

OSCE Newsletter

Border Security and Management

National Focal Point Network

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Welcoming words from the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre

As Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, and on behalf of the OSCE Secretariat, it is with great pleasure that I introduce the OSCE's first Border Security and Management National Focal Point Network Newsletter.

The OSCE's involvement in border security and management goes back many years. I am happy that the Organization has been able to provide support to the border agencies of a number of participating States through training, capacity building, technical advice, provision of equipment and the facilitation of cross border bi-lateral and multi-lateral co-operation and information exchange. In addition, the OSCE has conducted three major border monitoring operations, deploying its personnel along borders affected by, or adjoining conflict areas.

In December 2005, the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept. This was



Ambassador Herbert Salber, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre

OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev

an important step in which the participating States formally recognised the importance of co-operation in strengthening their borders, the importance of facilitating legitimate cross border movement and the role of the OSCE in assisting them in developing their border security and management.

The Concept also envisaged the establishment of a network of National Focal Points relating to border security and management. In December 2006, the OSCE Permanent Council passed a decision to create such a network and tasked the OSCE Secretariat with maintaining it. This newsletter is one of the tools that we have developed to make the network a living one. I would encourage feedback, comments and suggestions to be sent to the Secretariat's point of contact in the Operations Service Borders Team, as to how we can make the network as useful as possible.

Implementation of the Border Security and Management Concept

Since the adoption of the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept 18 months ago at the Ljubljana Ministerial Council, there is growing interest among participating States to engage in further concrete work in the framework of the Concept, as border security and management rests at the heart of our common fight against a multitude of contemporary threats such as terrorism, organized crime, trafficking in human beings, arms and illicit drugs. Taking into account

that borders in the OSCE region are not uniform and may call for case-specific policy choices, further intensification of cooperative efforts in this field will not only enhance the effectiveness of the OSCE's ongoing work in all these spheres but also contribute to and complement other parallel national, bilateral and multilateral initiatives. In the meantime, we should also be ready to consider, with an open mind and as a matter of collective interest, relevant requests for assistance by our Partners for co-operation which could have a direct bearing on strengthening the security and stability of participating States.

Chef-de-file on Border Security and Management
Turkish Mission to the OSCE

The OSCE's 56 participating States



OS/Borders Team



Representatives of Field Operations dealing with border issues and members of the Borders Team

The Borders Team of the Operations Service (OS) of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, located in Vienna, has been in existence for four years. During that time, the role of the OSCE in assisting the Organization's participating States in the area of border security and management has evolved significantly with related activities taking place across the whole of the OSCE area.

The OS/Borders Team is the point of contact within OSCE Secretariat for all border security and management matters and has been designated as the Point of Contact within the OSCE Secretariat responsible for maintaining the OSCE Border Security and Management National Focal Point Network.

The National Focal Point Network

The National Focal Point (NFP) Network, consisting of NFPs in all participating States and a contact point in the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, provides a tool for co-operation between participating States on border security and management issues, as well as a proactive way of information sharing between relevant border security and management agencies on international level. It will also provide a framework for interaction with international partner organizations dealing with border-related issues and OSCE Field Operations.

The Border Team's priorities are to meet the OSCE's objectives as they are described in the Border Security and Management Concept i.e. to:

- promote free and secure movement of goods, services and investments across borders;
- promote high standards in border services;
- promote dignified treatment of all individuals wanting to cross borders legally;
- foster prospects for joint economic development, and assist participating States in:

-reducing the threat of terrorism, including by preventing cross-border movement of persons, weapons and funds connected with terrorist and other criminal activities;

-preventing and repressing transnational organised crime, illegal migration, corruption, smuggling and trafficking in weapons, drugs and human beings;

-creating beneficial conditions for social and economic development in border territories;

-ensuring the security of the international transport circuit.

Presently the OS/Borders Team together with the Organization's Field Operations are supporting projects in 14 of the OSCE's 56 participating States. In addition, the Team maintains links between the OSCE and other organizations such as the relevant UN agencies dealing with border security and management related issues, the EU, CSTO and NATO, and is in regular contact with participating States' delegations in Vienna.

The Secretariat will maintain an updated list of NFPs and process incoming information and requests from participating States on border security and management related issues.

In order to foster the information exchange, the Secretariat will edit and distribute the NFP Newsletter three times a year. All participants in the NFP Network are encouraged to provide input to this Newsletter which will include information about ongoing border related activities within and between participating States, as well as related activities of regional and international partner organizations. Such input may be sent by email to the Secretariat's contact point address: bordersnfp@osce.org

Co-operation between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania

On 13-14 September 2006, a workshop took place in Struga under the auspices of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and the OSCE Presence in Albania on “Cross Border Co-operation: Obligation or Opportunity”.

Experts from both countries and the Border Adviser from the OSCE’s Conflict Prevention focused on strengths and weaknesses of present border patrolling strategies and ways to improve co-operation to combat organized crime.

Besides the regional commanders of the shared border, representatives from respective central border police directorates presented their national border management strategies, including the implementation status.

Moreover the distinctive settings of the two police services were discussed in order to improve the co-operation for an efficient combating of crime at the ‘green border’ and border crossing points.



An OSCE vehicle on a border in the Balkans

Additionally, a table top exercise on “Joint operations” was conducted between representatives of both border police sectors.

The workshop complemented multiple regional meetings involving border police from neighboring countries.

A follow-up meeting is planned to take place during the summer 2007 in Pogradec (Albania). The aim will be to work on practical solutions in the area of cross border co-operation thus leading to better risk assessments.

The Ohrid Border Process

Since 2003, the OSCE is committed along with its Partner Organizations (EU, NATO and the Stability Pact) to supporting participating States in SEE (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo/Serbia) in the area of border security and management within the framework of the Ohrid Border Process (OBP). The aim of the OBP is to bring their border management in line with standards set by the European Commission and to create regional co-operation on border security and management related issues.

Considerable achievements have been made by the relevant States: national strategies and their associated action plans have

been developed; co-operation mechanisms between relevant agencies related to border security and management issues have been set up; full demilitarization of borders has been achieved; and adapted legislation has been put into force.

The OSCE’s main contribution within the OBP has been the South-Eastern Europe Cross-border Co-operation Programme (OSCCP). The OSCCP consisted of a comprehensive series of workshops and seminars, delivered from 2004 to 2006, that focused on various aspects of enhancing cross-border co-operation. In 2007, OSCE activities within the framework of the OBP will be devoted to “Lessons Learned in promoting cross-border co-operation”.

An annual OBP review meeting will take place at the end of 2007, in which Partners will evaluate progress made and take decisions concerning the future of the Process.

Border Security and Management Assessment in Tajikistan

Between 20 July and 2 August 2006, a team consisting of members of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe conducted an assessment trip to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The trip was the initial response to a formal request, based on the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept, to the Permanent Council from the Tajik Government for assistance in strengthening Tajikistan's border security and management.

A particular task for the assessment team was to identify gaps and needs in present Tajik capacities relating to border security and management and the ability of domestic agencies to meet the various threats and challenges facing them. The assessment team examined issues pertaining to both border crossing points and to the "green" and "blue" border. Particular attention was given to the Tajik border with Afghanistan.



Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan

The main challenge confronting Tajikistan's border security and management agencies is the flow of drugs and small arms and light weapons from Afghanistan, moving North across the River Panj, into Central Asia and beyond. The problems of border demarcation in the North-East of the country, with the complicating factor of property ownership disputes, also create difficulties for border management, as do the activities of armed groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

The OSCE, working in co-ordination with the wider international community, is well positioned to provide some of the assistance needed. Four concrete project proposals have now been submitted to the Tajik authorities by the Organization. The OSCE is hopeful that, with the Government's agreement, delivery of training, equipment and technical advice can start in the autumn of 2007.

Upcoming events

25 July 2007

Regional Workshop of OSCE Field Operations in SEE and the OS/Borders Team on "OSCE Facilitation of Cross-Border Co-operation and Information Exchange" in Skopje (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

August 2007

Cross-border co-operation meeting at operational level between practitioners coming from border law enforcement

agencies and anti-organized crime units from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania in Pogradec (Albania)

October 2007

Regional OBP workshop on "Harmonisation of IBM strategies and existing national action plans in the SEE region" in Belgrade (Serbia)

20-21 November 2007

Workshop entitled "OSCE Field Operations and National Focal Point Network Briefing" in Vienna

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.