the MAX VAN DER STOEL award

2009

Commemorative book

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OSCE
HCNM
High Commissioner on National Minorities

the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Max van der Stoel, first OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, 1992-2001

Max van der Stoel Award

The Award of €50,000 named in honour of Mr. Max van der Stoel – a prominent Dutch statesman and the first to hold the position of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities – was established by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2001. It is awarded biennially to an individual or an institution in recognition of extraordinary and outstanding achievements aimed at improving the position of national minorities in the OSCE participating States

Award Winners

2003	Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, Riga, Latvia
2005	Memorial Historical, Educational, Human Rights and Charitable Society, Moscow, Russian Federation
2007	European Roma Rights Centre, Budapest, Hungary
2009	Integration and Development Center for Information and Research, Crimea, Ukraine.

Max van der Stoel

Max van der Stoel was appointed as the first High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE-HCNM) in 1992. He served an unprecedented eight and a half years in this post. Born in 1924, van der Stoel is a senior statesman with a long and distinguished career. As well as being twice Minster for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (1973-1977 and 1981-1982), he held seats in both the upper and lower houses of the Dutch Parliament. He was also a member of the European Parliament (1971-1973) and the North Atlantic Assembly (1968-1973, 1978-1981) as well as the Council of Europe Consultative Assembly and the Western European Union Assembly between 1967 and 1972. Between 1983 and 1986 he served as Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations and in 1991 was awarded the honorary title of Minister of State by Queen Beatrix for his exceptional accomplishments. The following year he was appointed by the UN Commission on Human Rights as Special Rapporteur on Iraq.

Van der Stoel became familiar with the work of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE later OSCE) in his roles as Foreign Minister during the Helsinki consultations from 1973 to 1975, as Chairman of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee for several years and as the Netherlands head of delegation during the CSCE conferences on the human dimension in Paris, Copenhagen and Moscow. After several renewals of his mandate as OSCE-HCNM, he was succeeded by Swedish diplomat Mr. Rolf Ekéus in July 2001.

In 1999 van der Stoel was awarded the Order of the Golden Lion of Nassau; the first citizen of the Netherlands to receive the award since 1919. Several honorary doctorates have also been awarded to him; including the Cleveringa Chair at Leiden University and the Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award at the University of Tilburg is named in his honour.

2009

Account of 2009 Award Winner's activities

(*AT DATE OF PRESENTATION*)

The Integration and Development Center for Information and Research (IDC) has been working over the last decade to promote interethnic harmony and integration on the Crimean peninsula. It has worked tirelessly to improve the education system in Crimea and has published several relevant articles and books on interethnic relations on the peninsula. Past activities include numerous NGO training courses, workshops, public seminars, research studies and opinion polls, mediation projects, information and consultative services, educational and methodological training courses, and the publication of popular leaflets, textbooks and scientific articles. IDC has also been highly instrumental in promoting networking among local and regional NGOs.

IDC came into being in 1997 in the context of a programme supported by the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), which is part of the Soros Foundation Network. The Center is located in Simferopol in Crimea, an ethnically diverse region of Ukraine threatened by interethnic tensions and economic, social and political instability. IDC's activities are financed through its members' contributions, private donations and grants of charitable foundations and international organizations.

The general objective of IDC is to contribute to the promotion of civil society and the development of democracy in Crimea. Its education and tolerance initiatives aim to popularize concepts of tolerance, diversity, intercultural education and mutual respect as well as promote practical collaboration between the ethnic and confessional groups and their integration into Ukrainian society. The Center has established itself as a well-respected partner for representatives of all ethnic groups, for NGOs, for academic institutions and for the authorities in Kyiv and Simferopol. The focus on multicultural education demonstrates IDC's long-term vision towards sustainable interethnic peace in Crimea.

An ongoing initiative that epitomizes this approach is the integrated school course "Culture of Good Neighbourhood". The main purpose of the course is the education of children in the spirit of tolerance, thereby providing them with the intercultural, interconfessional and multilingual communication skills essential for a polyethnic environment. The course was introduced in pilot schools in 2005-2006 and the Crimean Ministry of Education and Science intends to introduce it as a mandatory subject in all schools of the Crimean Autonomous Republic. Another of IDC's major initiatives led to the establishment in 2005 of the Center for Intercultural Education and Tolerance, which is run by IDC in co-operation with the Crimean ethnographic museum.

Presentation of the Max van der Stoel Award 2009 to Margarita Aragioni and Oleg Smirnov of the Integration and Development Center for Information and Research by the Netherlands Minister for European Affairs, Frans Timmermans (r.)

Publications also underpin IDC's work for tolerance and education. They include data sources that provide important information on the ethnic history of Ukraine to education professionals and compilations of research materials indentifying such problem areas as equal opportunities for national minorities, access to education in native languages and intercultural education to foster

tolerance and enlighten children and adults. IDC has also produced several workbooks for its integrated school programme and a manual for preschool children featuring interactive popular games to develop skills of tolerance among the very young.

The grounds on which the 2009 Award was made

The Jury has decided to confer the 2009 Max van der Stoel Award on the Integration and Development Center for Information and Research (IDC) for its efforts to promote tolerance and understanding among the multi-ethnic population of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. For many years the IDC has initiated, developed and implemented projects, particularly in the field of education, aimed at facilitating genuine integration and participation of all ethnic communities in Crimea.

The Jury considers these efforts as particularly cogent in light of the challenges facing Crimea, including the return of formerly deported people to the region, local interethnic and interreligious tensions and strained international relations. The message that IDC has consistently advocated through its work is that Crimea, as an integral part of Ukraine, should be home to all communities, be it ethnic Ukrainians, Russians or Crimean Tatars and not exclusively to any one group. As such, this NGO plays an important and commendable role as a builder of bridges in a divided society. It has become a symbol of co-operation and tolerance, admirably reflecting the spirit of the work of Max van der Stoel and making it a deserving and befitting recipient of the Award that bears his name.

Award Ceremony in Het Spaansche Hof, Westeinde, The Hague.

Transcript of Opening Address - 14 OCTOBER 2009 by Mr. Knut Vollebaek, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Minister Timmermans, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to all of you; and a very special welcome to the person who has given his name to the Award, namely Minister Max van der Stoel. It is a great pleasure to see you here today. Let me also welcome Frans Timmermans, Minister for European Affairs of the Netherlands, who will present the fourth Max van der Stoel Award and hand over the prize of 50,000 Euro to the award winner, the NGO Integration and Development Center for Information and Research from Ukraine.

Allow me at the very outset of this event to thank the Government of the Netherlands for establishing this significant award. The Award celebrates a famous son of the Netherlands, Minister of State Max van der Stoel. Throughout his renowned career, Minister van der Stoel was a champion of the oppressed, excluded and discriminated. He is internationally recognized as an outspoken protagonist for human and minority rights.

Max van der Stoel's path-breaking work for the OSCE in the field of conflict prevention began in the early 1990s; an era when parts of Europe were in flames, and ethnic cleansing, genocide and nationalism each became household words; when crying men, women and children, carrying their meagre belongings, stared out from our TV screens every day.

The challenge faced by a Europe torn apart by interethnic conflict was unprecedented. Against this backdrop, the Netherlands and a group of like-minded countries took an equally unprecedented step. They proposed setting up a preventive and intrusive mechanism – the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities – to nip interethnic hostilities in the bud.

When Max van der Stoel assumed his duties in January 1993, he entered largely unchartered territory. He stated that he would "have to explore a path which has not been trodden before". Indeed, by then the CSCE Copenhagen Document, the most important catalogue of minority rights at that time, had only been endorsed a little less than 3 years before. The UN Declaration on Minorities was passed first a month later.

Minister van der Stoel approached his tasks with typical Dutch sobriety. He was not afraid to call things by their real names. His research of issues was meticulous. His treatment of the parties involved was impartial.

At the time, Minister van der Stoel did not always make friends in the countries he visited. In 1999, Xan Smiley of The Economist compared van der Stoel's role to that of a prefect in a rundown boys' school: "The prefect's main job is to stop big boys from bullying little ones, and to stop boys of all sizes from fighting among themselves. He is not allowed to use his own fists… He is, perforce, a bit of a swot, a bit of a sneak, and a bit of a prig. Nobody likes him much."

This is, however, no longer true. Today he is remembered all over the OSCE area for his dedication, impartiality and pragmatic attitude seeking solutions to some of the most burning problems of that time. As Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE in 1999 I witnessed first-hand the impact he had. Today, I can harvest and build on the solid foundations laid down by him during his time as High Commissioner.

When Max van der Stoel retired in 2001, he left behind an impressive imprint on the minority rights regime in Europe and beyond. Many places in the OSCE region became much safer than they had been prior to 1993. And a lot of the credit for this goes to him. Even governments that at one time were sceptical now realize the importance of his contribution to conflict prevention and integration.

Minister Timmermans, Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the places regularly visited by Max van der Stoel was the Ukrainian Crimea Region. By the end of 1994, he had been to the peninsula several times. In 1995-1996, van der Stoel brokered an agreement between the authorities in Kyiv and Simferopol through a series of confidential meetings. His interest in the regional situation continued unabated in the years to come.

Crimea is blessed with fertile land, a warm sea and breathtakingly picturesque views. At the same time, this region has seen some of the worst fighting known to Europe in the course of its history, and has changed hands many times. It was also witness to some of the most heinous crimes committed by the Stalinist regime.

Thousands of Crimean Russians, Ukrainians, Jews and others perished in the purges. Sixty-five years ago hundreds of thousands – Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians and others – were thrown into cattle trucks and forcefully resettled. The people hardly had time to gather their belongings before they were forced to travel for weeks without any food or warm clothes, eating grass to survive.

Scars of injustice run deep in Crimea. The relationship between ethnic groups there is fraught with stereotypes, prejudices and historical woes. In June this year, a leading Crimean newspaper published a poll taken among Crimean youth. A staggering 41.5 per cent of the young people supported the 1944 deportations of Crimean Tatars.

The Ukrainian Government, civil society and international actors still have a lot to do to further tolerant interethnic coexistence on the peninsula. This must of course be done respecting both the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the linguistic, educational and participatory rights of Russians, Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars and other communities.

For all these reasons, the region of Crimea remains a priority area for the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Fortunately, the HCNM is not alone in attempting to heal the scars. Many grass-roots initiatives seeking to build bridges between the communities in Crimea have sprung up. One such organization is the Integration and Development Center for Information and Research.

Since its founding in 1997, this NGO has trained government officials and members of the police service in diversity management, monitored the press for hate speech, assisted formerly deported peoples and engaged in conflict prevention at the local level. In 2006, the HCNM and the IDC joined hands in tackling intolerance and xenophobia at grass-roots level. Together with the Renaissance Foundation, the IDC has introduced a facultative course entitled "Culture of Good Neighbourhood" in Crimean schools. This course is now a recognized part of the effort by the authorities and civil society to instil values of tolerance and respect from an early age.

The Integration and Development Center for Information and Research is a worthy disciple of Max van der Stoel and his conflict prevention and integration work in Ukraine.

Minister Timmermans, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Netherlands took a bold decision when it inaugurated the Max van der Stoel Award in 2003. It is a noble, long-term investment both acknowledging and further inspiring activities that have a tangible impact on majorities and minorities alike. The work of all the laureates – the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies,

the Russian NGO Memorial, the European Roma Rights Centre and now the Ukrainian Integration and Development Center for Information and Research – makes a difference to the daily lives of so many.

We are very honoured to have among us today the director of IDC, Mr. Oleg Smirnov, and IDC's specialist for its intercultural education programme, Ms. Margarita Aragioni.

Let me now read the Jury's citation for this year's Award before I leave the floor to Mr. Frans Timmermans, Minister for European Affairs of the Netherlands.

Jury Citation: Max van der Stoel Award 2009

The Jury has decided to confer the 2009 Max van der Stoel Award on the Integration and Development Center for Information and Research (IDC) for its efforts to promote tolerance and understanding among the multi-ethnic population of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. For many years the IDC has initiated, developed and implemented projects, particularly in the field of education, aimed at facilitating genuine integration and participation of all ethnic communities in Crimea.

The Jury considers these efforts as particularly cogent in light of the challenges facing Crimea, including the return of formerly deported people to the region, local interethnic and interreligious tensions and strained international relations. The message that IDC has consistently advocated through its work is that Crimea, as an integral part of Ukraine, should be home to all communities, be it ethnic Ukrainians, Russians or Crimean Tatars and not exclusively to any one group. As such, this NGO plays an important and commendable role as a builder of bridges in a divided society. It has become a symbol of co-operation and tolerance, admirably reflecting the spirit of the work of Max van der Stoel and making it a deserving and befitting recipient of the Award that bears his name.

That is the verdict of the Jury. Thank you again and congratulations.

Thank you.

Transcript of Presentation Speech by Mr. Frans Timmermans, the Netherlands Minister for European Affairs

Ladies and Gentlemen, High Commissioner, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am at a loss for words for having this unique opportunity to speak at the Max van der Stoel Award, and I will tell you why: for years I had the privilege of being Max's assistant in his work as High Commissioner from 1995 until the Parliamentary Elections in 1998, and he taught me everything, everything I know about European Affairs, about the relations between communities, about international politics, about diplomacy. It is tempting for me now to tell you a number of anecdotes about our travels and what happened during those travels; and perhaps later over drinks we might exchange some of those war stories. But one experience I have had with him, I really want to share because it says so much about the value of preventive diplomacy. What makes it so difficult to be a champion of preventive diplomacy is that you can never prove that you prevented a violent conflict from happening.

In our culture, linked with our religion probably, and even Greco-Roman history, we always love those who first commit a crime and start a war and then repent, and then we "award" them for repenting. That is how Yasser Arafat got the Nobel Peace Prize, first making bombs, then making peace; you get a prize. But those who never went to war; who always did their best to prevent violent conflict from happening can never prove that they did this. But I can tell you here, now, today, that on several occasions I was witness to the fact that Max van der Stoel stopped an escalation that would have certainly ended in violent conflict.

One of the clearest examples of that we saw was in Estonia. At some stage in Estonia we were very close to the Russian Minority – concentrated in the North East in Narva – declaring itself independent from the Estonian territory. So the respect for

the territorial integrity of Estonia was no longer something that they would agree to. And only with great effort, Max van der Stoel was able to get them on board to accept the point that if they would accept the territorial integrity of Estonia, he would make sure that the Estonian Government would have reasonable demands in terms of their integration, in terms of their requirements for Estonian language knowledge, in terms of their requirements for citizenship exams. This was a deal he put on the table and only because of his strong personal authority and his commitment to his job, they accepted. Then the difficult job started of convincing the Estonian authorities to accept as well. And, I shall not hide it – I say this to my Estonian friends today who are now members of the European Union like my own country, I always had a knot in my stomach when we travelled to Tallinn because we got such a cold and harsh reception from the authorities, but they did co-operate and they did accept Max van der Stoel's advice.

And what I've learned in those years is that conflict prevention and human rights is not about long-winded statements in general terms, it's not about declaring your values and it is very often the nitty-gritty work. It is looking at precise legal texts, it is looking at precise political statements, it is looking at relationships between communities at a local level. It is the work people do within communities at grass-roots level. You can never let up. You can never let any detail escape your attention. You can never let them get away with "alright, we'll make it happen". You need to be part of the solution and part of deciding the details of every legal and political text. This is what I learned working with Max van der Stoel, this is one of the important elements in his success.

And of course I know that we carried a very big stick in those years – this making the job of the present High Commissioner so much harder, the stick being EU membership. And the agreement was always between the EU and the High Commissioner, "I will help them transform some of those areas but please you need to express your support for the work of the High Commissioner". And what always struck me as essential was that the High Commissioner, Max van der Stoel, was able to, not just get the support of the EU, but also from the United States and when applicable, if they were not part of the problem, from the Russian Federation. This form of diplomacy is something that has really stuck in my mind. So Max van der Stoel represents everything that is good in this nation: he is hard working, he is conscientious, he is fair, he is direct, he is able to bring together people who, on the surface, seem to have nothing in common and he is able to put moral standards into action and not just leave it at words. And I think that there are very, very few people in Europe and very few people in this country that have all of these qualities. And if I can look a bit further sometimes, today, it is because this "giant" has allowed me to stand on his shoulders.

We talked a lot about preventing violent conflict as a result of the end of the European divide and the transition in the newly independent, newly free countries. But I do argue today that we need to look at Europe as a whole. The problem of Western Europe today is that we believe that the end of the European divide changed the East and did nothing to us. Whereas when you look at the whole of Europe, the West is going through the same transformation period as the East went through.

In Germany they refer to the new parts, the new Bundesländer, in Germany as a place where people experience the phenomenon called "Ostalgie". They have a feeling that they should have nostalgia for the past. I maintain that one of the problems in Western European societies today is that we suffer from "Westalgie". We suffer from the feeling that we would like Europe to go back to the recognizable European Union before the end of the European divide. And to quote someone who has been very perceptive on this issue, the Lebanese writer Amim Maalouf. He has written an essay recently called "Le Dérèglement du Monde", in which he describes that because of the end of this ideological dichotomy we have now created a new form of politics surrounding the issue of identity. And he describes the dangers of this; and you see this danger also in Dutch society – because I want to talk about Dutch society now – not just about the East, or the newly free countries.

Identity has become a political instrument; identity has become a source of fear, the identity of "the other". Tolerance has been called weakness, acceptance has been seen as capitulation. This is what threatens the West more than anything else today. I think that we could learn a lot from the experience that we had in working with minority issues in Central and Eastern Europe in the past. One of the fundamental points Max van der Stoel always made, and I'm sure High Commissioner, you are making the same point day by day, is that there is a very important distinction between integration and assimilation. I can tell you that in the Dutch context these words are used as though they mean the same thing. I can tell you that in the Dutch context many people believe that the only way Islam can find a place in this society is for Muslims to give up their faith and start being like us, rather than enjoy a place in society like other religions and other communities have done during the last four or five centuries. This is unacceptable to me, especially when Amsterdam was in the late 16th, early 17th century the only place in Europe, outside the Arab world, where different religions could live peacefully together, where the first multicultural society in Western Europe started, where people spoke many languages – and nobody minded, where people needed to respect the official doctrine and religion, but could follow their own religion in their own communities. It is unacceptable that in this country, with this city, we would now make identity a political instrument excluding diversity.

So what I want to say today is that if the High Commissioner focuses on those issues that have to do with the risk of violent conflict emanating from interethnic or intercultural relations, it is perhaps not this instrument that is needed in many of our older democracies. But rather the issue of identity used as a political tool should be much more an element of our political debate and should be regarded as a threat to the way we want to live our lives in the hall of Europe. The only way ahead for Europe is to embrace tolerance, to embrace diversity and to see that the only way we can progress as a community is if we are able to see the world through someone else's eyes, thus understanding better who we are.

The Max van der Stoel Award this year is awarded to the Integration and Development Center for Information and Research, Crimea, Ukraine. The reasons why have been given by the High Commissioner, I shall not expand on this. But I travelled myself with High Commissioner van der Stoel to Crimea and it's like travelling to paradise on earth. It is arguably one of the most beautiful areas in Europe. Arguably also one of the most difficult areas to work in and if you look at how the Crimean Tartars are sometimes treated, it is comparable to the way Roma are treated in many other parts of Europe. It is comparable to how we sometimes treat certain minorities in our own society. And what I learned working with Max van der Stoel on these issues is that you can combine identity issues, cultural issues, with social issues. But much of this goes back to a lack of opportunity, to a lack of social-economic opportunity and that is why I commend the work of the Center. It concentrates on creating opportunity, on creating an optimistic outlook for this community and by doing so, creating a better position for the community to be open towards the rest of the Ukrainian, Crimean community and thus creating a platform for the Ukrainian – the Crimean – community to accept this minority as an integral part of their society.

Can I please ask you now to step forward so I can give you the official document signed by all the members of the Jury? Congratulations.

Thank you.

Transcript of Acceptance Speech by Mr. Oleg Smirnov and Ms. Margarita Aragioni, Integration and Development Center for Information and Research (IDC)

Oleg Smirnov, Director:

Good afternoon, Mr. Minister, High Commissioner, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen

To say that the news about our reward was unexpected would be an understatement. As you know, any traditional awarding process is always preceded with a deliberate and public nomination. But in our case, we were so much enthralled with our everyday duties on the threshold of the new school year, that the news really stunned us. For a long time we just couldn't believe it was true.

Of course everybody dreams about being appreciated for his or her efforts and true value, but only a few have a good chance to experience that happy moment when such dreams come true. That's why today's event makes us so especially delighted and excited. And of cause we would like to express gratitude to all the people who supported our mounting this platform.

Ukraine has made a number of significant steps on its way to a modern democratic multicultural society. But there is still a long way to go. Ukraine did not yet succeed in resolving all social, educational and cultural problems of its national minorities. The necessary conditions for ensuring equal rights of all groups are not always present. But there are several objective reasons for this. The mass return of Crimean Tatars and other deportees coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union and deep crisis in political, economical and social spheres. Ukraine alone shouldered the burden of solving all the problems of repatriation of around three-hundred (300) thousand Armenians, Bulgarians, Crimean Tatars, Greeks and Germans exiled from Crimea by the Stalin regime and forced to settle in Central Asia, the Urals and Siberia.

This burden was partially relieved by international organizations, like UNDP or the Crimea Integration Program of the International Renaissance Foundation funded by the Open Society Institute, who aimed to protect the rights of formerly deported people; providing them with equal opportunities for education in their native languages and development of their cultures.

But the public consciousness has still to overcome the attitudes and approaches our country inherited from the Soviet epoch, including those concerning minority policy. Efforts by the Government to create a Ukrainian political nation on the basis of the Ukrainian ethnical culture would not be in line with modern principles of a multicultural society.

In spite of the factual cultural, ethnical and confessional variety of the Ukrainians, the people are not willing to accept the world in all its diversity. We frequently meet the blind conviction of the majority in their personal rightfulness and their marked aversion to other cultures, languages, religions, and even people expressing another opinion. The environment of permanent elections makes the problems of national minorities one of the playable cards used by all the political forces: from the ruling groups to representatives of the national elites. That's why several opinion polls show an increase of ethnic intolerance in all regions of Ukraine.

We can and we must advocate and defend the rights of the minority people in every specific situation. And it's much easier to protect rights when we see an overt violation that can be directly reacted to. But in our case we have to deal with underlying symptoms, which run the risk of developing into direct confrontation and outright violation of the people's rights, as well as with prejudices and stereotypes. For many decades these have been cultivated towards the minorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and, above all, toward the Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Crimean Tatars and Germans – the nations that returned from the places of their forced resettlement. But no less important and significant, and

sometimes neglected, are the activities directed towards the systemic changes of society, which promote the decrease of xenophobia and the early prevention of discrimination of national minorities.

We understood it was not enough for us just to support the minorities' aspiration to rebirth and the preservation of their ethnical identity. We were concerned with changing the majority's attitude to the minorities. From the very outset the activities of the IDC were not only educational in character, but addressed all sections of the population.

When we start something new, we are always prey to doubts: is it right? Shall we succeed? And the more people affected, the heavier is our responsibility. Now we can say that we have moved on from the local initiatives and painful problems of systemic educational work within the framework of the culture of peace concept, focusing on early identification and prevention of the interethnic and interconfessional conflicts.

These activities address different issues, like neutralization of the negative influence of the mass media "hate speech" through monitoring, discussions and the retraining of journalists. Or courses conducted in partnership with the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research for local authorities on dealing with all kinds of official stereotypes. As we know it is not rare when people in governmental bodies are not competent enough in ethnic policy issues. They are guided by superficial stereotyping beliefs when making important decisions. To date around six-hundred (600) civil servants in the Crimea passed through our training programme on the management of interethnic relations. Research results demonstrate that this work helps overcome the negative stereotypes, thus forming more balanced ethnic policy at local level.

I'm the director of the IDC, but most of the work on the "Culture of Good Neighbourhood" course is done by my colleague Margarita Aragioni, and I give her the floor to explain more about this part of our activities.

Margarita Aragioni (translation from Ukrainian):

And, of course, the most important task we pursue in our activities is to teach our children the culture of good neighbourhood. This is the very name we have given to our integrated course developed by us in co-operation with representatives of academia and teachers, and successfully integrated into the activities of the Integration and Development Center for Information and Research over a period of eight years.

Back then we realized that so-called "one-off" school events and activities like festivals of friendship and sporadic classes dedicated to tolerance conducted in schools do not, in most cases, produce a sustainable and long-lasting impact. In order for tolerance to take root in people's minds, a systematic and goal-oriented approach with the application of innovative methods of teaching would be required. This is especially true for the regions with high conflict potential.

We have conducted a thorough investigation and analysis of the situation in the field of interethnic relations among children and teachers, and have evaluated whether school curricula and textbooks conform to the criteria of ethnic tolerance. The findings of the study have been made public in the course of a series of "round tables" and have triggered a wider public discussion.

In this way the initiative of the experts and NGO's compelled the Crimean authorities to commence the drafting process of Ukraine's first "Concept on Educational Priorities in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea". We have also succeeded in ensuring the inclusion of the ethnic tolerance criterion in the list of evaluation criteria for textbook manuscripts financed by the State. Apart from all this, we have developed an integrated course called "The Culture of Good Neighbourhood".

The course has been designed with the focus on specific realities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea – the only region in Ukraine where ethnic minorities represent the majority of the population. They are all migrants with no mutual co-existence skills.

The Culture of Good Neighbourhood course is aimed at giving children a good idea of the place where they live, of the people around them, their language, culture, religion and mentality, thus integrating the children into the reality of Ukrainian society. It also provides teachers with the opportunity to help schoolchildren to develop the skills of peaceful conflict resolution, to broaden their social competence, with tolerance as a crucial component; thus fostering a positive attitude towards the ethnic diversity around them.

The results of the psychological monitoring of the programme have shown that those children who have completed the course display a higher level of civic identity, are more open to communication and are more interested in their own culture as well as in the cultures of other ethnic and religious groups.

The Culture of Good Neighbourhood course consists of four major components, depending on the stage of education, and is designed for pupils and students

between four and 20 years of age. Currently we are developing a programme for adults, parents and teachers.

All the components of The Culture of Good Neighbourhood course have been approved by the State; and following the successful testing of the programme in the period 2005-2008 is currently being implemented.

In the course of the last five years the number of schools willing to add the course to their curricula for various grades has increased tenfold (from 30 to 300 schools). This has been done not under duress but based on the free will of the school authorities, so our supporter base is steadily growing.

Current State support for our course is manifest in the fact that it has been incorporated into several State educational programmes, and that the State also finances its implementation in schools and covers the training needs of the teachers.

A very important outcome of the practical implementation of The Culture of Good Neighbourhood course in schools is the skills gained by the teachers to work in a multicultural environment. This is something the teachers have not been taught before; in addition, parents display more and more interest in the course.

Children are our best teachers. It is with their help we are able to tell their fathers and mothers about different ethnic groups living next door to them, attempting to destroy negative stereotypes and decrease the level of xenophobia and intolerance towards the "others".

The course also allows us to work in a systematic and goal-oriented way with representatives of both the minorities and the majority in order to achieve ethnic tolerance.

The Culture of Good Neighbourhood course not only helps us in laying down the foundation for the future of our peninsula, it is also a great tool in our present activities to improve the current state of interethnic relations and to initiate systemic changes in society. Our ultimate goal is to make the motto inscribed on the coat of arms of Crimea "To Prosper in Unity" a reality.

Oleg Smirnov, Director:

We should stress that through its activities the IDC demonstrates how effective the co-operation of NGOs, educators, scholars and governmental officials can actually be. In addition, the representation of the IDC in such international networks as Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts, International Network for

Conflict Resolution and Peace Education, and UNITED for Intercultural Action has allowed us to adjust our efforts, benefiting from the achievements and failures of other organizations in all parts of the world.

We thank all our colleagues from partner organizations – the Crimean Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Science, Taurida National Vernadsky University, the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research, the Crimean Ethnographic Museum, ethnic cultural associations and the Odessa Mediation Group, who helped us in all our activities.

We are grateful to those international and national organizations who provided us with financial and methodological support during recent years, and above all the Black Sea Trust for Regional Co-operation of the German Marshall Fund, the International Renaissance Foundation and the office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

We are obliged to the Ministries of Education and Science of Ukraine and Crimea, the Republican Committee on Inter-ethnic Relations and Deported Citizens of the Cabinet of Ministers of Crimea, regional authorities and school administrations – those governmental authorities that managed to understand, and it is really uncommon for the Ukraine that the initiative of the non-governmental organization is actually able to change the situation for better.

We are also thankful to those people, above all the teachers, at different educational levels who adopted the course and actively popularized it, making us a large team of like-minded people.

Undoubtedly, the Award from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands will not only contribute to helping solve the most actual interethnic problems of Ukraine, but also to the work on raising the responsibility and awareness of our organization. We hope that the timely and task-oriented activities, directed at promoting tolerance in relations between representatives of different cultures on the Crimean peninsula, will remove the threat of instability and will promote conditions for economical and social rebirth.

Thank you very much!!!!

Transcript of Congratulatory Speech by Mr. Ilya Kvas, Counsellor at the Ukrainian Embassy The Hague

Minister for European Affairs Timmermans
Minister van der Stoel,
High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Vollebaek
Excellencies,
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's a great pleasure and honour for me to be here today before such a distinguished audience on the occasion of the winning ceremony of the Max van der Stoel Award. I would like to sincerely congratulate the International and Development Center for its achievement in promoting tolerance and mutual understanding among the multi-ethnic population of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

I am sure that the conferral of this prestigious award is a significant recognition of the efforts of your organization to improve the status of national minorities and strengthen interethnic dialogue in Crimea. I wish to express support for your activities in Ukraine. I am also confident that they could be a good example to be followed in the other OSCE member states. I hope that the activities of the Center will continue to facilitate effective implementation of the policy of the Government of Ukraine in this year of ensuring rights of national minorities.

By combining our efforts we will be able to reach a high level of interethnic understanding in Crimea. Attaining this goal is in its turn a prerequisite of the stable development and prosperity of our multicultural country.

Congratulations once again.

Rules of Procedure
Max van der Stoel Award

1. GENERAL

1.1 The Max van der Stoel Award will be presented in recognition of extraordinary and outstanding achievements aimed at improving the position of national minorities in the OSCE area. It will be awarded to international organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes, government bodies or individuals with a record of excellence in this field.

1.2 The Award shall be presented every two years.

1.3 The Award shall consist of a cash sum of €50,000 and a certificate.

1.4 Award winners must indicate in advance how they wish to receive the cash award.

1.5 Award winners may spend the cash award as they deem appropriate. No restrictions may be imposed in this respect.

2. MANAGEMENT

The management of the Award will be executed by the office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (OSCE HCNM) in The Hague.

3. THE JURY

3.1 The HCNM will be responsible for the constitution of the Jury.

3.2 Members of the Jury shall be appointed for a maximum period of three terms leading to the presentation of the Award. When selecting candidates for the Jury, preference shall be given to persons with an international reputation for their work on behalf of national minorities and European security policy in relation to national minorities.

3.3 If a member of the Jury has a hierarchical or comparable relationship with a prospective Award winner (e.g. is on the board or the supervisory council of a legal entity or is a relative or partner of a natural person), the Jury member in question shall not take part in compiling the list of five nominees for the Award. If, at the deadline for nomination, a relationship of this kind exists between more than two members of the Jury and prospective Award winners, the Jury shall be dissolved for one year. A new Jury shall be appointed for a period of eight months, consisting of the uncontested members of the previous

Jury and the reserve members next in line on the reserve list, subject to the rules set out above concerning hierarchical or comparable relationships.

3.4 The Jury shall formulate, in writing, the grounds on which the Award is given.

4. NOMINATIONS

4.1 Nominations for Award winners shall be submitted to the Jury by:

a) The OSCE Missions and Institutions;
b) the OSCE participating States through their Permanent Representations with the OSCE in Vienna[1];
c) and the OSCE HCNM in The Hague.

4.2 The Award may not be shared.

5. AWARD CEREMONY

5.1 The Award shall be presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the HCNM. The Minister shall incorporate in his speech the grounds for the Award, as formulated by the Jury.

5.2 Two representatives of the winning organization, or, if the winner is a natural person, the winner and one other person, shall be entitled to travelling expenses to The Hague and hotel accommodation for three nights, and shall receive the equivalent of the UN daily subsistence allowance (DSA). An extra allowance shall be granted if hotel bed and breakfast rates exceed 50 per cent of the UN DSA rate.

5.3 In consultation with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the HCNM shall produce the certificate and a commemorative book, to be published for each award ceremony and sent to all guests present on those occasions.

The commemorative book shall include, if possible:

a) a photograph of the presentation;
b) a transcript of the Minister's speech in English and in the language of the Award winner's country;
c) information about the Max van der Stoel Award and a photograph of Mr. van der Stoel;

[1] Amended by The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 16 February 2006 (before the amendment, only Dutch Embassies to the OSCE participating States were entitled to nominate candidates)

d) the grounds on which the Award was given;
e) an account of the Award winner's activities;
f) a chronological list of previous Award winners;
g) the rules of procedure for the Max van der Stoel Award, in English.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY

The HCNM shall submit biennial reports to the Security and Defence Policy Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for approval by the Ministry's Financial and Economic Affairs Department. Both the Ministry's internal and external accountants shall be authorized to inspect and comment on the reports.

Pre-Award chat between Max van der Stoel, High Commissioner Vollebaek, jury member ms.Anastasia Crickley and Ambassador for International Organizations mr. Rob Zaagman.

Members of the Jury

Ms. Anastasia Crickley (Ierland),
Chairperson of the Management Board of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Vienna

Ms. Chinara Jakypova (Kyrgyzstan),
Director General of the Institute for Public Policy, Bishkek

Mr. Wilco de Jonge (the Netherlands),
Manager Human Rights Policy - Amnesty International Nederland, Amsterdam

Mr. Emil Pain (Russian Federation),
Director of the Centre for Ethnopolitical and Regional Studies, Moscow

Ms. Gay McDougall (United States),
Independent Expert Minority Issues - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva

Amb. Knut Vollebaek (Norway),
OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, The Hague (Chairman)