

OSCE Newsletter

Border Security and Management National Focal Point Network

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OSCE Engagement with Afghanistan

(OSCE OS/Borders Team)

Afghanistan has been an OSCE Partner for Co-operation since 2003. In 2004 and 2005, the OSCE provided support to Afghanistan through its election support teams deployed in Afghanistan. Following this positive experience, Afghanistan has requested OSCE assistance in border security and management, police training and combating drug trafficking.

At the Madrid Ministerial Council Meeting in December 2007, OSCE participating States agreed that the long-term security and stability of Afghanistan is of the utmost importance for the OSCE area, in particular for Central Asia. Ministers thus decided, through the adoption of MC decision 04/07, to augment the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan across a spectrum of activities, and tasked the Secretary General, together with the participating States, to examine ways to accomplish this goal.

MC Decision 04/07 focuses on OSCE action to support measures for securing the borders between

the Central Asian participating States and Afghanistan, and on Afghan involvement in appropriate OSCE activities. The Decision envisages that the OSCE takes action in this field and develops options in line with the objectives and principles of the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept.

The OSCE Secretariat has so far developed 16 options aimed at addressing the current situation in Afghanistan, strengthening border security and management, promoting and fostering cross border co-operation between the Central Asian participating States and Afghanistan and enhancing national law enforcement capacities, in accordance with MC Decision 04/07. In doing so the OSCE Secretariat has taken into account the suggestions communicated to it by the Afghan authorities as well as participating States and international organizations in Vienna, Kabul and elsewhere. The OSCE Secretariat has also sought to align the proposed options with the Afghan National Development Strategy. By targeting as a priority, but not exclusively, border guards, customs personnel and counter-narcotics police. These options would relate to all three OSCE dimensions: Politico-Military, Economic and Environmental and Human. Participating States are currently considering the possible implementation of the options presented by the Secretariat.■

Forged Document Training in Turkmenistan

(OSCE ATU)

On 1-12 September the OSCE Secretariat's Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) teamed with the Operations Service's Borders Team of the Conflict Prevention Centre, the Centre in Ashgabad and the Austrian Federal Ministry for the Interior to conduct an intensive two-week train-the-trainers course to "Increase Operational Awareness to Detect Forged Documents." The training was designed for Turkmen border control officials and included 10 classroom days with practical examples, interactive discussions, capstone reviews and a final examination. The training was designed to provide participants with the necessary skills to detect forged documents, which in turn they are to further disseminate within their structures as national trainers.

The forged document training in Turkmenistan was

the 3rd of its kind conducted in OSCE participating States. The training courses are high in demand because recent feedback has shown that, at present, border control authorities in the OSCE area lack up-to-date information on the latest trends in document fraud, on the plethora of new travel document security features in circulation, as well as training material – all of which complicate the identification of forgeries during the inspection process at border controls. The primary objectives of the training are to prevent the use of false documents to cross borders, reduce the possibility of terrorist attacks, and help prevent other cross-border crime.

The training is a part of ATU's comprehensive assistance programme for travel document security, which is based on four objectives:

- Facilitate upgrades of travel document security features;
- Improve handling and issuance processes;
- Encourage reporting of invalid document numbers to the International Criminal Police Organization

INTERPOL and provide real-time connection to their databases at border controls; and

- Organize training for border control officials in identifying forged documents.

Currently, the ATU has travel document security projects running in multiple OSCE participating States. To this end, the Unit actively co-operates with relevant organizations such as International Civil

Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the European Union. The majority of the funding for the programme has come from Spain, the United States and Norway.■

OSCE Office in Tajikistan's Comprehensive Approach to Border Security and Management

(OSCE Office in Tajikistan)

In recent years, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan (OIT) has been developing a number of border related projects. Within the OIT, the border management, economic and demining units are currently involved in the implementation of such projects.

In March 2008, a project titled "National Border Strategy and Implementation Plan – Tajikistan" was launched by the OIT. This project aims at providing advice and support to the Government of Tajikistan in drafting a National Border Strategy, which will contain a comprehensive Government vision of the country's future border security and management needs and priorities. A first draft of the strategy and of the implementation plan are scheduled to be finished by January 2009.

The OIT began implementing cross border trade projects along the Tajik-Afghan border that foster and encourage bilateral trade in 2004, with the support of a Eurasia Foundation project, to set up markets at the Panj bridges in Badakhshan. In October 2007, the

OSCE sponsored a business forum, where officials and business people from southern Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan were brought together to identify opportunities and hindrances to the development of regional trade and to draw up recommendations for removing the latter. Based on the recommendations made by participants, a permanent facility was opened in southern Tajikistan to assist entrepreneurs on both sides of the Tajik-Afghan border to engage in cross-border trade. Similar resource centers were opened at the two main bridges between Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan, in November 2007. Two more centers are planned for the border market at the bridge in Ruzvai near Darvoz and for Langhar, the main crossing to Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor.

OIT's demining unit is also considering launching a project along the Tajik-Afghan border which would aim at providing assistance to the border guards, enabling them to have safe and effective access to mined areas along the border so as to carry out patrol and observation duties. This should be achieved by providing border guards with accurate area patrol maps that clearly indicate the confirmed mined areas along the border and then to verify the extent of these mined areas thus enabling the durable demarcation of mine fields with numbered reference beacons.

The OIT will continue to assist Tajikistan in strengthening its border security and management system and acknowledges the importance of implementing projects that encourage stronger bilateral trade and political dialogue between Tajikistan and its neighbours.■

OSCE Addressing Complex Border Situations in Southern Kyrgyzstan

(OSCE Centre in Bishkek)

As a legacy of Soviet rule, the Kyrgyz Republic has inherited land borders that present a variety of problems and challenges. These include non-demarcated and non-delimited borders, the existence of Uzbek and Tajik enclaves, disputed lands, disputes over pastures and water resources, social and inter-ethnic issues - which can all generate tensions at the inter-state and inter-community level.

The OSCE Centre in Bishkek has actively been involved in border management projects since 2004, when a research project aiming at identifying border-related problems was initiated and led to the preparation of the report "Borders of Discord". Several further projects were undertaken to address the ongoing border difficulties. The main implementing partner of these initiatives is "ACTED", an international NGO that has extensive experience in working along border areas. The sub-partners include the Border Guards Service of Kyrgyzstan and several NGOs operating in the region.

To continue with this endeavor, in 2008, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek launched a project called "Positive peace building in Jalalabad and Batken provinces". The project aims at improving local governance and cross border conflict prevention mechanisms and at

raising human rights' awareness in the community. Moreover it aims at improving cross border dialogue among border agencies.

The project targets villages located along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border of Jalalabad province and of the Sokh enclave, as well as along the Kyrgyz-Tajik border in Batken Province and the Vorukh enclave. Activities include the organization of regional management

boards (RMBs), consisting of Kyrgyz citizens and the neighboring countries which meet periodically to discuss and solve current cross-border problems; the organization of seminars and trainings for locals on cross-border rules and regulations; and the provision of legal and technical assistance to border guards. Additionally, joint festivity as well as sports and art competitions among youth and local communities are also organized. ■

OSCE Centre in Astana's initiatives to enhance border control

(OSCE Centre in Astana)

Over the last years, the Centre in Astana has been involved in several border security and management activities, supporting the host country efforts in promoting stability and security at the regional level. These activities are based on the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept and implemented in co-operation with leading international organizations in the field of border security and management.

Since 2007, the Centre has been implementing the project "Enhancing border control on the land border of Kazakhstan" in close co-operation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the EU Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA), as well as the Border Service of Kazakhstan. The project includes two main components: infrastructural capacity building at one of the border checkpoints and training seminars for Kazakh border officials.

The infrastructural support provided through the project last year to the Kordai checkpoint at the border between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan helped to double the number of passport controllers, improve their working conditions and facilitate more orderly

and humane crossing of this border point, which is one of the country's busiest checkpoints, with a daily flow reaching 10,000 people.

Two training seminars were held in the framework of the project. The first one took place in November 2007, at the Kordai checkpoint. The seminar lasted five days and covered several topics, such as the analysis of the border reforming process (transition) undertaken in the Balkans, management of information exchange systems, profiling, and interviewing techniques. A number of sessions also focused on human trafficking, smuggling and migration. The training was led by trainers from South Eastern Europe and Kazakhstan's Military Institute.

In June 2008, a second training course for border officers was organized at Merke checkpoint again at the border between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The agenda of the five day seminar included discussions on the experience of East European countries, with a focus on their border procedures and internal systems of information exchange. The participants received extensive knowledge of the latest techniques on the checking of cars, passport control in buses and trains, drug interception during vehicle checks and assessment of related risks. In view of the agreement on joint border control recently signed between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, a session was held with the participation of Kyrgyz border guards.

Later this year, jointly with the same partners, the Centre in Astana envisages supporting another training course for lower-ranking border guards, this time to be held at the border between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. ■

International Conference on "Problems of Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia"

(OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan)

From 29 April to 1 May 2008, Tashkent hosted an international conference entitled "Problems of

Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia". The event was organized by the Foundation of Regional Policy (Uzbekistan) with assistance provided by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, the US Agency for International Development and Institute for New Democracies. The conference was attended by more than 40 political scientists and security experts from 20 countries in Asia, America and Europe.

As emphasized by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, Ambassador Istvan Venczel, in his opening remarks, the conference reflected Uzbekistan's support to the efforts of the international community to promote and ensure stability and sustainable development in Central Asia. Modern border management and other tools and ways to

further promote peace and sustainable development in Central Asia were amongst the central topics of the conference. Participants repeatedly stated that modern and efficient border management systems are crucial to effectively addressing threats to security, such as trans-national terrorism, extremism, trafficking of drugs, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

The conference focused primarily on the current state of affairs in Afghanistan. It was noted that achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan is not only of regional but also of global importance as the threats emerging from opiates production, the financing of terrorism and trans-national organized crime have security implications in broader geographical terms.

It was highlighted that drug trafficking from the so-called "northern corridor" is one of the most acute cross-border security threats in Central Asia. International experts stressed the need for the international community to focus attention and resources in the field of border security and

management, as well as in the fields of education, youth, rule of law, anti-corruption, law enforcement and social security.

As a follow-up to this event, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan has expressed its readiness to facilitate, in Tashkent, further discussions on threats and challenges in Central Asia, in light of developments in Afghanistan, through intellectual fora and other relevant events. In this context, the OSCE is ready to join the efforts of other international actors in the country, such as NATO, UN and the EU, and to share the valuable experience gained in early warning and conflict prevention in the region.

At present, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, in co-operation with the local partner NGO Regional Policy Foundation, has developed a three-year comprehensive project "The 'Tashkent dialogue' on ensuring regional security and sustainable cooperation", which is expected to be launched in the beginning of October 2008.■

OSCE Centre in Ashgabad Organizes Training to Help Improve Airport Security in Turkmenistan

(OSCE Centre in Ashgabad)

In May 2008, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabad organized a two-week checkpoint and x-ray interpretation training in Turkmenistan. The training course was carried out within the Centre's security co-operation programme with Turkmenistan which is aimed at countering security threats, such as terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in drugs and weapons.

In today's world, terrorism and criminal activity is constantly changing, creating an immense challenge to law-enforcement officials to remain up-to-date with new threats and incidents. The checkpoint and x-ray training course aimed at strengthening Turkmenistan

border officials' knowledge and awareness of the latest threats, as well as assisting the country to meet International Civil Aviation Organization recommendations to ensure high aviation safety standards.

The training course, which was delivered by a UK expert, consisted of two weeks of simulation and practical exercises. The participants were trained on how to better recognise prohibited items, firearms, explosives, dangerous goods, weapons and drugs. They also learned about typical concealment methods and how to use handheld metal detectors, x-ray machines and new technologies.

Eleven officials from the State Customs Service, Turkmenistan Airlines, State Border Service and the Ministry of Interior completed the training course and were qualified to work as independent instructors in the future. One of the main aims of the course, in addition to improving airport and air transport security, was to train and equip local instructors for the future. The OSCE Office is planning further project activities involving the newly qualified local trainers later in the year.■

Upcoming Events:

- **OSCE National Focal Points meeting**
Vienna, 28 October 2008
- **Ministerial Conference on 'Border Management and Drug Control in Central Asia'**
Dushanbe, 21-22 October 2008
- **OSCE Ministerial Council**
Helsinki, December 2008



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