



Elections

Elections are a crucial moment in the life of a democracy. It is the moment at which the people manifest themselves directly and unmistakably on their authorities, their politicians, their representatives and their institutions. The event is of such magnitude that no citizen should abstain from voting. With all logic, if each person were conscious of the importance of the moment of voting in the life of their country, nobody would abstain.

But it is certain that non-participation or abstention is a very general practice even in the most democratic countries in which the turnout hardly reaches 50%. The public opinion tends to believe that one vote more or less will not decide the result, but one must take into account that a lower turnout can bring victory to a candidate that many might not favour - and that a higher turnout may put another, perhaps their favourite candidate, in power.

Croatia is on the eve of elections scheduled to take place on the 25th of November. Naturally, this article will not try to emphasize the virtues of one or another political party or one or another candidate. During almost 12 years of its presence in Croatia, the OSCE Mission has maintained good relations - at times excellent - with authorities of different orientations and thus it must continue its efforts in the short or long time during which our presence in the country continues.

With respect to the elections, the Mission to Croatia has worked towards ensuring that they are conducted within the strictest rules of the game, securing that electoral laws be as perfect as possible. With this objective in mind, in the past two years the Mission organized three roundtables, held within the symbolic venue of the Parliament and all of them co-presided by the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament,

including the participation of the most important personalities of the country's political, judicial, parliamentary, academic, diplomatic and journalistic life.



From among a number of electoral laws, the OSCE chose three of principal importance to put them under rigorous analysis of the participants of the three roundtables debating issues such as the functioning of the State Election Commission, the campaign financing and the Voters' List. Perhaps we should have also organized a fourth gathering on the functioning of the media in the election period. Fortunately, some independent institutions have assumed that task efficiently. Let us next consider the significance of each one of the roundtables.

The State Election Commission is essential for centralizing the entire electoral process, from keeping the deadlines for the calling of elections, conduct of the campaign, constitution of polling stations to the counting of votes and publishing of results. One of Croatia's particularities consists precisely in the important role that judges have in this task. The President of the Supreme Court, Judge Branko Hrvatin, presided over the State Election Commission in the past years and will continue doing so until after the coming elections when another person with the required exclusive competence and firm dedication can be chosen to carry out such an important function. Without a doubt, Judge Hrvatin has taken up his second large responsibility with great competence, as well as the rest of the judges, but this judicial task has not been undertaken without a price, and a consequence of this is the judicial backlog. For

the future it would be advisable that the elections are controlled through other mechanisms as is the case in the majority of democratic countries.

The financing of political parties is equally essential. Correct financing ensures equal participation of parties and their equal opportunities at the ballot boxes. The roundtable held on 11 September 2006 reiterated the limit on personal donations (90,000 kunas) and donations of legal entities (1 million kunas) as well as the prohibition of anonymous, public companies' or foreign countries' donations. The general opinion was inclined towards reducing the number of individual donations to a maximum with a view to maintaining the transparency and fairness of electoral process. The necessity to regulate not only the financing of political parties but also the campaign financing was also insisted upon.

With respect to the Voters' List, needless to say that without a proper census, the probability of irregularities taking place is great. In the case of Croatia, this is particularly certain when it comes to the vote of the Diaspora, which represents a high percentage of the overall census (perhaps up to 10%). Special care needs to be taken about the voting of Croatian citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina (124 polling stations) and Serbia (13 polling stations), which must function with identical correctness with which, without a doubt, those located within the Croatian territory are expected to operate.

That said, it only remains to recommend to the population to exercise their right to vote responsibly, to trust that the 25th of November is a true celebration of democracy and... may the best one win!

Ambassador Jorge Fuentes,
Head of Mission

Calendar	Activities
<p>1-8 October - ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw</p> <p>12 October - Closure Ceremony of Field Office Pakrac</p> <p>16-17 October - Final Ceremonies of Children Together Project in Osijek and Vukovar</p> <p>18-19 October - Informal Regional HOMs Meeting, Sarajevo</p> <p>23 October - Plenary Meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>24 October - Diplomatic Field Visit to Zadar</p> <p>25 October - HOM participated in a Radio 101 talk show</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">A home at last, after sixteen years</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">The Šljivar family - the first ex-OTR holder to receive an apartment in Zagreb</h3> <p>Šljivar lost his occupancy-tenancy rights to the flat he left behind, in a court proceeding held in absentia. In 1994, the Zagreb Municipal Court passed a verdict on termination of the occupancy/tenancy rights of Mr Šljivar, a decision which was subsequently confirmed by the Zagreb County Court. The reason for the termination was “unjustified absence from the apartment of the OTR holder and his family members for more than six months”. The Court determined that the apartment was not used by Mr Šljivar for living. The Šljivars did not succeed to reverse the verdict in a renewed court proceeding in 2003, nor in their constitutional complaint. When the verdict came into effect, the apartment was allocated to another Ministry of Interior employee, who later purchased it.</p> <p>Dubrava. The hand-over took place in September 2006, and the family can now use an apartment which is actually larger than what a 3-member family would be regularly entitled to. The apartment is in very good condition, and this family’s housing story is a true happy ending after more than 16 years of living in different provisional accommodations, including collective centres. The Šljivar family expressed their gratitude to the Mission, and notably to the Return and Integration team for assisting them to bring about this happy ending.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Vera Milovanović-Gedošević National Legal Officer & Gender Focal Point, Return & Integration Unit</p>

The “housing story” of the Šljivar Family began in 1981, when the that-time employer of Mr Šljivar, the Ministry of Interior, allocated him an apartment of 84 m² in Zagreb. Mr Šljivar moved in with his wife and two children.

In summer 1991, Mr Šljivar experienced several threats to his family. He decided to leave Zagreb, to leave his flat behind, trying to find a safer place for his family in areas under the control of the so called “Republika Srpska Krajina”, in Ilok (Vukovar-Sirmium County). The family was temporarily accommodated in a private house until 1998, and later on in the Collective Centre in Velika Gorica, where they stayed until November 1999. The next destination was the Pisarovina Collective Centre (Zagreb County). The family lived there for almost seven years, until they could return back to Zagreb to an apartment provided by the State.

During the time of his absence, Mr

To solve their housing situation in another way, the Šljivar family submitted a request for housing care outside the areas of special state concern in February 2004. Given that the family was at that time still located at the Pisarovina Centre and because of their difficult social situation, the Mission advocated for their case to be dealt with as a priority by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Tourism, Transport and Development (MMATTD).

In April 2006, the Ministry offered to the Šljivars two flats, out of which the family chose the one in Zagreb’s



Farewell to our dear colleagues



L-R: Marija Djerfi, Jelena Marin, Project Management Assistants and the Unit Head Suzanne Salopek. Jelena left the Mission at the end of October continuing her career in one of Croatia’s NGOs.

Mission’s Headquarters staff at the farewell party of Olga Roberts from the Executive Office, 25 October 2007.



Activities

The Platform - A balance

On 23 October 2007, a “Three Ministers’ Configuration Plenary meeting” was held at the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. HoM was briefed by Foreign Affairs Minister Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, Justice Minister Ana Lovrin and Development Minister Božidar Kalmeta, accompanied by other Ambassadors of the international community in Zagreb, like the Spanish representing the 56 OSCE States, the Portuguese EU Presidency (representing the 27 States providing 75% of the OSCE budget), the American and Russian with important standpoints about Croatia, and other Ambassadors invited on a rotating basis for several reasons including being important budgetary donors to Croatia.

At the very beginning, the Platform initiative did not receive unanimous support. Some thought that the OSCE Mission had nothing to “negotiate” with the Croatian Government and that the Mission should limit itself to identify and request accomplishment of mandate issues, to observe and check results, and to report on shortcomings both to Vienna and Croatia. However, meetings with top level officials from the central Government always provide a valid opportunity for them to explain the limitations (budgetary, practical or technical) they have to accomplish tasks. It was soon apparent that the Platform was a perfect forum for the joint identification and prioritization of objectives, discussing and listing the tasks to be accomplished,

might be expected in countries with severe budgetary and development limitations.

Most valuable improvements in mandate-related issues could be tracked to Platform sessions; through them, the Mission encouraged the adoption of legislation like the basic electoral one on State Election Commission, Political Party Financing and Voters List, minority rights and employment, Ombudsman and Constitutional Court, freedom of the media, etc. Sessions were a good tool to check advancements in housing care programmes or judicial training for example. They were also used by the HoM to make sure that a message regarding the need for fair war crime trials was passed. It was also during



A recess for reflection in the succession of Platform sessions needed to be established due to two obvious reasons: the Parliamentary Elections in Croatia on 25 November, and the OSCE Ministerial Council in Madrid on 29 November.

The launching of the Platform initiative can be dated to January 2006, when Ambassador Fuentes met with Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and proposed a special negotiating framework between the Mission and the main stakeholders in the Government to move mandate-related issues towards conclusion. Agreed at the highest level, the Platform initiative took shape in the following weeks, through the organization of three separate monthly ministerial-level plenary sessions with the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs and the Ministry dealing with refugees, supported by numerous sub-working groups.

envisaging forms of assistance to be provided by the Mission and checking progress on a monthly basis. Some time later, the Platform was acknowledged by everyone as a very effective tool for mandate advancement. Even more, the Platform was later mentioned as a model for the SEE region and an initiative that could be exported to other OSCE Missions by Vienna officials and by several Participating States within the Permanent Council.

Concerning this last possibility, the experience shows that the Platform initiative can only be of real effectiveness in countries that are already in the final years or in the final stages of the accomplishment of their OSCE mandates. Keeping such an intense agenda of monthly meetings with Ministers during decades could be a counter-productive measure. Both sides, the Governmental and the OSCE, could become frustrated by the slow advancements that

a session of the Platform where the successful initiative called “plenaries in the field” was first suggested. The platform also facilitated the implementation of this initiative aimed to disseminate the policies agreed upon at the central level in Zagreb to the field attaining the very basis of Croatian society and the troubled war-affected areas. Finally, it could be said that it was due to the success of the Platform that enough mandate advancement was achieved as to close four Mission portfolios: Political, Police, Media and Civil Society.

In trying to make balance, we could ask ourselves why was the Platform so successful? The immediate and simple answer could be: because clear commitments to address outstanding mandate-related issues were obtained at the highest level.

Enrique Horcajada,
Head of Executive Office

XIII Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, ODIHR Warsaw

For the third consecutive year, I participated in the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting that ODIHR has held annually in Warsaw since its establishment in 1991. As it is well known, ODIHR is one of the four institutions created by the OSCE in the course of its transformation into a permanent Organization. It is, at the same time, the one allocated the largest budget, human resources and infrastructure.

In the course of two weeks, the Warsaw Meeting once again assembled more than 1,000 representatives of states and NGOs, who, through hundreds of addresses, documents and books, have turned these meetings into one of the three greatest human rights forums in the world - the other two being the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

The forum is intended to be a centre of reflection and tranquil and serene exchange of ideas. With complete freedom and transparency, the participants plunge into a debate in which one might have an impression of having entered the tunnel of time and gone back to the particularly tense years of the cold war.

In spite of the constant calls for moderation by the efficient Director of the Office - Ambassador Christian Strohal - what is certain is that the tension level in the past years has constantly grown and has motivated the non-attendance of certain official delegations from Central Asia and the insistence on the part of countries of Eastern Europe to reduce the duration of the meetings or to even discontinue them entirely. Naturally, defenders of the freedom of expression, though also receive plenty of criticism, continue to support the continuity of the forum and even the extension of its duration.

Judicial issues, freedom of expression, freedom of association and belief, protection of national minorities and promotion of free elections are issues that, together with many others, inspire the heated debate in Warsaw.

Along with those issues of great importance, perhaps the one for which ODIHR has become well-known in the world and helped promote the OSCE logo maybe more than any other institution, is the monitoring of elections.

On the basis of the Copenhagen Agreement, all OSCE participating

make an effort to avoid a full fledged Mission as it entails large amounts of distrust. The attitudes of Poland and Russia - reluctant to have a decided co-operation with ODIHR - illustrate the aforesaid. The fact that the most stable democracies such as the USA, France, Finland, Switzerland, Spain, Holland, Italy or Canada - have received Missions, does not



states are obliged to invite ODIHR to observe their elections. The Office annually selects those among them in which it will be able to deploy some type of a mission, aware that it would be impossible to undertake this annually in the 56 participating states.

A Need Assessment Mission (NAM) arrives in the chosen country to evaluate the necessity of sending either a limited Election Observation Mission or a full fledged Election Observation Mission, which can result in the deployment of hundreds of observers who monitor polling stations on the Election Day.

Then again, this activity of ODIHR is also quite controversial. The countries know that they cannot refuse to invite the Office because it would be an indication of the lack of confidence in the transparency, integrity and fairness of their elections. Nevertheless, all of them

quite reassure states of more recent democracies.

In short, ODIHR's work extends to many other fields such as judicial reform, improvement of legislative processes, protection of women's rights, defence of tolerance and non-discrimination, protection of the Roma and Sinti population. Such an ample array of activities can hardly be carried out without a unified effort aimed at avoiding interference with the remaining institutions, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Missions and the 56 participating states. The effort towards obtaining a harmonious result is necessary in order to secure not only the correct functioning of the Office but also its necessary reinforcement.

Ambassador Jorge Fuentes,
Head of Mission

Promoting gender equality ...in the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Croatia

“The peace and welfare of the world require maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields”

The gender equality contributes to comprehensive security, which is a goal of OSCE activities in all three dimensions. The 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (MC.DEC/14/04, Sofia, 7 December 2004) stipulates that the Heads of Missions and Institutions, among others, shall exercise strong and active leadership in building sustainable gender awareness in the Organization. In order to achieve these goals, the gender perspective should be taken into account in the Organization's activities, projects and programs, in order for the Organization to achieve gender equality within its own operations as well as in the participating States.

In October 2005, the Head of Mission (HoM) - Ambassador Jorge Fuentes appointed the gender focal point and approved the Mission's Plan for the implementation of concrete measures for achieving the overall aims of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. According to the Action Plan, the Head of Mission is responsible to position the gender focal point (GFP) on a sufficiently high level and to make sure that the GFP enjoys full access to senior management. The Senior Staff Management (SSM) confirmed the gender focal point's terms of reference aiming to clarify the GFP's role. Namely, the GFP has to advise and/or support the SSM on developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the overall strategy on gender mainstreaming in the Mission and the host county when it is appropriate; to enhance the visibility of the Mission gender-related activities through Mission reports. The HoM approved two Annual Evaluation Reports that relates to the implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality based on which the Secretary General reports on progress in work on gender issues in

OSCE before the Permanent Council every year.

The Mission budgeted around € 25,000 for gender related projects and activities involving Croatia and Croatian institutions in 2006 and 2007. The Mission was looking for gender based NGOs' - project proposals which were promoting the role of women in the Police, or for journalist writing about women and women's rights and activities in conjunction with NGOs work. The Mission to Croatia supported four projects:

“The Awards for Gender Sensitive Journalism” was implemented by the Women's Network Croatia (WNC), in Zagreb in March 2006 with Mission funds of € 1,563.



The Mission supported the Women's Network Croatia ceremony aiming to present the “Maja Miles Award” to two female journalists for gender sensitive journalism in honour of the 8th March, International Women's Day in the Journalists' House in Zagreb.

The Mission supported the WNC's ceremony for the fourth time aiming at honouring two female journalists for gender sensitive journalism in honor of the 8 March, International Women's Day in the Journalists' House in Zagreb. The prize carries the name of journalist Maja Miles, who marked journalism in the eighties by promoting responsible civic behavior. Maja Miles introduced a high level of expertise, professionalism and professional ethics into local journalism. Educated with working experience both in the court and as a lawyer, Maja entered journalism

as an excellent professional. In 2006 both awards were given to journalists active on the national level - Mirjana Rakić (HRT) and Branka Valentić (Vjesnik). The ceremony was attended by Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, media, Government Vice President Jadranka Kosor, Dubravka Šimunović, Co-ordinator for Gender Equality at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Vladimir Rončević, former Editor of the HRT Informative Programme, Dragutin Lucić, former Head of the Croatian Journalist' Association, Helena Štimac Radin for the Government Office for Gender Equality and NGOs.

“Together Against Domestic Violence” (Extra-budgetary Contribution) was implemented by the Croatian Red Cross, Zagreb in the period from 15 November - 31 December 2006 and the Mission supported the project with € 7,000. The project was also supported by several Embassies, UNDP, UNHCR as well as the OSCE Mission to Croatia aiming to raise awareness of domestic violence, particularly violence against women by producing the video clip which was publicly launched during the roundtable on a topic of domestic violence and aired for several days at primetime by the Croatian Television network marking the International Day of Fight against Violence Against Women on 25 November.

The main objectives were: prevention of domestic violence; alleviation of the consequence of already committed domestic violence; development of a multi-disciplinary approach to the victim of domestic violence; improved co-operation and coordination between relevant state bodies; education of experts and public about domestic violence and contribution to gender equality.

“Public Promotion of the Guide for Non-violent Action” was implemented by the NGO for Educational Workshops “SKILLS” from Opatija and supported with HRK 2,000 from Mission funds.

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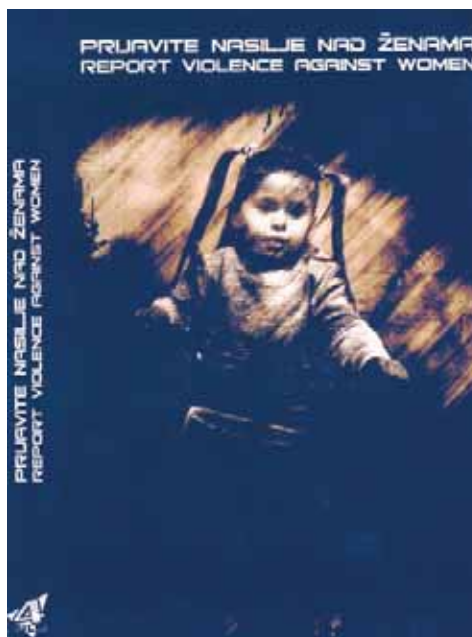
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The project related to public promotion of the Guide for non-violent action titled “Skills of Non-violent Action” by publishing the Guidance for non-violent communication aimed to raise the public consciousness about causes and consequences of violence, with focus on violence directed towards women (and children) and enabling the members of the community to recognize this problem and come together in solving it. The strategic objectives of the project is to affirm gender equality standards in decision-making process, to provide women with knowledge about leadership, to offer a tool for implementation of knowledge and skills on women and leadership; to affirm alternative models of leading and leadership.

“Women & Leadership: Empowerment through Learning and Sharing” was implemented by the Centre for Women’s Studies, Zagreb, in period from May to November 2006 with Mission funds of € 9,780. The project aimed at addressing the problem of obstacles in society (ideological, organizational, power-related, education and political) which discourage women to take on a

more active role in the public sphere and decision-making process.



On 9 and 10 May 2007, in co-operation with the Ministry of Family, Veterans Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity, the Government Office for Gender Equality and the Council of Europe’s (CoE) Directorate General for Human Rights organized a

seminar in Zagreb titled ‘Men’s Active Participation in Combating Domestic Violence’. The seminar was one of five regional seminars organized for 2007, as part of the CoE’s Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, Including Domestic Violence, launched in Madrid in November 2006. The first seminar entitled, ‘Legal Measures to Combat Violence against Women’, was held in The Hague in February. Participants exchanged ideas and best practices on raising awareness among men and engaging them in the fight against domestic violence. The agenda included discussions on the role of men in preventing domestic violence and protecting victims, educational programmes both for school children and professionals in contact with the victims of domestic violence as well as intervention programmes aimed at protecting individual victims. Deputy Prime Minister Kosor presented a short video entitled, ‘Report Violence against Women’ co-funded by the Mission.

Vera Milovanović-Gedošević
National Legal Officer & Gender Focal Point, Return & Integration Unit

Photo Story

Where Eagles Dare

To work for the OSCE as a translator/interpreter does not mean to “just know the languages”. It is a lot more than that. In addition to familiarizing yourself with specialized vocabulary, you have to develop concentration skills, have an excellent memory, remain calm in tense situations and have the ability to find quick solutions. However, apart from all that it is of utmost importance that sitting behind the office computer on a daily basis and interpreting during various meetings is replaced with activities that help one maintain the level of stamina necessary for the performance of sometimes very demanding and tiring tasks.

One of the HQ interpreters, Zvezdana Lalić, enrolled in a mountaineering course that will take her wandering across Croatian and Slovenian mountains, enjoying the wonderful landscape and advantages of the outdoor life.



Mount Snježnik (1506 m) is situated in the Rijeka hinterland. Snježnik is part of the Risnjak National Park and it’s famous for its moody weather changes. Snježnik is part of the Dinaric Alps that extend for 645 km along the Adriatic Coast and comprise some of the most rugged and extensively mountainous areas of Europe.



Final presentation of “Children Together 2007”

OSCE Field Office Vukovar, based on the positive experience of the 2006 “Children Together”, organised an even more ambitious project in 2007. The overall goal was to reach the next level, i.e. providing schools and all relevant partners with sustainable tools for further integration of minorities and the creation of an improved atmosphere of understanding and tolerance, thus moving from children living side by side towards a real “Children Together” situation. Since May 2007 different elements of this year’s project were implemented, such as mediation training for teachers and peer mediation, a joint summer camp for children from different ethnic backgrounds, and art workshops for groups of children.

exhibited at each location. During the two hour presentations, officials like Osijek-Baranja County Prefect, Krešimir Bubalo, and Vukovar City Mayor, Zdenka Buljan, underlined the necessity of such projects and successful implementation in both counties, with the Prefect saying, “I would like to express my satisfaction with the implementation of the project which is based on the ideas of freedom, tolerance, trust and friendship.”

HoM and Mrs Fuentes, Spanish Ambassador Manuel Salazar, Australian Ambassador, Tracy Reid, Osijek-Baranja County Prefect, Krešimir Bubalo, Vukovar City Mayor, Zdenka Buljan, and other dignitaries and guests, watching a performance of the musical “Little Prince” as part of the “Children Together” project.

He further pointed out the need for continuation of such projects, “Out of some 460 projects the Mission has implemented in 11 years, “Children Together” is my favourite project which hopefully will be continued in the years to come. The exceptional value of the project lies in the fact that it has managed to gather children of different ethnicities.”

His request was responded by one of the implementers, Croatian Red Cross Osijek, who already drafted a 2008 project and plan to follow up activities with the children involved in the 2007 project.

Participants of the different activities of the project gave a short account of their experiences, while on behalf of the donors - Embassies of Australia, Norway, Spain, and USA, Red Cross, counties of Osijek-Baranja, Vukovar-Sirmium and their respective Police Administrations, Školska knjiga. Two main supporters, the Spanish Embassy, Amb. Manuel Salazar, also in his capacity as representative of the OSCE Chairmanship, and the Australian Ambassador Tracy Reid, addressed the guests, who included besides local authorities, principals, teachers and children, and parents, also many further ambassadors and international guests, saying



More than 750 children from 36 schools participated in 150 workshops in 105 groups creating artworks which visualised their ideas of „Children without borders“. This exercise and other parts of “Children Together 2007”, supported by many international embassies and national institutions, was well received and actively supported by all 30 multiethnic primary and seven secondary schools in the region, their staff and the children.

On 16 and 17 October 2007 the final presentations of “Children Together 2007” gathered nearly 600 visitors and participants in the Osijek Children’s Theatre and the Vukovar Ružička House, who not only enjoyed among others the presentation of the musical like “Little Prince” by the 50 summer camp children, but also could see the 12 winning artworks



The Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia, Ambassador Jorge Fuentes, highlighted the successful co-operation and support of many international and national institutions, which were all awarded at these events.

“The project is forward-looking, life-affirming and highly creative. It has also been, as we have seen and heard, highly enjoyable.”

Renate Herrmanns,
Head of FO Vukovar

Photo Gallery



Head of Mission met with Croatia's two strongest political parties leaders, (left) Zoran Milanović from Social Democratic Party (SDP) and (right) Prime Minister, Ivo Sanader, of the currently ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ).



HOM, Leos Javurek, Head of the Mission's Return and Integration Unit, Bosnian HOM, Ambassador Douglas Davidson, the Montenegrin HOM, Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu and the HOM to Serbia, Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad, at the informal regional HOMs meeting on the Sarajevo Process, held in Sarajevo 18-19 October.

L-R: Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Spencer Oliver, HOM and Josep Borell, Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairman in Office at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly annual meeting, Portorož 29-30 September.



Representatives of the diplomatic corps in Croatia on the field trip to Zadar with HOM and DHOM, 24 October. During the trip the diplomats were acquainted with the situation in the field regarding the Mission's mandate.