

OSCE Newsletter

OSCE Border Security and Management National Focal Point Network*

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Joint Border Patrolling along the Albanian–Montenegrin border

OSCE Mission to Montenegro

On 15 January 2009 the OSCE Presence in Albania and the OSCE Mission to Montenegro took part in the official inauguration ceremony of Joint Patrolling along the Albanian–Montenegrin border, which was held in Shkodra, Albania. The ceremony was attended by the heads of the border security and management agencies of Albania and Montenegro, high-level border police officers from both countries, regional level border police officers and representatives of the Police

Assistance Mission of the European Community to Albania (PAMECA).

The ultimate aim of joint patrolling is to bring the border security and management agencies of the two countries closer in their efforts to increase operational capacity and effectiveness in tackling cross-border organized crime along their common border.

Since January 2009, 44 joint patrols have been conducted. The concrete results achieved to date included the arrest of cigarette smugglers on 27 January 2009 and the arrest of narcotics traffickers, including the seizure of 164 kilograms of marijuana, on 26 April 2009. During those operations, border police officers successfully used code numbers via SMS, which allowed them to communicate regardless of the language barrier. ■

Regional Cross Border Meeting between the border security and management services of Albania and Montenegro

OSCE Presence in Albania

The Regional Cross Border Meeting, which took place in the Shkodra Grand Hotel on 5 May 2009, was attended by representatives of the border security and management agencies of Albania and Montenegro, the OSCE Presence in Albania and the OSCE Mission to Montenegro.

Both sides agreed that joint patrols should be conducted more regularly in order to fulfill the conditions of the Protocol between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Interior of Montenegro on Joint Patrols along the State Border between the Republics of Albania

and Montenegro. An agreement was reached to increase the frequency of vehicle inspections in order to prevent smuggling and trafficking and to conduct local level meetings on a monthly basis.

The parties defined Vermosh (a mountain area in the northeast part of Albania with a border crossing point at the Albanian–Montenegrin border) as the most problematic area for patrolling. Additional patrols started there in June of 2009.



The participants expressed the desire to start regular joint patrols along all seven sectors of the green border up to the border with Kosovo/UNMIK, for which the local commanders were tasked to prepare monthly plans.

The OSCE field operations were asked to consider the possibility of organizing language courses for the representatives of both services, which would foster cross-border communication.■

Opening of the Joint Border Crossing Point (JBCP) at the Albanian/Montenegrin border

OSCE Presence in Albania

On 18 June 2009, the OSCE Presence in Albania took part in the opening ceremony of the Joint Border Crossing Point Muriqan–Sukobin at the Albanian–Montenegrin border.

For more than two years, the OSCE Presence in Albania, in co-operation with the other international actors, has been assisting Albanian Border and Migration Police in preparing to launch the first JBCP in the Western Balkan region.



In December 2008, the OSCE Presence in Albania and the OSCE Mission to Montenegro organized a joint training for future JBCP personnel. It was followed by a study trip to a similar JBCP in Bulgaria, on the border with Romania, organized for Albanian Border and Migration Police officials.■

OSCE assistance border security and management services in Bosnia and Herzegovina

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina provides assistance to the authorities of Bosnia



and Herzegovina (BiH) in meeting their international and OSCE politico-military commitments and recognizes the special importance and significance of border security and management. The Mission has regularly participated in the Annual Ministerial Conference on Co-operation in the Field of Border Security in South East Europe and has been involved in a number of activities related to cross border co-operation and border policing.

Support and promotion of the democratic control of security forces and relevant agencies became an important part of the Mission's program. The Parliamentary Section of the Mission focused primarily on the work of two specific joint committees of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly: the Joint Committee for the Oversight of the Work of the Intelligence and Security Agencies, and the Joint Committee on Defense and Security (hereby referred to as the Joint Parliamentary Committee) of BiH, which was established at the end of 2003, and has the authority to oversee the work of all State level defense and security structures, including the State Border Police.

Over time, the Joint Parliamentary Committee identified two main areas of interaction with the State Border Police: capacity building and

improvement of the legislative framework in the border security and management sphere. During the first three years of its mandate, the Joint Committee conducted a number of visits to the State Border Police Headquarters, its regional offices and border crossing points across the country. It also visited the respective Parliaments and Ministries of Interior of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Parliamentary Assembly of BiH passed a number of laws related to border security and management and the Joint Committee discussed, *inter alia*, the laws regulating the status of State Border Police and border surveillance.

The OSCE Mission to BiH, together with the Joint Parliamentary Committee, the East West Institute and the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for SEE organized a Conference on “Regional Co-operation and Assistance in Crisis Situations and Natural Disasters — Problems and perspectives”, in April 2008.

In June 2008, a bilateral meeting of the BiH and Montenegrin parliamentary defense and security committees took place at the BiH–Montenegro border crossing point Zupci–Sitnica. Relevant ministries and border police forces discussed a joint initiative aimed at preventing illegal crossings and prepared a plan of action to examine the possibility of building a joint border crossing point.

As a result of ongoing bilateral dialogue between BiH and the Slovak Republic, a new project on possible Slovak assistance to the BiH institutions responsible for overseeing and enacting security arrangements for the borders of BiH has been initiated.

Through its work with the parliamentary committees, the OSCE Mission to BiH has been able to positively influence border police matters, resulting in increased financial and human resources for the Border Police provided by the BiH Council of Ministers as well as increased awareness of parliamentarians’ responsibilities to promote cross border co-operation.■

Facilitation of cross-border co-operation in the sphere of border security and management

OSCE Mission to Montenegro

On 6 March 2009, the Sixth Annual Ministerial Conference on Co-operation in the field of Border Security in South East Europe was held in Belgrade. Two Protocols were signed: the Protocol on Joint Patrolling along the State Border of Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Serbia; and the Protocol on Procedures for the Functioning of Joint Border Crossing Points between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

The signed Protocols, which are fully in line with the Ohrid Border Process, the Way Forward Document and the following declarations from the Ministerial Conferences on Co-operation in the Field of Border Security in South East Europe, are the result of joint efforts applied by the relevant border police authorities of the three countries, as well as the relevant OSCE field operations.

The joint work on Protocols took a relatively short time. The negotiation process was initiated and



facilitated by the OSCE field operations, which organized a range of meetings between the border security and management authorities of Montenegro, BiH and Serbia. The first meeting between the delegations of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina was held in December of 2008 in Pluzine (Montenegro). The following meeting, with the participation of the Serbian Delegation, took place in February of 2009 in Prijepolje (Serbia). It is planned that training sessions for the patrol leaders and members of the joint patrols on both sides of the border will be conducted in autumn this year.■

Efforts of the OSCE Mission to Serbia to assist authorities in developing a modern Border Security and Management System

OSCE Mission to Serbia

The OSCE Mission to Serbia Border Policing Programme continues to assist the Serbian Border Authorities in developing a modern concept for a Border Security and Management System, as well as in implementing the National Integrated Border Management Strategy (NIBMS), the establishment of which is one of the preconditions for EU accession for Serbia.

The Government of Serbia adopted the NIBMS in January of 2006. Upon adoption of the Strategy and the related Action Plan, in early September 2006 the Ministries of Internal Affairs (*Border Police*), of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (*Veterinary and Phyto-Sanitary Inspections*) and of Finance (*Customs Administration*) signed *Functional Strategies*, which define the detailed needs for implementing the Strategy and the areas of common interest for the above mentioned border security and management authorities (inter-agency co-operation).

The demilitarization of Serbia's borders, completed in February 2007, and adoption of the Serbian NIBMS, highlighted the importance of the Border Policing Programme in its efforts to assist local authorities in identifying and addressing the need for reform in the border security and management sphere.

Continuous assistance was provided to the Serbian Border Police Directorate in developing a new organizational structure, both at the central and peripheral levels, as well as in enhancing standard operational procedures in order to harmonize border control activities at the operational level with the aim of guaranteeing



border security and management with maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

On 6 February 2009, the above mentioned Ministries and the Ministry of Infrastructure signed a multilateral agreement in the area of inter-agency co-operation. Thus, inter-agency co-operation, previously based only on informal arrangements, has gained the legislative framework for further development. Additional efforts are now required to launch the bilateral agreements, which would regulate the terms of co-operation.

Currently the Border Police Directorate of Serbia is defining legislative and operational framework for conducting cross-border co-operation activities (Memoranda of Understanding and bilateral agreements). Such activities were designed in co-operation with the border security and management authorities of neighboring countries (BiH, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro etc.), in line with the Police Co-operation Convention in South East Europe.

In particular during the Sixth Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Annual Ministerial Review Conference, held in Belgrade on 6 March 2009, the two bilateral agreements with Montenegro were signed: the "*Implementation Agreement on Joint Patrols*" and the "*Implementation Agreement on the Establishment of the Common Border Crossing Points*". ■

Upcoming events:

- 3 November 2009 (Vienna):** Annual OSCE Field Operations Briefing on Border Security and Management Issues
- 4 November 2009 (Vienna):** Annual OSCE Border Security and Management National Focal Point Network Meeting