgia

On 9 to 11 June the High Commissioner paid a visit to Georgia, where he was received by President Shevardnadze. He had talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Burduli and Deputy Speaker of the Georgian Parliament Eldar Shengalaia. He also met with the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Constitutional, Legal Affairs and the Rule of Law, Mikhail Saakashvili, and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Ethnic Minorities, Konstantin Kokoev. Other meetings were held with the President's adviser on inter-ethnic relations, Aleksandr Gerasimov, Chairman of the Abkhaz Supreme Council in exile, Tamaz Nadareishvili, as well as with NGOs representing the Meskhetian community in Georgia.

The main topic of these discussions was the recent fighting in the Gali district and its impact on the efforts to bring a settlement of the Abkhaz conflict. In addition to being informed about background developments leading up to the latest fighting, the High Commissioner

was also briefed on the present state of bilateral negotiations in Moscow. Meetings scheduled to take place in Sukhumi were not held owing to a request from the Abkhaz side to postpone the visit.

Among other issues discussed in Tbilisi was the problem of the return of deported Meskhetians to Georgia. These discussions, in the Parliament and with representatives of Meskhetian NGOs, revealed the unsatisfactory state of affairs and also the difficulties in finding a solution taking into consideration the complex legal, political and economic aspects of a sizable repatriation effort.

Estonia

On 18 and 19 June the High Commissioner visited Tallinn in order to participate in a meeting of the Presidential Round Table on National Minorities. During the visit the High Commissioner had meetings with Prime Minister Mart Siimann, and Minister for Inter-Ethnic Affairs, Andra Veidemann. He also met with the Chairman of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, Eino Tamm, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Constitutional Affairs, Tiit Kabin, and other parliamentarians.

The main subject of the High Commissioner's discussions was the latest situation concerning proposed amendments to the Citizenship Law with regard to children of stateless parents born in Estonia since 1991. The

High Commissioner was informed of the decisions taken during the second reading stage of the bill in the Riigikogu (parliament) which will be resumed after the parliamentary summer recess.

At the meeting of the President's Round Table the High Commissioner had the opportunity for a useful exchange of views with representatives of the round table regarding the integration process and the situation of national minorities in Estonia.

Ukraine

On 26 June the HCNM visited Kiev, where he presided over a donor conference aimed at raising funds to help the 250,000 Crimean Tatars and other formerly deported peoples and at dealing with the many problems surrounding their resettlement. The conference, which was organized jointly by UNHCR, UNDP, the Ukrainian Government and the OSCE Mission in collaboration with the office of the HCNM, was attended

by representatives from 29 States. Several of these States made concrete pledges, while others announced that they were considering a contribution. The European Commission also announced that it would be making money available, and the World Bank came forward with a promise to contribute as well.

UPDATE from the ODIHR

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is located at : Ujazdowskie Avenue 19, PL-00-557 Warsaw, Poland, tel.: (+48-22) 520 06 00, fax: (+48-22) 520 06 05, e-mail: office@odihr.osce.waw.pl

ODIHR Consultation on Women in Public Life in Central Asia

A regional consultation on Women in Public Life in Central Asia was held in Tashkent from 16 to 18 June 1998 as part of a series of projects in the Human Dimension field agreed upon in a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Uzbekistan in October 1997.

The consultation was organized by the ODIHR and the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia in close co-operation with UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC/UNDP) and with the assistance of the Government of Uzbekistan and the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan.

The regional consultation was attended by 80 participants from the five Central Asian republics and included parliamentarians, representatives of non-governmental organizations, government

officials and Gender in Development (GID) units supported by the UN.

The ODIHR objectives for the consultation were threefold. The first aim was to allow Central Asian experts from both government structures and civil society to assess the present situation, share

their experiences and develop co-operation. The second aim was to develop an ODIHR women's human rights programme in the region with concrete follow-up projects to be included in the Memoranda of Understanding between the ODIHR and the Governments of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan and Turkme-



Participants in the regional consultation on Women in Public Life in Central Asia

nistan currently being prepared. The third objective was to begin co-operation with the UNDP regional Gender in Development Programme.

Throughout the consultation, legal illiteracy and economic dependence were singled out as important sources of women's vulnerability, resulting in their marginalization from public life, especially under conditions of conflict and social and economic instability. The links between human development, human rights, peace and stability were highlighted, calling attention to the special problems faced by economies in transition. Broader recommendations were also made on the acceleration of the adoption of National Action Plans, the incorporation of gender analysis in the process of legal reform and the provision of comparative reviews of legislation directly or indirectly affecting women's rights in Central Asian countries.

Another concrete recommendation was to promote women's political participation at all levels, in addition to strengthening the institutional infrastructure of co-operation among donors, governments and NGOs for the promotion of regional co-operation, including proposals for the creation of an Assembly of Central Asian Women Parliamentarians and a Central Asian Business Women's Association.

The consultation also produced recommendations on broadening awareness concerning international conventions and standards relating to women's human rights and raising gender awareness and legal literacy through education and training at all levels.

The ODIHR intends to follow up during the second half of 1998 on a number of the recommendations.

New Premises Inaugurated

On 26 June the OSCE Chairman in Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, officially inaugurated the new premises of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on Aleja Ujazdowskie in Warsaw. The event was attended by a broad representation from the diplomatic community in Warsaw and other friends of the ODIHR. The new offices have been made available for the ODIHR by the Polish Government and provide more space for this steadily growing OSCE institution.

In his inaugural statement Minister Geremek expressed his satisfaction with the continued ODIHR presence in Warsaw, and declared Warsaw "the human dimension capital" of the OSCE. The OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona, thanked the Polish authorities for their generosity and congratulated the ODIHR on its successful move. The ODIHR Director, Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, stressed that with its improved working environment, the Office has a responsibility to focus with even greater energy and efficiency on meeting human dimension needs throughout the OSCE area.

ODIHR Torture Prevention Panel

The first meeting of the OSCE/ODIHR Expert Panel for the Prevention of Torture was held in Warsaw on 11 and 12 June. The Expert Panel includes: Danielle Coquoz, Head of the Central Tracing Agency and Protection Division, International Committee of the Red Cross; Ian Gorvin, Director Europe Regional Program, Amnesty International; Douglas Johnson, Executive Director, Center for Victims of Torture; Claude Nicolay, Prosecutor General of

Luxembourg and formerly Chairman of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture; and Prof. Nigel Rodley, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Professor of Law, University of Essex. The meeting was opened by Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, Director of the ODIHR and chaired by Peter Eicher, Deputy Director of the ODIHR.

The Expert Panel was established pursuant to recommendations from the 1997 Human Dimension Implementation Review Meeting to provide advice on how the ODIHR can best develop programmes and activities to combat torture in OSCE participating States without duplicating ongoing efforts by other organizations.

During the two-day meeting, the Expert Panel provided guidance to the ODIHR in developing new projects involving legislative reform, training and strengthening the work of NGOs. It advised the ODIHR on ways to integrate anti-torture activities into existing projects and it will also help the ODIHR in the development of a strategic plan to combat torture. The next meeting of the Expert Panel is scheduled for late October.

Agreement on Co-operation with the UNHCHR

The ODIHR Director, Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, signed an agreement on co-operation on 19 June 1998. The agreement is designed to actively contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights in the OSCE area. It includes provisions for improving the exchange of information between the two offices, for developing joint projects in the field and for establishing

institutional links, including the designation of a liaison officer in each office and yearly meetings between the heads of the offices.

ODIHR Observes Czech Election

The ODIHR observed the election to the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic held on 19 and 20 June 1998. The Election Observation Mission was headed by Mark Power-Stevens. Mrs. Tone Tingsgard, member of the Swedish Parliament, was appointed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to be Special Coordinator for the Czech elections.

The observation of the election administrative preparation and of the political campaign was performed by a seven-person team present in the country from 13 May, both in the capital and in the provinces. On the election days the Mission deployed, throughout the eight electoral regions of Czech Republic, some 70 observers representing 24

countries and including a 23-member delegation from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

In the Preliminary Statement issued on 21 June, the Election Observation Mission concluded that the elections had been carried out in general accordance with the law and had been conducted in a transparent manner, enjoying the confidence of political parties and the public.

A detailed final report will be issued by the ODIHR in the coming weeks.

Continuing discussions on the Azerbaijan Election Law

As reported in the May OSCE Newsletter, a high-level delegation from Azerbaijan met with ODIHR experts in Vienna to review the draft Law on the Election of the President of Azerbaijan. The law was adopted on 9 June 1998 and signed by the President.

In order to assess the extent to which the ODIHR comments had been integrated into the law, the ODIHR held a new series of meetings with the Azerbaijan delegation in Warsaw from 24 to 30 June. Most of the comments have been incorporated fully or partially, but a few issues of concern still remain. One of the major issues is the formation of the Central Election Committee to include different political interests contesting the elections. Other issues of concern include the exclusion of domestic non-partisan observers, the procedures for collection and validating signatures in support of candidates, and lack of clarity on who should be allowed in the polling station premises on election day. During the meetings, the ODIHR stressed the need to draft a detailed set of rules and regulations to further clarify these provisions in the law. The proposal was positively welcomed by the Azerbaijan officials, who agreed to address this need immediately upon their return to Baku.

REPORT from the Parliamentary Assembly

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

Seventh Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to meet in Copenhagen

The Seventh Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) will meet in Copenhagen from 7 to 10 July. The 317 members of the Assembly include leading parliamentarians from 54 participating States. Additionally the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Assembly of the Western European Union, the North Atlantic As-

sembly, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS, and the European Parliament all have official observer status.

The Copenhagen Session will focus on the development of the structures, institutions and perspectives of the OSCE. On the opening day, the meeting, which will be chaired by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Spanish Parliament, Javier Rupérez, will be addressed by the

Prime Minister of Denmark, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, the Speaker of the Danish Parliament, Ivar Hansen, the Chairman-in-Office, and high-level OSCE officials including the Secretary General, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Director of ODIHR and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

On 8 and 9 July the Assembly will consider three reports and draft resolutions put forward by Rapporteurs of the three

General Committees of the Assembly. Also on the agenda will be a draft resolution on the Kosovo crisis, submitted by OSCE PA President, Javier Rupérez. Mr. Rupérez has invited a parliamentary delegation representing the Yugoslav Federal Assembly to address the Annual Session. Ibrahim Rugova, President of the LDK, the largest party in Kosovo, has also been invited and is expected to attend.

Full coverage of the 7th Annual Session will be provided in the July Newsletter.

Second Tri-Parliamentary Mission to Albania

The second Tri-Parliamentary Mission made up of representatives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, visited Tirana on 29 and 30 June 1998.

The purpose of the Mission was to follow up the Declaration of the first Tri-Parliamentary Mission of 22-23 January 1998. In particular, the Mission concentrated on promoting the drafting of the new Albanian constitution. The Mission also discussed other recommendations included in the January Tri-Parliamentary Mission's Declaration, such as the promotion of the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was represented in this Second Tri-Parliamentary Mission by Senator Tana De Zulueta and Tekin Enerem, M.P. They were accompanied by the Deputy Secretary General of the PA Pentti Väänänen and Ambassador Daan Everts, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania.

The Parliamentary Assembly delegation made a report for the Standing

Committee in which it noted that a number of improvements had taken place in Albania in accordance with the January Tri-Parliamentary Mission's Declaration. Such improvements included the fact that the Democratic Party, the main opposition force in Albania, had joined the parliamentary work. The international monitoring of the Parliament was also bringing about significant improvements in parliamentary work and practices.

The Mission also noted that the drafting of the new constitution is proceeding in earnest. The drafting process has been transparent and the Constitutional Commission of the Parliament has been in close co-operation with the Venice Commission and a number of other institutions.

There is also considerable positive new legislation being prepared concerning the independence of the judiciary, status of the civil servants and the freedom of the media.

At the same time the Mission also noted several areas in which there has not been satisfactory development. For example, the political climate continues to be highly charged and confrontational, there is a very high level of crime, and there are problems concerning the independence of the judiciary.

The Parliamentary Assembly delegation's report noted that the Democratic Party continues to boycott the work of the Constitutional Commission established by the Parliament. The main aim of the Mission was to help involve the opposition in the drafting of the constitution.

On 30 June the Tri-Parliamentary Mission issued a joint declaration (the

full text is available from the Parliamentary Assembly). The Declaration included an agreement "to establish the international advisory group, as suggested in the first declaration of the (January) Tri-Parliamentary Mission, to advise, if requested, on any fundamental political issue before a final vote in the Parliamentary". The Declaration also emphasized the need to improve procedures for the recruitment and appointment of the civil service, armed forces and police. It urged that judicial independence be strictly observed and called for increased emphasis on measures to improve the security situation in Albania.

OSCE Parliamentarians Participate in the Economic Forum

A delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly participated in the work of the Sixth Economic Forum, which was held from 1-5 June in Prague. The delegation included the Chairman of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment of the OSCE/PA, Jacques Floch, Member of the French National Assembly; Rapporteur of the Committee, Tana de Zulueta, Member of the Italian Senate; and Deputy Secretary General of the OSCE/PA, Vitaly Evseyev.

Members of the OSCE/PA delegation participated actively in the discussions at the Forum, including the Working Groups. Mr. Floch, who had initiated the Parliamentary Conference on Sub-Regional Co-operation last October in Monaco, spoke on that subject as well as on the work of the OSCE/PA in the economic field at the last plenary. A document on the Monaco conference was distributed to participants in the Forum.



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