

Issue Number 3/2011



**Interview with Lamberto Zannier
OSCE Secretary General**

**Engaging for good economic and
environmental governance: Goran Svilanović**



Public participation for a safe environment
The Aarhus Centres

The OSCE Magazine, which is also available online, is published in English and Russian by the Press and Public Information Section of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the OSCE and its participating States.

Editor: Ursula Froese

Designer: Nona Reuter

Printed by Ferdinand Berger & Son

Please send comments and contributions to:
oscemagazine@osce.org

Press and Public Information Section

OSCE Secretariat

Wallnerstrasse 6

A-1010 Vienna, Austria

Tel.: (+43-1) 514 36-6267

Fax: (+43-1) 514 36-6105

OSCE Chairmanship 2011: Lithuania

OSCE Structures and Institutions

Permanent Council (Vienna)

Forum for Security Co-operation (Vienna)

Secretariat (Vienna)

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (Vienna)

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (Warsaw)

OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (The Hague)

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (Copenhagen)

Field Operations

South Caucasus

OSCE Office in Baku

OSCE Office in Yerevan

The Personal Representative of the

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference

Central Asia

OSCE Centre in Ashgabat

OSCE Centre in Astana

OSCE Centre in Bishkek

OSCE Office in Tajikistan

OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

Eastern Europe

OSCE Mission to Moldova

OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

South-Eastern Europe

OSCE Presence in Albania

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

OSCE Mission in Kosovo

OSCE Mission to Montenegro

OSCE Mission to Serbia

OSCE Mission to Skopje

OSCE Office in Zagreb

In this issue

- 3 Deepening partnerships: interview with the OSCE Secretary General, Lamberto Zannier
Virginie Coulloudon
- 6 Committees of the Permanent Council: where the OSCE gets down to business
- 8 Defining the lines that divide us
Jérôme Bouyjou
- 10 Engagement for good governance: interview with the OSCE Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, Goran Svilanović
Ursula Froese
- 14 Dossier: the Aarhus Centres
 - 15 How it all began: the Aarhus Centres and the Aarhus Convention
Esra Buttanri
 - 15 A brick in the road to sustainable development and a green economy
Ella Behlyarova
 - 16 Defending public control over the impact of gold mining: the Aarhus Centre in Osh
Kanybek Isabaev
 - 18 The Aarhus Centre network in Tajikistan
Nargis Hamrabaeva
 - 19 Developing a pollutant register: Aarhus Centres in Kazakhstan
Gulsara Yeskendirova
 - 20 Civic Action for Security and Environment
 - 20 CASE in Azerbaijan
Zahra Ahmadova
 - 21 CASE in Armenia
William Hanlon and James McMordie
 - 23 Towards better environmental impact assessment: the Aarhus Centre Georgia
Tamar Gugushvili and Nino Gvazava
 - 24 Keeping development green: Aarhus Centres in Albania
Robert Mangham
 - 25 Drawing inspiration from regional neighbours: the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina promotes the Aarhus Convention
Alma Mirvić
 - 26 Partnering with local governments: Aarhus Centres in Serbia
Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman, Srdjan Matović and Pavle Budincević
- 28 The OSCE Mission to Serbia moves into the second decade
Ivana Jovanović and Milos Bulj
- 28 Appointments

On the cover: Copper mine at Alaverdi, Armenia, December 2010. The OSCE works to promote co-operation on the environmental impact of mining and other industrial activities. (ENVSEC/ V. Mello)



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe



OSCE/JONATHAN PERFECT

Deepening partnerships

Interview with
Lamberto Zannier,
OSCE Secretary
General

Lamberto Zannier became the new Secretary General of the OSCE on 1 July 2011. A senior Italian diplomat, lawyer and specialist in security matters, he is no stranger to the OSCE. From 2002 to 2006 he directed the Conflict Prevention Centre, where his responsibilities included overseeing the OSCE's field operations in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia. He returns to the Organization from Kosovo, where he was United Nations Special Representative for Kosovo and in charge of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

"Your priorities are now my priorities," Ambassador Zannier told delegates of the 56 participating States in a speech on 4 July 2011. He outlined his intentions to enhance the

political profile of his role and to make the Secretariat more effective for addressing new security issues such as transnational threats. On 16 September 2011 he spoke with Virginie Coulloudon, Spokesperson of the OSCE and Head of the Press and Public Information Section, about his plans and his vision for the Organization.

Virginie Coulloudon: How did you find the Organization five years after you left it?

Lamberto Zannier: The overall security situation has evolved and so has the Organization and the interaction between the OSCE and other organizations. The Organization has once again proven its flexibility and its ability to adjust to new security realities based on transparent dialogue and constructive discussion ►►

on the matter, in particular through the Corfu process, which has made discussions on security more substantial. Security challenges have changed significantly over the last 20 years and will certainly continue to evolve, possibly even more rapidly and unpredictably than before. Today, new threats have emerged that impact on each of us as individuals, on each of the participating States, and on the OSCE region as a whole.

You refer to change. Do we need change today to address the new security challenges? How do you see your role in that respect?

The OSCE should continue to flexibly adapt itself to changing situations. This does not mean that we need to reform radically, but there should be constant efforts to make sure that we are in line with current challenges and that the structures reflect what is needed at any point in time. In that sense, I believe that change is positive. It should be encouraged not for its own sake but to make sure that in the way we operate, we reflect the current environment and our ability to respond to challenges. At the same time, we need to be careful not to undermine the core values and principles which must remain the very foundation of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security.

As to my role, the Chairmanship is the political driving force in the Organization. The Secretary General plays a supporting role in helping the Chairmanship to achieve its objectives as well as directly supporting the dialogue process. He or she is the guardian of the core values of our Organization and a key element in ensuring the continuity of operations and the sound implementation of the decisions of participating States.

In your first address to the Permanent Council, you developed your priorities as Secretary General. Your first priority was to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization. Could you elaborate on this?

To tackle today's security challenges and to provide maximum support to participating States, we need to sharpen our work processes. There is room for reshaping a few elements internally to bring them better into line with the current priorities of the Organization. We need to better equip the Organization if we want to address transnational threats and ensure that we make a difference in dealing with them.

Are transnational threats the ultimate security challenge in the modern world?

In an increasingly globalized world, there has been a significant evolution in the nature of security threats. Terrorism, organized crime,

weapons smuggling, cyber crime: these are all threats of a global nature and we need to develop tools that are different from the ones we had in the past. We need to find ways to help countries to identify common approaches to combating these challenges. But this does not diminish the importance of the OSCE in other areas. We still need to focus on the protracted conflicts, where we in many cases managed to prevent the recurrence of conflict but unfortunately made only limited progress towards sustainable solutions. We also need to continue our work to strengthen democratic developments in our participating States, providing support across the three dimensions of security.

You mentioned raising the visibility of the Organization as your second priority.

The OSCE is an Organization that is unique in many ways, but we have often found it difficult to market ourselves, partly because our work in conflict prevention is not always visible. In today's environment, it has become crucial to profile ourselves more effectively and explain our comparative advantage. We need to better communicate how the Organization operates and how we can contribute to improving the lives of people and their security — how we add value. But we also need to make an effort to reconnect with civil society so that the wider public appreciates our relevance and value in the face of today's security challenges.

Another reason to raise the visibility of the OSCE is its commitment to developing a security community. In Astana, the heads of state entitled the Commemorative Declaration "Towards a Security Community". Focus was placed on the need to build a security community, a community of states across the northern hemisphere working together to build a framework that provides security for each of us, relying on conflict prevention, political dialogue, building democratic institutions, promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and fostering economic co-operation. The OSCE works for individuals, states and the entire region across the three dimensions of security. This interaction and this spirit of co-operation need to be kept alive and dynamic.

How do you see the Organization ten years from now?

I believe the OSCE will still be relevant and needed ten years from now. The Organization has a unique ability to adapt: it was relevant in different ways in Helsinki 35 years ago, in Paris 20 years ago, in Istanbul 12 years ago and in Astana last year. The forum for dialogue that we represent is needed today and will certainly be needed ten years from now.

We also make a difference on the ground. I saw this in Kosovo, when I was working for the UN. Here, the OSCE is working with communities and helping people learn how to work together after a dramatic conflict. Or take Croatia, for example, where the OSCE has played an extremely positive role in the past years, supporting capacity building in the local judicial institution for war crimes or assisting with housing for displaced people. I truly believe that we have been instrumental in helping people. We should be proud of all the work and effort we have invested there and elsewhere. The OSCE participating States, our field operations and the Secretariat have worked side by side with the people in the countries in which we operate and supported difficult transition processes. But we also need to discuss how we should adjust as we proceed and develop the tools with which the Organization can continue its important work on the ground in the most efficient and effective manner.

Partnerships and co-operation seem to be key in your eyes.

It remains crucial for the OSCE to work with key partners in the international community. Coming from the UN myself, I see an important value in the OSCE strengthening its co-operation with the UN as a regional organization under Chapter VIII. I would really want to reinforce this element of the OSCE. Partnerships with other regional organizations are essential, because of the globalization of security challenges and because developments in neighbouring regions can impact the security of the region represented by the OSCE. For instance, we are now looking at developments

in North Africa or in Afghanistan, because they can impact European security. The OSCE can play a role here, by discretely sharing some of its experiences and best practices and offering assistance when our partners request it and when our participating States agree to provide it. But for this to happen it is important to develop proper partnerships with other regional organizations, such as the Arab League and the African Union. And this should take place as much as possible in close co-ordination with the United Nations. We never work in isolation and should maintain and even further develop our co-operative approach.

Co-operation is an integral part of the OSCE. We work positively through dialogue and mutual assistance. We define security through co-operation by building trust, setting up mechanisms of mutual assistance and exchange. For me, that is what the OSCE is about: security through co-operation.

If you had one wish for your tenure as Secretary General, what would that be?

Concrete progress in the resolution of conflicts. Working with the participating States, I wish to see progress towards a more stable and peaceful environment in which we are operating. This will ultimately lead to sustainable peace, prosperity and freedom for all people in our region. But for this to happen, we need everybody to be engaged. Different countries can play different roles; they can operate from different angles. This is the richness of the OSCE as a true security community, where everyone has a role to play and where everyone has an opportunity to contribute to strengthening our common security.



OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier in a meeting with his staff at the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, 15 September 2011. Left: Virginie Coulloudon, Spokesperson of the OSCE. Right: Ian Mitchell, Head of External Co-operation. (OSCE/Jonathan Perfect)

Committees of the Permanent Council: where the OSCE gets down to business

Monday, 10 a.m. in the Vienna Hofburg. Delegates to the OSCE settle into their seats around the table in the plenary hall for another round of monthly discussions in the Security Committee. To an outsider, the rather ambitious-sounding name of the gathering might be misleading. This is not where decisions are made in the OSCE's Vienna headquarters. That happens elsewhere — in the weekly meetings of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation.

The Security Committee, the Economic and Environmental Committee and the Human Dimension Committee, corresponding to the OSCE's three security dimensions, were established at the end of 2006 as informal subsidiary bodies to the Permanent Council. Under a chairperson appointed by the current OSCE Chair, the delegates attending their meetings “discuss” and “consider” topics on the OSCE agenda; they “support” or “recommend” proposals and strategies. Yet, as so often in multilateral affairs, it is the Committees' informal nature that makes for their strength. Their discussions most often predetermine the final decisions and policies adopted at the OSCE's upper echelons, including the annual Ministerial Council.

THE SECURITY COMMITTEE

The Security Committee, which Ambassador Heiner Horsten of Germany has been chairing since the beginning of 2010, deals with non-military aspects of security: issues such as policing, border security or anti-terrorism. It devotes its meetings to three basic functions:

Guest speakers from outside the OSCE address the Committee, keeping delegations in Vienna informed about global trends and OSCE partnerships with other relevant actors. Such external input is crucial for the OSCE as a facilitator of dialogue in the international arena.

Secondly, discussions at the Security Committee test waters and help delegations to gradually build consensus on the adoption of new Ministerial Council

decisions. Of course, this process takes place largely in consultations outside the plenary hall. But it is only in the Committee that delegates of all 56 participating States are regularly updated and can eventually clear proposals for adoption. Providing transparency among all participating States in an organization that has as its guiding principle consensus is an important function of the Committee.

Thirdly, the OSCE Secretariat, Institutions and field operations regularly report to the Committee regarding their activities. Delegates can thereby oversee ongoing efforts and determine future directions for the OSCE.

TRANSNATIONAL THREATS

To these regular functions of the Security Committee, a fourth has been added: a general and strategic review of OSCE activities related to transnational threats. In recent years, the message that the OSCE, with its cross-dimensional concept of security and broad geographical reach, could make a more targeted contribution to confronting threats like terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal migration and other organized crime has grown louder. At the Astana Summit, it was condensed into a short slogan: achieve greater unity of purpose and action in facing emerging transnational threats.

This strategic review, centred from the start around the Security Committee, has invigorated the work of this informal forum and the role of its chairperson. The Committee has assessed the recommendations contained in the Secretary General's 2010 report on transnational threats and expanded discussions to crucial new topics, including cyber-security and strengthening programmatic co-ordination and coherence. This year, delegates are busy translating their conclusions into new texts on mandates and programmes, and exploring ways to adapt current OSCE capacities accordingly.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

The Economic and Environmental Committee, currently chaired by Ukrainian Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk, discusses second dimension issues and also prepares the meetings of the annual OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. The results



of the 2010 Astana Summit and the intensive discussions that preceded it, which were taken up by the Lithuanian Chairmanship as priorities, have determined this year's work programme.

Defining the role of the OSCE in the energy security dialogue has been an important focus. A special thematic Committee meeting in May reviewed the report on the subject which the Secretary General had presented to the Permanent Council in March, as well as other proposals submitted by delegations. The discussions showed that all delegations consider it necessary to enhance the OSCE's role as a forum for dialogue on the challenges of energy security, which no country can tackle on its own. And all consider it necessary to clearly identify their expectations from the Organization.

Other topics this year are migration management and good governance. A proposal by Ireland, as the incoming OSCE Chair, that good governance should be the theme for next year's Economic and Environmental Forum enjoyed broad support in the Committee.

Discussions on sustainable transport development, one of the Forum topics this year, may well be translated into a relevant decision for the Ministerial Council at year's end, as may plans for enhancing the confidence-building role of the OSCE's economic and environmental activities.

The Committee is also exploring the important and fundamental question of how to unlock what is often referred to as "the unexploited potential of the second dimension". The Committee's chairperson, with the assistance of a Group of Friends, has developed a proposal for a draft Permanent Council decision that is currently under discussion within the Committee. If adopted, the decision will formalize the progress achieved and further modernize work in the second dimension.

This year, participating States will have the opportunity to review OSCE economic and environmental activities at a new event, the Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting (EEDIM), scheduled for 17 to 19 October in Vienna. The Committee elaborated the mandate and organizational modalities of this new reviewing mechanism, which was then approved by the Permanent Council.

HUMAN DIMENSION COMMITTEE

Ambassador Thomas Greminger of Switzerland, who assumed the Chair of the Human Dimension Committee this year, started consulting with participating States early. His goal was to design an ambitious but balanced work programme that would enhance trust, produce concrete outcomes, and allocate time and resources efficiently.

Since the beginning of the year, the Committee has followed a structured agenda: discussion of a main topic is

followed by preparation and follow-up to human dimension events, voluntary reports by participating States and briefings by OSCE executive structures.

Six months later, the Committee has witnessed interesting developments. In the first six Committee meetings, 15 participating States took the opportunity to voluntarily report on their implementation of human dimension commitments. Moldova, Austria and the Netherlands described their follow-up to ODIHR's reports on their parliamentary or presidential elections. Canada, Poland, Croatia and Georgia shared best practices in the fields of multiculturalism and diversity, prevention of hate crimes, reform of the penal code and freedom of the media, respectively.

Briefings by OSCE executive structures have also been insightful. Janez Lenarčič, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), spoke about ODIHR's experience in observing more than 230 election processes. Roland Bless, Principal Advisor to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, gave a comprehensive overview of the situation of media freedom. ODIHR experts gave presentations on combating torture and on the Kyiv Recommendations on Judicial Independence. The OSCE Office in Tajikistan introduced a plan for authorities and civil society to prepare and follow up to OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meetings that could become a best practice.

A mid-year review of the Human Dimension work would confirm that it has succeeded in concentrating on substantive issues. Relatively little time was lost on negotiating formal Permanent Council decisions on human dimension events.

What carries the work in all three Committees is a remarkable team spirit, a high degree of consensus on strategic goals and a culture of candid exchange of views. Little surprise, then, that there are members who regret that they do not meet more often. Some would even say that the Committees are the place where the heart of this Organization beats strongest.

This article is based on contributions by Ambassador Heiner Horsten, Chairperson of the Security Committee, Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk, Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee and Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee.



Defining the lines that divide us

by Jérôme Bouyjou

If asked, most of us, as citizens, would probably say that in the present day, apart from a few well-known disputes, the drawing of boundaries between OSCE participating States is a non-issue. But in fact, territorial ambiguities in the region abound. Some are the result of new international boundaries created since the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Some are a result of geographical movement: a river that defines a boundary changes course. And sometimes, there are discrepancies between treaty descriptions or maps and the practice on the ground.

Which leads us to a second popular misconception: that once two states have agreed on allocation of territory, tracing the boundaries on the map and on the ground is a straightforward, purely technical process. It is, in fact, complex and full of political pitfalls.

The OSCE participating States agreed on a common Border Security and Management Concept in 2005, embracing the political vision of open and secure borders in a free, democratic and more integrated OSCE area. Since that time, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre's Borders Team has developed a rich programme of support for the realization of this vision. But time and again uncertainties and long standing disagreements about where the boundaries actually run have gotten in the way of progress.

At the request of the Lithuanian Chairmanship, the Borders Team organized a seminar in Vilnius on 31 May and 1 June 2011 entitled Applied Issues in International Land Boundary Delimitation/Demarcation Practices. Presentations by academics and experts exposed the border officials, lawyers and diplomats from 20 participating States who attended to an array of models and methods of boundary-making and to possibilities for technical assistance. And not insignificantly, representatives of neighbouring countries had an opportunity to interact on the margins of the meeting. The exercise was

about inclusiveness in defining the lines that divide us.

A COMPLEX PROCESS

The line that separates two states needs to be defined by mutual agreement. This is a task border experts call delimitation or delineation. It is matter of negotiation between states, and ideally should be as unambiguous as possible. Delimitation is usually followed by demarcation: physically marking the agreed dividing line on the ground, typically with cement or metal monuments at set intervals. Delimitation and demarcation are mutually dependent. The experts in Vilnius concurred that many tensions can be avoided if political delimitation negotiations, even at the highest level, anticipate problems that may develop on the ground.

Boundary-related negotiation is a complex process. Bilateral negotiations are usually, but not always, the best option. Ambassador Andreja Metelko-Zgombic of Croatia pointed to the examples of her country's negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina resulting in a boundary agreement on the one hand, and its submission of the question of the boundary with Slovenia to international arbitration on the other. A middle course is using the good offices of a third party.

Delimitation is usually carried out by boundary commissions. Experts stressed the importance of empowering them to negotiate. Experience has shown that frustrations arising when commissions lack the authority to broker conclusive agreements can cause relations between states to deteriorate. On the positive side, skilful delimitation can be an instrument of conflict prevention. "With a flexible and adequate mandate, boundary commissions have been able to resolve many disputes that could have sparked conflict," said John Donaldson of Durham University.

A boundary marker on the Lithuanian side of the Lithuanian-Belarus border. (OSCE)



Equally important is that a commission spends time in the field and takes account of the human element, the perceptions of people living near the boundaries. "It is crucial for residents to understand the delimitation and demarcation process and how it may affect their lives; this helps prevent conflicts," Nurlan Sakenov, of the Foreign Ministry of Kazakhstan remarked. Sometimes communities straddle the proposed lines, sometimes there are issues of property rights or land use. There are many possibilities for compromise. Land can be exchanged, a forest for a field, for instance.

Senior negotiators from Lithuania and Belarus spoke about the 13 years' work of the joint Lithuanian-Belarusian boundary commission to delimit the ambiguous boundary inherited from the Soviet period, completed in 2007. "The co-chairpersons of the commission were entrusted to make revisions to the line, providing there was an equal transfer of total territory," explained Zenonas Kumetaitis of the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry. "The commission sought to respect the boundaries of existing land and property and retain the integrity of transport and communication infrastructure on either side," he added.

DRIVING THE PILLARS INTO THE GROUND

Demarcation, the physical marking of boundaries, is a complex process in itself, but should not be seen as a once-off procedure. It is very much influenced by and interlinked with the delimitation stage. "Discrepancies between the information gathered at the delimitation stage and the situation on the ground are a problem, and the quality of demarcation depends heavily on the quality of delimitation data" said Gennadiy Breskalenko, of the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine. In some cases, the demarcation stage is an opportunity to improve inadequate delimitation, with marker locations being incorporated into the official boundary documents.

The nature and frequency of boundary markers depend on the physical and human geography of the boundary. Different approaches may be needed along a single line. Markers must be visible to borderland populations. "Unless they know where the boundary is located, neighbouring states risk encroachment of settlement or land use across the boundary, disputes about land ownership and resource entitlement and development of no-man's land areas where potentially valuable land remains unused and law enforcement uncertainty encourages criminal activity," explained Durham University's Martin Pratt.

But the process is not over once the pillars have been driven into the ground. They have to be maintained, sometimes replaced. Geography changes. Uncertainties arise. Good boundary maintenance can resolve ambiguities that could spark a dispute, prevent a conflict over boundary definition before it can escalate. Al Arsenaault, of Canada, spoke of his experiences with one of the oldest permanent boundary commissions,

the Canada-United States International Border Commission (IBC), which has been in operation since 1925 and in which he served as deputy Canadian commissioner. Over 8,600 boundary markers define the longest land boundary in the world. The IBC keeps boundary maps updated and retains comprehensive data for each boundary marker. Annual field operations are led by the two deputy commissioners, who maintain close contact throughout the year. The trust within the IBC is so well developed that either side is permitted to replace and repair pillars unilaterally and communicate the results to the other side.

A CHANCE FOR THE OSCE TO BUILD CONFIDENCE

While negotiations on boundary issues are sovereign matters of participating States, the OSCE is able to provide a forum for discussion of best practices and obstacles that others have experienced and are willing to share. The seminar in Vilnius was the Organization's first opportunity to engage on the topic. The experience showed that exposure to examples of peaceful settlement of boundary disputes can be beneficial to participating States currently experiencing difficulties with boundary issues.

Clearly, boundary definition is a topic well suited to the OSCE's mandate for promoting stability in its region. Just as poorly negotiated or demarcated boundaries can be the cause of attrition in the relations between states, maintaining good practices in the processes of delimitation and demarcation can be a way to build inclusiveness. As is always the case in matters of conflict prevention, political will, pragmatism and the willingness to compromise are the keys to success.

Jérôme Bouyjou is Programme Management Officer in the Borders Team of the Conflict Prevention Centre in the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna.



Participants in the OSCE seminar on international land boundary delimitation and demarcation practices in Vilnius, 31 May to 1 June 2011. (OSCE/Jérôme Bouyjou)



INTERVIEW WITH GORAN SVILANOVIĆ, CO-ORDINATOR OF OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Engagement for Good Governance

Goran Svilanović is the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. He spoke about his work with the OSCE Magazine editor, Ursula Froese, on 13 July 2011.

Ursula Froese: The OSCE region has seen many changes since the early days of OSCE economic co-operation, which focused on assisting young democracies with their transition to a market economy. What is the main goal of OSCE economic activities today?

Goran Svilanović: The changes you mention are indeed dramatic. It would be difficult today to say for any of the 56 participating States that they are not market economies. This is a huge change. On the other hand, there is an economic and financial crisis, which is affecting most if not all of these economies. The labels market or non-market economy will not be sufficient to explain economies in this century and in the decades to come. Some authors are using the labels “liberal capitalism” and “authoritarian capitalism”, but I am not sure that this is a sufficient explanation of the changes we are living in, either. New concepts will be needed, and we are going to be part of the process.

If we look back a few months at what was

happening in some of the OSCE Partner countries in North Africa, and ask ourselves what people were protesting about, one answer is that they wished to increase respect for human rights in their countries. Indeed, this was and still is the case. But, and I would like to insist on this, they were also demanding a new approach to the way their societies are governed.

The OSCE assists participating States, at their request, with ensuring accountability in their management of public funds, with implementing international standards for fighting corruption and money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, and with effective management of migration. What ties all these activities together is that they aim to improve the quality of governance. The same goes for our activities in the environmental field. When we deal with water management, we are actually dealing with governance, with how the country is responding to the challenges presented

Goran Svilanović, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, speaks at a conference on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Serbia, Kragujevac, 28 April 2010. (OSCE/ Milan Obradovic)

by scarcity of resources. When we deal with energy, we are also trying to improve governance in this field. So we see the engagement for good governance as the overall engagement of this Office. And as the example of North Africa shows, the relevance of the issues our Office deals with is only going to increase in the coming years.

The theme for next year's OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum under the Irish Chairmanship will be "Promoting Security and Stability through Good Governance."

It is not only our Office in Vienna but also the OSCE field presences that are doing very important work in this regard, on issues that are sometimes not very high on the agenda here in Vienna but are very important for respective participating States. One example is the reform of regulations related to economic development in certain countries, the so-called guillotine of regulations. Too many regulations, especially if they are unclear or overlapping, make room for corruption. Business becomes too difficult. This is an issue in my own country, in Serbia, and I have seen efforts recently by the OSCE field operation in Armenia guided by the same idea, that business has to be easier to implement. Legal structures need to be reformed and the OSCE is assisting in this respect.

Can economic and environmental activities also function as a confidence-building measure in situations of conflict?

Recent statistics show that 40 per cent of all conflicts that turn violent are linked in some way to a struggle for control of natural resources. In these cases, co-operation with regard to these resources can relax tensions. Even where a dispute over shared natural resources is not de facto driving a conflict, economic and environmental co-operation can be a valuable tool for building trust between both sides.

We have, for instance, a regional project on fire management in the South Caucasus that brings together fire fighters and Ministry officials from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in joint training. Another example is water co-operation, where we conduct several sub-regional projects developing joint water management institutions between participating States. In Moldova, the OSCE supports an expert working group on agriculture and ecology that builds confidence among citizens affected by the conflict over Transdniestria.

What steps have you taken to improve the organization of the annual OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum?

The Economic and Environmental Forum — we speak of the Forum process, because it is

not one event, but a cycle of meetings — is the most important activity of this Office, attended by more than 400 participants. Until last year, the cycle consisted of four meetings, beginning in the autumn. This year, we have restructured the Forum, we now have three events in one calendar year, bringing the Forum cycle into line with the term of the OSCE Chairmanship. And leaving one slot empty for something new. This is going to be the Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting, which will be held for the first time this year, in Vienna from 17 to 19 October.

The Forum is always organized around one theme determined by the OSCE Chairmanship. This year, it is sustainable energy and sustainable transport, last year it was transport, the year before it was migration. Naturally, when we focus on one theme, we can never really satisfy the interests of all the 56 participating States. Also, there is much more we are doing over a year, both in this Office and in the field missions. The Implementation Meeting will be an opportunity for our Office to present other activities. And of course, it will be October — time to discuss deliverables to the Ministerial. This is why I think this might be a very interesting event.

The OSCE is chairing the ENVSEC Initiative* this year. How are you working to move ENVSEC forward in your position as its Chairperson?

Our primary objective for the OSCE Chairmanship of ENVSEC is to strengthen the security dimension of its work programme in the OSCE region. One of the concrete outputs of our Chairmanship will be a security study, currently under preparation, which will elaborate on the current and emerging links between the environment and security in the pan-European region and identify new opportunities for the ENVSEC Initiative.

We are putting emphasis on increasing the Initiative's visibility. On 18 May, we organized a presentation on its work programmes for the OSCE participating States; I will be making a similar presentation at NATO headquarters in October. ENVSEC will be participating in the Seventh Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Astana in September. And in December, at the UNECE regional preparatory meeting for next year's global environmental conference, Rio+20, we will be working closely with our ENVSEC partners to draw attention

* The Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative is a six-agency partnership comprising the OSCE, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as an associated partner.

to our best practices in the promotion of sustainable development and public participation in environmental matters — for instance, our support of the Aarhus Centres.

We are also helping to organize the Balkan Ministerial Forum on Environment and Security, which will be hosted by Serbia during its South East European Co-operation Process Presidency.

Is the OSCE addressing the security implications of climate change?

I believe that climate change will have a profound impact on tomorrow's political, economic and security environment of our planet. The debate over the OSCE's role in addressing the security implications of climate change began with the adoption of the Madrid Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Security in December 2007, but the participating States have yet to reach consensus on a possible Ministerial Council Decision on the matter.

We have contributed to the UN Secretary-General's report on climate change and are currently co-operating with the European Environmental Agency to develop scenarios for quantifying the impact of climate change on natural resources, energy and food availability — in Eastern Europe and soon in Central Asia.

In your past work, you have been involved with human rights matters: you headed the National Council of Human Rights of Serbia from 1994 to 1996 and later you worked with the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights. Does that affect your approach to economic and environmental co-operation?

I did a lot of work in the field of human rights in past years. Now I am dealing with totally different issues, and at the OSCE, I am happy to be able to bring these two areas together. I am actually grateful for this question because it gives me the opportunity to explain something I really care about, and if you permit I will give a somewhat longer answer.

I am a lawyer by training. In law, you are taught to think in terms of a hierarchy of laws — you say: this particular law is written like it is because it has to be in accordance with a higher law, and this higher law has to be in accordance with the constitution, and the constitution has to reflect, what? In the end, you arrive at what we call the supreme legitimacy factor.

Philosophers and lawyers have of course given very different answers to what this supreme legitimacy factor might be. But we can say that a good half of the twentieth century was defined by the notion of human rights as the supreme legitimacy factor in the international arena. The whole system of the

United Nations is really designed to provide for peace and security in the world through implementation and respect for human rights. This idea has prevailed from the end of World War II to the present, the beginning of the twenty-first century.

But today, if we look at the changes around us, we can observe that next to the notion of human rights, other important supreme legitimacy factors are emerging in international politics. If you try to understand why countries are acting the way they are in the international arena, you will see that they are trying to make sure that they have sufficient energy for their societies; they are explaining their actions by saying: we are fighting terrorism, they are saying: we would like to mitigate climate change and we invite you to co-operate in this respect. So if you really try to determine the key legitimacy factor in the international arena, you will see that it is of course respect for human rights, but it is also energy security, anti-terrorist engagement, and climate change or environmental security. And that changes everything: the positions of countries and the way they co-operate.

This Organization is very well suited to dealing with this change, because since its inception it has been about politico-military co-operation, co-operation in the field of human rights and also about co-operation on economic and environmental issues.

I believe we should be realistic and honest in assessing events around us. Human rights remains the most important legitimacy factor, as participating States affirmed in the Astana Commemorative Declaration at the OSCE Summit last December, but it cannot go alone. It cannot go without these other very important issues, like climate change mitigation, or energy security or anti-terrorist engagement. They go hand in hand. And this is a big change. The notion of comprehensive security, as it has been defined in the OSCE, provides a good response to the changed world.

Spotlight on OSCE economic and environmental activities

Economic and Environmental Forum Process

The Economic and Environmental Forum is the main and the highest level annual meeting within the second dimension of the OSCE. The theme of the Forum, proposed on a yearly basis by the OSCE Chairmanship, is agreed upon by all 56 participating States. The Forum process is divided into Preparatory Meetings and a Concluding Meeting. The objective of these meetings is to give political stimulus to the dialogue on economic and environmental issues linked to security, as well as to contribute to the elaboration of specific recommendations and follow-up activities.

The Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative

Responding to environment and security challenges requires joint action and expertise of international partners. The six-agency ENVSEC Initiative (OSCE, UNDP, UNEP, UNECE, REC and NATO as associated partner) implements projects to strengthen co-operation between and within countries that are vulnerable to environmental damage and competition over natural resources. Within ENVSEC, the OCEEA co-ordinates the ENVSEC work programme in the South Caucasus.

Water and security

Governing water can involve governing conflicting interest. International waterways are used simultaneously by several countries, for hydropower, agriculture or industry, with sometimes conflicting interests. The OCEEA has facilitated water agreements on the Dniester River in Eastern Europe, the Sava River in South-Eastern Europe and the Chu-Talas River in Central Asia. Technical co-operation on the Kura-Araks River (Southern Caucasus) is underway.

Hazardous waste and security

Unsustainable use of resources and pollution are legacies of the past that still need solutions. Tensions can arise through the illegal transfer of hazardous waste. That is why the OCEEA has supported capacity-building of border guards and customs officials to detect the illegal traffic of hazardous waste in Eastern Europe and is preparing to do the same in Central Asia.

Civil society and environmental security

The OCEEA supports a network of 32 Aarhus Centres in ten countries in the OSCE region that facilitate public access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. Through its small grants programme, Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE), the OSCE supports projects to increase environmental security in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Climate change and security

Climate change is a global problem with local consequences. The OCEEA is developing climate change security scenarios for different OSCE sub-regions to provide early warning on possible conflicts and come up with concrete recommendations.

Energy and security

The increasing energy interdependence among producing, consuming and transit countries in the OSCE area requires co-operative dialogue. The OCEEA, based on its mandate from participating States, promotes dialogue and facilitates the exchange of best practices on energy security.

Economic good governance and security

Good governance, transparency and sound economic policies attract more domestic and foreign investment and support sustainable development, stability and security. The OCEEA assists participating States in the adoption and implementation of their international commitments in the areas of combating corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism. It facilitates exchange of experience and best practice, provides legal assistance and supports training activities to increase institutional capacities in implementing more effective anti-corruption and anti-money laundering/countering of terrorism financing measures. Particular attention is being given to the inclusion of civil society and the private sector in the activities.

Migration and security

International migration continues to increase, with more and more countries affected by its economic, social, cultural and security implications. The OCEEA assists the participating States in implementing more comprehensive and effective migration policies by providing a broad regional platform for information and experience exchange. It has also produced guidelines, handbooks and training tools on labour migration management to serve as guidance and training materials for interested states. In support of evidence-based policy making, it is currently implementing a project on harmonized migration data collection and sharing.

Transport and security

Secure transportation networks are crucial to trade and regional economic co-operation, development and stability. The OCEEA supports the adoption and implementation of legal instruments related to transport, trade and border crossing facilitation. It has provided political support to the development of Euro-Asian transport networks, promoted the dissemination of best practices and standards, assisted in promoting integrity in customs and facilitated public-private dialogue. In the field of transport security the OCEEA and the UNECE plan later this year to implement a project aimed at promoting a better understanding of inland transport security challenges across the OSCE region and at improving the co-ordination and effectiveness of national and international efforts in addressing these challenges.



DOSSIER

The Aarhus Centres

HOW IT ALL BEGAN: THE AARHUS CENTRES AND THE AARHUS CONVENTION

by Esra Buttanri

Addressing environment and security challenges requires dialogue and consultation between countries and within countries among a wide array of stakeholders. By setting principles for access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)'s Aarhus Convention provides an exceptional tool in this respect. Adopted on 25 June 1998 in the Danish city of the same name and entered into force in 2001, the Convention broke new ground in spelling out citizens' environmental rights.

To turn the Convention's principles into concrete action, the OSCE, through its field operations and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, began establishing Aarhus Centres in 2002. Since then, working closely with host governments among

its participating States and in close partnership with the UNECE Aarhus Convention Secretariat and the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, the OSCE has been helping to set up and support a network which now covers 32 Centres in ten countries — Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Serbia and Tajikistan.

These Centres have enabled the development of a new model and understanding whereby public institutions, local and regional administrations and civil society organizations jointly address environmental challenges in their localities and seek solutions. They have become a bridge between citizens and authorities. In many countries, they also provide the means for coalition building and partnerships among civil society organizations.

The institutional set-up and

management of Aarhus Centres vary from country to country and even within a country. Many are hosted by the Ministries of Environment, while others rely on logistical support from local administrations and non-governmental organizations.

The Aarhus Centres oversee a wide range of activities. They disseminate environmental information, create public awareness, organize public hearings, monitor environmental hotspots, provide legal advice, support local environmental planning, and engage youth and women in environmental initiatives. More and more, they serve as public outreach facilities for initiatives in the field of environment and security.

Esra Buttanri is Environmental Affairs Advisor in the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

A BRICK IN THE ROAD TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND A GREEN ECONOMY

by Ella Behlyarova

The OSCE has been a truly outstanding partner in many different areas of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)'s work, and the Aarhus Centres have significantly contributed to strengthening the impact of the Aarhus Convention and recently also of its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. In the most recent round of reports submitted by governments on their national implementation of the Convention, it was clear that in many countries, Aarhus Centres play an important role. They serve as sources of environmental knowledge and professional expertise for both the government and the public, and in many cases they are used as a channel of communication and co-operation between authorities and non-governmental organizations.

In order for people to make informed environmental choices and truly participate in a sustainable society, they need to be aware of relevant information and of their rights as citizens. The Aarhus Centres are there to increase that awareness. At the same time, governments can benefit from their support while developing and implementing policies to promote sustainability and green economic growth. The Aarhus Centres therefore provide a valuable service in two directions, so we can speak of a win-win situation.

The Aarhus Convention is the only internationally binding instrument that embodies the principle of participatory environmental governance that was affirmed in Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development adopted almost 20 years ago. As we move

now towards Rio+20, Aarhus Centres are an additional brick in the road we are trying to build together towards sustainable development and a green economy.

We know that more and more Aarhus Centres are being opened in different countries in the UNECE region, and I can only greet that development with enthusiasm and encouragement. We see some new areas for potential co-operation, such as helping countries to comply with the decisions of the Convention's Meeting of the Parties, based on the recommendations of the Compliance Committee, and joining forces under the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative.

Ella Behlyarova is responsible for the Aarhus Convention at the UNECE Secretariat in Geneva.

< View from Khinalig, Azerbaijan's highest settlement, into the Khinalig River valley (OSCE/Zahra Ahmadova)

DEFENDING PUBLIC CONTROL OVER THE IMPACT OF GOLD MINING: THE AARHUS CENTRE IN OSH

by Kanybek Isabaev

People have been mining gold from the riverbeds in the Chatkal district in western Kyrgyzstan for thousands of years. In the present day, the gold mining industry here is undergoing rapid development. Foreign companies have been conducting geological exploration, mining and building plants for processing gold since 2000.

The environmental and social issues surrounding this development are complex. Mining operations and processing plants provide local people with jobs and villages with funds. But on the other hand, they cause damage to the environment: deforestation, water pollution and damage to land resources.

In early 2007, the environmental non-governmental organization FOAT sent a letter to the Aarhus Information Centre in Osh on behalf of the residents of Kanysh-Kya describing the problems that were being caused by the mining of gold: pollution, deforestation, destruction of pastures and the water protection zones of rivers. They requested help in regaining control over their environment. The Centre responded by providing training, in Kanysh-Kya and also in the town of Terek-Sai, on how to exercise the right to public participation in environmental matters under the Aarhus Convention.

A group of residents who had taken part in the training sessions created a working group. On 17 and 18 May 2007, they organized a public hearing in Terek-Sai and issued a number of demands to the companies doing geological exploration and placer gold mining in the Chatkal district: the disturbed areas where companies were working should be restored; companies should comply with the legal environmental requirements of the Kyrgyz Republic; they should employ local people and hold annual information meetings. The process of public participation was launched.

A SUCCESS STORY

Four years later, countless meetings, letters and telephone conversations by committed groups and individuals have brought change. Taking responsibility for the social and environmental impact of their activities has become part of the way mining companies do business in the Chatkal district. Funding from Norway and funding and expert advice from the OSCE,



the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative and the Aarhus Information Centre have been important elements in this success, as has the co-operation of the Chatkal Regional State Administration and the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry.

A milestone on the way was a meeting held in the neighboring Ala-Buka district on 12 May 2009, in which many of the demands made at the Terek-Sai hearing were translated into promises. Gold mining company representatives, residents, government officials and media from the Chatkal, Ala-buka and Aksy districts engaged in a heated debate on the industry's social and environmental impact. The meeting ended with the adoption of a number of resolutions: companies pledged to comply with environmental legislation and to register in the place where they carried out their activities — an important point as this lets communities benefit from tax revenues. They agreed to hire local people and provide social security benefits. Also, it was agreed that the Ministry of Natural Resources should be requested to revoke



Chatkal district residents at a public hearing held by mining companies, 5 June 2010 (Kanybek Isabaev)

the licenses of companies defaulting on their licence agreements.

Today, progress has been made on all of these counts. According to information provided by the Chatkal State Tax Service, four out of the 12 companies working in the region are registered and paying tax in the Chatkal district, and the other eight are in the process of registering.

A special commission created under the Ministry of Natural Resources is studying the legality of the licenses for exploration and development issued to companies. Several licenses had been withdrawn by the decision of the commission.

Mining companies now regularly hold public hearings: one was held on 5 June 2010 and the latest was on 8 June 2011. Most companies working in the district have presented information about their activities at these meetings.

Companies are hiring local people: according to the District Department of Migration and Employment, 1,264 people are presently employed in mining companies in Chatkal region. And they are providing social support: the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Chatkal Regional State Administration and gold mining

companies are planning to disburse 30 million soms in social support in 2011.

Companies responsible for damaging land have begun restoring disturbed areas: biological restoration has been carried out on 34 hectares of land so far.

This is not to say that gold mining does not continue to be a source of environmental concern and tension in the Chatkal district. Just weeks ago, residents of the towns Terek-Sai and Kyzyltokoy protested against the conditions under which local people in the Ala-Buka gold plant are being hired. They expressed their anger about pollution and deterioration of road conditions and demanded that the Chatkal and Kasansai Rivers be cleared of harmful waste. The Aarhus Centre in Osh provided its expertise and advice. Today, one can at least be sure that as solutions are sought to resolve the dispute, public demands will be a part of the equation.

Kanybek Isabaev is the manager of the Aarhus Information Centre in Osh.

THE AARHUS CENTRE NETWORK IN TAJIKISTAN

by Nargis Hamrabaeva

Tajikistan has four Aarhus Centres: in Dushanbe, Khujand, Kurgan-Tyube and Khorog. The four regional Aarhus Centres signed a memorandum on 24 April 2009, creating a single network. “It’s more than just a partnership, it obliges us to share information, to ask each other for advice on any matter,” says Munira Rakhmatullaeva, who manages the Aarhus Centre in Kurgan-Tyube.

DUSHANBE: A PRODUCTIVE DECADE

Shortly after Tajikistan signed the Aarhus Convention in 2001, the country’s first Aarhus Centre was established in Dushanbe, with OSCE support within the framework of an Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative project. The Centre can look back on a productive decade. It has reviewed and lobbied for environmental legislation, translated the Aarhus Convention into Tajik and held public hearings on Tajikistan’s national environmental strategy. With assistance from the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, it has prepared television broadcasts, conducted 15 seminars on the Aarhus Convention throughout the country and published quarterly environmental bulletins and the journal *Nature and Life*.

The Aarhus Centre in Dushanbe has also created the Club of Journalists. Journalists gather regularly at the Centre to discuss current and vital environmental issues: global warming, waste management, pollution and ways to better monitor it, land degradation, natural disasters prevention and response and radiation hazards. They exchange professional skills: how to find information and work with data.

KHUIJAND: PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Aarhus Centre in Khujand, in the northern province of Sughd, also works with journalists to get its message across. “Journalists were reluctant to write on environmental issues, and we explained to them that their coverage could radically change things. We have organized four festivals of ecological journalism in Sughd and we were partners in organizing a regional festival for Central Asian journalists,” says Dmitry Prudskikh, the Centre’s manager.

Radioactive waste safety is a hot environmental topic in Sughd, where over 400 hectares covered with uranium tailings were left abandoned at the former uranium mines in Taboshar. Since it opened in 2006, the Centre has distributed materials and organized many discussion events to give residents the information they need.

This year, the Khujand Centre began working to implement the Aarhus Convention’s third pillar: access to justice. A participant in the Centre’s training on environmental rights took the Khujand city administration



A peach orchard planted at 2,300 metres above sea level near the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border in a project of the Aarhus Centre in Khorog, Tajikistan. (Farkhod Abdurakhmonov)

to court for refusing to provide information on a distillery’s emissions and won the case. “This is the first time in the history of jurisprudence in Tajikistan that a citizen has defended the right to environmental information. Government officials dealing with environmental protection standards should be aware of the Aarhus Convention, of the fact that every person has the right to unimpeded access to environmental information,” comments Prudskikh.

KURGAN-TYUBE: ENVIRONMENTAL DEBATE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

The Aarhus Centre in Kurgan-Tyube, in the south of Tajikistan, was established through a non-governmental organization with the support of the OSCE Office in 2009. It answers requests for information, provides legal advice, publishes environmental newsletters, holds roundtables and conducts environmental clean-up events.

Among the most interesting projects of the Centre, according to manager Rakhmatullaeva, is the organization of environmental summer retreats for executives and state officials. “In order to effectively inform the public about their legal environmental rights, you must first prepare the specialists,” she claims.

The Kurgan-Tyube Centre hosts a weekly Environmental Debating Club, in which students come together to discuss and propose solutions to environmental problems in the region. Rakhmatullaeva recounts that club members have already had occasion to apply knowledge gained during the debates to defend their rights — with regard to the illegal collection of land tax, for example. >>

KHOROG: CO-OPERATING WITH AFGHAN COUNTERPARTS

The Aarhus Centre in Khorog, the youngest of the Aarhus Centres in Tajikistan, is hosted by the Milal Inter association of entrepreneurs and mountain farmers of Gorno-Badakhshan (GBO). It promotes sustainable land management to prevent degradation of mountain ecosystems. For example, in one project orchards were planted in a dried swamp in the Rushan region and at 2,300 metres above sea level in the Shugnan region.

The Khorog Centre focuses on co-operation with Afghan colleagues. Boimurodov Alibahshev, the Centre's manager, notes that GBO

and Afghan Badakhshan have a single ecosystem, so that it is possible to implement many joint environmental projects. "We taught our Afghan counterparts how best to cultivate potatoes, which they now grow with success and sell on the same frontier market as we do," he explains.

The Aarhus Centres Network in Tajikistan continues to advance its activities with the support of the OSCE, the Government of Norway, and the ENVSEC Initiative.

Nargis Hamrabaeva is a journalist with the news agency Asia Plus.



DEVELOPING A POLLUTANT REGISTER: AARHUS CENTRES IN KAZAKHSTAN

by Gulsara Yeskendirowa

Emissions of pollutants into the air, water and soil damage the fragile environment of our planet. At an extraordinary meeting in 2003, the parties to the Aarhus Convention decided to adopt a Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs). PRTRs are inventories of pollution from industrial sites and other sources. Since the PRTR Protocol stipulates that these inventories have to be publically accessible, they are powerful instruments to force polluters to change their behaviour. So far, 27 parties to the Aarhus Convention have signed and ratified the PRTR Protocol. Kazakhstan may soon be prepared to join them.

This September, at the seventh Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Astana, Kazakhstan's National Aarhus Centre held a side-event together with the UNECE Aarhus Convention Secretariat, in which it presented its project to develop a PRTR for Kazakhstan that complies to the Protocol's requirements.

In 2009, first steps were made towards registering pollutants in Kazakhstan when the NGO Green Women created a pilot register for companies working in the eastern part of the country. The OSCE Centre in Astana provided assistance.

The register can be viewed on the website <http://kz-prtr.org>.

In 2010, the OSCE Centre in Astana extended its assistance to the Ministry of Environmental Protection to review national legislation for compliance with the PRTR Protocol's obligations.

This year, the OSCE joined forces with the National Aarhus Centre in bringing Kazakhstan closer to setting up a national PRTR. Experts, including a specialist in geographic information system mapping, prepared detailed recommendations for organizing and maintaining a register and developed a national pilot version. The pilot is designed as a website and is currently located on the Aarhus Centre's server.

MARITIME SECURITY

In addition to the National Aarhus Centre in Astana, Kazakhstan hosts two Aarhus Centres near the Caspian Sea, both supported by the OSCE through an Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative project that also received contributions from the Government of Norway. The Aarhus Centre in Atyrau focuses mainly on bringing government, civil society and industry representatives together to address challenges associated with oil pollution and oil spills. It works on a wide range of issues in four different regions, with NGOs and journalists. The Aarhus Centre in Aktau opened its doors in May of this year. With continued assistance from the OSCE and its partners, the Aarhus Centres network in Kazakhstan will expand further to support public involvement in environmental matters.

Gulsara Yeskendirowa is the Director of the National Aarhus Centre in Astana.

CIVIC ACTION FOR SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENT

In many ways, Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE) is a simple idea, yet it is impressive in its aims. Launched by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities in 2009 and supported under the umbrella of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, the programme provides small grants in the range of €5,000 to €10,000 to civil society groups in regions where people committed to promoting good environmental governance may be struggling to obtain financial and political support.

CASE was first launched in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Since 2010, CASE grants are also being awarded in Tajikistan,

where particular attention is being paid to supporting rural NGOs in remote areas that lack the resources available in the capital for raising environmental awareness. The CASE programme benefits from and reinforces the work of the Aarhus Centres in all three countries.

Appropriate projects are selected by the CASE National Screening Board, composed of representatives of the government, civil society and international organizations, and approved in accordance with the agreed CASE strategy for that country. So far, 36 projects have received CASE support. Austria, Canada, Luxembourg, the United States, and Statoil have led the way in financing the programme.

Shepherds
near Khinalig,
Azerbaijan. (OSCE/
Zahra Ahmadova)

CASE IN AZERBAIJAN

by Zahra Ahmadova

The picturesque village Khinalig, on the mighty Shahdag Mountain, is the highest human settlement in Azerbaijan. A serpentine road takes one through fascinating landscapes of green slopes and fast-flowing rivers to the village, where traditionally people's livelihoods have relied upon sheep breeding and handicrafts. While the latter has become obsolete, animal husbandry has increased dramatically, putting pressure on the grasslands around the village. In fact, this rapid increase mirrors a countrywide trend.

"The increase in the intensity of grazing has environmental implications, among them soil erosion and desertification", says Gasham Abayev, who heads the non-governmental organization Support to Development of Tourism in Khinalig. His organization has launched a project with financial support from the Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE) programme to monitor summer pastures around Khinalig and prepare recommendations for local farmers and policymakers in Guba and Baku.

In Azerbaijan, two years into its implementation, CASE has supported 11 projects throughout the country within the context of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative.



The environmental impact of mining, deforestation, landslide risk, hazardous medical waste and the agricultural impact of climate change are some of the problems they deal with.

An important focus is the environmentally responsible use of energy. The OSCE Office in Baku has been promoting renewable energy sources since 2009. Now a CASE grant in the village of Novkhany on the Absheron peninsula, where there are many greenhouses producing vegetables and flowers, is disseminating information about solar energy. Currently, the farmers burn gas or other combustible >>

fuels to heat their greenhouses. The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus), which is carrying out the project, will match the CASE grant by purchasing and installing a solar panel in a competitively selected greenhouse.

Another CASE project educated young leaders in the link between energy and security and the three pillars of the Aarhus Convention: public access to information, public participation and public access to justice on environmental matters, so that they can pass this knowledge on to their peers in local communities across Azerbaijan.

Essential to the success of the CASE programme in Azerbaijan has been the close partnership with the Ministry of Ecology and National Resources, the United Nations Development Programme, Statoil and the EkoSfera Public Union, who have rendered strategic advice and assisted with project selection through their engagement with the CASE National Screening Board.

Zahra Ahmadova is the Co-ordinator for CASE Azerbaijan in the Economic and Environmental Unit of the OSCE Office in Baku.



Women in the village of Khinalig, Azerbaijan (OSCE/Zahra Ahmadova)

Arsenic deposits at an abandoned mining waste facility in Alaverdi, Armenia. (ENVSEC/V. Mello)



CASE IN ARMENIA

by William Hanlon and James McMordie

Armenia's Aarhus Centres are pioneers of the Aarhus movement in the OSCE. The first Centres, supported by the OSCE Office in Yerevan, opened in 2002. Meanwhile the network has grown to 15 Centres, in almost all the regions of the country.

The Aarhus Centres are an important element in environmental governance in Armenia. They create conditions for effective public participation and, over the years, have served as a platform for organizing often heated discussions on environmental concerns with state and local administrations, village communities and environmentalists, contributing to the formation of local environmental movements and influencing policy decisions.

Since 2009, an important function of the Aarhus Centres in Armenia has been to support projects under the Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE) programme. CASE first began to materialize in Armenia when the OSCE Office in Yerevan prepared the Strategic Plan for its implementation in the country in 2009. The National Screening Board adopted it and used it as a basis for selecting projects for an initial phase commencing in February and March of 2010, on topics as diverse as sustainable transport in Yerevan, organic farming

in the Tavush region and waste management, green zone development or gender sensitivity in the Goris region. This was followed by a second and third phase later in the year, with a total of 17 projects approved.

One of the first grants went to the Anahit Women's Support Centre in the city of Alaverdi. The members of the Centre had concerns about a legacy mining waste facility containing arsenic that was in poor condition. In fact, they suspected that the condition of the waste fill could pose a risk to groundwater and as such a considerable health hazard for the local population. Another concern was that the location of >>



Debris on the shore of the Hrazdan River, Armenia. A CASE project is analysing the environmental risk posed by the dumping of waste into the river. (ENVSEC/ V. Mello)

the facility on a hilltop close to the city of Alaverdi could be prone to landslides and threaten residential areas. The group sought and gained a CASE grant to carry out an analysis of the site and develop proposals for an effective rehabilitation.

Work commenced in February 2010. Working alongside the municipality and the owner of the fill, the Centre carried out seismic and other scientific examinations of the area, which confirmed earlier suspicions of a risk to public health. Thanks to the grant, the group was able to organize public discussions, produce two television programmes and place a number of articles in a local newspaper. An added benefit of the project was the good co-operation the group maintained with both the municipality and the fill's owners.

Another project was carried out in the region of Hrazdan, an industrial hub in central Armenia, by the Hayanist Intercommunity Association. The Hrazdan River is a water source upon which the local population relies for crop irrigation and fishing. The CASE grant allowed the Association to analyse the impact of various industries and building projects in the river basin and develop appropriate responses.

Environmental risks, including those presented by industrial and sewage sites along the Hrazdan River, were identified, mapped and assessed. Once this was done, the group explained its findings to the public and

identified general solutions, for instance the establishment of waste water treatment facilities.

Both of these examples illustrate the substantial difference civil groups can make with even modest support along with the co-operation of local government, business and international organizations. As phase four of the Armenian CASE programme starts, we can be confident that it will continue to be of benefit to Armenian citizens and their environment.

William Hanlon is an Economic and Environmental Officer in the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

James McMordie was an Intern in the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

TOWARDS BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: THE AARHUS CENTRE GEORGIA

by Tamar Gugushvili and Nino Gvazava

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is an important tool for informed decision-making on activities that affect the environment. Required by law in most OSCE participating States, it provides developers with a technical evaluation of the impact planned projects are likely to have on their biophysical and social surroundings, and commits them to justifying their decisions accordingly.

In Georgia, projects that pose a potential risk to the environment and human health require an environmental impact permit with a mandatory EIA. The system leaves room for improvement — potentially harmful activities such as mining and paper production are not included, for example. Still, it is currently the main instrument for environmental regulation in Georgia and the only tool enabling public participation in environmental decision-making.

OBSERVING THE PROCESS

The Aarhus Centre Georgia started observing the EIA process in the country in 2007. It

analyses the institutional and legal framework, monitors whether procedures and EIA reports comply with national legislation and the provisions of the Aarhus Convention and attends EIA public hearings. It posts the findings on its public website, distributes them to stakeholders, including the Ministry of Environment Protection, and discusses them at open roundtables.

A visit to the Centre's public website gives proof of its dedication to public participation. Announcements of new development projects and EIA public hearings and all preliminary and final EIA reports are posted there. Information on ongoing projects is updated regularly. The Centre has developed an online project database for the use of both civil society and state institutions. It contains the written justifications of EIA approval and permit conditions of each project since 2008.

Public participation in the EIA process is generally low. But the Centre has found that taking positive measures to encourage it ►►

The Aarhus Centre Georgia prepared TV advertisements to illustrate the health risks of pollution and inform citizens of their right to participate in decisions affecting the environment under the Aarhus Convention. They were broadcast from April to June 2011. (Aarhus Centre Georgia)



does bring results. Flyers and posters that carry additional information on projects have attracted more people to public EIA hearings. And public discussions have made a difference, leading to a decision not to construct a landfill near a settlement, for instance. Based on its observations, the Centre recommends involving the public at very early stages of decision-making. Projects that have no chance of gaining public approval would then not have to go through the costly EIA process.

IMPROVING THE SYSTEM

This year, the Aarhus Centre Georgia is participating as the local partner in a new project initiated by the Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia and implemented jointly by the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment and Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. The project aims to provide decision-makers with cost estimates and hence with a justification in monetary terms for improving the EIA process. For selected sectors, such as construction of hydropower stations and motorways and production of construction materials, the Centre will develop detailed guidelines on determining the initial scope of a project. And it will prepare recommendations for harmonizing existing legislation with the requirements of the Aarhus Convention and the European Commission's EIA Directive. All of these are steps forward towards a sound environmental permit system in Georgia.

With the support of the OSCE and the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, the Aarhus Centre in Georgia will continue to be a resource centre for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in the country.

Tamar Gugushvili is the Public Outreach Specialist responsible for Environmental Impact Assessment observation at the Aarhus Centre Georgia. Nino Gvazava is the Assistant Manager of the Aarhus Centre Georgia.



KEEPING DEVELOPMENT GREEN: AARHUS CENTRES IN ALBANIA

by Robert Mangham

Albania has enjoyed a prolonged period of investment in recent years, with numerous new projects in the energy and infrastructure sectors, including road construction and thermo and hydro power stations. The country's beautiful coastline, snow-capped mountains, mountain lakes and cultural heritage sites have also been magnets for a steadily increasing number of tourists. While providing employment and business opportunities particularly valued in remote areas, the rapid nature of Albania's development also presents significant challenges for environmental protection, mainly linked with lack of proper waste management systems across the country.

In this context, there is a real need for the public to be informed about and have a say in environmental matters. The OSCE Presence in Albania maintains an ongoing programme of support to the Government of Albania for implementation of the Aarhus Convention, to which Albania became a party in 2001. With funding from the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, three Aarhus Information Centres were established in 2007, one within the Ministry of Environment in Tirana and two as independent NGOs in Shkodra and Vlora. Working as a network, they raise awareness of citizens' rights and state obligations under the Convention, facilitate dialogue between communities and decision-makers on environmental issues and strengthen the capacity of civil society for effective participation in decision-making.

AN UPHILL STRUGGLE

The working environment for the Aarhus Information Centres is a demanding one. On the one hand, citizens are unaware of their right to get environmental information and to be consulted regarding environmental implications of proposed investments. On the other hand, public authorities at the national and local levels have limited capacities to respond to these challenges. While there >>



Sunset in Albania's Vjosa Valley. Tourism and development are presenting a challenge for the protection of the environment. (OSCE/Elton Qendro)

are significant efforts to embrace European Union and other international participatory standards, there is still room for encouraging greater transparency and accountability.

Add to these challenges the difficulty of raising funds in the prevailing economic downturn, and it becomes clear that the Aarhus Information Centres are involved in an uphill struggle.

SUCCESS NONETHELESS

Still, the Albanian Aarhus Information Centres have achieved modest victories. A quarterly Aarhus consultation meeting is held in Tirana for environmental representatives nominated by a group of NGOs and key ministry officials on issues of compliance and developments related to the Aarhus Convention. Senior business officials from some of the country's most polluting industries, such as cement production and oil extraction, have actively participated in training events on the private sector's obligations for

ensuring thorough environmental impact assessment and public consultation. The government has also made use of the Aarhus Information Centre network as a vehicle for disseminating information and soliciting feedback, particularly on draft laws and policies.

The Aarhus Information Centres are making an impact in the regions as well. The network facilitated a visit by potential donors and government officials to the site of a proposed landfill project designed to remedy an acute problem of illicit garbage disposal; the project was subsequently granted state funds. In Shkodra, local residents informed the Aarhus Information Centre about metal waste bins made from used pesticide cans placed in a children's playground. A meeting with the school director resulted in their removal. In the picturesque Vjosa valley, the Aarhus Information Centres established five Eco clubs for school children. Regular local clean-up exercises are helping to re-introduce a volunteer spirit into communities and highlight the importance of a clean environment for tourism development.

As a result of these efforts, awareness of the Aarhus Convention and its good governance principles has risen among citizens and officials. Moreover the arrival in Albania of some large international investors well aware of the benefits of good governance approaches, albeit from a corporate social responsibility perspective, is providing new opportunities for joint Aarhus Information Centre-private sector initiatives. Edlira Dersha, the manager of the Aarhus Information Centre in the Ministry of the Environment, looks to the future with optimism: "Soon, we may not need to send people on foreign study tours to view Aarhus best practices because we will have our own Albanian examples," she says.

Robert Mangham is Economic and Environmental and Regional Reform Officer in the OSCE Presence in Albania.

DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM REGIONAL NEIGHBOURS: THE OSCE MISSION TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA PROMOTES THE AARHUS CONVENTION

by Alma Mirvić

In early 2010, a group of environmental public servants and NGO representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina visited two Aarhus Centres in Albania, in Tirana and Vlora. It was an opportunity to gain inside information on the start-up and operation of the Centres. The delegation from Bosnia and Herzegovina was particularly interested in learning more about the Civil Alliance Movement, which had reported to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee on how the construction of an oil terminal and a thermal power plant in the Bay of Vlora had constituted a breach of Article 7 of the Convention. Article 7 states that "each Party shall make appropriate practical and/or other provisions for the public to participate during the preparation of plans and programmes relating to the environment, within a transparent and fair framework, having provided the necessary information to the public."

The visit, organized by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the OSCE »

Presence in Albania, was just one example of how the country is drawing on regional experience to move forward in the promotion of public participation in environmental matters. It was part of a project funded through the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative and Hungary and implemented in close partnership with the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC). The goal of the project is to map the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina's implementation of the Aarhus Convention, to which it has been a party since 2008.

The OSCE Mission has also joined the OSCE field operations in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia in a project to further the Aarhus Convention's implementation in South-Eastern Europe, again within the framework of the ENVSEC Initiative. Environmental experts from across the region share information and expertise to better promote the Convention in their respective countries. The Mission is inviting guests from the region to two seminars in Bosnia and Herzegovina before the end of the year.

Under this project, the Mission has supported Bosnia and Herzegovina in the preparation of its first national implementation report on the Aarhus Convention, a co-operative undertaking by almost 30 ministries, institutions, agencies and environmental NGOs. The Mission created an electronic database containing information on the methodology followed in preparing the report and all the contributions to the public consultations, for the use of the responsible ministries.

It is also working to educate municipal civil servants on how to put the Convention into practice, in collaboration with the NGO MDP Inicijative.

Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have an Aarhus Centre as yet. But in 2012, the Mission will conduct a thorough assessment of interest and sustainability, in the hope of soon being able to add to the network of Aarhus Centres in the region.

Alma Mirvić is a National Planning and Co-ordination Officer in the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: AARHUS CENTRES IN SERBIA

by Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman, Srdjan Matović and Pavle Budincević

Waste disposal, drinking water and sewage systems are a few of the many matters affecting the environment of citizens in their daily lives and which are regulated by towns or municipalities. In Serbia, where two Aarhus Centres have started operating since the country became party to the Aarhus Convention in 2009, local administrations are at the centre of the action.

When the Mission to Serbia held seminars throughout the country in early 2010 promoting the Aarhus Convention's principles of public participation in environmental decision-making, representatives from the government administration of Kragujevac, the fourth-largest city in Serbia and an important industrial centre, were quick to respond. By April, the city had established Serbia's first Aarhus Centre, as part of the city's Environmental Protection Department. The Centre teamed up with the OSCE Mission to

encourage other towns to make similar arrangements, and in March 2011, a second Aarhus Centre was opened in the northern city of Subotica. It is part of the Subotica Open University, but, like the Centre in Kragujevac, closely associated with the local government. The sustainability of both Centres is secured through funding from the respective annual city budgets, as well as the Serbian State Fund for environmental protection.

The necessity of securing a funding scheme to ensure that the Centres would not be short-term projects was a point on which the OSCE Mission insisted during preparatory talks on the Centres' establishment. The Mission co-organized and covered costs for the inauguration ceremonies, the development of public websites and the printing of promotional material. It continues to advise the Centres and assist with outreach activities. It is

currently working closely with representatives of the South Backa Administrative District on preparations for a third Aarhus Centre in Novi Sad.

Both Aarhus Centres have become meeting places for citizens to connect with the town's government about environmental concerns. A recent example from Subotica was the complaint by a resident of the city's old town, who informed Centre representatives about the problem that he and his neighbours were facing with each heavy rain. He explained that the sewage system in the area was in very bad shape, with collapsed pipes and clogged shafts, so that whenever it rained the streets were flooded with fecal waters. While this in itself is a serious communal health problem, there was, in addition, a plan by the city to build a large parking garage on the same street. Residents were worried that the city would build the garage without repairing the sewage system beforehand. Representatives of the Aarhus Centre Subotica contacted Suzana Dulić, the member of the city council in charge of environmental and communal affairs. She immediately liaised between the public companies in charge of sewage systems and parking to solve the problem. "Sewage reconstruction is now scheduled for the first half of 2012, and only after it is reconstructed will the parking lot be built", she says.

MODEL LEGISLATION

Correct implementation of the Aarhus Convention, with bylaws ensuring citizens' rights to participate in decision-making, would preclude problems becoming as acute as the ones suffered by the old town Subotica residents. One of the first achievements of the Aarhus Centre in Kragujevac has been to develop model legislation for local self-government. According to local authorities, the main obstacle to implementing the Aarhus Convention was the lack of secondary legislation to make the Convention work. Legal experts from the Aarhus Centre and the OSCE Mission to Serbia collaborated to develop two model Municipal Assembly decisions — one for the implementation of the Convention's three pillars (public access to information, public participation and public access to justice) and one for the establishment of an environmental protection council. The model decisions can be applied in several versions, depending on powers granted to towns and municipalities by the Serbia's on Local Self-Government.

This is the first time that such model legislation has been developed in Serbia. It was officially recommended to local self-governing units by the Standing Conference of Towns and

Municipalities in November 2010. The municipal assembly of the city of Kragujevac used them as the template for legislation it passed in December, 2010. The Subotica administration is considering them with interest, as are several other communities.

Olivera Zurovac-Kuzman is Environmental Advisor at the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

Srdjan Matović is Manager of the Aarhus Centre in Kragujevac.

Pavle Budincević is Manager of the Aarhus Centre in Subotica.



Former Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad, raises the Serbian flag in front of the Mission's building in Belgrade upon the declaration of Serbia's statehood, June 2006. (OSCE/Milan Obradovic)



The OSCE Mission to Serbia moves into the second decade

by Ivana Jovanović and Milos Bulj

When the OSCE flag was first raised at the Mission to Serbia in Belgrade on 16 March 2001, the atmosphere in the streets of Belgrade was one of hope but also of apprehension. The country had liberated itself from the oppressive Milosević regime and was looking forward to a rapid democratic transformation. But establishing security and stability in the region seemed to pose a formidable challenge against the backdrop of the bloody decade of conflicts.

On 16 May 2011, the OSCE Mission invited friends and partners to mark the tenth anniversary of its work. The common refrain of the guests of honour was that the feeling of hope had not been unfounded. The past ten years had not been easy ones: they had seen security challenges in southern Serbia, the extradition of Milosević to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in 2001, the murder of the Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić in 2003 and the disbanding of the union between Serbia and Montenegro in 2006. In these years, the Mission, in partnership with the host government and civil society, had constantly sought to find solutions to security issues, promoting respect for human and minority rights and combating extremism, discrimination, trafficking in human beings and other organized crime.

“When one takes a look at the transformation of our Mission’s programmes throughout the years, one can see that while the core of our mandate has remained unchanged, the way our assistance and advice was

provided and applied has evolved,” said the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Dimitrios Kypreos.

Today, 170 Mission members from some 20 countries work to implement the Mission’s programmes, at the headquarters in Belgrade, the field office in southern Serbia, a training facility in Novi Pazar and the police training centre in Sremska Kamenica.

“The core of the OSCE’s philosophy is to protect security and stability in Europe. Here in Serbia, we have seen one of the most profound and positive applications of this vision,” says Ambassador Kypreos.

SOUTHERN SERBIA

An example of synergy between the Mission’s security and democratization agendas are its efforts in southern Serbia.

The security and the development of this volatile, ethnically diverse region have always ranked high on the agenda of the OSCE Mission to Serbia. A panel discussion during the anniversary celebration provided the occasion for architects of the Mission’s institutional support to the region to reflect on their work during the past decade.

“When we first visited the region in 2001, there were barbwires everywhere, youngsters running around with kalashnikovs” recalled Ambassador Stefano Sannino, who headed the Mission from 2001 to 2002 and played a leading role in the international efforts to secure peace



Panel discussion on stabilizing southern Serbia on the occasion of the OSCE Mission to Serbia's anniversary celebration in Belgrade on 16 May 2011. Left to right: Milan Marković, Head of the Co-ordination Body for southern Serbia, Riza Halimi, Member of the National Assembly, Nebojsa Cović, former Head of the Co-ordination Body and Stefano Sannino, former Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia. (OSCE/ Milan Obradovic)



Male and female cadets from communities across Serbia are encouraged to enroll at the Sremska Kamenica Police Training Centre, to ensure that the police service in Serbia mirrors the society it serves. The OSCE Mission to Serbia assisted in the establishment and modernization of the Sremska Kamenica Police Training Centre. (OSCE/Milan Obradovic)

in the region. He described how the Mission, together with the Co-ordination Body for southern Serbia, which the Belgrade authorities had set up to facilitate dialogue, joint planning and project implementation, and local counterparts took initial steps to demilitarize the region and disarm the ex-combatants.

Nebojsa Cović, who headed the Co-ordination Body at the time, and Riza Halimi, a member of the National Assembly and one of the leaders of ethnic Albanians in the south, agreed that preventing a spillover of violence and securing peace in the region was an important achievement at the time. Halimi emphasized that the OSCE's help in establishing a multiethnic police force and empowering local authorities was essential for creating the conditions in which confidence and trust between different communities could be built. "There have been no serious incidents in the region in many years," he observed.

Ten years down the road, however, new concerns leave little room for a sanguine feeling of accomplishment. Skyrocketing unemployment, lack of education opportunities, low-paid jobs, shut factories and poor access to healthcare are all social ills that are besetting contemporary southern Serbia. The majority of young people crave work.

In 2009, the Serbian Government, with the Mission's support, restructured the Co-ordination Body to shift their focus from building security to including and integrating the ethnic Albanian population. Six

working groups were set up to address practicalities and develop long-term action plans. In the view of Halimi, there is still much to be done to make the groups truly operational.

Milan Marković, Serbia's Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, who currently heads the Co-ordination Body, conceded that the pace of reforms is slow, yet noted a positive shift in the rhetoric of politicians and a greater commitment of all actors to identifying the everyday practical problems hampering people of the region. "Until 2008 no one spoke of these [development] issues, everyone was wrapped up in the general [security-related] discussions," he remarked. He pointed to progress that, albeit slowly, is being made: the Serbian Government opened the multilingual Law and Economics Faculty of the University of Nis in Medvedja in 2009 and is currently looking at options for establishing a faculty in Bujanovac. The Co-ordination Body will also proceed with the restructuring of the existing health center in Bujanovac to allow for the opening of a maternity ward in this town.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

All the panelists said that the ultimate challenge for the security of the region lies in achieving sustainable economic growth. Long-term investment in the region is hard to attract when the entire Serbian economy faces woes. Cović, now a successful businessman, sees the potential in forestry, tourism and manufacturing. But >>

any investment is dependent on harmonious relations among communities in southern Serbia.

“No tourist wants to sit in a hotel and watch people across the street go at each other,” he says. “Everyone, central and local authorities and the international community, must sit down and find ways to solve the economic problems.”

THE OSCE’S WORK REMAINS INNOVATIVE

The OSCE Mission’s work in southern Serbia has all the hallmarks of the OSCE’s approach to security: a unique combination of early warning, the use of the good offices of its political actors and capacity-building through programmatic activities. Building on the concept of human security, the initial efforts for stabilization have given way to working for the inclusion of minorities and reforming institutions, with the hope that local actors — government, civil society and media — will work hand in hand to advance the reforms further, bringing lasting security and prosperity to the area.

When it first opened its doors, the OSCE Mission to the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with its core

mandate to advise and assist the host authorities and civil society, represented a turning point in Serbia’s history. In the words of Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić, “The opening of the OSCE Mission in 2001 marked the beginning of the return of Serbia into international institutions.”

Today, as Serbia advances towards its stated objective of joining the European Union, the Mission continues to provide political and programmatic assistance. The partnership lives on.

Ivana Jovanović is Senior Press and Political Assistant and Milos Bulj is Programme Assistant at the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

Heads of the OSCE Mission to Serbia:

September 2009-present: Dimitrios Kypreos from Greece

2006-2009: Hans Ola Urstad from Norway

2003-2006: Maurizio Massari from Italy

2001-2002: Stefano Sannino from Italy

More information about the OSCE Mission to Serbia’s activities can be found at www.osce.org/serbia

OSCE Appointments



OSCE/SARAJEVO/CHROZIER

Lamberto Zannier from Italy took up the post of OSCE Secretary General on 1 July 2011. A career diplomat, Ambassador Zannier was United Nations Special Representative for Kosovo and the Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo from 2008 to 2011. He was Director of the OSCE’s Conflict Prevention Centre from 2002 to 2006. Previous senior positions include Permanent Representative of Italy to the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague (2000-2002), chairperson of the negotiations on the adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (1997 to 2000) and Head of Disarmament, Arms Control and Co-operative Security at NATO from 1991 to 1997. He has a Ph.D. in law.



OSCE/BIH/ENAN/BUZANZIC

Fletcher Burton from the United States of America took up his duties as Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 29 August 2011. A senior career diplomat, he was head of the United States Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kirkuk, Iraq prior to assuming his post. Burton has extensive experience in the Balkans. He served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the United States Embassy in Sarajevo from 1995 to 1996, a period marked by the Dayton peace negotiations. He has served in Kosovo, as the Deputy International Civilian Representative at the International Civilian Office from 2008 to 2010 and at the United States Office in Pristina from 2001 to 2002. Other postings abroad have been to Afghanistan, Germany and Saudi Arabia.



OSCE/FARSHAD HUSEYINOV

Koray Targay from Turkey was appointed Head of the OSCE Office in Baku effective from 15 August 2011. A career diplomat, Ambassador Targay has worked in economic affairs, political affairs, press and public information, civil aviation and consular affairs. He was Ambassador to the Czech Republic from 2007 to 2011, Co-ordinator for Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon from 2004 to 2007, Ambassador to Malaysia from 1999 to 2004 and Consul General in Thessaloniki from 1994 to 1996. Other postings abroad have been to Switzerland, Syria, Canada, Germany and Greece. Targay has university degrees in political science and law.



WOLFGANG VOGHUBER

Ilze Brands Kehris, of Swedish and Latvian nationality, has been Director of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities since 17 February 2011. A political science specialist, she has worked with national minority rights and human rights at the national and international level. Brands Kehris is Chairperson of the Management Board of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, of which she has been a member since the institution's creation in 2007. She was Vice-Chairperson of the Management Board of the EU Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia from 2004 to 2007 and First Vice-President of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities from June 2006 to June 2010. She directed the Latvian Centre for Human Rights from 2002 to 2011.



IGOR PETROV

Andrey Rikhter from the Russian Federation assumed the post of Director of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media on 1 July 2011. He came to Vienna from Moscow, where he was the founder and director of the Media Law and Policy Institute. He is professor of media law at the Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University and author of numerous books and articles on media law and policy in Russia, Ukraine and other post-Soviet states. Rikhter is a member of the International Commission of Jurists. He has a doctorate in journalism and degrees in law and English literature.



OSCE/JONATHAN PERFECT

Ian Mitchell from Canada assumed the post of Head of External Co-operation at the OSCE Secretariat on 4 July 2011. Ian served most recently with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Jerusalem, as Head of the Advisory Commission Secretariat. Prior to that, he was Senior Policy and Planning Advisor in the Office of the Secretary General in the OSCE Secretariat. He has also served at a senior level in many election observation missions with OSCE/ODIHR, the UN and in other organizations, and has worked for UN peacekeeping missions and the UNHCR. He has served as a management consultant across a wide variety of industries in the private sector. He holds a doctorate in international politics.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for stability, prosperity and democracy in 56 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

osce.org/publications
e-mail: oscemagazine@osce.org

OSCE Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe