

*Remarks by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, Ambassador  
James F. Schumaker, to the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine  
29 November 2005*

Thank you very much. I am very grateful for the opportunity you have given me today to talk with the staff and students of the Diplomatic Academy about the activities of the Project Coordinator in Ukraine, and the role my office plays in advancing cooperation between Ukraine and the other members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

First, let me say that Ukraine and the OSCE have enjoyed a long and positive relationship, one that has evolved significantly over the past decade. As many of you know, the OSCE Project Coordinator is the second OSCE field operation established in Ukraine. The first was invited to this country in 1994 to help lower ethnic tensions and to prevent conflict in the Crimean peninsula. Offices for the field operation were established in Simferopol and Kyiv, and although they were very small, much positive work was accomplished.

After the successful completion of its mandate in 1999, the OSCE Mission to Ukraine was closed. That same year, Ukraine and OSCE decided on a new form of cooperation aimed at supporting Ukraine in adapting its legislation, institutional structures and decision-making processes to the requirements of a modern democracy. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 1999, and ratified by the Verkhovna Rada in 2000. Since then, the Project Coordinator's office has striven to promote OSCE principles and commitments through the implementation of cooperative projects aimed at strengthening Ukraine's social and political integration into Europe, and into the OSCE area as a whole. The mandate of the office is renewed every six months, and earlier this month the mandate was extended again until June 30, 2006.

I will not burden you in this presentation with overwhelming detail on the many projects the office is currently managing. With your permission, I would like, instead, to make three broad observations which describe the current state of the Project Coordinator's office in Ukraine, and then discuss briefly some of our more important projects.

My first observation is that the activities of the Project Coordinator in Ukraine are growing even more rapidly than before. Thanks to the excellent cooperation between the OSCE and Ukraine, particularly cooperation with our most important partner, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, what was only a dozen or so projects a few years ago has increased significantly, and our office is now engaged in over 40 projects which range across the entire spectrum of OSCE activities, including the Political-Military Dimension, the Economic-Environmental Dimension, and the Human Dimension. In response to requests from Ukrainian officials, the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine has in particular increased its activities in the field of good governance,

focusing on cooperative programs to help prepare for the 2006 Parliamentary elections. We have also expanded our training programs for military personnel affected by downsizing, as well as our anti-trafficking initiatives, and our support to economic development in Ukrainian regions. Most recently, our office has also begun a new project aimed at the disposal of military rocket fuel components, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defense. We have also just started working with the Ministry of Emergency Situations to devise ways in which OSCE can help Ukraine overcome the consequences of the Novobohdanivka ammunition depot explosion, and, more generally, deal with the entire problem of obsolete ammunition stocks left over from the Soviet period.

My second observation is that the OSCE Project Coordinator Ukraine continues to enjoy excellent cooperation with and the appreciation of its partners, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Although I have been in my current position only a few months, I have been fortunate to meet with a large proportion of the current Ukrainian government leadership, including all Ministers and Agency Heads directly involved with our project activities. Their praise for the office's work and their support for a continuation and expansion of our activities has been virtually unanimous. In fact, the OSCE as an institution has never been more strongly supported than it is by the current Ukrainian leadership, a point exemplified by the very cordial meeting between President Yushchenko and Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, last October in Kyiv.

Finally, my third observation is that the projects undertaken by the Project Coordinator's office have provided real benefits to Ukraine, and have positively contributed to the cooperation between Ukraine and its international partners. A review of some of our projects undertaken during the current year should demonstrate this point.

In the Politico-Military Dimension, our office has continued to support the transition of discharged military personnel to civilian life by providing retraining programs, employment assistance, and information seminars. In 2005, 320 discharged military officers will pass through these programs, and, based on previous experience, 80% of them will be employed within three months of completing the training course. Such retraining programs are reaching only a small percentage of the thousands of officers that need them, however, and our office is investigating jointly with the Ministry of Defense ways to increase our activities in this area. Next month, the final class of the year will graduate from our Khmelnytskyi retraining program, and Defense Minister Hrytsenko and I plan to be there to hand out the diplomas.

More recently, our office has launched a new initiative, jointly with the Forum for Security Cooperation, concerning the disposal of more than 16,000 tons of the highly unstable and toxic rocket fuel component known as "Mélange." A scoping study was completed on October 11<sup>th</sup>, which marks the end of Phase I of the project. The study identified suitable ways of disposing of and recycling Mélange, and also identified technical and financial needs. Phase II, which has already begun, will focus on budgeting, fundraising, and conducting a tender to select contractors. Mélange poses

a toxic danger to innocent Ukrainians and will have to be dealt with, one way or another, within the next four years. Whatever efforts OSCE can make to contribute to this process will do much good for ordinary Ukrainian citizens, and therefore we will do our best.

In the Economic and Environmental Dimension, the Project Coordinator's office has also expanded its activities, concentrating on stimulating economic growth by supporting local economic development initiatives, and assisting Ukrainian regions in attracting investment. Since the beginning of our Local Economic Development Project in 2004, more than 800 new businesses and 1100 new jobs have been created. Based on the success of this effort, we will soon extend this project to three more regions of Ukraine. Most particularly, in the Ukrainian region of Rivne, an investment promotion agency has been established by our office in cooperation with the Rivne Oblast State Administration and the City of Rivne, and over a dozen potential investors from Western and Central Europe have been attracted as a result.

In the Human Dimension, the Project Coordinator's activities have also increased, particularly in those areas related to good governance, the rule of law, and combating trafficking in human beings. Good Governance activities are proceeding at an especially high level in the run-up to the March 2006 Rada elections. Based on ODIHR recommendations, the office of the OSCE Project Coordinator has been working closely with Ukrainian governmental bodies, in particular with the Central Election Commission, to help prepare for the elections. For example, most recently, our office provided the Central Election Commission with 1730 computers, 850 printers, 29 servers and associated operating systems for use in compiling updated voter lists from all over the country. This computer equipment has been distributed to all regional and Oblast centers, and the Project Coordinator's Office is currently helping the Central Election Commission in training newly-hired staff in the proper techniques for compiling accurate voter lists. It is hoped that eventually a central voter registry will be compiled for the entire nation that is more accurate than ever before, and will help to ensure a fair voting process for all citizens of Ukraine.

Like Good Governance, Rule of Law activities also remain high on our office's agenda, particularly projects supporting the establishment of Ukraine's new administrative justice system. In addition, at the request of the Ukrainian Supreme Court, the Project Coordinator's office has assisted in the effort to reconcile gaps and overlaps in Ukraine's Civil and Commercial Codes, and, from January until September of 2005, the Project Coordinator provided the Rada Committee on European Integration with 53 independent expert opinions on various draft laws. It is currently in the process of developing criteria for legal aid clinics in Ukraine, and introducing the first-ever Rule of Law course to law faculties here in Kyiv.

The Project Coordinator's office is also engaged in a growing number of projects aimed at supporting Ukraine in its efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. At the request of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports, the Project Coordinator is currently assisting Ukraine in its efforts to create the position of a National Coordinator on Anti-trafficking issues. It has also assisted in the drafting of Ukraine's

new comprehensive Action Plan on combating trafficking. Through its continued support of eight regional anti-trafficking hotlines in Uzhgorod, Ternopil, Odesa, Kharkiv, Luhansk, Simferopol, Vinnytsya and Mykolayiv and one national toll-free hotline in Kyiv, more than 14,000 hotline callers have been assisted during the past year. The Project Coordinator also conducted two anti-trafficking training courses this year. The first course trained 25 hotline operators, and the second provided essential information on anti-trafficking issues to over 50 employees of visa sections in foreign consulates in Ukraine. [I myself participated in the Consular training courses and can testify to their usefulness.] We are also working with celebrity spokespersons, including Ruslana, to put together an effective and wide-ranging anti-trafficking public awareness campaign. So, as you can see, our efforts in the field of anti-trafficking are growing rapidly, and we are hoping that in concert with many other international organizations, we will be able to help ameliorate the worldwide problem of trafficking in human beings.

Finally, I would like to highlight another project that is of particular relevance to this audience: this is our office's cooperation with the Diplomatic Academy itself. At the request of the Rector and Vice-Rector, the OSCE Project Coordinator's office has been pleased to support your training by providing 9,000 Euros to buy books and other literature on diplomatic history, international relations, international law and Euro-Atlantic integration. We are also helping with the publication of three textbooks containing lectures for use in the classroom, and we are looking for other ways to assist the Diplomatic Academy in its efforts to provide the finest training and education for its students.

Every nation faces the critical task of educating its diplomatic corps. In my own country, the United States, roughly one fifth of an American diplomat's time is spent in training for new assignments, and great priority is placed on preparing the best and the brightest to represent America overseas. As Ukrainian diplomats, you play an even more important role, as Ukraine assumes its rightful place on the world stage as a member in good standing of the democratic community. To invest in Ukraine's future diplomats is to invest in Ukraine's own future, and OSCE is proud to do its part in this process.

Before I stop, however, I would like to conclude with a few parting words on my own experience thus far as OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine. When I first arrived in Kyiv last July, I didn't really know what to expect. I didn't know whether the office I had been picked to run would be up to the very ambitious tasks that had been set before it. I didn't know how much I could rely on the goodwill of my Ukrainian hosts, or how much support I would receive. Now, after only five months, the answers to those questions are clear. My staff at the Project Coordinator's office in Ukraine is dedicated to helping the Government of Ukraine achieve its foreign policy and domestic reform goals, and they are working very hard toward those ends.

For their part, our partners in the Government of Ukraine, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ukrainian OSCE Mission in Vienna, continue to provide us with much needed advice and support, and we are very grateful for their efforts. I am confident that -- together -- we can achieve much good for Ukraine. For the future, I look forward to working closely with my Ukrainian partners in the coming year, as we continue to expand our cooperative activities, and I especially look forward to seeing all of you again as well, either at the Ministry, or as diplomats representing your country overseas. Thank you very much.