

OSCE Deploys Kosovo Verification Mission

AP Photo/Dženan Vrančić



The OSCE Chairman-in-Office Bronisław Geremek displays agreement signed with the Yugoslav authorities during a press conference in Belgrade, 16 October 1998.

The OSCE faces the toughest and most high-profile challenge in its history: organizing, deploying and running a 2,000 member Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM). OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Bronisław Geremek described the operation as both a “tremendous challenge and a tremendous opportunity” for the Organization.

The announcement came on 13 October after weeks of diplomatic wrangling between Serbian President Slobodan Milošević and the international community.

On 6 October Mr. Geremek received a letter from the Foreign Minister of the

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Živadin Jovanović, in which he invited the OSCE “to witness first hand the positive evolution of the most crucial processes in Kosovo and Metohija.”

In reply, Mr. Geremek emphasized that “the best conditions for accepting this invitation will appear when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) satisfies the requirements contained in OSCE Permanent Council Decision No. 218, as well as United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1160 and 1199.”

In a statement issued on 7 October Mr. Geremek recalled “the OSCE’s long-standing readiness to give its contribu-

IN THIS ISSUE

• Troika Ministers in Oslo	5
• Regional Arms Control	6
• Developments in Latvia	7
• OSCE & UNHCR Partnership	8
• Mediterranean Seminar	9
• Subregional Co-operation	9
• In Brief	10
• News from the Field	11
• Recent Publications	12
• Report from the HCNM	13
• Report of the Representative on Freedom of the Media	14
• Update from the ODIHR	15
• Report from the PA	17

tion to the democratic processes in the FRY and to the solution of the crisis in Kosovo, where appalling human suffering is occurring, and where there is the risk of its aggravation in the near future.” At the same time, he reiterated the OSCE’s long-standing readiness to contribute to a durable solution and to stability in the area. He said that he hoped “conditions will soon allow the OSCE to undertake an appropriate initiative” and noted that OSCE monitoring could be an important element of the settlement process of the solution of the crisis in Kosovo.

All the while the situation on the ground deteriorated. With winter approaching,

the humanitarian situation worsening and sporadic fighting still raging, a solution to the crisis became increasingly urgent.

While forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) prepared for air strikes, United States Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke pursued intensive negotiations with Serbian President Slobodan Milošević.

Indications of a possible breakthrough in the crisis came on the night of 12 October when Mr. Holbrooke briefed representatives of the NATO in Brussels. Rumours had been circulating throughout the day that Mr. Milošević would agree to allow international observers to monitor compliance with the UN resolutions. The possibility of OSCE participation in this verification mission was hinted at by Mr. Holbrooke when he told reporters at a late-night press briefing on 12 October that he was to hold talks immediately with OSCE Chairman-in-Office Geremek.

The deal was announced on 13 October. It was agreed that co-ordinated verification operations of 2,000 OSCE “verifiers” on the ground and NATO air surveillance would verify compliance with the UN resolutions.

On 15 October the US Special Envoy for Kosovo, Ambassador Christopher Hill, briefed the Permanent Council on the negotiations which had led to the agreement to establish an OSCE Verification Mission for Kosovo. At the same meeting, the Permanent Council took a decision that declared the preparedness of the OSCE “to embark upon verification activities related to compliance of all parties in Kosovo with the requirements set forth by the international community with regard to the solution of the

crisis in Kosovo.” It also supported the Chairman-in-Office’s efforts “to arrange with the FRY authorities for the OSCE to make such contribution.”

This paved the way for the Chairman-in-Office to travel to Belgrade on 16 October, where he signed an Agreement with Yugoslav Foreign Minister Živadin Jovanović on the creation of an OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission.

The agreement (the full text of which is available on the OSCE website at www.osce.org), allows for the creation of a Mission of 2,000 unarmed verifiers from OSCE participating States “to verify compliance by all parties in Kosovo with UN Security Council Resolution 1199, and report instances of progress and/or non-compliance to the OSCE Permanent Council, the United Nations Security Council and other organizations” (see box on page 3 for more details). It also gives the OSCE the responsibility of supervising elections in Kosovo “to ensure their openness and fairness in accordance with regulations and procedures agreed.”

Endorsement for the OSCE Mission was given by the UN Security Council on 24

October through resolution No. 1203 which demanded that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia abide by its agreements and commitments concerning the OSCE Verification Mission in Kosovo and reminded the FRY of its “primary responsibility for the safety and security of all diplomatic personnel accredited to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.” It said that all parties should comply “fully and swiftly” with resolutions 1160 and 1199 and “co-operate fully” with the OSCE Mission. It also insisted that the Kosovo Albanian leadership “condemn all terrorist actions”, demanded that such actions cease immediately and emphasized that “all elements in the Kosovo Albanian community should pursue their goals by peaceful means only.”

On Sunday 25 October the Permanent Council met in a special session to formally establish the Mission. The mandate will be for one year, “with extensions upon the request of either the Chairman-in-Office or the FRY government.”

Contingency preparations for the deployment of the KVM had already been going on for some time.

On 17 October the Chairman-in-Office appointed Ambassador William G. Walker of the United States as Head of the KVM. Ambassador Walker has had a distinguished 37-year career in the Foreign Service, mostly in South America. Most recently he served as Special Representative of the UN Secretary General as head of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) in Croatia.

A Technical Assessment Team dispatched by the Secretariat arrived in Belgrade on 17 October. The team, made up of representatives of the OSCE



Head of the Kosovo Verification Mission, Ambassador William G. Walker

Secretariat and assisted by members of the OSCE Missions to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, travelled extensively around Kosovo between 18 and 21 October in order to gain a first hand impression of local conditions (particularly outside Priština) and to ascertain the availability of office and lodging accommodations.

The Kosovo Verification Mission has its headquarters in Priština. It is anticipated that co-ordination centers will be established in the capital of each *opština* in Kosovo. In some districts there may be other small sub-stations.

Norway, which will assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 1999, has taken the lead role in establishing the Mission Headquarters and has set aside USD 26

million to cover the expenses incurred in connection with this task.

Ten times bigger than any other OSCE Mission, this operation is presenting planning and logistical challenges for the Secretariat. Secretary General Giancarlo Aragona has said that “the OSCE will be equal to the task. The political will is there and the OSCE has a proven record of being flexible and innovative enough to take on new challenges.” Marton Krásznai, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, notes that in the first two weeks since the decision to establish the KVM “significant progress has been made and will continue at an accelerated pace.”

Lists of verifiers have been forwarded to the Secretariat by many participating

States. Their deployment will be phased over the next few weeks. In the short term, the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission will make up the core of the verification staff. They will be absorbed by the OSCE Mission once it is fully operational.

Security of the verifiers is a priority. Mr. Geremek raised the issue in Contact Group meetings and in discussions with NATO. While UN Security Council resolutions 1199 and 1203 stressed that it is up to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to guarantee the safety and security of the Verification Mission, resolution 1203 also affirmed that “in the event of an emergency, action may be needed” to ensure the safety of KVM personnel. Talks are continuing on arrangements for the security of the verifiers.

WHO ARE THE “VERIFIERS” AND WHAT WILL THEY DO?

The term “verifiers” has been chosen for these OSCE personnel because they will verify compliance with the specific provisions of a UN Security Council resolution. It has the connotation of being more proactive and intrusive than a more passive observer or monitor. Personnel of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission are seconded from OSCE participating States.

According to the Specific Terms of Reference of the Agreement, the role of the Verifiers will be the following:

1. The Verification Mission will travel throughout Kosovo to verify the maintenance of the cease-fire by all elements. It will investigate reports of cease-fire violations. Mission personnel will have full freedom of movement and access throughout Kosovo at all times.
2. The Verification Mission will receive weekly information from relevant FRY/Serbian military/police headquarters in Kosovo regarding movements of forces during the preceding week into, out of or within Kosovo. Upon request of the Verification Mission Director, Mission personnel may be invited to accompany police within Kosovo.
3. The Verification Mission will look for and report on roadblocks and other emplacements which influence lines of communication erected for purposes other than traffic or crime control. The Mission Director will contact the relevant authorities upon receipt of such reports. These authorities will explain the reasons for the emplacements or else direct that the emplacements be removed immediately. The Verification Mission will also receive notification should emergent circumstances lead to the establishment of a roadblock for other than traffic or crime control-related reasons. The Mission Director may request the removal of any roadblocks.
4. The Verification Mission will maintain liaison with FRY authorities about border control activities and movements by units with border control responsibilities through areas of Kosovo away from the border. The Verification Mission, when invited by the FRY authorities or upon its request, will visit border control units and accompany them as they perform their normal border control roles.

5. When invited or upon request, the Verification Mission will accompany police units in Kosovo as they perform their normal policing roles.

6. The Verification Mission will, to the extent possible, assist UNHCR, ICRC and other international organizations in facilitating the return of displaced persons to their homes, the provision of facilitative and humanitarian assistance to them by the FRY, Serbian and Kosovo authorities as well as the humanitarian organizations and NGOs. The Mission will verify the level of cooperation and support provided by the FRY and its entities to the humanitarian organizations and accredited NGOs in facilitating procedural requirements such as issuance of travel documentation, expedited customs clearance for humanitarian shipments and radio frequencies. The Mission will make such representations as it deems necessary to resolve problems it observes.

7. As the political settlement defining Kosovo's self-government is achieved and implementation begins, the Mission Director will assist, both with his own resources and with augmented OSCE implementation support, in areas such

as election supervision, assistance in the establishment of Kosovo institutions and police force development in Kosovo.

8. The Mission Director will receive periodic updates from the relevant authorities concerning eventual allegations of abusive actions by military or police personnel and status of disciplinary or legal actions against individuals implicated in such abuses.

9. The Verification Mission will maintain liaison with FRY, Serbian and, as appropriate, Kosovo authorities and with ICRC regarding ICRC access to detained persons.

10. The Mission Director will, as required, convene representatives of national communities and authorities to exchange information and provide guidance on implementation of the agreement establishing the Verification Mission.

11. The Mission Director will report instances of progress and/or non-compliance or lack of full cooperation from any side to the OSCE and other organizations.

AP Photo/Santiago Lyon



The OSCE Technical Assessment Team arrives in Priština



Troika Foreign Ministers Meet in Oslo

The OSCE Troika, consisting of the Foreign Minister of Poland, Bronisław Geremek, the Foreign Minister of Norway, Knut Vollebæk and the Foreign Minister of Denmark, Niels Helveg Petersen, met in Oslo on 21 October to review pressing issues facing the OSCE. The Secretary General of the OSCE, Giancarlo Aragona, also took part.



OSCE Troika Foreign Ministers, Bronisław Geremek of Poland (Chairman-in-Office in 1998), Niels Helveg Petersen of Denmark (CiO in 1997), and Knut Vollebæk of Norway (CiO in 1999)

Their primary focus was on the progress made in

establishing the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM). The Ministers also reviewed a number of regional issues of particular concern to the OSCE and evaluated the work of several OSCE missions in the field.

In a communique issued after the meeting, the Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the signing of the agreement between the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and their expectation that it would be rapidly implemented. They expressed the hope that the agreement will become a turning point in international efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement in Kosovo and expressed their determination to do their utmost to that effect. However, the Ministers were disturbed by reports of renewed fighting in Kosovo and urged both sides to abstain immediately from further use of force and work towards a peaceful settlement.

The Ministers stressed the importance of ensuring the security of the KVM

personnel. They called on both sides to live up to their responsibilities to this end. They also agreed that close liaison with NATO shall be maintained. They welcomed the appointment of Ambassador William Walker as Head of the Mission. Ambassador Walker was also present at the meeting.

The Ministers welcomed the offer from the Norwegian Government to assume responsibility for the establishment and operation of the Kosovo Mission headquarters in Priština, in co-operation with the OSCE Secretariat.

They were encouraged by the broad support of OSCE participating States for an OSCE role in Kosovo, and appealed to them to contribute quickly to setting up the Mission and strengthening the Secretariat. They were pleased that a technical assessment team had visited Belgrade and Kosovo, and that a KVM Support Unit had been formed in Vienna. They agreed that the financing of the KVM should be based on the

scale of contributions for large Missions and projects adopted at the 1997 Copenhagen Ministerial Council Meeting. The Ministers also expressed the need for voluntary contributions to ensure that the Mission becomes operational as soon as possible.

The Ministers also welcomed the initiative by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to convene a target-oriented meeting in Warsaw with

all organizations involved in human rights. The meeting should coordinate a strategy for human rights action in Kosovo.

The Ministers noted with satisfaction the OSCE's important role in Albania, including its new function as co-chairman, together with the EU, of the "Friends of Albania" group, which brings together the countries and international bodies concerned.

They congratulated the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the successful organization of the September elections and stressed the importance of implementing the election results and of continued emphasis of the full implementation of the Dayton accords. They agreed that the OSCE shall continue its engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing in particular on human rights and democratization in all parts of the country. At the same time, they called on the authorities of the country to take on greater responsibility in this process.

Regarding Croatia, the Ministers noted with satisfaction the smooth takeover by the OSCE of police monitoring tasks from the United Nations in the Danube region. They reiterated their support for the OSCE Mission's efforts to assist the Government in improving conditions for the return of refugees and displaced persons. They called on the Government of Croatia to ensure real progress in this field.

The Ministers saluted the establishment of OSCE Centres in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, as a sign of OSCE commitment in Central Asia and as an expression of the host countries' willingness to enhance co-operation and to live up to OSCE principles.

The Ministers expressed their hope that the forthcoming trip of the Chairman-in-Office to Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan would bring about progress in

OSCE efforts toward a peaceful solution of local conflicts and would expand OSCE co-operation with these countries.

The Ministers positively assessed the substantive work by OSCE delegations in Vienna on the drafting of a Document-Charter on European Security in preparation for the forthcoming Oslo Ministerial Meeting on 2 and 3 December. They noted that many of the ideas and concepts put forth in the Document-Charter are being played out in practice, particularly the increasing co-operation between international institutions in handling conflicts.

The Troika thanked Ambassador Lars Vissing of Denmark for his report on enhancing the OSCE Secretariat's operational capabilities. They said that they looked forward to a report from the Secretary General at the Oslo Ministerial Council Meeting on the implementation.

It was noted that the "human dimension" of the OSCE should continue to be placed high on the OSCE agenda. In this light, the Ministers encouraged wide participation in the forthcoming meeting in Warsaw on the implementation of human dimension commitments, organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Also attending the meeting were the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoep; the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve; the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Gérard Stoudmann; the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Helle Degn, the Head of the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Robert Barry and the Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, Daan Everts.

Consensus Developing on Regional Arms Control

The Agreement on Regional Arms Control as foreseen by Article V of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina is now one step closer as a consensus is developing on how to conduct negotiations with the goal of establishing a regional balance in and around the former Yugoslavia.

Although preliminary discussions on Article V have been going on since the Copenhagen Ministerial Council Meeting of December 1997, they were contingent to a great extent on the satisfactory implementation of Articles II and IV.

In a report given to the Permanent Council on 29 October, General Carlo

Jean, Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Articles II (confidence-and security-building measures or CSBMs in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and IV (sub-regional arms control), said that significant progress had been made on the implementation of both Articles.

Work on Article II is an ongoing process since CSBMs are more of a means than an end in themselves. The goal is to encourage confidence and transparency among the Parties, and to make such practises routine. General Jean reported that inspections, contacts and co-operation are proceeding well. Visits to weapons manufacturing facilities, the finalization of operating procedures for

military liaison missions, and the establishment of co-ordination and verification centers (with the help of the United States) are all important elements of the process. General Jean said that "co-operation between the Parties is proceeding with openness and goodwill and no major problems have emerged." With the support of Germany and the United Kingdom, training and practise exercises and challenge inspections (inspections at short notice in a specified area) have been conducted successfully and will continue in 1999.

Arms control in and around Bosnia and Herzegovina is an important element in bringing peace to the region, and in lim-

iting the number of armaments held by the Parties: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Under Article IV, more than 6,600 pieces of heavy equipment have been destroyed. The reduction of excess armaments, with respect to the ceilings established by the June 1996 Florence Agreement, continues. About 250 weapons were destroyed in the summer of 1998. No major discrepancies have emerged during any inspections.

Beginning in 1999, the Chairmanship of the Sub-Regional Consultative Commission (SRCC) will be transferred to the Parties (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina/ Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska), as established by the Flo-

rence Agreement. The OSCE will continue to provide assistance in the planning and evaluation of the inspections, and in providing assistants to inspecting and escort teams, in training for inspectors, and in the improvement of data exchange. Challenge inspections (or inspections on undeclared sites, as worded in the Agreement) have been scheduled, for the first time, next year.

The next phase is regional stabilization in South-East Europe. Significant progress to this end was made on 28 October when consensus was reached on a number of important points. Ambassador Henry Jacolin, Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Article V negotiations, reported to the Permanent Council on 29 October that a general understanding has been reached on what should be contained in the agreement. As twenty states from both

within and outside the region have indicated their willingness to be involved in the Article V process, it has been agreed that the region will remain undefined. Achieving a synthesis between the dialectic of balancing regional concerns with the indivisible nature of security will be one of the issues which Ambassador Jacolin says will have to be considered in the course of negotiations. Another will be balancing the interests of States within the region with those of outside countries which have an interest in the region's security.

It is clear, with recent developments in South-East Europe, that regional stabilization is of the utmost necessity. The OSCE has played a significant role in this process through Article II and Article IV and will continue its involvement also through Article V.

OSCE "Warmly Welcomes" Developments in Latvia

The OSCE has regarded in a positive light the parliamentary elections and referendum which were held in Latvia on 3 October.

The ODIHR conducted an assessment of the electoral arrangements in Latvia for the Parliamentary Election on 3 October as well as the national referendum which took place on the same day. Mr. Peter Hatch of the United Kingdom co-ordinated the efforts of 15 election experts from Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America who looked into the legal and administrative provisions and their implementation by the various electoral bodies. The OSCE

Mission to Latvia provided invaluable support to the Mission.

Following the election, the experts concluded that the Parliamentary Election as well as the national referendum were, on the whole, conducted in a transparent and professional manner. A more comprehensive report will be issued shortly.

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoep, who has been closely involved with the issue of citizenship in Latvia (which was the focus of the referendum) issued a statement on 5 October in which he warmly welcomed the outcome of the referendum. He said that "by deciding to approve the amendments to the Law

on Citizenship, the people of Latvia have taken a very important step towards solving interethnic problems and promoting the process of integration." He expressed the hope that "now that the people and the Parliament of Latvia have agreed to bring its legislation regarding children of stateless parents born in Latvia since the restoration of its independence into line with European practice in this field," the Parliament of Estonia "will take a similar step by approving legislation to this effect as proposed by the Government."

OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, issued a statement on the same day welcoming the ODIHR's preliminary con-

clusions, more particularly the result of the referendum. He supported the statement by Mr. van der Stoep and said that “the results of the Referendum create an opportunity that European standards can be better applied and observed in Latvia,

and the OSCE community expects this to be the case.”

The OSCE Mission to Latvia is following up the implementation of the amendments to the Latvian citizenship law in-

cluding abolition of the “window” system, provisions for extraordinary review of naturalisation applications as well as amendments to the history/constitution and language tests, and other initiatives in the field of education and social integration.

OSCE and UNHCR Deepen Partnership

On 15 October the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Dr. Sadako Ogata visited the OSCE where she signed a Memorandum of Understanding and addressed the Permanent Council.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed by Dr. Ogata and OSCE Secretary General Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona, is designed to enhance the relationship between the OSCE and the UNHCR. In the MoU, it is agreed to establish regular channels for exchanging information at headquarters level as well as between field operations, and to undertake joint assessments of the situation in areas of common concern.

The MoU builds on patterns of cooperation which have already been working well in several areas. UNHCR and the OSCE have had good experience of coordinated efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania, the Caucasus as well as Central Asia. In her address to the Permanent Council, Dr. Ogata noted that “a basis already exists and is underway in the Balkans in which the OSCE and the UNHCR work together. In Croatia and Bosnia the UNHCR and the OSCE have cooperated on various levels towards the main objective of promoting and facilitating

voluntary return.” Referring to states of the former Soviet Union and the CIS Conference process, she said that “the OSCE has assisted UNHCR in facilitating returns by playing a role in conflict resolution, local capacity building and solving issues of statelessness.”

Dr. Ogata stressed the need for close cooperation between the UNHCR and the OSCE especially in handling the present crisis in Kosovo: “A great opportunity lies ahead for the UNHCR and the OSCE to forge a strong partnership in our activities in Kosovo – in order to

assist paving the way for a political settlement and lasting peace. The OSCE can play a pivotal role in helping to foster conditions for refugees and displaced people to return home.”

The High Commissioner also told the Permanent Council that “now is the time for the UNHCR and the OSCE to strengthen – and tailor – our partnership to resolve the complex plight of refugees and other displaced people – not only in Kosovo, but also in other areas such as Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.”



The Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona, signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Dr. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, on 15 October 1998.

OSCE/RCSchladt

Mediterranean Seminar Looks at the Human Dimension, Democracy and the Rule of Law

The annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminar was held in Valletta, Malta on 19 and 20 October on the topic of "The Human Dimension of Security, Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law". This year's seminar was organized in close co-operation with the Maltese Government, and inaugurated by Professor Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta. The OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Giancarlo Aragona, addressed the gathering during the opening session. The Chairman-in-Office was represented by Mr. Jerzy Węcław.

The Seminar was attended by a large number of high-level representatives from twenty-eight participating States, and five Mediterranean partners for co-

operation, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Tunisia. Korea, one of the partners for co-operation, was also represented.

The Seminar proved to be a useful tool to enhance dialogue with the Mediterranean partners for co-operation, and provided an opportunity to discuss the human dimension, the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, in particular, within the Mediterranean region.

In addressing the Seminar, the Mediterranean partners presented their perspectives on the human dimension of security. They were encouraged by the OSCE participating States to participate in election observation and to make short-term visits to OSCE Missions in

order to take advantage of the OSCE experience in the field.

Ms. Sandra Mitchell, representing the ODIHR, Ambassador Robert L. Barry, Head of the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr. Freimut Duve, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, contributed to the Seminar by discussing their specific tasks in connection with human dimension issues. The Seminar also benefited from the active participation of a number of international organizations, including the UNHCR, Council of Europe, NATO, WEU and the Mediterranean Forum.

The Consolidated Summary of the Seminar will be available on the OSCE website, and upon request from the Secretariat.

Conference Explores Subregional Co-operation

On the initiative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EastWest Institute, an international conference was held in Stockholm on 13 and 14 October on the topic of the "OSCE and Subregional Groups: Co-operation between Mutually Reinforcing Institutions." The topic of the conference reflected the growing awareness of the importance of subregional relations in the OSCE area. It was a continuation of the process begun by the Danish Chairman-in-Office with a seminar on regional security and co-operation in June 1997.

The purpose of the conference was to promote awareness of subregional groupings and their activities and the contribution they make to comprehensive security. It was designed to encourage dialogue and co-ordination between different subregional groups as well as among subregional groups and larger European organizations. It highlighted the OSCE's role as a forum for mutually reinforcing institutions and afforded an opportunity to explore the potential of subregional contributions to OSCE activities.

The conference was successful in meeting these objectives, particularly in pro-

viding subregional groups with an opportunity to present their activities to a wide international audience. It also served to acquaint subregional actors with current OSCE discussions on the Document-Charter on European Security, and issues pertaining to regional security within the OSCE area. Three principal themes (the Security Contribution of Subregional Groups; Linking Subregional Co-operation to Wider Security Processes; and OSCE and Subregional Groups) were explored during which a number of recommendations were proposed, focusing on practical ways of ensuring closer co-operation between the OSCE and subregional groupings.

BRIEF

The Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, met on 8 October 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 September trip to the region of the conflict and on the results of their meetings with the leadership of the three Parties. They noted with satisfaction the Parties' aspiration for the prompt renewal of negotiations for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the OSCE Minsk process framework and emphasized the importance of maintaining the intensity of their collective effort towards that aim. The Co-Chairmen informed the Chairman-in-Office of a new approach to resolving Nagorno-Karabakh's status under their consideration that seeks to apply creatively the concept of a common state. The Chairman-in-Office and the Co-Chairs emphasized the importance of the continuation of the existing cease-fire on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and the Line of Contact. They welcomed the Parties' assurances of their desire to resolve the conflict through peaceful means, as expressed to the Co-Chairmen.

Mr. Vartan Oskanian, Foreign Minister of Armenia, addressed the Permanent Council on 8 October. He spoke of his country's efforts to be integrated into European cooperation and partnership structures. He raised the issue of what he described as "contradictions and tensions" inherent in the OSCE's current principles and values. He also described Armenia's perception of its own security. He spoke about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and said that Armenia "remains committed to all ongoing OSCE sponsored efforts pursued through the Minsk Group and its co-chairmen."

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Borys Tarasyuk, addressed the Permanent Council on 15 October. He thanked the OSCE, particularly the HCNM and the Mission to Ukraine, "for the assistance it renders in bringing about democratic transformations." He said that "the Mission's mandate had been successfully accomplished" and that it "could complete its activities by the end of the year." He also outlined his country's views on the Kosovo crisis and the Document-Charter on European Security.

Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy addressed the Permanent Council on 22 October. He mentioned the opportunities and challenges created by the crisis in Kosovo, and outlined the central importance of "human security." He called for the OSCE area to be made a landmine free zone, and suggested that the OSCE should consider drafting a convention on illegal trafficking in firearms and other weapons.

A **Re-enforced Permanent Council** met on 23 October to look at **regional issues**. The situations in Georgia and Moldova were discussed, and the prospects for intensified OSCE efforts in the resolution of "frozen" conflicts in those areas were considered, particularly in the context of the forthcoming Oslo Ministerial Council Meeting.

CORRECTION: The **e-mail address** of the webmaster of the OSCE website as quoted in the September Newsletter was **incorrect**. Please note that if you would like to receive the OSCE Newsletter on-line contact:

webmaster@osceprag.cz

INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY? KEEP YOUR NEWSLETTERS!



News from the Field

The OSCE currently has eleven 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.

New Draft Constitution for Albania

On 21 October, the Albanian Parliament finalized a draft Constitution for presentation in a national referendum on 22 November. This final draft is the result of an intensive year-long drafting process that included international expertise (from the Venice Commission and bilateral contributors) and broad public consultations. The goal of these national consultations was to create an open, transparent drafting process that provided opportunities for all interested parties to participate. The Constitutional Commission of the Albanian Parliament, the Ministry for Legislative Reform, and the OSCE-sponsored Administrative Center for the Co-ordination of Assistance and Public Participation (ACCAPP) all worked together with multiple international and domestic organizations to achieve this goal.

The Presence continues its border monitoring activities. A decision was taken by the Permanent Council in October to enhance the strength of the Presence.

Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina Continues to Focus on Elections

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is monitoring the post-election period (certification and implementation), looking at lessons learned from the September election, and is already looking ahead to the 1999 elections. Considerable emphasis is being

placed on the “nationalization” of the election process, in other words giving the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina a greater role in the organization, running and monitoring of their elections. Several initiatives are underway to encourage this process.

The Mission is continuing its other activities like democratization (particularly as regards returnees and their property claims) and human rights work. Following an effective performance and exercise of its mandate during the 1998 general elections, the Media Experts Commission has completed its work and ended its mandate on 31 October.

Members of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina were part of the advance team that went to Kosovo on 17 October to perform a security assessment of the region and to organize the initial logistical and communications tasks.

OSCE Takes Over Police Monitoring in Croatia

On 16 October the OSCE Mission to Croatia began monitoring the work of the police force in Eastern Croatia. This is the first time that the OSCE has taken on a police monitoring role. Planning for this unprecedented task began early this year, in close co-operation with the United Nations. Under UN authority, a multiethnic police force was established in this region of Croatia in 1996. After the full reintegration of the region in

January 1998, the United Nations Police Support Group (UNPSG) monitored the local police for a further nine months. In June 1998, the OSCE Permanent Council (in decision No. 239) expressed “readiness” to “assume the responsibilities of the UNPSG by deploying not more than 120 unarmed civilian police monitors, wearing specially designed uniforms.”

The transition was symbolised by a ceremony held in Vukovar on 15 October, the last day of the UNPSG’s mandate. Croatian and international officials from Zagreb and Vienna heard speeches by UNPSG Head, Mr. Souren Seraydarian and the Head of OSCE Mission to Croatia Ambassador Tim Guldemann. Guldemann thanked the 16 participating States of the OSCE who had contributed to this, the first police monitoring group in the organization’s history.

Update from Georgia

In Senaki, Western Georgia, a mutiny by soldiers supporting former President Zviad Gamsakhurdia was put down on 19 October. On 21 October OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, issued a statement in which he said he was “concerned about the recent armed insurrection in Western Georgia.” He described it as “a clear attempt to replace democratic procedures by the use of force” and said that it “threatens the whole process of stabilization achieved in Georgia during

the past four years. Moreover it threatens the process of conflict settlement in which the OSCE is involved and may also have adverse effects on stability in the Caucasus." He appealed to the insurgents to lay down their arms and hopes that the incident will be settled without bloodshed.

Local elections will be held on 15 November. The OSCE Mission will provide a forum and mechanism for co-ordination of international observation efforts. The aim of this limited observation is to identify whether there are elements of the election process which need to be strengthened and improved in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections in 1999.

The Head of Mission, Ambassador Michal Libal, visited the Autonomous Republic of Ajara on 11 and 12 October to re-establish contacts between the OSCE Mission and the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Ajara, Aslan Abashidze and to discuss the question of an OSCE/international presence during the local elections on 15 November.



Recent Publications about the OSCE

Decaux, Emmanuel, *"La place de la Convention de 1992 au sein de l'OSCE"*, pp. 45-53. *The Peaceful Settlement of Disputes between States: Universal and European Perspectives*, Kluwer Law International, The Netherlands, 1998.

Polinger, Sigrid, *Der KSZE/OSZE-Prozess: Ein Abschnitt europäischer Friedensgeschichte*, Laxenburg: OIIP, 1998.

Schmeets, Hans, *The 1997 Municipal Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina: An Analysis and Observations*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998.

Troebst, Stefan, *Ethnopolitical Conflicts in Eastern Europe and the OSCE: An Interim Appraisal*, Flensburg: European Centre for Minority Issues, 1998.

OSZE-Jahrbuch 1998, Hrsg. vom Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg (IFSH), Band 4, Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998, 582 S., ISBN 3-7890-5665-0, DM 48,-

This volume, in German, contains about 30 contributions by leading experts, politicians and diplomats including Bronisław Geremek, Niels Helveg Petersen, Nikolaj Afanasievskij, Franz Vranitzky, Gret Haller, Janne Haaland Matlary, Adam Rotfeld, and Victor-Yves Gheballi. Subjects covered range from the human dimension, to co-operative security and the future of the OSCE. This volume focuses particular attention on the OSCE in the light of NATO enlargement. For information on ordering the OSZE-Jahrbuch 1998 please contact Susanne Bund, IFSH Falkenstein 1, 22587 Hamburg, Germany (tel: +49 40 866 077 50, fax: +49 40 866 3615).

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

Greece

On 8 October the High Commissioner participated in a conference in Athens commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The conference highlighted the importance of the Declaration and other international legal and political instruments in the field of human rights protection for the building of societies based on democracy and the rule of law. It also discussed Greece's experience with human rights protection. The High Commissioner gave a lecture on the subject of human rights and integration issues, in which he referred to his experience in dealing with various minority and inter-ethnic problems.

During the visit to Athens, the High Commissioner met with Alternate Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece Giorgos Papandreou. The meeting focused on current developments in the Southern Balkans and their implications for security in the region. Mr. Papandreou acquainted the High Commissioner with various aspects of Greek policy towards different groups within the society.

Croatia

From 11 to 14 October the High Commissioner paid a visit to Croatia. He first travelled to the former UNTAES area and had a series of meetings in Vukovar. He met with county officials, the Joint Council of Municipalities, as well as with representatives of the Serbian minority. He then travelled to Zagreb where he had meetings with Deputy

Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mate Granić, Deputy PM and Minister for European Integration Ljerka Mintas Hodak, and Deputy PM and Minister for Justice Jovan Ramljak. He also met with Minister for Education Bojidar Pugelnik, Deputy Minister for Reconstruction and Development and Head of the Governmental Commission on the Return of Displaced Persons (DPs) and Refugees, Stepan Sterc, and with the Head of the Office for DPs and Refugees, Vojislav Pejković. In addition, the High Commissioner had discussions with the Chairman of the Serb National Council, and the heads of the UNLO office in Zagreb and the UNHCR Mission in Croatia.

The main focus of the discussions in Zagreb and Vukovar was the current situation in the former UNTAES area in Croatia, specifically concerning the return and resettlement of refugees as well as the integration of returnees. A particular concern remains the ongoing exodus of ethnic Serbs with Croatian citizenship from the region. The role of the Joint Council of Municipalities and the problems surrounding its financing were among other subjects of discussion, both in Vukovar and Zagreb. In conversations with Ambassador Tim Guldemann, Head of the OSCE Mission, arrangements were made for strengthening co-operation between the Mission and the Office of the HCNM.

Locarno Conference

From 18 to 20 October the High Commissioner co-chaired an international

conference in Locarno, Switzerland, entitled "Governance and Participation: Integrating Diversity". The conference, organised by the ODIHR together with the Office of the HCNM, was hosted by the Swiss Government and supported by several Governments, including the United States of America, Norway, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Representatives of the OSCE participating States and leading international experts attended and contributed to the work of the conference. During the conference a number of suggestions were made regarding ways to meet the needs and interests of minorities. States, it was suggested, can introduce forms of effective participation of minorities in public decision-making, especially in matters that concern them, through electoral processes as well as special mechanisms for structured dialogue, consultation, and advice.

In the course of the conference it was stressed that the principles of the Helsinki Decalogue of 1975 should always be considered and implemented together and not selectively. In this respect, special emphasis was placed on the positive correlation between the principles relating to self-determination and respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of internationally recognised borders. These principles are not irreconcilable. "External" self-determination through secession is fraught with the potential for conflict. Instead, it was observed that a great variety of solutions are available to the contemporary State to accommodate the vital interests and aspirations of minori-

ties by way of “internal” self-determination.

States can establish various forms of autonomy, especially on a cultural or functional basis. States should ensure the freedom and opportunities for the use of language and the enjoyment of

culture of minorities in conditions of equality. States can provide educational regimes which respond to the genuine needs and desires of minorities for the maintenance and development of their identity. The Chairman’s Statement, issued at the end of the conference, noted that it is desirable for States to

explore further and consider for implementation alternative forms of governance and participation of minorities as necessary. The Chairman’s Statement also pointed out the desirability of concrete follow-up activities with regard to the objectives of the conference.

REPORT of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media is located at Kärtner Ring 5-7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria, tel.: (+43-1) 512 21 45 0, fax: (+43-1) 512 21 45 9, e-mail: pm-fom@osce.org

Duve Focuses on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Throughout October, Freimut Duve, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, focused his attention on the deteriorating situation of independent media in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). In a letter to the Yugoslav Foreign Minister dated 23 October, Mr. Duve wrote that “the Serbian government has revoked the Decree that was used to close down a number of independent newspapers and radio stations. However, a Law on Public Information was recently adopted by the Serbian parliament which I can only describe as highly repressive. This Law fundamentally undermines freedom of the media and the current climate of co-operation between the OSCE and the Yugoslav Government.” The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media also voiced his extreme concern “with the latest statements attributed to government member Vojislav Šešelj, who has branded, once again, the independent media as “domestic traitors.” These statements are in stark contravention with the principles of a necessary plu-

ralistic media debate.” Mr. Duve appealed to the Yugoslav Government to change its attitude towards independent media and to uphold freedom of expression, one of the most basic human rights.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media issued a number of statements in support of freedom of the media in the FRY and calling for the repeal of the draconian Law on Public Information. On 27 October, Mr. Duve met with journalists from Serbia/Vojvodina. Nenad Canak, President of the League of Social-Democrats of Vojvodina, accompanied them. He and four other members of the Serbian Parliament had strongly criticised and then voted against the newly adopted Law on Public Information. Mr. Duve conveyed to the journalists the firm view of Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, that free media and the direct presence of national and international journalists in Kosovo is a basic precondition for peace.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media is currently working together with the Chairman-in-Office on

establishing a Media/Radio Verification Office as part of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission. This office will verify freedom of the media in the region.

Visit to Canada

The Representative on Freedom of the Media paid an official visit to Canada on 7 and 8 October where he held consultations with the Canadian Government, and Members of Parliament, and met with Canadian NGOs, in particular the international NGO network dealing with freedom of expression issues.

Visit to Georgia

Stanley Schragar, Adviser to the Representative on Freedom of the Media, visited Georgia on 5 to 8 October where he addressed the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Seminar on Conflict Prevention in the Caucasus and assessed the current media situation in the country. Mr. Schragar met with senior government officials dealing with the media, parliamentarians, non-governmental organisations and journalists. In general, most of the interlocutors agreed

that there was no government censorship of the media and that journalists could operate freely and independently.

Visit to Ukraine

Beate Meader-Metcalf and Alexander Ivanko, Advisors to the Representative on Freedom of the Media, visited Kyiv on 12 to 14 October to assess the current media situation in Ukraine. The visit was in light of a number of complaints

concerning freedom of the media mentioned in the ODIHR Report on Parliamentary Elections in March 1998 and in media reports. The Advisers met with government officials, newspaper and television editors from pro-government and independent media. The Advisers were also present during the eviction of *Kyivskiy Vedomosti*, an independent Kyiv daily, from its premises because of a lease dispute.

Both government officials and journalists stressed that the libel laws need to be changed: currently the amount of fines is unlimited thus leading to enormous sums being demanded and often paid that might lead to bankrupting media outlets. The Advisers were informed of the difficult financial and material situation of many newspapers also due to an economic crisis in the country. The Representative on Freedom of the Media plans to visit Ukraine personally early next year.

UPDATE from the ODIHR

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

ODIHR observes Presidential Election in the Republic of Azerbaijan

The Presidential Election in Azerbaijan took place on 11 October. The OSCE/ODIHR had established a mission on 11 September and deployed 13 long-term observers throughout the country, while a six-person core team was based in Baku and headed by Mr. Nikolai Vulchanov. The OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission observed the election campaign and the administrative preparation. On election day the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) joined the OSCE/ODIHR to observe the voting, counting and aggregation procedures. More than 150 international short-term election observers were deployed in all regions of Azerbaijan.

The preliminary findings of the observation mission were that, although the new Law on the Election of the President of the Republic, amended on 10 July in consultation with the ODIHR, showed

significant improvements over the previous law, its implementation fell short of international standards. The ODIHR, however, welcomes the efforts made by the Government of Azerbaijan to reach these standards. The ODIHR plans to continue assisting the country in view of the forthcoming local and parliamentary elections. The Azeri authorities also expressed their willingness for further co-operation with the ODIHR in this area. The final report on the elections will be issued in mid-November.

On 16 October, the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Geremek, issued a statement in which he expressed his regret that the Presidential election in the Republic of Azerbaijan "fell short of OSCE commitments." He said that "all necessary steps should be taken to improve the functioning of democratic institutions and procedures." In this regard he stated his appreciation for "the noticeable efforts made by the State authorities to improve the democratic environ-

ment" and expressed the readiness of the OSCE "in developing stronger and more effective democratic institutions."

Election Observation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

On 18 October the OSCE/ODIHR, together with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe, observed the first round of the Parliamentary Election in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The ODIHR observation mission, headed by Mr. Mark Power-Stevens (UK), had 14 long-term observers deployed throughout the country.

For the first round 179 short-term observers were deployed, including 26 from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and 11 from the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. So far the elections appear to have been generally well conducted in accordance with OSCE commitments.

Following the second round of the election, which will take place on 1 November, a final report will be issued.

Bosnia Election Report

The Final Report of the Election Observation Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has been completed and is available on the ODIHR's website (<http://www.osce.odihr.org>) or from the Office itself.

Uzbekistan Election Workshop

The OSCE/ODIHR organized a workshop on New Election Legislation in Uzbekistan on 15 and 16 October in Tashkent. The workshop was held jointly with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and USAID, as well as the Uzbek National Centre for Human Rights and the Central Election Commission of Uzbekistan, and was implemented largely owing to the assistance of the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia and OSCE embassies in Tashkent. Issues such as international standards for democratic elections, transparency in the electoral process and registration of candidates were discussed. The workshop was an important contribution to preparation for the forthcoming parliamentary elections, and was conducted as part of the Memorandum of Understanding which exists between the ODIHR and the government of Uzbekistan.

As follow-up to the workshop and in recognition of the fact that more practical training and information is needed for election administrators and political parties, 15 election officials from Uzbekistan have been invited to attend the Regional Conference for Election Administrators to be held in Almaty between 17 and 20 November.

Albania Constitutional Referendum

An ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission visited Tirana, Albania from 12 to 16 October in order to assess the situation in connection with the forthcoming Constitutional Referendum and the need for an OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission. On 20 October the final draft of the Constitution was adopted by Parliament, and it will be submitted to the Albanian people for approval by referendum on 22 November. The text has incorporated many comments made by international experts, in particular by the Venice Commission/Council of Europe. Upon receiving a formal invitation by the Albanian Government, the ODIHR has set up an Election Observation Mission, headed by Mr. Kåre Volan, seconded by the Norwegian Government. It is planned to deploy 12 long-term observers and 150 short-term observers for the observation of this Referendum.

Judges Meet the ODIHR and Council of Europe to Discuss Political, Economic and Social Rights

More than 70 senior judges from the Moscow area participated in a three day conference with legal experts from the ODIHR and Council of Europe on 29 September to 1 October in Moscow.

The conference, entitled "International and European Legal Standards Regarding: (1) Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2) European Convention for Human Rights Articles 5, 6 and 13", was co-organized with the Russian Legal Academy and the Russian Federation Supreme Court.

Discussion focused on individual rights to a fair trial, pre-trial guarantees and individual security, the obligations of

Russian judges under the European Convention for Human Rights and the Russian Constitution.

The workshop was part of the OSCE's multi-phased programme "Professional Training Programme for Russian Judges based on International Standards of the Judiciary", and was made possible by a generous contribution from the Canadian International Development Agency.

ODIHR-Council of Europe Consultation

As agreed between the ODIHR and the Council of Europe, the organizations held their second consultation this year in Warsaw on 28 October. Co-operation on a number of issues was discussed, including Kosovo, the Caucasus and Ombudsman/national human rights institutions.

Civil Society Assistance Programme in Kyrgyzstan

Between 19 and 23 October, the third and fourth in a series of NGO-Government consultation meetings took place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The meetings focused on the role of NGOs in monitoring and reporting on police brutality, as well as in domestic election observation. In each meeting a set of principles was adopted, outlining co-operation between the Government and non-governmental organizations in the areas of discussion. The NGOs were very active and suggested a number of constructive measures, such as the establishment of specialized NGO commissions to further co-operation with the Government. At the third meeting it was decided that the commission should submit reports to the Government of Kyrgyzstan to allow it to maintain detailed records on incidents of police brutality. In the domestic

observation meeting it was decided to establish an NGO commission to enable civil society representatives to liaise with

the Central Election Commission. The civil society assistance programme is organized jointly with the OSCE Liai-

son Office in Central Asia and funded through a voluntary contribution from the Government of Norway.

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



OSCE PA President Helle Degn meets Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze at a PA seminar in Tbilisi.

Tbilisi Parliamentary Seminar

More than 65 parliamentarians representing 21 OSCE Participating States, along with a number of parliamentary staff and journalists, attended a two-day OSCE PA Seminar on 'Conflict Resolution and Democratic Development in the Caucasus', which was held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 5 and 6 October. The Seminar, principally hosted by Mr. Zurab Zhvania, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, was chaired by OSCE PA President Ms. Helle Degn.

The participants were welcomed by the President of Georgia and the Georgian

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as by the Speaker of the Parliament of Armenia and the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Azerbaijan. In his welcoming remarks the President of Georgia, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, expressed his appreciation for the work of the OSCE and of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in the resolution of conflicts in the Caucasus. He stated that "the OSCE was the only international organization which announced publicly that in Georgia a grave crime against humanity had been committed – an ethnic cleansing of the civil population in Abkhazia." President Shevardnadze said that the constructive dialogue

between Georgia and South Ossetia, now gaining momentum, was achieved first and foremost through the efforts of the OSCE and its Mission in Georgia. He noted that the OSCE PA rendered considerable assistance in the building of democratic institutions in Georgia. Mr. Shevardnadze concluded that his country understands that it is the responsibility of the States of (the Caucasus) region – and not just of international organizations, whatever their authority or influence – to resolve regional problems.

The Tbilisi seminar focussed on regional security, building civil society, free flow of communications and guarantees for minority populations. Presentations were given by PA First Committee Chairman, Mr. Bruce George, MP (United Kingdom), OSCE PA Third Committee Vice Chair, Mrs. Dorota Simonides, MP (Poland), OSCE PA Vice President Ms. Tana de Zulueta, MP (Italy), OSCE PA Third Committee Chairman, Mr. Gert Weisskirchen, MP (Germany), the Director of the OSCE/ODIHR Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, and PA First Committee Vice-Chair, Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen, MP (Finland).

During the session on communication, Mr. Weisskirchen pointed out that steps towards conflict management and reso-

lution can only be agreed on by well-informed authorities, acting on behalf of a well-informed public. He suggested that the parliaments of the South Caucasian republics could pass an identical resolution appealing to the OSCE institutions to try to make arrangements for journalists to travel freely in the region and to report on developments.

The Tbilisi Seminar was the fourth OSCE PA seminar designed to enhance OSCE involvement at the interparliamentary regional level. Previous seminars were held in Georgia (1996), Austria (1997) and Uzbekistan (1997). During the Tbilisi Seminar the Vice President of the OSCE PA, Mr. Tekin Enerem, proposed to host a similar seminar in Turkey in 1999.

Statement on Kosovo

The Seminar in Tbilisi was held in conjunction with the Expanded Bureau Meeting on 3 and 4 October. During this meeting, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President, Ms. Helle Degn, speaking on behalf of the elected officers of the Assembly, delivered a statement on the Kosovo crisis urging all parties concerned to do their utmost to prevent further loss of life and escalation of the conflict. The leadership of the OSCE PA renewed its appeal as stated in the Kosovo Resolution passed at its Annual Session earlier this year. The Resolution calls upon all sides to refrain from any form of violence, including the use of terrorism. In addition, the Resolution urges the Government of the FRY and the leaders of the Albanian population in Kosovo to begin serious negotiations in order to bring about a peaceful and just solution to the conflict.

PA Ad Hoc Committee on Belarus

On 15 October the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly established an ad hoc Committee on Belarus. Ms. Degn, President of the Assembly, has appointed Mr. Adrian Severin, Member of the Romanian Parliament and former Minister, to chair the Committee. Other members are Ms. Nino Burjanadze, MP (Georgia), Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen, MP (Finland), Mr. Igor Ostash, MP (Ukraine), and Mr. Gert Weisskirchen, MP (Germany).

The Committee will act as a working group to support the work of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group to Belarus. It will assist in the development of democracy in Belarus and help build dialogue and facilitate national reconciliation. The Committee will maintain contact with the authorities and independent political organizations in the country.

The Parliamentary Assembly, by creating a new ad hoc Committee on Belarus, hopes to support and intensify the OSCE's work in helping Belarus to fulfill and ultimately comply with its OSCE commitments.

OSCE Parliamentarians Monitor Macedonian Elections

OSCE PA Vice-President, Mr. Tekin Enerem, MP (Turkey), was appointed Special OSCE Coordinator by the OSCE Chairman in Office, Mr. Bronisław Geremek, to lead the observation mission for parliamentary elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, held on 18 October. The observation mission was composed of 179 short-term observers, including 26 members from the OSCE PA, and 11 members from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The

OSCE PA Observer Team consisted of members of parliament from Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Turkey as well as advisers from the American Helsinki Commission.

Prior to the elections, the parliamentary delegation met with Mr. Tito Petkovski, President of the Macedonian National Assembly, representatives from other ministries, and members of the State Electoral Commission. The delegation was also briefed by Mr. Faustino Trodi, Head of the OSCE Spill-Over Mission in Skopje, representatives of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the main competing political parties.

On 19 October, Mr. Enerem issued a joint preliminary statement for the OSCE Election Observation Mission in Skopje in conjunction with Mr. Henning Gjellerod, Head of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe delegation and Mr. Mark Power-Stevens, OSCE/ODIHR On-Site Coordinator in Skopje. According to this statement, the mission found that "the overall electoral process was well conducted." However, some concerns were raised regarding voter registers and voter cards. The mission pointed out the necessity to promptly deal with these irregularities in order to ensure transparency in the second round. However, these elections were considered to be "a significant improvement on past elections."

President Degn Attends OSCE Troika Meeting in Oslo

On 21 October, President Degn attended her first meeting of the OSCE Troika since being elected President of the Assembly. She assured the Troika For-

eign Ministers that the parliamentarians in the OSCE are committed to playing a constructive role within the OSCE family and are willing to be as helpful as possible in the important OSCE effort in Kosovo.

President Degn reported on the recent OSCE Seminar in Georgia, on the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Belarus, and on her recent experience as the Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the election observation mission to Slovakia. Ms. Degn also emphasized the need for the OSCE to develop better post-election follow-up arrangements to make sure that OSCE recommendations are seriously considered and implemented.

OSCE PA Secretary General Addresses IDEA-Conference in Copenhagen

On 26 October, Mr. R. Spencer Oliver, Secretary General of the OSCE PA, addressed the Conference of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) on 'The future of Electoral Observation', which was held in Copenhagen on 26 and 27 October. The Secretary General stressed the present and future importance of parliamentarians in election monitoring and elaborated on OSCE experience with cooperation between international institutions observing elections. Since 1993, when the then Swedish Chairman-in-Office, Ms. Margaretha of Ugglas stressed the important role of parliamentari-

ans in election monitoring and the central role they should play as active participants in this respect, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has sent more than 800 observers to elections in the OSCE area. The Secretary General pointed out that the political judgement of parliamentarians carries weight and credibility, not only with governments and the public, but also with the mass media. According to the Secretary General parliamentarians can, after having observed an election, express their views – also in critical terms – without being constrained by governmental diplomatic relations. As to the need for cooperation, Mr. Oliver mentioned the observation mission to the parliamentary elections in Slovakia last month as a particularly successful example of international cooperation in election monitoring. At these elections, the ODIHR, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly cooperated very well and issued a joint statement. "Elected political figures from these international parliamentary organizations caught the attention of international and Slovak press, which helped to ensure that any effort to distort the election results would not have been successful," he said.

President Degn addresses OSCE Permanent Council

On 29 October President Degn addressed the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna. Ms. Degn saluted the efforts

that have been made to prepare the OSCE for the critical task of the Verification Mission in Kosovo. She pointed out that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly also stands ready to contribute to the OSCE effort in Kosovo at the appropriate time.

In her address Ms. Degn focused on OSCE PA events since this year's Annual Session – the election observation missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia and Macedonia, the Tbilisi Parliamentary Seminar, and the establishment of the ad hoc Committee on Belarus – and some of the tasks that lay ahead. She also mentioned her satisfaction that the Chairman-in-Office recognized the Assembly's continuing recommendation for changes in the OSCE decision-making procedures, particularly concerning the requirement for consensus on nearly all decisions. At the Copenhagen Session the Chairman-in-Office expressed some understanding and even sympathy with the Assembly's point of view on 'approximate consensus' when he said: "Such ideas which emanate from a parliamentary body, are most welcome, and represent positive elements in the continuing dialogue between parliamentarians and their governments. It may be that the time for such an idea and for such a change will come sooner or later." Finally President Degn expressed her support and encouragement for the work of the focal points on gender issues recently established within the OSCE Secretariat and the ODIHR.



The OSCE *NEWSLETTER* is published monthly by the Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Kärntner Ring 5-7
A-1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel: (+43-1) 514 36-196
Fax: (+43-1) 514 36-105
E-mail: wkemp@osce.org

For more information on the OSCE
see the OSCE Website:
<http://www.osce.org>