

OSCE Increases Efforts to Find a Peaceful Solution to Kosovo Crisis



Ambassador Christian Faber-Rod, Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, explains the Mission's activities to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Prof. Bronisław Geremek, Director of the Conflict Prevention Center, Ambassador Jan Kubis (sitting) and representatives of the Troika.

Photo: Melissa Fleming

Although face-to-face talks in Belgrade on 28 March between OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek and Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević were described by Foreign Minister Geremek as “disappointing,” the OSCE remains committed to the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis in Kosovo.

The visit by the Chairman-in-Office to Belgrade, Priština and Podgorica on 28 March was the latest in a series of initiatives taken by the OSCE.

On 2 March the Chairman-in-Office issued a statement saying that he was

“deeply shocked and disturbed” by the unrest and violence in Kosovo. He urged all sides to refrain from any further acts of violence and to start a meaningful dialogue. He said that “the OSCE is ready to assist in this process” and that “it will also continue its active involvement related to the full and unrestricted observance of all OSCE principles and commitments.”

The involvement of the OSCE was supported by Foreign Ministers of the Contact Group countries who met in London on 9 March. Among the measures set out in the Contact Group statement was the Group's support for

the return of the OSCE long-term missions and the proposal for the involvement of Felipe Gonzalez as the Personal Representative of the Chairman in-Office for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). (Mr. Gonzalez was also subsequently named Special Representative of the European Union.)

Speaking on 10 March in Warsaw, the Chairman-in-Office outlined an action plan on Kosovo that, together with the Contact Group recommendations, formed the basis for a draft decision discussed at a Special Session of the Permanent Council a day later.

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The decision (No. 218) which was adopted, supported a new mission by Mr. Gonzalez as the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the FRY, which would include a mandate for addressing the problems in Kosovo. It called on the FRY authorities to co-operate fully with Mr. Gonzalez.

The decision also authorized the temporary enhancement of the monitoring capabilities of the OSCE Presence in Albania and of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission in Skopje in order to allow for adequate observation of the borders with Kosovo (FRY) and prevention of possible spillover effects.

The decision noted that the crisis in Kosovo is not solely an internal affair of the FRY because of violations of OSCE principles and commitments on human rights and because it has a significant impact on the security of the region.

The participating States called on the authorities of the FRY to halt the excessive use of force in Kosovo, to vigorously investigate and accept an international investigation of reported summary executions and to bring to justice those found responsible. The FRY authorities were also called on to allow access to Kosovo for the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations and to implement the Education Agreement without delay.

Taking into account the need for an immediate response by the international community to prevent further escalation, the participating States called on the authorities in Belgrade and the leadership of the Kosovar Albanians to assume their responsibility and to enter, without preconditions, into meaningful dialogue based on full observance of OSCE principles and commitments. The OSCE

expressed its readiness to assist in that process.

The OSCE States also called on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to accept without preconditions an immediate return of the OSCE missions of long duration to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina, noting that the return of those missions was essential for any future participation by the FRY in the OSCE.

As a result of this decision, the capabilities of both the OSCE Mission to Skopje and the Presence in Albania were enhanced. A temporary field office was quickly established in the town of Bajram Curri in the north of Albania from which members of the OSCE Presence in Albania (in co-operation with the ECMM and UNHCR) are able to monitor the border zone. The Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje is working closely with UNPREDEP and the ECMM to monitor the border between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the FRY in the Kosovo region.

Representatives of the embassies of OSCE countries in Belgrade continued their continuous monitoring of the situation in Kosovo including visits to the province.

On 19 and 20 March the Chairman-in-Office, together with representatives of the Troika and Secretariat, visited Skopje and Tirana. In Skopje the Chairman-in-Office was accompanied by the High Commissioner on National Minorities. The aim of the visits was to signal the OSCE's continued concern about stability in the region, focusing primarily on the situation in Kosovo and on OSCE efforts to help prevent a spillover of the crisis there to neighbouring countries.

On 18 March the Chairman-in-Office officially designated Mr. Felipe Gonzalez as his Personal Representative for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In a letter to Mr. Gonzalez, the Chairman in-Office wrote that "I empower you to represent the OSCE in all specific areas of concern including democratization, human rights, treatment of minorities and the still unresolved problem of the future participation of the FRY in the OSCE." Mr. Geremek also asked Mr. Gonzalez to "pay special attention to the FRY's adherence to the international community's demands regarding the solution of the problem of Kosovo." The duration of his mission is six months.

The mandate of Mr. Gonzalez was backed by the Contact Group which, at its meeting in Bonn on 25 March, urged President Milošević to co-operate fully with his mission. The statement noted that "once the Gonzalez mission is underway, it will certainly be possible to address the potential for FRY participation in the OSCE." The Contact Group also requested the OSCE Troika to assess the compliance of the FRY with the measures set out by the Contact Group and to report to the next Contact Group meeting, which is scheduled for the second half of April.

Some improvements were noted. For example on 23 March an agreement was reached in Priština between Serbia and the Kosovar Albanians to implement the Education Agreement, originally signed by President Milošević and Mr. Rugova, President of the Democratic League of Kosovo, on 1 September 1996. In a press release issued on 24 March, Mr. Geremek noted that the decision represented "an important, though small, first step towards normalization of the situation in Kosovo". At the same time he reiterated the OSCE's expectations that "talks on

the status of Kosovo will begin soon to bring an end to the current crisis.”

This message was repeated in a visit to Belgrade on 28 March. The main purpose of the visit was to inquire into the attitudes of the Yugoslav authorities towards the implementation of recent OSCE decisions taken with regard to the situation in the FRY, including the crisis in Kosovo.

In his meetings with President Milošević, Foreign Minister Jovanović and the Chairman and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. Geremek encouraged his interlocuteurs to accept the

mandate of Mr. Gonzalez, to agree to the return of the OSCE long-term Missions and to begin a round-table dialogue with Kosovar Albanians with the participation of a third party, preferably the OSCE.

President Milošević made it clear to the Chairman-in-Office that Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) would not be ready to implement any of the OSCE's “demands” before “taking back its seat in the OSCE.” He indicated his readiness to accept the mission of Mr. Gonzalez, provided that his mandate would be limited exclusively to discussion of the normalization of the FRY's relations with the OSCE. Mr. Milošević said

he could not accept international involvement on the Kosovo issue since it is “an internal affair of the Republic of Serbia.”

In Priština, the Chairman-in-Office held separate meetings with political leaders of the Kosovar Albanians, Dr. Rugova and Mr. Demaci. In Podgorica, Mr. Geremek met with the President of Montenegro, Mr. Djukanović.

The Contact Group will meet in the third week of April to reassess the situation. Their assessment will take account of the report by the OSCE Troika on compliance.



The annual “2+2” meeting between the Chairmen-in-Office and the Secretaries General of the OSCE and the Council of Europe took place in London on 12 March. The agenda included regional issues, in particular the situation in Kosovo, Albania and Belarus, co-operation in the elaboration of the OSCE Platform for Co-operative Security, and the initiative of the Government of the Netherlands aimed at discussing ways of improving co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Muratbek Imanaliev, addressed the Permanent Council on 19 March. He described the process of democratization in Kyrgyzstan and the support of the OSCE in that process. He outlined the pivotal role of Central Asia in Eurasian security and noted the risks and threats to security faced by that region. He spoke of the importance of OSCE institutions active in Central Asia such as the

ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Central Asia Liaison Office.

On 26 March **Mr. Hans van Mierlo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands,** addressed the Permanent Council. He outlined what the Netherlands regards as the priorities for the OSCE in the next few years, stressing in particular the “strengthening of the links” between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. He proposed the establishment of an Alliance for Human Rights and Democracy to undertake joint action in the field where the two organizations have a shared responsibility. He also advocated the creation of joint missions, joint training for mission members and the establishment of joint local offices. The Netherlands will host a meeting on 5 June to further discuss this initiative. In his address, Foreign Minister van Mierlo also spoke about strengthening the Secretariat, improving co-ordination between the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation, and exploring ways of controlling the proliferation of small arms.

Implementation of Election Results Almost Complete in Bosnia

Although observers have applauded the visible success of the OSCE's supervision of municipal elections on 13 and 14 September 1997 in 135 municipalities and one city council in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the challenging implementation of those election results under OSCE oversight—the Organization's first experience of this kind—is a relatively little known achievement. It is an accomplishment all the more remarkable when one takes into consideration the fact that a mere 38 days after the September polls, the OSCE was again supervising an election in the country—this time, the extraordinary elections called for the Republika Srpska National Assembly.

Despite this considerable diversion, as of 30 March 1998 all but nine municipalities had received final certification from the OSCE Head of Mission, Ambassador Robert L. Barry. This represents a substantial victory for the process of creating civil structures in post-Dayton Bosnia.

The OSCE managed the implementation process by monitoring the conditions under which the municipal councils were created and, where necessary, mediating negotiations and guiding parties in the councils to a resolution of their sometimes significant differences.

The Provisional Election Commission's (PEC) Rules and Regulations created a two-step process for the implementation of election results. First, results had to be “technically certified” by the PEC thereby determining the number of seats won by each party. Second, municipalities were required to implement those results in order to receive final certification. This required a number of condi-

tions to be met, including the attendance of all parties at the inaugural session of the council, the election of Chairman or President of the Council, the Municipal Secretary, Council Officers and the Municipal Executive (Board).

The OSCE Head of Mission (HoM) alone issues the final certification, although in making his decisions he takes into account the views of the National Election Results Implementation Committee and the Provisional Election Commission. He may withhold certification if, in his opinion, acceptable conditions have not been met. Serious breaches include: the denial of access by councillors to municipal buildings; threats, harassment, or violence directed at elected officials; prevention of elected officials from establishing a place of residence in the municipality; failure to make provision for minority political party representation; and the denial of access to municipal assets, materials, or funds for elected officials.

The HoM may also withdraw final certification from a municipality for a period of up to six months after it has been given if that municipality violates the Rules and Regulations or fails to ensure acceptable conditions.

Importantly, the OSCE and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) will not recognise decisions taken by a municipal administration that has not received Final Certification.

Mediation undertaken at the local, regional and national levels by the OSCE and OHR to narrow the range of disputed issues between parties proved successful, and many problems in

various municipalities were resolved. Some of the contentious issues faced in the process included ‘representation for [political rather than ethnic] minority parties’ in legislative and executive posts, the timing of the return of elected councillors, the merging of parallel administrations in municipalities under the control of two different nationalities (a particular problem in the Federation) and the fear of minority parties of being outvoted on crucial issues.

In the limited number of cases in which mediation did not succeed, arbitration was applied.

At the Bonn Conference in early December 1997 it was agreed that municipalities that did not comply with the Rules and Regulations for the implementation of election results would be subject to final and binding arbitration by the OSCE Head of Mission and the High Representative acting together. The aim of arbitration is to arrive at a fair agreement on disputed issues. In the eyes of the international community, arbitration is the remedy of last resort for the implementation of election results.

Of the 136 municipalities involved, nine were subject to final and binding arbitration awards. Two of those awards have been fully implemented and those municipalities have received final certification. Of the seven outstanding awards, three are likely to require the application of sanctions to ensure implementation. The affected municipalities are Srebrenica, Prozor-Rama, and Kresevo.

In the months ahead, the OSCE will continue to monitor the adherence of

the political parties to the Rules and Regulations governing the process of final certification. Major issues confront these newly constituted municipal governments, such as the task of enabling the return of minority councillors to their former municipalities. Distrust between political parties and ethnic groups has been the single largest obstacle to be overcome. The act of

implementation itself has been a significant factor in beginning the process of political negotiation that is a prerequisite for eventual co-operation.

The implementation process has been a remarkable success for the OSCE, leading to the creation of municipal civil institutions with a popular mandate. The success of the implementation

programme is also a fitting end to the significant challenge of running the 1997 municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The editor of the OSCE Newsletter would like to thank the Director of Implementation, Ian Mitchell, for his contribution to this article.

Chairman-in-Office Meets with Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group

The Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, met on 3 March in Warsaw with the French, Russian and United States Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group. They exchanged views on possible further steps aimed at facilitating a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The Chairman-in-Office emphasized the utmost importance which he attaches to an early resumption of the negotiations within the OSCE Minsk process and expressed his full support for the efforts of the Co-Chairmen in this regard. He welcomed the Co-Chairmen's intention to convene on 5 March a

meeting of the Minsk Group and to visit the region soon after the presidential elections in Armenia.

The Chairman-in-Office and the Co-Chairmen were unanimous in their belief that the proposals advanced by the Co-Chairmen should continue to constitute the basis for a resumption of negotiations. At the same time they said that they would welcome any constructive suggestions which might result in speeding-up the negotiating process.

The Chairman-in-Office and the Co-Chairmen expressed concern over the increase in the number of military incidents on the Armenian-Azerbaijani

border and along the Line of Contact, including shooting at the OSCE monitoring team, which resulted in a temporary suspension of monitoring activities.

They called on the Parties to the conflict to show maximum restraint and to avoid any statements or actions which might lead to an uncontrolled development of the situation or hamper the negotiating process.

The Co-Chairmen plan to travel to the region in the second half of April to meet with the new President and Government of Armenia.



News from the Field

The OSCE currently has ten Missions in the field as well as the Assistance Group to Chechnya, the Presence in Albania and the Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus. The following are highlights from the work of some of the field operations during the past month:

New Developments and Offices in Albania

Ending a six-month boycott, Albania's leading opposition parties, led by the Democrats, returned to Parliament on 9 March. In a press release issued on 10 March the OSCE Presence in Albania described the decision as "a positive and necessary step towards normal democratic process and political dialogue in Albania."

The Mission is monitoring the domestic reaction to the events in neighbouring Kosovo and the situation on the border. A third OSCE field office was opened in Vlore on 6 March. A temporary office was established in Bajram Curri near the Albanian-Kosovo province frontier on 27 March.

Update from Bosnia and Herzegovina

In addition to wrapping up the post-municipal election implementation process (see page 4), the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has been preparing for elections scheduled for 12 and 13 September 1998. Elections will be held on those days for the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the President and Vice President of Republika Srpska, the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska, the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the cantonal assemblies in the Federa-

tion of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the municipal councils in ten newly established municipalities.

In other news, the Brčko Arbitration Tribunal announced on 15 March that it would postpone its decision on the final disposition of the municipality until the end of 1998 or the beginning of 1999.

In March the Mission organized a number of events concerning the role of women in Bosnian society. These included a conference in Sarajevo bringing together over 200 women from the Federation and Republika Srpska to discuss the role of women at all levels of BiH politics, a symposium in Tuzla on women's rights, and a "TV bridge" between Sarajevo and Banja Luka on International Women's Day, which encouraged women throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina to become active participants in the political process.

"Silent Exodus" Evident in the Danube Region

The OSCE Mission to Croatia reports that statistical evidence suggests a silent exodus of Serbs from many areas of Croatia. It reports continued incidents of intimidation against the Serb population, the persistence of documentary and procedural obstacles to normalization, and observes that the tension in the Danube Region, especially in the Baranja, is not decreasing, although positive signals are sent by the central Government to counter this development. These signals

include a review of property legislation, further implementation of an amnesty law and the sending of high-ranking representatives to the Danube region.

The Head of Mission, Ambassador Tim Guldemann, joined one such visit to the Knin area on 9 March and stressed to the mayors that international assistance was contingent on government support for the return of displaced persons and refugees, the rule of law, human rights and the inviolability of property.

The Mission is continuing its active role in preparing for a "Conference on Reconstruction and Development" which has been tentatively scheduled for later this spring. The aim of the conference would be to strengthen co-operation between the international community and the Croatian Government in the continuing reconstruction and development of the country and in securing the return of refugees and displaced persons.

Mission to Moldova Assists with Elections and Observes High-Level Meeting

The OSCE Mission to Moldova was represented at a high-level meeting on Moldova, which took place in Odessa on 19 and 20 March. The meeting was hosted by President Kuchma of Ukraine and attended by Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, Moldovan President Luchinschi and Trans-Dniestrian leader Smirnov. At the meeting the sides negotiated an agreement

on “Measures of Confidence and the Development of Contacts between the Republic of Moldova and Trans Dniestria” and a “Protocol on Several Priority Steps

to Activate the Political Settlement of the Trans-Dniestrian Problem.” A third agreement on Russian military property in eastern Moldova was also agreed.

Mission Monitors Plight of Crimean Tartars in Election Build-up

The OSCE Mission to Ukraine assisted the OSCE election monitors during the parliamentary elections of 29 March (see page 9) In the run-up to the elections, the Mission paid particular attention to the situation of the Crimean Tartars, many of whom are either stateless or citizens of another country and who are therefore not eligible to vote. Non-citizens make up almost half of the electorate and they fear that they will not be able to vote with the result that Tatar representation will be significantly reduced in the new Crimean parliament.

The Mission reports that there were several protests by the Crimean Tartars. It received appeals from representatives of the Crimean community and, in accordance with its mandate, raised the situation of the Crimean Tartars with representatives of the Ukrainian Government.



The sky is falling!

Ambassador John Evans, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, stands amidst the rubble of mission headquarters in Chisinau after the roof caved in on the morning of 22 March (15 minutes before the polls opened for the Parliamentary elections).



Recent Publications about the OSCE

Bothe, Michael et al., *The OSCE in the Maintenance of Peace and Security: Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Peaceful Settlement of Disputes*, The Hague, Kluwer Law International, 1997.

Cuny, Laurence, *L'OSCE et le règlement pacifique des différends: La Cour de conciliation et d'arbitrage*, Geneva, Graduate Institute of International Studies, 1997.

Nyholm, Lars (ed.), *OSCE - A Need for Co-operation: Towards a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century*, Copenhagen, The Danish United Nations Association, 1997.

We welcome information about new publications concerning the OSCE and OSCE-related topics.

REPORT from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) is located at Prinsessegracht 22, NL-2514 AP The Hague, The Netherlands, tel.: (+31-70) 312 55 00, fax: (+31-70) 363 59 10

Slovakia

In the autumn of 1997 the Government of Slovakia invited the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and the office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities to send experts to discuss with Slovak Government experts the question of Slovak minority language legislation. After consultation between the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the High Commissioner, it was decided to send a joint delegation to Slovakia.

The opening session of these consultations was at the political level and took place on 9 March in Bratislava. Priority attention during this meeting, which was

attended by the High Commissioner, was given to the issue of bilingual school certificates and the problem of the use of the minority language in official communication. The State language law itself was among other issues discussed.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

From 19 to 21 March the High Commissioner paid another visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. On 20 March he joined the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Prof. Bronisław Geremek, who visited Skopje in his capacity as OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The High Commissioner participated

in the meetings with President of the Republic Kiro Gligorov, Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski, Minister of Foreign Affairs Blagoj Handziski, Chairman of the Party for Democratic Prosperity Abdurahman Aliti, and UNPREDEP Chief of Mission Henryk Sokalski.

In addition, the High Commissioner had separate meetings with leaders of Macedonian opposition parties and ambassadors of some of the OSCE participating States. His talks in Skopje focused on the current situation in the field of inter-ethnic relations in the country and on the most recent developments in the region and their impact on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities has updated its homepages on the Internet. Look for the High Commissioner's section on the OSCE website at <http://www.osceprag.cz>

UPDATE from the ODIHR

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is located at Krucza 36/Wspólna 6 (3rd floor), PL-00-522 Warsaw 53, Poland, tel.: (+48-22) 625 70 40, fax: (+48-22) 625 43 57



ELECTION FOCUS

March was a very busy month for the Election Section of the ODIHR, with Election Observation Missions operating in three OSCE participating States: Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Extraordinary Presidential Election in Armenia

At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, on 14 February the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission began to monitor administrative preparations for the election and the election campaign. As the 16 March election day approached, over 200 international observers were deployed to all parts of Armenia to provide broad coverage of polling stations. The OSCE observers visited more than 800 polling stations on election day. After the close of the polls, they observed the counting of the votes. Observer teams then followed the results through numerous Community Electoral Commissions and all 11 Regional Electoral Commissions.

A preliminary statement was released after all the observers had been debriefed.

A number of concerns were raised in this statement which concluded that "the elections fell short of the standards to which Armenia had committed itself in OSCE documents." Several key areas of concern were outlined which, the report suggested, required correction before the second round was held.

The OSCE deployed nearly 140 observers for the second round which took place on 30 March. The observers visited more than 680 polling stations as well as the places where the votes were counted and the results compiled.

The preliminary statement following the second round indicated that although this election is an overall step forward from the 1996 elections, some serious concerns need to be addressed in order to bring Armenia in line with the OSCE standards to which Armenia has committed itself.

The preliminary statement can be found on the ODIHR Internet homepage. A final report will be issued shortly, and will also be made available on the Internet.

Parliamentary Elections in Moldova

The OSCE/ODIHR maintained a long-term presence of 15 persons in Moldova to observe the pre-election campaign throughout the country. On election day, 22 March, the long-term observers, together with almost 150 short-term observers from 30 different countries, visited more than 30 per cent of the polling stations.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly issued a preliminary statement on 23 March, saying that

"The election process was as a whole satisfactory. The candidates could compete under generally good conditions, and the voters could freely express their will on Election Day. A major exemption to this positive assessment was Transnistria, where – due to the lack of de facto control by the government of the Republic of Moldova – neither the candidates nor the voters had even close to adequate conditions for exercising their civil rights." The statement went on to note that "no significant deficiencies were observed during the pre-election period or on election day. However, further improvements can be made, in particular with regard to the legal framework, the voters registers and the media campaign."

A final report will be issued shortly.

Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine

In Ukraine the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission deployed 16 long-term and 243 short-term observers. More than 1,200 polling stations were visited on election day.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly issued a preliminary joint statement on 30 March 1998. The statement concluded that "the Ukrainian Elections were conducted under a generally adequate administrative framework." However, it noted

that “the campaign was marred by incidents of violence, arrests and actions against candidates and abuse of public office that represent a serious shortcoming in the conduct of the campaign, and raise questions about the neutrality of the state apparatus in the election.” It also stated that “further steps could have been taken to ensure the full participation of returned Tartars in the election, and a better possibility for them to be represented in the Crimean Parliament.” Criticism was also levelled against the late passage of laws and regulations, the role of the media and some procedural difficulties in polling stations.

The full text of this joint statement is also available on the ODIHR site of the OSCE website at:
<http://www.osceprag.cz/inst/odihr/odihr.htm>.

A final, comprehensive report on the Ukrainian elections will be issued in the coming weeks.

OTHER ODIHR NEWS

Electoral Process Workshop Prepares Central Asian Administrators

Sixteen top-level election administrators from Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in a three-day workshop entitled “Key Aspects of the Electoral Process” in Stockholm on 16 to 18 March. The meeting was jointly organized by the OSCE/ODIHR and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

The workshop was the first of its kind at which election officials from Central Asia were able to discuss common approaches to the many challenges facing their newly independent States.

Among the participants were the chairpersons of the Central Election Commissions of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. All of these countries will hold their second presidential and parliamentary elections in 1999-2001. Representatives from the United Nations Development Programme, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the International Federation of Journalists, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and Electoral Reform International Services also participated.

Among the topics discussed were: the role and structure of an election administration; electoral systems; the conduct of effective and cost-efficient elections; voter, candidate and party registration; elections and the international community; and the role of the media. The participants also had a meeting with the Stockholm Election Committee.

Joint Assessment Mission Visits the Caucuses

A joint delegation of international organizations visited Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia from 14 to 28 March. The aim of the mission was to assess the needs for assistance to the three countries in the human dimension field and to take stock of assistance programmes already provided by the international community in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to improve co-operation between the international organizations.

The joint delegation consisted of representatives of the OSCE/ODIHR, the Council of Europe, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the European Commission and the Danish Refugee Council. In Georgia, the delegation also included representatives

of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute of the Soros Foundation. The joint delegation was led by the ODIHR Director, Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann.

In each of the three countries visited the joint delegation met with top officials in the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of power and had discussions with non-governmental organisations. A report of the delegation's observations is available from the ODIHR.

Update on ODIHR Activities in Central Asia

In March the ODIHR undertook a series of need assessment missions to the countries of Central Asia in order to identify areas in which joint projects in the human dimension field could be developed. These missions also provided an opportunity to identify candidates for ODIHR supported education and training courses.

The ODIHR Special Representative for Central Asia, Mr. Sam Brown, led the mission to Turkmenistan from 2 to 6 March and to Kyrgyzstan from 7 to 11 March.

Between 11 and 17 March ODIHR Adviser Erol Akdag and ODIHR experts travelled to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to assess the status, and streamline the implementation, of various projects agreed upon by the ODIHR and those countries. The projects discussed in Uzbekistan include a human rights law course scheduled for 25 to 31 May and the Central Asian Women's Consultations to be held between 2 and 4 June. In addition, the status of various projects initiated in

accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the ODIHR and Uzbekistan last year was surveyed.

Two new projects were discussed as well: a Police Human Rights Programme, and a program of assistance for the Ombudsman Institution and Human Rights Centre.

In Tajikistan the ODIHR team assessed present and possible future ODIHR activities in that country including an Ombudsman project.

Upcoming ODIHR Events

17-18 April – Prison assessment mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

May – Education and training course in human rights for participants from five Central Asian countries. The course will take place in Tashkent.

10-24 May – Parliamentary elections in Hungary

REPORT from the Parliamentary Assembly

The Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is located at Rådhusstræde 1, DK-1455 Copenhagen K, Denmark, tel.: (+45-33) 32 94 00, fax: (+45-33) 32 55 05

Expanded Bureau of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to meet in Madrid

The Expanded Bureau of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) which is composed of the President of the Assembly, the Vice Presidents, the Treasurer, the President Emeritus, and the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteurs of the three General Committees, will meet from 23 to 25 April 1998 in Madrid at the invitation of the Parliament of Spain.

The main purpose of this meeting will be to consider the reports and draft resolutions prepared by the rapporteurs for the forthcoming Annual Session of the OSCE/PA to be held in Copenhagen from 7 to 10 July 1998. "The Development of the Structures, Institutions and Perspectives of the OSCE" has been chosen as the main subject for discussion during the Assembly Session. The Bureau will also choose the winner of the 1998 OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy.

The Presidents of the two Chambers of the Parliament of Spain as well as the

Spanish Prime Minister are expected to address the meeting of the Expanded Bureau. The OSCE Secretary General, Mr. Giancarlo Aragona, will also participate in the meeting.

Presidential Elections in Armenia

A delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored the presidential elections in Armenia on 16 March 1998 at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Armenia. The delegation, which was led by Mrs. Tone Tingsgard, Member of Parliament of Sweden, included 12 parliamentarians from eight countries and two members from the Parliament of Turkey, and one from the United States Congressional Helsinki Commission. The countries represented in the delegation were: the Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Turkey. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation monitored the presidential elections in conjunction with the OSCE/ODIHR (see page 9).

While in Armenia, the OSCE Parliamentary delegation met with ten of the

twelve registered presidential candidates, the President of the National Assembly, the Chairman of the Central Election Commission, the President of the Constitutional Court and members of the mass media. It was briefed extensively by the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission in Yerevan.

On election day, members of the delegation visited ten precincts in and around Yerevan, and 62 polling stations, observing their activities and their operation at the time of their opening and closing.

Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine

A 37-member delegation from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored parliamentary and local elections in Ukraine on 29 March. The delegation was headed by OSCE/PA Vice President Andras Barsony (MP, Hungary) who was appointed Special Co-ordinator of the Observation Mission by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The Parliamentary Assembly delegation included Members of Parliament and staff from the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy,

the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

The delegation monitored the elections in conjunction with the OSCE/ODIHR, the OSCE Mission to Ukraine, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and representatives of local embassies, OSCE participating States and a number of NGOs (see page 9).

The briefing program for the delegation included meetings with representatives of major political parties, the Chairman of the Central Election Commission, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Ukraine, the Head and members of the OSCE Observation Mission in Ukraine, long-term election observers, representatives of the European Institute for the Media, journalists from State and independent media, and representatives from the Ukrainian Parliament.

On election day, the Assembly delegation was divided into 17 teams which were assigned to operate in the regions around Kiev, in Crimea, and in the Donetsk region as part of the overall deployment plan of the OSCE Observation Mission. Delegation members visited nearly 300 polling stations, and witnessed the opening and closing procedures.

Parliamentary Elections in Moldova

A delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored the parliamentary elections in Moldova on 22 March 1998. The delegation was led by Mr. Markus Aaltonen, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament, whom the Chairman-in-Office had appointed as the Co-ordinator of the short-term observation mission. The delegation included 31 parliamentarians from nine OSCE countries:

Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden and Turkey. The delegation also included a representative of the North Atlantic Assembly and advisers to the United States Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored the elections in conjunction with the OSCE/ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (see page 9)

Prior to the elections the parliamentarians were given an extensive briefing which included meetings with the Central Electoral Commission, all major parties, the leadership of Gagausia and officials in Tiraspol. They also met with the OSCE/ODIHR monitoring mission and the OSCE Mission to Moldova.



The logo for the OSCE Newsletter, featuring the letters 'OSCE' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, with each letter in its own square. Below it, the word 'NEWSLETTER' is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.

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